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POOR REPORTING: THE POLITICAL UNCONSCIOUS IN JOURNALISTIC RESPONSES TO POVERTY AND PROTEST DURING THE COTTON CRISIS.

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Poor Reporting: The political unconscious in journalistic responses to poverty and protest during the Lancashire Cotton Crisis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS **6**

ABSTRACT **7**

INTRODUCTION **9**

PART ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK **15**

1. Introduction to the methodology 15
2. Sampling 18
3. Research objectives 19
4. The Political Unconscious 19
5. Influences on and challenges to Jameson 28
6. The interpretive horizons 36
7. Applying the methodology 41
8. Scholarly responses to Jameson's methodology in *The Political Unconscious* 43

PART TWO: ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS AND HISTORIOGRAPHY **48**

CHAPTER ONE: American Civil War **50**

British opinion and the American Civil War 52

The Emancipation Proclamation 55

CHAPTER TWO: Marxism, the Cotton Crisis and Manchester **58**

Marx and Engels on Manchester 60

Marx and Engels on the American Civil War 63

Marx and Engels on poverty and protest 64

The journalism of Marx and Engels 68

Marx and Engels in Manchester 71

Marx's experience of poverty 74

Manchester legacy 77

CHAPTER THREE: The Press **79**

The scholarly interpretation of press histories and ideology 79

Newspaper histories 82

The provincial press and the working class 93

Legislative changes 97

Political landscape in Manchester 101

The science of reporting poverty 106

CHAPTER FOUR: The Cotton Crisis **109**

The scholarly debates around the causes and management of poverty 109

The historical interpretation of workers political response during the Cotton Crisis 112

The cotton industry 114

Disputed causes of poverty 116

Disputed extent of poverty 120

CHAPTER FIVE: Managing poverty **128**

Legislation 128

Poverty in Manchester 133

CHAPTER SIX: Political agitation amid poverty **152**

Free Trade Hall meeting supporting the Emancipation Proclamation 152

Reporting support of the Emancipation Proclamation 154

Stalybridge Riot 158

Reporting the Stalybridge riot 160

Press as a means of social control 162

Stevenson Square 166

PART 3: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS **170**

CHAPTER ONE: Imaginary solutions to social contradictions 170

Locating the imaginary solutions 175

Editorials engaging imaginary solutions 198

News stories 212

CHAPTER TWO: Ideologeme **221**

Locating the ideologeme 221

Editorials 230

Headlines and copy 234

Copy and quotes 237

CHAPTER THREE: Form **242**

Journalism ideology and form 242

The intro 249

The ending 252

Paraphrasing and quotes 255

Parenthetical descriptions 258

PART 4: CONCLUSION **262**

BIBLIOGRAPHY **273**

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Abstract

The poor do not represent themselves in the Press; despite being the first victims of economic crises, they are instead presented by journalistic mediators. This thesis utilises the methodology outlined in Fredric Jameson's seminal text *The Political Unconscious Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981) to unearth that mediation. The thesis posits that, by examining journalistic responses to poverty and protest, during a time of recognised and short-term economic crisis, it is possible to unearth the political unconscious, and strategies of containment employed which are intended to conceal the relationship between labour and value, in order to defend the status quo. It is further posited that an investigation of three politically and commercially competitive newspapers will reveal a broad strategy of containment beyond the political binary of left and right. As such, the study considers the liberal *Manchester Guardian*, the conservative *Manchester Courier* and the radical *Manchester Examiner and Times*. The analysis focuses on the reporting of political agitation in Stevenson Square, Manchester, during the Lancashire Cotton Crisis and the American Civil War and around the subject of legislation employed to manage poverty. The Cotton Crisis between 1861 and 1865, saw destitution among unemployed cotton workers, who faced the Labour Test when seeking 'famine relief' in order to survive. This economic crisis is of recognised international political and historical significance and is well-researched, but there has not been a broad study of the journalistic response in its representation of poverty and protest in Manchester. The British response to the American Civil War, spanning the same time period, is the focus of much debate, with a focus on Manchester, as is the responses to relief payments to the unemployed, with reference to the city, but analysis of political protest in Manchester in reaction to poverty

legislation is scant. Further, available research, while extensive in regard to the history of the Victorian press, is less developed into the ideology of mid nineteenth-century journalism as specifically contributing to an understanding and presentation of poverty. The response of the unemployed workers is researched with regard to the experience of poverty, particularly in terms of poetry and dialect, but the journalistically reported words of their political protests during the Cotton Crisis has not, until now, been thoroughly analysed. This thesis, in considering journalistic copy totalling 43,000 words from late 1862 to early 1863, argues that the political unconscious masked the horror of poverty and mediated the collective experience of working class existence to defend the status quo.

Introduction

> Another 'demand' of the men is that the rate of relief be increased. In this 'demand' they would obtain many sympathies, if it was made with a little more politeness.

This editorial comment was made by the *Manchester Examiner and Times* on October 11, 1862[1] after a meeting was held in Stevenson Square, Manchester, calling for the 'total and immediate abolition[2]' of the Labour Test 'or the guardians must take the consequences[3]'. The copy accepts that the workers have 'a right to the largest amount of relief' but adds 'many of us want things which we ought to have yet don't get, without demanding them with a threat of force'. This editorial, in the radical paper which claimed support for the workers, sets boundaries on what workers can do to get their 'demands' met. The workers themselves set divisions between unemployed cotton workers by declaring the Labour Test as 'only fit for the common vagrant'. On the face of it, the workers are being supported but merely asked to not to be impolite and the workers themselves acknowledge their difference to the 'common vagrant' in the experience of poverty which could suggest a recognised difference in expected behaviour. Yet in October 1862 a quarter of a million unemployed cotton workers in Lancashire were seeking 'famine' relief from ratepayers and charity,[4] according to research, and, by December, the figure is reported to have been 496,816[5]. How were readers, then, expected to respond to the poverty faced by unemployed cotton workers when it was presented with

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[1] *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 5.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] W O Henderson, Henderson, WO, *The Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861-1865*, (Manchester University Press, 1969), 53.
[5] Arthur R Arnold, *The history of the cotton famine, from the fall of Sumter to the passing of the Public Works Act, (*(Saunders, Otley and Co, 1864), *191.*

limitations on their protests? Why do the workers, paraphrased or quoted in copy, perceive division between those experiencing poverty? What representation of the poor is given when reporting protests about poverty related to the Cotton Crisis? Did the political leanings of newspapers inform content? The answers to these questions (and others) can be answered, this thesis posits, by utilising Fredric Jameson's methodology to unearth the political unconscious. One general assumption challenged here is that which suggests Victorian journalism can used as the starting point in historical study, as reliable and objective, providing the first account of history and, as such, history itself is seen as accessible through that copy. By engaging Jameson's methodology in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* thesis seeks to ascertain if Victorian journalism carried the same ideological sign posts as Victorian fiction. Jameson considers the fashion for publishing 'realist' literature in the nineteenth-century in attempting to document and share the experience of poverty to the middle classes and his methodology is able to chart 'the limits of a specific ideological consciousness and mark the conceptual points beyond which that consciousness cannot go' [6]. Put simply, it is acceptable to support the poor demanding greater relief and an end to the Labour Test so long as those demands do not challenge the historical, political and social status quo. Further, this thesis presents a literary analysis and an historiography of the period, using a variety of sources from differing ideological positions and research methodologies, to offer political, legislative and economic context to the texts and the period studied. For Jameson, Marxism is argued to subsume apparently antagonistic or incommensurable critical operations

[6] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 32.

at once cancelling and preserving them[7] and, as such, this thesis approaches historical examinations without either rejecting or accepting them but critically acknowledging them as representations of the Cotton Crisis.

This analysis covers 11-months of the Cotton Crisis[8], a period which revealed a growing agitation among workers amid an increased need for relief and charity as poverty spread. The Crisis, which began in 1861 and ended in 1865, was influenced, in no small part, by the American Civil War. The impact of the American Civil War on cotton supplies, while recognised, is also disputed as the only or primary cause by for example, Engels (1861-1863), Brady (1963), Gurney (2014) among others later discussed. The War began in April 1861 and ended in May 1865 and was a battle between the free states of the Union North and slave states of the Confederate South, over the government's power to prohibit slavery, following the election of America President Abraham Lincoln in 1860. The War saw a Union blockade of Confederate ports which prevented the export of raw material from the South reaching Lancashire for the cotton trade. It is recorded that over half a million workers in Lancashire, and their dependents, relied upon the cotton industry for their livelihoods and income. Statistics reveal that in November 1861 unemployment in the Lancashire cotton textile industry was at zero, with 533,950 in work and, within 12 months, that unemployment figure was at 330,759.[9] The experience of unemployment and the poverty it created resulted in protests.

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[7] Ibid, 77.

[8] The event is known more widely as the Cotton Famine, but this description is refuted in the historical and economic analysis in this thesis.

[9] These figures are taken from Eugene A Brady, A Reconsideration of the Lancashire "Cotton Famine," *Agricultural History*, 37, No. 3. (July, 1963), 156.

This thesis in analysing the reporting of the protests seeks to provide a critical analysis of the historical and social grounding active outside the journalistic copy, to consider the industrial, political and technological position of the journalism in three politically-opposed newspapers. The newspapers chosen are representative of the political spectrum of the time, with different publicised agendas. They are the *Manchester Guardian*, a newspaper with a liberal approach if not a party political allegiance; the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, established to challenge the *Manchester Guardian*; and *Manchester Courier,* Conservative Party-aligned and also established to rival and challenge the *Manchester Guardian.*

This thesis, then, argues that these Victorian newspapers, across the political spectrum, obscured the truth of exploitation and oppression, denied the horror of poverty and accepted austerity in terms of justifying cuts to public expenditure ('famine' relief) as opposed to implementing tax increases to force contributions toward aiding those experiencing poverty during an economic crisis. The word *austerity* is utilised in this thesis to indicate the intentional difficulty created in victimising and blaming the poor for poverty, to justify harsh economic decisions. Robert Skidelsky stated, 'The doctrine of state frugality underpinned the Victorian fiscal constitution. Its rules were simple. Government was to be kept small in relation to the economy. No investment function for the state was allowed.[10]' The argument in this thesis is that the *austere* intention of Victorian politicians in Lancashire was not to grow or to create wealth, as with the contemporary use of the term, but to manage poverty through harsh conditions and without investment: famine relief payments were restricted and withheld as

[10] Robert Skidelsky, "The Failure of Austerity", *Sheffield Political Economic Research Institute Paper*, No. 23, 2015, 3.

punishment, charity was expected to be depended upon to fill the gaps, borrowing was transparent to reveal the financial implications of supporting the poor, balancing the budget was considered a positive necessity to ensure as little money from the state was spent during localised poor economic conditions.

The copy served as a mediation to make this *austerity* acceptable, which repressed the response to poverty by providing imaginary solutions, by using language which rationalised the experience of poverty, and in the traits apparent in the Victorian journalistic form. The journalist, rather than writing the first draft of history, or working as the first impartial witness, instead created copy through which individual and social factors were filtered to provide an understanding of the world to the reader and this understanding justifies poverty legislation and the impact of austerity measures on the poor. So, looking to the example opening this chapter, the poor were presented as protesting their poverty with some legitimacy but this representation was within the ideological confines of not challenging the status quo. Further, the Victorian journalism revealed the shared assumptions about the inevitability of poverty and the need to manage the poor in an economic crisis.

This thesis intends to reveal that the experience of poverty, as faced by the cotton workers in Manchester, is one shared among the working class during economic struggle and, rather than being confined to one era or to one crisis in capitalism, is part of a shared class history, one that is not journalistically presented as such. In order to achieve this, the analysis firstly, utilises Jameson's methodology of interpretive horizons to seek to unearth the use of imaginary solutions in the copy. These manifest as moral judgment, unifier, opportunity and, ultimately, austerity as the copy accepted and defended the austere experience of working

class existence during economic crisis. Secondly, it engages the search for the ideologeme which manifests as the term distress, used as an adjective for the experience of poverty and a collective noun for those experiencing poverty. Finally, it analyses the Victorian news form, focusing on introductions, endings, paraphrasing and parenthetical descriptions, to consider form. The thesis, then, seeks to unearth the political unconscious in the strategies of containment,[11] that is the limitations of the journalistic, and societal, thinking during economic crises, which hindered revolutionary change having been 'constructed in order to avoid the ultimate consequences of such insights as the relationship between labour and value[12]'.

[11] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 37.
[12] Ibid.

PART ONE: THEORTICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Introduction to the methodology

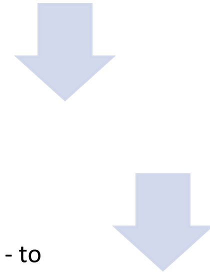
This study is a qualitative examination of Victorian news reporting poverty and protest held in Stevenson Square, Manchester, during the cotton famine. The thesis first considers the historiography of the period, using a variety of sources, from differing ideological positions and research methodologies, to offer political, legislative and economic context to the period studied. This means considering biographies, historical texts, contemporary and economic analysis, political speeches and conflicting interpretations of events. The intention here is not to provide suggestion of accuracy or point as to which interpretation is more valid but to historicize the economic crisis, its impact on cotton workers in Manchester and the workers' response.

Then the three newspapers at the centre will be analysed using Fredric Jameson's interpretive horizons, from *The Political Unconscious*. The horizons take place within concentric frameworks. The first, of political history, in the narrow sense of punctual event – the Lancashire Cotton Crisis – and chronicling happenings in time. The second is society and the struggle between social classes – focusing on reporting poverty and protest. Thirdly, is that of history conceived in its vastest sense of the sequence of modes of production[13] – Victorian

[13] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 1.

newspapers during the industrial revolution and Manchester as Cottonopolis. This thesis utilises Jameson's three interpretive horizons which take this shape:

Text as a symbolic act: analysing the text to reveal imaginary solutions and when a practical resolution is blocked by the dominant social relations (capitalism) the journalism performs an unconscius mythical reconciliation. For example, emigration as an opportunity and moral judgment to suggest workers can end their own poverty.



Ideologeme – signs in the text is being pulled in different directions between classes as revealed in one word *distress*, as used by politically antagonistic liberal, conservative and radical newspapers, politicians and the workers themselves.

Form – text is reframed as a moment within a struggle - the Cotton Crisis - to achieve cultural hegemony within Victorian journalistic form which included paraphrasing and parenthetical descriptions.

This thesis agrees with Ross Collin's position that the Jamesonian approach can strengthen critical discourse analysis. Collin states that by 'taking a Jamesonian tack and viewing each text as offering 'an imaginary resolution of a real contradiction',[14] researchers can track how antagonisms in the social order shape and are shaped by processes of textual production.[15] This is revealed in the imaginary solutions revealed in the reporting of the Cotton Crisis. This thesis develops the work of D C Walker[16] and Peter Berglez in applying the Marxist literary theory to journalism, positing that the methodology is adaptable and valuable. The interpretive horizons approach has been applied to journalism by Walker and Berglez. Berglez utilised Jameson's methods to investigate into how capitalist hegemonic order operates in two newspapers over three key events, borrowing only the concept of ideologeme,[17]using examples such as society,

[14] Ross Collin, "Introducing Jameson to Discourse Analysis," in *Critical Discourse Studies*, No. 13, 2, (2015), 158.
[15] Collin, *Introducing Jameson*, 158.
[16] D C Walker. "Form and ideology: Human interest journalism and the U.S. print media's coverage of U.S. military deaths in the Iraq War, 2003--2007." PhD diss., United States: University of Colorado, 2010.
[17] Peter Berglez, "The Materiality of Media Discourse. On Capitalism and Journalistic Modes of Writing." PhD diss., Orebro University, 2006, 61. Berglez considered the coverage of what he describes as two elite newspapers, the

behaviour (of politicians) and national culture to grasp and analyse the complex relationship between symbolic practices (the use of language) and an overall dominant mode of (capitalist) production.[18] Berglez argued that the identification of the ideologeme 'paved the way for the detection of a particular journalistic 'way' of organising reality'.[19] Walker utilised Jameson's interpretive horizons to consider form and ideology in human interest stories and the U.S. print media's coverage of U.S. military deaths in the Iraq War between 2003—2007. Walker argued that the coverage provides imaginary solutions to the unnecessary war and the ideologeme sacrifice is used to justify imperialism. In so doing, Walker concluded that the form of human interest stories 'work to provide a specific framework within which readers are encouraged to understand both the war itself and [military] deaths in particular.'[20] Walker argued that the reports provide an imaginary resolution to the contradiction of the Iraq war in answering the *why* of their deaths – for the cause of freedom.[21] Using the second horizon Walker locates the ideologeme *sacrifice* to reveal the antagonistic class discourse in creating a false impression of US soldiers dying voluntarily – giving up one thing for another of greater value – which is in fact, she argues, not for freedom but for imperialist war.[22] Further, she concludes that, from a Marxist perspective, the ideologeme serves as a way to align employee interests with those of other institutions to control the antagonism by persuading workers to realign their own

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Swedish DN and *the Slovenian Delo*, to analyse coverage of NATO's military intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999, the political demonstrations against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Prague in 2000 and the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001.

[18] Berglez, *Materiality*, 20.

[19] Ibid, 169.

[20] Walker, *Form and Ideology*, iv.

[21] Ibid, 89.

[22] Ibid, 185.

interests with those of capital and, thus, sacrificing their own well-being.[23] This conclusion is shared in this thesis.

2. Sampling:

The three Manchester-based newspapers at the centre of the research are: the liberal *Manchester Guardian*, a newspaper with a liberal approach as opposed to an allegiance with the Liberal Party; the more radical *Manchester Examiner and Times*, which was a reformist organ established to challenge the *Manchester Guardian*; and the openly party-aligned Conservative *Manchester Courier,* also established to rival and challenge the *Manchester Guardian.* The papers are representative of the political spectrum of the time, with different publicised agendas, and were described as the 'triumvirate' by the *Guardian* in January 1921.[24]

This thesis will consider news reports covering protest in Stevenson Square called by workers in response to the Union blockade, poverty management legislation, including the New Poor Law, Labour Test Order, and to famine relief distribution via Poor Law Guardians and the Poor Board. It will further consider charitable responses within the legislative and political context. Reports will be analysed between April 29, 1862 – to capture the first Stevenson Square meeting of that year - and March 28, 1863 - to capture reporting of a procession held for the first 'famine' relief ship. The copy amounts to approximately 43, 000 words over the 11-month period. The newspaper copy was sourced online and on microfiche in local archives. The *Manchester Guardian* is archived online with the *ProQuest* from 1828 to 1900. The *Manchester*

[23] Ibid, 212.
[24] *Manchester Guardian*, May 5, 1921, 10.

Courier is accessible from 1834 to 1870 via *British Newspaper Archive*. The *Manchester Examiner and Times* is with *British Newspaper Archives* from 1834 to 1862 then from 1864 to 1872; the year 1863 is not digitally archived so were accessed via microfiche at Manchester Central Library. The contextual study employs recognised texts heavily relied upon by historians, as well as a broad selection of biographies of notable political authorities, publications challenging and documenting the American Civil War and resulting Lancashire Cotton Crisis, evaluations of poverty legislation, historical reflections of protest in response to poverty in Lancashire and Manchester, and the accepted histories of the publications at the centre of the study. Scholarly responses to the methodology used are also considered.

3. Research objectives

The objective of this thesis is threefold. Firstly, using Jameson's term, to historicise by providing a critical analysis of the historic and social grounding active outside the journalistic copy which reported on poverty and protest in Stevenson Square, Manchester, during the Cotton Crisis. Secondly, to further historicise by considering the industrial, political and technological position of the journalism in three Manchester-based, politically-opposing newspapers in the reporting of protest during a 11-month period of the Cotton Crisis. The final analysis of journalistic text will utilise Jameson's three interpretive horizons methodology to analyse the journalistic discourse in the reporting of protests about poverty held in Stevenson Square, Manchester, in three politically-opposed newspapers and, in doing so, will unearth the political unconscious in the copy.

4. The Political Unconscious

This thesis takes Jameson's method of analysing nineteenth-century literature and applies it to nineteenth-century journalism. Jameson is a Marxist critic who, in *The Political Unconscious*, seeks to subsume interpretations of Marx and theories beyond Marx into one methodology This means that divergent and unequal bodies of work are interrogated and evaluated to restructure the problematics of ideology, to tackle the current problems of representation and its intersection with presentation, and the rhetorical movements of language and writing through time.[25] Jameson argues that our existence is 'already soaked and saturated in ideology'[26] and only Marxism can help us find a way to reveal the truth of the economic basis of capitalism; further this basis is in itself obscured by ideology, and is made natural and inevitable, with the reality of a history, as one of oppression and violence, hidden. The abject poverty experienced during the Cotton Crisis, and the protests held in Stevenson Square as a response, is dealt with as part of an inevitable and unquestioned event.

Jameson engages theories often at odds with his own, which are 'apparently antagonistic and inconcommensurable critical operations'[27] to arrive at 'an untranscendable horizon' which assigns other theories 'cancelling and preserving them'.[28] Simply put, this means he looks to Marxist and non-Marxists theories to shape his interpretive horizons, taking the aspects he considers valid, and concluding that Marxist analysis is the only valid approach. His position is asserted as:

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[25] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, xiii.
[26] Ibid, 2.
[27] Ibid, 2.
[28] Ibid, 10.

> Only Marxism offers a philosophically coherent and ideologically compelling resolution to the dilemma of historicism […] only Marxism can give us an adequate account of the essential mystery of the cultural past […] This mystery can be re-enacted only if the human adventure is one; only thus – and not through the hobbies of antiquarianism or the projections of the modernist – can we glimpse the vital claims upon of such long dead issues as the seasonal alternation of the economy of a primitive tribe, the passionate disputes about the nature of the Trinity, the conflicting models of the polis or the universal Empire, or, apparently closer to use in time, the dusty parliamentary and journalistic polemics of the nineteenth-century nation states.[29]

For Jameson, the ideology of the nineteenth-century literature is within and without the text, influenced by external factors, ideology, finances, control, and so on, which unconsciously shape narratives. The external influence and the political unconscious cannot be unearthed by analysing individual words or searching for the success of otherwise of the verisimilitude, because the individual, technological, political and ideological influences need to be waded through before we can see what oppression and violence is hidden. We can estimate, then, that researching journalism, using his methods, will reveal the process is not one of limitation, self-censorship or of overt propaganda, but, of repression and strategies of containment. Further, like Marx, is asserting that history under capitalism is one of class struggle, as outlined in the first chapter of *The Communist Manifesto*:

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.[30]

[29] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 3.
[30] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto, (*Foreign Language Press Peking, 1975), 2.

For Jameson, that history of class struggle is ‘intolerable to the collective mind’,[31] a mind that denies the conditions of exploitation, and this unconscious needs to be unearthed before we can face the real challenge of changing society. If, for example, we seek to recognise that the experience of the unemployed cannot be reduced to one point in time, to one era, one economic crisis in a capitalist system, it is necessary to unearth the ideological unconscious of the history presented in texts and to seek to find the uninterrupted narratives and restore to the surface of the copy the buried reality of the history.[32] This thesis asserts that by utilising Jameson’s methodology, it is possible to access copy that is 154-years-old, recognising that it is not static or inert, but it socially dynamic and socially pragmatic in interpreting the textual, social and ideology of its form.[33] The copy also reveals attitudes towards poverty in an economic crisis which remain familiar today.

Jameson’s methodology consists of three levels of political (ideological), societal (class struggle between ideology and reality) and historical (concluding if the texts are revolutionary or regressive and reifying). These build on Marx’s ‘trick of proving the hegemony of the spirit in history’[34] which he outlines as, first, to recognise the rule of ideas or illusions in history, secondly, to prove a mystical connection among the successive ruling ideas and, thirdly, to remove that mystical appearance as a self-determining concept representing individuals as

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[31] William C Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx: an introduction to the political unconscious*, (Methuen, 1984), 116.
[32] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 10.
[33] Ian Buchanan, *Fredric Jameson Live Theory*, (Continuum, 2006), 10.
[34] Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, (Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), 10.

manufacturers of history.[35] Marx outlines that it is the job of historians not to accept the word of rulers as the truth:

> Whilst in ordinary life every shopkeeper is very well able to distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he really is, our historians have not yet won even this trivial insight. They take every epoch at its word and believe that everything it says and imagines about itself is true.[36]

This *proving the hegemony in spirit* takes shape in Jameson's work as identifying imaginary solutions (to maintain the status quo), unearthing the ideologeme (to reveal the illusion) and challenging the form (to consider the undeniable role of the material base of history in capitalism). This study relies on journalistic copy, the content and the form of which relates to the socioeconomic determinants and historical circumstances that shaped it. One cannot, to put it simply, ignore the fashion for publishing 'realist' literature in the nineteenth-century any more than one can ignore the rise of the influence of advertising on journalism. As Jameson explains:

> It does little good to banish 'extrinsic' categories from our thinking, when the latter continue to have a hold on the objective realities about which we plan to think. There seems to have been an unquestionable causal relationship between the admittedly extrinsic facts of the crisis in late nineteenth-century publishing, during which the dominant three-decker lending library novel was replaced by a cheaper one-volume format, and the modifications of the 'inner form' of the novel itself. The resultant transformation of the novelistic production of a writer […] must thus necessarily be mystified in attempts of literary scholars to interpret the new form in terms of personal evolution or of the internal dynamics of purely formal change.[37]

The three-decker lending library novel was reshaped to cheaper one-volume and, in turn, the form of the novel itself altered; this form is then presented as social and cultural progress

[35] Ibid, 67.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 10.

rather than one of economic priorities. Equally, one can approach the study of mid-Victorian newspaper history through only its legislative evolution, or individual editors, or technical developments, but to do so is to accept mechanical causality which is, according to Jameson 'much less a concept that can be evaluated on its own terms than one of the various laws and subsystems of our peculiarly reified social and cultural life'.[38] Life outside the novel form, Jameson argues, impacted further on content, its inner form. As 'realist' novelists in the nineteenth-century attempted to document and share the experience of poverty to the middle classes, so too did journalists and, while the journalism is considered objective, even verbatim,[39] it carries the same ideological sign posts as the fiction. To clarify, in analysing the nineteenth-century literature of Balzac, Gissing and Conrad, Jameson considers the development of 'realism' in the literary form, especially when claiming to document working class life, and the influential 'Dickensian paradigm' of sentimentality, 'angel of the hearth' heroines, the 'carrot and stick of the nineteenth-century middle-class moralising about the lower classes'.[40] Gissing's *The Nether World*, a story centred on the slums of London and published in 1889, Jameson concludes is less documentary information on the conditions of the working class than 'testimony about the narrative paradigms that organize middle class fantasies about, 'solutions' that might resolve, manage and repress evident class anxieties aroused by the existence of an industrial working class and an urban lumpenproletariat'.[41] The

[38] Ibid, 11.
[39] Melissa Jean Score, "The development and impact of campaigning journalism in Britain, 1840-1875: the old new journalism?" (PhD diss., Birkbeck, University of London, 2015), 30; Andrew Hobbs, "Reading the Local Paper: Social and cultural functions of the local press n Preston, Lancashire, 1855-1990." PhD diss., University of Central Lancashire, 2010, 77.
[40] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 72.
[41] Ibid, 173.

journalism at the centre of this study reveals a similar pattern, in providing 'solutions', with an ideological acceptance of the inevitability of poverty rather than a challenge to the economic decisions which create it. Further, the philanthropic motif as outlined by Jameson also finds a place within the journalism, the parallel ideological acceptance of philanthropy, 'which seeks a non-political and individualising solution to the exploitation which is structurally inherent in the social system'.[42] The cotton 'famine' had numerous and various causes according to historians, from a blockade during the American Civil War to an over-production of cotton,[43] during a hugely significant time in the newspaper industry,[44]. The understanding of both histories, with historians often taking journalism as their source primary material, are considered via individual politicians, proprietors, newspapers, policies, and so on, as opposed to being placed within a broader context of extrinsic influences. As Jameson explains:

> From this perspective the convenient working distinction between cultural texts that are social and political and those that are not becomes something worse than error: namely a symptom and a reinforcement of reification and privatization of contemporary life […] reconfirms the structural, experiential, and conceptual gap between the public and private, between the social and the psychological, or the political and the poetic, between history and society and the 'individual' which – the tendential law of social life under capitalism – maims our existence as individual subjects and paralyses our thinking about time and change […] the only effective liberation from such constraint begins with the recognition that there is nothing that is not social and historical – indeed, that everything is 'in the last analysis' political.[45]

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[42] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 180.

[43] Farnie, D A. *The English Cotton Industry and the World Market 1815-1896*, (Clarendon Press), 1979; Brady, Eugene A, "A Reconsideration of the Lancashire "Cotton Famine," *Agricultural History*, 37, No. 3. (July, 1963); Henderson, WO, *The Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861-1865*, (Manchester University Press), 1969; Ellison, Mary, *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War* (The University of Chicago Press), 1972.

[44] Brake, Laurel and Jones, Aled and Madden, Lionel. *Investigating Victorian Journalism*. (Palgrave Macmillan), 1990; Temple, Mick. *The British Press*, (Open University Press), 2008; Griffiths, D. *The Encyclopaedia of the British Press, 1422-1992*. Macmillan, 1992 and Griffiths, D. *Fleet Street: Five Hundred Years of the Press*. British Library Publishing Division, 2006.

[45] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 5.

The newspapers in this study offer imaginary solutions in the form of managing the behaviour of the poor: for example, poverty is an opportunity to emigrate, famine relief (adequate or otherwise) is an answer to that poverty, austerity focusing on the poorest is inevitable, and charitable responses offer a chance for unity for the political left, centre and right. This is the first horizon. For the second horizon, Jameson identifies the ideologeme in Gissing's work, of ressentiment, which he explains, manifests first as the envy of the poor towards the wealthy and then as a way to explain the conduct of, and any disorder among, the have-nots.[46] It can then suggest a psychological destructive envy the have-nots feel for the haves, accounting for otherwise inexplicable uprising or to demonstrate the wholesome virtue of the have-nots. Secondly, it can also explain the conduct of those who attempt to incite the masses to disorder, depicted as those whose personal dissatisfactions led them to politics and revolutionary militancy.[47] The ideologeme in the news copy, the word *distress* used across the political spectrum, serves as a metaphor for the destitution and destruction caused by the Cotton Crisis. Jameson asserts that this is a diagnostic double standard which furnishes the inner dynamic for a whole tradition of counter-revolutionary propaganda.[48] Jameson's third horizon is that of form, which, he argues, sees the nineteenth-century novel, exploring its mature and original possibilities, transform 'telling' into 'showing', adding and 'estranging commonplaces against the freshness of some unexpected 'real', foregrounding convention itself as that through which readers have hitherto received their notion of events, psychology, experience, space and

[46] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 79.
[47] Ibid, 189.
[48] Ibid.

time'.[49] Form in the journalism will reveal the sediment which remained from the imaginary solutions and the ideologeme presented in the copy, where presentation as 'telling' is, in fact, 'showing'. The form of the copy, presented as objective, chronological, true accounts of protest, uses stylistic traits which support the imaginary solutions and ideologeme. These traits are revealed in the introductions and endings and in the unique use of parenthetical descriptions. The newspapers do not offer an 'organic unity but a symbolic act that manifests a narrative paradigm with their own contradictory ideological meaning'.[50] This thesis builds on the position of Chalaby, Curran and Seaton[51] in challenging nineteenth-century history of journalism which presents the industry as a contributor to a developing democracy, arguing that this liberal position fails to consider the political unconscious of journalistic copy. In a contemporary context, Walker states that 'one could argue from the liberal pluralist celebration of a vigilant and active news media as necessary and important to a healthy, working democracy the existence of the news media, healthy or otherwise, is in any case an instrument of mystification at least to the extent that reporting fails to self-consciously challenge of interrogate the inclination to produce imaginary solutions'.[52] This thesis challenges the development of the myth of the Fourth Estate and posits that journalists failed to provide, to use Buchanan's words, 'some better sense of the problems of and contradictions that arise from socially elaborated differences between use value and exchange value, the alienating effect of the commodification of labour, the discrepant distribution of wealth under a market

[49] Ibid.
[50] Robert T Tally, *Project of Dialectical Materialism, (Pluto Press, 2014)*, 68.
[51] Chalaby, Jean K, *The Invention of Journalism*, (Palgrave Macmillan), 1998; Curran, James and Seaton, Jean, *Power without Responsibility. The Press and Broadcasting in Britain*, (Routledge), 1991.
[52] Walker, *Form and Ideology*, 43.

system where such problems and contradictions can be invisible or appear the opposite'.[53] Journalists did not consciously ignore the contradictions, expectations and self-preservation of capitalism, but are saturated in its ideology. To see past the journalists' overlooking of capitalism's contradictions it is necessary to look at how those contradictions manifest.

5. Influences on and challenges to Jameson.

To understand how Jameson developed the interpretive horizons it is necessary to consider the various influences upon which he draws and the challenges he faced from historians, critics and fellow academics. Firstly, it is important to recognise that, for Jameson, Marxism cannot be defended as a mere substitute for other methods and that his methodology subsumes apparently antagonistic or incommensurable critical operations at once cancelling and preserving them.[54] This position met with some reservations from Mark Poster in his 1981 review of *The Political Unconscious* in which he asserts Jameson makes a 'questionable assumption' in concluding:

> […] Marxist theory is the only radical theory capable of providing an approach to literature that makes it politically alive, socially contextualist, and historically adequate. Again, there is no case made for this position. Even those sympathetic with Marxism are compelled to recognize significant theoretical problems in it. By never placing Marxism in question Jameson masks these difficulties[55].

Of course, Jameson does not challenge his Marxist position and, indeed, defends it unflinchingly in what is a polemic. For Jameson, to understand how capitalism determines a history of

[53] Buchanan, *Live Theory*, 68.
[54] Adam Roberts, Fredric *Jameson,* (Routledge, 2000), 72.
[55] Mark Poster, "The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act by Fredric Jameson", *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 3, No. 2, (September 1981), 254.

exploitation, which is a psychological hell,[56] we need to consider how capitalism functions and to do so must engage Marx. As Dowling explains:

> The collective repression of the historical nightmare is a fact so massive, then, so powerful, so all inclusive, that Jameson can feel justified in founding upon a system of literary interpretation that is also a theory of history […] For collective repression only gives us what did not happen, the 'not-revolution' whose presence is revealed in the traces of an impinging pressure from beneath on the ideological structures of society.[57]

James Seaton strongly challenged *The Political Unconscious* as a Marxist text in ignoring the lived realities of the proletariat and exemplifying the errors of who he calls 'cultural radicals'. He stated:

> The failure to recognize difficulties, both conceptual and historical, is the common problem I found in Jameson's style […] these failures constitute a viewpoint whose self-proclaimed radicalism is vitiated by its failure to recognize the very real problems most people face in the 1980s in the United States. For the vast majority of Americans economic problems remain pressing while the satisfactions human relationships are more and more difficult to achieve […] In such a society Jameson's call for politics based on a commitment to Utopian desire strikes arrogant, inviting not the envy of the inarticulate author, but the indignation of those who with the difficulties of both personal America about a Marxism which claims but which achieves easy rhetorical victories difficulties[58].

However, it is ideology and history as presented in texts which, as David Punter acknowledged in his review of *The Political Unconscious*, reveal to us the political unconscious which influence understanding and must be unlocked to change society:

[…] nonetheless returns to us, exclusively in the form narrativization, collective fictions about the past which are interpretation and can be made to yield contents within the political unconscious[59].

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[56] Roberts, *Jameson*, 54.
[57] Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, 118.
[58] James Seaton, "Marxism Without Difficulty: Fredric Jameson", *The Centennial Review*, 28, No. 4, (Fall, 1984), 142.
[59] David Punter, "The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act by Fredric Jameson", *Criticism*, 23, No. 4, (Fall 1981), 363.

Further, utilising Jameson to unearth the experience of the working class as depicted in journalistic texts, does not fail to recognise difficulties, conceptual or historical, but unearths the political unconscious which ensures the personal desires of the individuals are tempered by ideology and unmet by the economy. First, consider Manchester during the Cotton Crisis: a war in America, a foreign land, contributes to a lack of cotton which closes mills and factories, creating unemployment for skilled and non-skilled workers, while simultaneously making profits for capitalists, as banks open and speculators take advantage. The workers, sometimes destitute, often struggling, in a city with a visible rich and poor, and an acceptance that workers earn wages while bosses profit from their labour, do not revolt against their poverty but accept it is temporary, do not blame the bosses but seek famine relief to survive and, when seeking more as needed, ask only for 'a fair day's pay for a fair day's work'[60] and, during this crisis, these workers vote to support President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation against slavery.[61] A shared language develops as both the rich and poor talk of the distress of the poor, refer to those out of work as *the distressed* and report on *the distress in the cotton manufacturing districts*. These many contradictions are repressed as a means of survival – by bourgeoisie and proletariat, by cotton worker and famine relief governor, by newspaper reader and journalist - against the true horror of history. As if taking history to the psychologist's couch,[62] Jameson seeks to unearth that repression to uncover the political conscious contained in texts which serve as mediation for capitalism between the classes throughout history. Firstly, then,

[60] "Meeting of the Operatives to Oppose the Application of the Labour Test," *Manchester Courier*, June 28, 1862, 10.
[61] A meeting was held in Manchester on December 31, 1862, at the Free Trade Hall to offer support.
[62] Roberts, *Jameson*, 54.

Jameson draws on Althusser to consider how the mode of production shapes society's understanding of its existence. Secondly, the psychology and repression of this hell for people to continue existing, to contain and mediate, not having sustained revolutionary uprisings: for this Jameson draws on Freud and Lacan. Finally, must also consider the normalising of capitalism for human beings, bourgeois and proletariat: here Jameson invokes Lukacs. Further, to unearth the contradictions revealing the political unconscious in texts, Jameson looks to Levi-Strauss and for the ideologeme he is informed by the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. Such a cross section of work might seem unusual to many Marxist academics because Jameson engages with texts, approaching them as interesting and useful where many vulgar Marxists would simply dismiss them as 'false consciousness'[63] but for Jameson false consciousness exists but it is everywhere and needs to be looked at differently.[64] Jameson's approach, then, needs to be considered within this subsuming of seemingly contradictory scholars. Taking on board the Althusserian idea of History as an absent cause, Jameson views the absent cause as a lack of social revolution. Althusser dismisses the cause and effect notion of the base (the mode of production) as an aspect of vulgar Marxism, a mono-causality determining a force on the superstructure (culture, law, politics and so on), while Jameson argues this 'billiard ball effect',[65] is by no means discredited and 'its continuing influence may be observed in that technological determination of which McLuhanism remains the most interesting contemporary expression'.[66] This is the effect outlined earlier in relation to the changes in the mid nineteenth-century

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[63] Roberts, *Jameson*, 31.
[64] Anders Stephanson, "Regarding Postmodernism. A Conversation with Fredric Jameson." *Social Text*, 17, (Autumn, 1987): 39.
[65] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 10.
[66] Ibid.

publishing and its impact on the novel: economic cause and effect must be acknowledged as resulting in social and ideological change. For vulgar Marxists society will change if the mode of production is changed, that is, if capitalism is replaced with socialism, the base of all societies also changes, as a unicausality. The Marxist notion of mode of production takes forms which can be listed as: hunting and gathering (primitive communism or the horde), Neolithic agriculture (or the gens), Asiatic mode, polis, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and communism. These are not individual linear states but a specific type of production, the base, which also developed superstructures.[67] In refuting that the base determines the superstructure with unicausality, Althusser instead considers multicausality:

> Marx has at least given us 'two ends of the chain,' and has told us to find out what goes on in between them: on the one hand, determination in the last instance by the (economic) mode of production, on the other, the relative autonomy of the superstructures and their specific effectivity.[68]

For Wayne it is the use of 'in the last instance' that renders Althusser's dismissal of base determining the superstructure as 'little different from the liberal relegation of the economic sphere to a narrowly conceived, specialised and non-determinant role, stating the mode of production is a determining force or it is not'.[69] That is, the change of the mode of production will ultimately impact the superstructure. Jameson, then, accepts Althusser's notion of History as an 'absent cause'[70] but disregards the lack of acceptance of a narrative of history, of a

[67] Jameson*, Political Unconscious*, 476.
[68] Louis Althusser, *Contradiction and Overdetermination*, 1962.
https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/works/formarx/althuss1.htm
[69] Mike Wayne, *Marxism and Media Studies*, (Pluto Press, 2000), 139.
[70] Roberts, *Jameson*, 38.

totality because if ‘in the last instance’ the root of society is economic, then ‘follow the chain of causation for long enough and you eventually return to economic realities and determinants’.[71] Jameson does not banish Althusser’s base-superstructure model but maintains aspects of unicausality while accepting the necessity of not using ‘false consciousness’ as an over-generalised and sweeping critical judgment to explain ideological power.[72] Simply put, the development of hegemony is multicausal but the economic determinants of the mode of production remain entirely necessary. Calling upon Roberts to help summarise how the theories combine, using a modern context, consider the film The Matrix:

> The Matrix exists. Neo is told to obscure the truth – ‘the truth that you are a slave’. Neo is disabused of the false appearance of his reality […] if we ask what the ‘Matrix’ is, then the answer is that it *is* ideology in the Marxist sense of a fiction obscuring the truth of exploitation […] this film articulates thorough-going Althusserian or Jamesonian sense of what ideology is: ‘the Matrix’ is more than a set of false beliefs about reality (or false consciousness) – it is reality, it conditions and defines how the people caught up in themselves think and act […] the entire system works to blot out the consciousness of oppression.[73]

For Jameson, text works as a mediation, with history itself unable to be apprehended because it is repressed in the texts which show history to us: history is not a text, or a narrative, or journalistic copy, but an ’absent cause’, inaccessible, and our approach to it and to the Real – a Lacanian theory – passes through its prior textualisation and narritivisation in the political unconscious.[74] To unearth that unconscious, Jameson looks to Lacan and Freud, both concerned with the primary processes that constitute identity and which are universal,

[71] Ibid, 38.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Roberts, *Jameson*, 38.
[74] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 20.

transhistorical.[75] Lacan's three-tiered categories of psychological apprehension saw first, imaginary, from birth images and fantasies structured by the symbolic of language, next symbolic, the introduction of language and identity coming into consciousness, and thirdly, the Real, which can never be apprehended because the very act of perceiving reality filters through the already developed consciousness.[76] This is in keeping with Marx's idea of universality, by which he meant, the impact on every aspect of a human's understanding of the world, from the moment one is born, concluding:

> Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no developments, it is rather men who, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.[77]

Roberts explains that 'by seeing the construction of the individual subject as an entry into *language*, and as oriented forever towards something – the Real – which cannot be reached, Lacan described a paradigm that also describes the way, from a Marxist perspective, society determines consciousness of its individual, grounded at all times in the unapprehendable 'reality' of history'.[78] To put it simply, the journalist, rather than writing 'the first draft of history' as the 'first impartial witness of history', instead creates copy through which individual and social factors are filtered. [79] That copy is used to interact with history as an example of real life; it becomes impossible to attain any 'reality' because of the filtering process. This leads us, then, to the notion of the unconscious repression within texts. Here, Jameson draws on the

[75] Stuart Hall, *Representation Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices,* (Sage, 1997), 321.
[76] Roberts, *Jameson*, 62.
[77] Marx, *German Ideology*, 47.
[78] Roberts, *Jameson*, 71.
[79] Joanne Garde-Hansen, *Media and Memory*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 3.

work of Sigmund Freud. Freud was not a Marxist and relied on the bourgeois construct of the family for much of his analysis, and, while Freud saw pathological problems in individuals, Jameson transfers this to capitalism with Marxism acting as a social therapist to explore buried and repressed pain.[80]

> A therapist looks into the unconscious mind and tries to read the hidden and coded manifestations of the unconscious that has shaped the ego in order to bring them to the surface where they can be rationally dealt with. Jameson proposes looking into the aspects of the superstructure […] and try to read the hidden and coded manifestations of the economic and political base that has shaped them.[81]

For Freud, repression is a psychological defence mechanism and Jameson engages with this thinking to explain a non-revolutionary reaction to the psychological nightmare of history. To put it simply, society represses pain experienced living under capitalism in much the same way as an individual will for bad experiences in the family. We learn to accept economics as natural and we rationalise capitalist structures and struggle through the pain the system causes.

> The conditions of possibility of psychoanalysis become visible only when you begin to appreciate the extent of psychic fragmentation since the beginnings of capitalism, with its systematic quantification and rationalisation of experience, its instrumental reorganisation of the subject just as much as of the outside world. […] The dynamic of rationalisation is a complex one in which the traditional or the 'natural' unities, social forms, human relations, cultural events, even religious systems, are systematically broken up in order to be reconstructed more efficiently […] a semi-autonomous coherence, which, not merely a reflex of capitalist reification, also in some measure serves to compensate for the dehumanisation of experience reification brings with it, and so rectify the otherwise intolerable effects of the new process.[82]

[80] Roberts, *Jameson*, 62.
[81] Ibid, 57.
[82] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 47.

An example of 'rectifying the otherwise intolerable effects' manifesting in in the mid-Victorian news copy would be the persistent use of *distress* to describe the period of history and the conditions and the individuals experiencing the intolerable effects of the Cotton Crisis, serving not to just to rationalise that experience but to make it appear normal, masking the horror of workers becoming destitute because of an economic crisis which, in turn, serves the very system that is bringing the nightmare to life: the intolerable effects of capitalism are tolerated. Market forces become natural disasters, the Cotton Crisis unavoidable, the weight of the resulting economic burden on the poor is accepted as their problem because it is within their cotton factories, their cities and so finds its way into their homes. The crisis is presented as part of natural forces rather than a product of decisions made through human interactions. Jameson is drawn to Freud because capitalism itself, Roberts explains, can be depicted as a psychological illness:

> It is an interesting feature of psychological illness that patients are often very insistent that they are not ill, and emphatically deny that there is anything wrong […] From Jameson's Marxist perspective this becomes a description for *society in general*. Capitalism insists it is in rude health and declares it will just carry on, despite a series of pathological problems (widespread poverty, oppression, misery). The Marxist critic can act as a sort of social therapist, exploring the areas where the painful problems of modern society have been 'buried' or repressed.[83]

6. The interpretive horizons

For the first horizon, providing imaginary solutions to unearth contradictions, Jameson is informed by anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss. Hall explains that Levi-Strauss 'studied the customs, rituals, totemic objects, designs, myths and folk tales of so-called 'primitive peoples' in

[83] Roberts, *Jameson*, 62.

Brazil, not by analysing production but what these things were trying to 'say', what messages about culture they communicated by looking at the underlying rules and codes'.[84] For Levi-Strauss, Wiseman adds, 'designs aren't simply placed on the face but rather entertain a complicated interrelation with it [with] on the one hand the designs and the face are opposed in the sense that the designs modify the structure of the face and distort it in a quasi-sadistic manner. On the other it is only by being painted that, according to Caduveo belief, the face acquires its specifically human dignity and spiritual significance'.[85] Jameson, then, invokes Levi-Strauss's study of Caduveo facial decorations and the contradictions revealed in the design, which he states is 'symmetrical but yet lies across an oblique axis',[86] as constituting e a symbolic act whereby 'real social contradictions, that is the hierarchical structures of the Caduveo society with its inferior status of women, subordination of youth to elders and development of hereditary aristocracy, finds formal resolution in the aesthetic realm.[87] For Jameson, the design revealed 'people perplexed enough by the dynamics and contradictions of their still relatively simple forms of tribal organisation to project decorative or mythic resolutions of issues that they are unable to articulate conceptually.[88] For Jameson, Levi-Strauss's perspective means recognising that:

> […] ideology is not something which informs or invests symbolic production; rather the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative forms is seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function if inventing imaginary or formal solutions to unresolvable social contradictions.[89]

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[84] Hall, *Representations*, 35.
[85] Boris Wiseman, "Lévi-Strauss, Caduveo Body Painting and the Readymade: Thinking Borderlines," in *Insights*, 1, No 1, (Durham Institute of Advanced Studies, 2018),5.
[86] Roberts, *Jameson*, 35.
[87] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 64.
[88] Ibid, 65.
[89] Ibid.

Here, Jameson also engages with Georg Lukacs' theory of reification, which itself is a development of Marx's idea of alienation. Marx argued that capitalism, developed from private property, alienated people from our 'species essence' or Gattungswesen.[90] He wrote:

> Private property alienates not only the individuality of men, but also of things. The ground and the earth have nothing to do with ground-rent, machines have nothing to do with profit. For the landowner ground and earth mean nothing but ground-rent; he lets his land to tenants and receives the rent - a quality which the ground can lose without losing any of its inherent qualities such as its fertility; it is a quality whose magnitude and indeed existence depends on social relations that are created and abolished without any intervention by the landowner. Likewise, with the machine.[91]

Building on Marx's idea, Lukacs saw reification occurring in two ways: the way capitalism describes everything in terms of commodity and exchange value – how things are bought and sold – and that commodification then, simply put, sees people desire purchasing the latest fashions rather than fighting injustice. This reification manifests in journalism and, for Lukacs, is where it is at its most grotesque:

> Not until the rise of capitalism was a unified economic, and hence a - formally - unified structure of consciousness that embraced the whole society, brought into being. This unity expressed itself in the fact that the problems of consciousness arising from wage-labour were repeated in the ruling class in a refined and spiritualised, but, for that very reason, more intensified form. The specialised 'virtuoso', the vendor of his objectified and reified faculties does not just become the [passive] observer of society; he also lapses into a contemplative attitude *vis-à-vis* the workings of his own objectified and reified faculties. […] This phenomenon can be seen at its most grotesque in journalism. Here it is precisely subjectivity itself, knowledge, temperament and powers of expression that are reduced to an abstract mechanism functioning autonomously and divorced both from the personality of their 'owner' and from the material and concrete nature of the subject matter in hand. The journalist's 'lack of convictions', the

[90] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, 1857. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch05.htm
[91] Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, (Merlin Press Ltd, 1975), 1.

> prostitution of his experiences and beliefs is comprehensible only as that of capitalist reification.[92]

This thesis posits that Jameson's engagement with Lukacs to interpret nineteenth-century novels can be useful in analysing Victorian news copy. The copy presents the experience of the Cotton Crisis, caused by economics, subjectively not objectively: it contributes to the reification of the experience of cotton workers in terms of their response to desiring work to life them from poverty in an economic crisis, and in the judgment of their contribution to their own poverty. This reification and alienation disseminated by journalism manifests in the words of workers who absorb the ideas that undermine the purpose of the protests in which they are taking part. For the ideologeme, the second in Jameson's interpretive horizons, the work of de Saussure, the father of modern linguistics and his language system of signs, is utilised. For de Saussure language was preceded by established systems of meaning and it is posited by Hall that de Saussure's greatest achievement was to focus on language as a social at in itself, recognising the necessity to distinguish between sheet and sheep before we can link one of those words to an animal and the other to bedding.[93] De Saussure divided language into two parts: the langue, which is the general rules and codes of a language structure and the parole, the actual speech or writing. The langue is in place before we learn to speak and its 'source lies in society, in the culture, in our shared cultural codes and practices, in the language system – not in nature or in the individual subject'.[94] Jameson develops de Saussure's conclusions,

[92] Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, 1.
[93] Hall, *Representations*, 31.
[94] Ibid, 34.

postulating that these units need a real world interpretation, and must be specified with langue as the larger class discourse organised around minimal units, which he defines as ideologemes.[95] Simply put, the langue is influenced by capitalist ideology and absorbed as part of our understanding of the world before we learn to speak. *Distress* is the ideologeme in the Victorian news copy in this study. It carries with it the weight of those codes and rules and is, when placed in the real-world context Jameson demands, used across liberal, conservative and radical press to describe and name both the experience of existing in poverty during the Cotton Crisis and the people who are experiencing. Distress itself is not simply a word, but a form of social praxis, a further symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation.[96] The final horizon, form, offers completeness to the ideologeme[97] and, in this study, is considered as the familiar shape and writing practices which take form in the Victorian news copy. Form is the horizon which can recognise the ideology within a text as crossing historical boundaries. The Victorian era saw the press developing technologically, professionally, as part of a perceived historical and cultural revolution in the industry's history. However, Jameson explains that history cannot be interpreted this simply and it is worth considering his explanation at length:

> This new and ultimate object may be designated, drawing on recent historical experience, as *cultural revolution*, that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very centre of political, social and historical life. […] So, the Western enlightenment may be grasped as part of a properly bourgeois cultural revolution, in which the values and the discourses, the habits and the daily space, of the *ancien regime* were systematically dismantled so that in their place could be set the new conceptualities, habits and life forms, and value systems of a capitalist market society. This process clearly involved a

[95] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 72.
[96] Ibid, 104.
[97] Ibid, 103.

> vaster historical rhythm than such punctual historical events as the French Revolution or the Industrial Revolution. [98]

The rhythm within the punctual historical event in this thesis reveals antagonisms in the mode of production: for example, as advertising expanded the number of newspapers it undermined the radical press, as legislation made newspapers more affordable it came to rely on advertising income, as the cotton industry expanded it faced economic challenges in the availability of raw supplies. Ultimately, what is seen as the golden era of journalism and the pinnacle of Cottonopolis can now be revealed in journalistic form in the same way as literature. Simply put, this 'revolution' is not one which challenges the economic base but defends and recreates it. The ritualistic form of the Victorian press carried with it the ideological underpinnings of capitalism at a time when its power was developing and expanding.

7. Applying the methodology

The Cotton Crisis provides an opportunity to apply Jameson's methodology to consider the reporting of poverty and protest within the context of mass unemployment caused by an economic crisis during American Civil War. Further, these are events which contributed greatly to the writings of Marx and Engels on whom Jameson's own philosophy depends.

A newspaper story published in 1862 about the experience of cotton workers protesting the Labour Test read in isolation is virtually meaningless and could be read by invoking a

[98] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 81.

twenty-first-century meaning, by projecting a contemporary understanding of poverty and protest, of proprietors, of journalistic technological advances, of class relationships. It could be 'contextualised' by considering the individual lives of proprietors, by placing the journalism in its 'Golden Age'[99] or by characterizing the experience of unemployed men and women. Instead this thesis accepts the Jamesonian assertion to *always historicize:*[100] not present the world from a subject-centred view of history but from an object-centred view; that is, recognising private lives are lived in confrontation with the deeper drama of what Marxism terms the mode of production, the manner and means of distributing wealth on a social scale.[101] In doing so it challenges some scholarly approaches to journalism history.

> New Historicism is committed to a subject-centred few of history. It is concerned with the intriguing texture of specific lives. It exhumes the objects and documents, public records and private memoirs, of a distant past to fashion a montage (Jameson's word) of details creating the illusion of interiority, very much in the manner of cinema, thereby giving us a vivid sense of what it felt like to be that person. But it is an hallucination. By assembling the everyday items some historical figure or other, Shakespeare or Marlow say, must have been surrounded by, must have routinely used or thought about, the historian's 'eye' begins to seem as though it is mimicking the subject's 'I' and the illusion is formed We feel as though we are seeing 'their' world in the same way 'they' did and as a consequence 'they' always seem more modern than we expected 'them' to be.[102]

In utilising Jameson to analyse journalistic copy this thesis intends to consider a philosophy of history, situating the Cotton Crisis within the unity of a single great collective story, of collective struggle. If we accept, as this thesis does, Jameson's assertion that the only effective liberation

[99] A Golden Age or Golden Era of journalism is historically situated as post-1860 by scholars and authors for its technological and professional advances.
[100] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, ix.
[101] Buchanan, *Live Theory*, xv.
[102] Buchanan, *Live Theory*, 54.

from individual, subject-centred constraint begins with the recognition that there is nothing that is not social and historical – indeed, that everything is 'in the last analysis' political[103] we choose not to focus on mill worker or cotton worker, proprietor or journalist, but on the collective story of the journalism and the Cotton Crisis. We can challenge assumptions that Victorian journalism is propaganda, or objective, or verbatim. We can consider ideological-closure, unconscious self-censorship, acceptance of bourgeois interpretations by debating the political contradictions in the copy. As history was happening within and without that copy, the copy itself is an historical event representing historical facts, embodying history in its form[104] and the object-centred analysis of the political unconscious of the copy can reveal more than a subject-centred reading of it.

8. Scholarly responses to Jameson's interpretive horizons in literary theory and beyond

Jameson provides a valuable methodology in *The Political Unconscious* to attempt to capture the ideas around reporting of poverty in the UK. This thesis also highlights the potential of Jamesonian analysis to journalism research. It is informed by several interpreters: William C Dowling's *Jameson, Althusser, Marx: An Introduction to The Political Unconscious;* Ian Buchanan's *Live Theory;* Sean Homer's *Fredric Jameson: Marxism, Hermeneutics, Postmodernism;* Steven Helmling's *The Success and Failure of Fredric Jameson* and Adam

[103] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 5.
[104] Buchanan, *Live Theory*, 57.

Roberts' *Fredric Jameson*. Further analysis is provided by Mike Wayne's *Marxism and Media Studies*. It also considers the previous application of Jameson's interpretive model for use in journalism utilised by D C Walker in her thesis *Form and Ideology: Human Interest Journalism and the US Print Media's Coverage of the US Military Deaths in the Iraq War, 2003-2007* is considered, as is, although to a much lesser extent, the work of Peter Berglez in *The Materiality of Media Discourse On Capitalism and Journalistic Modes of Writing.* The literature examined here is chosen as a selection which has informed the thesis and made significant contributions to understanding Jameson's intent in *The Political Unconscious*.

Dowling remains the standard entry into Jameson's 1982 publication, published just two years later, considered by Helmling to have 'served [a] needful purpose for many back in the early days of trying to cope with Jameson'.[105] It is recognised among scholars that Jameson's ideas are difficult and even controversial among theorists and Marxists in particular with Homer recognising that on its publication the text was welcomed more readily in America than by British traditional Marxists.[106] Its Marxist foundations are much-debated among Jameson scholars. For Homer, Jameson seeks to employ 'Marxist critical practice that can at once accommodate and address many of the criticisms of orthodox Marxism and at the same time retain Marxism's key analytical categories.'[107] Helmling suggests that Jameson's aim is 'less to fortify analytical positions in which like-minded Marxists might shelter, than to survey all the arguments and methods available, rotating them critically, testing, probing, pressing each to its

[105] Steven Helmling, *The Success and Failure of Fredric Jameson*, (SUNY Press, 2001), 5.
[106] Sean Homer, *Fredric Jameson, Marxism, Hermeneutics, Postmodernism* (Polity Press, 1998), 37.
[107] Ibid. 4.

point of failure, in order to assess what sorts of use it may serve.'[108] Tally further asserts that *The Political Unconscious* is 'the definition of a concept – a very precise definition encompassing a panoply of nuances and permutations but containing nothing inessential or extraneous' adding that 'Jameson's thoughts rarely stay motionless long enough to be captured'.[109] Buchanan describes the work as bold, rigorous and combative[110] precisely because Jameson proposes to subsume all the other interpretive frameworks into one 'untranscendable horizon'[111] which is Marxism. Buchanan further argues that this presents challenges to some traditional interpretation in both English and History research because Jameson rejects the idea that social and cultural change can be grasped phenomenologically from the perspective of a single individual and argues in favour of a philosophy of history with the 'scandal' of social and cultural change[112]. For Buchanan, Jameson sees Marxism as not a rival to structuralism or post-structuralism, nor an alternative, but the only way texts can be investigated because all texts embody history.[113] For La Capra, though, Jameson provides 'a method that at times brings him paradoxically close to critics who, from a Marxist perspective, would appear formalistic'[114] and, as such, his 'approach to history is not the institutionalized empiricism familiar to most historians; he is out for big game, and one does not hunt elephants with a slingshot.'[115] Buchanan recognises, are at odds with traditional approaches (specifically New Historicism

[108] Steven Helmling, *Fredric Jameson Writing the Sublime, and the Dialectic of Critique*, (State University of New York Press, 2001), 5.
[109] Tally Jr, *Dialectical Materialism*, 5.
[110] Ian Buchanan, *Fredric Jameson Live Theory*, (Continuum, 2006), 55.
[111] Buchanan, *Live Theory*, 87.
[112] Buchanan, *Live Theory*, 55.
[113] Ibid, 57.
[114] Dominick La Capra, "The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act." A review in *History and Theory*, 21, No. 1, (February, 1982), 85.
[115] La Capra, "The Political Unconscious," 85.

committed to a subject-centred approach, documenting public records, private memoirs, to 'fashion a montage) because Jameson is committed to an object-centred view in which private lives are lived in confrontation with capitalism.[116] Dowling sees Jameson's work as one of conception of narrative in which that narrative becomes 'not so much a literary form or structure as an epistemological category'.[117] Jameson is seldom used in the study of journalism but in recent years has gained some interest. Walker uses the interpretive horizons to unearth the imaginary solutions for sending soldiers to their deaths and the ideologeme of sacrifice as a journalistic mode of viewing and retelling the world.[118] Berglez uses Jameson to a lesser extent and is informed by other theorists and argues, 'all of them are concerned with the question of how to grasp and analyse the complex relationship between cultural/symbolic practices (the use of language) and the overall dominant mode of (capitalist) production'.[119] As Dowling explains, 'what Jameson wants us to do is look beyond the local confrontation between reader and text to the common linguistic and cultural codes that make both text and reading a possibility'.[120] The methodology of *The Political Unconscious* is not without challenge. Tally concludes with an example, 'one cannot help but note in Jameson's writing a tentative, aspirational, and above all projective sense, at both the conceptual level of his philosophy and the formal level of his sentences and paragraphs' and, as such, 'it seems, we are always moving to something towards our grasp. Even as we are simultaneously looking back on the historical

[116] Ibid, 57.
[117] William C Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, 95.
[118] D C Walker. "Form and ideology: Human interest journalism and the U.S. print media's coverage of U.S. military deaths in the Iraq War, 2003--2007." PhD diss., United States: University of Colorado, 2010.
[119] Berglez, Peter. "The Materiality of Media Discourse. On Capitalism and Journalistic Modes of Writing." PhD diss., Orebro University, 2006, 20.
[120] Dowling, *Jameson Althusser, Marx*, 95.

circumstances […] while also persistently taking note of our current, all-too-real situation in the here and now'.[121] Further, Professor of English, James Seaton, in a review of the book in 1984, stated 'I find the mode of argument often specious and the advocacy of a Utopian perspective unfruitful regarding either politics or culture'[122] adding that Jameson's, 'Marxism appeared vacuous, and his proposed division of cultural phenomena into Utopian desire and 'ideology', pernicious'.[123]

[121] Robert T Tally, *Dialectical Criticism*, 5.
[122] James Seaton, "Marxism Without Difficulty: Fredric Jameson's The Political Unconscious," in *The Centennial Review*, Vol 28, 4, (Fall 1984 – Winter 1985), 123.
[123] Ibid, 124.

PART TWO: ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

Jameson posits that to interpret is to impose meaning and to risk reducing complex texts to simplistic codes or to consider meaning as fixed rather than recognise it 'continues to slide along a never-ending chain of signifiers'.[124] Further, Jameson in *The Political Unconscious,* intentionally considers conflicting theories and scholars. As such, this thesis also looks to avoid imposing meaning by considering opposing accounts of the Cotton Crisis and associated political response. It relies upon socialist and conservative theories, Whig history and radical history, and on debates within academia as to the motivations of both journalists and the cotton workers the press wrote about. The intention is not to decide whose interpretation is more valid but to gain an insight into the histories of the political landscape, press and ideologies as so far debated in order to historicize the economic crisis, its impact on cotton workers in Manchester and the workers' response. As such, the intention of this historiography is not to present either the scholarly debates or journalism as accurate but to gather and critically assess the contribution as so far understood.

The historiography is in six parts.

1. A brief insight into the history of the American Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation as contributing to poverty and political agitation in Manchester. The British press' and workers' response to the war is also considered as contributing to

[124] D C Walker, *Form and ideology*, 36.

attitudes towards workers' protests. The War and Proclamation were significant in the cause of poverty and experience of it during the Cotton Crisis and the inspiration for protest.

2. The relevance of Marx and Engels to Manchester, to journalism and to the period studied. Marx and Engels' work is central to Jameson's theory and interpretive horizons methodology and it contributes to the understand of Manchester, protest and the Cotton Crisis.
3. An historical analysis of the commercial, technological and political landscape of the provincial and British press. This includes a consideration of legislation and campaigns around it, access to newspapers of the working class and the impact of statistical analysis on reporting poverty. It also includes relevant references to international press and summarised histories of the three newspapers studied.
4. An historical analysis of the Cotton Crisis. This includes debates around its causes, the extent of poverty and a discussion on the historical interpretation of protest during the cotton famine.
5. An analysis of the historical and scholarly debate around the management of poverty in the early and mid-nineteenth century. There is particular focus on legislation and its impact in Manchester.
6. Analysis of political agitation related to the experience of poverty. This includes a consideration of the significance of and reporting of protest at Stevenson Square, Manchester, a riot in Stalybridge and support for cotton workers' support for

Emancipation. It then focuses on the use of press as a means to control political agitation.

CHAPTER ONE: The American Civil War

Protests in Stevenson Square focused on the American Civil War and its influence on the Cotton Crisis. Other political agitation in Manchester included supporting Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The research in these areas pays particular attention to the political allegiance of the British press, which presented the war, the crisis and the experience of poverty to its readers. The British workers' reactions to the cotton blockade, to calls for intervention by the government, and to the Emancipation Proclamation are well-documented and debated. Foner states, 'one of the controversies in recent historiography, both in England and the United States, has revolved around the role of British workers during the American Civil War'.[125] The representation of the British press further highlights the background to the frequent moral judgment of those attending and organising that political agitation.

The American Civil War began in 1861 and, Heartfield posits, was to be a defining event in US history in which more than half a million people died.[126] Its causes are a persistent political debate, but Marx saw the Civil War as a revolutionary fight, as one against slavery which resonated with workers in Europe. He outlined the arguments for its causes and Britain's involvement in *Die Presse* in 1861:

> The war between North and South -- so runs the first excuse -- is a mere tariff war, a war between a protectionist system and a free trade system, and Britain naturally stands on the side of free trade. Shall the slave-owner enjoy the fruits of slave labour in their entirety or shall he be cheated of a portion of these by the protectionists of the North?

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[125] Philip Foner, *British Labor and the American Civil War*, (Holmes and Meier, 1981), preface.

[126] James Heartfield, *British Workers and the US Civil War: How Karl Marx and the Lancashire weavers joined Abraham Lincoln's fight against slavery 150 years ago*, (Reverspective, 2012), 11.

> That is the question which is at issue in this war [...] The whole movement was and is based, as one sees, on the *slave question.* Not in the sense of whether the slaves within the existing slave states should be emancipated outright or not, but whether the twenty million free men of the North should submit any longer to an oligarchy of three hundred thousand slaveholders; whether the vast Territories of the republic should be nurseries for free states or for slavery; finally, whether the national policy of the Union should take armed spreading of slavery in Mexico, Central and South America as its device.[127]

Slave-holders in the South had rebelled against the Northern Union when President Lincoln made clear labour would be free in all new territories, meaning and end to slavery.[128] The Cotton Crisis began with the blockade of the southern ports by the Union's navy meaning that raw materials could not make it to the Lancashire cotton industry. The Civil War saw both the Union North and the Confederate South, recognising textile capitalists of Britain were dependent on cotton from the slaveholder states, calling on the British government to intervene on the side of the Confederacy; and at a time, Schraffenberger suggested, when Britain and France were geopolitically-dominant, and both wanted to weaken the United States.[129] Blackett has argued that the British position of neutrality, led by Liberal British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, frustrated Confederate supporters as it meant it did not support war, and it worried pro-Unionists because it could support secession.[130] It is suggested by Foner that while Palmerston 'was long noted for his antagonism toward the United States, he was also known to be cautious and sensitive to public opinion.[131] As such, both the debate around neutrality and public opinion had to be managed in the British press.

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[127] Karl Marx, "The North American Civil War," *Die Presse*, October 25, 1861. http://hiaw.org/defcon6/works/1861/10/25.html

[128] Heartfield, *British Workers and US Civil War*, 11.

[129] Donny Schraffenberger, "Karl Marx and the American Civil War," *International Socialist Review*, 80, (November, 2011), accessed November 7, 2018, https://isreview.org/issue/80/karl-marx-and-american-civil-war

[130] R J M Blackett, *Divided Heart*s, (Louisiana University Press), 123.

[131] Foner, *British Labor*, 2.

British opinion and the American Civil War

British newspapers' attempts to garner the interest and support of working class for the North or South is well-studied. Cotton workers were a significant part of that working class support. For Marx, Foner argues, the war was a bread and butter question for the working class; to him, a class fully conscious that the government waited on an intervention from below – from an organised working class - to put an end to the blockade and to English misery.[132] Marx wrote of the political allegiance of the British working class in early 1862:

> It ought never to be forgotten in the United States that at least the working classes of England, from the commencement to the determination of the difficulty, have never forsaken them. To them it was due that, despite the poisonous stimulants daily administered by a venal and reckless press, not one single public war meeting could be held in the United Kingdom during all the time that peace trembled in the balance.[133]

One Confederate leader, as quoted in Heartfield, saw the potential for revolution and told *The Times* 'we have only to stop shipment of cotton for three months and a revolution will occur in England'.[134] A race was on to win hearts and minds. Manchester had both a Southern Independence Society and the Manchester Southern Club, agitating for the Confederate South, and also had the Manchester branch of the Emancipation Society, agitating for the Union North. These organisations vied for space in the British press.

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[132] Foner, *British Labor*, 13.
[133] Karl Marx, *New York Daily Tribune*, February 1, 1862, accessed November 3, 2018, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1862/02/01.htm
[134] Heartfield, *British Workers and US Civil War*, 16.

The press in England is described by Keiser as divided, part condemning secession because of the threat to democracy, and part lauding secession because of the threat of American dominance in the world;[135] many of the newspapers claimed to be anti-slavery but refused to support the North while Marx felt the basis for the anti-Northern position was the English capitalist desire for free trade.[136] Keiser argued that in London, Manchester, and Glasgow, 'English and Scottish working class editors joined hands with the commercial and Liberal [and] made strange bedfellows'.[137] Blackett posits that there were also concerns that Confederate agents had infiltrated the British press and that there had been 'some tampering with a certain accessible portion'.[138] Journalists James Spence, Percy Greg and Henry Hotze were key figures in Confederate propaganda who contributed to British journalism: Spence for the pro-slavery *Index*, and also for *The Times* as a special correspondent under the nom de plume 'S', Greg for the *Index* and the *Manchester Guardian.*[139] Hotze, creator of the *Index*, later expressed his frustration at the failure to win working class support for the South in Lancashire stating:

> The Lancashire operatives [are the only] class which as a class continues to be actively inimical to us […] they look upon us, and upon slavery as the author and source of their present miseries.[140]

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[135] T J Keiser, *The English press and the American civil war*. (University of Reading, 1971), 31.
[136] Gerald Runkle, "Karl Marx and the American Civil War." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 6, No. 2, (January, 1964), 6.
[137] Keiser, *English Press*, 31.
[138] Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 142.
[139] Heartfield, *British Workers and US Civil War*, 15; John D Bennett, *The London Confederates: The Officials, Clergy, Businessmen and Journalists Who Backed the American South During the Civil War*, (McFarland, 2007), 39, 33, 47.
[140] James M McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom The American Civil War, (Penguin, 1988), 549.*

Heartfield states that the British backed the Confederacy and of 250 newspapers no more than 10 were pro-North.[141] Liberal English fair trade supporter MP John Bright wrote to fellow Liberal radical and Union supporter MP Richard Cobden stating that the government, the press, and 'all our rich and ruling class' had done all within its power to sustain the Confederacy.[142] Marx concluded, writing in the *New York Herald* in November 1862, 'the English press is more southern than the South itself'.[143] He further described the South-supporting London newspapers as 'organs either of the Whig ministry or the Tory opposition. *The Times*, *Morning Post*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Advertiser*, and *Sun* […] slavishly reflect the opinions of the Palmerston ministry, and do the bidding of that ministry'.[144] It is argued by Ellison, however, that the support of the newspapers for the South reflected the opinions of the workers, including cotton workers. Ellison posits that, in fact, the *Manchester Examiner and Times* was the only paper in Manchester providing 'substantive support for the North',[145] while the *Manchester Courier* stood alone in its 'early and wholehearted championing of mediation'.[146] Ellison argued further that rather than determinedly supporting the South, the Manchester press had the 'rare ability to see all sides of the emancipation question' and 'authoritatively analysed […] with the political position adopted by either section […] not lightly given'.[147] These

[141] Heartfield, *British Workers and US Civil War*, 15.
[142] Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 124.
[143] Bennett, *London Confederates*, 143.
[144] Runkle, *Marx and the American Civil War*, 9.
[145] Mary Ellison, *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War*, (The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 79.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid, 144.

conclusions, written in the early 1970s, though, are dismissed as part of a generation of Cold War revisionist accounts by Heartfield and Foner.[148]

The Emancipation Proclamation

The Emancipation Proclamation presented on January 1, 1863 read:

> All persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward and forever free.[149]

Heartfield describes the Emancipation Proclamation as a turning point because 'it gave courage to slaves in the south to rebel against their owners. It gave the armies in the North the ideal they needed to fight slavery.[150] It was also significant in Lancashire where the brunt of the cotton blockade was most forcefully felt. In Manchester there were efforts to gain support for the south from the unemployed cotton workers. Journalist James Spence worked with ex chartists and trade unionists Mortimer Grimshaw and Joseph Barker, among others, to gain support for the South while cotton workers Edward Hooson and John C. Edwards agitated for the North.[151] The workers in Manchester voted to support Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Eve, 1862, at Manchester Free Trade Hall. The meeting was organised by

[148] Heartfield, *British Workers and US Civil War*, 34.
[149] Heartfield, *British Workers and US Civil War*, 11.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid, 20.

Edwards and Hooson. In 'An Address from the Working Men of Manchester to Lincoln' published in the *Manchester Guardian*, it was stated:

> As citizens of Manchester, assembled at the Free-trade Hall, we beg to express our fraternal sentiments towards you and your country. We rejoice in your greatness, as an outgrowth of England, whose blood and language you share, whose orderly and legal freedoms you have applied to new circumstances, over a region immeasurably greater than our own … the victory of the Free North in the war, which has so sorely distressed us, as well as afflicted you, will strike off the fetters of the slave, you have attracted our warm and earnest sympathy'.[152]

Lincoln described the workers' solidarity, in his return address to the 'Working Men of Manchester',[153] as a 'decisive utterances upon the question as an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not yet been surpassed in any age or in any country',[154] adding, 'I know and deeply deplore the sufferings which the working men in Manchester, and in all Europe, are called to endure this crisis'.[155] It is argued by Rice that Lincoln used the sacrifice of the workers 'to internationalise the struggle against the South and to promote the universal struggle of human rights'[156] with radicals in the north-west of England 'making links between the oppressed working class in Britain and the chattel slaves in bondage in the South'.[157] The *Manchester Guardian* printed:

> We have it from Mr Lincoln's own lips and pen that he does not desire to abolish slavery except as a means of extrication from the difficulties of government, and that he would willingly maintain it, if for no other reason, for the accomplishment of his own political ends'.[158]

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[152] "An Address from Working Men to President Lincoln," *Manchester Guardian*, January 1, 1863, 3.
[153] "President Lincoln and the Working Men of Manchester," *The Times*, February 12, 1863, 9.
[154] Ibid.
[155] "President Lincoln and the Working Men of Manchester," *The Times*, February 12, 1863, 9.
[156] Alan Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic, (*Liverpool University Press, 2012), 95.
[157] Ibid.
[158] David Ayerst, *Guardian Biography of a Newspaper,* (Harper Collins, 1971), 154, *Manchester Guardian*, January 2, 1863, 2.

Ellison's research revealed the *Manchester Guardian* described the Emancipation Proclamation as 'an arrogant act of necessity that would not benefit the slaves' while the *Manchester Examiner and Times* welcomed Emancipation and felt the retention of slavery in the North 'constitutionally unjustifiable' and the *Manchester Courier* argued that the anti-slavery movement in Manchester only undermined the cause stating, 'it has become one of the most difficult things in the world to induce a public meeting to express sympathy with President Lincoln and the North'. [159]

As such the British press, and specifically the politically-opposed Manchester press, reported on poverty and protest resulting from the American Civil War, while predominantly supporting either non-intervention or the South. The War was the backdrop to the political activities locally and internationally. The attitude to the workers who discussed the War, and supported the Emancipation Proclamation, is considered in a later chapter.

[159] Ellison, *Support for Secession*, 83, 79, 83.

CHAPTER TWO: Marxism, the Cotton Crisis and Manchester

Jameson is inspired and influenced by the writings and theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, while both men were inspired by Manchester and its political activity, or lack thereof, in the early and mid-Victorian era. As such, it is essential to consider their relationship with the city, particularly the period and events this thesis considers. Historian Asa Briggs stated, 'If Engels had lived not in Manchester [...] his conception of class and his theories of the role of class might have been very different. In this case Marx might have been not a communist but a currency reformer.[160] This supports Boyer's suggestion that 'while the Communist Manifesto was written by Marx, its economic analysis was strongly influenced by Engels' 'practical experience in capitalism'[161] because Engels was a cotton mill owner in Manchester during the Cotton Crisis. Boyer further argues that Manchester could not have been a better place from which Engels could observe and learn about working class attitudes, their conditions of life and struggles, and the north, particularly Lancashire, which initially fascinated him as the stronghold of Chartism through which he meets James Leach.[162] Hunt's

[160] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, (Pelican, 1963) 116.
[161] George R Boyer, "The historical background of the Communist Manifesto". *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 12, No. 4. (1998), 151.
[162] John Green, *Engels A Revolutionary Life*. (Artery, 2008), 61.

research reveals Leach was a Manchester hand-loom weaver[163] and Henderson reveals he authored *Stubborn Facts from the Factories*.[164] Engels, Henderson states, relied on his experience in the cotton industry in Manchester, and on the information of Leach, as a 'first-hand indictment of the nefarious practices deployed by mill owners, from wage robbery to fining pregnant women for sitting down, to enforced prostitution'.[165] Engels was interested in the socio-political aspects of the factory system and, in 1842, almost twenty years before the Cotton Crisis, he wrote, as quoted in Green's *Engels A Revolutionary Life*, with some prescience, for *Rheinische Zeitung*:

> In the cotton districts most people are employed, in Manchester there is probably only one unemployed worker for every ten employed, in Bolton and Birmingham the ratio is probably similar, and when the English man is employed he is content. And he can be, certainly if he's a cotton worker and if he compares his lot with the German and French counterparts. There the worker has hardly enough to survive on potatoes and bread; lucky he who has meat once a week. Here he eats beef daily, and, for his money, gets as good a roast as the wealthiest in German. Twice a day he has tea and still has money left over to take a glass of port at noon and in the evening a brandy with water. That's the lifestyle of most workers in Manchester for working 12 hours a day. But how long will it last! With the slightest tremor in the business world, thousands of workers will be on the dole.[166]

Boyer's analysis of the historical background of the Communist Manifesto posits that Engels provided Marx with facts about other British cities but much of his information was based on Manchester, where his father owned Ermen and Engels[167]. This is supported by Messinger's research that states Marx wrote 'hundreds of queries to Engels to get factual information on

[163] Tristram Hunt, *The Frock-Coated Communist: The Revolutionary Life of Friedrich Engels*, (Allen Lane, 2009), 96.
[164] W O Henderson, *Engels Volume One*, (Frank Cass and Company, 1976), 22.
[165] Hunt, *Frock-Coated Communist*, 96.
[166] Green, *Engels A Revolutionary Life*, 69.
[167] Boyer, *Historical Background of the Communist Manifesto*, 152.

the English manufacturing system',[168] and depended on these facts to write sections of *Capital*. Marx and Engels also wrote about the Poor Law and the Labour Test, the Poor Law Guardians, and the workers' response. They shared information and frustration, in correspondence and journalism, at the response, or lack thereof, to the economic crisis. Marx also wrote about the American Civil War as a frequent contributor on the subject to the liberal Republican newspaper the *New York Daily Tribune,* assuring readers of the loyalty of the English working class and that 'even at Manchester, the temper of the working classes was so well understood that an insulated attempt at the convocation of a war meeting was almost as soon abandoned as thought of'.[169] Marx ultimately saw the working class as protesting poverty to bring an end to their exploitation under capitalism, seeing all labour as forced labour. In *Capital* he wrote:

> Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, slavery, oppression, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working classes, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanisms of the process of capitalist production itself.[170]

Marx and Engels on Manchester

Marx, Frow argues, was interested in what Manchester could teach him about industrialisation, telling his publisher that his 1845 journey to the city had been taken exclusively to research for *Poverty of Philosophy* with Engels adding that Marx had 'only

[168] Gary S Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian Age The Half-Known City, (Manchester University Press)*, 56.
[169] *New York Daily Tribune*, January 11, 1862.
[170] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume One; Robert Griffiths, *Marx's Das Capital and capitalism today*, (Manifesto Press Co-Operative Ltd, 2018), 22.

examined such books as were procurable in Manchester.[171] Manchester was taken by many, according to Briggs, to be the symbol of the age in the 1840s and considered of central importance in modern world history'.[172] Marcus further argues that during the nineteenth-century Manchester was, after London, thought to be most important in England and described as 'the most sensational. Manchester could be, and was, pointed to as the living embodiment of what was happening in and to the modern world'.[173] Henderson asserts that 'Marx could hardly have failed to appreciate the 'unprecedented prosperity' of the city in the early 1850s and the temporary setbacks to its fortunes during the commercial crisis of 1857 and the cotton famine of the early 1860s'.[174] As such, this thesis further posits that Manchester, as a hub of industry, provided for Marx and Engels an understanding of capitalist development and ideology which influenced Jameson's work. Manchester was itself a city enabling exploitation and repression in its very planning, as Engels argued. As quoted in Hunt, Manchester appeared to Engels to have no structure – 'a planless, knotted chaos of houses – but, in reality there existed a terrible logic behind the city's suffocating form'.[175] In *Conditions of the Working Class in England*, published in 1844, Engels described Manchester further:

> … by unconscious tacit agreement, as well as with out-spoken conscious determination, the working-people's quarters are sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle-class […] And the finest part of the arrangement is this, that the members of this money aristocracy can take the shortest road through the middle of all the labouring districts to their places of business, without ever seeing that they are in the midst of the grimy misery that lurks to the right and left. […] I have never seen so systematic a shutting out of the working-class from thoroughfares, so tender a

[171] Ruth and Edmund Frow, *Karl Marx in Manchester*, (Working Class Movement Library), 7.
[172] Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 116.
[173] Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester and the Working Class,* (Norton, 1985), 3.
[174] Henderson, *Marx and Engels*, 9.
[175] Hunt, *Frock-Coated Communist*, 109.

> concealment of everything which might affront the eye and the nerves of the bourgeoisie, as in Manchester.[176]

Edward Brotherton, a campaigner for educational reform, writing about residential segregation by class in the city, twenty years later for the *Manchester Guardian* in 1864 toward the end of the Cotton Crisis, concluded:

> I have been shocked and alarmed to find vast masses of people rotting and festering in ignorance and corruption. I do not exaggerate. No words are strong enough to convey any idea of the truth; and the most fearful sign is that the evil is rapidly increasing. We look at the census, find every year a large increase of population, and look upon it as an index to the prosperity of the district. At present, nearly the whole addition which is being made to the population is of this ignorant, half-starved class, who are constantly spreading into districts that formerly contained only the moderately well-to-do classes. Nowhere - even in London - is the separation of classes so complete as in the great commercial towns of England. It is one of the changes which have insensibly crept upon us, as the result of railways and the manufacturing system of modern times.[177]

To some aspects of the Victorian mindset, Hunt states, Manchester, as Cottonopolis, stood for all the horrors of modernity and is described as a shock-city of the Industrial Revolution.[178] Marx, though, went further, in arguing that industrialisation would change not just the way people would live, moving from rural to urban areas, but their relationships and the very way they think. As quoted in Guevara's bibliographical introduction to Marx and Engels, Marx wrote in 1846:

> In England all the earlier economic forms, the social relations corresponding to them and the political system, which was the official expression of the old civil society, were destroyed […] with the acquisition of new productive faculties, man changes his mode of

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[176] Friedrich Engels, *Conditions of the Working Class in England*, (Granada Publishing, 1979), 80-81.
[177] "Lives of Misery and Ignorance in Manchester," *Manchester Guardian*, January 5, 1864, 5.
[178] Hunt, *Frock-Coated Communist*, 81.

> production and with the mode of production he changes all the economic relations which were but necessary relations of that mode of production […] those who produce social relations in conformity with their material productivity also produce the ideas, categories, i.e. the ideal social abstract expressions of those same social relations.[179]

Marx and Engels on the American Civil War

Marx and Engels are understood to have differed in their assessment of the American Civil War, with Engels arguing it was not being taken seriously enough by the North but taken very seriously by the South. While Marx declared, 'In the end the North will make war seriously, adopt revolutionary methods and throw over the domination of border slave statesmen' while Engels continued to doubt the ability of the North to win.[180] Marx repeatedly rejected economic arguments for the war and unflinchingly supported the North and the fight against slavery, seeing the Civil War as a decisive turning point in nineteenth-century history.[181] Writing for Die Press in 1862, Marx referred to Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation as the 'manifesto abolishing slavery' calling it 'the most important document in American history since the establishment of the Union'.[182] Marx even wrote an address to Lincoln on behalf of the International Working Men's Association after he became President.[183] As Marx saw it, though, it was the British working class who had ignored attempts to blame American for their misery and be influenced by Confederate or interventionist propaganda, it was they, including the Lancashire cotton workers, 'that saved the West of Europe from plunging headlong into an infamous crusade for the perpetuation of slavery on the other side of the Atlantic'.[184] Marx and

[179] Ernesto Che Guevara, *A bibliographical Introduction to Marx and Engels*, (Ocean Press), 32.
[180] Henderson, *Engels Volume Two*, (Frank Cass and Company 1976), 434.
[181] Robin Blackburn, *Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln, The Unfinished Revolution*, 8.
[182] Marx, Karl, "Comments on the North American Events," *Die Presse*, October 12, 1862. https://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1862/10/12.htm
[183] Eugene Kamenka, *The Portable Karl Marx* (Penguin, 1983), lxxxvi.
[184] Foner, *British Labor*,1981.

Engels both saw the Civil War as 'a specific form of bourgeois-democratic revolution whose victory

would open the way to the rapid development of capitalism in North America'.[185] As such, they vehemently supported the North. In March 1863 Marx attended a meeting at St James's Hall, London, organised by the London Trades Council, founded three years earlier, held to 'pledge support for Abraham Lincoln against slavery in the American Civil War [and] Marx was pleased to note that 'the working men themselves spoke very well indeed, without a trace of bourgeois rhetoric or the faintest attempt to conceal their opposition to the capitalists' but he remained unsure, according to Stedman's *Marx Greatness and Illusion*, 'how soon the English workers will throw off the bourgeois contagion'.[186] Marx was, of course, fundamentally interested in workers fighting against oppression to change society. Unsurprisingly, Foner argues that Marx recognised and believed 'profoundly that the interests of all wage workers, both in the United States and Europe, were linked to a victory of the North over the slave owning Confederacy'.[187]

Marx and Engels on poverty and protest

Their shared recognition of the ideological influence on workers entering factories and mills, did not initially dissuade Marx or Engels from a belief that people would resist change and, at first, the developing city of Manchester showed revolutionary potential to the two young men. The city at the same time showed potential for profit to capitalists, provided insight to statisticians and economists, with, as described by Hunt, 'its smog-cloaked factories and

[185] Marx and Engels Collected Works, *Volume 40*, xxvi.
[186] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Marx Greatness and Illusion*, (Penguin, 2017), 437.
[187] Foner, British Labor, 100.

stark contrasts of misery and Midas-like riches the city attracted those wishing to decipher the meaning of industrialization'.[188] Marx saw capitalists consciously seeking new approaches to exploitation of workers as the consumption of Indian cotton grew, challenging other markets, and compared it to Ireland after The Hunger and potato blight. He wrote in the *New York Daily Tribune*:

> A larger basis for the reproduction and maintenance of the toiling millions had then to be adopted. The second pivot of English industry was the slave-grown cotton of the United States. The present American crisis forces them to enlarge their field of supply and emancipate cotton from slave-breeding and slave-consuming oligarchies. As long as the English cotton manufactures depended on slave-grown cotton, it could be truthfully asserted that they rested on a twofold slavery, the indirect slavery of the white man in England and the direct slavery of the black men on the other side of the Atlantic.[189]

Marx started writing *Capital*, first published in 1867, ten years earlier, and described the work, according to Kamenka's *The Portable Marx*, as 'wading conscientiously but with great effort of will through what he called 'economic filth'.[190] This work meant an analysis of the Lancashire cotton industry. In volume one, in Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist, Marx quotes at length Sir Frederick Eden, a writer on poverty, who despite being described by Marx as 'blasé'[191] provided him a description he considered of value:

> In many of the manufacturing districts, but particularly [Lancashire], cruelties the most heart-rending were practised upon the unoffending and friendless creatures who were thus consigned to the charge of master-manufacturers; they were harassed to the brink of death by excess of labour ... were flogged, fettered and tortured in the most exquisite refinement of cruelty; ... they were in many cases starved to the bone while flogged to

[188] Hunt, *Frock-Coated Communist*, 84.
[189] Marx, "The British Cotton Trade," *New York Daily Tribune*, October 14, 1861.
[190] Kamenka, *Portable Karl Marx*, 488.
[191] Eden was a believer in self-improvement rather than legislative intervention in poverty. Marx describes him as 'blasé to the horrors of the expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil' in *Capital*. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch31.htm

> their work and ... even in some instances ... were driven to commit suicide.... The beautiful and romantic valleys of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lancashire, secluded from the public eye, became the dismal solitudes of torture, and of many a murder. The profits of manufacturers were enormous; but this only whetted the appetite that it should have satisfied, and therefore the manufacturers had recourse to an expedient that seemed to secure to them those profits without any possibility of limit; they began the practice of what is termed 'night-working,' that is, having tired one set of hands, by working them throughout the day, they had another set ready to go on working throughout the night; the day-set getting into the beds that the night-set had just quitted, and in their turn again, the night-set getting into the beds that the day-set quitted in the morning. It is a common tradition in Lancashire, that the beds *never get cold.*[192]

Marx further observed the effects of capitalism in creating poverty, but he sought change. He outlined the beginning of the cotton industry in being significant in the very foundations of both physical and ideological capitalism:

> While the cotton industry introduced child-slavery in England, it gave in the United States a stimulus to the transformation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery, into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage workers in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world […] if money 'comes into the world with a congenital blood stain on one cheek', capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.[193]

In late 1858, Engels had concluded that 'the English proletariat is actually, becoming more and more bourgeois so that the ultimate aim of the most bourgeois of all nations would appear to be the possession, alongside the bourgeoisie, of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat'.[194] By November 1862, immersed in the cotton industry, Engels looked to the cotton embargo during the American Civil War to spark a revolutionary anger among the

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[192] Kamenka, *Portable Karl Marx*, 489.
[193] Ibid,488.
[194] *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, *Vol 40*, 434.

workers. In a letter to Marx, Engels wrote ‘the distress up here is gradually becoming acute […] I imagine by next month the working people themselves will have had enough of sitting about with a look of passive misery on their faces’.[195] However, by 1863, Henderson states, Engels had concluded that ‘the English proletariat’s revolutionary energy had completely evaporated’.[196] It is reported that a factory officer ‘praised the ‘silent resignation’ and the ‘patient self-respect’ of the cotton operatives [and] the Poor Law Board reported that the ‘working classes in the cotton manufacturing districts have conducted themselves generally with admiral patience under their privations’.[197] Marx, writing to Engels later in 1862, as quoted in Henderson, commented on the cotton workers ‘behaving like sheep’:

> […] what might possibly do damage to my views is the sheeplike attitude of the working men in Lancashire. SUCH A THING HAS NEVER BEEN HEARD OF IN THE WORLD. The more so since those scoundrels of manufacturers themselves don't even pretend to be 'making sacrifices' but are content to leave to the rest of England the honour of keeping their army on its feet—i.e., let the rest of England bear the cost of maintaining their variable capital. Of late, England has made more of an ass of itself than ANY OTHER COUNTRY, the working men by their servile Christian nature, the bourgeois and aristocrats by the enthusiasm they have shown for slavery IN ITS MOST DIRECT FORM. But the two manifestations are complementary.[198]

This was not Marx simply denouncing the inaction of cotton workers but defining what he saw as ‘the sheeplike or tribal consciousness’ which, he argued, develops and extends through increased productivity and the increase of needs,[199] suggesting that, for Marx, the ideology of

[195] Marx and Engels Collected Works Volume 41, 422.
https://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1862/letters/62_11_05.htm
[196] Hunt, *Frock-Coated Communist*, 190.
[197] Henderson, *Engels Volume One*, 214
[198] *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, *Vol 40*, 429.
https://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1862/letters/62_11_17.htm
[199] Marx, *German Ideology*, 51.

the factory had created inaction in face of poverty and exploitation of the new population. Marx in *Capital* states that the British Poor Law converted wage labourers into slaves when English labourers depressed wages, by making the addition of Poor Law relief 'necessary for the physical perpetuation of the race'.[200] Engels, meanwhile, had long recognised the threat of the workhouse, and the particular oppression of a site in Manchester:

> The Workhouse, the 'Poor-Law Bastille' of Manchester, which, like a citadel, looks threateningly down from behind its high walls and parapets on the hilltop, upon the working-people's quarter below.[201]

During the Cotton Crisis, the workhouse became the only relief available to those unable to satisfy the Labour Test and receive poor relief. Engels, Henderson writes, saw the Poor Law as 'a glaring example of the inhumanity of the middle classes', and that the 'the vampire middle classes first suck the wretched workers dry so that afterwards they can, with consummate hypocrisy, throw a few miserable crumbs at their feet'.[202] Nevertheless, Henderson concludes, Marx and Engels were ultimately disappointed that, by the time of the Cotton Crisis, the English workers had 'lost their taste for revolutionary agitation' and they looked to the Irish Fenians as revolutionary potential.[203]

Marx and Engels' journalism

[200] Kamenka, *Portable Marx*, 427.
[201] Engels, *Conditions*, 60.
[202] Henderson, *Engels Volume One*, 60.
[203] Henderson, *Engels Volume Two*, 460.

Prawer's research into *Karl Marx and World Literature*, reveals that Marx took his 'first plunge' into journalism in 1848 with an article on new Prussian censorship regulations.[204] While Henderson states that Engels tried and failed to use journalism as an escape out of the businessman's life he resented by becoming the military correspondent of the *Daily News* in London and instead remained in Manchester for twenty years.[205] It is further put by Henderson that Engels tried to secure work at the *Manchester Examiner and Times*[206] and, by Prawer, that he did secure commissions with the *Manchester Guardian* in 1865 for which he was paid two guineas per article.[207] Green states that Engels also had plans to gain commissions from the *Manchester Examiner and Times,* by getting to know the then editor of the *Manchester Guardian* Jeremiah Garnett, of whom he wrote in 1855:

> The editor of the *Guardian* who I've got to know is a wise man in his own mind and a sort of oracle among a number of the philistines. He's also a teller of dirty jokes and a moderate pub drinker. He's clearly heard about me, because when I mention some triviality or other he listens to me with marked respect and seeks enlightenment from me by asking penetrating questions. I'm gently letting the man come closer, so that I can then nobble him about personnel at the *Examiner and Times* and can then approach these papers.[208]

Engels was interested in military topics and the American Civil War was a conflict that interested him politically, according to Henderson, and while he wrote little for publication it was a familiar subject in many letters to Marx.[209] Green reveals Engels wrote uncredited

[204] S S Prawer, *Karl Marx and World Literature*, (Verso, 2011), 32.
[205] Henderson, *Engels Volume One*, 201.
[206] Henderson, *Engels Volume Two*, 426.
[207] Ibid, 437.
[208] Green, *Engels Revolutionary Life*, 213.
[209] Henderson, *Engels Volume Two*, 434.

military reports for *American Cyclopaedia,* under the heading Address to Volunteers, and for *Putnam's Monthly Magazine.*[210] According to Frow, Engels wrote, at least, nineteen of the early article commissions Marx was offered by editor Charles Anderson Dana at the *New York Tribune* while Marx perfected his writing in English, providing Marx with both the byline and the income.[211] Wheen in his *Karl Marx* biography states that of Marx's journalism Engels said:

> He is no journalist […] and will never become one. He pores for a whole day over a leading article that would take someone else a couple of hours as though it concerned the handling of a deep philosophical problem. He changes and polishes and changes the change and owing to his unremitting thoroughness can never really be on time.[212]

Marx, though, was impressed by Engels' writing, according to Green, and his ability to incorporate relevant material in to articles and reports, and his being 'capable of working day or night, drunk or sober, he writes rapidly and is incomparably quick on the uptake'.[213] Marx, according to Prawer, 'tried to link the concern of the journalist with those of the literary critic',[214] while writing in the *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842, and recognising the significance of the power of the Press, its existence as a *literary object*, and the significance of form. Prawer publishes a quote from Marx capturing his thoughts:

> The conservative Press, which constantly reminds its readers that the views of the critical Press are unacceptable because they are nothing but individual opinion and distort reality, always forget that it does not itself constitute its subject but represents only an opinion about that subject, and that, therefore, is an attack on its views does not invariably imply an attack on the subject of those view. Every object which is introduced in the Press, whether in praise or in blame, become thereby a literary object,

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[210] Green. *Engels Revolutionary Life*, 213.
[211] Frow*, Marx in Manchester*, 13.
[212] Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx*, (Fourth Estate, 2010), 133.
[213] Green, *Engels Revolutionary Life*, 301.
[214] Prawer, *Marx and World Literature*, 36.

> an object that is, for literary discussion […] what makes the Press into the most powerful lever of culture and intellectual education of the people is precisely that it transforms material battles into ideal battles, the battle of flesh and blood into that of spirit and intellect, the battle of necessity and cupidity and empiricism into one of theory, understanding and form.[215]

Marx and Engels in Manchester

Engels sacrificed his own journalistic career to work at Ermen and Engels, which Frow states he referred to as 'that damned business' because 'he became convinced that Marx had to devote himself to study' and to do so he needed to be 'relieved of the necessity to earn enough to keep his wife and increasing family'.[216] Research by Carver in *Marx and Engels the Intellectual Relationship* reveals that, while in Manchester, Engels regularly sent money to Marx, to pay for his visits to Manchester and for necessities in London: it is estimated from correspondence that he provided an allowance of £23,000 between 1859 and 1869 with the Marxes taking up to fifty per cent of Engels' annual income because Engels saw Marx's work as imperative to the communist cause and that Marx should devote himself entirely to the study of economics'.[217] Marx was in Manchester almost every year, sometimes twice, and occasionally to escape his creditors in London, always to visit Engels, according to Raddatz's *The Marx and Engels Correspondence*, who sets the scene:

> Marx was in London without occupation or income, entangled in countless political activities, intrigues, émigré, squabbles, tormented by sickness, shortage of money and domestic worries. Engels's situation was radically different […] He joined the family firm Ermen and Engels in Manchester, with which he was to remain connected to the end of

[215] Prawer, *Marx and World Literature*, 36.
[216] Ruth and Edmund Frow, *Karl Marx in Manchester*. (Working Class Movement Library, 1985). 9.
[217] Terrell Carver, *Marx and Engels The Intellectual Relationship*, (Olympic Marketing, 1984), 144, 202.

> his life through all kinds of inheritance quarrels, participations and disbursement modifications. He repeatedly complained.[218]

Raddatz further outlines that Engels led the life of the 'elegant gentleman' in lodgings 'fit to be shown' to his father and was respected member of Manchester society, including the exclusive Albert Club, the Manchester Foreign Library and the Manchester Exchange.[219] This is supported by Frow's researching describing his life as that of a German businessman, hunting with the Cheshire Hunt and as a member of German ex-patriot groups.[220] Engels, according to Henderson, referred to his business contacts as 'philistine' and among them was John Watts, journalist and author of *Facts of the Cotton Famine* used in this thesis, whose lectures Engels attended on first arriving in Manchester before later dismissing him as a 'completely radical humdrum bourgeois'[221] but with whom he kept on friendly terms and secured a reference when later applying for work at the *Daily News*. Henderson also states that Marx describes Watts' pamphlet *Trade Societies and Strikes* as 'a positive cesspool of ancient and rotten apologetic commonplaces' but, nevertheless, Watts was occasionally approached by Engels to ask for loans on Marx's behalf.[222] Watts also provided Engels with a letter of recommendation to help him secure at *The Daily News* in 1854.[223] Significantly, Henderson argues, Engels' understanding of the cotton industry was profound, and informed Marx's own, as he grew familiar with the ideology, the attitudes, of Manchester's mill owners and businessmen and

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[218] Fritz Raddatz, *The Marx-Engels Correspondence: The Personal Letters, 1844-1877*. (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981), 213.
[219] Fritz J Raddatz, *The Marx-Engels Correspondence: The Personal Letters, 1844-1877*., (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981), 23.
[220] Frow, *Marx in Manchester*, 12.
[221] Henderson, *Engels Volume One*, 286.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Henderson, *Engels Volume Two*, 426.

Engels was elected as a member of the Manchester cotton exchange, an achievement on which Marx congratulated him, tongue-in-cheek, as becoming 'altogether respectable'.[224] Henderson's research reveals Engels also had a home outside the city which he shared with Salford factory worker Mary Burns, his lover, and her sister Lizzy and that Engels had, in Manchester, secured and a nine year contract, from 1855 to 1864, which provided a welcome increase in salary of £100 per annum and a five per cent share in Ermen and Engels.[225] Engels' opinion of the philistines did not alter and in *Conditions* he wrote:

> I once went into Manchester with such a bourgeois and spoke to him of the bad unwholesome method of building, the frightful conditions of the working people's quarters, and asserted I had never seen so ill-built a city. The man listened quietly to the end and said at the corner where we parted, 'and yet there is a great deal of money made here. Good morning, sir'.[226]

Of Engels' attitude to the Manchester cotton industry, Henderson writes:

> Although for twenty years his income depended upon the prosperity of Ermen and Engels – and of the Lancashire cotton industry – Engels was always delighted when the firm ran into difficulties or when the industry was depressed. So passionately did he detest the middle classes in general and the Manchester business community in particular he derived great pleasure from any misfortune which befell them […] In the autumn of 1857, when there was an economic crisis, Engels – who was just recovering from a serious illness – declared that "the cotton exchange is the one place where my present low spirits give way to cheerfulness and good humour. Of course, this annoys the asses there – as do my gloomy forecasts for the future.[227]

[224] Henderson, *Engels Volume Two*, 199.
[225] Henderson, *Engels Volume One*, 201.
[226] Engels, *Conditions*, 301.
[227] Henderson, *Engels Volume One*, 201.

Marx's experience of poverty

Marx's condemnation of the Poor Law and Board of Guardians is clear from a political standpoint, but he also experienced poverty himself. Kamenka reveals Marx suffered ill-health and financial difficulties as he spent the year working on drafts of *Capital*.[228] Engels made personal and financial sacrifices to support Marx and, according to Carver, 'to keep his communist associates from death's door, the workhouse or the kind of menial labour that would have broken them physically, emotionally and intellectually. By burdening himself with tedium he made considerable sacrifice but in terms of sheer pain and suffering his situation bore no comparison to that of the Marxes'.[229] It is documented by Gabriel that the 'Marx family's plight had been so bad for so long that there were no longer crises: financial free-fall was a way of life. Marx had been able to earn, borrow, and shuffle debt in such a way that the family remained barely just afloat'.[230] Gabriel further outlines that Marx was dependent on money from Engels and from journalism to keep his family, wife Jenny and his six children, three of whom, Edgar, Henry 'Guido' and Jenny Eveline Franzisca, died.[231] The Marxes could not even afford to hire and undertaker for Jenny Eveline until a neighbour lent them two pounds.[232] The family's accommodation in Dean Street, London, is described by Wheen:

[228] Kamenka, *Portable Marx*, lxxxxi
[229] Terrell Foster Carver, *Friedrich Engels His Life and Thought*, (Macmillan Academic and Professional Ltd, 1989), 143.
[230] Mary Gabriel, *Love and Capital: Karl and Jenny Marx and the Birth of a Revolution*. Little, (Brown and Company, 2011), 298.
[231] Ibid, 167, 176.
[232] Wheen, *Karl Marx*, 177.

> His living conditions might have been expressly designed to keep him from lapsing into contentment. The furniture and fittings in the two-room apartment were all broken, tattered or torn, with a half-inch of dust over everything.[233]

Wheen writes that in 1852, as he wrote *Capital*, Marx had joked, 'I don't suppose anyone has ever written about money when so short of the stuff'.[234]

According to Green, in 1862 Marx stopped writing for the *New York Daily Tribune* for which he and Engels had provided 500 articles in the previous twelve years: all were published under Marx's name and often edited by Engels, with the editor and owner unaware.[235] Marx, Frow writes, managed to secure some work with *Die Presse*, a liberal paper published in Vienna, towards the end of the year,[236] while Guevera wrote, Marx tried, in early 1863, to find work at an English railway office but failed because his handwriting was so poor[237]. Indeed, Marx wrote in a letter in 1862:

> I lost my chief source of income, the *New York Tribune*, as a result of the American Civil War. My contributions to that paper have remained in abeyance up to the present. Thus, I have been and, still am, forced to undertake hackwork to prevent myself and my family from actually being relegated to the streets. I had even decided to become a "practical man" and had intended to enter a railway office at the beginning of next year. Luckily – or should I perhaps say unluckily – I did not get the post because of my bad handwriting.[238]

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[233] Ibid, 170.
[234] Wheen, *Karl Marx*, 234.
[235] Green, *Engels Revolutionary*, 301.
[236] Frow, *Marx in Manchester*, 22.
[237] Guevara, Bibliographical Introduction, 46.
[238] *Marx and Engels Collected Works, Volume 41*, 435.
https://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1862/letters/62_12_28.htm

By late 1862 Engels also declared himself 'very broke', according to Gabriel and faced his own financial difficulties calculating that if there were no end to the American Civil War his annual income would be greatly reduced to less than he sent to the Marx family.[239] He wrote to Marx, 'unless we can discover the art of shitting gold, there would hardly seem to be any alternative to your extracting something from your relations'.[240] Raddatz reveals that in early 1863 when Engels' partner Mary died suddenly at home in Manchester it led to a brief falling out between Marx and Engels when the former gave a 'frosty reaction' to the news of Mary's death.[241] Frow builds on the research adding that, in January 1863, 'on a day when there was no coal or food in the house, that Marx received a letter from Engels telling him that Mary had died'[242] and responded by listing his own problems which, Engels later explained, was hurtful and received an immediate apology from his comrade; Frow further suggests this quarrel made each of them aware of their mutual dependency'.[243] The friendship lasted till Marx's death and Engels gave the eulogy at his funeral. It is quoted in Foner's *Marx Remembered*:

> Marx was the best hated and most calumniated man of his time. Governments, both absolutist and republican, deported him from their territories. Bourgeois, whether conservative or ultra-democratic, vied with one another in heaping slanders upon him. All this he brushed aside as though it were a cobweb, ignoring it, answering only when extreme necessity compelled him. And he died beloved, revered and mourned by millions of revolutionary fellow workers -- from the mines of Siberia to California, in all parts of Europe and America -- and I make bold to say that, though he may have had many opponents, he had hardly one personal enemy. His name will endure through the ages and also will his work.[244]

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[239] Gabriel, *Love and Capital*, 83.
[240] Marx and Engels Collected Works, Volume 41, 403.
https://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1862/letters/62_08_08.htm
[241] Raddatz, *Correspondence*, 23.
[242] Frow, *Marx in Manchester*, 22.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Philip Foner, *Marx Remembered Comments at the Time of his Death, (Synthesis Publications, 1983)*, 40.

Manchester Legacy

Foner suggested that outside of London only the liberal *Manchester Guardian* carried anything on Marx's death[245] but the availability of British Newspaper Archives helps to unearth the conservative *Manchester Courier* reporting the death. The newspaper printed a brief obituary under the headline 'Funeral of Karl Marx', on page eight on March 20, 1883. It read in part:

> Karl Marx was buried at Highgate Cemetery on Saturday. His closest friend, Herr Engels, spoke under deep emotion, a few words over the grave where husband and wife now rest. He pointed out that Karl Marx was the Darwin of social and political thought, bringing to bear upon social and religious questions the great principles of evolution. His one aim had been the raising of the working class, and through them humanity as a whole.[246]

To this day the city has a remaining connection with both men, resulting in a newly established statue to Engels at First Street in the city centre. The artist who relocated the Soviet statue told the *Guardian*, 'Manchester is a meeting point. It represents both the birth of capitalism and the factory system and the magic of capitalism, the magic of surplus value. But Manchester is also a site of resistance to that – of the Chartists and the 1842 general strike and the suffragettes and the Vegetarian Society'.[247] The installation of the 12-foot statue coincided with the 1917 Russian Revolution centennial and was part of a day-long celebration funded in-part by Manchester City Council.[248] The statue did, though, meet with some controversy, and

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[245] Foner, *Marx Remembered,* 124.
[246] "Funeral of Karl Marx," *Manchester Courier*, March 20, 1883, 8.
[247] Charlotte Higgins, "Phil Collins: why I took a Soviet statue of Engels across Europe to Manchester," *Guardian*, June 30, 2017.
[248] Zephira Davis, "A communist icon toppled in Ukraine I restored. In England," *Independent*, August 18, 2017.

local historian Michael Herbert is quoted in a hyperlocal news website stating, ‘The whole project reeks of tourism and heritage, not politics and history and local journalist stated that the statue has also been put up on private land where if you tried to give away copies of *The Communist Manifesto* you would be stopped’.[249] The desk Marx and Engels shared at Chetham’s Library is considered a notable part of the venue’s history and a tourism draw.[250] Engels wrote to Marx about this, their favourite spot: ‘I have again spent a good deal of time sitting at the four-sided desk in the alcove where we sat together twenty four years ago. am very fond of the place. The stained glass window ensures that the weather is always fine there’.[251] Contemporary historians of the city[252] have acknowledged the significance of both men’s work while novelist McCrea was inspired by Engels’ relationship with Mary and Lizzie Burns. [253]

[249] Jonathan Schofield, “Jonathan Schofield examines complaints that the return of a dead German communist is a bad thing,” *Manchester Confidential*, July 24, 2017.
[250] Karl Marx’s desk, Chetham’s Library http://library.chethams.com/collections/101-treasures-of-chethams/karl-marxs-desk/
[251] Frow, *Marx in Manchester*, 7.
[252] Paul Morley, *The North, (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013)*; Dave Haslam, *Manchester, England,* (Fourth Estate, 1999).
[253] Gavin McCrea, *Mrs Engels*, (Scribe, 2015).

CHAPTER THREE: The Press

The scholarly interpretation of press histories and ideology.

This thesis argues that the political unconscious, the ideology of the news texts reporting the specific experience of poverty, is revealed in the copy, supporting the conclusion held by Curran, Seaton, Conboy, Barnhurst and Nerone[254] that traditional Whig historian interpretations are outdated, and research must recognise that capitalist systems of communications incorporate class structure and reproduce class power.[255] Further, it recognises that while notable contributors Brake and Brown, for example, provide reliable, traditional accounts of journalism history, with enthusiastic discussion of the exceptionally interesting news stories which developed the public taste for news,[256] suggesting journalists were making a record 'in much the same way as law makers or parliamentary reporters',[257] they do not consider ideological influence. Like Curran and Seaton[258] this thesis asserts that there is an assumption that the media in the mid nineteenth-century became a voice of the people when it was, in fact, often a conduit of power; it accepts that historical accounts of the press have given rise to an incomplete understanding of the historical role of the media.[259] It challenges this liberal interpretation of media history, that the media was democratised and strengthened as it became independent, that it celebrated a 'free press', and empowered

[254] James Curran, James and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility. The Press and Broadcasting in Britain*. (Routledge, 1991), Martin Conboy, *A Critical History*, (Sage, 2004).
[255] Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone, "Journalism History," in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, edited by Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch, (Routledge, 2009), 22.
[256] Lucy Brown, *Victorian news and newspapers*, (Clarendon Press, 1985), 94.
[257] Ibid, 103.
[258] Curran and Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility The Press and Broadcasting in Britain (Routledge, 1991)*, 7-84.
[259] Ibid.

citizens.[260] Further, this thesis looks to historians such as Temple who asserts that the Victorian era of the press is characterized by abundant variety while recognising that diversity was constrained by strict political limitations.[261] It also intends to further consider and illuminate the often overlooked links between media development, ownership and wider trends in society,[262] as with Jameson and nineteenth-century fiction. This is intended to be done by studying both content and organisation in looking from the historical make-up of the newspaper, to the individual text, to the wider development. As such, while Royle in stating that news stories were written with a mixture of motives, including 'a desire to speak the truth … or to campaign for a right cause'[263] has some bearing in this thesis, such conclusions are treated with some caution. Victorian newspapers are recognised instead as vehicles of propaganda for political parties, and individual politicians with partisanship becoming a dominant characteristic, as asserted by Griffiths,[264] recognising the editor was the nucleus of the Victorian world, leading cultural and technological transformation while also protecting the status quo, as acknowledged by Wiener.[265] Brown's interpretation of Victorian journalism as personified by editors as leading figures, political activists in pressure groups and parties, who used journalism to gain political office or a seat in Parliament is acknowledged as part of each newspaper's political foundation.[266] As such, traditional analysis is considered but while recognising the

[260] Curran and Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, 32.
[261] Mick Temple, *The British Press*, (Open University Press, 2008), 63.
[262] Curran and Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, 1991.
[263] Edward Royle, "Newspapers and Periodicals in Historical Research," In *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, Edited by Brake, Laurel and Jones, Aled Gruffydd and Madden, Lionel, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), 51.
[264] D Griffiths, *The Encyclopaedia of the British Press, 1422-1992*, (Macmillan, 1992, 35.
[265] Joel H Wiener, *The Americanization of the British Press, 1830s – 1914*, (Palgrave, 2011), 13.
[266] Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers*, (Clarendon Press, 1985), 65.

charges of revisionism as put by Curran and Seaton.[267] The practical and political approach of Victorian newspapers, then, is found in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden's *Investigation Victorian Journalism,* and Lucy Brown's *Victorian News and Newspapers* with some challenges to their conclusions from James Curran and Jean Seaton in *Power without Responsibility*, in Mick Temple's *The British Press* and in Martin Hewitt's *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832–67.* Newspaper histories are approached similarly, with a recognition of ideology not being considered but that the works provide invaluable facts and figures. These are considered while acknowledging and accepting Carey's assertion that such studies and biographies executed within the frame of Whig interpretations of history, as a representation of an inevitable march towards press freedom in the Victorian era and beyond,[268] are exhausted[269] and that 'history written against the background of the Whig interpretation would not be wrong—just redundant'.[270] Much of this history is sourced from David Ayerst's *Guardian Biography of a Newspaper*, Alan J Lee's *The Origins of the Popular Press 1855-1914;* and to a lesser extent Bob Clarke's *From Grub Street to Fleet Street an Illustrated History of English Newspapers to 1899.* Biographies of editors, journalists and further history of the newspapers are sourced from Dennis Griffiths' *The Encyclopaedia of the British Press.* Finally, in considering Victorian journalism as form, which is still given scant consideration, this thesis looks briefly to Marcel Broersma's *Form, Style and Journalistic*

[267] Curran and Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, 55.
[268] Ibid, 7.
[269] James Carey, "The Problem of Journalism History," in *The Problem of Journalism History A Critical Reader*, Edited by Eve Stryker Munson and Catherine A Warren, (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 86-94.
[270] Carey, *Problem of Journalism History*, 88.

Strategy[271] and Dallas Liddle's *The Dynamics of Genre Journalism the Practice of Literature in Mid Victorian Britain* in recognising, respectively, that form and style have not received the attention deserved in media history[272] and that the understanding of 'its genres, conventions assumptions, influences and implicit values has hardly begun'.[273]

Newspaper Histories

Manchester Courier

The *Manchester Courier* was a Conservative paper founded on January 1st, 1825, first printed and published by brothers James and Thomas Sowler, and intended as direct opposition to the *Manchester Guardian.*[274] The first paper was sold at seven pence and consisted of a four page sheet, the front page carried advertisements, with one column devoted to an announcement of a volume, *The Literary Souvenir,* by Alaric A. Watts, who was a member of the *Courier* staff.[275] It is described by Cranfield as having a 'Tory paternalistic spirit [and] was founded with the explicit intention of fighting the middle class reform paper' but that it did not expect many working class readers.[276] Thomas Sowler remained in charge until his death.[277] It was described by Escott, a contemporary historian, as 'less as a business speculation than

[271] Marcel Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategy An Introduction," In *European Newspapers and the Representation of News 1880-2005*, edited by Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA, (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change, 2007), ix-xxix.
[272] Broersma, *Form*, x.
[273] Dallas Liddle, *The Dynamics of Genre: Journalism and the Practice of Literature in Mid-Victorian Britain*, (University of Virginia Press, 2009), 2.
[274] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 525.
[275] T Swindells, *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*, (Harding Press, 1901), 107.
[276] G A Cranfield, The *Press and Society from Caxton to Northcliffe, (Pearson Education, 1978)*, 193.
[277] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 525, 587.

because, honest and ardent Conservatives, [had] a mission to stem the torrent of subversive thought and democratic writing then poured forth from so many sources in their native county'.[278] As such, Ayerst suggests, the *Manchester Courier* remained the *Manchester Guardian's* main conservative rival for 90 years.[279] The rivalry between the *Manchester Courier* and the *Manchester Guardian* was such that on March 30, 1840, *The London Standard* reported a court case following a fight between Jeremiah Garnett and Thomas Sowler and his son Robert which took place in St Ann's Square.[280] It was reported that Sowler had described Garnett, the then editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, as a blockhead, a defender of national infidelity and a person of a degraded standard of morality, after he himself been accused of insulting the Queen. Garnett described Sowler's explanation as 'a crawling, cowardly lie that would not be believed if he swore it a thousand times'.[281] The *London Evening Standard* report acknowledged the political rivalry:

> It appeared that the two newspapers advocated different politics, the *Courier* being for the Tory interest, and the politics of the *Guardian* on the Whig side, and that for a long time subsequent to the alleged assault various violent leading articles had appeared in both of them, indulging in violent language in respect of the views and principles of the opponent.[282]

The *Manchester Courier* later printed the court case under the headline' Affair of Honour: Joint Editor of the Guardian publicly horsewhipped', while the *Manchester Guardian* carried the

[278] T H S Escott, *Masters of English Journalism a study of personal forces*, 296. https://archive.org/details/mastersofenglish00escouoft Accessed: January 13, 2017.
[279] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 57.
[280] Swindells, *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*, 224.
[281] "The Queen vs Sowler and Another," *London Evening Standard*, March 30, 1840, 4.
[282] Ibid.

headline 'The Queen and the *Manchester Courier*'.[283] Thomas Sowell and Robert Scarr Sowler were sentenced and told, 'this is not the way in which the law allows newspaper editors to settle their quarrels […] you be severally imprisoned in a gaol of the county for the space of three months, and that at the expiration of that imprisonment you severally find security to keep the peace for two years'.[284] The proprietors had made the *Manchester Courier's* political positions clear from the outset describing themselves on its launch as 'advocates of Church and State … friends of the social order' as well as Tory and anti-Catholic.[285] The first edition described Catholic emancipation leader Daniel O'Connell, who was calling for the right of Catholics to become MPs as a 'noisy zealot, and the newspaper, Busteed posits, 'took every opportunity to denigrate the tactics of emancipation supporters'.[286] It re-asserted its anti-Roman Catholic stance in an editorial 25 years later:

> From the opinions we expressed on New Year's Day in 1825, we have not swerved a hair's breadth […] In our opening line we said this: 'A provincial newspaper may be expected to indulge sparingly as possible in religious controversy; but the politics of the Roman Catholics are now inseparably connected with their religious sentiments, and their language and conduct […] that it becomes a moral duty for every public writer whose religious sentiments are consonant with our own, to avow himself the champion of the Protestant Church of England, and lend his aid towards exposing the fallacies and detecting the monstrous sentiments of his Popish assailants.[287]

This has particular relevance because the newspaper was in Manchester, a city with a large Irish migrant population working as cotton operatives. Busteed reveals it continued to express little

[283] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 67.
[284] *London Evening Standard*, March 30, 1840, 4.
[285] Mervyn Busteed, *The Irish in Manchester c. 1750-1921: Resistance, adaptation and identity.* Manchester University Press, 2016, 91.
[286] Ibid, 91.
[287] "To the Readers of the Courier," *Manchester Courier*, January 4, 1851, 7.

compassion for the Irish in the city after the flooding of an area called Little Ireland, in May 1847, publishing:

> Amidst the danger that was prevalent for a time, some scenes occurred that were not altogether devoid of the comic. We need hardly inform our readers in this poor wretched locality, inhabited almost exclusively by the Irish, there is no scarcity of pigs, and it was not without considerable difficulty and sometimes merriment that some of the grunters were moved to dry land.[288]

Thomas Sowler Jr took ownership after his father's death, having joined the paper as a young man, working with his brother John.[289] Like his father before him, he was a staunch Conservative, who stood and lost as Party candidate in South Manchester in 1886.[290] In 1890, after a long career as a reporter, he was knighted for services to journalism.[291] Robert Sowler, brother of Thomas and John, worked as a reporter on the paper, and was its editor from 1842 until 1857.[292] He was Deputy Judge and Chairman of the Conservative Association and became Queen's Counsel in 1866.[293] A year later Sowler was counsel for the prosecution of Fenians known as the Manchester Martyrs when a police-van was stopped and broken into freeing prisoners Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasey and the policeman in charge (Sergeant Brett) was shot,[294] arguably further highlighting the anti-Catholic stance. He wrote articles for the

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[288] Mervyn Busteed, *The Irish in Manchester c. 1750-1921: Resistance, adaptation and identity.* Manchester University Press, 2016, 31.
[289] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 525.
[290] "Manchester Worthies," Sir Thomas Sowler, MLFHS, http://www.mlfhs.org.uk/worthies/sowler.php
[291] "Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser," British Newspaper Archives, https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/titles/manchester-courier-and-lancashire-general-advertiser
[292] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 525.
[293] David F Roberts, "Still More Early Victorian Editors." *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, No 18, 5, (December, 1972), 21.
[294] William A Axon, *The annals of Manchester: a chronological record from the earliest time to the end of 1855*, (Heywood Deansgate and Ridgefield, 1886), 327. https://archive.org/details/annalsmancheste01axongoog

Manchester Courier for 18 years 'which allowed time for the cementing of many close political friendships'.[295] He is described in the *Annals of Manchester* as being very active in political controversies in the North of England.[296]

Read argued that the newspaper's determined political stance did more good than harm because, while the newspaper sold less than the *Manchester Guardian* and to a 'decidedly middle and upper class' readership, 'the gentry of south Lancashire were probably among its most numerous subscribers' and it was to be 'the Tory answer to the *Manchester Guardian*'.[297]

Manchester Guardian

The modern *Guardian* describes its original founder and owner, John Edward Taylor, as 'a reformer and religious nonconformist [who] had written the first eyewitness account of Peterloo and wanted to see a new paper committed to political change and truthful reporting'.[298] Peterloo of August 1819 is described by Robert Poole in *By the Law or the Sword: Peterloo Revisited* as 'one of the defining events of its age' when 'people seeking parliamentary reform were violently dispersed by troops under the authority of local magistrates'.[299] Taylor was a wealthy cotton merchant and, with a £1,000 start-up fund from a dozen subscribers, alongside Jeremiah Garnett, formerly of the Tory *Manchester Courier*, and contributors Archibald Prentice and John Shuttleworth it was launched on May 5, 1821.[300] The *Manchester*

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[295] David F Roberts, *Still More Early Victorian Editors*, 21.
[296] William A Axon, *The annals of Manchester: a chronological record from the earliest time to the end of 1855*, 327.
[297] Donald Read, *Press and People* 1790-1850, Opinion in Three English Cities, (Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd, 1961), 105, 106.
[298] "In the wake of Peterloo, the Manchester prospectus 1821," *Guardian*, November 15, 2017.
[299] Robert Poole, "By the Law or the Sword: Peterloo Revisited," *History*, Vol 91, No. 2, April 2006, 254.
[300] Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism,* (The British Library Publishing Division, 2009), 394..

Guardian, its modern form suggests, was launched 'after the government attempted to censor accounts of the Peterloo Massacre and a group of Manchester Dissenters'.[301] This account is disputed. It is argued by Ayerst that Taylor intended, in fact, to undermine the working class leaders of reform, of whom he wrote for the *Manchester Gazette*:

> […] They have appealed not to the reason but the passions and the suffering of their abused and credulous fellow-countrymen, from whose ill-requited industry they extort for themselves the means of a plentiful and comfortable existence. They do not toil, neither do they spin, but the live better than those that do.[302]

Further, it is pointed out that Taylor had previously avoided use of the word Peterloo and Massacre but instead referred to the event as a tragedy.[303] The *Manchester Guardian* was to be among the six papers already in the city appealing to 'the class to whom, more especially, advertisements are generally addressed',[304] meaning those with money.

It is further posited that Taylor had been advised to launch the newspaper after a court case. Taylor, a former apprentice to a local cotton manufacturer, was a writer for the *Manchester Gazette,* where he was working when found not guilty of criminal libel after he responded to accusations that he had caused a fire at the Manchester Exchange by calling his accuser a 'liar, scoundrel and a slanderer' in the pages of the *Gazette*. Griffiths posits that on the journey home a supporter suggested he set up a newspaper.[305] The proprietors presented the *Manchester Guardian* as 'a weekly paper that would support liberal causes and provide complete, accurate news coverage for a local market'.[306]

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[301] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary*, 394.
[302] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 20.
[303] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 19.
[304] "In the wake of Peterloo, the Manchester prospectus 1821," *Guardian*, November 15, 2017.
[305] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 553.
[306] Ibid, 394.

It began as a bi-weekly, reaching a daily readership of 23,000 in 1858 which rose to 43,000 by the end of the century.[307] It was priced at 7p, 4d of which was in tax in 1821, and became a 1d daily by 1857.[308] The intention was put to provide 'the liberal with a means to counteract the dominant Tory tone of the local press[309] and Ayerst posits that, from the start, it was a political paper and that was its owner's sole interest.[310] It carried more commercial advertisements than its more radical rivals and was, Royle suggests, aimed toward a financially poorer market[311] but the cost with Stamp Duty priced out working class readers. Clarke suggests it took readers from *The Times*, post repeal, as northern readers began to switch.[312] It was less radical in its politics than its rivals in, for example, not supporting the strikes of 1820-1821, nevertheless, it is posited by Brake and Demoor, 'its reporting of them was far more even-handed than that of the London press'.[313] Its success angered Tories as much as its Radical rivals and is described by Clarke as 'a firm advocate of electoral, educational and municipal reforms'.[314] Taylor arguably saw the *Manchester Guardian* as a response to a domination of Tory newspapers but also saw potential for profit in the changing city of Manchester, as revealed in his writing:

> […] a great change in the manner in which much of the business of Manchester is conducted. We were formerly a community of manufacturers; we have now […] become also a community of merchants and with a serious, world-wide interest in raw materials and in the products of countries which bought from Britain.[315]

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[307] Brown, *Victorian Newspapers*, 97.
[308] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary*, 394.
[309] Martin Hewitt, Dawn of the *Cheap Press in Victorian Britain The End of the Taxes on Knowledge 1849-1896, (Bloomsbury, 2014),* 70.
[310] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 27.
[311] Edward Royle, "Newspapers and Periodicals in Historical Research," In *Investigating Victorian Journalism*. Edited by Brake, Laurel and Jones, Aled Gruffydd and Madden, Lionel, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), 53.
[312] Clarke, *Grub Street*, 266.
[313] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary*, 394.
[314] Clarke, *Grub Street*, 148.
[315] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 41.

Historians have posited that the paper's 'financial strength derived from its indispensability as a commercial organ of the cotton trade'.[316] Significantly, its readers are described by Brake and Demoor, as 'prosperous Manchester merchants who did not necessarily agree with its progressive politics, which led to a rightward shift'.[317] It was described in radical *Reynold's Weekly Newspaper*[318] as 'the principal organ of the manufacturing and commercial classes […] in politics it sides with the liberal party, and it is likewise a spirited advocate for public improvements'.[319] It is further described by Clarke as 'the organ of the Northern cotton manufacturers, the voice of hard-faced Manchester economic liberalism supporting the Poor Law, campaigning against the ten-hour day […] and siding with the bosses against striking workers'.[320] Its position, however, was considered by the Whiggish Manchester liberals to be too extreme and it was also disliked by Radical John Bright, who declared that it represented 'the wealthy, moderate Liberals who thought of themselves as the town's natural governing elite'.[321] Some insight into the newspaper's discomfort with radical politics was revealed in 1859 when the *Manchester Guardian* described public meetings as 'always a nuisance and generally a farce and, as a result, a valuable organ of public opinion is mutilated, silenced or falsified'[322] and within a year stated 'public meetings often represent nothing more than the determination and activity of a small minority advocating unpopular opinions'.[323]

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[316] Boyce, Curran, Wingate, *Newspaper History*, 119.
[317] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary*, 394.
[318] Reynold's Weekly Newspaper is itself described as 'a very successful Sunday newspaper, especially in the North of England, with a radical working class approach combined with sensationalism.' https://www.brad.ac.uk/library/special-collections/collections/reynolds-news/
[319] Cranfield, *Press and Society*, 201.
[320] Bob Clarke, *From Fleet Street to Grub Street. An illustrated history of English newspapers from 1899*, (Revel Barker Publishing, 2010), 148.
[321] Denis G Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England*, (Stanford University Press, 1992), 209.
[322] Martin Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832–67, (*Scolar Press, 1996), 290.
[323] Ibid, 290.

Unsurprisingly, its rivals, political and commercial, commented on its approach and content. By 1836 George Condy, the editor of the radical *Manchester and Salford Advertiser*, described the *Manchester Guardian* as 'the common heap in which every purse-proud booby shoots his basket of dirt and falsehood … foul prostitute and dirty parasite of the worst of the mill-owners'.[324]

John Edward Taylor Jr took control of the paper in 1861, having started as a trainee sub-editor in 1848, and, Griffiths asserts, returned it to its radical roots with investigations into social problems and its advocacy of the Parliamentary Reform Act.[325] The *Manchester Guardian* had a London office by the late 1860s, in the neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament, before later dropping Manchester from the title and a move to Fleet Street just before the First World War.[326]

Manchester Examiner and Times

The *Manchester Examiner and Weekly Times* was founded as a Saturday paper in July 1824 but has a history of mergers. It began life as the *Manchester Gazette*, edited by Archibald Prentice who had purchased *Cowdroy's Gazette* which as a business venture had failed badly.[327] The first years proved difficult, so the paper merged, becoming the *Manchester Times* in 1828.[328] Prentice, who is said to have retained the confidence of his political friends, was editor.[329] To set up the newspaper, Prentice paid £800 for the copyright and printing materials,

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[324] Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *Social History of the Media from Gutenburg to the Internet,* (Polity Press, 2009), 91.
[325] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 554, Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary*, 394.
[326] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 281.
[327] Swindells, *Manchester Men*, 53, Read, *Press and People*, 88.
[328] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 471.
[329] Read, *Press and People*, 88.

promised a further £100 annual sum for eight years and paid £300 for a new printing press.[330] The *Manchester Times* was sold in 1847 to Henry Rawson and, the following year, was amalgamated with the *Manchester Examiner*, which had been founded in 1846 with the backing of John Bright, Dr McKerrow and Edward Watkins.[331] Like the *Manchester Courier*, the *Manchester Examiner and Times* created immediate and specific competition aimed at the *Manchester Guardian*.[332] The *Manchester Guardian* and the *Manchester Examiner* were published almost next door to one another, from where, Ayerst suggested, it 'must have been easy to keep an eye on each other's purely local sales'.[333] Sales were not competing well with the *Manchester Guardian* outside the city. Prentice is described by Cranfield as an editor who angered the manufacturers but failed to appeal to the working classes, was critical of the poor law but did not support noisy agitation, and took the middle position over the ten-hour bill refusing to believe masters made slaves of factory children.[334] Read describes Prentice's manner as too pedagogic to appeal to many readers and, when addressing the working-classes, Prentice's tone often became decidedly patronising.[335] Prentice, however, wrote in his memoirs: 'I was often told that it would be more to my interest if I made *Manchester Times* more of a newspaper. It mattered not. If journalism was not to effect public good, it was not employment for me'.[336] The new *Manchester Examiner and Times* was edited by A W Paulton until 1854 when Henry Dunckley, a former Baptist minister, took the post.[337] This version is

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[330] Ibid.
[331] Swindells, *Manchester Men*, 53, 90.
[332] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 100.
[333] Ibid, 129.
[334] Cranfield, *Press and Society*, 191, 197.
[335] Read, *Press and People*, 89.
[336] Cranfield, *Press and Society*, 191.
[337] Swindells, *Manchester Men*, 53.

suggested to have proved to be ‘the great local rival of the *Manchester Guardian* during the mid-Victorian period’[338] a position supported by the recorded sales. Business manager, Peter Allen, Edward Taylor’s brother-in-law, began to suspect that the *Manchester Guardian* was ‘seriously outsold’ beyond the city with, by 1857, the *Manchester Examiner and Times* print estimated at 18,000 to 20,000.[339] Supporter John Bright MP said of the situation:

> At Manchester the *Manchester Examiner and Times* stole a march on the *Manchester Guardian* […] ‘*The Examiner* … beats the *Guardian* hollow’, noted John Bright, and ‘it is in fact the only great organ now in the Manchester district’.[340]

Editor Dunckley, who had previously won first prize of £250 in an Anti-Corn League competition for his essay on the conditions of the working class, remained editor for more than 30 years.[341] It was suggested that the ‘provincial press could not show a better representative of its rugged strength than Henry Dunckley’.[342] The newspaper itself asserted:

> A newspaper enters upon certain relations with its readers, who adhere to it in the faith that it will steadily advocate defined and recognised principles … no newspaper has any right or privilege suddenly to outrage the sympathies of its readers, by advocating the contrary to-day of that which yesterday it pronounced to be essential to the well-being of the community.[343]

A Saturday issue of the *Manchester Examiner and Times* named the *Manchester Examiner and Weekly Times* was launched and ‘allowed the paper to develop a significant regional circulation amongst […] the better class of tradespeople and mechanics’.[344] Throughout the 1860s the

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[338] Read, *Press and People*, 88.
[339] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 129.
[340] Hewitt, *Dawn of the Cheap Press,* 103.
[341] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 212.
[342] Escott, *Masters of Journalism*, 295.
[343] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 101.
[344] Hewitt, *Cheap Press*, 103.

Examiner remained a party paper with wealthy backers and, in 1888, both the *Manchester Examiner* and the *Manchester Examiner and Weekly Times* were sold to local Liberal Unionists.[345]

The provincial press and the working class

The power, politics, commercial nature and legislation of the press must be considered in debating the political unconscious around its reporting of poverty and protest. The years 1860 to 1890 have been defined as the Golden Age of the British Press when it became 'the most important single medium of communication of ideas marked by professionalization'[346] with it further posited that news as we understand it now define as a creation of the nineteenth-century.[347] The mid-Victorian English press is often characterized as being of abundant variety, in subject matter and political allegiance, with Victorian politics playing a key part but constrained by strict political limitations.[348] This important medium for communicating ideas, playing a key part in politics, shaped society's understanding of the Cotton Crisis.

Lee posits that only steam railway was a rival to the Victorian estimation of progress in civilisation,[349] after the telegraph which first used for railway signalling before transmitting its first news in 1844.[350] The telegraph quickly became extensive enough by 1847 to be of real help to newspapers, according to Ayerst.[351] It could help gather international news of the American

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[345] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 212.
[346] Alan Lee, *Origins of the Popular Press 1855-1914, (Croom Helm, 1976)*, 18.
[347] Brown, *Victorian News*, 1.
[348] Brake, *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, 63.
[349] Lee, *Origins of the Popular Press*, 21.
[350] Mick Temple, *The British Press*, (Open University, 2008), 24.
[351] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 98.

Civil War and provide opportunities for the world to be informed of the Lancashire Cotton Crisis, although the *Manchester Guardian* is described by Ayerst as 'barely worth reading for its American news – the *Examiner* was better – but its views deserving of attention'.[352] Marx and Engels, at least, found the *Manchester Guardian's* foreign correspondence well worthwhile as a source for their weekly articles for the *New York Daily* T*ribune*'.[353] As Jameson recognised with the technological development of the novel in the nineteenth-century, it is posited by Temple that technology impacted on journalistic form too with readers increasingly unwilling to 'wade through columns of material to get to the nub of the story[354], with the further suggestion that the now familiar inverted pyramid came into use during the American Civil War 'as reporters rushed to transmit their most newsworthy copy over often unreliable telegraph lines'.[355] Significantly, it is further posited by Chalaby that the growth in the notion of journalistic objectivity arose from increased competition because it allowed editors to 'accommodate a politically eclectic audience'.[356]

The repeal of advertisement tax and stamp duty were among the legislative changes to influence newspaper readership and commercialism. Prior to this, newspapers were offered in coffee houses, public houses and libraries for the readers who did not or could not purchase their own newspapers. It is recorded that subscribers would join forces to fund reading rooms,

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[352] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 152.
[353] Ibid, 120.
[354] Temple, *British Press*, 24.
[355] David B Sachsman, David B and S Kittrell Rushing, *The Civil War and the Press*, (Transaction Publishers, 2000) 181. This is first attributed to Bradley S Osbon writing about Fort Sumter to produce 'a logical narrative account in measured cadence and prose' although the development of the pyramid at this time has been challenged as not revealed in the journalistic writing Osbon produced or in the newspapers he wrote for at the time.
[356] Chalaby, *Invention of Journalism*, 136.

paying one guinea a week for the provision of reading material.[357] The Manchester Coffee and Newspaper Room was one such endeavour and, in the 1830s, advertised itself as:

> The Establishment affords advantages never before offered to the Manchester Public, combining Economy, Health, Temperance and Instruction, in having a wholesome and exhilarating beverage at a small expense, instead of the noxious and intoxicating stuff supplied at the Ale-House or the Dram-shop, together with the privilege of perusing the most able and popular publications of the day, whether political, literary, or scientific, in a comfortable and genteel apartment, in the evening brilliantly lit by gas.[358]

This particular Coffee and Newspaper Room took the *Manchester Guardian*, *Manchester Courier* and the then *Manchester Times* among its broad selection of ninety six daily and weekly titles, charging one penny for entry[359] but the appeal, Cranfield posits, was 'aimed squarely at a middle class audience'[360] and the cotton workers could not afford coffee-houses and would instead 'find an adequate supply of (so far) unstamped newspapers at the Ale-house or Dram-shop'.[361] Abel Heywood, later Mayor of Manchester during the Cotton Crisis, also founded penny reading rooms in the 1830s for, according to Wiener, educative purposes and to accelerate the distribution of illegal periodicals.[362] The unstamped papers found in the ale-house or dram-shop were illegal but various titles emerged such as *The Poor Man's Guardian*, described by Himmelfarb as 'the unofficial house organ of the National Union of the Working Classes' with a title which was 'an ironic play on the "guardians" who administered the poor law', and which was read aloud at coffee houses, in public houses and reading rooms, meaning

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[357] Rachel Matthews, *The History of the Provincial Press in England,* (Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2017), 63.
[358] Cranfield, *Press and Society*, 193.
[359] Swindells, *Manchester Men*, 105.
[360] Cranfield, *Press and Society*, 193.
[361] Ibid.
[362] Joel H Wiener, *The War of the Unstamped The Movement to Repeal the British Newspaper To 1830-1836*, (Cornell University Press, 1969), 205.

its readership was 'considerably larger than its sales'.[363] Sustaining unstamped newspapers was costly meaning such ventures remained unaffordable to the working class; papers such as *The Beehive*, a trade union publication, is described as having been crippled by inadequate funding and forced to sell at double the price of the large-circulation weeklies it had been intended to compete against.[364] The unstamped press, Temple argues, was seen as the radical press which 'encouraged the growing trade union movement, providing masses of material for political education' and 'giving workers a common class identity' so were 'feared by government and the ruling classes'.[365] Wiener posits that Manchester and surrounding areas are recorded to have 'purchased consistently about 10 per cent of the total number of illegal journals' and that this 'reflected the pronounced class consciousness of the Lancashire districts. [366] Further, since the impetus behind illicit journalism was primarily working-class, it derived much of its support from those regions in which class antagonisms flourished'.[367] Alternatively, it is argued by Himmelfarb that, overall, 'the illegal nature of the enterprise itself was an invitation to radicalism'.[368] Indeed, Temple writes that *The Poor Man's Guardian* publisher Henry Hetherington was frequently imprisoned.[369] Himmelfarb further posits that the 'unstamped papers came to reflect the entire spectrum of political thought' and creating a publishing and distribution organisation which was itself 'something like a radical movement', and, as such,

[363] Himmelfarb, The *Idea of Poverty*, (Knopf, 1983), 233.
[364] Curran and Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, 37.
[365] Temple, *British Press*, 17.
[366] Wiener, *The War of the Unstamped*, 185.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Himmelfarb, *Idea of Poverty*, 232.
[369] Temple, *British Press*, 16.

‘the simple fact of the cheapness of the papers had an unwitting political effect’ in acquiring a readership which was ‘largely but not exclusively working class’.[370]

Griffiths notes that in 1850, MP Richard Cobden introduced resolutions in the House of Commons calling for the repeal of advertisement tax and stamp duty on papers, making newspapers more affordable to the working class, stating:

> So long as the penny [tax] lasts there can be no daily press for the middle or working class. Who below the rank of merchant or wholesale dealer can afford to take in a daily paper at five pence? The governing classes will resist the removal of the penny stamp, not on account of the loss of revenue – that is no obstacle with a surplus of two or three millions – but because they know that the stamp duty makes the daily press the instrument and servant of the oligarchy’.[371]

The campaign to challenge taxation, presented as ending the exclusion of the working class from accessing newspapers, lasted five years.

Legislative changes

The presentation of the campaign to end Stamp Duty had some value but the reality for the working class and the political position of the newspapers needs to be considered. Chalaby reveals that taxes and duties on newspapers were first raised in 1712 and intended ‘to make pamphlets and newspapers too expensive for a large majority of people’.[372] Stamp Duty by 1855 was 7d, so arguably putting the cost of purchase out of the reach of the majority.[373]

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[370] Himmelfarb, *Idea of Poverty*, 232.
[371] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 93.
[372] Chalaby, *Invention*, 9.
[373] Temple, *British Press*, 17.

The attitudes of politicians towards newspapers were split. According to Matthews, Conservatives who 'deplored what they saw as a dissimulating industry which had the power to challenge the establishment' argued that 'Stamp Duty meant they were in the hands of respectable men because of the amount of capital needed to own one' while liberals, who led the campaign for repeal, argued that the effect of taxation was 'to curtail the freedom of the press.[374] The abolition of Stamp Duty campaign was led by radical Liberals Richard Cobden and John Bright: Cobden is described by Foner as an English free trader, merchant and leading Manchester liberal who had supported the Anti Corn League fight to repeal the tariff on wheat, with his support for the North during the Civil War earning him respect in the United States.[375] Foner outlines that Bright as having given speeches against the Corn Laws and, advocating laissez-faire, and became a spokesman for the newly enfranchised industrial middle classes.[376] Significantly, Bright was a founding owner of the *Manchester Examiner*, inspired, Cash asserts, 'for reasons of freedom of trade and their aversion to monopoly, but also wanting direct contact with the masses'.[377]

It is posited by Score in her analysis of campaigning journalism that the coverage of the tax repeal campaigns in the liberal *Manchester Guardian* was a combination of self-interest and a reflection of fears that removal would usher in cheaper, more scurrilous competition.[378] It is suggested further by Chalaby that it sparked the start of the move towards being apolitical and

[374] Matthews, *Provincial Press*, 62.
[375] Foner, *British Labor*, 119.
[376]Foner, *British Labor*, 118.
[377] Bob Cash, *John Bright Statesman, Orator, Agitator*, (IB Tauris, 2012), 89.
[378] Score, *Campaigning journalism in Britain*, 284.

newspapers ceasing to be the mouthpiece of a political party, a situation argued to be firmly established by the 1880s.[379]

Commercial success was had. Outside London, new newspapers were launched. Manchester saw five new daily titles followed by several weeklies. The *Manchester Examiner and Times* was selling 15,000 copies, limited only by printing capacity. 'What a shove we have given the slow coaches on the newspaper road', John Bright, its part-owner, declared,' according to Hewitt.[380] A post-repeal surge in titles extended across Britain, Hewitt posits, with, by 1861, 137 newspapers in 123 towns where previously there had been no newspaper at all.[381] Recent research by Matthews reveals the *Manchester Guardian* profits rose from £6,777 in 1884 to £20,000 in 1865, publishers sought to establish a foothold in the city, seeing it as an increasingly lucrative but competitive market.[382]

Stamp Duty repeal arguably represented an attempt to drive the politically disruptive pauper press and street literature out of existence, according to Vernon.[383] The cause itself, Jones argues, was collectively stigmatized in bourgeois, laissez-faire, and plebeian radical politics, and that it became a cause *célèbres* within reforming circles, where opinion was increasingly in favour of freeing commercial activity from fiscal control.[384] At the same time, as a result of increasingly stiff competition, Chalaby posits that newspaper owners were forced to keep up with technological progress and invest in new machinery.[385] As cover prices fell,

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[379] Chalaby, *Invention*, 130.
[380] Hewitt, *Cheap Press*, 101.
[381] Ibid, 103.
[382] Matthews, *Provincial Press*, 69.
[383] James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture 1815-1867*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993) 142.
[384] Chris Williams, *Companion to Nineteenth Century Britain*, (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 374.
[385] Chalaby, *Invention*, 43.

advertising rose and the cost of machinery became an increasing necessity. As a result, it is argued by Lee, while some radical papers remained, the unstamped and Chartist papers had almost disappeared by the 1860s, unable to attract advertising or to afford the machinery. [386] Further competition came from telegraph companies. Three major companies, the Magnetic, the Electric and the United Kingdom, combined to form the Intelligence Unit offering telegraph package deals and raising their charges for newspapers keen to provide national and international news.[387] Further, advertisers wanted a prosperous audience, Temple asserts, and while radical newspapers boasted a large circulation, they had poor readers meaning they had to become less political to appeal to advertisers or close down due to a lack of income.[388] As such, Temple suggests, while it as suggested that 'on an even playing field the radical press would flourish. […] From the mid-Victorian era a new target audience was identified in the prosperous lower middle classes and growing industrial bourgeoisie'.[389] This supports Griffiths' assertion that, while the stamp duty repeal had intended to stop 'the daily press [being] the instrument and servant of the oligarchy,' it had reaffirmed assumptions about the poor, contributing to a lack of challenge to the status quo. [390] The press, rather than extending its reach to the working class was increasingly aimed at a middle class audience, in whom its advertisers had an interest, and who could provide an income to ensure maintaining sales, technology purchases and political power.

[386] Lee, *Origins of Popular Press*, 38.
[387] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 105.
[388] Temple, *British Press*, 18.
[389] Ibid, 23.
[390] Griffiths, *Encyclopaedia*, 93.

The political landscape in Manchester

There is no doubt that Manchester in the mid nineteenth-century was a city of political and commercial significance. The 1842 creation of the London-Birmingham-Manchester railway had made it the major provincial hub from which London could reach the north[391] and the city is described by Briggs as more than a 'metropolis of manufacturers; it was above all a centre of trade of a whole region, linked to the world'.[392] Manchester is also argued, by Brake and Demoor, to have emerged as England's second city for print culture, with imprints of books and periodicals, including newspapers, journals and magazines, far in excess of other provincial cities but was due to it being a provincial hub where 'Manchester's importance in the newspaper trade lies less in terms of manufacturing and production than in wholesale and distribution'.[393] Briggs argues that Manchester also became the focus of worldwide attention in the 1830s and 1840s because it was fashionable to write about society, because of the economic depression and the political movements of the Chartists and Anti-Corn League.[394] During Whig statesman Liberal Viscount Palmerston's Prime Ministerial years (1859-1865), a man described by Foner as being 'known for his belligerent attitude to foreign policy',[395] Manchester was a Liberal city where profits were being made from increasing industrialization. Liberalism in Manchester took a particular shape which, Messinger wrote:

> […] connected Manchester with the doctrine first crystallised in the French Revolution, and supported by the rising business class, which advocated opposition to the arbitrary imposition of government controls in politics and the market place […] Economically it called for the removal of economic favouritism of the type the Anti-Corn League had battled

[391] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary,* 395.
[392] Briggs, *Social History of the Media*, 96.
[393] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary*, 395.
[394] Briggs, *Social History*, 96, 118.
[395] Foner, *British Labor*, 125.

> for and it urged governments to allow the businessman to pursue his own selfish interest on the grounds that society as a whole would benefit.[396]

This rising business class developed political power, and, by the end of the century, more than thirty newspaper proprietors had held seats in Parliament, according to Matthews.[397] Vernon posits that, increasingly, the press in Manchester and beyond represented commercial and industrial society. This impacted on the way the cotton industry and its workers were understood.

> […] provincial papers, undergoing pressures from competition, rising costs of technology, the influence from advertising, articulated a select version of the local past and present that masqueraded as a pluralist one […] the language and behaviour of the council debate chamber was endlessly exalted and favourably compared to the politics on street corners […] print transformed the whole process in which politics and memory were created and transmitted, how it was stored, and the criteria used for judging its accuracy'.[398]

Further, Temple has argued, the 'solid, bourgeois respectability of so many Victorian editors, along with spiralling costs of production and the interests of shareholders and advertisers, imposed their own constraints on the freedom of the press'.[399] It is suggested by Conboy that while stamped papers like the *Manchester Guardian* had called for reform, the lack of power of the middle classes was more important to them than the rights of the engaging working class.[400] Indeed, rather than freeing up the provincial press, or inviting a working class readership, post-repeal encouraged a close interpenetration of party politics and commercial journalism and the growth of advertising did not transform the commercial press into an

[396] Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian Age*, 81.
[397] Matthews, *Provincial Press*, 81.
[398] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, 147.
[399] Temple, *British Press*, 66.
[400] Conboy, *A Critical History*, 17.

independent Fourth Estate.[401] It is described by Temple as becoming like a caricature Victorian lady in attempting high mindedness in the news and simultaneously becoming too close to the politicians it claimed to scrutinize.[402] The tax repeals may have intended to make papers more affordable, but Vernon argues it is doubtful it created a new or wider audience.[403] Ultimately, Lee argues, the legislation for the abolition of taxation 'accorded a vastly enlarged readership and a great potential for political influence' but newspapers of the 1860 were still written by and for the middle classes:

> […] the governing classes, aristocratic, official, parliamentary, financial and commercial – and were not read, to any considerable extent, by the public outside the charmed sphere of the governing classes … and were to a great extent controlled and contributed to by members of the governing classes themselves […] the working classes mostly read the Sundays and were provided for by the *News of the World*, the *Weekly Dispatch*, *Reynolds News* and *Lloyds Weekly News.* [404]

There was a recognition of the press as a valuable political weapon and one which presented itself as the voice of the people on the back of radical reforms intended to support and defend the working class. However, Lee argued:

> By 1861, with the disappearance of the paper duty, the Liberal idea of the press as an economic institution was firmly entrenched in reality, and as literacy, education and reform progressed, there was the prospect of the Liberal press becoming more central to the sure and sound running of the country as it then was. The prospect of a golden age, both for press and liberalism, was not an illusion. The illusion was that it could be perpetuated indefinitely.[405]

These characteristics of an objective, liberal press with the best interests of the nation in mind provide a respectability to the journalistic representations of poverty and protest. This notion

[401] Curran and Seaton, Power without Responsibility, 11.
[402] Temple, *British Press*, 20.
[403] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, 415.
[404] Lee, *Origins*, 38.
[405] Ibid.

of a ‘golden age’ was part of journalism’s rise to respectability when ‘that tree of knowledge from which none are forbidden, but all are invited to pick the fruit; that oak, that social and political life, the free press of England’.[406] Liberals presenting the press as an educator, combined with a continued lack of access to newspapers for the working class despite tax repeals, however, saw the middle class speaking predominantly from, for and to the middle class and the ideal of the press acting as a link between public opinion and the governing institutions – as the Fourth Estate - was ultimately a myth[407] . It has been argued by Matthews, that, in fact:

> The relationship between the press and politics was one of ‘mutual dependency with political purpose a pillar of the newspaper’s business model, underwritten by an ideological belief in the educative power of the newspaper […] used by newspaper owners to maintain the elite business model for the provincial press in opposition to the burgeoning radical press’ in the first half of the century.[408]

Indeed, the Fourth Estate, according to Conboy, is ‘high on emotive value but low on concrete evidence’ and is an idealistic claim ‘shrouded in all the imprecision of British constitutional history’.[409] The phrase, which arguably still carries that emotive value in the twenty-first-century, contributed to the establishment of journalism in the nineteenth-century as mainstream economic and political force and ‘journalism was able through this status of Fourth Estate to provide an important rhetorical bridge between the interests of the newspapers and those of the newly enfranchised middle classes’.[410] The significance of the Fourth Estate is relevant when one considers that the *Manchester Guardian* viewed all contemporary politics

[406] Conboy, *Critical History*, 127.
[407] Boyce and Curran, *Newspaper History*, 21.
[408] Matthews, *Provincial Press*, 59.
[409] Conboy, *Critical History*, 109.
[410] Ibid.

through the eyes of the economy: its attitude toward the operatives' trade unions was one of acceptance and dislike, doubting whether trade unions had any useful function, believing employers would not reduce wages below what was economically necessary, and condemning union leaders as agitators with the newspaper's opinion of factory hours.[411] Indeed, at the *Manchester Guardian* at the time of the introduction of the New Poor Law in 1834 its proprietor, J E Taylor, was a 'convinced Malthusian' seeing the 'rigidity and impersonality of the system, which the Anti-Poor Law agitators denounced', as a strength, commenting:

> The idle and desperate pauper frequently wrings from the fears of an overseer an allowance of which he is known to be wholly underserving; but, under the new system, he will soon learn that it is perfectly useless to threaten the overseer, - to fire his stacks, or to destroy his cattle. He will know the overseer has no discretion in the matter.[412]

The *Manchester Guardian* is further suggested by Temple to have considered universal suffrage, for which the cotton workers were judged for the suitability, 'a foolish theory' and was opposed to the demand for annual parliaments.[413] Further, as property owners in the north felt their homes were in danger with the New Poor Law and poverty igniting conflict, men such as J E Taylor, who wanted to see considerable political and economic reforms, were often more scared of their working class allies than grateful to them and feared mob violence, according to Ayerst.[414] The view of journalism as accessible to all, as an educator, as public watchdog was compromised by commercialism in the nineteenth-century, Conboy argues, but the

[411] Read, *Press and People*, 145.
[412] Ibid.
[413] Ibid.
[414] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 62.

characteristics remained an important part of its public legitimacy.[415] That legitimacy gave validity to the presentation of poverty and protest.

The science of reporting poverty

Statistics used in the three papers in this study gave further legitimacy to the presentation of the poor and attitudes toward them. The Manchester Statistical Society was formed in 1833 and, according to Ashton's analysis of its early reports, intended to 'assist in promoting the progress of social improvement in the manufacturing population' and 'not merely by collecting facts' but 'for the discussion of subjects or political and social economy, and for the promotion of statistical inquiries, to the total exclusion of party politics'.[416]

The organisation provided the three papers at the centre of this study with frequent calculations of poverty during the Cotton Crisis, including the costs and distribution of famine relief. The copy, often in the shape of regular columns, repeatedly employed the word *distress* to describe the content under headlines such as 'The Distress of the Cotton Manufacturing Districts' and 'Distress in Lancashire'. Arguably, though, these statistics could have another effect, and instead, 'through a solely financial focus and the soothing, almost hypnotic listing of abstract number, is that of reassuring depersonalisation with reassurance offered by the numbers provided producing complacency, even permission to inactivity'.[417] The *Manchester Examiner* at the annual conference of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, held in Manchester in 1866, stated 'the mass miseries which afflict, disturb or torment

[415] Conboy, *Critical History*, 126.
[416] Thomas S Ashton, *Economic and Social Investigations in Manchester 1833-1933*, (Harvester Press, 1977), 3.
[417] Elizabeth F Gray, "Journalism and Poetry in the Nineteenth-century," *Journalism Studies*, 18, No 7, (2017), 820.

mankind have their origins in preventable causes […] they can be classified just as drugs are classified and they may be employed with almost the same certainty of operation'.[418] It told the gathering:

> […] that they were not merely alleviating misfortune and leaving things as they were but, by investigating, explaining and understanding, they might remedy and improve, thus following the inevitable march of social progress. Statistics above all were invaluable to this task since they represented objective neutral fact, not subject to party and sectarian bias.[419]

The statistics were provided by Frederick Purdy described as 'an exemplary case of the combination of government expert and professional statistician being Principal of the Poor Law Board's Statistical Department and an Honorary Secretary of the Statistical Society'.[420] These societies which emerged in major cities including Manchester 'aimed to provide information about a rapidly changing society'[421] and to 'guide social policy and social action, to stimulate the improvement of industrial society'.[422] Purdy himself is described as wanting 'the chaotic mass of parliamentary statistics might, with great public advantage, be brought into more serviceable order'.[423] Not everyone supported the statistical approach. Famously, Charles Dickens, journalist and author, created the fictional Mudfog Association 'which presented self-important and pointlessly detailed' reports with 'characters intended to reveal the emptiness and meaningless of statistical inquiry'.[424]

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[418] A J Kidd and K W Roberts, *City, class and culture: Studies of cultural production and social policy in Victorian Manchester*, Manchester University Press, 1985, 107.
[419] Kidd and Roberts, *City, class and culture*, 107.
[420] John Agar, *The Government Machine: A Revolutionary History of the Computer*. MIT Press, 2003, 91.
[421] Felix, Driver, "Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth-century England." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 14, No. 3, (1988): 275.
[422] Driver, *Moral Geographies*, 275.
[423] Agar, *The Government Machine*, 91.
[424] Tina Young Choi, "Writing the Victorian City: Discourses of Risk, Connection and Inevitability. *Victorian Studies*, 43, No 4, (Summer 2001): 561-589.

The early century, it is argued by Joyce, was characterized by protest, and the mid-century by Liberal campaigning to end taxation and promote press freedom, a uniting of the classes against ignorance.[425] The repeal of the Stamp Duty, presented as intending to bring knowledge and power to the working class, instead brought increased commercialism and competition, the necessity for new technology, low cover prices managed by increased advertising, and the press remained dominated by and speaking to the middle class, still unrepresentative of and to the working class. The role of the press continued to be one of serving to reconcile – that is, to mediate – the many different factions which made up the alliance of Liberalism and emphasized a reconciliation of differences under a banner of progress and realism.[426]

[425] Joyce, *Visions of the People Industrial England and the question of class, 1840-1914, (*Cambridge University Press, 1991), 40.
[426] Ibid, 41.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Cotton Crisis

The scholarly debates around the causes and management of poverty during the Cotton Crisis.

The historical and political context of the Cotton Crisis is widely informed by a small number of historians, notably W. O. Henderson, R. Arthur Arnold and John Watts, whose work underpins most analysis. This thesis also considers some challenges to the accepted economic and political understanding, particularly George R. Boyer and D. A. Farnie. Henderson's *The Cotton Famine in Lancashire* remains the seminal text on the period of history, especially for statistics and figures. Watts' *The Facts of the Cotton Famine* and Arthur Arnold's *The history of the cotton famine, from the fall of Sumter to the passing of the Public Works Act*, also prove to be influential works; both offering a more polemical approach and descriptive detail. These works do not fully challenge the accepted narrative of poverty, indulging in judgment of the poor, while also occasionally challenging the behaviour of the wealthy. The American Civil War as cause is also fundamentally accepted in these texts with Henderson also acknowledging overproduction as a factor. It is, for the most part, left to historical analysis such as Brady's *Reconsideration of the Lancashire 'Cotton Famine'* and, albeit to a lesser extent, D A Farnie's *The English Cotton Industry and the World Market 1815-1896* to look at the crisis in the context of capitalism as a contributory cause.

Brady was among the first to challenge the assumption of the northern blockade as the cause while Farnie deliberates on the profits made by capitalists. This is significant in considering the impact of this economic crisis in terms of its burden on the poor and justification for poverty legislation. As the moral judgment of the poor, the acceptance of

austerity and the stigmatising of relief form part of this thesis analysis, it is important to consider the ongoing debate among historians, including economic history interpretations, of poverty legislation and the distribution of and dependence on relief and charity. Most theories fall into two general camps: the famine relief is either a result of practical legislative and generous charity arrangements, or poverty is managed with political intent. The former contributes more to the ideological assumption that poverty is a short-term, individual experience, that legislation is suitable, and that society's structures do not create it. For example, Henderson and Rose both acknowledge the poor law as struggling under the crisis, with Henderson accepting a logistical problem[427] but it is Rose who argues further that it, in fact, the impetus for the Poor Law Amendment Act was to ensure pauperism must not 'infect the honest working man and destroy his character'[428] and determining 'those in dire need would accept the workhouse rather than starvation'.[429] The Act was, Rose writes, 'seen as the final solution to the problem of pauperism which would work wonders for the moral character of the working man'.[430] This ideology is significant, and manifests in the press, but is overlooked in much historical analysis, or not formally expressed.

Arnold, Watts and Henderson accept, to some extent, that workers avoided famine relief by choice and recognise the limited contribution from capitalists to subsidies but do not provide an overt recognition of stigma of poor relief suiting the economic crisis. Analysis elsewhere recognises the opposition to the Poor Law and that 'famine' relief was founded in

[427] W O Henderson, *The Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861-1865* Manchester University Press, 1969, 52.
[428] Michael E Rose, *The Relief of Poverty 1834-1914*, (The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1972), 10.
[429] Ibid, 11.
[430] Ibid, 8.

an inequality in distribution. Henriques states that opposition to the Poor Law was historically always 'fiercest in northern towns' and considers Poor Law Guardians making references to depraved appetites of paupers, the use of propaganda, preconceived conclusions of Commissioners toward the poor and the increasing distinction between those deserving of relief and those not.[431] Any acceptance of the poor preferring relief is challenged further; some with recognition of political aim of stigmatisation, others not. Kiesling argues that workers were 'horrified at being branded a pauper by accepting public relief'[432] while Rose states it was 'degrading for those unemployed through no fault of their own to be set to work with idle and dissolute paupers'[433]. Boyer acknowledges that a lag of 14 months between the start of the Cotton Crisis and a peak in the number of recipients for relief, suggests this 'tells us more about the role of poor relief[434]' than attitudes to self-reliance of preference for charity. There is much analysis of the logistics of poor relief, but Rose and Henriques confront the ideology of the distribution practices. Further, Farnie argues it became possible for the industry's spokesmen to blame war for the industrial depression, since short time working began only after the start of hostilities and suggests the interpretation harmonized with the fashionable political economy with scarcity rather than abundance as the central problem of economic life.[435]

[431] Ursula Henriques, "How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law?" *The Historical Journal*, 11, No. 2, (1968),365, 367, 369.
[432] Lynne, Kiesling, "Institutional Choice Matters: The Poor Law and Implicit Labour Contracts in Victorian Lancashire." *Explorations in Economic History*. 33, (1996): 79.
[433] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 132.
[434] George R Boyer. "Poor relief, informal assistance, and short time during the Lancashire cotton famine". *Explorations in Economic History*, 34, No. 1. (1997), 7.
[435] D A Farnie, *The English Cotton Industry and the World Market 1815-1896*, (Clarendon Press, 1979), 143.

The historical interpretation of workers' political response during the Cotton Crisis.

Research by historians into the agitation at Stevenson Square relating to the Cotton Crisis is limited. R M Blackett in *Divided Hearts* does briefly consider a meeting of 3,000 workers challenging the Labour Test.[436] Henderson recognises Stevenson Square as the location for the first disturbance of note, specifically during the crisis when workers challenged the 'George Griswold' procession in Stevenson Square when famine relief from America was paraded prior to distribution.[437] Eric J Hewitt in *Protest and Crime in Manchester's Industrial Revolution: Capital of Discontent* also acknowledges a meeting of cotton workers in June 1862 opposing the Labour Test and seeking access to education, describing the cotton workers as 'resolute and determined to engage in self-improvement'[438], behaviour which he argues helped working men win the right to vote. Insights into the broader political motivations and agitation are available and relevant to the attitudes towards workers during this time. In order to consider broader attitudes to unemployed workers' agitation. A clear example is the political response of workers to the American Civil War. The positions presented by historians on the whole take four forms: the workers actively supported Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation with political awareness; the workers were manipulated by Lincoln and others; it is a myth that they attended meetings at all; they were either economically-motivated into political action or inactive. This thesis shows some evidence of political agitation with economic considerations as the prime

[436] R M Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, (Louisiana University Press, 2001), 176.
[437] Douglas Maynard, "Civil War "Care": The Mission of the George Griswold." *The New England Quarterly.* 34, No. 3, (September, 1961), 291.
The ship's purpose is outlined later.
[438] Eric J Hewitt, *Protest and Crime in Manchester's Industrial Revolution: Capital of Discontent,* (The History Press, 2013), 76.

motivation. However, other positions remain at odds. In considering the American Civil War, which contributed to the Cotton Crisis, James Heartfield in *British Workers and the US Civil War: How Karl Marx and the Lancashire weavers joined Abraham Lincoln's fight against slavery 150 years ago* suggests some historians, notably Ellison, write the working class out of history and fail to understand the difference between working class agitation and middle class activism as part of Cold War revisionist writing.[439] Ellison, in *Support for Secession Lancashire and the American Civil War*, argues that there was more support for the South among cotton workers than is given historical credit, concluding that a notable meeting on New Year's Eve in Manchester, held at the Free Trade Hall in support of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, is a 'famous delusory gathering of working men'.[440] Foner in asserting that Ellison's research was politically-motivated, described it as 'simplicity personified' and stated that the American Civil War was a 'bread and butter question for the working class'. [441] While Marx saw a clear link between the cotton workers of Lancashire and slaves seeking emancipation, writing in the *New York Times* of a 'twofold slavery, the indirect slavery of the white man in England and the direct slavery of the black men on the other side of the Atlantic', Henderson, accepting Ellison's findings, in *Marx and Engels and the English Working Class* states that 'the Lancashire operatives were motivated by considerations and economic self-interest rather than the lofty opposition to the institution of slavery'.[442] Frank L Owsley described the workers as 'politically apathetic, sodden, ignorant and docile, with the exception of a few intelligent and earnest

[439] Heartfield, *British Workers and the US Civil War: How Karl Marx and the Lancashire weavers joined Abraham Lincoln's fight against slavery 150 years ago*, (Reverspective), 2012.
[440] Mary Ellison, Support for Secession *Lancashire and the American Civil War*, (The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 183.
[441] Philip Foner, *British Labor and the American Civil War*, (Holmes and Meier, 1981), 20.
[442] W O Henderson, *Marx and Engels and the English Workers: And Other Essays*, (Routledge, 1989), 11.

leaders' in notable Cotton Crisis history *King Cotton Diplomacy*[443] a quote used in many texts. The cotton workers in this study, meeting in Stevenson Square, focus on topics relating to their own economic situation and, as such, this thesis, challenges these assumptions and the acceptance across historical debate while recognising ideological influence on the reporting of those gatherings.

The cotton industry

There is ample historical research into the cotton industry in Manchester, known as 'Cottonopolis'.[444] Historians determine that manufacturing 'made Manchester' with commerce, transport and buildings, flowing from this manufacturing process.[445] Between 1859 and 1861, 106 new companies formed to manufacture cotton goods in Lancashire, drawing new capital and new labour migrating to cotton towns in search of work.[446] Research reveals that population growth was rapid; in 1801 the population of Manchester had been 98,876 and within 60 years was 460,018.[447] By 1860 in Lancashire there were 'about two thousand cotton factories employing half a million operatives' and these factories relied on '1,390 million pounds of imported raw cotton'.[448] Economic histories cite that in 1860 the UK was the most

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[443] Foner, *British Labor*, 114.
[444] Examples include: Ellis H Chadwick, *Mrs Gaskell Haunts, Homes and Stories*, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 312; Michael Nevell, *Cottonopolis: An Archaeology of the Cotton Industry of North West England*, (Manchester University Press, 2019); Rachel Lebowitz, *Cottonopolis*, (Pedlar Press, 2013).
[445] Martin Hewitt, *Dawn of Cheap Press*, 11.
[446] Janet Toole, "Workers and slaves: class relations in South Lancashire in the time of the Cotton Famine," *Labour History Review*, 63, No. 2, (1998), 166.
[447]Arthur R. Arnold, *The History of the Cotton Famine: From the Fall of Sumter to the Passing of the Public Works Act*, (Saunders, Otley and Co, 1864), 8.
[448] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 1.

efficient producer of cotton textiles in the world and had the capacity for textile output that was more than that of the rest of the world combined.[449] Henderson posited that the factory system, amid capitalist growth, had in the previous decade acquired 'a firm social foundation as the inspiring ethos of free trade spread'[450] and that conditions for the cotton workers before the crisis were favourable, with these skilled workers seen as 'the head of the English working class[451]', and with judgment passed on their relative intelligence:

> They had the most wages and were, of all workers, the most intelligent and best organised. They had already secured the fixing of working conditions, wages, hours, etc. by means of agreements with employers. Many of them had deposits in the savings bank; a considerable number owned their cottages. There was much less poverty in Lancashire than in the rest of the kingdom.[452]

According to recent research by Kiesling, in 1859 spinners earned between 21s 6d to 39s 6d pre week; power-loom weavers, usually men, averaged an income of 12s 6d in 1860; women working as winders and reelers in 1860 could earn between 10s and 9s 6d; piecers earned on average 8s 6d. The average worker, then, could afford to save after paying a cottage rent of 2s 6d.[453] Gurney has further suggested that this income and working conditions means that the 'Lancashire textile operatives were the prototypes of modern working class consumers'[454] and 'almost, if not quite, totally dependent on the market for the supply of their everyday needs'[455]

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[449] Brady, *A Reconsideration*, 156.
[450] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 135.
[451] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 3.
[452] Ibid.
[453] Kiesling, *Institutional Choice*, 69.
[454] Peter Gurney, *Wanting and Having Popular Politics and Liberal Consumerism in England 1830-1870*, ((Manchester University Press, 2014), 260.
[455] Ibid.

and were ‘probably the earliest example of ‘embourgeoisement.[456] Engels, then owner of a Manchester cotton mill, recognised this development, in 1858:

> […] one might almost believe that the English proletarian movement in its old traditional Chartist form must perish utterly before it can evolve in a new and viable form. And yet it is not possible to foresee what the new form will look like […] the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that the ultimate aim of this most bourgeois of all nations would appear to be the possession, *alongside* the bourgeoisie, of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat.[457]

Disputed causes of poverty

Engels felt the cause of the Cotton Crisis was surplus not shortage. In a letter to Marx in January 1860, he said the conviction that the blockade had created the Cotton Crisis meant capitalists could take advantage of depleted stocks and were able to run up the cotton prices, writing:

> … the practice of operating on fictitious capital is again just as RIKE in Indian business as it was in 1846/47, and most people are buying only because they have to and cannot stop. But, even if that were not so, the increase in production alone will bring about a colossal COLLAPSE this autumn or in the spring of 1861 at the latest.[458]

The crisis became widely known as the ‘Cotton Famine’.[459] This thesis argues that this was an economic crisis, not a famine. The position is supported by historical research. Gurney argues that the name ‘Cotton Famine, was used to ‘obfuscate the ways in which human suffering was built into the structure of unregulated markets’ and for others to ‘deflect the blame from

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[456] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 260.
[457] *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, *Volume 40*, 434.
[458] *Marx and Engels Collected Works*, *Volume 40*, 8.
[459] Used extensively in book titles, including by influential historians by Arnold, 1864; Watts, 1866; Waugh, 1867; Henderson, 1969.

manufacturers and traders'.[460] The use of 'famine' is significant when one begins to look at the causes of and the responses to the crisis. For one notable historian, Arnold, the crisis 'naturally commences with the bloodless bombardment of Fort Sumter on the 13th of April, 1861'.[461] For others, such as Kiesling the Union blockade of the Southern ports stopped essential raw cotton imports resulting in production decline and in workers being either laid off or asked to work short time.[462] Recorded figures reveal that at the start of November 1861 49 mills had stopped and 119 were on short time.[463] It is argued by Brady in his 'reconsideration of the Cotton Famine', that the crisis was not wholly unexpected, with individuals already aware of a shortage of cotton from a dependence on limited sources from as early as 1828; John Bright set up a committee to encourage cotton growth in India, the West Indies, Brazil and Egypt, resulting in the formation of the Cotton Supply Association in 1857.[464] It is further argued by Farnie that credit-based expansion had, in fact, previously stimulated growth of the demand in America and Australia, a boom which culminated in unprecedented imports and exports, but in an industry that faced increasing competition from the Continent and India and where overproduction saw prices decrease.[465] Marx stated that it 'became evident that the cotton industry had produced too much in 1860 and the effect of this made itself felt for the next few years'.[466] It is further argued by Toole that the Cotton Crisis initially 'did not compound the industry's problems but rescued it' from overproduction and 'enabled the industry to get rid,

[460] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 265.
[461] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 28.
[462] Kiesling, *Collective Action*, 380.
[463] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 52.
[464] Brady, *A Reconsideration*, 157.
[465] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 135, 141.
[466] Marx, *Capital Volume 3*, 152.

without ruinous losses' proving to be a 'good thing, saving the trade from the ruin it had invited'.[467] It is further argued by Henderson that the crisis benefited capitalists in the form of three distinct classes of men: manufacturers who were able to sell at unexpectedly high prices; brokers and agents; and speculators 'who financed risky but lucrative blockade-running ventures and gambling on the fluctuation in cotton prices'[468] throughout the duration of the American Civil War. Further, it is recorded that 'Manchester banks established branches in the cotton towns from 1862, as stocks of cloth were sold off at much higher prices than had been expected'.[469] The post-war annual report of 1866 published by the Manchester Bank revealed its net profit rose from £41,557 in 1860 to £66, 809 in 1864.[470] Manchester and Salford Bank profited financially from what is described as 'an optimism and energy of manufacturers'[471] and from commercial treaties with European nations, while the woollen industry benefited from a struggling cotton industry.[472] The cotton workers struggled while others working in industries benefited, as Arnold wrote:

> While the cotton manufacturers languished, the woollen looms of Yorkshire drove such a rattling trade as they had never known before. While Manchester was under a cloud, the sun of prosperity was shedding unusual rays upon the flaxen industry of Belfast. India consolidated the foundations of a glorious commercial future through the very circumstances which distressed the English cotton district; while, nearer home, Birmingham forged, at large profits, and the very arms which maintained the strife that was desolating the States of America and causing the privations of Lancashire.[473]

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[467] Toole, *Workers and Slaves*, 166.
[468] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 14.
[469] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 161.
[470] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 8.
[471] Ibid, 8.
[472] Ibid, 9.
[473] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 161.

At the end of 1863, there were well over a hundred stores in Lancashire with a combined annual turnover in excess of £1 million pounds a year,[474] suggesting the petit bourgeoisie did not struggle en masse. Meanwhile employers benefited from short-time and fixed wages because it reduced turnover and migration of workers.[475] Further, it is argued by Kiesling that the Poor Law was seen as a thinly disguised attack on rates and one of a series of incidents which demonstrated that political power was being used during the crisis to undermine union effectiveness.[476] Contemporary history and news reports reveal that there was a recognition that the capitalists and mill owners were not bearing the crisis as much as the poor. It is posited by Arnold that:

> It was 'well known that there were numbers of the Lancashire capitalists who were making short gains […] by sales of goods, by cotton sales and speculations' and that 'the public looked – and it must be added, looked in vain – for those who share this accidental wealth with the class whose sufferings it had in some measure produced'[477]

By summer 1862, Arnold argued, there was 'much complaint that manufacturers were not doing their duty' and that they 'shunned the subscriptions list' to provide famine relief, they also, were 'not indisposed to prolong the inactivity of the cotton manufacture':[478]

> […] they saw with no sorrowful eye the difficulties of their smaller competitors, and were not unwilling that these, having fallen as victims of the Famine, should leave the trade to become their own monopoly. To some extent they were slandered by these insinuations. That they were not ready with their subscriptions for the relief is beyond denial. Half the newspapers in the country, and none more strongly than those in

[474] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 263.
[475] Kiesling, *Institutional Choice*, 70.
[476] Hewitt, Emergence of Stability, 231.
[477] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 217.
[478] Ibid, 110

> Manchester, urged them to be heedful of the sufferings of others, and of their own duty.[479]

Further, according to Evans, even the end of the American Civil War and Union blockade did not see the fortunes of the working class immediately improve with it recorded that 'the long-term effect was to be a legacy of approximately 330 permanent mill closures'.[480]

Disputed extent of poverty

In April 1862, one year after the bombardment of Fort Sumter and the Union blockade, Cobden spoke at a meeting in Manchester to consider the formation of a relief committee and he 'recommended a bold appeal to the whole country, declaring the prophetic keenness of vision that not less than £1 million pounds would be required to carry the suffering operatives through the crisis'; at that time subscriptions were only £180,000.[481] The Central Relief Committee was formally established in Manchester in April 1862, made up, according to Henderson, of 'prominent businessmen, and of mayors and ex-mayors of the cotton districts' which passed a motion to be 'distributed to important officials throughout the country', which read:[482]

> That the existing distress of the workpeople connected with the cotton trade in Lancashire [and the well-founded expectation of its increasing intensity as the winter approaches, warrants the Committee […] is prepared to receive any sums that may be

[479] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 217.
[480] Claire Evans, "Unemployment and the making of the feminine during the Lancashire cotton famine." In *Women's Work and the family economy*, edited by Hudson P and Lee, W R, (Manchester University Press, 1990), 248.
[481] Edwin Waugh, Home-Life of the Lancashire Factory Folk, (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017), 153.
[482] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 75.

> subscribed for the object in view, and will give its best attention to the proper and judicious distribution thereof'.[483]

By May of the same year, the House of Commons heard that 58,000 operatives were entirely out of work in Lancashire, and Manchester alone had 15,183 workers on short time and 7,567 unemployed.[484] It is revealed in research and news copy that 'efforts were made to carry the industry on by the use of materials from other sources, but these were entirely inadequate for the purpose'.[485] Reported figures reveal the weekly loss of wages was estimated at £13,6094, more than £7 million a year.[486] The cotton workers were considered to be a concentrated group who were dependent on the export market.[487] These skilled workers, who had previously been said to earn enviable weekly wages were, by December 1862, in receipt of famine relief. Fears grew that 'starvation and accompanying diseases now threatened, not in a 'backward' country like Ireland but in a region that represented the epicentre of modern industrial capitalism'.[488] Figures gathered by historian Henderson show that by January 1862 applications to the boards of guardians for relief were 70 per cent above the usual number for the same part of the previous year and 30,000 new applicants came forward in August 1862, followed by 24,000 more in September and a further 44,000 in November, by which time the guardians were

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[483] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 75

[484] John Watts, *The Facts of the Cotton Famine,* Frank Cass and Company Ltd, 1968), 284.

[485] Brady, *A Reconsideration*, 156.

[486] "The Distress in Lancashire; Terrible Effects of the Cotton Famine in England. Quarter of a Million of People in One District Out of Work and Living on Charity. Facts, Figures and Incidents of the Suffering. Details of the Numbers Unemployed and the Consequent Distress in the Towns and Unions of Lancashire. Extent and Growth of the Famine. The Number of Suffering. The American War and Distress. From Times Correspondent. *New York Times*, November 26, 1862, 8.

[487] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 156.

[488] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 260.

relieving over a quarter of a million.[489] According to Arnold's research, by December 1862, there were 496,816 unemployed workers, supported by parochial or charitable relief, meant a weekly expenditure of 46,656.[490] The operatives, Henderson states, pawned their belongings: furniture, clothes, bedding and pawnbrokers became 'glutted with the heirlooms of many an honest family'[491] and 'the small hoards of the most prudent operatives were gradually exhausted – the best clothes were turned to food – the neat household furniture was consumed – the beds were exchanged for straw – the much-loved musical instruments and the little cottage library were sold – and the trim cottage itself often exchanged for a single room, an attic or a cellar'.[492] Gurney argues that these workers, whose intelligence was commented upon and who were thought to be an example of 'embourgeoisement' had, before the crisis, owned 'pianos, pictures, books, and other incentives to mental cultivation' which were found in their homes and that among the working classes 'the competition in dress, furniture and appearance' had been great.[493] Further, Edwin Waugh provided copy for the *Manchester Examiner* reporting on the unemployed selling newspapers, 'to make an honest penny till better days return', and of the poor from Manchester travelling to Wigan were they were unknown.[494] Henderson refers to reports of 'the Wails of the Workless Poor'[495] who sang and begged on the streets.

[489] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 53.
[490] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 191.
[491] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 98.
[492] Watts, *Facts*, 231.
[493] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 260.
[494] Waugh, *Home Life*, 70, 135.
[495] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 99.

Health suffered but the extent of ill-health has proven difficult to calculate. Farnie asserts that 'evidence of balanced judgment is difficult to secure because of the general lack of information about the condition of the labouring classes, the prompt publication of blatant apologias, the undeveloped nature of public health administration, and the traditional technique of the organs of public opinion minimising the significance of national disasters'.[496] A report produced by Dr George Buchanan in December 1862, to the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, after a two month inquiry, claimed 'to capture the facts of the experience of working class existence around health, diet, housing and income'.[497] Buchanan's report is captured by Henderson as writing of poorer operatives 'taking in lodgers and of others herded together to save rent and stay warm, with six or eight people to a twelve foot square room, with a closed, padded window and a papered-up fireplace', noting:

> […] the operatives suffered from an insufficient and innutritious diet: he noticed 'a loss of strength and flesh among the cotton workers'. The mothers who most of all starve themselves, have got pale and emaciated […] 'a haemorrhagic tendency has been noticed in several towns; actual scurvy has been seen among cotton workers' Almost all these cases are women […] bronchitis and pneumonia – due to cold exposure and ventilation – were very common […] there was an exceptional dirtiness of houses and persons […] there were epidemics resulting from a combination of these influences. There were epidemics of typhus fever in Preston and Manchester.[498]

It was also recorded by Henderson and Oddy that measles and whooping cough were prevalent in Manchester, where bruises and slight wounds proved difficult to heal and that cases of

[496] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 157.
[497] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 104.
[498] Ibid, 105.

Xerophthalmia, an eye condition associated with vitamin A deficiency, presented in Manchester among low-income groups of all kinds.[499] *The Times*, using the term 'famine', reported:

> Failing fever, famine goes on to run its own well marked course. I write from what I and many others saw, watched, and noted. With no real complaint developed, with little real pain, there is an increase of lassitude in the adult, a want of all childish energy in the young: a species of patient, sullen, hopeless despondency masters the whole man. You have atrophy now showing itself in many ways; the hair quits the head in patches, the ankles swell, the skin is bloodless, the eye sunken; at this stage food fails, medicine fails, care cannot rescue. It is a mere matter of time; few, if any, recover -- few seem to wish it.[500]

Engels, whose own factory put operatives on half-time, noted cases of typhoid, pneumonia, malnutrition and tuberculosis mounting, writing:

> The distress up here has become acute. I imagine by next month the working people themselves will have had enough of sitting about with a look of passive misery on their faces.[501]

It is stated by Watts that the it was 'satisfactory to find that [in the cotton districts] the actual mortality fell below the average'[502] and, in 1863, his conclusion is used to suggest the liberality of famine relief kept death away, writing, 'grim king Death himself [and the] liberality of boards of guardians [...] not only prevented an increase of his harvest but hindered his usual work'.[503] It was further argued by Henderson that it was, in fact, 'the suffering of the distressed operatives – particularly of the weak and aged that led to an increased death rate'.[504]

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[499] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 106; D J. Oddy, "Urban Famine in Nineteenth-century Britain: The Effect of the Lancashire Cotton Famine on Working Class Diet and Health." *The Economic History Review,* 36, No. 1, (February, 1983), 82.
[500] *The Times*, November 7, 1862, 25.
[501] Hunt, *Frock-Coated Communist*, 199.
[502] Watts, *Facts*, 232.
[503] Ibid.
[504] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 106.

Henderson also posits that a fall in the death rate was caused by a fall in infant deaths because mothers stayed home to nurse their babies.[505] Arnold suggests that the health of the health of the working population improved due to 'compulsory temperance'[506] with, according to Henderson, the Commissioners of Inland Revenue reporting a decline of more than 28 per cent in quantities of spirits taken in retail stocks in some of the cotton districts.[507] Dr Noble, who conducted a study in Ancoats, just north of Stevenson Square, argued that 'both views had been exaggerated and had risen from hasty and incompetent handling of the statistic of mortality'.[508] Buchanan's report of December 1862 also contained a direct warning that relief was insufficient to maintain long-term health. Guardians, who distributed relief, allocated a maximum of 1s 6d per head per week and a normal weekly amount of 10.8 pounds of bread for cotton operatives was reduced to seven pounds by winter 1862.[509] The *New York Times*, acknowledging the previous income of these now unemployed skilled workers, also reported that relief was not enough:

> All the grants, therefore, from these sources scarcely amount to more than a sixth of what these workpeople have been in the habit of earning, and it is impossible to suppose that private charity and local funds, already exhausted, contribute more than a faction to redress this balance.[510]

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[505] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 106.
[506] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 102.
[507] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 102.
[508] Ibid, 107.
[509] Oddy, *Urban Famine*, 77.
[510] *New York Times*, November 26, 1862, 8.

The poor became dependent on relief that had usually been distributed ‘to an isolated family or two that may be in distress’ and were now unable to call upon friends and family experiencing the same loss of work and dependency. [511] Watts noted:

> [..] we all know that in prosperous times, when the bulk of the working people are employed, they are always kind to each other. The poor, in fact, do more to relieve the poor than any other class. A working man and his family out of employment in prosperous times could get a meal at a neighbour’s house […] now the whole mass of the labouring and working population is brought down to one sad level of destitution.[512]

It is also argued by Farnie that ‘the extent of the distress in Lancashire […] seems to have been exaggerated by outside observers to make political gain in the Conservative interest or to facilitate the raising of relief funds.[513] Farnie makes six argument, none of which recognise the unemployed workers as bearing the brunt of the crisis. He argues that surplus grain from the American West meant a shortage of food did not coincide with the industrial crisis, which it could be argued is revealed in the donated ‘famine’ relief supplies; emigration reduced the labour force in Lancashire during 1862 by 50, 000 hands, thus reducing the pressure on demand upon existing supplies; food prices remained low and so prevented any recurrence of the mortality associated with the Irish Famine; no general rise in the death rate occurred comparable to the fall in the marriage rate and birth rate; the reduction in employment of women strengthened family structures and improved the health of children; and the reduction

[511] Watts, *Facts*, 175.
[512] Ibid.
[513] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 136.

in consumption of drink improved the health of adults.[514] The newspaper copy analysed in this thesis both confirms and refutes the findings revealed above by historians and economists.

[514] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 136.

CHAPTER FIVE: Managing poverty

Legislation

The poverty legislation managing poverty, known as the English Poor Laws, which are considered in this thesis are the New Poor Law – or the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 - and the Outdoor Relief Labour Test Order of 1842, which included the Labour Test. The legislation to manage poverty was itself saturated in ideology. Revd. Thomas Malthus authored a pamphlet *An Essay on the Principle of Population, As It Effects the Future Improvement of Society* in 1798, which, Englander argues, became foundational text of nineteenth-century social theory.[515] Among Malthus' principle aims, in presenting population growth as a liability not a benefit, was to explain the nature of poverty to suggest there was no viable alternative to capitalist economy and to advocate for abolishing poor laws, which were, Ross explains, 'the closest thing that existed in his time to social welfare'.[516] It has been argued by Professor John Bellamy Foster that 'no other work was more hated by the English working class no more strongly criticised by Marx and Engels'.[517] Of Malthus, Marx wrote:

> What characterises Malthus is the fundamental meanness of his outlook; a meanness which only a parson could permit himself to display, a parson who looks upon human misery as the punishment for the Fall of man and stands in general need of ''an earthly vale of tears'', but who at the same time, out of consideration for the benefices accruing to him, finds it most advantageous, with the help of the dogma of predestination, to "sweeten" the sojourn of the ruling classes in the vale of tears.[518]

[515] David Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Britain: From Chadwick to Booth, (*Longman, 1998), 7.
[516] Eric B Ross, The Malthus Factor Politics, Poverty and Population in Capitalist Development, (Zed Books, 1998), 1.
[517] John Bellamy Foster, "Malthus' Essay on Population at Age 200 A Marxian view," Monthly Review, 50, No. 7, (December, 1998), https://monthlyreview.org/1998/12/01/malthus-essay-on-population-at-age-200/
[518] Ronald L Meek, *Marx and Engels on Malthus, Selections from the writings of Marx and Engels dealing with the theories of Thomas Robert Malthus*, (Lawrence and Wishart, 1953), 119. https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.191351/2015.191351.Marx-Amp-Engels--On-Malthus_djvu.txt

Marx recognised the need for Malthus to present a kindly manner while forming cruel and punitive responses to poverty, a manner needed, in part, to satisfy the ruling class by presenting poverty as inevitable. It also suggests a visit to compassion by way of charity, an attitude revealed in the imaginary solution of unity discussed in the analysis chapter.

Malthus' essay outlines clearly an attitude that the poor were experiencing poverty because of character not economic failure. He wrote:

> The labouring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live from hand to mouth. Their present wants employ their whole attention, and they seldom think of the future. Even when they have an opportunity of saving they seldom exercise it, but all that is beyond their present necessities goes, generally speaking, to the ale-house. The poor laws of England may therefore be said to diminish both the power and the will to save among the common people, and thus to weaken one of the strongest incentives to sobriety and industry, and consequently to happiness.[519]

This attitude, based in the imaginary solution of moral judgment, is also revealed in the newspapers analysed in this thesis. Further, Marx concluded in 1844 that the English Poor Law system founded in Malthusian thinking was not tackled by politicians or the Press, and he recognised the dependency on statistical rather than political insights, which categorised, rationalised and managed rather than eradicated poverty:

> Now how does the English bourgeoisie and the government and press connected with it regard pauperism? In so far as the English bourgeoisie admits that pauperism is that fault of politics, the Whig regards the Tory and the Tory regards the Whig as the cause of pauperism. According to the Whig, the monopoly of large landed property and the prohibitive legislation against the import of corn constitute the main source of pauperism. According to the Tory, the whole evil lies in liberalism, in competition, and in a factory system which has been carried too far. Neither of the parties sees the cause in politics in general; each rather sees it only in the politics of the other party. Neither of the two parties even dreams of a reform of society. The most decisive expression of English insight into pauperism — we speak always of the insight of the English bourgeoisie and government — is English political economy, that is, the scientific reflection of English economic conditions.[520]

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[519] Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, 1798, (Electronic Scholarly Publishing Project, 1998), 33. http://www.esp.org/books/malthus/population/malthus.pdf

[520] Meek, *Marx and Engels on Malthus*, 63.

Malthus had written his *Essay* during a time of agricultural revolution and was a response to the anxieties of in England among the propertied class and the threat of questioning the legitimacy of owning property, and he offered a clear defence and an explanatory framework, and his *Essay* became a best-seller and the basis of the New Poor Law.[521] For Malthus, Ross suggests, the root cause of pauperism was the excessive procreation of the lower classes and that 'his aim was not to reduce population pressures but to reduce the obligation of the rich to mitigate human misery, hence his desire to abolish relief.[522] Poor Law policy had two priorities which reflected Malthusian thinking: direct the surplus population from the glutted countryside into new industrial districts and safeguard the urban ratepayer from support costs.[523] Simply put, the workforce was shifted from agriculture to industrial mills, benefiting capitalism, but, should they find themselves in need, the burden could not be placed on the wealthier with financial support. Hewitt argues that it was 'based on the principle that pauperism was predominantly a moral lapse rather than an economic one'[524] and it 'sought to de-pauperise the 'lazy, shiftless, able-bodied poor[525]' with the threat of the workhouse which, as outlined earlier, was intentionally 'a place which must be uninviting so that a pauper's situation would always be less eligible than that of the lowest independent labourer[526]'. Rose posited that the New Poor Law was seen 'as a final solution to the problem of pauperism which

[521] Ross, *The Malthus Factor*, 10, 11.
[522] Ibid, 13.
[523] Englander, *Poverty and Law Reform*, 14.
[524] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 102.
[525] Ibid.
[526] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 102.

would work wonders for the moral character of the working man[527]. Engels saw the New Poor Law as the most open declaration of war upon the proletariat treated the poor with the most revolting cruelty:

> Convinced with Malthus and the rest of the adherents of free competition that it is best to let each one take care of himself, they would have preferred to abolish the Poor Laws altogether […] The commissioners were not so barbarous; death outright by starvation was something too terrible even for a Poor Law Commissioner. 'Good,' said they. 'We grant you poor a right to exist, but only to exist; the right to multiply you have not, nor the right to exist as human beings. […] Can any one wonder that the poor decline to accept public relief under these conditions? That they starve rather than enter these bastilles? I have the reports of five cases in which persons actually starving, when the guardians refused them outdoor relief, went back to their miserable homes and died of starvation rather than enter these hells. Thus far have the Poor Law Commissioners attained their object. At the same time, however, the workhouses have intensified, more than any other measure of the party in power, the hatred of the working-class against the property-holders, who very generally admire the New Poor Laws.[528]

The New Poor Law created a choice between the workhouse and no poor relief and, as such, it is argued by Rose that the scheme 'had the attraction of being a self-acting test of destitution. Those who were genuinely in dire need would accept the workhouse rather than starvation'[529] Further, Rose argues, it was established as part of a Whig[530] government focus on social reform, who 'remained committed to the notion that only the propertied should have a say in governing and also favoured gradual reform as a way of staving off revolution.[531] This was done by dividing workers, with the Amendment Act presenting a new concept of poverty as

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[527] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 9.
[528] Engels, *Conditions*, 228, 311.
[529] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 8.
[530] The Whig Party became the Liberal Party. Steinbach, Susie L, Understanding the Victorians Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-century Britain, (Routledge, 2012), 41.
[531] Susie L Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-century Britain*, (Routledge, 2012), 41.

dependency and non-dependency and one which ‘reflected an influence of a new individualist political economy’.[532] Divisions were created between pauper and non-pauper, and efforts were made to exclude the able-bodied from the scope of the Poor Law.[533] Outdoor relief, that is financial assistance outside the workhouse for the able-bodied, became illegal and those able-bodied in need of help had to enter the workhouse.[534] The system of workhouses, Ross asserts, were ‘deliberately made so bad that people would choose to take the poorest paid work rather than enter them’,[535] as one Poor Law Commissioner is recorded to have stated the intention was to ensure workhouses were ‘so severe and repulsive as to make them a terror to the poor and prevent them from entering’.[536] Each parish was responsible for its own paupers and the Poor Law Commission, established to administer relief, was independent of parliament, without accountability or representation, to prevent the intrusion of politics’,[537] despite that intrusion already existing ideologically in the legislation itself. The alternative to the workhouse was provided by claiming relief under the Outdoor Labour Test order of 1842. It was a fundamental part of the New Poor Law and made outdoor relief conditional on performing work. The Labour Test, for those deemed able-bodied, meant oakum picking and breaking rocks. Both jobs were often the labour of prisoners and paupers in workhouses. Broken rocks could be sold for road making, and oakum picking is explained by the *National Archives* as being ‘given quantities of old rope, which they had to untwist into many corkscrew strands. They then had to take these individual strands and unroll them, usually by rolling them on their knee using their hands until

[532] Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform*, 7.
[533] Ibid, 9, 10, 11.
[534] Steinbach, *Understanding Victorians*, 12.
[535] Ross, *The Malthus Factor*, 27.
[536] Ibid.
[537] Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform*, 13.

the mesh became loose.'[538] The workers who met in Stevenson Square were placed at Crumpsall Farm to do these tasks in return for relief, as revealed in newspaper reports. The General Outdoor Relief Regulation Order of 1852 extended the Labour Test to include able-bodied unemployed women,[539] who were now, in poverty at least, treated the same as unemployed able-bodied men.

Poverty in Manchester

Poverty as austerity

It is argued by Henderson that when the Cotton Crisis took hold in Lancashire in April 1862, cities such as Manchester and Liverpool, were 'in no hurry to set up Relief Committees, for they did not feel the strain of the Cotton Crisis so soon, or so severely as other towns'.[540] Watts states was not until April 29, 1862, when 'a meeting of gentlemen residents […] was held in the Town Hall' in Manchester to set up such a committee. [541] The majority of those in attendance decided against and the 'view of the gentlemen present appears to have been confined to Manchester, including Salford, which from its cosmopolitan character, must always suffer less in a commercial crises than the surrounding towns'.[542] The men recognised there was 'real suffering' but shared three beliefs 'that the distress was not so great as it was represented to be, that the agencies already at work were sufficient for the occasion and that

[538] "Prisoners Picking Oakum," Prisoner 4099, National Archives.
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/prisoner4099/historical-background/enlarge-oakum.htm
[539] Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform*, 15.
[540] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 75.
[541] Watts, *Facts*, 169.
[542] Watts, *Facts*, 169.

certainly non outside help was needed for Manchester'. [543] It was also felt, Henderson records, that the already existing Manchester and Provident Society could tackle any problems; an organisation established in 1863 for 'the encouragement of industry and frugality; the suppression of mendicancy and imposture, and the occasional relief of sickness and unavoidable misfortune'.[544] The responses to the Cotton Crisis accepted the experience of poverty as inevitably and even disproportionately affecting the unemployed. Henderson notes that the Manchester Relief Committee was eventually, established on June 20, 1862, consisted of prominent Manchester businessmen and ex mayors of the cotton district. He shares the resolution that was passed:

> That the existing distress of the workpeople connected to the cotton trade in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and the well-founded expectation if its increasing intensity as the winter approaches, warrants the Committee in communicating to the various counties, cities and towns of the country, that it is prepared to receive sums that may be subscribed for the object in view, and will give its best attention to the proper and judicious distribution thereof. [545]

Nevertheless, Rose writes, of the Boards of Guardian who were elected to work alongside paid officials, that 'it was alleged they guarded the rates more effectively than they guarded the poor'.[546] The crisis is described by Henderson as 'the most serious with which the Poor Law had to grapple'.[547] On the eve of the Cotton Crisis, Henderson states, the Poor Law Board declared that in the metropolis and in the manufacturing districts all able-bodied men, if allowed relief, were to be set to work by the guardians, a regulation not previously in place in urban

[543] Watts, *Facts*, 169.
[544] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 74.
[545] Ibid.
[546] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 36.
[547] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 74.

districts.[548] Workers meeting in Stevenson Square argued that ‘to pick oakum or to break stones was […] peculiarly unfitted to the cotton operative suddenly shut out from the cotton factory’ because of the nature of the cotton operatives’ profession and the necessity for unblistered and soft hands.[549] In one newspaper report a worker is paraphrased, stating:

> The act of parliament provided that the guardians should find suitable employment in return for the relief. Was it suitable for factory operatives to labour in the open air in all weathers? If it was carried on through the winter the operatives would be absolutely unfitted to return to their former work when trade revived, and so they would become paupers for life.[550]

The Poor Law relief rates were also frequently discussed at meetings and considered inadequate. Further, on April 29, 1862, Waugh recorded, Richard Cobden MP gave a speech in Manchester Town Hall, stating:

> It runs up from one shilling and a half-penny in the pound to one shilling and fourpence or one shilling and fivepence; there is hardly one case in which the allowance is as much as two shillings per week for each individual — I won't call them paupers — each distressed individual. [551]

The severity of the suffering under the Poor Law was disputed. Watts recorded that on May 9 1862 Poor Law Commissioner, Charles Pelham Villiers MP, told the House of Commons that as well as believing there was sufficient action to meet the problem of poverty, he felt confident that ‘the extremity of want and destitutions which had been alluded to did not exist’.[552] While the workers were forced to perform tasks to receive relief, and their experience of poverty was

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[548] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 52.
[549] Ibid, 87.
[550] “The Labour Test in the Manufacturing Districts.” *London Evening Standard*, August 15, 1862.
[551] Waugh, *Home Life*, 135.
[552] Watts, *Facts*, 285.

doubted, they were also accused of fraud. Henderson records that in Manchester in 1863 the Manchester Board of Guardians stated:

> Almost every conceivable variety of fraud, it would appear, has been practised upon the officers of the Board […] Children recently dead have booked as living; children that never existed have been booked; children have been borrowed to make up families; concealment or misrepresentation of wages seems almost to have been the rule in some districts of the city; men, whose regular work was at night, have obtained relief for want of work in the daytime; sick men have been found drunk in bed; men discharged by employers for drunkenness have obtained relief as decent, respectable artisans; persons have left work avowedly because they could get an easier living by charity or parish relief than by work; men have been found who, having work at home, were attending the school or the farm […] the reports referred to have made the Guardians acquainted with the existence, in one district, at least, of an amount of immorality which they had not before heard of, a large number of persons living in adultery having obtained relief as a married couple.[553]

The burden of the economic crisis was most acutely felt by the unemployed cotton workers, but the ideological foundations of the Poor Law meant prioritising judgment of the character of the poor rather than the economic failing of the cotton industry.

Poverty as a moral calling

Analysis of newspapers in this thesis reveals that Rose is accurate in his assessment that the Poor Law was seen as having the potential to do wonders for the moral character of the working man.[554] While Watts compared the managed distribution of relief to a ship's captain putting his crew 'on short allowance to enable them to reach their destined port alive,'[555] unemployed cotton workers resented the precautions taken by the Board of Guardians to prevent fraud and disliked being classed as 'ordinary paupers' and felt leniency should be

[553] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 85.
[554] Rose, Relief of Poverty, 9.
[555] Watts, *Facts*, 230.

shown to ‘the granting of relief to decent workmen who were only temporarily unemployed through no fault of their own’.[556] The unemployed cotton workers were judged and they, in turn, judged other unemployed workers as lesser. It was considered degrading, Rose states, for those unemployed through no fault of their own to be set to work with ‘idle and dissolute paupers’.[557] As such, judgment was passed on those seeking relief by the wealthy and the poor. A further example is the Irish cotton workers, and those of Irish descent, who were often perceived differently to and by the English. Analysis by Busteed and Hodgson shows that in the mid nineteenth-century ‘Lancashire had the greatest number of Irish-born of any county in Great Britain’ with the Irish population of Manchester and Salford at 52,081 or 13.1%.[558] Poor Law Guardians, Busteed further reveals, reported that ‘in the streets of Manchester an immense number of Irish standing at the corners of streets begging’ and warned warning against generosity since they were ‘a most improvident people […] we should be having them in droves’.[559] Further, historians such as Arnold describe ‘improvidence’ as a characteristic of the Irish:

> It is generally said of them that they are thriftless and improvident; that they do not possess the sober perseverance which is a marked characteristic of the English operatives; that they have none of that stubborn pride which cherishes independence - though it be ragged and hungry - as the greatest of treasures. The history of the Cotton Famine does not contradict this view of their condition; for they, be it their fault or their misfortune, have always been the first to swell the relief-lists and the last to leave them.[560]

[556] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 87.
[557] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 132.
[558] Mervyn Busteed and Rob Hodgson, “Irish Migration and Settlement in Nineteenth-century Manchester with Special reference to the Angel Meadow District of 1861,” *Irish Geography*, Vol. 27, 1, (1994): 5.
[559] Busteed, *Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life*, 43.
[560] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 225.

In previous years the Irish had been blamed for the moral degeneration of the Manchester working class. Dr James Philip Kay, an assistant Poor Law commissioner by 1863, had in *The moral and physical condition of the working classes employed in the cotton manufacture in Manchester* singled the Irish out for particular moral judgment. He wrote of the Irish influence on Manchester and Lancashire which is outlined by Busteed:

> Ireland has poured forth the most destitute of her hordes to supply the constantly increasing demand for labour. This immigration has been, in one important respect, a serious evil. The Irish have taught the labouring classes of this country a pernicious lesson […] Debased alike by ignorance and pauperism, they have discovered, with the savage, what is the minimum of the means of life, upon which existence may be prolonged … and this secret has been taught the labourers of this country by the Irish […] the labouring classes have ceased to entertain a laudable pride in furnishing their houses and in multiplying the decent comforts which minister to happiness. What is superfluous to the mere exigencies of life, is too often expended in the tavern; and for the provision of old age and infirmity, they too frequently trust either to charity, or to the protection of the poor laws […] The contagious example which the Irish have exhibited of barbarous habits and savage want of economy, united with the necessarily debasing consequences of uninterrupted toil, have demoralized the people.[561]

Just as the cotton workers distanced themselves from other members of the working class, Rose states that the Poor Law guardians sometimes raised objections to the Labour Test 'since this would mean mixing honest workmen put out of work through no fault of their own with the idle and feckless whose indolent habits they might contract'.[562] It was important the cotton workers saw the crisis as temporary, not the fault of an economic crisis, and that they had a duty in accepting austerity and had, as Farnie explains, 'fallen victim to an act of God, and the operatives were therefore called upon to display heroic fortitude under suffering which was no

[561] Busteed, *The Irish in Manchester c. 1750-1921*, 27.
[562] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 39.

fault of their own or their employers'.[563] The heroic fortitude of unemployed workers was celebrated in the political arena, in speeches and in newspaper reports. Arnold asserts that 'at no period in the history of manufacturing have sufferings so sudden and so severe been borne with so much silent resignation and so much patient self-respect'.[564] The operatives were further described by Watts as suffering in a good cause, and not blaming themselves, the employers or government:

> Where they can, or think they can trace their sufferings home to the conduct of an individual or of a class, the operatives are still a formidable body to deal with; but when trouble is inevitable, being demonstrably due neither to the conduct of employers nor the government; or when they believe they suffer in a good cause, the trouble is borne just as bodily illness would be – patiently, if not stoically, and with a belief that in some way or other, good will come of it.[565]

While Henderson noted 'observers agreed that they bore their suffering with great fortitude'.[566] This fortitude, like charity, is frequently presented in the press as admirable amid an economic inconvenience. It is not just notable historians such as Watts, Arnold and Henderson who accept the moral judgment of the unemployed workers, the newspapers outside Manchester accepted it too. The *Windsor and Eton Express* reported a speech which, to celebratory cheers, heard that 'the public-houses are as desolate as a church on a week-day', adding:

> The calm patience and endurance of the men was beyond all praise. Imagine hundreds of starving men, having at home starving wives and children – sufficiently numerous and powerful, if they acted in unisons, to overpower any police force that could be brought

[563] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 143.
[564] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 113.
[565] Watts, *Facts*, 231.
[566] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 107.

> against them – listlessly wandering about the streets in groups, passing shops well stored with bread, meat, and other provisions, with nothing between them and the supply but glass, and yet not a single pane was broken […] such was the self-control practiced that they belied the proverb 'Hunger will break through stone walls'. They were bright examples of the people of a Christian country. [567]

For the *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 'nothing can exceed the patient and heroic manner in which the poor suffering workers have sustained the terrible privation to which they have been exposed'.[568] The ruling class were seen as providing funds for relief and, as such, worthy of recognition as honest and stable, and of unifying poor and wealthy, as the *Dunfermline Saturday Press* reported a Rev. Mr. Hutchison declaring:

> One result of that terrible scourge of distress […] would be to wipe away the unjust and unworthy jealousies that one class had entertained towards another. The conduct of these brave, patient and heroic men […] was enough to show men in authority that there was a fund of honesty and stability among these men they had never thought before'.[569]

Nevertheless, the Board of Guardians did not treat unemployed cotton workers with more civility. Henderson states that final decisions on relief were made with no chance of appeal, the workhouse was used as a threat, and the police were on hand to remove any applicant who argued.[570] Even before the Cotton Crisis, Henriques argues, the Poor Law Guardians were 'disingenuous in publicising their policies, introducing propaganda amounting to large-scale humbug [and] brushed aside evidence which conflicted with their preconceived notions [that] the Poor Laws created pauperism' and had a 'determination to believe that poverty among the able-bodied arose from the vice of idleness [which] inhibited for generations attempts to get at

[567] "The Distress in the Cotton Districts Meeting at the Town Hall, Windsor," *Windsor and Eton Express*, November 22, 1862, 3.
[568] *Lincolnshire Echo*, December 5, 1862, 5.
[569] "Local Intelligence,"*Dunfermline Saturday Press*, December 27, 1862, 2.
[570] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 108.

the real causes of unemployment.[571] While stoicism was celebrated and the poor were not overtly blamed directly for the cause of poverty, judgment of behaviour continued and impacted on relief distribution. Included in Dr Buchanan's report on the *Health of the Distressed Operatives* as outlined by Henderson with considerations for crime rates, illegitimate births, prostitution and sexually transmitted diseases deemed relevant in assessing the experience of poverty. Buchanan concluded: crime was not above the average in the cotton districts, and the operatives were given credit for this; venereal disease appeared to be in excess in certain areas; registered births of illegitimate children rose during 1862 and 1863 then dropped in 1864; and there was 'more youthful prostitution than known for the last twenty five years'. [572] Watts revels that the relief committee chose to reduce the amount distributed to 'abolish drunkenness' so it provided tickets to give to shopkeepers arguing that 'this class of the population still retained its old character, the publicans obtaining a large portion of the money which ought to have provided food for suffering wives and children'. [573]

Both Marx and Engels saw in Manchester the potential for revolution, as the cotton operatives faced persecution for their poverty amid an economic crisis but, Hunt argues, they were instead 'to become a symbol of the mid-Victorian settlement and patted on the head for the dignified resolve with which they endured their poverty [with] an exemplary display of self-control in the interests of a great moral calling'.[574]

[571] Henriques, *How Cruel*, 367, 369.
[572] Henderson*, Cotton Famine*, 107, 105, 106.,
[573] Watts, *Facts*, 263.
[574] Hunt, *Frock-Coated Communist*, 199.

Poverty as unifier

It is perhaps unsurprising then that, as Kiesling states, alternative avenues were tried before workers applied for relief because they were 'horrified at being branded a pauper by accepting public relief'.[575] Henderson further asserts that unemployed operatives in Manchester and beyond preferred a reliance on charity to relief and further posits that Manchester was late to react to poverty because it was believed the city 'with her varied industry and large charitable resources, was very indisposed to believe that famine was at the gates'.[576] This charity is often presented as creating city-wide, regional, national and international unity in response to the crisis facing the poor. Arnold, writing at the time, asserted that 'it has been a result of the Cotton Famine to bring together, with a good and common object, men who had not hitherto been seen acting in co-operation'.[577] Further, he described funds raised at Manchester Town Hall in December 1862 as 'a satisfactory and conclusive reply to those who had reproached the magnates of Lancashire with a too-willing avoidance of their proper obligations'.[578] Answering the call for donations and the generosity of donors was often celebrated in the media and among politicians. The generosity of the wealthy in attendance is also reported nationally after a County Meeting held in Manchester on December 2. At this meeting Tory politician Lord Derby gave a speech in which he described the £130,000 raised as 'the contribution of a single county, at a single meeting, to a single object, it is certainly without parallel in our history and without example in any other nation'.[579] This generosity is presented

[575] Kiesling, *Institutional Choice*, 79.
[576] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 121.
[577] Ibid, 188.
[578] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 188.
[579] "The Distress in Lancashire," *Downpatrick Recorder*, December 6, 1862, 2; "The Meeting in Lancashire," *Dublin Evening Mail*, December 3, 1862, 2; "The Cotton Famine The County Meeting," *Sheffield Independent*, December 4,

considered by Watts to be forthcoming from all classes. Watts wrote 'whilst bread was plentiful and cheap [Lancashire] all had the evidences of famine except fever and pestilence; and these were only prevented by the extraordinary liberality by which the universal public, from the Queen on the throne to the brigade of shoeblacks who ply their vocation in the streets of the metropolis, met the cry of distress and rushed to its relief.[580] Amid the celebrations of unity in crisis, while the unemployed operatives bore the brunt, the manufacturing district referred to as 'Cottonborough' is described as 'fortunate in having many wealthy residents, many local relief committees, and a Poor Law administered with humanity'. [581] Charity is presented as abundant and an answer to the crisis.

This unifying act of charity and raising of essential funds for relief, however, existed against a backdrop of the ideological Poor Law and the restrictions on relief enforced by Guardians. It is also posited by Hewitt that the middle class response – that of the friendly societies, credit providers, and burial societies – was intended to encourage thrift, self-reliance and so reduce the burden on charitable institutions[582]. Soup kitchens were organised by manufacturers, but these manufacturers were often also the workers' landlords, some who chose not to press for cottage rents.[583] Watts writes of a ladies' committee which was founded in Manchester, with funding raised to release the pawned clothing of the 'almost naked operatives', and it had to be explained that, 'was a satin gown or a dress coat of so much use in

1862, 4; "The Cotton Famine and the Distress in Lancashire," *Preston Chronicle*, December 6, 1862, 3; *West Surrey Times*, December 6, 1862, 2.
[580] Watts, *Facts*, 230.
[581] Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 161.
[582] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 173.
[583] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 68.

an operative's household as the five or ten shillings that could be borrowed?'. [584] Arnold describes cotton workers as wearing clothing 'that had seen better days, perhaps when it had adorned some London dandy, or covered the comfortable proportions of some wealthy country gentleman'.[585] Henderson writes of a young philanthropist whose reputation benefited when he raised money to start a sewing school for unemployed women and girls, and raised £104 within two weeks following an appeal in *The Times.*[586] *The Daily Telegraph* gave the opportunity for those wealthy enough to donate to be publicly celebrated when donations, however small, were listed to bring 'the satisfaction of a gratuitous acknowledgement' of the donation.[587] Charitable donations were also inconsistent and unreliable. By summer 1862, as outlined earlier, there was a complaint that manufacturers were not doing their duty'[588] and they had 'shunned the subscriptions list'[589] to provide much-needed relief to the poor. It is further argued by Gurney that the 'middle class charitable initiatives stepped in to meet this emergency in order to prop up the norm of consumption of working-class consumers'.[590] Meanwhile, some cotton workers with limited income, helped each other with those still in employment contributing to the relief funds, according to Henderson.[591] It was also suggested by Toole that operatives who had fought to improve conditions in the factories were also fully

[584] Watts, *Facts*, 179.
[585] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 197.
[586] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 72.
[587] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 199.
[588] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 110.
[589] Ibid.
[590] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 260.
[591] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 73.

aware that industrial conflict was not lessened after job losses.'[592] A *London Evening Standard* correspondent reported:

> […] few persons conversant with the industrial history of the kingdom will readily forget the fatal episode of 1853, when upwards of 18, 000 operatives were suddenly reduced to a state of ruin and misery in consequence of their vain and short-sighted attempts at enforcing their own terms upon the acceptance of various mill owners […] strikes were of frequent occurrence amongst the misguided artisans of the North […] more than 36,000 operatives joined in the fierce and senseless onslaught against capital, and voluntarily endured the anguish of their self-inflicted misery […] and to the unprecedented privations undergone by the luckless workers during this period may fairly be attributed much of their present inability to meet the crisis which now threatens them with irremediable ruin. The lesson has been a severe one and it is to be sincerely hoped that its teachings will not be wholly lost upon the poor and miserable sufferers.[593]

The threat of unity among workers, and a shared recognition of their burden in the form of class consciousness, was also apparent to other journalists, including Confederate propagandist Henry Hotze who, outlined earlier, concluded, 'the only class which as a class continues actively inimical to us ... They look upon us, and ... upon slavery as the author and source of their present miseries'.[594] Further, the unity of the charitable response across classes and among workers was not welcomed by all. Sir Charles Trevelyan, assistant secretary to the Treasury during the Great Hunger in Ireland, and finance minister from 1862 to 1865, argued that when 'labour and charity are mixed up together, great abuse and demoralisation are

[592] Toole, *Workers and Slaves*, 171.
[593] *London Evening Standard*, December 5, 1862, 3.
[594] McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 47.

always engendered. Corruptio optimi pessima.[595] It was so in the Irish Famine. It was so in the Cotton Famine'.[596]

Poverty as opportunity

Poverty under the New Poor Law was not just, as outlined earlier, to work 'wonders for the moral character of the working man,[597] but also, under the Cotton Crisis, to create opportunities for the poor, which included emigration and the establishment of educational training schools.[598]

Arguments for emigration were presented as an opportunity to escape poverty and to ease the poverty of those who would remain. Marx did not see emigration as an opportunity and, in outlining the earlier movement of workers into the cotton districts, and stating he is using the very words of the cotton manufacturers, he wrote:

> Agents were appointed with the consent of the Poor Law Commissioners. ... An office was set up in Manchester, to which lists were sent of those workpeople in the agricultural districts wanting employment, and their names were registered in books. The manufacturers attended at these offices, and selected such persons as they chose; when they had selected such persons as their 'wants required', they gave instructions to have them forwarded to Manchester, and they were sent, ticketed like bales of goods, by canals, or with carriers, others tramping on the road, and many of them were found on the way lost and half-starved. This system had grown up unto a regular trade. This House will hardly believe it, but I tell them, that this traffic in human flesh was as well kept up, they were in effect as regularly sold to these [Manchester] manufacturers as slaves are sold to the cotton-grower in the United States.... In 1860, 'the cotton trade was at its zenith.' ... The manufacturers again found that they were short of hands.... They applied to the 'flesh agents, as they are called.[599]

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[595] Meaning 'the corruption of the best is the worst of all'. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/corruptio%20optimi%20pessima
[596] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 66.
[597] Rose, Relief of Poverty, 9.
[598] Claire Evans, *Making of the feminine*, 248.
[599] Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, chapter 10, 180.

The statement is that the operatives' experience at home is comparable to the slavery being fought against in the American Civil War, stating they were 'regularly sold to these manufacturers as slaves are sold to cotton growers in the United States'[600]. These arguments included some mill owners who discouraged it, and so revealed the difference of interests for capital and labour.[601] Ellison's research revealed that agents were sent by the American Federal government and private Northern companies keen 'to popularize the idea of emigration and help fill the acute labour shortage'.[602] To make an impact on reducing the numbers receiving relief, however, Arnold has argued, that 'it would have been necessary to provide for the emigration of at least fifty thousand.[603] The Manchester Emigration Society was established in April 1863 and helped 1,000 workers to emigrate and it is estimated by Henderson that in 1862 18,244 emigrated from the cotton districts overall.[604] The colonies benefited from emigration that did take place, with committees set up to, Ellison notes, specifically serve Australia, New Zealand, America and Canada who were, 'eager to attract skilled operatives sickened by the degradation and poverty attendant on living off relief'.[605] Henderson's research reveals that Victoria and Queensland set aside £50, 000 and Canterbury had £10, 000 to induce suitable persons to emigrate but that criticism to the opportunity for emigration was that cotton operatives were not wanted for their skills but needed as pioneer farmers capable of bringing new lands into cultivation. [606] Further, what was presented as an opportunity to escape poverty

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[600] Jon Elster, *An Introduction to Karl Marx*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 153.
[601] Evans, *Making of the feminine*, 248.
[602] Ellison, *Support for Secession*, 193.
[603] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 265.
[604] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 118.
[605] Ellison, *Support for Secession*, 252.
[606] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 117, 118.

was, for women at least, Evans suggests, a recognition that 'a movement of women to the colonies could redress the unsatisfactory sex ratio' and that 'women had a socio-moral role' and would have a 'humanizing and refining' effect.[607] As such, Evans reveals, official guidelines from November 1863, stated that single women, without their parents or illegitimate children, were preferred above other unemployed workers, married women or single men.[608]

The opportunity was not available to all, if legislators or employers did not wish it to happen. Working men seeking emigration were sometimes rejected as Henderson's research shows. For example, the Lancashire and Cheshire Operatives Relief Fund (otherwise known as the Mansion House Fund) was established in May 1862 and, in 1864, gave money to the Victorian Emigrants' Assistance Society, the Carlisle Emigration Society and the Manchester Emigration Society, but later rejected a similar request for such assistance from 150 Blackburn working men who had petitioned the organisation for funds to go to Australia.[609] Henderson further posits that those keen to emigrate found that it was 'steadfastly resisted by their employers' who they imagined wanted to reduce wages permanently by keeping 'a stock of superfluous labour'.[610] Marx supports this viewpoint, writing in *Capital* of the Relief Committees:

> […] acted as watch-dogs, at the same time, the manufacturers acted in secret agreement with the government to hinder emigration as much as possible, partly to retain in readiness the capital invested in the flesh and blood of the labourers, and partly to safeguard the house-rent squeezed out of the labourers.[611]

[607] Evans, *Making of the feminine*, 252.
[608] Ibid.
[609] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 79, 117.
[610] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 110.
[611] Marx, *Capital, Volume 3*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1894-c3/ch06.htm.

Some workers' newspapers dissuaded readers from emigrating to America which, Foner argues, was presented as 'being on the verge of ruin'[612] but, Erickson posits, after the crisis, overproduction was still considered by trade unionists to be 'a chronic cause of distress which emigration would alleviate'.[613] Henderson reveals that the 'Executive of the Associated Cotton Spinners issued a circular to its members stating that a large emigration of factory labour was still necessary[614]'.

Education was also presented as an opportunity. Educational and sewing schools were allowed under the Denison's Act of 1855 with Guardians permitted to start schools or pay for the education of recipients of outdoor relief.[615] Thomas Evans at meetings in Stevenson Square repeatedly argued that an educational test should replace the Labour Test allowing workers to attend school instead of picking oakum or breaking rocks. This type of debate, Watts posit, excited some of the board and that these schools 'might sometimes be seen the spectacle of youths with their fathers and grandfathers, all learning to read and write in the same class' and that 'the effects upon the minds of the people by these efforts were most exhilarating and heartfelt'. [616] Meetings in Stevenson Square were also held to plead the right to education for in return for relief. Hewitt writes:

> […] they proposed a 'school test' or 'learning test' whereby recipients of relief would attend adult schools to learn basic literacy and crafts such as carpentry and sewing. The resolution was accepted by Manchester Board of Governors […] empty mills were converted into schoolrooms and teachers recruited on a voluntary basis. One of the

[612] Foner, *British Labor*, 103.
[613] Charlotte Erickson, "The Encouragement of Emigration by Trade Unions, 1850-1900," *Population Studies*, 3, No. 3 (1949), 251.
[614] Erickson, *Encouragement of Emigration*, 251.
[615] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 89.
[616] Watts, *Facts*, 202.

> converted buildings in Manchester was located in City Road, Hulme, and became known as the Institute for the Unemployed.[617]

The bourgeoisie were celebrated for their contribution to famine relief and educational opportunities. Among the wealthy, Hewitt posits, some were seen as 'benevolent and supportive of members of the working class, especially those individuals attempting to lift themselves out of poverty and ignorance' with Manchester's working class specifically described as 'resolute and determined to engage in self-improvement activities to raise themselves out of poverty and ignorance'.[618]

As such, it remained significant that workers took individual responsibility for their experience of poverty. The Board of Guardians were presented as managing a working poor whose moral behaviour needed control particularly amid fears of degeneration caused by the experience of poverty. As such, the poor were challenged to react appropriately to poverty as opposed to the poverty itself being challenged. The wealthy, meanwhile, as a group and as individuals were celebrated for financial and charitable contributions providing the suggestion of unity, a sense of the city of Manchester and the manufacturing district of Lancashire sharing the experience, despite a lack of subscriptions and the necessity for the poor to help each other. The chance to emigrate was presented as positive, despite hindrances to that supposed opportunity from bosses and from the demands of capital in the colonies in the form of preferring female or youthful labour. Further educational opportunities may have excited the

[617] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 76.
[618] Ibid, 10, 76.

Board of Guardians but were again placing the onus on the individual worker to find ways to deal with their poverty in a broader economic crisis.

CHAPTER SIX: Political agitation amid poverty

Political agitation organised and conducted by cotton operatives in Manchester was taking place beyond Stevenson Square. This section will consider recorded responses to the New Year's Eve meeting of 1862 and to the Stalybridge Riot (in chronological order) to offer broader context to the attitudes of contemporaries and of historians to poverty and protest during the Cotton Crisis. Both events are chosen because they are well-documented and analysed; the riot as a revolt against poverty and the New Year's Eve meeting as an indication of interest of workers beyond poverty, but both connected to the political and economic significance of the Cotton Crisis.

Free Trade Hall meeting supporting the Emancipation Proclamation

On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free the slaves in the Confederate states. Lincoln had been elected the sixteenth President of the United States in 1860, on a platform opposing the further extension of slavery in the territories and its abolition in the South.[619] The night before the Proclamation was issued, on New Year's Eve 1862, news reports state that between 4,000 and 6,000 people attended a meeting at Manchester Free Trade Hall in support. [620] The meeting was one of many in 1862, in the run up to the issuing of the Proclamation, but is described by Foner as 'the most famous of them all'.[621] Foner further states that a committee of working-men's associations had raised the necessary

[619] Foner, *British Labor*, 123.
[620] Heartfield, *British Workers and US Civil War*, 21.
[621] Foner, *British Labor*, 39.

thirty pounds to hire the Free Trade Hall for the evening.[622] The meeting had been called by Edward Hooson and John C Edwards, who are described by Blackett as two working men and radical working-class figures active in political reform causes.[623] An advertisement in the *Manchester Guardian* had stated the meeting's intentions 'to adopt an address to President Lincoln' for the 'abolition of slavery and maintenance of the American Union'. Newspaper reports at the time, as researched by historians, stated that Edwards and Hooson were joined on the platform by Thomas Evans, a former weaver, and other notable attendees included John Watts, author of *Facts of the Cotton Famine* and Thomas H Barker, who wrote the Address to Lincoln.[624] There was also Thomas Bazley, a prosperous cotton spinner and merchant, said to be instrumental in founding the Manchester Cotton Company in 1861 and Manchester Liberal MP.[625] Also a former slave who had escaped from Confederate President Jefferson Davis, listed as 'President Davis's escaped coachman'[626] whose name was William Andrew Jackson, a man who toured Britain sharing his experience.[627] Hewitt states that speakers compared the plight of the textile workers to that of plantation slaves, highlighting long hours, unhealthy conditions in homes owned by manufacturing bosses, and it was claimed that what united the factory workers in Manchester with the slave in the Southern States of America was exploitation.[628]

The *Manchester Guardian* reported two resolutions which were adopted. The first resolution was put by J C Edwards:

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[622] Foner, *British Labor*, 39.
[623] Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 82.
[624] Ibid, 82.
[625] Foner, *British Labor*, 118.
[626] "Address from Working Men to President Lincoln," *Manchester Guardian*, January 1, 1863, 8.
[627] Black, *Divided Hearts*, 187.
[628] Hewitt, *Protest and Crime*, 76.

> That this meeting, recognising the common brotherhood of man-kind, and the sacred and inalienable right of every human being to personal freedom and equal protection, records its detestation of negro slavery in America, and of the attempt of the rebellious Southern slave-holders to organise on the great American continent a nation having slavery as its basis.[629]

Seconding, the resolution Thomas Evans, a regular attendee to meetings in Stevenson Square, said he hoped:

> When the history of this calamity should be penned, one bright chapter would tell that on New Year's Eve there was a great meeting in Manchester in which the voice of thousands of artisans were heard saying, Onward, ye freemen of the North and Downward, ye Southern men who want slavery (applause). Hitherto the people of the cotton districts had been drawing their livelihood in a co-operative system of slavery. He hoped they would draw out of it that night (hear, hear).' The resolution was adopted unanimously with acclamation.[630]

The second resolution, put by Edward Hooson, was reportedly adopted with two or three dissenters and seconded by James McMasters. It read:

> That this meeting composed mainly of the industrial classes of Manchester, desires to record its profound sympathy with the efforts of President Lincoln and his colleagues to maintain the American Union in its integrity and also its high sense of the justice of his proclamation of emancipation, and other measures tending at once to give freedom to the slaves and restore peace to the American Nation.[631]

Reporting the support for Emancipation

The class character of the meetings is not uncritically accepted in contemporary newspaper reports with debates about misleading behaviour of those in attendance. Under the headline 'Demonstration Performed for Working Men' the *Leeds Intelligencer*, under the headline 'Demonstrations Performed for Working Men', considered the Free Trade Hall

[629] "Address from Working Men to President Lincoln', *Manchester Guardian*, January 1, 1863, 8.
[630] Ibid.
[631] Ibid.

meeting, and added, ‘let us turn to the subject generally of what are called ‘working-men’s demonstrations’:

> The demonstrations are certainly calculated, most of anything, to do injury to the operatives themselves, especially as they are liable to be taken to represent a much larger section of the operatives than they really do. The speakers are usually a few ambitious, and fluent, and, (may we not add self-conceited) members of the operative class.[632]

A letter published in the *Manchester Guardian* describes the scene outside Manchester Free Trade Hall on the night:

> […] a man came up to me and gave me the enclosed card, and asked me whether I would go in. I saw the same thing done to passers-by, loiterers, etc. I should think curiosity, or the expectation of excitement must have taken the majority there […] I am sure a feeling that either the abolition of slavery, liberty or free-trade would result from the maintenance of the Union, and the policy of the North, could lead few to sympathise with or take part in such a gathering.[633]

The *Manchester Courier* described the meeting as ‘a very artfully contrived enterprise' claiming the Mayor of Manchester being in attendance to take the chair was ‘much too laboured’. [634] The *Manchester Guardian* sarcastically said it could not ‘allow such practiced hands at agitation as Messrs J. C. Edwards and H. Hooson to do themselves an injustice’ before mocking what it described as an ‘who would have thought of seeing you here air’ with which the Mayor took the chair. [635]

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[632] “Demonstrations Performed for Working Men,” *Leeds Intelligencer*, January 3, 1863, 5.
[633] “Correspondence,” *Manchester Guardian*, January 2, 1863, 5.
[634] “Summary,” *Manchester Courier*, January 3, 1863, 6.
[635] *Manchester Guardian*, January 2, 1863, 2.

However, elsewhere, the Free Trade Hall attendees were described in *The Times* as a 'half-starved working men'.[636] The *Manchester Guardian* acknowledged its organisers were 'two working men'.[637] The *Coventry Herald* reported:

> The Manchester operatives have taken a very noble line on the Slavery question. They well know that the war deprives them of their living, and that the policy of the North in refusing to permit the extension of Slavery is the cause of war. This has, in great measure, nerved them to endure the misery they have suffered with fortitude.[638]

The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* reported that the meeting was made up of 'working class men' and 'their eloquent address […] appear to have struck the pro-slavery governing class dumb'.[639] The newspaper goes on to add that 'the *Daily News*, the honest organ of the Radicals of England, gives the people the full advantage of their patriotic conduct, and bravely pleads for them as the only class in the country who have faithfully stood by the grand old traditional sympathy of England with the oppressed all over the world'.[640] The *Independent* wrote about meetings as 'crowded with working men who adopted by acclamation addresses to President Lincoln'[641]. Some newspapers chose to put working men of Manchester in quotes (*Newcastle Journal*, *Penny Despatch and Irish Weekly Newspaper*, *Carlow Post*) while others do not (*Dundee Advertiser*, *Westmorland Gazette*, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, *Morning Post*) which could suggest minor edits made to syndicated copy to remove the quotes. It was equally emphasised at the time that 'the speeches […] were mostly from working men' who were 'able and

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[636] "The Relief of the Distress in Lancashire," *The Times*, February 5, 1863, 5.
[637] Foner, *British Labor*, 39.
[638] *Coventry Herald*, January 9, 1863, 4.
[639] *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, January 5, 1863, 3.
[640] Ibid.
[641] "The American War," *Sheffield Independent*, January 3, 1863, 7.

eloquent'.[642] The *Liverpool Daily Post* described the event as 'one of the most startling meetings ever held in that modern city, and added, 'the working men of Manchester refused to remain any longer silent' and questioned the motives of 'the Manchester paper', likely a reference to the *Manchester Guardian*, publishing:

> The Manchester paper understood to reflect the views of the more wealthy manufacturers […] an excellent journal, but it failed to affect the free opinion of workingmen, placed by their own industry and the peculiarity of their position in a situation to give free and full expression of their opinions. The Free Trade Hall […] contained some five thousand of those resolute men […] There was no difficulty in preserving order.[643]

The *London Daily News* described a 'crowded and enthusiastic meeting' which had been 'organised by the working classes but there was a large attendance of the middle-class as well as working men'[644]

It is worth briefly considering one notable challenge to the working class character of the New Year's Eve meeting put by historian Mary Ellison who intentionally set out to 'correct the lingering misconception' that cotton workers refused to support the Confederacy and for whom any suggestion of class consciousness of the workers is dismissed as a myth.[645] For Ellison, relying upon the reports in the *Guardian* and *Courier*, this meeting was carefully arranged rather than spontaneous and is referred to as 'that famous delusory gathering of working men created' which created 'an artificial but lasting impression of sincere working-class support for the North'. [646] Ellison concludes that after the meeting 'sentiments voiced there

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[642] Foner, *British Labor*, 40.
[643] "Something Startling," *Liverpool Daily Post*, January 3, 1863, 4.
[644] "Condemnation of the American Rebellion," *London Daily News*, January 2, 1863, 3.
[645] Ellison, *Support for Secession*, ix.
[646] Ibid, 183.

were for many years and in many places taken to typify the feelings of operatives not only in Manchester but throughout Lancashire; myths are easily born but are of an unconscionable time dying'.[647] Peter d'A Jones in supporting Ellison's conclusion argues:

> […] the myth was born in propaganda and survived, because like all myths that endure, it told people what they wanted to be believed. The structure of this particular myth is modestly complex. It has at least three sides, three satisfied audiences: the English Radical-Liberals who needed the myth to help them fight the battle for parliamentary reform at home; Marx and Engels, for whose world view the myth was expedient and fitting; and Americans, deeply concerned, as always, with their national identity […] the myth of the noble worker, supporting the Union, against the slave-power despite the distress caused by the cotton famine, was born on the spot and at the time.[648]

However, this account is challenged, dismissed as revisionist by historians such as Foner, Blackett and Heartfield, and Ellison is accused of 'writing the working class out of history' and failing to understand the difference between middle class radicalism and working class agitation. [649]

Stalybridge Riot

Stalybridge is a town eight miles east of central Manchester which Gurney argues was one of the hardest hit by the Cotton Crisis because it relied heavily on cotton supplies.[650] This does not, though, stop the press from questioning the acts of the workers in rioting and their lack of gratitude for relief. The Stalybridge Riots of March 20, 1863 saw, according to Henderson, a brief, violent uprising against the local Relief Committee, when workers refused to accept a ticket in relief instead of cash.[651] Rose posits that the committee had decided to pay

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[647] Ellison, *Support for Secession*, 183.
[648] Ibid, 200.
[649] Heartfield, *British Workers and the US Civil War*, 35.
[650] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 264.
[651] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 111.

in tickets rather than cash because of allegations of relief being spent in beer houses and it had also decided to hold back a day's pay as a condition of good behaviour.[652] A crowd went to a mill where 'an unpopular member of the committee' was partner, and smashed windows and damaged machinery. [653] In language which is judgmental, using mob and loot, Henderson, writes, 'having beaten off police the mob looted the clothing store of the Relief Committee'.[654] Rose writes that the workers are also recorded to have broken the windows of a grocer's shop owned by a member of the relief committee and took £800 of goods.[655] Henderson writes that goods were also taken from a chemist's and an 'eating house' and that windows at the police station were smashed.[656] After about two hours, Rose writes, the Hussars arrived from Manchester, the Riot Act was read and the crowd dispersed.[657] Of the 89 arrested a third were women, and 29 people were sent to Chester for trial the following day on charges of riot and felony where crowds tried to release prisoners, according to Gurney.[658] Oddy has argued that the cause of the riot was less about desperation than the 'continuing friction between operatives and local Relief Committees composed frequently of vulgar, ill-bred men, proud of the brief authority with which their duties invested them'.[659] Henderson, meanwhile, asserts that Marx 'was naturally delighted when riots broke out in Stalybridge'.[660]

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[652] Rose, Michael E (1977), "Rochdale Man and the Stalybridge Riot: The Relief and Control of the Unemployed during the Lancashire Cotton Famine," In *Social Control in Nineteenth-century Britain* edited by Donajgrodzki, A P, (Croom Helm Ltd, 1977), 194.
[653] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 111.
[654] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 111.
[655] Rose, *Rochdale Man*, 194.
[656] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 111.
[657] Rose, *Rochdale Man*, 194.
[658] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 285.
[659] Oddy, *Urban Famine*, 75, Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 254.
[660] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 214.

Reporting the Stalybridge riot

The Home Office had reassured the nation in 1861 that Manchester showed 'no disposition to riot' while 'the underlying fear of the working class was evident'. [661] Toward the end of 1862, however, concern grew at increasing political agitation. Research by Richard N Price reveals that a police constable was murdered in Ashton, a town near to Staybridge, by an armed group he had caught destroying bricks as part of organised agitation in the brickmaking trade and their defence was funded by their union.[662] After the Stalybridge riots of March 1863, newspaper reports reveals that a strike broke out at Crumpsall Farm, where workers were sent to carry out the obligations set out by the Labour Test. There were also growing calls at meetings in Stevenson Square, studied in this thesis, for the complete abolition, rather than modifications, of the Labour Test. The *Manchester Guardian* described the riot as 'the single marked exception to the peaceable and orderly demeanour of the whole of our manufacturing population'.[663] *The Times*, however, suggested the riot was a reason to further promote emigration, writing 'Spend money to disperse them. Otherwise they will be converted into a mob of sturdy beggars and truculent paupers'.[664] The *London Daily News* published a column from a correspondent reading, 'I deeply regret that such a blot should have been cast upon the reputation of the Lancashire operatives as a peaceful and law-abiding people, during a season of bitter trial' adding 'I do not believe the infection will spread; on the contrary, I am persuaded

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[661] David Kent, "Containing Disorder in the 'Age of Equipoise': troops, trains and the telegraph," *Social History*, Volume 38, 3 (August, 2013), 313.
[662] Richard N Price, "The Other Face of Respectability Violence in the Manchester Brickmaking Trade," *Past & Present*, No. 66, (February, 1975): 130.
[663] Rose, *Rochdale Man*, 193,
[664] Ibid.

that the great mass of the manufacturing population will be more resolute than ever to show their gratitude for the help which has been given to them'. [665]

Individual responsibility, proper behaviour and gratitude for relief was the way to keep 'the mob' in place but so was reducing that relief. The *Western Times* asserted that 'the Stalybridge riot is a strike against charity of the worst kind. It is an ill omen that disturbances of the public peace would have begun in a town where relief has been most liberally administered, and privation, in consequence, most lightly felt'.[666] The *Liverpool Daily Post* special correspondent shared concerns that 'further disturbances are feared tomorrow if the decision of the relief committee should be averse to the wishes of the mob'.[667] The *Hull Packet* reported, 'the Stalybridge riots are to be regretted not only because of the destruction of property they have occasioned and the feeling of insecurity they have aroused in the town it[…] but also because of the effect the must have in checking the stream of charity still flowing towards Lancashire and because of the false impression they are likely to convey of the feeling generally prevalent among the unemployed operatives'.[668] Nevertheless, the *Manchester Guardian* stated that relief in the town was 'too high, when compared with that generally prevailing, and it had become absolutely necessary to reduce it' adding that 'rival committees were running a race in a similar destructive liberality'. [669] Generosity, then, was creating a lack of gratitude among the unemployed workers. Meanwhile, in Stevenson Square a gathering heard a worker state that 'the riot at Stalybridge was but the sounding of tocsin, which would

[665] "The Riots at Stalybridge," *London Daily News*, March 23, 1863, 5.
[666] "Public Opinion," *Western Times*, March 25, 1863, 2.
[667] "The Stalybridge Riots," *Liverpool Daily Post*, March 23, 1863, 5.
[668] "The Stalybridge Riots, The Prospects of the Operatives," *Hull Packet*, March 27, 1863, 8.
[669] "Summary of News," *Manchester Guardian*, March 24, 1863, 2.

reverberate throughout the whole of the county unless […] the nation came to the assistance of the county'.[670] The reporting, often from correspondents, is overall one of checking the behaviour of the famished workers and an insistence on gratitude for relief with an undercurrent of warning that the mob is out of hand.

Press as a means of social control

It is clear from names provided, the advertisement placed, the motions reported, that meetings in Stevenson Square and beyond were made up of unemployed cotton operatives and other workers. It is also clear that whether organised or sudden, the manner of the meetings and the attendees were judged and doubted. As asserted by newspaper historian Alan Lee, 'because the newspaper was considered was such an important channel of communication it was also recognised as a form of social control' with declarations in the 1830s of 'the more newspapers, the fewer rioters' and that repeal of duties would mean 'the working man would cease to have to resort to the public house in order to read a newspaper'.[671] Access to newspapers, then, was seen as being able to curb drinking and rioting among the working class. Lees writes that in the 1830s English statesmen Lord Lytton declared:

> Large classes of men entertain certain views on matters of policy, trade or morals. A newspaper supports itself by addressing these classes; it brings to light all the knowledge requisite to enforce or illustrate the view of its supporters; it embodies also the prejudice, the passion and the sectarian bigotry that belong to one body of men engaged in active opposition to another. It is, therefore, the organ of opinion; expressing at once the truth, the errors, the good and the bad of the prevalent opinion it represents.[672]

[670] "Serious Riots at Stalybridge," *Manchester Courier*, March 28, 1863, 7, 10.
[671] Lee, *Origins*, 27.
[672] Lee, *Origins*, 27.

Jameson recognised in critiquing nineteenth-century novels, it was with 'increasing urbanization […] more strikingly around northern industrial towns like Manchester, an extensive subgenre emerged, devoted to investigating urban horrors and unveiling the city's poverty and filth for a primary middle class readership'.[673] So too with journalism.

Edwin Waugh's *Home-Life of the Lancashire Factory Folk* was first serialised in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* in 1862 and it is suggested by Gurney that his 'sharply drawn vignettes certainly humanised the unemployed, evoking sympathy for families whose homes were disintegrating before their eyes'.[674] Waugh's narrative journalism featured details of unemployed cotton workers selling newspapers 'trying to make an honest penny in this manner till better days return' and of unemployed operatives from Manchester travelling to Wigan 'wandering away to beg where they would not be known'.[675] It was able, Oddy argues, to gain 'the attraction of suffering nobly borne for Victorian philanthropy'.[676] Further, the 'Letters of a Lancashire Lad', first appearing in *The Times* on April 14, 1862, pleaded the cause of the distressed operatives and, for Waugh at least, 'there is no doubt that his letters in *The Times*, and to the Lord Mayor of London, led to the Mansion House Fund'.[677] The letters were also considered 'a source of danger', according to Rose,[678] at a time when 'indiscriminate charitable giving had, it was felt, done much to pauperise East London […] and a similar fate might befall Lancashire unless private as well as public aid could be distributed in a regulated manner' but the 'Letters of a Lancashire Lad' saw donations 'pour in from other parts of Britain and the

[673] Choi, *Writing the Victorian City*, 562.
[674] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 279.
[675] Waugh, *Home Life*, 147.
[676] Oddy, *Urban Famine*, 7.
[677] Waugh, *Home Life*, 147.
[678] Rose, *Rochdale Man*, 190.

world'.[679] Vivid depictions also found a place in American newspapers. The *New York Times* sought famine relief for Lancashire from a position of political solidarity. On November 8, 1862, under the headline 'Our Friends in England A Practical Suggestion', it first acknowledged the political support of Lancashire workers and then asked for sympathy by means of famine relief, reporting:

> […] an immense assemblage of these poor men in Manchester -- thousands of them gaunt with long-endured hunger, and who had left hovels where their wives and children were starving to death -- uttered their shrill cheers for America. […] The accounts which reach us from Lancashire, and other manufacturing districts, of the prevailing and spreading want, famine and suffering, are heart-rending. […] Would it not be a magnificent thing for the people of these States, even in this, our great day of National trial, to send these our poor friends in England, a contribution, -- to offer them a ship-load of corn and wheat out of the God-given bounties of our land? Our country is rent by an unprecedented war, but it could spare a gift of a hundred ship-loads of produce. […] At present we simply throw out the suggestion for the consideration of the Chamber of Commerce, the Corn Exchange, and the open-handed merchants of New-York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and other cities.[680]

This suggestion led directly to the arrival of the 'George Griswold' famine relief ship. People were called upon to support 'the stand taken by the poor of England, even though disfranchised, had influenced the ruling classes, and that without this support the North might well have been involved in war with England and France and possibly Russia!' with only one questioning the plans stating, 'the distressed workmen were surrounded by plenty; all branches of English trade, with the exception of cotton, were flourishing, and as a last resort of England could appeal to the government.[681] On January 9, 1863, the new 200-foot-long George

[679] Rose, *Rochdale Man*, 190.
[680] "Our Friends in England, A Practical Suggestion," *New York Times*, November 8, 1862.
[681] Maynard, *Mission of the George Griswold*, 293.

Griswold, flying the Union Jack, was loaded with donations and was towed down the Bay of New York to cheers from spectators and saluted by docked British vessels.[682] Maynard writes that the ship's master, Captain George Lunt, served without pay, and a New York pilot volunteered to take the ship out of New York harbour .[683] Watts wrote that the Liverpool authorities, where the ship docked, declined to receive dock or town dues and everybody engaged, down even to the porters and landing waiters, like declined to be paid for their services'.[684] Historians record its contents included 11, 236 barrels of flour from the International Relief Committee and 1500 barrels from the New York Produce Exchange[685] as well as 102 boxes of bacon, 50 pounds and 50 barrels of pork, 167 bags and 500 barrels of corn, 315 boxes and 125 barrels of bread, 50 barrels of wheat, and three tierces and two bags of rice[686]. The Central Relief Committee entertained the ships' officers at a 'magnificent dejeuner' held at Manchester Town Hall and presided over by the mayor before eighteen of the master carters of Liverpool agreed to haul, free of charge, all of the shipment to the railroad and the railroads carried without cost all of the food to the distressed districts of Lancashire and neighbouring counties.[687] Under the headline 'A Shipload of Bread and Meat for Lancashire' the *Dundee Advertiser* commented:

> Beef, pork and breadstuffs, are commodities which appeal to hungry men with more eloquence than political paradoxes; and the Lancashire weaver, with his mouth full of Wisconsin biscuits or Cincinnati pork, will be hard to persuade that the givers of it hate him. If any English man cares to criticise the George Griswold and her bill of lading, we

[682] Foner, *British Labor*, 49.
[683] Maynard, *Mission of the George Griswold*, 300.
[684] Watts, *Facts*, 234.
[685] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 84.
[686] Foner, *British Labor*, 49.
[687] Maynard, *Mission of the George Griswold*, 303, 304.

> can only say that we are not them, and we take this timely gift in the spirit which seems to inspire it. We take it as every man, woman and child in Lancashire will take it, when the good ship is fairly in harbour and her cargo delivered.[688]

Journalism proved crucial in organizing this and other charitable relief for cotton workers, for income beyond that provided by taxation. With reporting and requests for relief, however, came demand for gratitude and a behaviour of stoicism rather than political protest. When copy appeared, F E Gray argues in *Journalism and Poetry Calls to Action*, it was often beside 'vivid and accusatory' poetry which sought charitable responses, but also reported the workers' 'virtuous desire for honourable work'. [689] Suffering was acknowledged and described, charitable efforts sought to help the poor, but those poor were simultaneously subject to moral judgments of behaviour.

Stevenson Square

The square itself was developed in the 1780s by landowner William Stevenson and intended as a middle class area but by the end of the 18th century any plans for a residential enclave had given way to mixed industrial and commercial use and to homes for workers from the nearby industry.[690] Hewitt posits that the square became a 'focus of working class activity. Its corners were a frequent stomping ground for orators and propagandists […] participating in long-running debates […] often to large audiences[691] Although historians have infrequently documented meetings at Stevenson Square some have proved the gatherings worthy of

[688] "A Shipload of Bread and Meat for Lancashire," *Dundee Advertiser*, February 2, 1863 3.
[689] Gray, *Journalism and Poetry*, 189.
[690] "Manchester's Northern Quarter: The greatest meer village," English Heritage, (Taylor and Holder, 2008), 19.
[691] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 268.

consideration. The meetings are described by Blackett as 'vigorous but peaceful protests' which 'demonstrated the level of political sophistication working men had achieved, a level sufficient to warrant being given the vote'.[692] Speakers are further described by Hewitt as 'resolute and determined to engage in self-improvement'[693] and the gatherings, described by Rose, as 'peaceable organised protests against relief methods'.[694] Hewitt further suggests that the cotton works shared class consciousness, recognised bourgeois individualism and shared a humanity:

> A great deal of unrest occasioned by the relief efforts was derived from the injured pride of the working class applicants, who felt that they were being treated 'as if they were so many wild beasts, unworthy of sympathy and scarcely worth answering'. The working classes' resentment at their treatment under the Poor Law reflected not just persistence of robust pride at being working-class but also their continued repudiation of the bourgeois individualism which it represented. While attempting to present their case in the best light as regards the principles of political economy, working class groups at the same time continued to appeal to what the Manchester spinners called 'the far higher considerations of justice and humanity'.[695]

In conclusion, aspects of all the gatherings, inside and outside Stevenson Square, suggested a political awareness: the varied topics of meetings, the organisation, adoption of resolutions, recognition of economic considerations from above, the regular, strong attendance, and the assertion of a common humanity, both among the operatives experiencing the Poor Law and the solidarity shown toward slaves in the American South. The political purpose for the meetings, with often many thousands in attendance, was explicit, and included motions and resolutions seemingly written in advance to share with the gathered crowds. One

[692] Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 205.
[693] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 76.
[694] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 193.
[695] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 202.

example is the meeting held to 'urge the necessity of an immediate grant of £2,000,000' similar to that provided to Ireland during the 'famine' which suggests a recognition of a shared class experience across nations and history.[696] A recognition of enforced and unequal austerity is revealed in the determination, as described in the *Sheffield Independent*, 'to show to those who ought to be your natural guardians that you have not settled down to their kind of grim prosperity; that you will avail yourselves of the public on every occasion; and that you are not willing to starve to death by their meagre allowance'.[697] There are also example of efforts to influence the political thinking of workers, not just behaviour more broadly. Placards issued by the Tories at a Stevenson Square gathering urged working men 'to oppose the Budget and pass resolutions in favour of tea and sugar reductions instead of the abolition of paper duty'.[698] A motion was presented by Mortimer Grimshaw, a former Chartist, Tory radical and trade unionist, who worked with Confederate propagandist James Spence:[699]

> That this meeting is of the opinion that the war duties levied upon tea and sugar are oppressive to the working man, and ought to be reduced; and that such reduction would confer larger benefit on the working classes than the proposed repeal of the paper duty.[700]

Grimshaw told the gathering he was 'proud to see men of his own order entering a protest against a clique who were seeking to repeal the paper duty for their own aggrandisement and

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[696] *Manchester Courier*, March 28, 1863, 6.
[697] *Sheffield Independent*, December 5, 1863, 9.
[698] *Birmingham Journal*, May 4, 1861, 7.
[699] Heartfield, *British Workers and the US Civil War*, 18. Heartfield writes that Charles Dickens used Grimshaw as inspiration for the unfavourable portrayal of a trade union leader Slackbridge in *Hard Times*.
[700] "Anti-Budget Meeting," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 4, 1861, 6; "The Budget and the Working Classes," *Manchester Guardian*, May 1, 1861, 3; "Open-Air and Budget Meeting," *Manchester Courier*, May 4, 1861, 10.

prevent the working classes from obtaining a great boon which the repeal of the tax on tea and sugar would confer'.[701] His views were not met with uncritical agreement. Dr Watts, author of *Facts of the Cotton Famine*, is reported to have been 'received with much cheering' and defending the repeal, calling it a measure of progressive reform which 'as a determination to leave all useful industry free, and all knowledge untaxed, and so increase employment and education amongst the working classes'.[702] The meeting descended into chaos, people not considered to be from Manchester denied the opportunity to speak, and the Tory motion fell. These meetings are said to have been allowed by the police during periods such as the Cotton Crisis to give the working class the ability let off steam.[703]

It is revealed consistently, then, that the press was a form of social control in judging the behaviour of the workers, in presenting the impression of unity, in both promoting and dissuading emigration as an opportunity and, ultimately, in accepting austerity as inevitability. This is revealed against a back drop of a press which both accepts the working class as a collective group to be influenced and, at the same time, dismissing their contribution to political gatherings. The political unconscious is one of providing imaginary solutions to the poverty of the workers particularly around their activities of protest.

PART THREE: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

[701] "The Budget and the Working Classes," *Manchester Guardian*, May 1, 1861, 3.
[702] "Anti-Budget Meeting," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 4, 1861, 6.
[703] Hewitt, *Protest and Crime*, 209.

CHAPTER ONE: The first interpretive horizon: Imaginary resolutions

Common sense in an economic crisis

Marx argued that the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, meaning the class which is the ruling material force of society is also society's ruling intellectual force and their ideas take on a 'universality, meaning a broad understanding and acceptance'. He wrote:

> Each new class which puts itself in the place of the one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones.[704]

As such, to use the Gramscian idea, assumptions about the Cotton Crisis are presented and accepted in news copy as 'common sense', as, Crehan explains, practical implications of economic and social life which can be taken for granted.[705] As such, as Jameson wrote, this presumed efficiency of austerity, as a politico economic model with a belief in progress and a mode of temporality, is based in common sense, an acceptance of austerity as 'reality'.[706] If we accept that reality has no interpretation, no subset, but instead has an inert given, then the understanding of the economic system or crisis, of austerity, is itself ideology: it is the political unconscious. So, it follows that, during the Cotton Crisis, the poverty legislation was presented

[704] Marx and Engels, German Ideology, 64.
[705] Kate Crehan, *Gramsci's Common Sense Inequality and Narratives*, (Duke, 2016), 134.
[706] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 48.

as practical because poverty was seen as inevitable, despite clear historical evidence (as outlined in earlier chapters) that the ruling class financially gained as the poor struggled. This unconscious acceptance of the social hierarchy, and its demands upon workers, as 'common sense' in turn created a mediation ensuring social control and a defence of the capitalist system. This mediation worked to answer contradictions in society which manifested as, for example, poverty and wealth, ruling class and working class, gaining or struggling from economic crises. As such the editorials and news copy shaped individual experience and social totality into an accepted code – consisting of narrative patterns and expectations – of social and historical reality to make it accessibly mediated for, in this case, the newspaper reader.[707] Further, journalism reporting on political agitation of the poor served to undermine workers' needs and to prioritise the demands of the wider capitalist economy: it mediated the contradiction of the poor suffering while the wealthy do not in an economic crisis. It achieved this in a number of ways by, for example, setting acceptable recognised standards of behaviour, or presenting a utopian notion of unity, in terms of celebrating the generosity of charitable relief. Both mediate, that is provide understanding of that experience of witnessing poverty, for the readership.

In analysing nineteenth-century literature Jameson asserts the historic originality needs to be specified 'not merely against the mechanisms of classical storytelling but against the psychological and interpretive habits of our own period as well'.[708] There is not an assumption in this thesis that editorial decisions were taken to consciously mediate, or to present poverty

[707] Roberts, *Jameson*, 78.
[708] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 142.

as common sense, nor is the thesis judging accuracy. Journalism is more complicated than a proprietor or editor asserting an opinion which is automatically held by staff and readership, instead ruling ideas, or ideas which were more compatible with or did not confront the ruling ideas, and were in the interests of the Victorian ruling class, are those shared unconsciously.[709] This thesis posits that this first horizon – the imaginary solutions – can, as Homer explains, tap into Western history to move beyond the traditional notion of historical context in that it recognises history itself is that of modernization and the rise of capitalism.[710]

Walker, in discussing the reporting of soldiers killed in the Iraq War, explains, 'to suggest that the problem these stories are attempting to resolve is one of deaths of members of the military in an armed conflict may seem, on the face of it, counterintuitive. One reasonably expects, after all, that some members of the military will die in a war'.[711] The same consideration can be made for attempting to resolve the problem of poverty during an economic crisis dubbed 'the Lancashire Cotton Famine'. One could reasonably expect suffering under economic austerity, in a concentrated manufacturing district dependent on raw cotton, and that any attempts to politically and financially manage that crisis to be an expected and even fair response. Indeed, it is shown that Victorian society accepted that the crisis was not 'the fault of cotton workers' and that politicians endeavoured to create legislation to manage the poverty caused, in no small part, by the shortage of cotton[712] but to understand the horrors of the experience of the poor and the containment strategies of the press one must attempt to

[709] Wayne, *Marxism and Media*, 135.
[710] Homer, *Jameson Marxism, Hermeneutics, Postmodernism*, 64.
[711] Walker, *Human Interest and Form*, 89.
[712] The economic impact of a cotton availability beyond the blockade is considered by Brady, *Reconsideration*, 1963, Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 1969; and Farnie, *English Cotton Industry*, 1979.

locate what Dowling calls aesthetic contradictions disclosing the presence of underlying social contradictions.[713] Simply put, one must consider the historical context without the text, in which the newspaper reports were produced, to find the political subconscious hidden within the text. This chapter will consider the first of Jameson's interpretive horizons, the imaginary resolutions offered by three newspapers which attempt to solve problems to unresolvable social contradictions.[714] It will be posited that the newspapers provided ideological efforts to defend the status quo by asserting not just the acceptance of but the necessity for, and inevitability of, unemployed workers suffering as a result of an economic crisis not of their making. The production and reproduction of these imaginary resolutions ignored the social problem of poverty that could and can only be resolved through social practice; by challenging the foundations of capitalism's dependency upon the exploitation workers as labour. Jameson recognises that the development of capitalism changed every aspect of human existence and that 'natural unities, social forms, human relations, cultural events, even religious systems, are systematically broken up in order to be reconstructed more efficiently, in the form of new post-natural processes'.[715] This process saw cotton operatives, in the decades before the crisis, travel to Manchester in search of work, enter factories in the manufacturing districts and, as a result, their understanding of their world altered to suit the economic system. As Marx described it, the workers, by producing their means of subsistence, indirectly produced their actual material life.[716] They did so by becoming part of the factory process, living in operative

[713] Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, 128.
[714] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 79.
[715] Ibid, 48.
[716] Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, 42.

dwellings, existing in developing urban communities, seeing relationships formed or separated around factory demands. This is also recognised by Arnold, writing in 1865, and focusing on women in relation to their opportunity to move from factory work to domestic service:

> The mill is her only possible. If she does not love its oily floors and noisy rooms, she has, at least, but very little idea of any other mode of life. She is introduced to the cotton-factory at a very early age; from morning till night she works in it, as a girl, woman, and mother, till old age or good fortune interferes. The romance of her life, her friendships and her love, are associated with the tall chimney, with the long rows of windows and with her busy fellow-workers. She is one of a caste and the suggestion to her of another mode of life is by no means welcome.[717]

Henderson also points out that this immersion into factory life also led to the relative wealth of cotton workers in comparison to other workers.[718] Gurney adds that an increase in consumerism created a developing embourgeoisement, with some operatives becoming property owners.[719] By the time the crisis hit, the cotton workers could be considered to have a level of independence and power, as Jameson describes workers under capitalism, they gained 'a certain autonomy of their own, a semi-autonomous coherence which, not merely a reflex of capitalist reification and rationalisation, also in some measure serves to compensate for the dehumanisation of experience that reification brings'.[720] That is, the workers, now engaged in and embracing the capitalist system, rationalised the horrors of the Cotton Crisis and sought only certain demands rather than dramatic change to meet their needs. The newspapers too engaged in and embraced this understanding, not merely reflecting the world upon which they

[717] Arnold, *Cotton Famine* 193.
[718] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 1969.
[719] Gurney, 2015 and Engels, 1858.
[720] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 48.

reported but passing value judgments, taking moral considerations and debating behaviour in keeping with bourgeois expectations of the time. This is in keeping with the Malthusian idea that, no matter what the cause of the economic crisis, as Hewitt explains, ‘pauperism was predominantly a moral lapse rather than an economic one’.[721]

Locating the imaginary solutions

The analysis will consider the resolutions, which manifest in four intersecting yet distinct types:

- Poverty as moral judgment outlines how those experiencing poverty during the inevitable times of struggle are judged for their behaviour and how this judgment ultimately contributes to an expectation of and burden upon the unemployed to manage, emotionally and financially, until the crisis comes to an end. This accepts Jameson’s assertion that it is more than just representation because it is necessary to secure the reader’s consent, to validate or accredit the object (in this case the working class) as desirable.[722] It is also necessary to curb revolutionary fervour by judging the political agitation of the cotton workers as not in the best interests of that point in history.
- Poverty as unifier is the assumption that the burden of the poverty is shared, be that as a community, city, or nation with the potential for positivity and

[721] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 102.
[722] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 142.

solidarity, of the working or ruling class, amid inevitable times of struggle manifesting as, using Jameson's phrase, a 'utopian unity of collectivity'.[723] This collective can be among one class, across classes, but it is presented as evidence of support for the suffering working class and generosity and liberality of the wealthier classes.

- Poverty as opportunity sees unemployed workers encouraged to seek ways of self-improvement and individual responses to the crisis in order to extricate themselves from it. This accepts Jameson's conclusion that the expectation of the poor to end their own poverty amid crisis serves as a 'diagnostic double standard [furnishing] the inner dynamic for a whole tradition of counter-revolutionary propaganda.[724] Further, this thesis accepts Marx and Engels conclusions that it fails to acknowledge that the nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production[725] in, for example, suggestions that emigration to the colonies is a choice rather than a result of an economic crisis and a ruling class desire to develop the Empire.
- Austerity is the ultimate imaginary solution in its acceptance of the inevitability of scarcity among the working class. It accepts Jameson's conclusion that there is a vested interest in and a functional relationship to social formations based on violence and exploitation.[726]

[723] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 142.
[724] Ibid, 189.
[725] Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, 42.
[726] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 289.

Within these categories it will focus on sub-categories:

- Moral judgment: preserving law and order, stigmatising relief, blaming the poor for poverty.
- Unity: the welcoming or repudiation of charity, the promotion of Manchester as an international concern and the insistence Manchester can and should manage its own affairs.
- Opportunity: develop the cotton supply, emigration, education and improved relations among the classes.
- Austerity is the ultimate imaginary solution, encapsulating and reinforcing all other categories.

These sub-categories enable an analysis into the social contradictions and the specific ideological intent, albeit subconscious, of the copy. Each category and sub-category serves to highlight the contradictions of the positivity and negativity in capitalism and further ensures that the analysis does not romanticise the experience of the poor or seek to moralise the Victorian response: we seek only to unearth the political unconscious as revealed in contradictions. To this end, this thesis accepts Tally's interpretation of Jameson in that:

> […] we need to be careful about the denunciation of capitalism from a moralizing point of view, and the temptation to regress to a simpler past and to conserve what is still on a human scale in this immense and superhuman development of the system. At any rate, the choice between a 'good' description of capitalism (as constant revolutionising and innovation) and a 'bad' one (as exploitation and domination) is in fact a political choice and not a logical or scientific one: a choice that must be made in function of the current situation.[727]

[727] Tally, *Dialectical Materialism*, 132.

The reports analysed include articles and editorials. The copy used paraphrasing and direct quotes. Each newspaper in reporting the events focused on different aspects of the speeches, different angles, used different quotes and paraphrased different sections but this thesis maintains that, despite being liberal, conservative or radical, the newspapers presented poverty in the same way and created a mediating effect through the four imaginary solutions.

Meeting themes during this time included: challenging the Labour Test, seeking more relief, cotton growth in the colonies, a strike of labourers at a Manchester workhouse, the welcome of the 'George Griswold', censuring other meetings, calls upon the ratepayers for a grant as distributed during the Great Hunger. It is also evident that agitation against the Poor Law increased and demands became firmer: cotton operatives at first demanded modifications to the associated Labour Test and eventually called for its abolition.

This section will first consider the ways in which the imaginary solutions manifested across the time period in each newspaper. Examples of each imaginary solution will be considered in turn: moral judgment, unity, opportunity and austerity with the sub-categories. It will then focus on editorials from each of the newspapers, discussing meetings at Stevenson Square, before considering the news copy provided alongside those commentaries. This will provide an opportunity to both compare and separate the newspapers' explicit commentary and any attempt at detached reporting.

Imaginary solution: moral judgment

Moral judgment is presented as an imaginary solution to poverty across all three newspapers. Examples include a recognition that a meeting was orderly or ended calmly: 'around the lamp-post in the centre, they formed in excellent order, and as if acting under instructors';[728] 'the whole proceedings were conducted in perfect order';[729] with the additional assertion that the workers 'must not agitate for political reform now. Hunger knew no politics and the reform they needed was of more importance than what concerned their political privileges. They should begin to say that they were all of one mind, that they must have cotton'.[730] This prioritising of cotton over political revolt resulted in the three newspapers with different political leanings relating moral judgments to the unemployed. This was amid observations of fear of an uprising caused by residential segregation. Kidd and Roberts posit that Edward Brotherton, a member of the Manchester Statistical Society, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* of 1864, represented the fear 'that urban growth in the nineteenth-century and especially the residential segregation of classes had removed the civilising influence of the wealthy from the experience of the poor' and the 'recurrent social crises from the 1860s' meant 'a rediscovery of poverty and a resurrection of the desire to bridge the gap between the classes'. [731] The moral judgments which manifested as a result served varying roles: to preserve law and order amid this threat, to stigmatise relief in growing poverty, to create a perceived burden on the ratepayers, to view the poor as to blame for poverty, and, amid calls for parliamentary reform, to debate the working class fitness to vote. The workers

[728] "Distress in Lancashire," *Manchester Courier*, August 9, 1862, 8.
[729] "Operatives' Protest Against the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 9, 1862, 5.
[730] "The Cotton Supply Meeting of Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Guardian*, August 15, 1862, 2.
[731] Kidd and Roberts, *City, class and culture,* 49.

were warned that their behaviour could 'alienate sympathies'.[732] In what was presented as a news report under the headline 'The Unemployed Operatives and the Labour Question', the liberal *Manchester Guardian* published:

> At six o'clock, the hour fixed for the meeting, rain descended in torrents, and it was found desirable to adjourn the meeting until this evening. The placards announcing the meeting contain quotations from Scripture, which are irreverently handled. The authors of these effusions would do well to avoid such profanity in future, as it calculated to alienate the sympathies of any who otherwise wish well to the cause.[733]

Considering *Manchester Guardian* readers were more likely manufacturers than cotton operatives this moral judgment served more readily as an instruction to those offering sympathy. This mirrors Walker's findings of instructions made to American readers in how to 'support the troops without having to elaborate or to examine the assertion'.[734] For Walker it is 'the fear that readers will not reveal themselves to be 'grateful Americans'.[735] The ideology in the Victorian copy revealed a further condemnation of the poor and a moral judgment of behaviour without providing full context. It was not printed in order for the journalist to provide nor for the reader to consider context – anger, irritation at the rain, frustration – but to pass judgment. The suggestion was that of a lack of gratitude manifesting in an irreverent handling of Scripture. The radical *Manchester Examiner and Times* may not have shared the conservative *Manchester Courier* anti-Catholic position (as outlined in earlier chapters) but this was published at a time of anti-Irish sentiment when the poor Irish were blamed for many of the problems in working class communities. The call for improving religious conditions of the

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[732] "The Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts," *Manchester Guardian*, September 3, 1862, 3.
[733] Ibid.
[734] Walker, *Human Interest and Form*, 113.
[735] Ibid.

poor was at a time when anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment was an accepted part of discussions of poverty.

Preserving law and order and providing assurances to middle class readers of good behaviour proved significant in the reporting of speeches. At a meeting held on May 12, 1862, as reported by the conservative *Manchester Courier* to 'hear the report of the deputations that waited on the guardians and the Mayor',[736] the behavioural expectations of those gathered was outlined in a speech by Bernard Barratt,[737] who acted as chair to the proceedings. Barratt's speech, paraphrased in the copy, asked for the meeting to be 'set with the same moderation and order as on previous occasions,' and said that 'by doing so they would be certain to gain their object'. [738] Barratt added that 'if they continued to conduct themselves in the same orderly manner they must succeed and that the pride of Manchester aristocracy would give way to a better nobler spirit'.[739] He continued that he 'hoped the newspaper reports would show that, though the appearance of the deputation might not entitle them to be classed as gentlemen, their language and conduct did'.[740] Barratt concluded that better behaviour would encourage generosity from capitalists but, as Arnold wrote, it had been recognised that by summer 1862 some manufacturers were shunning subscriptions intended to provide famine relief and also sought to monopolise the industry amid crisis.[741] This imaginary solution of good behaviour is also presented at a time of fear among the ruling class that the cotton operatives

[736] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.
[737] Bernard Barratt is described as a hand loom weaver and is one of a handful of men repeatedly quoted or paraphrased in the copy of all newspapers.
[738] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.
[739] Ibid.
[740] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.
[741] Arnold, *Cotton Crisis*, 110.

might revolt. It is suggested by *Guardian* historian Ayerst that that property owners in the north felt with some reason in those years that their lives as well as their possessions were in danger.[742] Changes were often proposed on the basis of adapting working class behaviour through moral improvement which was presented as aiding an increase in social harmony. This position is further analysed later with the imaginary solution of opportunity. The *Manchester Guardian* described the behaviour of the poor when reporting on a demonstration against the Labour Test in such a way as to reassure its middle class readership. It ended the copy with a description, that 'everything passed off in a very orderly manner and the speakers expressed a wish that all present would quietly retire to their homes […] several officers were present but there was no time any reason to apprehend any necessity for the interference of the police'.[743] The police, there to watch over agitation about the Labour Test, were not needed: this mythical reconciliation, the suggestion that any threat from the poverty-stricken is being managed, assured the writer and reader of control and social harmony. The preservation of law and order can also be identified in the moral judgment associated with the Labour Test, which ultimately divided workers into unemployed artisans and common paupers. When a suspension of the Labour Test is supported it is by the suggestion of being 'beneficial to all classes of the community', and that it would 'materially improve the moral, social and religious conditions of the poor people generally';[744] the context provided is not one of an unfair expectation of working for 'famine' relief but of paupers and unemployed cotton workers kept apart. The

[742] Ayerst, *Guardian*, 62.
[743] "The Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts A Second Demonstration Against the Labour Test," *Manchester Guardian*, August 6, 1862, 3.
[744] "Open-Air Meeting in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 18, 1862, 6.

Manchester Examiner and Times article also points out a speakers' suggestion that a suspension of the Labour Test will 'preserve law and order, to the satisfaction of all gentlemen in Manchester, without losing confidence or sympathy'[745] revealing a recognition among the working class of the potential threat of violence in the weeks before demands to abolish the Labour Test grew stronger and the necessity to retain sympathy to gain 'famine' relief.

In order to understand the acceptance that the mode of production is the determining force and the journalism is an expression of it, it is necessary to consider the workers themselves identifying the stigma of receiving relief, the need to show gratitude for sympathy, and the imagined support of the wealthy, despite the experience of poverty caused by a lack of access to work and resulting in little or no income. The mediation here involved a double process of internalisation and reconfiguration. This internalisation and reconfiguration also unconsciously manifested in the journalism: the journalists reconfigured the general logic which it internalised and then failed to confront when witnessing the workers' experience.[746] By recognising this internalisation and reconfiguration this research can further avoid Jameson's concern of limiting itself to the identification of class motifs or values, or the risk of simply replicating those class motifs and values back onto history.[747] The demands from workers around relief payments and the Labour Test are shaped by their acceptance of austerity and, while they become firmer toward the end of 1862, as discussed later in this section, there is the ultimate acceptance of austerity, and of their poverty during the crisis as inevitability.

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[745] Ibid.
[746] Wayne, *Media and Marxism*, 14.
[747] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 81.

The Labour Test was the subject of a number of meetings. The test was seen as a potential threat ‘to weaken their noble independence’ with children calling after them in the street ‘there go the paupers’.[748] The application for relief is described in one meeting as, ‘it was […] better to be in the lowest depths of hell than to be ground by such a system’.[749] It suited the developing ruling class of Manchester and Lancashire to protect itself during the Cotton Crisis, after the agitation against the Poor Law in the 30s and 40s, and one way it did that was to present receipt of relief as a moral judgment. In an ‘appeal to the country for assistance’ a speech chosen to be reported by the *Manchester Courier* stated, ‘it was not those who were most clamorous for relief who were actually suffering, but the honest hardworking men, who suffered in silence and would endure almost any amount of suffering before applying to the guardians for relief’.[750] Here the stigmatising of relief – as something paupers take advantage of – served to further divide the poor: on the one hand it recognised that providing relief will not solve the crisis but, on the other, the division of workers, rather than acknowledging a shared experience of poverty, was an ideological imaginary solution which let ratepayers, and manufacturers, who were not contributing to subscriptions, off the hook. By suggesting relief was being given only to those ‘most clamorous’ as opposed all in need excused a lack of subscriptions. Ratepayers were protected from the act of joining subscriptions and the shame or guilt of not doing so. There were also debates that loans rather than donations to unemployed operatives would avoid them being pauperised. Watts concluded that ‘the independence of the Lancashire character was so great that workmen would much more

[748] “Demonstration Against the Labour Test in Manchester,” *Manchester Courier*, August 2, 1862, 10.
[749] “Meeting of the Unemployed Operatives in Stevenson Square,” *Manchester Courier*, July 5, 1862, 10.
[750] “Meeting of the Manchester Operatives,” *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 8.

readily accept loans than donations and it was most important to preserve this feature of self-reliance.[751] However, this thinking and legislation consciously removed pressure from ratepayers because it encouraged the independence of workers as a remedy to poverty. This is especially relevant in the context of historians who have debated the stigma attached to claiming poor relief during the Cotton Crisis. Kiesling argued there was a long-term reluctance among cotton operatives to seek poor relief, while Boyer concluded most were forced to within weeks of becoming unemployed making avoidance and a desire for self-help impractical, while Henriques revealed the Poor Law commissioners to be disingenuous in publicising their policies and the use of propaganda made the law a safety valve which ensured the system could survive the depressions of the 1830s and 1840s.[752] This normalising of cycles of economic depression, inside and outside the cotton industry, of Poor Law practices, of outdoor relief requiring a Labour Test, in order to manage poverty, became accepted and then ideologically redistributed by both the newspapers and the working class alike. In previous years, Henriques, wrote, the Poor Law Commissioners 'published testimonials as to the increasing independence and moral improvement of the rural labourer' and 'by independence they meant fear of parish relief, and by moral improvement they meant outward respect for and subservience to employers'.[753] This consideration of moral improvement manifested in the workers' words. In the copy, Barratt concluded 'the more dignified the position which they took, the more deeper [sic] would be the sympathy'.[754] Yet it needs to be acknowledged that as workers were said to be 'clamouring' for

[751] Watts, *Facts*, 170.
[752] Kiesling, *Assisting the Poor*, 1995; Boyer, *Poor Relief*, 1997; Henriques, *How Cruel*, 1968.
[753] Henriques, *How Cruel*, 367.
[754] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.

relief or were too ashamed to apply, there was relief money left over once the crisis was deemed to have passed suggesting dissuading and denying workers was not a financial necessity but an ideological one. Watts recalled at the closing of the Central Relief Committee:

> The central relief committee is adjourned *sine die*, but there still remains one duty which only the general committee can accomplish, viz, the disposal of the balance of the fund amounting to about five per cent of the collection; and this is a matter which requires grave consideration […] Uncertainty as to the duration of the struggle, and the fear of engendering permanent pauperism, dictated that the distribution should be limited to the amount necessary to preserve life and health […] And what is to be done with the balance of the fund?[755]

Watts offered a number of ideas such as paying the debts of paupers, paying the funds back to subscribers, before deciding the monies would be more easily and better spent in local hospitals.

The continued assumption of necessity and the threat of engendering permanent pauperism is presented and accepted as common sense and did not recognise a failure in the system to protect unemployed workers during time of crisis because it positioned that poverty as necessity and considered the moral standing of workers in relation to that poverty. Moral judgment also manifested in unity among the working class who argued 'the temperate way in which the deputation expressed themselves' would encourage the Guardians to hear their complaints.[756] One example is the arrival of the famine relief ship the 'George Griswold' and the celebration in Stevenson Square. The event ended in revolt described as 'tumult', 'dangerous

[755] Watts, *Facts*, 260.
[756] "Manchester Board of Guardians," *Manchester Guardian*, August 15, 1862, 3.

recklessness', and 'strange proceedings'[757] or 'impromptu', 'multuous confusion' [sic], or 'riotous scenes'.[758] The meeting 'publicly thanking the American people for their generous gifts'[759] changed course when anger rose at the way bread was being distributed, in the form of pageant as opposed to practicality. The liberal *Manchester Guardian* presented rival factions at the meeting when discontent is shared in reaction to the way the bread is being distributed in a pageant. During a prayer the meeting is described as 'quite ungovernable'[760] as workers are reported to have shouted 'no religion'[761] and 'plenty of humbug without that'.[762] The newspaper reported it is 'in vain that some persons protested one the platform protested against the disgraceful scene' losing objectivity in its reporting and leaning towards commentary. The bread, the newspaper reported, was eventually distributed 'in a less dangerous manner'[763] and this possible sarcasm arguably ignored the concerns of those present who were in desperate need of bread. Significantly, the *Manchester Examiner and Times* did not report on the meeting itself but did report on a meeting 'called for the purpose of discussing the conduct of the promoters'[764] of the 'George Griswold' meeting. It is impossible to know if the newspaper did not have had time or space to report the initial meeting. The motion which was eventually passed read:

> That, in the opinion of this meeting, the conduct of the parties who convened the meeting of Tuesday the 10th instant, was highly reprehensible, and deserving the censure of all honest men, inasmuch as the American people never intended that their charity should be the means of degrading the men whom it was their intention to

[757] "Meeting of Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Courier*, March 14, 1863, 11.
[758] "The Meeting of the Unemployed Operatives" *Manchester Guardian*, March 11, 1863, 3.
[759] Ibid.
[760] Ibid.
[761] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.
[762] Ibid.
[763] Ibid.
[764] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, March 17, 1863, 5.

> support; and, in the name of the unemployed, we heartily thank them for their generous support, and wish every support to the cause of American freedom'.[765]

Significantly, while the working men condemned both the promoters and those who are said to have behaved reprehensibly the motion still made efforts to acknowledge the workers' gratitude and unity.

Imaginary solution: unity

Unity is presented as the welcoming or repudiation of charity, with the promotion of Manchester exceptionalism which is the insistence Manchester can and should manage its own affairs. Debates took place as to the necessity of foreign aid, amid relief provided by ratepayers and charity as the result of individual philanthropy.

As workers expressed concerns at the Labour Test and limited relief offered, they looked to the nation and to the city of Manchester to tackle the problem. Paraphrasing a speaker, the radical *Manchester Examiner and Times* reported:

> […] he had thought the glory of England was departing when he saw gray-headed old women with their hands full of oakum […] The idea of a business community like Manchester being compelled to submit to the dictations of a board in London, who told the guardians the manner in which they ought to conduct their business! Manchester ought to be the first in the kingdom to shake off such tyranny.[766]

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[765] Ibid.
[766] "Protest Against the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, June 28, 1862, 6.

An appeal to the nation and a veneration of Manchester provided an imaginary solution of unity to a backdrop of unpaid subscriptions and capitalists benefiting from the crisis. Manchester's international significance during a Cotton Crisis further provided an opportunity for growth. In a report of a meeting about the cotton supply in the *Manchester Guardian*, Thomas Evans is paraphrased: 'he said he hoped that Manchester might have the honour of being the first to impress upon the government and capitalists the necessity of laying out some of their money where cotton can grow.'[767] The debate resulted in a motion adopted unanimously to agitate for alternatives to American cotton. The imaginary solution of unity sees the workers, though skilled artisans, act as if they can influence the means of production, while they are simultaneously denied relief and are denied access to the necessities for existence by an economic crisis. The imagined unity has an international and broader political resonance. Under the headline 'The Illuminations' the conservative *Manchester Courier* reported on the celebration of the 'George Griswold', and stated, 'the crowd would not listen' to speaker Thomas Evans but did listen to the ship's Chaplain Rev Denison. It later describes how bread hit the reverend and ends with 'the meeting closed amidst confusion and with thanks to the donors of the bread'. [768] The liberal *Manchester Guardian* offered a much lengthier and descriptive report. It opened by explaining that the meeting was held 'in accordance with the terms of a programme issued' and 'in response to this summons a crowd of operatives began to assemble', making it clear that the operatives had been invited and chosen to be there. [769] The report then described the scene, of bread placed in the square, of 'lurries [sic] dressed in some

[767] "Manchester Board of Guardians," *Manchester Guardian*, August 15, 1862, 3.
[768] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Courier*, March 14, 1863, 11.
[769] "The Meeting of the Unemployed Operatives," *Manchester Guardian*, March 11, 1863, 3.

rude way to suggest the idea of ships […] one of them carrying the United States flag and the British ensign and the other a black flag with a deaths head and crossbones painted upon it and the words Alabama' and 'while the crowd were making merry at this sight' another man formed an 'impromptu assembly'.[770] Here the newspaper suggested just one worker amid the thousands reported to be in attendance created a separate meeting and 'booing and applause could be heard of the rival assemblies'. [771] The unity is challenged at the proceedings but presented as the influence of one man. This man is then referred to as 'the leader of the opposition' as he is paraphrased as asking:

> What was it the promoters of that meeting intended the people to do? He said he did not wish to appear ungrateful to the American people for their gift of the bread, but he wanted to know why it was brought into that Square instead of being sent to the proper quarter – the quarter that the people have had to avail themselves for the last nine months. [772]

A worker who asked why there is pageantry above distribution of essential food is presented as a threat to local and international unity, while the worker himself did not wish to appear ungrateful for charity. Worker Thomas Evans is paraphrased as having 'denied the object of the meeting was to offer a bait to the people, but the promoters had thought that, upon such a day of rejoicing, something better might be done than to give an empty pageant to the starving poor'. [773] It is then pointed out how much was spent on the event and how many loaves were available for distribution. The workers failed to be compliant in unity in the form of welcoming famine relief. The acceptable international scale of the lack of political unity, however, is

[770] Ibid.
[771] Ibid.
[772] Ibid.
[773] "The Meeting of the Unemployed Operatives," *Manchester Guardian*, March 11, 1863, 3.

revealed when the workers are described as if they 'appeared to be thinking very little of the North or South'[774] when they failed to join in cheers and groans, respectively. This is further revealed in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* report censuring the 'George Griswold' gathering. The protest is presented as a covert attempt to form a Garibaldian[775] committee amid paraphrasing one worker who 'wished the Americans, instead of sending their ships loaded with loaves, had sent them to fetch the operatives themselves' and that the charity, while welcome, 'there was no need for the people to always be on their knees thanking the Americans for the present. The sympathies of the people were with the North, and against slavery, and so they would remain'.[776] The failure of unity of the workers in their gratitude for relief is presented as caused by opposition to a Garibaldian committee in the radical newspaper, as chaotic and disgraceful in the conservative paper, and as of having no interest to North or South in the liberal newspaper: the one consistent thread which is an underlying subtext is the workers' frustration at being forced to be grateful for relief at all.

Imaginary solution: opportunity

Opportunity is presented as a chance for workers to develop alternative cotton supplies or to emigrate, as opposed to a chance to populate the colonies; as the chance for education, as opposed to a recognition of the lack of schooling in general; and a chance to develop relations across the classes. The 'cotton question' is at the heart of opportunity presented as

[774] Ibid.
[775] Garibaldi led an uprising of Italian volunteers fighting for Polish independence in early 1863. It is said Marx expected a revolutionary uprising. Rolf, Hosfeld, *Karl Marx An Intellectual Biography*, (Berghahn Books, 2012), 107.
[776] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, March 17, 1863, 5.

imaginary solutions. The workers called upon capitalists to spend money on developing supplies in countries other than America and argued against emigration in relation to Manchester's need for labour: the reported speeches prioritise capital. Unity then blended with moral judgment to question the working class willingness to recognise and accept a lack of raw cotton as the fundamental cause of their poverty, whether they wished to emigrate or not.

A meeting was reported by all three newspapers which was called to 'take into consideration the best means to increase the growth of cotton in the British colonies, and to show the folly of Lancashire depending upon one country for its cotton' and belief that 'all classes were suffering'.[777] It was published under the headlines 'Operatives' Meeting on the Cotton Question'[778] and 'Meeting of Operatives in Stevenson Square'.[779] Solidarity was sought from the capitalists who were asked 'to countenance the meetings of operatives' and that by doing so 'they would be doing much good by encouraging the operatives to take heart' among recognition that 'the capitalists had done little or nothing to extend the sources of supply'.[780] It was, then, accepted simultaneously that the fault was not with workers but that access to raw material was the only way for the working class to avoid poverty. This motion was adopted unanimously and printed in all three newspapers:

> That it is in the opinion of this meeting that the time has now arrived when England should no longer depend upon America for cotton, but that all classes of the community should at once adopt means to accept a sufficient supply of cotton from our own

[777] "Operatives' Meeting on the Cotton Question," *Manchester Courier*, August 16, 1862, 10.
[778] Ibid.
[779] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times,* August 16, 1862, 3.
[780] "Operatives' Meeting on the Cotton Question," *Manchester Courier*, August 16, 1862, 10.

> colonies by forming additional cotton companies and giving still more aid and influence to the Cotton Association already established.[781]

Capital, and a unity with capitalists, was presented as the answer to a problem caused by capital and capitalists. This was further outlined by a call for emigration to the colonies which before that option was then considered not of value to capital. One worker is paraphrased:

> They wished to impress upon the capitalists the fact, if they would bring them cotton, and set them to work, they would do more good than all the soup kitchens had done. It was now absolutely necessary that their voices were heard. It is said that the capitalists were satisfied with their position, and their apathy and indifference on this cotton subject. half warranted the conclusion.[782]

While there was apparent frustration, the workers still believed, despite reporting of the meetings, that they were not being heard rather than they were being ignored and, when the suggestion of apathy is touched upon, it was only half warranted.

In June 1862, speakers in Stevenson Square, reported only in the radical *Manchester Examiner and Times*, debated emigration with one speaker asserting it 'the remedy for the present calamity […] was emigration to those parts of the world where they could assist in growing cotton for home consumption' with Thomas Evans, however, arguing this to be 'in direct opposition to the principles of political economy'.[783] Contemporary accounts considered further value of emigration to capitalists, following the Stalybridge riots and amid the

[781] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times,* August 16, 1862, 3; "The Cotton Supply Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Guardian*, August 15, 1862, 2; *Manchester Courier*, August 16, 1862, 10.
[782] "Operatives' Meeting on the Cotton Question," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 16, 3.
[783] "Meeting in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, June 7, 1862, 6.

acceptance of austerity, in outlining the concerns of increased violence among the poor. Arnold wrote, for example.

> The immediate effect of this disturbance was to revive with great force the emigration question. Alarmists viewed the difficulty as a choice of evils. They asked – was a population of five hundred thousand persons to remain for an indefinite period unemployed, and yet confined to the narrow limits of the cotton district, for the benefit of manufacturers? They saw nothing in the future but riot and bloodshed, and no remedy but a wholesale removal of the population […] The unemployed population would not be less turbulent because their numbers had been thinned; none of the causes of disagreement between masters and operatives, between relief committees and their pensioners, between guardians and paupers, would have been removed.[784]

The Labour Test, in reports across the newspapers, was referred to by cotton workers as 'unjust and degrading',[785] as 'demoralizing,'[786] as 'a false economy,'[787] and unfit for cotton workers.[788] Further, the Poor Law was described as 'a law to keep the poor, poor'.[789] The radical *Manchester Examiner and Times*, which claimed in 1825 to 'have the welfare of the working classes at heart',[790] paraphrased the words of Thomas Evans who 'urged that the cotton operatives were a class who had shunned the name of pauper' and that they 'should not be mingled with the common paupers or they would be liable to become paupers themselves'. [791] Further appeals to ratepayers and the aristocracy were made to end the Labour Test. It was declared by one worker that 'the putting of men to pick oakum, and to grind corn, while shut

[784] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, 265.
[785] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier,* May 17, 1862, 6.
[786] "Meeting of the Operatives to Oppose the Application of the Labour Test," *Manchester Courier*, June 28, 1862, 10.
[787] Ibid.
[788] "The Labour Test in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, August 9, 1862, 8.
[789] "Protest Against the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, June 28, 1862, 6.
[790] Read, *Press and the People*, 105.
[791] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 16, 1862, 3.

up in a box was demoralising, and would tend to make them lazy',[792] a suggestion that an alternative Labour Test would be justified and still ensure the unemployed keep working hard.

Thomas Evans was notable in using this situation to press for educational classes and declared the men ignorant. He suggested that 'three hours a day, especially in political economy and the relations of capital and labour' would allow the board of governors to 'take advantage of a period of distress to secure benefits for the future'.[793] Education was presented as an opportunity to help those 'who did not understand enough of political economy to keep him from engaging in strikes, let a good professor in political economy be engaged to teach him his duty to society during one half of the day and let him work during the other half:'[794] the strongest comment made to suggest the need to manipulate the workers to provide an opportunity to satisfy the ruling class. The Board of Guardians was reported as 'not aware that moral injury had resulted from the Labour Test' and that the workers 'would not avail themselves of the educational advantages proposed'.[795] Nevertheless, the solutions offered by workers are restricted to ultimately meeting the demands of capital. The conservative *Manchester Courier* frequently quoted the responses of workers to the unfairness of their situation but the workers themselves provide opportunity as an imaginary solution. The Cotton Crisis in its entirety is presented as an opportunity to build relations between the working class and the ruling class. In copy Bernard Barratt, is paraphrased speaking at a meeting in 1862, that

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[792] "Meeting of the Operatives to Oppose the Application of the Labour Test," *Manchester Courier*, June 28, 1862, 10.
[793] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 16, 1862, 3.
[794] "Meeting of the Operatives to Oppose the Application of the Labour Test," *Manchester Courier*, June 28, 1862, 10.
[795] Ibid.

‘he fervently hoped that in the future they would be able to say that the result of their great distress had been to draw closer the ties of sympathy and friendship which ought to exist between the employer and employed’.[796]

Imaginary solution: austerity

Ultimately, all the reports accepted austerity as inevitability. Austerity as an imaginary solution encapsulated and reinforced all the other imaginary solutions. The acceptance of austerity was internalised and reconfigured in the speeches of workers and repeated in the sections of speeches chosen by all three newspapers. Jameson states that for Marx it is the worker who lends the capitalist his capital to begin with, by agreeing to defer his wages to the end of the week.[797] During the Cotton Crisis it is revealed workers did defer their employment until the crisis ended. Thomas Evans pointed out the workers achieve nothing from leaving but must stay and seek increased capital with ‘the golden chain the wage-labourer has already forged for himself’.[798] As such, in the face of destitution, the workers concluded they did not object to labour ‘but to such a labour as degraded a man’ and sought ‘a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work’.[799] The intention of workers was not to end the Labour Test but to modify it and to divide unemployed cotton workers from paupers. Further, workers ultimately sought to ‘mitigate the rigour and severity of the distress’ and ‘wished his fellow men to stand uprightly

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[796] “Anti-Labour Test Meeting,” *Manchester Courier*, May 18, 1862, 10.
[797]Fredric Jameson, *Representing Capital*, (Verso Books, 2014), 63.
[798] Jameson, *Representing Capital*, 65.
[799] “Meeting of the Operatives to Oppose the Application of the Labour Test*,” Manchester Courier*, June 28, 1862, 10.

and honourably before the world, and to tell the world it was not alms but employment they wanted. But so long as they could not get employment they were entitled to sympathy and assistance'.[800] The report in the conservative *Manchester Courier* provided a mediation between the mill owners and the unemployed mill workers: work equals income and where work is unavailable sympathy informs the accessibility of assistance.

Editorials engaging imaginary solutions

All three newspapers provided editorial comment on meetings held at Stevenson Square. The *Manchester Guardian* provided commentary on a meeting held in on May 9, 1862 (published May 14, 1862). The *Manchester Examiner and Times* published editorials on meetings held on April 29, 1862 (printed May 3, 1862) and on October 9, 1862 (published on October 11). The *Manchester Courier* commented on a meeting held on March 23, 1863 (published March 28, 1863). The editorials were significant in that they were not simply a choice of which sections of operatives' speeches to report, either by paraphrasing or directly quoting, but shared opinions of the newspaper and, as such, it can be considered, the readership, if only through commercial imperative. The editorials engaged with all the

[800] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.

categories identified: moral judgment, unity, opportunity and austerity and with the sub-categories.

Manchester Examiner and Times editorial of May 3, 1862

On Saturday May 3, 1862, an editorial in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* headlined 'The Distress in Lancashire', in recognising that the operatives were struggling, made a comparison between northern manufacturing towns and London. It reported:

> In the British metropolis 'all that beauty, all that wealth' can give to the world is displayed in the most attractive and glittering form, whilst in the North sits gaunt famine brooding over the victims which have become hit by no fault of their own.[801]

Here, the newspaper acknowledged that workers were not at fault but then sought to ensure there was no conflict between the haves and have nots by adding:

> The contrast is a striking one - we may call it an unhappy one – but whilst we would gladly obliterate all traces of that which shows countrymen to be suffering, we are persuaded that not one of the sufferers would desire to be without that tribute to his country's greatness, which presents such a marked contrast to his own condition.[802]

The newspaper concluded that while the poor in Manchester and Lancashire suffered, they did not resent the wealth in London. This is an example of an acceptance of austerity, the inevitability of the poor carrying the burden, and also a suggestion of unity in accepting the experience of class inequality in a capitalist economy. However, the political unconscious can

[801] "Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.
[802]"Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.

be further unearthed as the editorial continued. Having boasted of London's 'glittering form' and 'greatness' the radical newspaper began to question the behaviour of workers, which manifested in moral judgment. The editorial considered more closely a meeting held in Stevenson Square the previous Tuesday evening to which, it pointed out, it wished to 'invite particular attention'.[803] The report referred to the speakers' 'moderation and judgment' adding that the newspaper – referred to as 'we' – did not 'have not one word to say against them,' them meaning the unemployed cotton workers. It ensured the reader that 'facts' which were 'fully recognised' at the meeting included the willingness of 'all classes'[804] to give aid. It continued:

> It is, indeed, very much to the honour of the distressed operatives that they have never as a body requested public help. The silence in which they have borne their sufferings is a tribute to the manliness of their character, and no praise is too high to describe the virtues of endurance, forbearance, and manly self-dependence even when the 'wolf was at the door', which have been exhibited.[805]

The suggestion in the editorial that not seeking relief was 'manly', 'honourable' and honest was printed alongside workers' speeches outlining that poor relief was insufficient and the Labour Test was 'cruel and unjust'. The newspaper later acknowledged that 'mingled with these virtues is a sense of political justice' and it quoted a speech of Gladstone by adding that such virtues, 'proves the fitness of the working classes for elective franchise'.[806] William Ewart Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer under Prime Minster Palmerston during the cotton crisis, and

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[803] Ibid.
[804] Ibid.
[805] "Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.
[806] Ibid.

began his career as a Tory in 1833 before joining the Liberals at the end of 1855 where, Foner writes, he became a dominant figure and later served as Prime Minister.[807] This is a specific moral judgment used to outline suitable behaviour of the working class presented as a positive aspect of developing democratisation and universal suffrage. Legislation introduced in 1867 allowed the vote to men in urban areas, dependent on property ownership or paying for lodgings at £10 a year or more.[808] It was not until 1918, after the First World War as part of the Representation of the Peoples Act, that men over 21 without property were allowed to vote. Women over 30 with property could now vote also.[809] This legislation was 56 years after it had been used in the copy to measure the political worth of cotton workers suffering during the Cotton Crisis.

Having set up the workers at Stevenson Square as having 'the virtues of endurance, forbearance, and manly self-dependence', the newspaper criticised the behaviour of workers in Ashton who voted 'by a considerable majority'[810] for the British government to acknowledge the Southern States of America; that is to neither choose to support the North nor take a position of non-intervention. The workers' participation in democratic practice, then, is presented with limits. *Manchester Examiner and Times* considered this meeting 'against this commendation [of Stevenson Square] as one item of deterioration'.[811] Having divided the

[807] Foner, *British Labor*, 122.
[808] "Second Reform Act 1867," parliament.co.uk, https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/houseofcommons/reformacts/overview/furtherreformacts/
[809] "Representation of the People Act 1918," parliament.co.uk, https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/parliamentary-collections/collections-the-vote-and-after/representation-of-the-people-act-1918/
[810] "Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.
[811]"Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.

workers of Manchester and Ashton by its moral judgment of behaviour, the report continued by judging their political conclusions also:

> Hunger is, no doubt, a sharp thorn, and men who are pricked by it may do and say things which, in calm and deliberate moments, they would not do. They are tempted to forget a great principle where such an urgent interest as food is concerned […] Restoration is a slow and gradual process; and in the meantime, if we are pinched, if our operatives are suffering, let us rely upon the cold hand of public charity, or the just and brotherly sympathies of private benevolence, than even think of committing an act of gross political injustice and national wrong.[812]

The conclusion, via moral judgment, is that the behaviour of workers, as either to be venerated or considered impolitic, was that the democratic political assertions of workers are unjust and wrong but experiencing poverty with dignity is honourable. This provided a mediation between the ruling class and the poverty-stricken.

Manchester Guardian editorial of May 14, 1862

The *Manchester Guardian* published an editorial on Wednesday, May 14, 1862, in the same tone; that is, the suggestion it did not want to question the workers but saw a need to do so. The commentary is printed in the same section of the page as others on foreign and domestic events. A meeting had taken place in the House of Lords the previous Monday night and, at the same time, workers had gathered in Stevenson Square. The newspaper urged:

> Thus, every evidence of the universality and genuine depth of the concern which the unmerited sufferings of our operative classes excite ought to be carefully recorded. It is not only an indication of that sympathy which is consolatory to all of us in our

[812] Ibid.

> misfortune, but an assurance that no practical measures which fairly promote to alleviate our burden will be withheld.[813]

The newspaper used the word universality in wanting a recognition of the willingness of aid towards operatives – aid which is to be both 'practical' and 'fair'. It further referred to the operatives as ours and later the 'misfortunes' to be 'ours' also. This language of unity welcomes charitable relief but with the restrictions of undefined practicality and fairness. The report continued by stating that the manufacturing industry is 'willing, as they believe themselves able, to bear their own burden', the report added that 'every obstruction to the free distribution of relief through the legal channels should be removed', and later asked 'what property is available without changing the law for the sustentation of the operatives wholly or in part thrown out of work'[814]: in effect, this was a request for the continuation of relief without seeking government relief or aid from outside Lancashire. On the face of it the report read as support of the unemployed operatives but the moral judgment of those gathered at Stevenson Square followed the broader debate. Ultimately the 'probable usefulness' of the meeting had, as far as the newspaper was concerned, 'insufficient explanation'. The report continued:

> It must be far from the inclination of any humane man to criticise the objectless nature of such proceedings too closely and we feel, for our own part, a strong unwillingness to say a word which might have the effect of checking the flow of benevolence in favour of a class so well deserving and so hardly treated by fortunes as the operatives of this district. Yet we are bound to say that such meetings as that of Monday do more to obstruct than facilitate the solution of the present difficulty.[815]

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[813] "The Cotton Supply Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Guardian*, May 15, 1862, 2.
[814] "The Cotton Supply Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Guardian*, May 15, 1862, 2..
[815] Ibid.

The moral judgment was about the very reason for meeting – aligning the need for relief with the assumption of behavioural standards. Further, far from being without aim, those gathered at the meeting heard, voted on and passed two resolutions in front of the Mayor of Manchester, Abel Heywood. The workers' motion was published:

> In the opinion of this meeting the poor-law is an utter failure in relieving the amount of distress at present prevailing, and that the city be divided into parishes, each having its own committee to receive any funds that may be sent from any quarter to relieve the distress existing in each district.[816]

This resolution was seconded and passed unanimously, according to the *Manchester Courier*.

> That it is the opinion of this meeting that the labour test, indiscriminately applied, is unjust and degrading, and that the guardians should be left to their own discretion in the application of it, independent of the Poor-Law Board.[817]

The Manchester Guardian concluded:

> The working classes as represented by the meeting declare 'the Poor Law an utter failure in relieving the amount of distress at present prevailing' is not that opinion premature? Are they certain that they know what the Poor Law can do until its capacity is fairly tried?[818]

Having expressed a desire to not want to undermine the workers and asserted the meeting was without purpose the *Manchester Guardian* questioned the workers' motives as presented at

[816] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.
[817] Ibid.
[818] *Manchester Guardian*, May 15, 1862, 2.

the meeting. Further, it singled out J. J. Finnigan, a beamer and twister[819] who quoted at a number of meetings, as someone who 'strangely sets himself up for the apostle'.[820] Of Finnigan, it wrote 'that the support from the public funds is for men who are unable to obtain employment, a legal right, whereas relief from promiscuous voluntary benevolence is a favour, placing the recipients under an oppressive and scarcely honourable obligation' which the newspaper declared is the 'true and unprejudiced way of looking at the question'.[821] It added:

> […] never were there circumstances in which working men might temporarily rest on the rates with so much independence and self-respect as those in which the operatives of Lancashire are now placed by a national calamity, the causes of which they are wholly innocent.[822]

Both Finnigan and the *Manchester Guardian*, in paraphrasing his conclusions, engaged with the imaginary solution of unity, where charitable relief is either welcomed or repudiated depending on circumstance, personal preference, or geographical acceptance. This is offered up as a debate which is outside financial necessity, and ultimately failed to solve even the immediate problem of poverty, let alone the problem in the longer term. It also engaged moral judgment because not accepting 'promiscuous voluntary charity' is presented as more honourable, even while workers are recognised as going hungry. As such, the newspaper engaged austerity in accepting the inevitability of poverty.

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[819] "The Cotton Supply Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," Beamers and twisters operated the bobbin and twisted yarns and threads, according to the W R Mitchell archive. "The Victorians," W R Mitchell Archive, 2012 http://www.wrmitchellarchive.org.uk/learning/the-victorians
[820] "The Cotton Supply Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Guardian*, May 14, 1862, 2.
[821] Ibid.
[822] Ibid.

***Manchester Examiner and Times* second editorial of October 11, 1862**

The *Manchester Examiner and Times* on October 11, under the headline 'The Operatives and The Labour Test', opened asserting 'in the midst of the calamity' there have been 'two causes for celebration'[823]. The newspapers described the crisis has having 'fallen upon' the manufacturing districts and outlined the imagined solution of the unifying nature of aid. It described 'munificent offerings' and a 'tide of generosity' and how the unemployed 'have not wanted the necessities of life', adding:

> Thousands of toiling operatives, hitherto living a life of comparative independence, were suddenly deprived of their means of obtaining and livelihood; but their wealthier brethren came forward to their aid […] there is no mistake about the liberality with which the people of England have responded to the call for help.[824]

The facts of the conclusions can be disputed, in terms of the extent of workers' needs and want of necessities, as revealed by historical analysis of diet, housing, inadequacy of relief and debates around mortality outlined earlier. The copy, however, discussed a 'universal sympathy'[825] and described the needs of workers having been met in specific ways:

> Parliament has legislated for them; the highest noblemen in the land and the most influential gentlemen have given their time to gather and distribute funds for their relief; money has been contributed from high and low, and donations have flowed in from all quarters, even our countrymen in India and Australia numbering themselves among the givers.[826]

[823] "The Operatives and the Labour Test*,"* *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 4.
[824] Ibid.
[825] "The Operatives and the Labour Test*,"* *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 4..
[826] Ibid.

The *Manchester Examiner and Times*, while acknowledging contribution to relief is a duty, considered this its first cause to congratulation. The second was that while 'the men of wealth have performed their duty, the operatives, up to the present time, have nobly done theirs'.[827] The qualifier 'up to the present time' is not associated with the 'men of wealth' and, as such, the imaginary solution here was less one of unity than one of moral judgment and especially in term of stigmatising relief. The newspaper's congratulation, in part, was extended to the operatives whose 'hard-earned savings have been exhausted' until relief became compulsory and 'he accepted, uncomplainingly'.[828] It was here that congratulation ended and, in the same approach as the *Manchester Guardian* outlined above, the newspaper, having praised the workers, decided to challenge proceedings at a Stevenson Square meeting. It focused on what it considered to be the 'reprehensible tone of the memorial and the speeches' and hoped they would not 'inaugurate a state of things, which will rob us of almost the only pleasure which is left to us during the current crisis'. [829] The meeting had been held on the previous Thursday morning 'for the purpose of protesting against the degrading and injurious application of the labour test'[830] and called for its 'total and immediate abolition', as reported in the *Manchester Courier.*[831] The language of the operatives was more forceful both in resolutions passed and in speeches given. The report in the *Manchester Courier* ended by paraphrasing a speaker: 'There must be relaxation of the labour test, or the guardians must take the consequences, and he

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[827] Ibid.
[828] Ibid.
[829] Ibid.
[830] "The Operatives and the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 4.
[831] "The Labour Test & Relief in Money Meeting in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 10.

could not tell what they would be (Cheers)'.[832] The *Manchester Examiner and Times*, in its editorial, defended the Board of Guardians as distributors of relief and challenged the behaviour of workers, in doing so it created the imaginary solution of moral judgment to defend law and order. The newspaper's conclusions are definitive:

> If the men had reflected for a moment before adopting the memorial, which they subsequently presented to the board, they might have answered their requests for themselves. The threatened consequences compelled the guardians to refuse their demands. It was the only course left open to them and, had they taken any other, under the circumstances, they would have been unfit for the responsible position they now hold, and wanting in duty to the ratepayers. We trust, therefore, that should the operatives continue their agitation for the abolition of the labour test, there will be no more intimidation.[833]

The newspaper added that 'it is not altogether just to compel men to undergo what is properly called 'a test' which is really intended to protect the ratepayers against imposition, when no one doubts that the great majority of those now compelled to apply for aid are fully entitled to receive it'[834] but insisted demands must 'be made with a little more politeness' and added, in defence of workers being entitled to more relief, 'many of us want things which we ought to have yet don't get, without demanding them by threat of force'.[835] The justified anger of the cotton operatives – now no longer able to be described and defined as behaving within the acceptable standards outlined earlier – was considered the act that will deny them relief, charity but less likely an end to the Labour Test. The radical paper used the imaginary solution of moral judgment to manage law and order at a time when an uprising was feared.

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[832] Ibid.
[833] "The Operatives and the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 4.
[834] "The Operatives and the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 4.
[835] Ibid.

Manchester Courier editorial of March 28, 1863

The following year, on March 28, 1863, the conservative *Manchester Courier* responded in an editorial to a series of letters in *The Times* regarding a brief uprising against the local Relief Committee in Stalybridge, published the previous week on March 20, 1863. The newspaper criticised the letters and reported it saw no value in being 'laid bare to the public eye the smouldering elements of turbulence in Stalybridge'. [836] The letters, it stated, accused 'the Manchester press of attempts to deceive the world by silence' adding, 'if the gentleman means we have failed to excavate below the surface of society and open up the hidden sources of discontent he is eminently right, and never in his life paid a greater compliment to the prudence of public journalism'.[837] The uprising is described as 'overt acts of violence' and the newspaper asserted that, had it reported on 'rumblings of discontent', 'the coming storm might have burst much sooner'.[838] Law and order was not been maintained at this point. This copy acted as mediation: it provided both a criticism of and an assurance against a political uprising in the middle of a recognised economic crisis impacting on only one section of society. It overtly sought to defend the issuing of tickets instead of cash to unemployed operatives to ensure they 'would not squander their means on drink' and recognised those without 'intemperate habits' were treated the same. The editorial stated:

> We have, indeed, no doubt that the concession will be shamefully abused by a part – a small part, of those who receive relief. We mean by the low Irish, who appear to have

[836] *Manchester Courier*, March 28, 1863, 6.
[837] Ibid.
[838] *Manchester Courier*, March 28, 1863, 6.

> been the ringleaders in the late disgraceful riots, and who form the dregs of that filthy and drunken pauperism which afflicts every English community in which they settle.[839]

Such anti-Irish sentiment could be expected from the newspaper which openly opposed Catholic emancipation[840] but the political unconscious here was a moral judgment dividing worthy recipients and unworthy recipients to preserve law and order. It goes on:

> No possible excuse can be made for that infamous turbulence which held in terror the peaceable inhabitants of Stalybridge, Hyde and Ashton, and robbed them and destroyed their property. But perhaps the deepest wrong has been done to the distressed operatives themselves – to those worthy artisans and their families, who are made wretched by enforced idleness. For there cannot be a doubt that such scenes as have taken place, will, as far as benevolent persons are concerned, scare and drive back to their sources fountains of charity; while, to others, they will furnish a ready pretext for not giving at all, or only giving sparingly. IN this way, also, some of those sources of liberality which were already failing will be dried up.[841]

The copy ended with the hope that workers meeting next at Stevenson Square would be informed of the need for a grant comparable to that given to the Irish during the Great Hunger, and a call for emigration presented as an opportunity; 'combining relief at home with a system of emigration that might have converted spinners of cotton into soiled growers and cleaners and packers of cotton'.[842] The skilled workers, at once venerated and derided, were now presented as a single mass capable of movement to the colonies and 'that by the time the supply of cotton at a reasonable price returns, we might again gather around us a skilled population able to work it'.[843] Capitalism was again prioritised over the need of labour.

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[839] Ibid.
[840] Busteed, *The Irish in Manchester*, 91.
[841] *Manchester Courier*, March 28, 1863, 6.
[842] *Manchester Courier*, March 28, 1863, 6.
[843] Ibid.

In conclusion, the discussion in editorials was one of keeping the peace, of recognising suffering and of seeking remedy; it was one of seeing necessary support for the poor while recognising destructive elements within the working class. Unity was presented in a celebration of finances being raised among the classes – from rich and poor. There was the suggestion of opportunity in developing relations between those classes and in emigration to tackle future cotton crises. There was also moral judgment commending and dividing the workers according to their behaviour. The political unconscious unearthed in all three newspapers, ultimately suggested: behave according to arbitrary and changing standards (modified behaviour, willingness to move, gratitude at generosity, for example) set by the ruling class or risk further financial hardship.

For Marx, as for Jameson, money is in itself a symptom of underlying social contradictions, it is a 'stopgap solution which does not resolve the contradictions themselves' but rather 'only provides the form within which they have room to move'. [844] As such, the newspaper's editorials engaged contradictory positions: a reliance on charity – be it from ratepayers or individuals – was to be depended upon while workers showed honour in not requesting public help. This provided an imaginary solution to a crisis with a need for money at its core. This mediation also sought to justify the economic crisis being felt more harshly by the unemployed cotton workers. Walker acknowledges the ritual played out by the media in reporting deaths in the Iraq War in efforts to justify, or legitimate, or explain deaths and, in so doing, 'to elevate the status of those who died, to locate their deaths in some seemingly

[844] Jameson, *Representing Capital*, 13.

timeless and uniquely 'American' set of values'.[845] So too the Victorian Manchester newspapers. Manchester was considered a hive of industry in a global capitalist context, studied by Marx and Engels as the potential centre of revolution, and a focus of worldwide attention due to this political agitation and capitalist development. The suffering of the working class was justified, given legitimacy and explained with a suggestion of Manchester exceptionalism,[846] that is, the extraordinary generosity of the city's wealthy against the backdrop of the city's global significance was presented within the celebration of international charity, all while debating the honour and sacrifice of the city's poor. This managed and contained the problem of an economic crisis and constructed imaginary solutions to the problem the journalism has diagnosed. An editorial which delivered the newspaper's position in a commentary could be expected to provide 'solutions' but these same solutions appeared in the news copy.

News stories

Jameson looks to the English Civil War as a time in which 'the ruling class established dominance not only by controlling the legal system, the prisons, and so on, but also by establishing a climate of thought in which the oppressed classes perpetuate their own oppression by learning the values of the masters'.[847] This becomes clear in analysing those

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[845] Walker, *Human Interest and Form* 92.

[846] While scholarly work into the notion of 'Manchester exceptionalism' has not yet been undertaken, the idea has gained interest under devolution with the city's economic size and strong cultural identity heavily promoted with concerns it would undermine the city's progress. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/feb/12/secret-negotiations-restore-manchester-greatness

[847] Dowling, *Jameson*, 129.

speeches which the newspapers chose to report. This is not just about the section on which the newspapers chose to focus but the acceptance of the imaginary solutions by the unemployed operatives themselves. The meeting to protest the Labour Test held on April 29, was widely reported in the radical *Manchester Examiner and Times* and the conservative *Manchester Courier* and the liberal *Manchester Guardian*. Describing the behaviour of the workers in itself could be interpreted as providing colour to copy, but the social contradiction is revealed in the prioritising of moral expectations of Victorian society, while reporting on the suffering poor, in seeking a remedy to poverty. Moral values in this sense means those which espoused sexual restraint, low tolerance of crime, and other strict social codes of conduct, such as those revealed in Dr Buchanan's 1862 'Report on the Health of Distressed Operatives', to include crime rates, illegitimate births, prostitution and sexually transmitted diseases. In order to consider the moral judgment of behaviour, it is important to first consider the purpose of the meeting, from the workers' perspective and the reporting of the newspapers. The conservative *Courier* published the workers' motion in full:

> That in the opinion of this meeting the modicum of relief afforded by the Poor-law Guardians is totally inadequate to meet the existing distress.[848]

The liberal *Guardian* paraphrased the motion:

> […] the object being to make a public representation of their present condition and to appoint a deputation to wait upon the authorities praying upon them to adopt means to alleviate the prevalent distress.[849]

[848] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, Saturday, May 3, 1862, 8.
[849] "The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester," *Manchester Guardian*, Wednesday, April 30, 1862, 3.

The radical *Examiner and Times* printed the same motion as that in the *Manchester Courier* but it did so toward the end of lengthy copy and with this second motion, put by James Oswald, reported as unanimously adopted:

> That in the opinion of this meeting, the present mode of applying the labour test is unjust and in principle, and cruel in its operation on the labouring classes. [850]

The motions, as read and adopted by the gathering, provide the strongest indication as to the thoughts and demands of the working class who attended that meeting. They suggested, at least, a call for modifications the Labour Test and the amount of relief available. Significantly, before continuing with its report, after paraphrasing the motion, the *Manchester Guardian* assured its readership, predominantly the property owning manufacturing and commercial classes that 'the behaviour of the vast concourse was very orderly throughout the whole of its proceedings' and it opted to report a further call from the meeting chairman, Bernard Barratt, which also observed the conduct of the workers:

> [He] said that the purpose of the meeting was to let the ratepayers and the Guardians know their actual condition. He exhorted all present to be peaceable in their behaviour and to show that in a public meeting they could conduct themselves as if they were dressed in their best black cloth. [851]

This copy could be read as a simple observation, both of a speech and the gathering, but it was loaded with ideological judgment which needs to be placed in its political context. Firstly, only the liberal newspaper chose to use this direct quote and focus on behaviour, the radical and

[850] "Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester*," Manchester Examiner and Times*, Saturday, May 3, 1862, 6.
[851] "The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester*," Manchester Guardian*, Wednesday, April 30, 1862, 3.

conservative newspapers did not; perhaps an unexpected ideological revelation in terms of the political stance of the publications. The radical paper described the speech as 'excellent and well-worded'[852] while the *Manchester Courier* chose not to offer its own comment on behaviour but to paraphrase that of a worker. Secondly, as workers sought to 'make a public representation of their present condition',[853] that is to alert the ratepayers who fund 'famine' relief and to convince the Guardians who distribute it of the authenticity of their poverty, the *Manchester Guardian* prioritises the consideration for orderliness. This description of order is presented at a time when society considered revolution could be imminent. As outlined earlier, the middle class feared 'mob violence' witnessed in the years leading to the Cotton Crisis in agitation against the Poor Law.[854] Putting this description in that historical context reveals the social contradiction of moral judgment intended to maintain law and order. So, within its historical context, the seemingly harmless description of behaviour provided a number of functions: it served to reassure the readership that the working class is not a threat, it considered the fitness of the working class to vote with democracy as an alternative to revolt, and it alluded to defending and developing the religious and social conditions of the poor and to quell any threat of political agitation becoming violent disturbance. Ultimately, this description served to placate the bourgeoisie amid economic turmoil affecting the working class: the working class might be angry, but they are behaving themselves. Other descriptions appeared to be support for the working class, not just a reassurance of a lack of threat from the

[852] "Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.
[853] "The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester," *Manchester Guardian*, April 30, 1862, 3.
[854] Ayerst, *Guardian Biography*, 62.

working class. This moral judgment, however, also worked to preserve law and order. In a separate story, in the same edition, a section of a speech by John Finnigan, described as a handloom weaver or beamer and twister,[855] is reported and presented an avoidance of applying for relief as honourable and honest.

> […] as we all the pride of Lancashire operatives is of that nature that in fact they will suffer any privation – they will do anything that it is possible men can do, in honour and honesty, before they will undergo what they consider to be the humiliating process of receiving parish relief.[856]

This copy in the context of the structures and activities surrounding poor relief, that is the legislation and practice of distribution, the moral judgment, and its purpose within the social contradiction, was arguably, to stigmatise relief.

The *Manchester Guardian* focused on an aspect of the speech which made a similar judgment:

> This innate pride in the working classes prevented them from making application to the Poor-law Guardians well knowing, as they did, the humiliating processes through which they would have to go before they got 2s 6d for five days' work in a stone-yard; and, if they missed a day, would have sixpence knocked off.[857]

Again, on the face of it this reporting seems fair, accurate and objective because it is, after all, the reported speech of a worker. The stigmatising of relief, however, was also linked to the

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[855] Handloom weavers worked in noisy conditions running looms to weave cloth, according to the W R Mitchell archive. "The Victorians," W R Mitchell Archive, 2012 http://www.wrmitchellarchive.org.uk/learning/the-victorians
[856] "Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.
[857] "The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester," *Manchester Guardian*, April 30, 1862, 3.

notion of unity in welcoming charitable relief. As Mr Finnigan is reported to have said, using paraphrasing not a direct quote:

> The spirit of the Lancashire operatives has been applauded in the highest quarters in the land. Their independence, their patience and their forbearance, had been the theme of statesmen; and he for one gloried in being associated with men who would rather sell every article of furniture and pawn every vestige of clothing before they would stoop to have the name of pauper branded on their brow.[858]

In its historical context this comment, as uttered by a cotton worker and reported by the liberal newspaper, was saturated with ideology. On the one hand it celebrated the shared class characteristics of independence, patience and forbearance, on the other, the admiration of the determination not to be paupers denied the harsh realities of poverty. Further, the admiration was amid discussion of fraud among the working class. The Labour Test was deemed 'cruel and unjust' but in the context of ensuring workers are not attempting fraud and, as such, the cotton workers become divided: there are those who revealed admirable characteristics amid poverty and those accused of committing fraud. Finnigan, paraphrased in the *Manchester Courier*, says 'he knows of imposters amongst the working classes but they were to be found in all classes, and because of the existence of a few, the many ought not to be sacrificed'.[859] The report continued in paraphrasing Henry Reather, described as a power-loom weaver, who says 'though working men had in some cases been extravagant and indulged too freely in beer and tobacco they ought not on that account to be left to die of starvation'.[860] The workers were judged for their behaviour in receipt of relief, and for their spending of it, and were accused of

[858] Ibid.
[859] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, May 3, 1862, 3.
[860] Ibid.

fraud. Yet, while there is a nod towards the possibility of corruption in all classes, concessions were made for the understanding of the middle classes, who lived in a city designed in such a way as to help them avoid witnessing poverty. The copy of all three publications was littered with the contradictions of suggesting the need to improve the moral condition of the working class which served only to blame them for poverty and the further stigmatising of receiving relief. The needs of the poor were not given priority or uncritically met in the copy. Concern was voiced for the ratepayers who were said to be paying for inferior bread to be handed to the workers as part of relief with it posited that the ratepayers should themselves 'not put up with such an inferior article'.[861] The workers' tolerance and acceptance was a given where that of the ratepayers was not.

A meeting was reported by the *Manchester Courier* and by the *Manchester Examiner and Times*: both newspapers used the headline 'The Labour Test and Relief in Money'. The similarities in the copy, words and structure, suggest syndication. As such, consideration will be given here to the copy as a whole and to the choices made by the *Manchester Courier* and *Manchester Examiner and Times* in terms of reporting and prioritising information. Both newspapers published the workers' first resolution in full:

> That we memorialise the Poor-Law Board of Manchester for a total and immediate relaxation of the labour test as applied to us; likewise for an increase in our relief, and also that such be made in money instead of part provisions, as the winter is drawing nigh, and our privations and necessities will, as a natural consequence, become greater.[862]

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[861] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, May 3, 1862, 3.
[862] "The Labour Test & Relief in Money Meeting in Manchester*," Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 10, "Manchester Board of Guardians," *Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 9.

The motion, put by Thomas Evans, while it could be argued is more forceful than those previously put and reported upon, accepted austerity is an inevitability. Evans listed a number of demands which were published equally, by use of paraphrasing, in both publications:

> The speaker thought they had a just claim to more prominent notice by the press.
>
> If property was to be respected it would be by an end being put to the diabolical and unjust labour.
>
> He believed that if all the manufacturers in Lancashire were polled upon the question, that there would be 100 to 1 in their favour.
>
> The guardians had no support but a bad law, the officials of which were incapable of grappling with the difficulties at the present time.
>
> The guardians were put in office to serve ratepayers and they had no right to degrade the operatives who had been driven to seek relief.[863]

In the *Manchester Courier* it was pointed out that 'in Oldham, a man, his wife and his child were entitled to 7s, a week; in Manchester they would get 4s 6d'[864] and also 'in Rochdale there was no labour test, excepting for the extreme vagabonds'. Indeed, the Labour Test is considered 'only fit for the common vagrant'.[865] The *Manchester Examiner and Times* added that 'the unemployed in Manchester received less for their labour than the people of any place in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire'. The workers recognised the different approaches of the Boards of Guardians and the inability for the Poor Law to cope but still accepted the inevitability of poverty: there was a recognition of a 'relaxation', a need to fulfil such a test, and a desire to encourage the meeting of the demands by explanation of the

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[863] "The Labour Test & Relief in Money Meeting in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 10, "Manchester Board of Guardians," *Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 9.
[864] "Manchester Board of Guardians," *Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 9.
[865] "Manchester Board of Guardians," *Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 9.

suffering of the poor, as if it is necessary to describe it fully. There were descriptions of inadequate bread, of poor meals provided as workers fulfil the obligations of the Labour Test, and of workers declared fit for work despite weeks of illness: all seeking to convince others of suffering. Further, the workers focused on the inadequacy of the law while imagining the unified, single-minded support of the manufacturers. There was reference to a desire to 'not be idle' and to workers not 'using their opportunities properly'.[866] All of these suggest an acceptance of from the newspapers of austerity as a solution to poverty.

The *Manchester Examiner and Times* and *Manchester Courier* differed in their approach to religious influences on workers: the former reported sections of a speech complaining of 'the missionaries using their opportunities improperly' and of schools providing unnecessary 'tracts and spiritual dictation' while the latter did not. This could reveal that the former wished to be thorough or wished to publish the more hostile aspects of the speech. The *Examiner and Times* ended, however, with a moral judgment using a paraphrased section of a speech as follows:

> Mr Billcliffe hoped the people would not forget to say their prayers. Man's necessity was God's opportunity. They must respect those above them, but here could not be peace without pudding. He hoped that henceforth the men would go for the relief themselves, and not send their wives to be blackguarded.[867]

[866] "The Labour Test & Relief in Money Meeting in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 10.
[867] "The Labour Test & Relief in Money Meeting in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 10.

Significantly, the radical *Manchester Examiner and Times* also ended its copy with 'the proceedings soon after were brought to a peaceable conclusion'[868] alleviating any fears of violence, ensuring law and order is seen to be preserved.

For Jameson what is revealed in historical context is not a 'mere explication de texte but an attempt to locate the aesthetic contradictions as disclosing the underlying social contradictions' and the 'collective repression' inherent in the copy. [869] In the next section the ideologeme will enable an analysis of the belief system within the copy which manifests as a concept or narrative as part of a wider social conversation, revealing the antagonistic dialogue between classes.[870] The ideologeme identified is *distress*.

CHAPTER TWO: The second interpretive horizon: ideologeme

Locating the ideologeme

The ideologeme provides a way of thinking about the world, an ideology which becomes the norm. For Jameson, it can mediate between conceptions of ideology, as abstract opinion and class values, and manifest as a 'kind of ultimate class fantasy about the collective characters which are the classes in opposition'.[871] Jameson explains:

> If the first dimension stresses the formal completeness of the text, its success in arranging materials in such a manner that it can perform its resolutions and containment strategies, this second level unpicks the apparent closure and situates the text in a more open-ended process where signs become […] pulled in different directions in the arena of class struggle. [872]

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[868] Ibid.
[869] Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx*, 118.
[870] Wayne, *Marxism and Media*, 9.
[871] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 73.
[872] Ibid, 143.

This second horizon, that is the second concentric circle, does not leave the interpretive horizon of imaginary solutions behind but its social aspect is contained within the political aspect. Jameson explains that to function as an ideologeme it must be susceptible to both a conceptual description and a narrative manifestation all at once.[873] He writes:

> […] to rewrite the individual text, the individual cultural artefact, in terms of the antagonistic dialogue of class voices is to perform a rather different operation from the one we have ascribed to our first horizon. Now the individual text will be refocused as a parole, or individual utterance, of the vaster system, or langue, of class discourse. The individual text retains its formal function as a symbolic act: yet the value and character of such symbolic action are now significantly modified and enlarged […] a symbolic move in an essentially polemic and strategic ideological confrontation between the classes.[874]

Jameson provides *terrorism* as one example of an ideologeme which he argues, as a concept currently manifests as a 'collective obsession, a symptomatic fantasy of the American political unconscious'.[875] Walker located *sacrifice* as the ideologeme used in reporting the Iraq War in American newspapers, serving as mediation between the ideology of American exceptionalism and the collective stories of print news reports of military death.[876] Wayne presents a contemporary ideologeme as manifesting as *surveillance* in the reality series Big Brother where 'the technological forces of communicative production become the site and stake of the class struggle'. [877] For Wayne the combination of an 'unprecedented access to data and communication with the unprecedented access of state agents to citizens' which resulted in a

[873] Ibid, 73.
[874] Ibid, 70.
[875] Jameson, *Ideologies of Theory*, (Verso, 2008), 509.
[876] Walker, *Human Interest and Form*, 186.
[877] Wayne, *Marxism and Media*, 148.

unique televisual format of reality television which, itself, then had a ‘real economic infrastructure, a web of interlocking financial interests, underpinning this hermetic quality of the genre’.[878] Simply put, *terrorism* is a fantasy for national unity, *sacrifice* met the ideological demands of war and *surveillance* met the ideological demands of commercial television.

Distress

The ideologeme located in the Victorian press reporting the Cotton Crisis is *distress*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines distress as ‘extreme anxiety, sorrow or pain’ as a noun and verb and also as ‘difficulty caused by a lack of money’ and states its origins are in the Middle English destresce (noun) and districies (verb) and the Latin distringere, meaning to stretch apart. The word was used with direct reference to Lancashire and Manchester but also more broadly as a reference to the cotton ‘famine’. *Distress* was used as a noun, for example, the distress in Lancashire and also used as a collective noun, for example, the distressed of Lancashire. The word serves as mediation between the ideology of the Victorian press and the experience of poverty caused by economic crisis. It takes the form of a noun and a concept and, this thesis asserts, ultimately takes the form of a philosophical system, a narrative manifesting in the copy which serves to present the unemployed workers’ necessity to meet the demands of capital, amid crisis or not.

The frequency of its use was a factor in it being located as the ideologeme. The *Manchester Guardian* used the word distress 877 times during the 11-month period studied, in

[878] Ibid.

articles and editorials, in headlines and in copy. It was used in a headline 260 times (two of which include articles on economic crises in France). Headline examples included: 'The Lancashire Distress', 'Distress in Lancashire', 'The Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts, Half A Year of Distress', 'The Distress in Manchester', 'The Government and the Distress in Lancashire', 'Statistics Relating to the Relief of the Lancashire Distress', 'Emigration and the Lancashire Distress', 'The Lancashire Death Rate in a Year of Distress', 'America and the Distress', 'The Millowners and the Distress', 'The Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Distress'.

The *Manchester Courier* used the word distress 682 times the 11-month period studied, in articles and editorials, in headlines and copy. It also appeared in correspondence to the editor. It was used 570 times in 1862 and 112 times in 1863. The headline used most frequently was 'Distress in Lancashire' at 88 times in 1862 and 23 times in 1863. Other headline examples included 'American Aid to the Distressed Operatives and The Manchester Committee for the Relief of the Distress'. The newspaper's earliest use of the headline 'Distress in Lancashire during the American Civil War', according to the British Newspaper Archive, was May 3, 1862, on page eight.

During the 11-month period studied, the *Manchester Examiner and Times* used the word distress 214 in 1862 in articles and editorials, in headlines and copy. Headlines included, 'Distress In Lancashire', 'Birmingham and the Distress in Lancashire', 'The Distressed Operatives of Coventry, Blackburn Cottage Owners and the Distressed', 'Meeting of the Operatives on the Distress', 'Christmas Among the Distressed' and 'Mr Gladstone on the Distress'.

It is worth considering the national and international use of the word during the 11-month period studied. The word *distress* combined with Lancashire was used 41,161 times in articles and editorials 1862 and 5,219 in 1863 in newspapers listed on the British Newspaper Archive.[879] A search for 'The Distress in Lancashire' on the archive reveals examples of the use of the word in headlines, which included 'Dreadful Distress in Lancashire', used in *Reynold's Newspaper* in 1862, 'Alarming Distress in Lancashire' used in the *Morning Post* the same year, 'The Sad Distress in Lancashire' used in the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* in 1862. The headline 'Distress in Lancashire' was used 379 times in the *London Evening Standard*, 212 times, 156 times by *The Times*, including 22 editorials, in the *London Daily News* 145 times, the *Leeds Mercury* 77 times, in the *Liverpool Mercury* 28 times, the *Dundee Courier* 22 times, and *Glasgow Herald* 11 times. The headline 'The Distress in Lancashire' was used 2,595 times in the Irish press, including 212 times in the *Dublin Daily Express* and 198 times in the *Dublin Evening Mail*. It was used in the *Belfast News-Letter* 19 times.[880] The headline 'The Lancashire Distress' was used 9,226 times in England, 2,181 times in Ireland, 1,685 times in Scotland and 232 times in Wales. The *New York Times*[881] used the phrase and headline 'Distress in Lancashire' and examples of it used as a headline can be found in the *Sydney Morning Herald.*[882]

[879] The British Newspaper Archive states that it holds over 20 million searchable pages, from more than 700 newspaper titles from UK and Ireland, including over 1.6 million newspapers published between 1850 and 1899 and 331,177 between 1860 and 1869.
[880] Arguably, the new could have carried greater implications in Ireland where the Great Hunger was still fresh in the memory as well as the recognition of the Irish now suffering in England.
[881] "The Distress in Lancashire; Terrible Effects of the Cotton Famine in England. Quarter of a Million of People in One District Out of Work and Living on Charity. Facts, Figures and Incidents of the Suffering. Details of the Numbers Unemployed and the Consequent Distress in the Towns and Unions of Lancashire. Extent and Growth of the Famine. The Number of Suffering. The American War and Distress," *New York Times*, November 26, 1862
[882] "The Distress in Lancashire," *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 17, 1862; October 11, 1862; January, 20, 1863

Some examples of the ideologeme in politics included use by Prime Minister Lord Palmerston's reference to 'the distress' in his 'renewed declaration of non-intervention' at a banquet in Sheffield as reported in the *New York Times*.[883] Distress was used in resolutions presented to the House of Commons.[884] The thank you letter from Mayor of Manchester Abel Heywood to Captain Lunt, commander of the ship the 'George Griswold', is signed 'on behalf of the general committee of the fund for the relief of distress in the manufacturing districts'.[885] In April 1862, when a meeting was held in Manchester Town Hall to consider forming a relief committee, Richard Cobden predicted 'relieve this amount of distress are 25,000 pounds a month for the next five months'.[886] William Ewart Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer during the Cotton Crisis, and in 1866, when debating the Reform Bill and expressing his belief in the labouring classes to vote, referred to the 'conduct of the labouring classes, especially in the Lancashire distress' to support his point. [887]

The ideologeme was clearly widely adopted and, as the second social interpretive horizon, it reveals the antagonistic collective discourses of social classes and this antagonism within capitalism – that, to use Wayne's description, 'the relationship between capital and labour is inherently, *structurally* antagonistic and a site of contestation where labour deploys strategies from the small-scale to the large-scale, from the individual to the collective, which

[883] "LORD PALMERSTON'S SHEFFIELD SPEECH.; Renewed Declaration of Non-Intervention. ROEBUCK'S SPEECH," *New York Times*, August 22, 1862, 8.
[884] *Hansard* April 27, 1863, volume 170, cc776-838 Retrieved from: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1863/apr/27/resolution
[885] Watts, *Facts of the Cotton Famine*, 236.
[886] Waugh, *Home Life*, 154.
[887] Gladstone's speeches, descriptive text and biography Retrieved from: https://archive.org/details/gladstonesspeech00gladuoft

resist and subvert the priorities of capital, and capital deploys a variety of strategies to contain and stifle any challenge to its priorities and logic. This contestation is called class struggle'.[888] This inherently, structurally antagonistic class struggle is witnessed outside and inside all copy reporting protests in Stevenson Square. Further, the manufacture division of labour – as experienced by cotton workers - developed into what Engels described as a greater weapon of exploitation by capital.[889] The unemployed cotton workers depended upon mill owners to remove them from 'famine' through access to selling their labour. In the early 1800s, hand-loom weavers saw machinery usurp their purpose, reduce their access to labour and, inevitably under capitalism, their access to money and, as such, access to the essentials for existence. This was not a 'famine' but capitalism reducing labour to suit its own purposes. It was the dependence upon *machinery* owned by the capitalist, technology developed to suit capitalism not labour, which rendered the worker separated from life's essentials. As Engels wrote:

> The self-dependent and estranged form that capitalist production gives the instrument of labour as against the labourer is developed by machinery into a thorough antagonism – hence now the labourer's revolt first against the instrument of labour.[890]

The antagonism, then, is inevitable and, as such, was revealed in the political unconscious of the journalistic text – the ideologeme speaks to the tension in this relationship. Walker recognises 'the multi-accentuality of the concept of sacrifice which pulls in opposing directions, first as a willing act of 'giving up' something of value in service to a greater goal and second, the experience of being required, unwillingly, 'to sacrifice' and, in so doing, recognises

[888] Wayne, *Marxism and Media*, 13.
[889] Engels, *Conditions*, 91.
[890] Engels, *Conditions*, 93.

the ideological use of the notion of sacrifice and its use to defend the needs of capital and capitalism.[891] This thesis considers the euphemistic and abstract use of distress as providing a mythical reconciliation with the ultimate goal of defending capital and capitalism during an economic crisis. For Jameson, interpreting nineteenth-century literature, the notion of ressentiment was key to the ideologeme. Jameson unearths ressentiment in the political unconscious as the 'unmasking of ethics and ethical binary opposition of good and evil as one of the fundamental forms of ideological thought in Western culture'.[892] Ressentiment is, to Jameson, the nineteenth-century explanation for lower-class disenchantment that continues today, as Buchanan outlines:

> [Ressentiment] finds new life today in such slogans as the Right of 'self-reliance' which hold that the poor are only poor because they do not have the character to change their situation. The same line of thinking is to be found in the nonsense idea that welfare is bad for poor people because it undermines their passion and drive to find work and lift themselves out of the 'poverty cycle' (a Left liberal term that in its own way is equally heartless since it contents itself with the idea that poverty is inexorable). These slogans show quite clearly that, as Jameson argues, the profoundest instances of ressentiment are always to be found on the side of the diagnostician rather than the sufferers. It is not the ones who are actually said to be afflicted by ressentiment that actually have it, but it is rather the ones doing the finger pointing who are the most blighted. But, and this is Jameson's real point, the diagnosis of ressentiment is simply a precondition for the negation of politics by recasting it in terms of ethics. By rewriting poverty as a character flaw and debating welfare in terms of good or bad for the character of the poor, the reality that poverty is a structural condition and effect of capitalism is blotted from view.[893]

For Jameson, then, the ideologeme allows for a displacement in emphasis, it lets capitalism off the hook and blames the poor for poverty; he uses the example of the English revolution in

[891] Walker, *Human Interest and Form*, 187.
[892] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 73.
[893] Buchanan, *Live Theory*, 71.

which various classes and class fractions were obliged to articulate their ideological struggles through a shared code.[894]

Here the shared code *distress* can be read as austerity. This moral, sentimental and, on occasion, theological code was presented through the use of 'distress' as a noun, of encapsulating pain, sorrow, misery, suffering, under one word which, to refer to Buchanan,[895] rewrites poverty as an emotional experience and blots capitalism from view. The ideologeme offered the theological code which offered sentimentality amid economic crisis and this was done in an attempt at a 'psychic wholeness or unity of experience which the historical situation threatens to shatter at every turn'.[896] As such, the use of the collective noun 'the distressed' to refer to unemployed cotton operatives repeated and reinforced the process of a strategy of containment by othering those experiencing poverty, presenting them as a single mass. The acceptance of austerity is evident in the moral judgment revealed in the first interpretive horizon and, here, in the second horizon is broadened to provide a cloak for that austerity rather than to challenge the suffering of the poor. This othering, in the use of a collective noun, further served to rationalize and reify capitalist daily life.

The tension – the antagonism – presented by the use of distress comes in two forms. Firstly, the idea of noble distress, of the poor managing their poverty with dignity and stoicism, with the recognition that the economic crisis is not the fault of the unemployed cotton workers, which is at odds with the presentation of the poor experiencing 'distress' as needing moral

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[894] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 74.
[895] Buchanan, *Live Theory*, 71.
[896] Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, 61. This takes from Jameson's interpretation of Walter Benjamin and 'distress in the face of a political and historical nightmare'

management. Secondly, distress is offered as a temporary state, one in which enduring poverty will be inevitable and short-term, but this is at odds with the recognition that 'famine' relief must be managed because there was not a clear and final end to the economic crisis in an increasingly concentrated industry, dependent on restricted cotton supplies. The implication was that while the poor were suffering under a crisis, they needed moral judgment and that, while 'distress' was caused by that crisis, the existence of the poor under capitalism was, in fact, inevitable and permanent: austerity manifested as both an authoritarianism and a management of economic conditions. Ultimately, the distress of the workers met the demands of capital and 'distress' was more ideologically acceptable, and even palatable, than austerity.

This Victorian austerity rhetoric, then, finds its place in the frequent use of the ideologeme. It was found in editorials, headlines, copy and the quotes chosen for publication by each of the three newspapers. The analysis will first consider editorials, then headlines and copy then, finally, copy and quotes or paraphrasing.

Editorials

> If the Southern blockade were at an end tomorrow, although it would take some time to exhaust by consumption the exiting stock of cotton in this country and America, it may well be doubted whether, at the expiration of that period, a fresh crop would be coming forward to supply the demand. The distress, therefore, is no temporary vicissitude of which any man can see an end; the system of relief must be organised on a principle adapted to a permanent state of things.[897]

[897] "The Federals and the Confederates Another Meeting in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Courier*, March 28, 1863, 6.

The conservative *Courier* captured in its editorial the tension: the presentation of temporary horror which is, in fact, a permanent state with workers dependent on either selling their labour or having access to relief. It defined that tension as *the distress*. Access to relief is managed according to the moral standards of the poor, the liberality and generosity of the wealthy, the labour of the boards of guardians and, as such, the distress, while described as tragedy and panic, is rendered a controlled concern under the ideologically accepted necessity for austerity. The conservative *Courier* referred to 'distressed districts', and 'the distress', in an editorial which focused on the newspaper defending its journalism and that it has 'always been careful to guard the public against the idea that the present crisis was drawing to a close'. [898] In what initially appeared to be a recognition of some form of permanence, the copy continued by arguing the need to prevent three things among the poor: demoralisation, idleness and drunkenness. It suggested that the administration of relief had to be handled carefully so as not to create these three problems. It welcomed decisions to provide relief in money rather than, in part in bread and bacon and, following riots in Stalybridge, adds:

> It is a concession well adapted to lay the turbulent spirit that had broken out, and we have good hopes that the admirable fortitude which has hitherto distinguished the whole of the distressed districts will not again be violated and abandoned.[899]

[898] Ibid.
[899] "The Federals and the Confederates Another Meeting in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Courier*, March 28, 1863, 6.

The tension of the permanence of poverty creating hostility is settled by the suggestion of workers behaving better: the turbulent spirit can be calmed if small concessions are met to reasonable demands.

The *Manchester Examiner and Times* also stirred this tension in an editorial discussing the Labour Test and defence of the Poor Law guardians.

> Among the many who have laboured to alleviate the distress, none have appeared more desirous of strictly discharging their duties than the boards of guardians in the various districts where distress exists […] Their ordinary regulations have been relaxed, the rate of relief has been increased, and everything which could possibly deprive the receipt of it of the humiliation which has usually been attached to having 'pay from the parish' has been abolished, so far as the guardians felt themselves justified by the law and their duty to the ratepayers.[900]

Many of the meetings held at Stevenson Square disputed this idea that applying for relief was not a humiliating experience and that it had increased or was distributed fairly. The tension here was revealed in the use of distress to describe the horror during the Cotton Crisis while defending 'famine' relief management and distribution practices. It, again, prioritised the demands of capital: it presented the management of poverty – of distress - as enough and eradication was not a consideration. Further, the article used references to 'tide of generosity', that 'influential men have given their time to gather and distribute funds', that 'money has been contributed from high and low', when using the ideologeme distress, suggesting a necessity for gratitude on the part of the 'distressed' which is simultaneously in conflict with

[900] "The Operatives and the Labour Test." *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 4.

the economic recognition of the need for that money and distribution. [901] The radical newspaper used distress in another editorial.

> The sadder picture of local distress must engage our attention for a few moments, and indeed no better comment upon them can be supplied than the proceedings of the operatives […] to the meeting held at Stevenson Square on Tuesday we invite particular attention. The remarks of the speakers were characterised by so much moderation and judgment, that we have not one word to say against them.[902]

While conjuring a 'sad picture of local distress'[903] in comparison to the wealth in the British metropolis, the radical newspaper localised the experience which is, in fact, felt throughout the country, in Scotland, Ireland and the Continent.[904] In using the ideologeme it also referred to 'the honour of the distressed operatives' in not applying for funding en masse. [905] The tension is, again, the judgment of the behaviour of the poor in the face of mass poverty while praising the lack of a collective demand from the unemployed operatives for financial assistance. The implication was repeatedly that the experience of poverty – the distress – is more meaningful *because* the operatives are not making demands upon the wealthy and, as such, are meeting the demands of capital during a crisis. The need for austerity was being met and, while the burden was on the poor, this was acceptable because not only were they stoic but also their morality was being measured. The copy did go on to have more than one word to say against the poor and, in particular, any suggestion from the workers that 'the distresses of Lancashire'[906] can be ended by the Government acknowledging the Southern States of America.

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[901] "The Operatives and the Labour Test." *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 4.
[902] "The Distress in Lancashire," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.
[903] Ibid
[904] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 131.
[905] "The Distress in Lancashire," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.
[906]"The Distress in Lancashire," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.

Ultimately, the 'sad picture' could be appreciated by readers as one that was moderated by presenting a stoic, and politically and financially managed, poor.

The *Manchester Guardian* also focused on the management of distress. The 'labourers in distress' and the 'distressed operatives' are discussed in terms of relief management in an article about divisions between unemployed operatives and mill overlookers.[907] These foremen who directed and controlled spinning in the mills were deemed 'aristocratical paupers' by the poor when they censured meetings held in Stevenson Square against the Labour Test. The liberal newspaper did not support the overlookers' stance but asserted that 'in the midst of an awful tragedy' and while 'the public in great measure thoroughly sympathise' that management was in place to alleviate poverty:

> I regret to hear that low fever is beginning to manifest itself among the distressed operatives at Preston, but I hope it will be checked in its progress before it makes any ravage of moment. The board of guardians there have, I see, signified their intention of opening schools for the instruction of adult operatives […] The whole number of the distressed borough (Stockport), including all trades is about 12,600. The inhabitants number some 72,000 so that less than one in four is a pauper. [908]

This first-person, almost eye-witness, account can be read in support of the 'distressed' but, again, revealed the tension. The copy suggested an acceptance that where poverty manifested, the answer was one of management through education and through and calculating the numbers of poor in a borough, to further suggest that management was successful.

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[907] "The Conditions of the Cotton Manufacturing Districts No. XII*,"* *Manchester Guardian*, October 18, 1862, 6.
[908] Ibid.

Headlines and copy

Variations of the headline use of distress, for example, 'Distress in the Manufacturing Districts' or the 'Distressed of Lancashire', are repeatedly used for headlines above copy provided by the Manchester Statistical Society in attempting to calculate the human cost of the economic crisis. Kidd and Roberts reveal that such figures were considered to be 'represented objective neutral fact, not subject to party and sectarian bias,' and, by being used in this way, were intended not to be 'merely alleviating misfortune and leaving things as they were but, by investigating, explaining and understanding'.[909] Economic and social investigations like these were frequently carried out in Manchester by the city's statistical society into such areas as mortality rates, population statistics, public health, and so on. This juxtaposition, however, further reinforced the ideologeme use in terms of its rationalising effects. As outlined in a previous chapter, statistics offered a 'reassuring depersonalisation'.[910] The Society which supplied the numbers was founded in 1821, the same year as the *Manchester Guardian*, and it shared the thinking of its London equivalent of which sought 'legitimate induction from facts, accurately observed and methodically classified'.[911] One national example of the use of the headline 'Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing District' to provide such statistics appeared in the *Dundee Courier*. The newspaper offered a comparison of 'the variation in the amount of pauperism in the undermentioned 21 Unions, on a comparison of the first week of the present month with the last week of December' which then provided a list which revealed 'two Unions have more paupers', and that 'two unions are in respect of the amount of pauperism the same

[909] Kidd and Roberts, *Class and Culture*, 107.
[910] Gray, *Journalism and Poetry*, 820.
[911] Ashton, *Economic and Social Investigations*, 3.

as the previous week', with what it described as 'a net decrease of pauperism in the whole district'.[912] This comparison and the conclusions are presented as unambiguous, calculated fact, without further analysis or context and with the added use of the ideologeme distress to further distance readers for the horrors of the crisis. This pattern is repeated throughout the press, due, to some extent, to syndication as a result of increased telegraph technology.

In the *Manchester Guardian*, under the headline 'Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts' with the sub-heading 'A Second Demonstration Against the Labour Test' there followed a statistical presentation under the second sub-heading 'State of Employment in Manchester'. It claimed to show 'the weekly return, prepared under the direction of Captain Palm, chief constable, of the state of employment of the operative classes in the city of Manchester' and focused on the factories and operatives in cotton mills, silk mills, printworks and foundries with the calculations packaging and presenting 'distress'.[913] The same pattern was repeated later in the year revealing a similar and familiar approach.[914] There was the headline 'Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts' and sub-heading 'State of Employment in Manchester' and sub-heading 'Return Showing State of Employment of the Operative Classes in the City of Manchester'. It then provided details for five areas (Manchester, Chorlton, Hulme, Ardwick, Beswick). The 'State of Factories' and 'State of Operatives' were provided with the figures of those factories and operatives working full-time and short-time. The figures are presented without further narrative analysis. The presentation is one of undisputed fact

[912] "Diminution of the Distress in Lancashire," *Dundee Courier*, January 12, 1863, 3.
[913] "The Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts A Second Demonstration Against the Labour Test," *Manchester Guardian*, August 6, 1862, 3.
[914] "The Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts," *Manchester Guardian*, September 3, 1862, 3.

combined with the ideologeme which served to both normalise the economic crisis while mediating the antagonism caused by the failure of capitalism to provide work: it presented austerity as acceptable and manageable. The ideologeme was further used in the *Manchester Guardian* headlines to report 'The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester',[915] 'The Distress in Lancashire Interview Between Operatives and the Mayor'[916] both which combined and diluted the political agitation of the operatives with the pacifying ideologeme. The radical *Examiner and Times* and the conservative *Courier* repeated the pattern in these examples, respectively: The Distress in Lancashire Deputation of Operatives to the Board of Guardians[917] and Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Lancashire[918].

Copy and quotes

These headlines are, of course, used to introduce copy and that copy also used *distress* and *the distressed*. The ideologeme was not only found in direct relation to statistics, in terms of the rationalizing of capitalism, but used as descriptions and taking on an almost euphemistic

[915] "The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester," *Manchester Guardian*, April 30, 1862, 3.
[916] "The Distress in Lancashire Interview Between the Distressed Operatives and the Mayor," *Manchester Guardian*, May 10, 1862, 6.
[917] "The Distress in Lancashire Deputation of Operatives to the Board of Guardians," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 10, 1862, 6.
[918] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, May 3, 1862, 3.

way of hiding the horrors of poverty during an economic crisis. There was clear evidence that the ideologeme was used by journalists and unemployed operatives alike.

Various adjectives are used as qualifiers in connection with distress. Present distress[919], prevailing distress[920], and existing distress[921]. Elsewhere, workers were described as 'about 2000 distressed operatives'.[922] Other era or time related descriptors included: time of distress,[923] period of distress[924] and a winter of distress[925] which suggested an end to the crisis is due and that such a crisis in capitalism is inevitable and short-lived. Other more expressive adjectives were used, such as, great distress[926] and distress stalking abroad[927] which suggested the word was used emotively to conjure images of the extent of the shortage of work and its consequences. It is worth noting here that the reports did use other words, such as 'painful and anxious circumstances',[928] 'present difficulty'[929]and 'national calamity' in response to workers' confronting the 'utter failure'[930] of the Poor Law or 'present panic',[931] or phrases like 'poverty and attendant sufferings'[932] but none of the phrases formed headlines or were consistently or

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[919] "The Distress in Lancashire Interview Between the Distressed Operatives and the Mayor," May 10, 1862, 6. and August 15, 2;" Meeting in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, June 7, 1862, 6; "Anti-Labour Test Demonstration," *Manchester Courie*r, August 16, 1862, 10.
[920] "Open-Air Meeting on the Indian Tariff," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 31, 1862, 5.
[921] "The Labour Test & Relief in Money Meeting in Manchester*," Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 9.
[922] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, May 3, 1862, 8.
[923] "Meeting of Overlookers*," Manchester Courier*, October 18, 1862, 10.
[924] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square*," Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 16, 1862, 3.
[925] "Operatives' Protest Against the Labour Test*," Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 9, 1862, 5.
[926] "The Distress in Lancashire Interview Between the Distressed Operatives and the Mayor," *Manchester Guardian*, May 10, 1862, 6; "Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester*," Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6; "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives*," Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.
[927] "Open-Air Meeting on the Indian Tariff*," Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 31, 1862, 5.
[928] *Manchester Guardian*, May 14, 1862, 2.
[929] Ibid.
[930] *Manchester Guardian*, May 14, 1862, 2.
[931] "Manchester Board of Guardians*," Manchester Guardian*, August 15, 1862, 2.
[932] ""The Conditions of the Cotton Manufacturing Districts No. XII," *Manchester Guardian*, October 18, 1862, 6.

frequently used in copy. The stories where distress was not used at all are around the subjects of the Labour Test and relief in money,[933] the Labour Test as instigated,[934] a Labour Test strike among unemployed operatives,[935] and the meeting held to thank America for famine relief via the 'George Griswold'.[936]

Distress also found its way into the language used by operatives protesting in Stevenson Square, who were paraphrased in the newspapers, showing the use was internalised and reconfigured by the people it was being used to describe. It might seem contradictory that a group of people witnessing the horror of poverty caused by the Cotton Crisis would embrace the euphemistic term *distress* especially during political agitation, but their understanding of their experience was not entirely shaped by them. John Finnigan was frequently paraphrased in copy which could suggest a number of things: his regular attendance, his being considered a reliable contributor to paraphrase, or his participation in writing and reading the motions which were put at meetings. In one speech he was paraphrased as stating 'the distress under which they suffered was not owing to any act of their own government but the war in America' and he sought for coming together to 'talk calmly, deliberately, and dispassionately as to the steps to be taken to alleviate the existing distress. [937] He used distress in the speech a further four times. He is later paraphrased using *distress* in copy which shared a workers' resolution which

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[933] "The Labour Test & Relief in Money Meeting in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 10; "The Labour Test and Relief in Money," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 5.
[934] "Anti-Labour Test Meeting," *Manchester Courier*, May 18, 1862, 10; "Protest against the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, June 28, 1862, 6; "Meeting of the Unemployed Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Courier*, July 5, 1862, 10; *"The Labour Test in Manchester," Manchester Courier*, August 9, 1862, 8.
[935] "Strikes Amongst the Labourers at the Workhouse Farm," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, September 27, 1862, 6; "Strike of Labourers at the Manchester Workhouse Farm," *Manchester Courier*, September 27, 1862, 9;
[936] "Meeting of Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Courier*, March 14, 11.
[937] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.

contained the word. This is clear evidence that the workers embraced the ideologeme. Further, in a speech Finnigan also referred to the 'great distress'.[938] John Matthew, a power-loom weaver, suggested that 'in the present distress in Lancashire it is unwise for the government to continue the Indian tariff'.[939] Thomas Evans, another operative whose speeches were frequently paraphrased, also used the word. He referred to the 'present distress.[940] A Mr Diggles, a dyer, put forward that 'the cause of the present distress had never been yet announced'.[941] This use of the ideologeme in Stevenson Square was significant in two ways. Firstly, it was rarely used by unemployed cotton workers to describe themselves but only for the experience of the distress. John Barritt, a handloom weaver, used it as a collective noun when chairing a meeting, and only to suggest the 'gentlemen should not leave the relief of the distressed to the guardians', in seeking opportunity for workers to become distributors of relief. [942] Secondly, because it highlights both the alienation experienced by the unemployed operatives, and also justified the journalistic use and reinforced the wider political use. In the manifestation of the ideologeme, the workers are both presented as subject and as object, both as experiencing distress and of becoming the definition of distress. Jameson outlines this as:

> The privileged nature of the worker lies, paradoxically, in its narrow, inhuman limits,: the worker is unable to know the outside world in a static, contemplative manner in one sense because he cannot know it all, because his situation does not give the leisure to intuit in the middle class sense; because, even before he posits elements of the outside

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[938] "The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester," *Manchester Guardian*, April 30, 1862, 3, "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.
[939] "Open-Air Meeting on the Indian Tariff," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 31, 1862, 5.
[940] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 16, 3.
[941] "Meeting in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, June 7, 6.
[942] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, May 3, 1862, 8.

> world as *objects* of his thoughts, he feels himself to be an object, and this initial alienation within himself takes precedence over everything else.[943]

This paradox can serve as a wake-up call for the working class in recognising its position or can be part of a strategy of containment. It was a form of repression against the horror of the reality of the crisis and complicity in use by the workers. As Marx wrote in 1852:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored [sic] disguise and borrowed language.[944]

This use of the ideologeme is not false consciousness because the workers were aware they were both subject and object. Instead, while attempting to protest around poverty the workers repeat the words of the Victorian press. The class discourse, organised around this minimal unit *distress*, was both a single word and the wider political and ideological concept of austerity with the acceptance of prioritising the needs of capital.

To reveal how the ideologeme was protected and developed this thesis now analyses the third and final horizon. Both the political and social aspects can now be found in the historical, focusing on the journalistic form of mid-nineteenth press.

[943] Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, 187.
[944] Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Accessed November 6, 2018, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm

CHAPTER THREE: The third interpretive horizon: form

Journalism, ideology and form

Form, as the final interpretive horizon, Jameson posits, allows interpreters to avoid idealising habits and builds on the conceptual antinomy level of the ideologeme to grasp the social and historical subtext as a contradiction.[945] This is to say the materials being researched,

[945] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 105.

the researcher themselves and the readers of that research all bring ideology which must be challenged. The providing of examples in the first two horizons can itself create problems and, Homer outlines, it is necessary consider the formal procedures at work in a text rather than addressing a specific question, and it is this 'dialectical shock' that is 'the mark of a genuine Marxist criticism'.[946] Literary theorist Terry Eagleton notes that Marx held the belief that form is no mere quirk on the part of the individual artist[947] and, as with Levi-Strauss's findings in the study of Caduveo facial decorations, form is saturated with ideology, and it changes with and in a mode of production, and, in turn, influences the superstructure. As Jameson explains, 'form itself is but the working out of content in the realm of the superstructure'[948] and he quotes Engels to provide further clarification:

> Men make their history themselves only they do so in a given environment which conditions it, and on the basis of factual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other, the political and the ideological relations, are still ultimately the decisive ones, forming the keynote which runs through them and alone leads to understanding.[949]

This quote mirrors Marx on the borrowed language of those demanding change, of revolutionaries, unable to move forward because they carry the weight of the past: that weight can take the form of the given, the common sense. Jameson provides a model to explain the relationship between form and substance, that is working out the content as created within the superstructure. He outlines it as follows:

[946] Homer, *Fredric Jameson.* 20-21.
[947] Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, (1976, Routledge), 22.
[948] Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, 164.
[949] Ibid, 164, 165. The quote is from a letter written in 1894 to Heinz Starkenberg.

expression: the narrative structure of genre

FORM

content: the semantic 'meaning' of a generic mode

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expression: ideologemes and narrative paradigms

SUBSTANCE

content: social and historical raw material[950]

Jameson discusses the 'given' within a text, as a development of the industrial era but, significantly, not one of determination or of causality but instead one of recognising a limiting situation, 'to block off or shut down a number of formal possibilities available' and also 'to open up determinate new ones'.[951] Meaning, it is not about the historic causes of the form but the objective of that form in relation to its historic position. For Jameson, considering genre in literature, the story, the institutions of the modern world, and the framework in which characters live out their dramas, end up as something merely given, as the accidental origin of the work in a particular national situation, at a particular moment of historical development.[952] Jameson uses the genre of romance as an example in which, he asserts, 'antagonism is not played out in the struggle of social class so its resolution can be a projected form of nostalgic harmony'.[953] The writer and reader accept and contribute to this symbolic projection and, as such, he explains:

> … the great art-romances of the early nineteenth-century take their variously reactive stances against the new and unglamorous social institutions emerging from the political

[950] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 134.
[951] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 134.
[952] Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 169.
[953] Ibid, 135.

> triumph of the bourgeoisie and the setting in place of the market system and the literary response can be nostalgic, or they can be regressive, but all are symbolic reactions to social change.[954]

So too then was the protest against poverty a symbolic reaction to social change by taking a reactive stance, in the place of the market system, while engaging with the language of the ruling class via the press. Jameson also uses the history of music to provide examples of the process of sedimentation in which form is a socio-symbolic message, 'immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right'.[955] It is worth outlining Roberts' interpretation here at some length:

> Jameson gives the instance from the history of music where 'folk dances are transformed into aristocratic forms like the minuet'. We could cite a more recent example: blues guitar music originates from a particular cultural context, specifically the poverty and class (and race) oppression of America's Deep South in the early years of the century. Nowadays it is one of the most lucrative forms in the world, its most famous practitioners multi-millionaires. There may be little difference in form and content between the early and most recent blues; The Rolling Stones of Eric Clapton play the same twelve-bar guitar form and they still sing about being miserable […] a Jameson approach would insist that a proper critical appreciation of the Blues would need to be sensitive to the socio-economic facts of the specific instances, and would see elements of both form and subject as expressing of differing political determinants […] that would mean going beyond the vulgar Marxist observation that (oppressed black) Johnson sung about going to the crossroads and selling his soul to the devil while (affluent white) J. J. Cale sang about taking cocaine […] a form in which repressed political realities returned as tales of lovelorn misery, adapted itself to the logic of late capitalism by becoming reified […] shifting its focus towards a depthless elaboration of sex and consumption.[956]

[954] Ibid.
[955] Ibid, 127.
[956] Roberts, *Fredric Jameson*, 89.

Journalism too in its presentation of radical, supporting the workers, of liberal, in progressing the lot of the working class, or conservative in maintaining the status quo, created shared forms. The workers' experience is relayed to the middle class readership and the differing political determinants displayed but, ultimately, the Victorian journalistic form achieved the result of hindering revolutionary progress, repressing political realities and adapted to the logic of capitalism, thus leaving poverty unchallenged and unchanged.

Journalism and form

As outlined earlier in the thesis, form and style is often overlooked by journalism historians and, as such, this thesis argues that Jameson's methodology allows a way to analyse nineteenth-century journalistic form. This research focuses on news form before the familiar use of the inverted pyramid, interviews and other twentieth-century news researching practice. The journalistic form is shared locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Broersma, in researching late nineteenth-century journalism, explains:

> '… the content of an article is unique and incidental; its form is more universal and refers to broader cultural discourses and accepted and widely-used news conventions and routines. The content of news items is bound to their national context, while forms and styles tend to travel internationally. They are intensively transferred from one country to another and adapted to national contexts. This process of cultural diffusion reveals how journalistic conventions and routines are influenced by the culture in which they function'.[957]

[957] Marcel Broersman, *Form and Style in Journalism*, (Peeters Publishers), ix-xii.

Michael Schudson, in considering American journalism, states its power lies mainly in its ability to provide the forms in which things are declared to be true and that news is a social construction; the news story is an account of the 'real world' just as the historical novel is another sort of account of the real world.[958] While Bird and Dardenne suggest that 'news stories, like myths, do not 'tell it like it is' but rather 'tell it like it means'. Thus, news is a particular kind of mythological narrative with its own symbolic codes that are recognised by its audience'.[959]

The act of analysing the mid nineteenth-century journalistic form, then, allows for the recognition that journalists did not consciously contribute to ideology but still used structure to shape content in an attempt to ensure accuracy, objectivity and truth. As such, this thesis posits, it is inevitable that the journalism acted in a way as to provide a sense of the world to readers. It provided an understanding of poverty, the causes of poverty, the experience of poverty and, ultimately, the inevitability of poverty. In the Victorian news copy, at every stage journalists made choices on behalf of readers in order to explain and describe reality. Within Victorian news form, there was the depiction of societal norms, boundaries and the organisation of life, which it was expected the readers would understand and adhere to. In considering the Victorian news form, this analysis reveals links to the first two interpretive horizons, imaginary solutions and ideologeme. The focus is on four key areas, some of which are only familiar to Victorian news copy, to further unearth the political unconscious:

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[958] Michael Schudson, *The Power of News*, (Harvard University Press), 38.

[959] Bird, S Elizabeth and Dardenne, Robert W. "Myth, Chronicle and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News" In *Social Meaning of News*, edited by Dan Berkowitz, (Sage Publications. 1997), 337.

- the opening of stories, taken as a single line in block copy or as a paragraph
- the ending of stories, again as a single line or paragraph
- the use of paraphrasing and quotes, the latter usually in the form of motions presented at meetings[960]
- the use of parenthetical descriptions which are no longer used in news copy but are a constant during the period covered

Walker uses Jameson's methodology to consider form in the human interest story when researching American journalism and the Iraq War and, in so doing, categorises the characteristic of form in the newspapers published in the mid to late 2000s. For Walker the news:

> […] invites reproduction of hegemonic cultural values (as fits the event) and drawing upon these values it constructs an imaginary unity to a world that is in reality increasingly experienced as segmented and isolated from the fact of social structures or political institutions. Themes such as 'birth, love, death, accident, […] and illness' often serve […] as locus of this imagined unity, presumably on the assumption that all readers can identify with these universal experiences.[961]

In the mid-nineteenth-century journalism, the journalists appeared to attempt to record events chronologically, with parenthesis describing the reactions of others with applause and so on. Paraphrasing is used rather than direct quotes but there was the occasional intrusion with sarcastic comments. There was a distinction between reportage and editorial, but the

[960] Interviews are not used in the journalism at the centre of this research.
[961] Walker, *Form and Ideology*, 79.

boundaries are blurred, and news as content can be criticised on the same page. There were efforts at the time at professionalisation of the role in keeping with cultural standards, however, as Conboy outlines:

> Pitman developed a shorthand in 1840 which added to the attraction of mimetic accuracy in the reporting of speech and fitted well with the Victorian epistemological taste for empirical evidence. Reporters were further encouraged within this culture provide a record of events rather than emotional responses or opinions. Journalism in the daily press was very much news-based.[962]

Nevertheless, the form had a very different shape to contemporary news. Walker, for example, finds news copy to be relatively short, written in a style to facilitate quick and easy reading, mostly between 450-600 words, requiring little intellectual effort, short paragraphs of no more than two sentences, lacking social, economic, cultural or political context.[963] By contrast, the Victorian journalism was lengthy with the shortest word count for one article at 170 and the highest, for two articles, at 3840, meaning reading demands time and effort; not something it can be assumed was available to members of the working class, and specifically to unemployed cotton workers. It could also suggest time was available to and demanded from journalists to dedicate to writing at length. Further it could suggest a lack of engagement with the inverted pyramid which is argued to have been utilised at this time in American journalism.[964] Nevertheless, the Victorian news form served the same purpose of making messages readable and understood within the accepted conventions of the day.

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[962] Conboy, *Journalism A Critical History*, 125.
[963] Walker, *Form and Ideology*, 72-80.
[964] The inverted pyramid became preferred to chronological accounts in the 20th century: Schudson, *The Power of News*, 55.

The intro

The analysis considers the opening lines and opening paragraphs, depending on the layout of the copy and the use of paragraphs; where paragraphs are not used in single block text the first line is considered only. This opening will be referred to as the *intro*.

The study revealed patterns in form. Each newspaper intro offered a restricted number of facts which, it is fair to assume, the journalist writing the copy felt necessary to prioritise: these included venue, day, date, activity, purpose and so on. All stories included some elements of these facts. Others included what could be considered less necessary information which add colour or emphasis. It became s clear that the journalist was following a formula, a shared understanding of the accepted shape of an intro, but also that this formula could be broken or adapted. The formula of placing facts in the introduction was, for example, not used in any editorials. The placing of the information within the sentence or paragraph could change but the content remained consistent.

The form revealed in the *Manchester Courier* was:

Event + Attendees + Venue + Day + Time + Purpose if the intro was one line.

> Another meeting of unemployed operatives was held in Stevenson Square on Thursday evening, to take steps to obtain the abolition of the labour test as applied by the Manchester Guardians at the Crumpsall Farm and at the House of Industry.[965]

Venue + Attendees + Event + Day + Time + Purpose + Attendance + Elected Chairman's name + First Speaker (quoted or paraphrased) if the intro was a paragraph.

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[965] "Anti-Labour Test Meeting*," Manchester Courier*, May 18, 1862, 10.

> Stevenson's[966] Square was again the scene of a working-men's meeting on Tuesday night. Want of work and consequent want of food, with the insufficiency of the poor-law relief, were the subjects of complaint. About 2,000 distressed operatives were present. Mr. Bernard Barritt,[967] a handloom weaver, was elected to preside. The principal speaker as Mr. John Finnigan who moved the first resolution.[968]

The *Manchester Guardian* followed a similar pattern:

Day + Time + Event + Attendees + Venue + Purpose is repeatedly presented as one line intros in the single block copy.

> Last night a large meeting of operatives was held in Stevenson Square to take into consideration the best means of increasing the growth of cotton in the British colonies and to show the folly of depending upon one source of supply.[969]

The *Manchester Examiner and Times* used:

Event + Attendees + Day + Time + Purpose in one line intros.

> A meeting of operatives was held on Wednesday night in Stevenson Square for the purpose of considering the Indian tariff.[970]

Event + Attendees + Day + Venue + Attendance + Attendees + Detail + Chairman if the intro was a paragraph.

> A meeting of the unemployed operatives was held on Tuesday in Stevenson Square. There were between 2,000 and 3,000 assembled, nearly all of whom were operatives. A man, named James Priest, lent his lurry [sic] for the use of the speakers. The people called Mr. Bernard Barrett, a hand-loom weaver, to conduct the meeting.[971]

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[966] It is being taken as part of this analysis that this use of Stevenson's was an error.
[967] It is being taken as part of this analysis that the misspelling of Barrett is an error.
[968] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, May 3, 1862, 8.
[969] "The Cotton Supply Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Guardian*, August 15, 1862, 2.
[970] "Open-Air Meeting on the Indian Tariff," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 31, 1862, 5.
[971] "Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 3, 1862, 6.

On the face of it, this copy appeared to meet the necessary sharing of information within a journalistic style and, to some extent, was recognisable as the shape of journalism intros to this day, but it became revealing when the content was further analysed.

The facts chosen, that is prioritised, revealed an appeal to readership and a response to those at the meeting. The 'attendees' were considered priority information for the intro but were described in the *Manchester Courier* variously as working men, unemployed operatives, men employed at Crumpsall Farm, able-bodied men, and unemployed overlookers. In the *Manchester Examiner and Times,* the wording choice was operatives, unemployed, unemployed operatives, unemployed cotton operatives. The *Manchester Guardian* described attendees as operatives and unemployed operatives. The necessity to describe the attendees as workers from the cotton factories and as unemployed outlined who they were before their purpose in meeting was revealed. The meetings themselves were given various descriptions: meeting is predominantly used in the *Manchester Guardian*, but takes on qualifiers of 'another', 'further', 'a second', 'large' which referred to a repetition of the workers' gatherings; this could suggest accuracy but also mundanity, familiarity, expectation of such events. The *Manchester Examiner and Times* also used 'weekly' and 'another' but also referred to 'large' and 'monster' which could suggest a recognition of the enormity of the gatherings despite the expectation or even a threatening tone. The *Manchester Courier* also referred to expectation and familiarity using 'another', 'a second', 'large' but also referred to the gatherings as working men's meetings, again placing the events in a class context. So, what at first glance appeared to be a formulaic sharing of essential information started to take a different shape under the third interpretive horizon.

The ending

As with the opening of stories the analysis considered the closing lines and paragraphs, depending on the shape of the copy. It was accepted that endings can be abrupt due to the need for space but the copy throughout the stories tends to end with a familiar pattern which suggested space was not an issue. The shape of the copy, and the ending specifically, could be interpreted as merely outlining the familiar shape of meetings - introductions, speeches, resolutions, end of proceedings - but there were decisions made by the journalists which revealed a political unconscious. The *Manchester Courier*, for example, frequently ended its stories by describing the end pf proceedings as would be recognised by anyone familiar with such gatherings. However, when taken in consideration with the interpretive horizon of imaginary solutions, and the revelation of the judgment of the poor and the fear of imminent uprising, they revealed a different ideological purpose. The newspaper ended the vast majority of its stories by stating that 'a vote of thanks'[972] was given, usually to the chairman, and, in one instance, included 'three cheers for the Press'.[973] On the face of it this seemed to simply describe how the meeting ended but the fact that it was not always used, was not a specific unchanging formula, revealed it was a choice. It revealed, this thesis argues, that it described the behaviour of the workers adhering to familiar meeting proceedings, in order to assure readers of an organised rather than revolutionary mass. This was further revealed in different endings from the newspaper in the conservative *Manchester Courier*, such as the paraphrasing

[972] Used repeatedly across all three newspapers.
[973] "Anti-Labour Test Meeting," *Manchester Courier*, May 18, 1862, 10.

of a speaker as 'It was the duty of the operatives to support the Lancashire members of Parliament in their efforts to mitigate the Labour Test'[974] which revealed an agreement on the part of the workers to protest within the accepted limits of Parliamentary politics. 'The crowd then dispersed'[975] was used to end a story about a demonstration of workers who had marched from the farm where they worked for famine relief which ended a story of organised political upheaval with a description of a separated gathering. The practice was revealed in the radical *Manchester Examiner and Times* in ending with 'the crowd quietly dispersed,'[976] 'The whole proceedings were conducted in perfect order',[977] 'proceedings soon after were brought to a peaceable conclusion,'[978] 'the meeting adopted the resolution and then separated'[979] all of which brought the end of the story to a non-confrontational conclusion. The *Manchester Guardian* also provided examples of this arrangement. It ended copy with: 'Everything passed off in a very orderly manner, and the speakers expressed a wish that all present would quietly retire to their homes – an injunction which was reiterated by the Chairman in replying to a vote of thanks passed by his fellow operatives – Captain Palin, Mr. Superintendent Leary, of the B division, and several officers were present, but there was at no time any reason to apprehend any necessity for the interference of the police'.[980] This, while revealing the comments from the Chairman, described as an operative named Ford, focused on a lack of necessity to employ the police which is not noted at other meetings. Significantly, this copy was reporting on a meeting

[974] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.
[975] "Demonstration Against the Labour Test in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, August 2, 1862, 10.
[976] "Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 16, 1862, 3.
[977] "Operatives' Protest Against the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, August 9, 1862, 5.
[978] "The Operatives and the Labour Test," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 11, 1862, 5.
[979] "Open-Air Meeting in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, October 18, 1862, 6.
[980] "The Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts A Second Demonstration Against the Labour Test," *Manchester Guardian*, August 6, 1862, 3.

held by operatives who had marched from Crumpsall Farm. It was a more unusual protest to the standard events in Stevenson Square, and at which police, including senior officers, had been instructed, one must assume, to attend. In an unusually short story, the *Manchester Guardian* also focused on the behaviour of workers carrying placards with lines from Scripture: 'The authors of these effusions would do well to avoid such profanity in future, as it is calculated to alienate the sympathies of many who otherwise wish well to the cause'[981] concluding with what is a public reprimand of unemployed and struggling workers involved in what was otherwise recognised as legitimate protest. These stories sometimes took the structural form of outlining proceedings in the order they arise, including some unexpected elements such as 'A heavy shower put an end to the meeting'[982] but, while it could suggest an abrupt end to meetings, when used after a description of how damp and cold was making the unemployed operatives ill, it fails to make an explicit link between the content of the meeting and the need to end the gathering. Overall, where copy did end abruptly, without a description of proceedings or of weather, there remained clear links to the imaginary solutions in revealing a decision to choose which subject to end the story on, to satisfy readers that the workers are not making revolutionary demands and that the crisis was being managed. Final words in copy were: 'they did not want to be idle but they did want useful and honourable work and honest pay for it',[983] 'fever patients included in the above, being an increase of 2 on the previous week,

[981] "The Distress in the Cotton Manufacturing Districts," *Manchester Guardian*, September 3, 1862, 3.
[982] "The Labour Test in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, August 9, 1862, 8.
[983] "The Labour Test & Relief in Money Meeting in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 10.

and the same number in the corresponding week last year',[984] 'the guardians had no desire to oppress anyone; their simple desire was to do their duty'.[985]

Paraphrasing and quotes

Workers' words were either shared by paraphrasing or direct quotes, with direct quotes being the verbatim account of resolutions and motions. The words of workers are also presented in parenthetical descriptions, outlined later in this chapter. The paraphrasing did not allow the workers' opinion to be shared without interpretation and there was not clear evidence as to the practice being necessary to share otherwise inarticulate responses; meaning, there does not appear to be a necessity to rewrite workers' words rather than report them directly. It could be posited that this created a barrier between the workers and the readers as the journalists are entirely relied upon to have interpreted accurately and fairly. For example, in the *Manchester Courier* in just one report,[986] the full resolution of the workers is presented before the discussion is recorded as having 'said', but for the remainder of the copy the workers are described as having 'contended', 'dared', 'venture', 'stated', 'argued', 'suggested'. Although the use of synonym could be editorial style, the choice of synonym suggested an argumentative nature or a lack of understanding. The paraphrasing was lengthy taking up much of the content of the news copy which, again, suggests an attempt at a verbatim account of the event, record proceedings chronologically and accurately: that is, the motions were presented because they were read out clearly to the gathering and the paraphrasing was less

[984] Ibid.
[985] "Manchester Board of Guardians," *Manchester Courier*, October 11, 1862, 9.
[986] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," Manchester Courier, May 3, 1862, 3.

consistent as a copy recording real time conversation. It also provided arguably fair accounts. By paraphrasing attendees who described the trauma they faced, based on hearsay or memory, the journalists prioritised the workers' words, and presented them as based in fact. This is a typical example:

> He knew of a young man who was out of employ for four months. He had a wife and four children. Every week he sought employment but found none. Bit by bit the clothing and furniture went. The youngest child pined away and died. He came to him (the speaker) and told him, with tears in his eyes, he thought, he should lose all his other children. He (the speaker) advised him to apply for relief; but the man replied he would rather be a soldier or anything than be a pauper.[987]

Nevertheless, the reporting also arguably provided a spectacle, a mere insight into poverty, in news copy which is distributed to conservative readers in a publication which simultaneously judged the behaviour of those in dire poverty. If the entire speech was not reported there is a suggestion that the focus on, for example, 'rather be a soldier than a pauper' continued the moral judgment and stigmatising of relief revealed in the first interpretive horizon. There were also occasions when paraphrasing was limited. This from the *Manchester Courier*:

> During the morning strange proceedings took place in Stevenson-square amongst the unemployed operatives […] the alleged object of the meeting was to thank the people of New York for their gift of food […] Mr Edwards said that on such a day of rejoicing something better might be done than give an empty pageant to the starving poor. The only speaker heard patiently was the Rev. C. W. Denison […] the demonstration ended in tumult. The bread carts were broken into, and the loaves thrown about with dangerous recklessness.[988]

The judgmental journalistic intrusion was clear. There could have been an inability to report speeches due to chaos, but this was not considered in any other copy during vibrant and

[987] "Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Unemployed in Manchester," *Manchester Courier*, May 3, 1862, 3.
[988] "Meeting of Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Courier*, March 14, 1863, 11.

chaotic meetings. The *Manchester Guardian* described the same proceedings and paraphrased a speaker at length:

> […] the leader of the opposition began to address the crowd amid the most multucus [sic] confusion. He asked what business those ships[989] and those carts full of bred to be drawn up in that Square? What was the promoters of that meeting intending to do? […] He wanted to know why it was brought into the Square instead of sent to the proper quarter.[990]

It cannot be definitively stated that all the journalists in attendance were able to hear, able to take notes, were not surprised by the events, and so on, but, nevertheless, the choices made in reporting contributed to the city's and the wider world's understanding of the event, the people taking part in it and the judgment of the behaviour unemployed workers during Cotton Crisis as a whole.

The conservative *Manchester Courier* and liberal *Manchester Guardian* were more likely to reproduce the resolution, that is the purpose for the meetings, in full in the second or third paragraph of copy, while the radical *Manchester Examiner and Times* was more likely to paraphrase. This could be have been dependent upon the ability of the reporter to gather the information, an unshared professional approach to verbatim reporting, and other stylistic or practical reasons, or it could be journalists were ensuring the words of the workers belonged entirely to them, not the publication itself, or that the words need to be owned, and shared, by the publication: in this sense this could arguably be in keeping with the newspapers' political positions but it is not possible to be certain.

Parenthetical descriptions

[989] Ships refers to carts decorated as part of the procession to distribute 'famine' relief.
[990] "The Meeting of the Unemployed Operatives*," Manchester Guardian*, March 11, 1863, 3.

Parenthesis was used in Victorian copy to describe reactions from the audience. Parenthetical description included additions such as (Hear, Hear!) in the middle of copy to describe the response of others in attendance as, for example, a reaction to a speech or the Chairman making a comment. This parenthetical addition was presented as, and could be interpreted as, an objective, eye-witness account of proceedings; it was merely observing the reactions at the meeting and recording them. However, there were still choices made in the use of parenthetical description and, indeed, it was sometimes not used at all. The sporadic use and lack of use in themselves strongly suggest a choice as to when to provide parenthetical description. Further, we cannot assume some meetings were silent and such description was unavailable, nor can we assume that the description which was used captured all outbursts, responses and comments at meetings: the journalists made choices or, at the very least, were restricted by, for example, time to write, copy space, or hearing these responses. Analysing parenthetical description used further revealed the political unconscious.

Each newspaper used parenthetical descriptions and no one paper employed the practice more or less than others. Parenthetical description described an individual shout, such as (A voice: That's true![991]) but was also used to capture more than one meeting attendee's reaction. Further, familiar descriptions, such as (Hear, Hear!), (Applause), (Cheers), were used but also appeared with subjective adjectives such as (loud applause) and (repeated cheering). The parenthetical descriptions analysed in this thesis focus on those which suggested a plural response and those which offered a subjective adjective: this is in an attempt to ensure

[991] "The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester," *Manchester Guardian*, April 30, 1862, 3.

consideration is taken into journalists responding, perhaps fairly, to broader outbursts and to their choice of adjective. Some consideration is given to the more unusual parenthetical descriptions if they are used in association fewer attendees but presumably considered significant enough to be reported. This is because, while we cannot know why the journalists chose these specific responses to report, we can accept there were others which were not reported (especially in copy which has none) and we can also accept that only some were heard. In order to understand the political unconscious of those chosen to be reported we can look at how they manifest in the form of nineteenth-century journalism.

Some choices suggest a decision to show workers' agreement with accepted modes of behaviour, again connected to the first interpretive horizon findings. One is example is the use of (applause[992]) of a parenthetical description which sought to acknowledge the good conduct of workers in attendance. We cannot know if this was the first response, but we can see the applause was linked to a celebration of well-behaved and well-dressed unemployed workers. In isolation this might appear coincidental, but a pattern emerged. In the same copy, in the *Manchester Guardian*, (cheers) is used in recognition of behaving well so as not to 'retard the flow of sympathy', to celebrate the fact mill-owners have provided meals to the unemployed and (repeated cheering) is outlined in response to workers saying they would prefer to pawn their property than be paupers.[993] This parenthetical description further reveals the imaginary solutions to poverty as moral judgment and unity. This pattern manifested across the newspapers. The *Manchester Examiner and Times* also employed a similar use for parenthetical

[992] "The Distress in Lancashire Great Meeting of Unemployed Operatives in Manchester," *Manchester Guardian*, April 30, 1862, 3.
[993] Ibid.

descriptions: (applause) was used to celebrate the amount of sympathy from the Mayor; there were (loud cheers) at workers avoid seeking relief, and (loud cheers) again that the rich and poor could unite to 'weather the storm'.[994] The favourable response to avoiding relief, celebrating the sympathy of wealthier counterparts, and finding common ground with the rich serves, again, suggested the crisis could be solved with unity and acceptable behaviour, while further stigmatising relief. In another story (Cheers and laughter) was used following a comment about the futility in emigration, (applause) to recognise the need to develop alternative cotton supplies in the colonies and (loud cheers) when seeking to revoke the Indian cotton tariff: these descriptions were chosen and further develop the political unconscious in encouraging the prioritising of the defence of capitalism; be that in Manchester by retaining a workforce, creating cotton supplies for profit or gaining political clout among workers in accessing Indian cotton by repealing the tariff.[995] The *Manchester Courier* also used (cheers) after the workers recognised there was sympathy between employer and employed.[996] These descriptions, even when used in what could be syndicated copy, were chosen for use while others did not appear across all titles. Arguably parenthetical descriptions capture the workers' opinions and feelings, but they must be placed in the practical and ideological context of having been chosen by the journalists to report and the newspaper to publish, and prioritise or ignore, according to that choice: this is where the political unconscious is revealed.

[994] "The Distress in Lancashire Meeting of the Operatives in Stevenson Square," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 12, 1862, .6
[995] "Open-Air Meeting on the Indian Tariff," *Manchester Examiner and Times*, May 31, 1862, 5.
[996] "Meeting of the Manchester Operatives," *Manchester Courier*, May 17, 1862, 10.

Conclusion

The form of Victorian journalism, then, rather than being one of mere observation and recording, or one that was reliably objective due to its often chronological style, in fact hid a political unconscious. The form contributed to the presentation of poverty and protest without engaging journalists' or proprietors' overt intent. While Liddle considers the influence of journalistic form on literary genre after 1865, the recognition of it being the least understood area of Victorian written discourse is shared by this thesis. It is posited that Liddle questions what types of interpretive tools can 'enable us to read a periodical text originally created to influence or manipulate its readers' opinions as evidence of what those opinions originally were'[997] can, to some extent, be answered here. Any unexamined assumption that Victorian journalistic form was innocuous is challenged while not seeking to or needing to question any individual journalistic contribution or agenda.

PART 4: CONCLUSION

Research objectives

This thesis, in examining three politically-opposed and commercially competitive newspapers, intended to provide a qualitative critical analysis of the influences at play within and without journalistic copy. It focused on the reporting of poverty and protest in Stevenson

[997] Liddle, *Journalism and Genre*, 4.

Square, Manchester, during the Cotton Crisis. It set out the research objectives to firstly provide a critical analysis of the historic and social grounding active outside the journalistic copy. Secondly to, consider the industrial, political and technological position of the journalism. Thirdly and finally, to analyse the journalistic discourse by utilising Jameson's methodology of interpretive horizons to unearth the political unconscious in the copy.

The first two objectives were met by providing historiographies to offer an overview of the period studied as presented and understood so far. An engagement with conflicting histories and analyses of the American Civil War and Cotton Crisis allowed a broader insight into the competing political, economic, social and cultural interpretations, which have themselves changed over the decades according to political approaches and academic methods. The critical analysis was initially informed by conflicting Cotton Crisis histories in the form of contemporary historians, initially Henderson, Watts, Arthur and Ellison, those who have since challenged earlier conclusions, including Brady, Foner, Heartfield and Blackett. This was followed by research into the interpretations of the development of poverty legislation, relying again initially on Henderson, Watts and Arthur, with further consideration of Marx, Engels, before considering later interpretations of Rose, Joyce, Hewitt, Englander and others. This included debates into the availability and distribution of famine relief, looking to Boyer, Mackinnon, Henriques, Kiesling, and again considered Marx and Engels. This meant analysing the associated ideological influences, expressed by both its originators and those managing it, as well as economic and political historians, which allowed for a consideration beyond the one era and enabled exposure of the management and representation of poverty as suited to the ideals of capitalism. The placement of the journalism industry within its contentious historical context

started with Ayerst, Griffiths and Matthews before moving to accounts challenging the historiography of journalism, including Curran, Chalaby and Conboy. This provided an insight into the development of and challenges to our shared understanding of the shaping of copy and how meaning is created, accepted, developed and understood within journalism. Thus, historicizing the American Civil War, Cotton Crisis, the development of the journalism industry, poverty legislation, political landscape of Manchester, and the broader reporting of poverty (with regional, national and international examples), this thesis was able to reveal the ideological weight on the journalism. The third objective was met by utilising Jameson's interpretive horizons which offered a unique insight into analysing journalistic discourse specifically in the Victorian era. Initial analysis here included interpretations of the methodology by Dowling and Buchanan, as early and late contributions to analysis of Jameson, before moving on to Wayne and Homer, with additions from Roberts and Wayne.

The three newspapers managed to find agreement in the imaginary solutions for the Cotton Crisis. Analysis also revealed a shared and extensively used ideologeme in the form of distress. Evaluation of the Victorian journalistic form, paying particular attention to the thus far under-researched use of parenthetical descriptions, revealed the strategy of containment.

Summary of findings

The imaginary resolutions were revealed as the belief in moral judgment which controlled the behaviour of the workers; the disingenuity of opportunity, which controlled the movement of labour; and the falsehood of unity which controlled the shared economic ideology. These three imaginary solutions combined to create the acceptance of the final imaginary solution: austerity. Austerity as an imaginary resolution hid the horror of exploitation

under capitalism and controlled the workers to avoid political uprising: Jameson's absent cause. The ideologeme and form served to rationalise and justify the imaginary solutions, leading to the strategies of containment across newspapers otherwise in commercial and political opposition.

The name 'Cotton Famine' continues to be used by historians and journalists alike while the historiographies reveal the economic crisis was not one of famine. The name itself has been recognised as able to 'obfuscate the ways in which human suffering was built into the structure of unregulated markets'[998] and to 'deflect the blame from manufacturers and traders'.[999] It is revealed that the late acceptance of the crisis in Manchester was built on the falsehood of unity, specifically Manchester exceptionalism. With Manchester full unemployment of cotton operatives at 7,567 and those on short-time at 15,183 by 1862,[1000] the relief committee in Manchester was delayed due to an acceptance that the city's 'varied industry and large charitable resources, was very indisposed to believe that famine was at the gates'[1001] and that 'the agencies at work were sufficient in Manchester' to avoid deprivation.[1002] As such, it was initially accepted that Manchester had the finances, through capitalism, and the character, through unity, to manage the economic crisis without special provision for the unemployed cotton workers. This notion of unity and Manchester exceptionalism is further challenged when recognising that while poverty was managed by 'famine relief', capitalists benefited, new banks were established, other industries profited, monopolies were formed, and the colonies gained

[998] Gurney, *Wanting and Having*, 265.
[999] Ibid.
[1000] Watts, *Facts*, 284.
[1001] Arnold, *Famine*, 121.
[1002] Watts, *Facts*, 119.

migrant workers. Capitalists were recognised as not contributing to subscriptions to fund essential famine relief. As such, the 'proper and judicious distribution'[1003] of relief, as promised by the Manchester Central Relief Committee, was in doubt: restrictions were placed on the amount paid, relief was given in bread and in the form of ticket to control purchases as part of moral judgement. Later research reveals the difficult relationships the unemployed had with the Board of Guardians and its use of propaganda, preconceived conclusions of the poor'[1004] which provided an economically advantageous stigma because it led to the poor avoiding claiming relief payments, 'horrified at being branded a pauper'[1005] by doing so. The charity which was forthcoming was inadequate, in the form of inappropriate clothing, meals provided by employers, and soup kitchens, against a backdrop of increased wealth of the capitalist class. The moral judgment often manifests in demands for gratitude from workers for relief payments, famine relief contributions, acts of charity, but alongside accusations of fraud, judgement of spending choices and penalties. This is despite the broader acceptance of 'the granting of relief to decent workmen who were only temporarily unemployed through no fault of their own'.[1006] The workers while not blamed for the economic crisis, and while disproportionately affected by the crisis, are nevertheless judged for their behaviour during it. The repetitive use of distress served as an ideologeme, with hundreds of examples in copy, headlines and editorials. It was used as an adjective, noun and, significantly, collective noun to describe both the experience of poverty and those who were experiencing it. The use of the

[1003] Arnold, *Famine*, 225.
[1004] Henriques, *How Cruel*, 365.
[1005] Kiesling, *Institutional Choice Matters*, 79.
[1006] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 132.

word to support statistical analysis further served as a justification of its purpose and strengthened its function as a mediating tool rationalising the effect and experience of poverty. Form was revealed to not be a merely stylistic shape but one which contributed to the strategies of containment. The construction of chronological reports suggested an objectivity which was challenged by analysis of the parenthetical descriptions revealing potential bias in choices made. The structure of openings and endings of copy revealed the political unconscious further. The political unconscious in the copy was revealed to be one which protected capitalism, rationalising the horrors of exploitation and serving to curb revolt during the experience of poverty caused by economic crisis.

Expectations

This thesis analysed more than 35,000 words of journalistic copy reporting on poverty and protest in Stevenson Square over an eleven month period. The expectation was of a heavily reported Cotton Crisis but with less focus on related protest of poverty. The word count over a short period was more than expected and revealed a shared journalistic interest in the events. There was an expectation that the liberal *Manchester Guardian*, while dubbed the commercial organ of the cotton trade[1007], the principal organ of manufacturing and commercial classes[1008] and the organ of northern manufacturers[1009], would take a centrist position of political reform in seeking to challenge poverty and defend the poor during an economic crisis. The conservative *Manchester Courier* was expected to be overt in its condemnation of the poor in

[1007] Boyce, Curran, Wingate, *Newspaper History*, 119.
[1008] Cranfield, *Press and Society*, 201.
[1009] Clarke, *Grub Street*, 148.

Manchester due to its ‘paternalistic’[1010] character, anti-Roman Catholic stance[1011], and its middle and upper class readership[1012]. The radical *Manchester Examiner and Times* was expected to challenge the conservative position and also the liberal position in seeking to secure the readership of the skilled cotton operatives as a better class of tradespeople and mechanics[1013] and sharing the assertion of its founding backer John Bright in wanting direct connections with the working classes.[1014] The recognition that the three newspapers shared imaginary solutions, an ideologeme and form was beyond expectations. There was a further expectation of the well-observed Victorian judgement in the notion of the deserving and underserving poor within legislation but less so in its manifestation among the poor themselves during their own political agitation opposing poverty, which served to divide the unemployed cotton operatives from ordinary paupers.[1015] There was an expectation of Manchester exceptionalism, due to the city celebrating its history as Cottonopolis and its people as members of a hive of industry, but less so that the Cotton Crisis would be presented as a unifying experience and one which provided an opportunity for unemployed workers and the manufacturing classes to forge better relationships. The ideologeme was expected to manifest as *suffering*, a word consistently used to describe the experience of poverty, but it quickly became apparent that *distress* was used as an adjective, noun and collective noun, consistently in headlines and with an international scope. This provided a reconsideration of the presentation of poverty, particularly in the use of distress as a collective noun. The revelations

[1010] Cranfield, *Press and Society*, 193.
[1011] Busteed, *The Irish in Manchester*, 91.
[1012] Read, *Press and People*, 105, 106.
[1013] Hewitt, *Cheap Press*, 103.
[1014] Cash, *Bright*, 89.
[1015] Henderson, *Cotton Famine*, 87.

of form in were unexpected because the use of paraphrasing, parenthetical descriptions and intros and endings was initially considered to be standard journalistic practice which would reveal only patterns rather than a political unconscious.

The limits of the research

The sample size of copy covering poverty protests in Stevenson Square is relatively small: the reports available were limited in number but the copy, of varying lengths, provided the overall word count of a single novel. A higher word count could be considered for future research, with more time available, to analyse copy during the period of the entire Cotton Crisis, or specifically in terms of the Poor Law and Labour Test beyond the dates in this thesis. However, a full Cotton Crisis period analysis of news copy could produce an unmanageable word count for a study of this kind. In this time-restricted research a larger sample would also have hindered in-depth analysis of imaginary solutions and the ideologeme, adding a further difficulty in needing to access microfiche for news copy not available through ProQuest or British Newspaper Archive, which would make single word (ideologeme) searches a time-consuming task. It is not possible to be certain which copy is syndicated across newspapers, so it had to be accepted in this thesis that the copy published is that newspaper's copy recognising the copy is still chosen, published and contributes to strategies of containment as a news source and historical document. Stevenson Square protests were frequently covered by reporters, but it is impossible to know which were not attended by journalists and the relevance of that. It is clear, though, there is a pattern of events being reported by all newspapers. However, Jameson's methodology allows a detailed three-step consideration of

the copy that is available and, as such, revealed the reports to be representative of broader significant trends across the three otherwise politically opposed newspapers. The choice of these newspapers also ensured an avoidance of political bias and the patterns which emerged further challenged any bias, conscious or unconscious, in relation to taking a liberal, conservative or radical position. There is scant research available about poverty and protest specifically in Stevenson Square, with historians researching broader political movements which manifested as one-off riots or larger gatherings in the Square, such as the Stalybridge Riot and Chartist movement respectively. This, however, enabled unique research into an overlooked yet significant part of Manchester's history and of the history of class, poverty and political agitation, as documented in newspapers. The availability of the workers' motions and the choice of which protests are covered offers an important insight into the experience of poverty from the positions of workers and the reporting of it within the journalism industry. The research into protest and poverty during the economic crisis is perennially important as it occurs over centuries. Further study could focus on a longer period, such as the duration of the crisis or the American Civil War or move beyond the restraints of this thesis into dissent around poverty legislation such as the Poor Law or Labour Test, which were repeatedly a central purpose of protest. Further research could include focusing on poverty and protest in the whole of Lancashire as opposed to the experience of Manchester, but reports do reveal Stevenson Square as a central venue for the wider cotton manufacturing districts. Available data on working class political activity is scant beyond focusing on the workers' engagement to the American Civil War, or in analysing journalism considering British responses to the War as revealed in news copy. This research offers an opportunity to tread new ground and to consider

the workers' responses to their own direct experience of poverty in relation to the American Civil War, the Cotton Crisis and the broader impact of poverty legislation. The intentionally limited focus on Stevenson Square, poverty and protest, during a well-known and transnational economic crisis, offers a unique insight into both poverty and the act of protest in a city at the centre of an economic crisis on the political world stage.

Contribution

The work firstly contributes to the interpreting of Jameson's methodology to journalism, as undertaken by Walker, with particular focus on reporting poverty. More broadly, the research creates new insight into critical discourse analysis in journalism studies, building on Collin. The focus on poverty and protest amid the Cotton Crisis can shed additional light on other events of historical interest, in particular the Stalybridge Riot, building on Rose, and the support for the Emancipation Proclamation, building on Foner, Ellison, Heartfield and Blackett. This previous focus on the class solidarity shown by workers can be strengthened by the recognition of other political activity organised by workers protesting their own experience of oppression and poverty, separate to but influenced by the American Civil War. Further, it can raise questions in both the dismissal of and the sentimentalising of this solidarity during the Cotton Crisis by considering the discourse of the event and how immersed workers themselves were in the ideological mediation of their poverty. The thesis also builds on the work of Walker, who first used the methodology to consider journalism, by placing it in Jameson's nineteenth-century context. Finally, it extends the approach of analysis of the journalistic form by uniquely

focusing on the structure and traits of Victorian journalism and revealing their ideological function.

Implications and future research

An engagement with modern copy in American or British journalism is possible for future research. Journalistic practice continues to present poverty as a justified inevitability, founded in Malthusian attitudes towards the poor. In developing this thesis an article on poverty for *The Journalist*, in 2015, considered how journalism legitimised legislation and attitudes towards the poor. It referred to the then Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne's 2010 declaration to 'step up the fight to catch benefit cheats' and his concerns that 'there is a question for government and society about the welfare state and the taxpayers who pay for the welfare state subsidising lifestyles'. [1016] This was against a backdrop of tabloid campaigns to seek out scroungers, cheats and swindlers. The political attitudes revealed in the journalism mirrored those of the mid nineteenth-century seeking to 'depauperize the lazy, shiftless and able-bodied poor'[1017] with the Poor Law as the 'solution to the problem of Pauperism'.[1018] A focus was placed on people defrauding the famine relief system, as opposed to the limitations of its distribution; the judgment of lifestyle in spending relief payments as opposed to its inadequacy; the debate centring on the moral judgment of the poor rather than the economic analysis of the crisis. In this context, the political unconscious as a strategy of containment served to justify and accept austerity, divide those experiencing it from other

[1016] Rachel Broady, "From Cathy Come Home to Benefits Street," *The Journalist*, (July/August 2015), 14.
[1017] Hewitt, *Emergence of Stability*, 102.
[1018] Rose, *Relief of Poverty*, 9.

sections of the working class, and gave a voice to the powerful, via journalism, in condemning the behaviour of the poor thus contributing to the strategy of containment. This research is already influencing campaigns and broader research intended to challenge how poverty is reported and understood by positioning those who experience poverty as the experts alongside researchers, journalists and social practitioners. Guidelines now exist in the National Union of Journalists to challenge how poverty is reported which read, in part, that 'newspapers and magazines should not originate material which encourages discrimination on grounds of being working poor or a benefit recipient'.[1019] As Walker argued in researching the Iraq War, in applying a Marxist analysis 'one's attention is necessarily drawn to the 'root of the problem' as it inheres in the imperatives of capitalism'.[1020]

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[1020] Walker, *Human Interest and Form*, 225.

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