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LITERACY AND SOCIETY

[E]veryone now knows that the best way for an illiterate worker to achieve integration into the production process and to form an idea of his place in the production chain is to internalize the linear nature of the printed text, to acquire the ability to see things laterally and to equip himself with the spatial scheme necessary in order to learn to read and write. Industrialists have fully understood that the medium constitutes the most important part of the message.

[Literacy] serves the purposes of ideological inculcation, for example, and, naturally, for the inculcation of industrial ideology, along with sharpening the appetite for individual advancement and, finally, domesticating the working class to the industrial ethos.

E. VERNE

*"Literacy and Industrialization—
The Dispossession of Speech" (1976)*

In such a context, literacy training is simply an introduction to this positivistic conception of the world. By restricting knowledge to facts and laws, under the pretense of science, it is necessarily limited to helping people adapt themselves to the established order.

ROGER GARAUDY

"Literacy and the Dialogue between Civilizations" (1976)

One important influence is the emphasis in modern linguistics research on the primacy of oral over written sources for understanding how language works. This development is important because literacy and literacy culture have for centuries been tied to social mobility, class

consciousness, and cultural elitism. With print came the grammar book, "proper" speech, and linguistic snobbery.

ROBERT DISCH

"The Future of Literacy" (1973)

[Any such] "simple distinction between literate and illiterate" . . . is fuzzy at every point in the eighteenth century: the illiterate hear the products of literacy read aloud in taverns and they accept from the literate culture some categories, while many of the literate employ their very limited skills only instrumentally (writing invoices, keeping accounts) while their "wisdom" and customs are still transmitted within a pre-literate oral culture. . . . Any attempt to segregate the literate and illiterate cultures will meet with even greater difficulty.

E. P. THOMPSON

"Eighteenth-Century English Society:
Class Struggle without Class" (1978)