
The Moral Bases of Literacy: Society, Economy, and Social Order

Morality is worthy of the attention of the economist.

J. P. KAY

*The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working
Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture
in Manchester (1832)*

In general terms, literacy opens up innumerable possibilities in the way of individualized response in the intellectual, moral, spiritual, and political spheres. But in the concrete case, the institution which provides literacy training at the same time exercises a determining influence by narrowing the range of choices and possibilities open to the subject.

JOHN MCLEISH

Evangelical Religion and Popular Education (1969)

The case of literacy is more complex. The ability to read and usually (though not always) to write was, of course, an aim of all nineteenth-century educators. Yet it is important to stress that literacy . . . was embedded in all kinds of other aims which predominated in the minds of providers.

RICHARD JOHNSON

*"Notes on the Schooling of the English
Working Class, 1780-1850" (1976)*

I

By the end of the first third of the nineteenth century, opposition to the universal institutional schooling of the masses had largely vanished in Anglo-America and in much of western Europe. Though the nature of the opposition had differed from place to place, from Great Britain to the Canadian provinces and the American republic, the educational solutions reached early in the century were similar in goals and content, if not always in structural forms. Changes in social context, involving the transformation of economic and social relations, joined with new modes of social response to promote new roles for education, and a new place for literacy within them. Now, largely gone were traditional elite attitudes, stressing fears of an educated poor and laboring class, discontented with its traditional position of deference. Rather, the masses should be schooled properly.¹ Mockery and caricature now became the common responses to notions that "it should be deemed an offense to teach the child of an English laborer to write his own name," or that "boys or girls, designed for domestic service, ought not to have the powers of reading their masters' or mistresses' letters if founding about."²

The new consensus, and its institutional forms, stressed schooling for social stability and the assertion of appropriate hegemonic functions; these dominated the goals of educational reformers and their supporters throughout Anglo-America. This view emphasized aggregate social goals—the reduction of crime and disorder, the instillation of proper moral values and codes of conduct, and, to a more limited extent, increased economic productivity—rather than the more individualistic ends of intellectual development and personal advancement.³ Dominat-

¹ On such attitudes, see Victor E. Neuberg, *Popular Education in Eighteenth Century England* (London: Woburn Press, 1971), Chapter One. Of course, this applied to the white masses and not to those like slaves in the American south. For important elements of continuity and discontinuity, see David Cressy, "Educational Opportunity in Tudor and Stuart England," *History of Education Quarterly*, 16 (1977), 301-320; Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

² Central Society of Education, *Papers* (London, 1837-1839; reprinted New York: Kelly, 1969), 1838, 356.

³ See Carl F. Kaestle, "Between the Scylla of Brutal Ignorance and the Charybdis of a Literary Education: Elite Attitudes toward Mass Schooling in Early Industrial England and America," in *Schooling and Society*, ed. Lawrence Stone (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 177-191; Rush Welter, ed., *American Writings on Popular Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), Introduction; J. F. C. Harrison, "Education in Victorian England," *History of Education Quarterly*, 10 (1970), 485-491, reviewing contemporary writings.

ing the rhetoric promoting the creation of systems of mass schooling, these goals represented the primary motives for the controlled training of children (and sometimes of adults) in literacy. The central questions became: Why (and how) should the population be provided with literacy? What uses will these skills serve to individual and society? What place does literacy have in the promotion of schooling? To borrow a phrase from Richard Hoggart, we ask, What were the "uses of literacy"?⁴

An answer, which this chapter addresses, lies in the confluence of morality, derivative of nondenominational Protestantism, with social change and the need for control.⁵ Of the panoply of reasons offered by school promoters in this period, the inculcation of morality was supreme; this represented one issue on which virtually all agreed. Literacy, the medium for training, consequently was rarely seen as an end in itself. More often, its possession or absence was assumed to represent either a symbol or a symptom of the progress in moral training or an index of what remained to be accomplished through the creation of educational systems embracing all the children of the community. Schooling in literacy was useful for the efficient training of the masses to the social order and the reassertion of hegemony; its provision ideally signified that the process was underway. Literacy alone, however,—that is, isolated from its moral basis—was feared as potentially subversive. Rather, the literacy of properly schooled, *morally restrained* men and women represented the object of the school promoters. As Susan Houston summarizes, "The campaign against ignorance (and the mandate of the school system) encompassed more than reading; illiteracy was deplored, but more as a visible sign of that other ignorance that was the root of personal and social deviance,"⁶ and a threat to the emerging capitalist order.

An emphasis on the controlled provision and use of literacy was not novel to these spokesmen for institutionalized schooling who rushed to build systems. Efforts with similar purposes predated their own, the source of which was sectarian: religious groups who agreed on the need to morally uplift the poor and working classes and competed for their souls. Religion, and in particular a reforming Protestantism, was the dynamic force in those few societies that achieved near-universal adult

⁴ Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961).

⁵ See Alison Prentice, "The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada," unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1974 (published as *The School Promoters* [Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977]); see also David Tyack, "The Kingdom of God and the Common School," *Harvard Educational Review*, 36 (1966), 447-460; John McLeish, *Evangelical Religion and Popular Education* (London: Methuen, 1969).

⁶ "The Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience," *History of Education Quarterly*, 12 (1972), 259.

literacy before the nineteenth century. "In all this world," concludes Lockridge, "the only areas to show a rapid rise in literacy to levels approaching universality were small societies whose intense Protestantism led them to offer to compel in some way the education of their people. . . . The motive force behind this action was the common Protestant impulse to bring all men the Word of God . . . [along with] the conservation of Piety. . . ." Reading the Bible was the vehicle for this impulse, for religious indoctrination derived from the moral message of this print. This was not so much an intellectual or a liberating action as it was a ritualistic one. The level of literacy, in fact, could be quite low: a proper understanding of the words was not in itself essential. Literacy, however nominal, signified in theory the observance of an ordained and approved social code.⁷

By the mid-nineteenth century, diverse educational promoters and religious groups, among others concerned with schooling, agreed in their motives for literacy training; their goals were institutionalized in developing systems for mass education, regardless of sponsorship. Schoolmen, while proclaiming that education should be nonsectarian, continued to stress Christian ethics and moral training as central to schooling.⁸ The increasing secularization, and indeed the subtle transformation, of morality can only be understood in the context of the larger changes occurring at this time.

The views accorded the place of literacy in schooling and society may be usefully characterized as the moral bases of literacy. The concept of moral bases both relates to and represents a crucial shift in and development from a traditional moral economy, as is explicated best by E. P. Thompson. To Thompson, the moral economy was "grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy." In his usage, this was largely the view of the poor and the crowd in eighteenth-century England. He found it possible to locate in every crowd action a legitimizing notion, such that those involved held the belief that they acted in defense of traditional rights and customs and, in so doing, were supported by a wider popular consensus.⁹

Economy, in the usage employed here, involves at once the rules that

⁷ Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England* (New York: Norton, 1974), 99-101; Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

⁸ J. M. Goldstrum, *The Social Context of Education, 1808-1870* (Shannon: Irish Universities Press, 1972).

⁹ *Past and Present*, 50 (1971), 79, 78.

govern or control a person's mode of living or regimen and the administration of the resources of a community or larger unit with a view to orderly conduct and productiveness. Moral economy, thus, is analogous to but not synonymous with political economy, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines thus: "Originally the art or practical science of managing the resources of a nation so as to increase its material prosperity." As a political economy replaced a moral economy, morality continued to comprise the core or base of this management, with its regulation and reforming orientation, although the context and the means of management changed. A religious frame of reference naturally informed the uses of the concept and its terminology, for morality of course derived from Christian ethics. Nonetheless, an emphasis on the purely theological or narrowly sectarian aspects of morality restricts appropriate conceptualization and can trivialize the meaning. Morality, we note, represented a mode of conduct and a way of life: habits, values, attitudes, which were based by this time on the cultural necessities of progress and the requirements of society.¹⁰ Political economy did not supplant morality as a valued instrument toward social organization.

The moral bases of literacy accompanied the shift from a *moral* economy to a *political* economy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, developing in response to a sweeping societal transformation and efforts to comprehend and interpret those changes. Literacy, we will see, was expected to contribute vitally to the reordering and reintegration of the "new" society of the nineteenth century; it represented one central instrument and vehicle in the efforts to secure social, cultural, economic, and political cohesion in the political economy of the expanding capitalist order. As J. P. Kay reminds us, "Morality is worthy of the attention of the economist"; indeed, popular behavior and the presumed needs for social learning attracted the attention of many concerned individuals, including those dedicated to the reform of society and the reformation of the masses comprising that society. In their many activities which sought to reestablish integration and recreate social order, they developed a conception of a literacy rooted in morality and of literacy as an instrument of social stability in a time of change, facilitating both progress and development without threat of disorder. As the political economy replaced the moral economy, the moral bases of literacy evolved. A "moral economy" of literacy itself was articulated; it lay behind new educational innovations and mass schooling as it expressed the dominant social assumptions of the controlling

¹⁰ See Richard Johnson, "Educating the Educators: 'Experts' and the State, 1833-9," in *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. A. P. Donajgradzki (London: Groom Helm, 1977), 90-91.

interests and integrated their efforts at maintaining order and control. Consequently, literacy could not be promoted or comprehended in isolation from morality.

Moral economy, which in the presuppositions of the mid-nineteenth century underlay the foundations of social order, government, economy, and preparation for work, involved the management of the masses, their adaptation to the requirements of the new order. As education increasingly became a dominant tool for social stability and hegemony, morality formed the basis for tutelage in literacy. Instruction was properly to teach and inculcate the rules for social and economic behavior in a changing and modernizing society; and literacy became a crucial vehicle for that process. Morality and literacy were intertwined and they were to be taught together: literacy speeding and easing moral instruction, morality guiding and restraining the potentially dangerous uses of literacy.

Indeed, the transformation of society required more than ever before the use of literacy to aid in instruction and integration. With the breakdown of traditional patterns of deference, in the face of capitalism's social transformations, the inculcation of morality and its behavioral attributes without literacy was increasingly seen as impossible. Education now substituted for paternalism as a source of order, cohesion, and hegemony in a society stratified by social class rather than by rank. Traditional desires and needs for control and assimilation had to be maintained but the form of the emerging social order demanded that the agencies and their functions be different. The need arose for the creation of institutions, like the school, to provide carefully structured, morally based tutoring in literacy. A unified attitude toward the place of schooling in society developed, and moral values formed its core with literacy its vehicle.

The moral bases of the political economy and of literacy embraced by school promoters and their supporters differed from that of the eighteenth century. Their morality was not that of the poor, but rather was one of the middle class and a new economic order that the poor and the working class were to be taught to share. To educational spokesmen, it represented a central legitimizing notion in the rhetoric of common school promotion, one which they felt was widely embraced. Yet, in their recognition of social changes, their realization that traditional rights and customs were being transformed, and their ambivalence and anxiety about these changes, the values they made central were not strictly traditional. While their concepts were grounded on a consistent view of social norms and obligations, their goals of harmony and order had shifted from traditional rural ideals. What they sought was the re-

establishment of stable patterns of social and economic relations in a new and different society.

Moreover, the promoters of education were hardly naive about the possibility or the usefulness of restoring the social order of the past. Men like Egerton Ryerson, the first Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, were well aware of the transitional state of their society; they feared that rampant commercialism, materialism, and urbanism carried the seeds of the destruction of their civilization. Nevertheless, the same men also sought social and economic change and development, never quite grasping that these ideals of progress were intimately connected to the social disorder they feared. They did realize, however, that urgent measures were required to elevate the minds and morals of the populace. Formal education, through the structured provision of literacy, was intended to elevate and assimilate the population and insure peace, prosperity, and social cohesion. An efficient and necessary substitute for deference, education would produce discipline and aid in the inculcation of the values required for an urban and industrial society. Here the moral economy was central, and morality and restraint were essential to proper education. As Alison Prentice aptly put it, "secular learning without [morality] was like a 'steam engine without its safety valve.'" ¹¹

Changing modes for training in social morality and restraint, and with them a new role for education, were responses to complex social and economic changes rooted in the transition from a pre-industrial to a mercantile and, later, an industrial capitalist order. Michael Katz states the connection:

The most characteristic and important feature of capitalism for the development of institutions, including public school systems, was its utilization of wage-labor and the consequent need for a mobile, unbound labor force. The shift in the nature of social organization consequent upon the emergence of a class of wage-laborers, rather than industrialization or urbanization, fueled the development of public institutions.

¹¹ See, for example, Ryerson, "Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Canada," in *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada (DHE)*, ed. J. George Hodgkins, 6 (Toronto, 1899); Prentice, "School Promoters," Chaps. 2, 6; quote from 200. (I will cite only the more complete, dissertation edition of this important work.)

As Charles Tilly has observed, interpretive schemes which pit morality against secular learning are versions of Durkheim's classic theories of social integration and disintegration. These clear expressions of nineteenth-century thought are still with us, as Samuel P. Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), among others, illustrates. On this and related points, see Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978). Ch. 2.

In much of the western world, and especially in Anglo-America, a new context for social life and social relations was forming; the role of schooling and literacy can be appreciated only in this context. New requirements and new demands resulted, to which institutions responded. These included the need to meet the perceived threats from crime, disorder, and poverty; the need to counteract cultural diversity; the need to prepare and discipline a work force; and the need to replace traditional popular culture with new values and habits. These problems, especially that of disciplining the work force and that of countering crime, disorder, and cultural heterogeneity, interacted with one another to heighten the need for action and to hasten the pace of institutional response. This sequence may be located throughout the Anglo-American world.¹²

Culturally, customary routines and rhythms had to be replaced by the punctuality, regularity, docility, and orderliness required by the new society. Socially, the place of traditional expectations of inheritance of position was preempted by a promise implicit in education: the triumph of achievement over ascription, or at least the need for individual attainments. Despite this new ideal, neither specific occupational skills nor cognitive traits were stressed; these remained less critical than character, behavior, habits, or attitudes in the moral economic formulations. Literacy's role in this process was complex, for the way in which it was to be acquired and the setting for instruction were obviously crucial. Both method and structure were elements in the inculcation of morality, in education's creation of proper restraint and modes of conduct. These processes, and literacy's place within them, were those of control and hegemony, as social relations and work patterns were reformed in accord with other transformations. The theorist of hegemony, Antonio Gramsci, aptly summarized the process in discussing education: "Its aim is always that of creating new and higher types of civilisation; of adapting the 'civilisation' and the morality of the broadest popular masses to the necessities of the continuous development of the economic apparatus of production; hence of evolving even physically new types of humanity."¹³

Schooling therefore, in its institutional role, held out an obvious attraction to many. A traditional force in society, especially in its moral orientation, education could be remolded and redirected to serve its new

¹² "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," *History of Education Quarterly*, 16 (1976), 391, see also 381-408; Johnson, "Notes on the Schooling of the English working class, 1780-1850," in *Schooling and Capitalism: A Sociological Reader*, ed. Roger Dale, Geoff Esland, and Madeleine MacDonald (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), 44-54.

¹³ *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and tr. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: NLB, 1971), 242; see also Johnson, "Notes"; Katz, "The Origins"; Johnson, "Educating."

social roles, not the least of which was the resurrection of restraint and control in times of rapid and disruptive social change—for stability and cohesion, and now for progress. The language of morality reveals a continuity of concern for hegemony and control—albeit in new forms and for new goals—and an emphasis in social thought and perception on the moral failings of individuals and classes as sources of society's severe problems. Despite resistance and conflict, efforts to reimpose control in these ways were swiftly established, succeeding in embracing the great mass of children and in providing them with some measure of schooling. And here, literacy had an important function to serve.

II

Popular education, as Richard Johnson has stressed, formed "one of the strongest of early Victorian obsessions"; this was equally true for Upper Canadians. Particularly striking in the educational development of Upper Canada is the speed and ease with which the school system was established (nor was this exceptional). This transformation, as Gidney illustrates, "was due, rather, to the growth during the 1830s and early forties of a consensus among public men about the importance of mass education to society—to the growing conviction that it was in the national interest to ensure that all children received some schooling." This conviction saw Upper Canadians closely following developments in both the mother country and the American republic, and resulted in conservatives, radicals, reformers, as well as diverse clergymen, in remarkably similar arguments, depicting education as promoting loyalty and order, good government, contented labor, and national progress. Sharing the values of the moral bases of literacy, they believed that "intellectual improvement was more than a source of material prosperity, it was also a powerful moral agent."¹⁴ Education divorced from morality was not education; morality divorced from education was not morality—the morality required for hegemony in a time of change.

Egerton Ryerson, the province's educational chief, addressed this broadly held conviction and enunciated this moral basis in his "Report

¹⁴ "Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England," *Past and Present*, 49 (1970), 96; "Upper Canadian Public Opinion and Common School Improvement in the 1830's," *Histoire sociale*, 5 (1972), 48–56; "Elementary Education in Upper Canada: A Reassessment," *Ontario History*, 65 (1973), 169–185; Susan Houston, "Politics, Schools and Social Change in Upper Canada," *Canadian Historical Review*, 52 (1972), 249–271.

on a System of Elementary Education for Upper Canada," of 1846. He commenced by defining education, as "not the mere acquisition of certain arts, or of certain branches of knowledge, but that instruction and discipline which qualify and dispose the subjects of it for their appropriate duties and enjoyments of life, as Christians, as persons of business and also as members of the civil community in which they live." Three years later, he expanded on these notions, adding that by education he included all that is inculcated and acquired: principles, habits, character, in the apprenticeship for life and for eternity. Education, of which literacy was the medium, comprised Christian duties, character and habit formation, and discipline. Morality was at the core of education, as Ryerson never failed to repeat throughout the two and one-half decades of his tenure as Chief Superintendent and principal architect of the school system. He, in his representative opinion, simply did not regard any instruction or attainment as education that did not include Christianity and morality. "High intellectual and physical accomplishments may be associated with deep moral and public debasement," he argued. Rather, "It is the cultivation and exercise of man's moral powers and feelings which forms the basis of social order and the vital fluid of social happiness."¹⁵ This indeed was common schooling—moral, Christian, and nondenominational—that pivoted on the moral bases of literacy.

Moral education of course was not the only education these school promoters provided. Man, they knew, was a physical, an intellectual, and a moral being. The physical side, a source of consternation and even fear, was to be curbed; the inculcation of moral restraint was required. Other dimensions of human development, however, were more central to the social goals of mid-century educators, receiving far more attention and a greater expenditure of energy. Consider intellectual development. Intellectual progress without moral development was simply not proper education; mental as well as moral training contributed to social order, and these two kinds of training should reinforce each other. Intellectual development, moreover, related to literacy, but not necessarily to individual advancement or to job preparation. As Ryerson saw it, a mechanic, for example, "will be a member of society; and as such, he should know how to read the language spoken by such society. . . ." Why reading? To be acquainted with ordinary topics of social intercourse. And why writing? Writing, which should be correct and intelligible, was "the vehicle of his thoughts, the instrument of all his intercourse

¹⁵ Ryerson, "Report", 142; "Canadian Mechanics and Manufacturers," *Journal of Education for Upper Canada (J.E.)*, 2 (1849), 19; "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People," *DHE*, 7, 148.

with his fellow men and with the histories of other nations and of the past ages."¹⁶ Noble goals, undoubtedly; useful skills—that is open to question.

Literacy's benefits were primarily social and integrating, and only rarely connected with job pursuits. Nonetheless, literacy could be essential, for the promise of the school had to be conveyed: "Every man, unless he wishes to starve outright, must read and write, and cast accounts, and speak his native tongue well enough to attend to his own particular business." These were ominous tones, but the implications of these needs were nowhere elaborated: did the individual benefits from the everyday uses of literacy make the worker more skilled, more knowledgeable about his work? Yes, but only partly so; educated labor, it was claimed, was more productive than uneducated labor. The educated mechanic was not disruptive; he was superior because he was orderly, punctual, and content.¹⁷

These moral functions of schooling intersected with work in another way, too. Schooling had the additional important task of assuring that manual workers did not aspire to rise above their station in life. Farmers or agricultural workers, for example, must be educated *not* to view their activities as narrow or regard them with contempt and disgust; they were not to be schooled so that they would want to leave their work, "in order to attain to a position of importance and influence." Education meant the cultivation of the workers (that is, if properly conducted) not the alienation of them from their positions. They were taught that labor did not deaden their mental faculties. Therefore, through the moral bases, "the proper education of the mechanic is important to the interests of society as well as to his own welfare and enjoyment." Social order, progress, and restraint were the goals of intellectual education, although the balance between the benefits to the individual and the benefits to society could seem ambiguous. Yet to consider the value of schooling to individuals in isolation from the value of it to society distorts the meaning of the educational purpose and confutes the goals of schooling. Ryerson considered this question, and his emphasis, the common one, was clear. "And if the intended mechanic should be trained to a mastery of his native tongue, he should, on still stronger grounds, be instructed in the nature of his social relations and duties. If he should be taught to speak correctly, he should be taught to act uprightly. He should be correct in his actions as well as in his words. He should surely be not less grounded in the principles of

¹⁶ See Prentice, "School Promoters," Chap. 1; Chap. 5, below; Ryerson, "Canadian Mechanics and Manufacturers," 19.

¹⁷ *J.E.*, 7 (1854), 134.



The lessons of the school and the values rewarded—regularity and punctuality of attendance, uniformly good conduct. “Certificate of Honour,” City of Toronto Public Schools, 1864: Robert Atkinson. [Records and Archives Centre, Toronto Board of Education]

honesty. . . .”¹⁸ Here indeed are the intentions of schooling; here are the moral bases, and the results of control. Rather than literacy, knowledge, or skills, social morality (Ryerson’s Christian virtues) formed the

¹⁸ “The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People,” 143; Prentice, “School Promoters,” 160–167; *J.E.*, 3 (1850), 20, quoting the Port Hope *Watchman*.

proper basis of education, and of social and individual happiness. Literacy had its place, for if morally controlled, it was the most effective vehicle for the creation and maintenance of the moral economy and the moral society.

These virtues were not only central to education, they were an intrinsic part of orderly civilization. The inculcation of them was "to habituate our children from early life to the rules of order, and to teach men justice, sobriety, industry, truth and the fear of God. . . . Whatever, in the education and training of your children, goes to restrain and subdue bad passions, is so much gained on the score of civil liberty and social order." Assimilation to a new manner of conduct was the end sought by the school; and the processes included molding and elevating, breaking and taming, governing and ordering, and managing, calming, restraining—all so that the individual could "live according to the best rules." Representing what Ryerson often called education for the duties of life, these were not professional or occupational attainments.¹⁹ They were rather the goals of the moral economy, the re-creation of hegemony through literacy and schooling.

Moral virtues influenced other actions too. Education supported the moral underpinning of democratic rights in a time of insecurity and social change; it also "unites the whole population in one common brotherhood by a community of interest and of brotherhood." The proper instillation of literacy insured these results, and though literacy alone did not guarantee the best use of these rights, the expected results of its teaching represented at once "the poor man's elevation and rich man's security." If free and universal schooling prevailed, the classes would be united; public education and public liberty would stand or fall together.²⁰ Children would attend the school, not through force or coercion, but as their free right; none would be stigmatized or isolated as either uneducated or educated through charity.

In the school, all children would be taught the "mutual relations and obligations" of the various classes, gaining mutual affections and "feelings of social oneness." The aim of common schooling, as many schoolmen noted, was the closing of the gap between the classes and the elimination of conflict (but not of inequality). Superintendent Henderson, of Kingston, put it nicely: "Education is to be the lever, that will not only show the deformity of vice, but that will elevate the social state

¹⁹ *J.E.*, 1 (1848), 49, 180; for the context, set in Ryerson's view of human nature, see Prentice, "School Promoters," Chap. 1; "Obligations of Educated Men," *J.E.*, 1 (1848), 161.

²⁰ "The Importance of Education to a Manufacturing, and a Free People," *J.E.*, 1 (1848); Editorial, *J.E.*, 1 (1848), 151; "The Importance of Education."

of the poor—assimilating them in habits, thoughts, and feelings to the rich and the educated—giving them the same intellectual tastes and pleasures and imbuing them with the same social sentiments and feelings.” Community and oneness, the bases for cohesion and hegemony, would be well advanced in common and correct schooling. The classes—rich and poor alike—would share habits and values once more, respect one another, and the lower class would become respectable and self-respecting. Of course, neither the classes nor the social order need be disturbed; attitudes would change from those represented by exclusion and hostility to those represented by sharing and cooperation. In this way, the poor and the working class would be taught the values of the middle class: Christian love, social morality, respect for property, harmony, and work discipline.²¹ This was the practice of the moral bases, toward prosperity and communication in shared goals.

This was also the re-creation of cultural and ideological hegemony. Represented in the process of such schooling is Gramsci's conception of the circumstances in which assimilation and control develop: The consent of the masses arises in response to “the direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group.” Involving neither conscious choice, coercion, nor deliberate deception, predominance derives from consent, or “the spontaneous loyalty that any dominant social group obtains from the masses by virtue of its social and intellectual prestige and its supposedly superior function in the world of production.” Hegemony, which was to obtain from correct and proper moral schooling, therefore, represents the social order in which one way of life and pattern of behavior becomes dominant; in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in its institutional and private functions; and which informs tastes, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, “particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations.” Hegemony consequently is the result of complex and subtle processes—conscious and unconscious—of control, in which the predominance of one class is established over others, by consent rather than by force. In this formulation, it is achieved by the institutions of civil society.²²

This is precisely what Egerton Ryerson and other promoters of

²¹ “The Social Advancement of Canada,” *J.E.*, 2 (1849), 179; *Annual Report of the Chief Superintendent*. . . , 1852, 130; Prentice, “School Promoters,” Chap. 5; Ryerson, “Report on a System,” 142–158.

²² *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 12; John M. Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 204; Gwyn Williams, “The Concept of ‘Egemonia’ in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 21 (1960), 587.

education sought to provide through their work; this lay at the heart of their efforts to reform and systematize schooling to embrace all the children in controlled instruction. The development of hegemony, they learned, depended on a "level of homogeneity, self-consciousness, and organization" reached by a social class. Neither narrowly economic nor crudely imposed or conspiratorial, their actions derived from a sure recognition of the needs of society and of the oneness of social interests, and the identification of their own requirements with those of others. Their task was to achieve this; the school and literacy were the instruments—through a dissemination of the message of the moral economy—for stability and cohesion.

Literacy's roles, as we will shortly observe, were several, but in general it was the medium and the carrier of the elements of the hegemonic culture, or as E. J. Hobsbawm writes, "the only culture that operates as such through literacy—the very construction of a standard national language belongs to the literate elite. The very process of reading and schooling diffuses it, even unintentionally." We will return to this aspect of the process, but even in this sketch it is possible to grasp the intentions of the educators and the mechanisms for the development of control in the moral economy. The popular acceptance of public education gave meaning to the process and represented public consent to the efforts, such as those of Ryerson, made to re-establish and maintain hegemony—apart from any public recognition of the values or assumptions that underlay those efforts.²³

That Ryerson grasped this development, however unclearly or unconsciously, cannot be doubted. For in addition to his other insights, he saw that success required the cooperation of all classes, but especially the higher responsibilities of educated and prosperous men. Aside from the awareness of self-interest, school promoters depended on the recog-

²³ Hobsbawm, "Religion and the Rise of Socialism," *Marxist Perspectives*, 1 (1978), 22. My interpretation owes much to the writings of David B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 348-362; Aileen S. Kraditor, "American Radical Historians on Their Heritage," *Past and Present*, 56 (1972), 136-153; Eugene Genovese, "On Antonio Gramsci," in his *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History* (New York: Pantheon, 1971), 391-422, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974). See also, R. W. Connell, *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). For pioneering application to educational history, see Katz, "The Origins"; Johnson, "Notes," "Educating." See also, E. P. Thompson's remarks, "Eighteenth-century English Society," *Social History*, 3 (1978), 133-165, which appeared after this chapter was written. It should be clear, finally, that this interpretation is offered as an explanation sketch, not as a fully detailed synthesis. While this is sufficient for the present purposes, much more remains to be done.

nition of the obligations of the educated to their society and to the lower class. Ryerson realized the need for their full support, maintaining that "one of the most formidable obstacles to the universal diffusion of education and knowledge is class isolation and class exclusiveness. . . ." The functions of schooling could not succeed if men of liberal education looked down on the education of the masses; they, as trustees of the social inheritance, had to be interested and involved, as moral agents, employing their powers, possessions, and advantages. As active leaders and material contributors, in addition to their personal stake in their own children's common schooling, they would contribute morally, too. These were in fact their obligations, the fulfillment of which was required if Canada was to rise and not sink: "What order and beauty [would arise] from chaos and desolation . . . what an intellectual, a moral, a social transformation would ensue."²⁴

The attributes that educational promoters attempted to instill in their pupils, particularly the children of the poor and the laborers, constitute what I have called the moral bases of literacy—the primary purpose of common school education. These moral values, central to nineteenth-century educators and to the society for which schooling was to prepare men and women, reveal the perceived connections between the school, the society, and the economy. Morality, in other words, underlay social relations, social order, economic productivity, and the development of hegemony. The inculcation of values, habits, or attitudes to transform the masses, not skills, was the task of schooling and the legitimating notion of the moral economy. Literacy properly served as the tool for this training in a close and reinforcing relationship with morality. This was the source of cohesion and order, and the defense of progress, in a developing and modernizing capitalist society.

III

Ryerson was hardly the sole spokesman for the moral bases of literacy, which amounted to a consensus view throughout Anglo-America. Examples of this are legion. Others in Upper Canada, particularly the clergy, often addressed the same ends; but this agreement has too easily been obscured by attention to differences in tactics and procedures. Often, bitter disagreements over sponsorship and control, as well as ten-

²⁴ *Annual Report*, 1857, 49; *Annual Report*, 1850, 215; "Obligations of Educated Men," 194, 196, 166, 165; see also, John William Dawson, *The Duties of Educated Young Men* (Montreal, 1863).

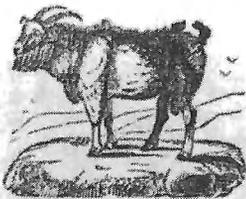
dencies to interpret their moral opinions as much more narrowly sectarian and theological than social, obstruct an understanding of the larger point. The religious press was an important voice in nineteenth-century Upper Canada, quite widely read and circulated, and the degree to which its statements, regardless of denominational affinities, amplified basic elements in a shared world view is instructive. Nor should it be forgotten that here, as elsewhere, the architects of the educational system were clergymen: the Anglican John Strachan and the Wesleyan Methodist Ryerson. This convergence of opinion is all the more striking when one notes the number of denominations in agreement, regardless of differences over doctrine, organization, the place of the Bible in school, control, or support.²⁵ Their consensus, a shared consciousness, fostered the legitimation of the moral economy and the development of hegemony. Their views provide further insight into the parameters of schooling's purposes.

Ryerson's own denomination, the Methodists, trumpeted loudly in support of morality in common schooling, in their weekly, *The Christian Guardian*, which Ryerson edited before he was appointed superintendent. From its first numbers, the *Guardian* expressed the moral economy, for the Methodists were certain that "A young Christian ought to aim at the highest degree of intellectual improvement [for] his Christian character will rest on what he knows." The usefulness, happiness, safety, and devoutness of any person could only follow, they argued, upon the eradication of ignorance. Morality, and Christianity, grew from education and literacy; the schools' "greatest glory," as it was put, lay in the provision of, first, moral development and, second, intellectual. And, as a result, free schools, common schools, would "level" the social hierarchy, producing a society "in which the multitude shall not be looked down upon as an inferior race."²⁶

Moral instruction, continued the *Guardian*, would also prevent crime, for unless the moral advanced with the intellectual progress, there would be "no increase from our increased education, but an increased capacity for evil doing." But with correct schooling, this

²⁵ On religion and sects in Upper Canada, see for example, John Moir, *Church and Sect in Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959); C. B. Sissons, *Church and Sect in Canadian Education* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959); S. D. Clark, *Church and Sect in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948); Gerald Craig, *Upper Canada, The Formative Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963); J. M. S. Careless, *Union of the Canadas* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967); F. A. Walker, *Catholic Education and Politics in Upper Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955).

²⁶ *Christian Guardian* (CG), Jan. 23, 1830; Jan. 15, 1834; on the politics of the *Guardian* see Goldwin French, *Parsons in Politics* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1972).

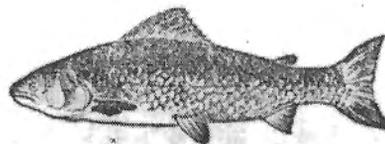


LESSON XX.

claw	jaw	shawl
crawl	law	spawn
dawn	maw	straw
haw	paw	thaw
hawk	raw	yawn

The beef is quite raw; will you roast it? A flail is used to part the grain from the straw. The hawk takes its prey with its claws. A worm can crawl, but a hare can run. Heat makes the ice thaw. I will rise as soon as day dawns. What part of a bird is the maw? Haws are the fruit of the thorn. Why do you yawn? Pull the tooth from my jaw. A fish spawns. Fine shawls are made from the hair of the goat. Puss has hurt her paw.

God gave this law to men, that they should love him more than all things in the world.



LESSON XXI.

cause	fraud	pause
clause	gauze	sauce
daub	laud	vault

James daubs his clothes with clay. Pause at the stops or points. It is fraud to take what is not yours. To laud is to praise. Read this clause. Jane has torn her gauze frock; that is the cause of her tears. Let me have sauce to my fish, if you please. It is not my fault, if you do not learn to read. Paul is a man's name. Wine is kept in vaults. *You must not vaunt or boast of your skill.*

LESSON XXII.

cloud	ground	proud
couch	hound	shout
flour	mount	sour
gout	mouse	south

This fruit is sour; I found it on the

would not result. Moreover, Sunday schools could also serve this end. The *Guardian* saw them as solely for religious and moral instruction according to the Word of God. Proper education, in sum, revolved around the nature of man, for man was a moral being, not only an intellectual one. Morality, therefore, formed the only safe basis for popular education. Pupils, as this journal approvingly quoted an American educator, "need some central governing power to rule the conscience, regulate the pulsations of the heart, and restrain the passions [, for] knowledge is power to do evil as well as good." Both intellect and emotion needed moral circumscription; alone or unrestrained by appropriate education they could only be harmful to society's interests. Consequently, the processes of control must begin early in life.²⁷

The need to control the use of literacy itself led the *Guardian* to specify what should and should not be read, extending the moral bases beyond the classroom with the products of its influence. "No part of education," it announced, "is of greater importance than the selection of proper books. . . . No dissipation can be worse than that induced by the perusal of exciting books of fiction . . . a species of a monstrous and erroneous nature." Novels, especially, were "pernicious" to man as intellectual and moral; they made few appeals to reason and engendered an aversion to profound and controlled thought—even threatening its loss. Novel reading was proscribed for young and unmarried women, and a religious newspaper was recommended for the needs of all, especially for a poor family. Best of all, of course, was the Bible, which, along with religious literature, formed the primary source for moral, Christian reading.²⁸

More specifically, the press offered "Advice to Apprentices." Often too young to choose what was best for themselves, they were to seek out "a friend to select for [them] the best books," on morality and religion, the liberal arts, and the profession likely to be theirs, in that order. The emphasis is clear; morality came first, then came the more practical arts and sciences. Tastes and manners were not neglected; for they were a sign of morality and they contributed to discipline.²⁹ Thus morality impinged on the passive employments of leisure.

Its applications, in fact, were broader, as few forms of leisure could

²⁷ CG., July 2, 1834; Dec. 2, 1835; Oct. 16, 1844; Apr. 15, 1840; June 7, 1848; May 1, 1850. For another view on Sunday Schools, see T. W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). For an extensive discussion of crime, see Chap. 6, below.

²⁸ CG., July 31, 1850; see also Altick, *Common Reader*, Chap. 5, and Chap. 7 below; CG., Nov. 17, 1849; Jan. 16, 1850; Feb. 19, 1840; May 24, 1848.

²⁹ CG., Dec. 13, 1867.

be left to individual freedom. The development of institutions for the controlled transmission of literacy coincided with the transformation of more active forms of popular recreation. Traditional activities, whether fairs, work holidays, bearbaiting, or cockfighting, were in the first half of the nineteenth century replaced by morally sponsored, socially accepted activities. Robert Malcolmson comments, "A closer regulation of popular behavior, an improvement in the common peoples' tastes and morals, a reform of their habitual vices, the instilling in them of discipline and orderliness: these were some of the principal objectives of the movement for the reformation of manners which arose [in England] in the later 1780s and matured during the following half century." This activity, aimed at the transformation of culture, stemmed from many of the same goals that led to the establishment of school systems and the propagation of the moral bases of literacy: the promotion of order, the maintenance of respect for property, propriety, the diminution of conflict, the assimilation into society of the poor and working class, the maintenance of control and discipline in new urban and industrial environments.

Morality was injected into play activities, in the establishment of hegemony, as into the curriculum; and, "it came to be assumed . . . that 'if recreation was permissible at all, it must be "rational" and must prepare mind and body for work instead of being an end in itself.'" In the attempt to reestablish order and cohesion in a society changing from the rural and paternalistic to the urban and capitalistic, recreation, like literacy, had to be transformed and controlled. As with schooling too, concern for labor discipline and conduct was central; "the more popular diversion could be controlled and restrained, the more would the national economy be strengthened and expanded; habits of leisure had to be brought into line with the requirements of efficient and orderly production."³⁰ Neither literacy nor leisure was neutral to the reforming spirit; their regulation by morality was required. Indeed, if controlled, one could reinforce the best use of the other.

That there were debates among the different denominations should not be allowed to obscure their consensus on the proper functions of education. Acrimonious struggles over sponsorship, legal arrangements,

³⁰ Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 169, 167, 98, *passim*. J. F. C. Harrison, *Early Victorian England* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 135-139; Brian Harrison, "Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth-Century England," *Past and Present*, 38 (1968), 98-125. But see also Gareth Stedman Jones, "Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class," *Journal of Social History*, 7 (1974), 460-508.

procedures, doctrinal interpretations, and the like, fill the pages of the religious press and the interpretations of the early years of school promotion.³¹ Nonetheless, despite such disagreements, which could be significant, a primary agreement was more important; this held that schooling without morality simply was not proper education. Upper Canada's Anglicans, the opponents of the Methodists and Ryerson on so many educational issues, made the consensus clear in their journal, *The Church*. To them, moral and religious education was important to schooling anywhere, but particularly so in Upper Canada; their complaints centered on legislation—not on the place of the moral economy. Fearing that the Bible and morality would be neglected, they worried that it might be replaced with the writings of Tom Paine and Voltaire, and that free schools were republican, even socialistic.³² Considering the desires of the chief superintendent, there was little danger of this.

The Anglicans, like the superintendent and his Methodists, therefore saw correct education, with morality at its core, as the formation of the social order. Their educational first premise held Christian morality “naturally and essentially” favorable to inquiry and cultivation. More fundamentally, moral schooling alone would properly equip the masses for their duties and guide them away from disturbance and commotion. Lacking the ties of property, pleasure, fashion, character, honor, or refinement, the poor, if not trained to be lawful and orderly, were dangerous and threatening to peace. Herein was reflected the Anglican faith. *The Church*, finally, was equally adamant about the choice of reading matter, advocating the control of books as well as the development of the ability to read them, and censuring many kinds of improper literature. Morals, they felt, could be as easily corrupted as properly molded by the use of bare literacy. The moral bases meant the regulation of transmission as well as use.³³

The province's Roman Catholics also embraced the moral economy, despite their rejection of common, nondenominational (Protestant) schooling. While they struggled to develop a school system of their own, they argued over means rather than ends. Schooling, even if separate, would be “suitable to [one's] station in life,” producing the “faithful Christian . . . [a] better Man, and a more useful member of Society.” Man, born in weakness and ignorance, required instruction, a schooling that provided at its base a sense of moral duty.³⁴ These groups, consti-

³¹ See, for example, *CG.*, Oct. 26, 1853; *The Church*, July 28, 1843. (*TC*)

³² *TC.*, May 30, 1850; May 26, 1838.

³³ *TC.*, Feb. 12, 1852; May 20, 1852; Oct. 12, 1839; Oct. 27, 1843.

³⁴ *The Catholic Citizen*, Jan. 5, 1854; *The Catholic* (Kingston), July 1, 1831; *The Catholic* (Hamilton), June 7, 1843; for continuing statements, see Rev. D. H. Macvicar,

tuting the province's major denominations, held education to be necessary to society and their place within it; their views moreover placed morality and religion at the core of education. All subscribed to the moral bases—their subscriptions very similar—as they accepted the hegemonic functions of schooling.

IV

How were the moral bases propagated and inculcated; how was hegemony developed through the school? We must turn briefly to the classroom itself, for the moral bases were operative in diverse school-rooms and transmitted in several ways, both consciously and unconsciously, subtly and unsubtly. The provincial board of education, the Council of Public Instruction, for example, ruled in October, 1850, that all common schools should open and close daily with religious exercises. The exercises consisted of the Lord's Prayer and Bible reading, and the Ten Commandments were also taught in the common school. After their incorporation in 1853, similar rules were devised for grammar schools. Morality, therefore, would be central in the classroom, as it was in the minds and intentions of the schoolmen. "Christianity, it was pointed out," Prentice notes, "in connection with these regulations, was the basis of law and order, as well as the cement and ornament of society."⁸⁵ If proper education was to succeed, the message of the school had to be in the air, in the ears of the pupils, and on their lips.

Was this mere lip service? The superintendent attempted to insure the contrary; Ryerson's education office also stressed the importance of morality in the classroom, regularly requiring information as to whether it was being adequately promoted. For his annual reports, Ryerson asked, Did the day open with prayer, Was the Bible in use, OF what denomination is the teacher? Summarizing the responses in his reports, he attempted to prove, to critics who thought his system godless, that the schools as they developed became progressively more religious. Local re-

"Moral Culture, an Essential Factor in Public Education," an address delivered before the Ontario Teachers Association, Toronto, August 14; John Eaton, "Illiteracy and its Social, Political and Industrial Effects," an address to the Union League Club, New York City (New York, 1882).

⁸⁵ "Religious Instruction in the Common Schools, 1859," *DHE*, 14, 267; "Programme of Public Instruction in Upper Canada," *J.E.*, 8 (1855), 24.

ports illustrate the success of his efforts, as Prentice reveals in her citation of a typical report. This claimed that "all the schools" in one city " 'now opened and closed by the teacher reading aloud a portion of the Scriptures and the Lord's Prayer;' and that in almost all cases, the children voluntarily repeated the prayer with the teacher."³⁶

The texts in use also demonstrate the centrality of morality, and the frequency and intensity of its message, in the classroom. Approved books spread the doctrines of order, harmony, and progress, ignoring conflict and inequality. Here lay one key role for literacy. Yet we must also recognize that the child did not need to be proficiently literate to read and comprehend the moral message and thus be instilled with the desired values. At mid-century, before silent reading was valued as a pedagogical tool—and for some years thereafter—oral reading dominated the classroom: reading to the class by the teacher with pupil recitation and repetition. The constant repetition of passages would surely dent the minds of the young, regardless of the level of their own ability to decipher the written word. Hearing would advance the necessary purpose, though literacy would surely ease the process of reinforcement and internalization.

The Irish National Readers constituted the texts for the Ontario common schools following Ryerson's endorsement and adoption in 1846. In a useful analysis of the series, J. M. Goldstrum concluded that school reform in both England and Ireland was moralistic in orientation, and permeated by the belief that individuals could be made over or radically changed by being taught correct social values. "School readers played a crucial role in this system because the scantily-educated teachers relied heavily on them," their authors and sponsors thought. Nevertheless, teachers were expected to be moral agents and to emphasize the moral economy in classroom behavior, management, and teaching.³⁷ Demanding order, respect, industry, and diligence, they were to reinforce the moral order of society. They were to insist on conformity to rules and regulations and respect for property, whether through discipline hard or soft, external punishment, or the inculcation of internal restraint. Barbara Finkelstein, in studies of nineteenth-century American teachers, calls this "pedagogy-as-intrusion": "The way these primary teachers

³⁶ Prentice, "School Promoters," 201.

³⁷ Goldstrum, *The Social Context*, 1, 2, passim.; see also Ruth M. Elson's analysis of school books used in the United States, *Guardians of Tradition* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1964); Sherwood Fox, "School Readers as an Educational Force," *Queen's Quarterly*, 39 (1932), 688-703. Chap. 7, below, elaborates some of these points.

Name _____

PRICE 7 CENTS

No. 4

PUBLIC SCHOOL

SENIOR THIRD

Writing Course

AUTHORIZED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

ROSE PUBLISHING Co. Limited, Toronto

August Avoid rudeness of manner Ancient

August Avoid rudeness of manner Ancient
 August Avoid rudeness of manner Ancient

Brazil Be always ready to do good Balance

Brazil Be always ready to do good Balance
 Brazil Be always ready to do good Balance

Cologne Correct some faults in writing Crayton

Cologne Correct some faults in writing Crayton
 Cologne Correct some faults in writing Crayton

Learning the moral bases of literacy by repetition, example, and practice. "Thomas Speer Copy Book," Public School Writing Course, No. 4, Senior Third Level, authorized by the education department. [Records and Archives Centre, Toronto Board of Education]

taught suggests that they believed that the main function of education was instilling restraint," tying intellectual and moral instruction firmly together in the service of character development.³⁸ In these ways, in text, teaching style, and classroom management, teachers and the authorities worked to maintain control of ideas and conduct, especially given the short stay of many pupils.

The National Readers followed closely upon the heels of the creation of a national educational system in Ireland, as their adoption accompanied the erection of Upper Canada's system of schools. The values expressed, and promoted, were secular, but they were at once morally and religiously imbued, permeated by Christian ethics. Though they might no longer contain Biblical passages or moral tales, the heroes of the tales and fables were inevitably good Christians. In these daily lessons, pupils were taught the rationales for government, military and police, private property, rich and poor, and the interdependence of the social classes. By explicit example and description, the duties of citizens, the necessity of obedience, cleanliness, industriousness, sobriety, honesty, and frugality were brought home to them.³⁹ By drill, repetition, and memorization, youngsters absorbed a code for social behavior.

Moreover, self-help and personal advancement were presented modestly; no large prospects of upward mobility were put forth, inasmuch as the continuation of the two classes—the rich and the poor—was justified. Poverty, pupils were instructed, was the consequence of moral failings: a lack of self-restraint, indolent and intemperate behavior, or early and improvident marriage. The poor were taught that to succeed, they must be self-restrained, obedient, and cooperative; the rich would then treat them with respect. The poor, of course, were not encouraged to nurture social ambitions. So, for the inculcation of correct standards of behavior and attitude, "a sound moral is conveyed in almost every lesson." As the *Thirteenth Report* of the National Society, 1841, emphasized, the diffusion of knowledge cannot, perhaps, be stopped, but it can be directed into the least dangerous channels: "He cannot hinder the people from obtaining Knowledge, but he can do something towards making that knowledge the safest and the best." Of course, other groups and denominations produced competing readers, but "all the books show one very important fact—the religious societies felt the same about

³⁸ Barbara Finkelstein, "Pedagogy as Intrusion," *History of Childhood Quarterly*, 2 (1975), 349–378, "The Moral Dimensions of Pedagogy," *American Studies*, 15 (1974), 79, 79–89. See also Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), Part II; Prentice, "School Promoters," *passim*.

³⁹ Goldstrum, *The Social Context*, 67, 68, Chap. 2. On the Irish schools, see Donald Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

Time-Table for a School 6, 7, or 8 Grades.

Recitations.	Hours.	Time.	STUDY.			
			D Division.	C Division.	B Division.	A Division.
Opening Exercises	8.50-8.57	7 min.				
Roll Call	8.57-9.00	3 "				
D Reading	9.00-9.13	15 "		Reading	Reading	Arith
C Reading	9.15-9.30	15 "	} Copying Lesson with help of an older pupil.		Reading	
B Reading	9.30-9.50	20 "		Copying Lesson		Lang. or Readt.
A Lang. or Read.	9.50-10.10	20 "	Busy Work	Arith	Arith	
D Number	10.10-10.25	15 "		Arith	Arith	Write notes on Les.

Recess 15 Minutes.

10.25 to 10.40.

C Arithmetic	10.40-10.55	15 "	Reading		Language	Arith
B Language	10.55-11.10	15 "	Read to Tutor*	Arith		Geog. or Hlat.
A Geog. or Hist.	11.10-11.30	20 "	Writing	Arith.	Arith	
D Reading	11.35-11.50	15 "		Arith. with Tutor.	Geog. or Hist.	Map Drawing
Singing taught.	11.50-12.00	10 "				

Noon 80 Minutes.

12 to 1.

Roll Call	1.00-1.03	3 "				
B Geog. or Hist.	1.03-1.25	22 "	Number	Lang		Arith
C Language	1.23-1.45	20 "	Read to Tutor*		Map Drawing	Arith
Singing	1.45-1.50	5 "				
Writing or Drawing	1.50-2.30	30 "	Nat. Les. to Teacher.			

Recess 10 Minutes.

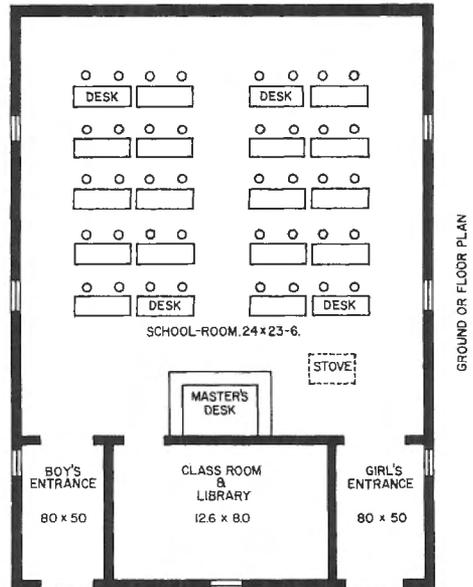
2.20 to 2.30.

D Reading	2.30-2.45	15 "		Reading	} Write outline (of Geog. or Hist.)	Alg. or Arith.
C Reading	2.45-3.00	15 "	Copy Lesson.			Arith.
B Arith.	3.00-3.20	20 "		DISMISS.		Geom.
A Geom. or Arith.	3.20-3.40	20 "				
A and B Nature Lessons.	3.40-4.00	20 "				

* In a large ungraded school it will be necessary frequently to utilize some of the older pupils as tutors. Let it be looked upon as a privilege, perhaps the reward of good work.
 † For the highest class, reading three times a week, and language or grammar twice, will be sufficient. So, also geography, three times a week, and history twice. — Writing and drawing the same, alternately.

Note. — It will sometimes happen that the 6th Grade can work with the 7th in history or geography. In various circumstances many minor changes of that kind may be desirable.

The ordering of time and the ordering of space—two aspects of carefully controlled and structured learning. (above) "Time Table for a School, 6, 7, or 8 grades," *The Education Review* (Quebec), 5-6 (1891-1893), p. 220. [Public Archives of Canada] (right) "Ground or Floor Plan," for school rooms, *Eighth Annual Report of the Chief Superintendent of Schools for New Brunswick*. Frederickton, New Brunswick, 1860.



education and the poor.”⁴⁰ With proper instruction, the dangers of unrestrained literacy, or of illiteracy, could be neutralized; in learning to read, children would be taught the rules of social order and correct behavior and the principles of economic advancement.

Important as they are, these were not the only ways in which the moral bases and hegemony were developed. Hegemony involves, we recall, the unwilling and unselfconscious consent so the direction that the predominant group imposes on social life—on morality, principles, and all social relations—through public institutions such as the school. The school, in addition to its curriculum, in ways beyond its stated goals and intents, is an environment conducive to training in approved patterns of conduct, and the inculcation of normative behavior. The organization of the institution, it seems, acts as a “hidden persuader” that implicitly contributes to learning the rules of personal action. Consciously and unconsciously, formally and informally, the organization of work and social life is implicitly encapsulated in the microcosm of the school. The school-as-microcosm, in fact, forms a mechanism of socialization frequently neglected by scholars.

In their internal organization, schools reflect social relations and ideology and serve as key agents of transmission, at once legitimating the social order and assimilating to it their charges. Dreeben, for one, illustrates the outcomes of schooling in learning to accept norms and authority, in a sensitive exploration of the structural aspects of education. Focusing on the “peculiar,” noncognitive properties of schooling, he shows how the experiences of learning link the students to the larger social structure, teach them to “participate in authority relations based on inequalities,” “link the family with the public institutions of adult life,” and integrate schooling with work and politics. Bowles and Gintis further document this complex process, concentrating also on the non-cognitive behavioral and attitudinal aspects of the correspondence between the social relations of school and the requirements of work. Emphasizing submission to authority, temperament, and internalized control, their discussion informs our understanding of how hegemony is transmitted through the institutions of education. In these ways, the moral bases gained vital enforcement from the very environment built to transmit it.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Goldstrum, *The Social Context*, 80, Chap. 2; 104; 129; for examples from the readers, see Chap. 2.

⁴¹ Alex Inkeles, “Making Men Modern,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 75 (1969), esp. 213, “The School as a Context for Modernization,” *International Journal of Sociology*, 14 (1973), 163–179; Robert Dreeben, *On What Is Learned in School* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1968), 144–145, *passim*; Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis,

Carefully guided instruction in literacy represented one central theme in the practical elaboration of the moral bases that bound school promoters to a specific notion of education in the past century. Reading and writing were seldom seen as ends in themselves or valued as individual attainments; indeed, undirected they were thought to be very dangerous and subversive. If, however, their provision in formal institutions were properly controlled and efficient, literacy could be the vehicle for the transmission of the moral message and the development of hegemony. The purpose of literacy was to integrate society through binding men and women in it and instilling in them the principles of correct behavior. The importance of print and of the ability to read was grasped by those most interested in social order and progress. They saw, on the one hand, that more and more people were becoming literate, and thus potentially able to use their literacy without restraint. On the other hand, there were the illiterate, especially among the young. Both elements constituted a threat, a barrier to the spread of the values considered essential to social order and economic progress. The result, of course, was the determination to seize upon print and literacy as socializing agents, to provide them in environments specifically and carefully structured for their dissemination, and to teach the moral code and the approved uses of literacy. Literacy was now necessary for moral control and control was required for literacy; progress would be advanced through the behavior of properly schooled persons. Given the vast importance attached to literacy and the values that accompanied it, what did literacy mean to *individuals* in Upper Canadian society? We address this question in the chapters that follow.

Schooling in Capitalist America (New York: Basic Books, 1975), Chap. 5; Gintis, "Education, Technology and the Characteristics of Worker Productivity," *American Economic Review*, 61 (1971), 266-279.