History of learning and learners 1800-1920

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A formidable legacy of educational ideas and practices was bequeathed to learners in the nineteenth century. At a time of great social, economic, cultural and educational change this inheritance represented a force for change but was contested, transformed and blended into existing patterns. The Reformation and Enlightenment took different forms in different countries, but one salient theme challenged mysticism and religious dogma in favour of apprehending reality through the senses. Potentially everyone might gain access to knowledge and salvation. The profound implications of this message were blown open by the French and American revolutions which were crucial historical turning points in the history of learning. They were the most visible symbols of the overthrow of an old aristocratic order even if many ideas and practices from the old regime would endure. They made it impossible to ignore the demands of the people, not just as subjects but increasingly as citizens, and education was one place where this struggle for equality was played out. In addition, novel technologies, tied into rapidly emerging capitalist relations of production, made communication faster and promised greater control over nature through the discovery and application of knowledge. The technology of education, so familiar to us today, pre-dated the nineteenth century but certainly became more extensive through the proliferation of schooling and the classroom. Progress was in the air - industrialisation, democratisation and urbanisation appeared to be unstoppable forces which were improving societies and their populations, symbolised by the image of the factory across western nations. The accumulation of

wealth, partly from colonial adventures, as well as the accumulating numbers of wealthier people, created an insatiable demand for education and learning.[1]

Yet, revolutionary ideas were to be stymied by forces of reaction and tradition. Nascent class-based industrial nations evolved new forms of inequality to replace the old. During the nineteenth century, waves of industrialisation and migration, while spatially diverse, were becoming pervasive across Europe, the Americas and Australia. Although the American Revolution threw off British shackles, the story of imperialism was far from over and the nineteenth century would witness an intensification of colonialism, with significant implications for education and learning. Imperialist expansion provided raw materials but also traded hierarchies and assumptions about civilization and learning. Important distinctions in terms of age, class, gender, sexuality and disability hardened. Moreover, not all societies developed in the same way and colonial nations had different trajectories of learning. Accessing actual process of learning helps to reveal some of these multiple and complex social relations.[2]

The enlightenment notion of individual autonomy championed by Immanuel Kant in his essay 'What is Enlightenment?' was not available to everyone but implied the need for resources and a sense of entitlement. The issue of who could be educated, who was capable of civilization, was embedded into most educational encounters of the nineteenth century. Whether elites considered 'natives', working class, disabled, women and other groups capable of civilization, of being improved and able to learn was a crucial matter. If the answer was no, then only basic forms of learning were considered possible or realistic and there was tenacious opposition to the spread of learning which might upset social relations. If the answer was yes then a different set

of assumptions resulted, for example, they might ultimately be integrated into the nation and granted the franchise or independence.[3]

The expansion of learning

The early nineteenth century, up until the European revolutions and uprisings in 1848, was marked by contrasting reactions to the French and American revolutions, highlighting secularism, equality and modernity on the one hand, and church authority, hierarchy and tradition on the other. The influence of Jean-Jacque Rousseau on learning was to be profound. Key thinkers such as Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel and Johann Friedrich Herbart all highlighted the need to start from the needs and activity of the child rather than impose a pre-given structure of knowledge upon the developing mind. Pestalozzi was unsuccessful in founding an orphanage but went on to establish an inspirational boarding school at Yverdon which was feted by educators internationally and would help to ensure the dissemination of his ideas. The head, heart and body were to be utilised in drawing out human potential in both intellectual and physical senses, as part of afor pioneering science of human nature. Cultivating skills and recognising daily experience was to contribute to moral growth among all sections of society. Pestalozzi's ideas, in *Investigations in the Course of Nature in the Development of the Human Race* (1797) and *How Gertrude Teaches her Children* (1801), would be grafted onto a range of practices and meanings.[4]

Similarly, Froebel's 'kindergarten' was founded in the early nineteenth century and helped to generate new ideas about learning. He formulated play as a vital aspect of social development, alongside song, games and caring for animals and plants. His 'gifts' or playthings were to stimulate controlled and regulated learning in order that

children would come to appreciate the connections between the inner unity of the child and that of the universe, encompassing God, humanity and nature. Kindergartens, crèches and infant schools were to become part of the national landscape in many countries. In a further contribution, Herbart infused learning with an understanding of psychological processes and moral philosophy in works such as *Aesthetic Revelation of the World as the Chief Work of Education* (1806) and *General Pedagogy Deduced from the Purpose of Education* (1806). He offered an early version of educational evolution which was linked to the stages of individual growth.[5]

The revolutionary upheaval in France built upon the ideas of the 'radical enlightenment'.[6] In 1791, revolutionaries in France proclaimed the universal right to education, that would resonate across the western world and beyond. If everyone had a right to education, then everyone was in theory educable. Jean-Joseph Jactot, in *Enseignement universel*, argued that intelligence was evenly spread and that all were able to teach themselves. One fascinating instance arose from Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard who worked with the so-called 'wild boy of Averyron' who had been discovered naked in a forest in 1799. Against the claims that the boy was 'incurable', Itard proferred an environmental explanation of his apparent deficiencies which, he argued, resulted from a lack of human interaction and, borrowing from John Locke and Etienne Condillac, he asserted that understanding could be gained by training the senses. While the progress of the boy was partial, Itard nevertheless represented an early example of developmental ideas and a rejection that even 'difficult' children were uneducable.[7] These ideas would find traction later in the nineteenth century. Itard's student, Édouard Séguin, was to popularise sensory-training and devise a nonverbal intelligence test, that was later to influence Maria Montessori.

The early nineteenth century was a time of great conflict, in particular over the uses of literacy. Social and economic changes were fuelling a demand for learning and many people were eager to gain literacy but the terms on which this was to be achieved and the values that were to permeate learning were far from settled.[8] Learning implied control, power and the autonomy of individuals and groups so could not easily be easily contained. There was an unmistakable 'thirst for knowledge' as early radicals adopted the adage, commonly attributed to Francis Bacon, that 'knowledge is power'. E.P. Thompson opened his ground-breaking study of the working class with the recognition that the membership of the London Corresponding Society was to be 'unlimited', open to all, as one of the 'hinges upon which history turns.' Learning was becoming a necessary corollary of popular participation and demands for reform.[9] One of Thompson's preoccupations was the engraver, critic and poet, William Blake, whose work helped to embed a romantic notion of the child as innocent. His now celebrated poem 'London' highlighted the harmful role of the institutions of the Church, monarchy and army which resulted in 'Marks of weakness, marks of woe'

> How the Chimney-sweepers cry
>
> Every blackning Church appalls,
>
> And the hapless Soldiers sigh
>
> Runs in blood down Palace walls[10]

He also identified the 'mind forged manacles' which imprisoned people, adding complexity to learning that was not simply a matter of putting in or taking out but also required the active engagement of learners themselves. Breaking out of these

manacles could be a life-long process; self and collective expression had to be built over time.

Working class autobiographers built upon puritan traditions in which the individual had charted their life before God; now the working class writer examined his and her path to learning and progress through a range of social movements. While their early experiences of education might be sketchy, they were buoyed up by a family member or close relative and friend and often devoted long hours to study and learning. This tendency is explicitly illustrated in Thomas Cooper's autobiography where he outlines his ambitious programme of learning:

> I thought it possible that by the time I reached the age of twenty four I might be able to master the elements of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French; might get well through Euclid, and through a course of Algebra; might commit the entire 'Paradise Lost' and seven of the best plays of Shakespeare to memory; and might read a large and solid course of history, and religious evidences; and be well acquainted also with the current literature of the day.[11]

Cooper reflects key point about such 'autodidacts' who delved into eclectic knowledge that appeared important. This was to be done through private reading and study, memorisation of key texts but, crucially, discussions in a network of domestic, public and political forms. The learning of another 'autodidact', William Lovett, was articulated as part of social and political movements which embraced libraries, reading rooms, discussion groups and individual study. Lovett's sense of adventure and free exploration is encapsulated in his title, *Life and struggles of William Lovett: in his pursuit of bread, knowledge & freedom with some short account of the different associations he belonged to & of the opinions he entertained.*

His experience formed the basis for imagining a complete reform of learning. Spending a year in Warwick jail for sedition, Lovett and John Connor wrote *Chartism: A New Organisation of the People* which argued for educational change to accompany political reform. 'Schools for the people' were to include lectures, readings, dancing, music and entertainments as well as libraries.[12] The political reformer, Francis Place, recalled that his library 'was a sort of gossiping shop for such persons as were in any way engaged in public matters having the benefit of the people for their object', it was a 'common coffee house room'.[13] Jürgen Habermas has argued that the eighteenth century coffee house, as an engine of civil society and business represented a bourgeois public sphere; it would be complemented by a proletarian public sphere.[14]

A further aspect of early nineteenth century radicalism was the flowering of utopian thought and practice particularly in France with the Saint Simonians, communitarians in the US and also in Britain. Utopians aimed to prepare for and prefigure a future state of society that required educated participants.[15] For example, Robert Owen and the Owenites would be influenced by the work of the Swiss educator Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg who worked with poor children by building shared learning between pupils and teachers as well as by fostering mutual support and self-help. Owen established model infant schools and formed communities on the land where there were attempts to live out utopian ideas and more equal relationships but such communities found it difficult to sustain themselves in the long-run. A more enduring case influenced by Owenism was the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, started in 1844 as the first successful consumer co-operative society, that stimulated a movement which was as much educational as it was economic. Its Law First stated that it intended to 'arrange the powers of production, distribution, education and

government, or in other words, to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests ….' [16] Education was to form the basis for a new state of society in which members exercised power. Co-operators were practical people who responded to the emerging industrial system and related struggles over 'useful knowledge'. In 1826, fearful of revolutionary tendencies, Lord Brougham's Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge was to provide information to the people by publishing cheap tracts and pamphlets. However, the application of these ideas to the working classes was to be fiercely contested and many radicals argued for 'really useful knowledge' that would bring emancipation and put workers on a par with the middle and upper classes.[17]

Reactions to industrialism were varied. The 'monitorial' system, developed by Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster, helped to address the potentially expensive cost of education, and lack of teachers to meet demand, through educating large groups of children by using monitors who were taught in stages by a single teacher. The emphasis tended to be on drill and memory and monitors also kept order, organised examinations and carried out other administrative tasks. It was an economic model that could easily be adopted by other countries, for instance, it proved to be long-lived in South America. A comparison with the Lunar Society which, from the late eighteenth century, met in the British Midlands on the nights on or near the full moon, is instructive in shining light on divergent responses to industrialism. The monitorial system tended to systematisation, order and mimicked industrial processes. By contrast, the 'lunaticks' such as Erasmus Darwin, James Watt, Matthew Boulton and Richard Lovell Edgeworth came together at each other's houses to share and test out their heterogeneous ideas and learning in an informal

and free atmosphere, unhindered by hierarchy, that stimulated innovation and change in science, thought and industrial application.[18]

Domestic spaces provided an important arena of education well into the nineteenth century although gender and class were to refract experiences in distinct ways. Protestantism gave weight to Bible reading in the home and the long tradition of girls producing samplers frequently carried religious and moral messages. *Practical Education*, written by Maria Edgeworth and her father, argued for enriching the early experience of childhood based upon practical experimentation. In order to produce well-rounded individuals steeped in moral values, they weighed up the relative merits of school and home as sites of learning. While the home was a place where it was possible to devote 'hourly attention to each of their pupils,'[19] wealthy parents were also censured for neglecting the education of their children and leaving them to the servants which led to 'vice and falsehood'.[20]

Clearly proper education was being targeted at a higher social group. By contrast, William Cobbett eulogised the self-sufficient rural household and independent sprit which it nurtured; it provided a necessary corrective to the 'system', in dire need of political reform, which was in danger of producing mere 'word-mongers'.[21] Rather the purpose of education should be highly practical 'breeding up, bringing up, or rearing up; and nothing more.' Fearing the school master as a spy, he thought the school system would educate children into servility and an acceptance of poverty.[22] Initiatives such as the Ten Hours Movement, which aimed to restrict the hours of labour, relied on similar conservative assumptions about the family.

A different example of home education is provided by the celebrated case of John Stuart Mill whose *Autobiography* revealed the intensive education pursued by his

father James Mill who subjected his child to Greek at age three and Latin at eight as well as a programme including Greek and Roman classics, political economy, philosophy, science, metaphysics, maths and languages. His father, in his 'frequent talks about the books I read, he used … to give me explanations and ideas respecting civilization, government, morality, mental cultivation, which he required me afterwards to restate to him in my own words.'[23] Such domestic tutorials would sharpen Mill's academic abilities although he also suffered from a mental breakdown in his 20s.

Reaction and compromise

Others foreshadowed dire unintended consequences of learning. Older practices and ideas were not wiped out by the novel educational movements and thinking. Even in France, traditional ideas about divine right, rank and hierarchy were to be translated into the new language of learning. For instance, under Napoleon the education of the bourgeoisie and upper classes were prioritised, and nationhood and citizenship were differentiated according to class, gender and race. With the Restoration of the monarchy in 1814, education once again fell under the church. The remarkable longevity of Jesuit schools and teaching orders illustrates the ways that older practices were reinvented in changing times. They had been created during the Renaissance but continued to exert considerable influence having grafted humanism onto the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Their restoration coincided with the defeat of Napoleon after which their educational influence would expand across Europe, the Americas and Asia, particularly China, in a context where the nation state was exerting control over education. The Ratio Studiorum or Plan of Studies, produced in the sixteenth century, laid out ambitious programs of study which aimed

to venerate God, save souls and support the Society of Jesus. Following their restoration, this would be adapted to diverse local settings where languages, sciences and humanities were taught alongside a familiar mastery of classical studies as a basis for the development of character and to train pupils in reasoned argument.[24]

Despite the difficulty of implementing ideas of equality in France, the revolution nevertheless reverberated across Europe. One of the most notable, anxious and lengthy rejoinders was Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. For Burke, the Revolution was a destroyer of all that was valuable in life. He identified an educated elite who were necessary to defend civilization and learning. They were to provide guidance and instruction for the poor through the state, the church and education. The most quoted phrase of Burke's *Reflections* appears in a passage which lauds a tradition of learning in terms of a hierarchical social structure:

> Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles … the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion. The nobility and the clergy, the one by profession, the other by patronage, kept learning in existence, even in the midst of arms and confusions … Learning paid back what it received to nobility and to priesthood, and paid it with usury, by enlarging their ideas, and by furnishing their minds. Happy if they had all continued to know their indissoluble union, and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been satisfied to continue the instructor, and not aspired to be the master! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.[25]

In Britain, the MP, Davies Giddy, opposed the Parochial Schools Bill of 1807 in terms which reflected the fear that hierarchy would be challenged as the multitude embraced learning. Giving education to the labouring classes would

> be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture, and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them; instead of teaching them subordination, it would render them factious and refractory … it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors and, in a few years, the result would be, that the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power towards them, and to furnish the executive magistrates with much more vigorous laws than were now in force … he never could admit it to be just or reasonable that the labour of the industrious man should be taxed to support the idle vagrant.[26]

These impulses were also built into learning that targeted the poor. Ragged schools, industrial schools, and foundling hospitals which had spread across Europe, could feel like the new workhouses, draconian forms of welfare created after the Poor Law Act of 1834, in which control was a primary concern as was the placing of the poor in appropriate employment. A mean and narrow fact-based learning would be parodied in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* and was echoed in Mr Buckle's prize in East London which was awarded to the 'headmaster who could produce the best results at the lowest cost' alongside the chilling award to the superintendent who managed to achieve the lowest death rate on his patch.[27]

In Russia, repeated half-hearted reforms proved no match for the stern forces of reaction. As in France and Britain, educational opportunities for peasants gave rise to corresponding fears of rebellion and the need to reassert hierarchy and tradition, a pattern that was to be repeated in the nineteenth century. Alexander I introduced statutes in 1803 and 1804 for scientific and secular education. Some state schools were introduced and peasants were to be taught reading, writing, arithmetic and agriculture in parochial schools alongside provincial schools that prepared wealthier pupils for white collar jobs. In 1825, Tsar Nicholas I realised that the educational tide could not be completely turned back but sought to ensure that students might be funnelled in such a way as to retain social divisions when he decreed that parochial schools were for peasants, district schools for merchants, ginmazii for gentry and civil servants.

> It is necessary that in every school the subjects of instruction and the very methods of teaching should be in accordance with the future destination of pupils, that nobody should aim to rise above that position in which it is his lot to remain.[28]

Widespread illiteracy remained as educational reform only scratched the surface. But out of unpropitious circumstances, suggestive experiments could blossom, albeit short-lived ones. The acclaimed writer Leo Tolstoy set up a peasant school on his Russian estate, Yasnaya Polyana. He was deeply moved and impressed by the storytelling capacities of the children which showed the value in pupil writing and its relevance for literary culture.[29] Locating knowledge and understanding within the peasantry carried revolutionary potential that would feed into discussion among the intelligentsia, some of whom were countenancing fundamental change in a semi-feudal system that was collapsing by the early twentieth century.[30] Tolstoy's

paradigm of mutual learning between teacher and taught would impact upon educators in the twentieth century.

The struggles and compromises between revolution and reaction were also very apparent in the transition of Spanish and Portuguese colonies to independence which represented a problematic journey involving a variety of educational experiences for the diverse populations of the continent. The bulk of South American countries gained independence in the 1810s and 1820s and learning was directly integrated into these struggles. Leaders would establish and lend their names to educational institutions as a continuation of independence struggles. The military liberator, José de San Martín, inaugurated the National Library and the Normal Lancasteriana, a teacher-training school, in Lima; Simón Bolívar created many schools; and Bernardino Rivadavia, the first president of Argentina, also stimulated the growth of learning through the establishment of the University of Buenos Aires; in Mexico, Benito Juárez would champion educational reform. The University of Mexico, because of its links with colonialism, was suppressed for a time but others in Latin America were formed on the wave of independence including the University of Buenos Aires in 1821. Battles over the curriculum of learning would ensue, especially between the still powerful Catholic Church and the newly empowered liberals who favoured secular, state supported education. While in Colombia religious education became the norm, elsewhere secular education prevailed. Ties to the Catholic Church would be retained or renewed in some instances such as the Catholic University in Chile in 1888 and the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru in 1917.

The spread of positivism in Latin America stimulated scientific and educational change, embracing science and pedagogy. Juan Bautista Alberdi, the Argentine

political theorist and diplomat, gained a scholarship to the College of Moral Sciences but subsequently reflected that 'my classmates and I were so ignorant in natural and physical sciences'. This had mixed blessings and revealed a shift from independence fighter to practical politician concerned to stimulate industrial development via polytechnical education. He argued that by encouraging moral sciences, Rivadavia, believed 'he was encouraging his country to be free. Tyrants are afraid of moral sciences … neglecting the natural sciences revealed his ignorance of the real needs of our countries, which cannot ignore technology and must prepare themselves by learning practical subjects, with utilitarian application'.[31]

Yet, limited public funds made the expansion of schooling problematic. It was in this context that the Lancaster model became popular, particularly in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Mexico. Gradually teachers' colleges would be created and pedagogical ideas from Pestalozzi, Froebel and Herbart would be introduced but the lack of teachers, effective administrative arrangements, and inequalities between classes, Spanish speaking and indigenous non-Spanish speaking groups and urban-rural areas all acted as a break upon learning. A missionary near Buenos Aires, Father Álvarez, wrote in the 1880s, in patronising terms that 'the little Indians progress perfectly but … lack books, paper … I am going to Buenos Aires just to beg for books…'[32]

These obstacles could not be overcome immediately, especially in an economic and social system that was not conducive to building an educational system. The Ottoman Empire divided learners according to religious and ethnic divides. Mahmud II, Sultan from 1808-1839, created the rüşdiye schools, which taught mainly Muslim boys in Turkish, reading, writing, arithmetic as well as geography and history. However, an educational system remained only a vision until the dismantling of the

Empire after World War 1 when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk would embark on a program of educational reform.[33]

Schooling, national identity, evolution

Increasingly, the need to educate more people to a higher standard was accepted. From the mid nineteenth century, the school incrementally became a dominant means of organising learning through the creation of systems of universal, mass compulsory schooling across most western nations. In turn, this had the effect of marginalising other practices and places of learning.[34] A powerful grammar of schooling would prove to be deeply persistent, including classrooms, blackboards and subject divisions that became a central educational experience. Subsequent reform would work within this basic structure.[35] The coming of compulsory education was overdetermined by multiple factors, including the influence of industrialism, urbanisation, secularisation, technology and nationalism. There were contested arguments on childhood and child labour, the economy, health, politics and international competition.[36]

The expansion of the state in the nineteenth century was a major shift predicated upon cultural change. The school contributed to a cultural revolution that slowly changed the habits of whole populations in making them pliable to rational thought and action and fitting them for varied employments. Gradually religious impulses would be partly replaced and partly overlaid with secular ideas of progress, a process which also squeezed out many facets of eighteenth century popular culture.[37] In many countries the school became coterminous with the spread of literacy, especially in southern Europe but in countries such as the USA, France and Britain, universal compulsory schooling had to contend with existing literacy

practices. Schooling was also closely tied into the building of national identity and citizenship.[38]

In fact, state education had roots in the absolutist state formations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which required an educated but compliant populace who would help to ensure the continuance of authority as well as its systematic and rational control over nature. For example, Frederick II introduced compulsory schooling in Prussia in 1763. State control over education was exerted in many ways, including entrance to the civil service. With the expansion of government, these posts were opened up to a larger number of people with the requisite skills and training. Degrees would be introduced for entry to key professions such as medicine, law and teaching.

In the USA, despite the wariness of the state and Federal government, the common school developed early in the century. The extension of democracy, the 'manifest destiny' of westward expansion and industrial growth challenged privilege and elitism. Fears about the potentially deleterious influence of waves of immigrants were to be countered by the Americanising role of the school, symbolised by the national flag in the classroom. Each of these forces facilitated ideas about the common school which received a boost in 1837 when Massachusetts established a state board of education that was to be led by Horace Mann who championed the extension of schooling as did Henry Bernard in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Mann argued that 'Two divine ideas filled their [Pilgrim Fathers] great hearts—their duty to God and society. For the one they built the church, for the other they opened the school'. Schools were to represent a continuation of puritan traditions and, although church and state were kept separate, they would help people to read the Bible and achieve social mobility in a dynamic society.[39]

However, a great variety of educational experiences can be identified in the US where race and ethnic divisions were prominent. The contrast between the common school in New England and the lacklustre provision in many Southern States was stark. In the ante-bellum south, slaves were obviously denied an education but maintained cultural, religious and educational traditions from 'sundown to sunup' which fed into the creation of African American schools and colleges in the post-Civil War period, institutions that would provide vital sustenance to communities that suffered exclusion and segregation for most of the twentieth century.[40] For Native Americans the so-called policy of 'assimilation' which denied cultural traditions led to both symbolic and physical violence against tribal groups which did manage to assert some control over their learning.[41]

Thus, at the same time that schooling was developing as a common experience, the diversity of schools reflected social divisions. The application of ideas of citizenship, culture and character to the working class, peasantry, women and disabled remained problematic. Generally elementary education was a completely separate track to secondary education, whether that be at the private schools, lycées, grammar schools or gymnasium which often enjoyed better resources and a different curriculum. However, once elementary education had become a part of an accepted framework, it gave rise to tendencies towards more advanced learning, for instance, the French *écoles primaires supérieures,* the higher-grade schools in England, or the US common schools which ultimately paved the way for the high school. In Britain, a few 'bright' children were able to win scholarships. A related perennial debate concerned whether schools were experienced as controlling or liberating places – willingly or unwillingly to school? Public support for education has been outlined by various scholars but so has the reluctance of many as well as the harsh

punishments. Equally, for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the experience of schooling could be fleeting, and later adult reflections and autobiographies did not always dwell upon schooling.[42]

The complementary forces of war and nationalism also led to the enforcement of learning in state schools. Education provides some supporting evidence for Eric Hobsbawm's argument that the nation was a product of state action. Schools acted as a conduit for Benedict Anderson's print culture of nationalism.[43] In Germany, the rector of Berlin University, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, feeling the effects of defeat by Napoleon, in his Addresses to the German Nation (1807-08), emphasised the potential for the nation to be rebuilt though a system of schools that was to educate all children in intellectual ideas and manual training. After the Franco-Prussian War, the Third Republic in France supported compulsory, free and secular education.[44] In Britain, national identity became entwined with citizenship through Empire Day which commenced in 1902, although the empire could appear as a diffuse and intangible entity.[45]

With the unification of Italy, Massimo D'Azeglio is popularly associated with the phrase that 'we have made Italy, now we must make Italians'. The 1859 Casati Law introduced elementary schooling. Texts such as Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* and Edmondo de Amicis's *Cuore* emphasised the interconnections between loyalty, schooling and the nation. Written as the school diary of 11-year old Enrico Bottini, *Cuore* features the arrival of a boy from Calabria in the south. The text explains that it was 'a glorious land which gave Italy illustrious men (sic), and which gives her strong workers and brave soldiers, in one of the most beautiful parts of our country … inhabited by people of ability and courage. Cherish him … Make him see that an Italian boy, no matter which Italian school he sets foot in, finds brothers there'.[46] As a

nationalist text influenced by socialism, it gained traction in twentieth century fascist Italy, communist Eastern Europe as well as Latin America.

Nationalist impulses did not efface social divisions. Most German schools adhered to Prussia's lead which stressed devoutness, obedience and efficiency on class lines. While the volksschule became universal and compulsory, there were to be multiple types of school. The prestigious nine-year gymnasium with Latin, Greek, and modern languages became the route to universities and the civil service. The realgymnasium offered Latin, modern languages, natural science and maths, and the realschule or oberralschule emphasised natural sciences and maths.[47] In the 1870s, the composer, Richard Strauss, attended the Ludwigsgymnasium in Munich which still felt the impact of Alexander von Humboldt's school reforms early in the century that had promoted literature, art, philosophy and classical languages as a way to cultivate the individual. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Friedrich Schiller had advocated a new humanism around the turn of the nineteenth century in order to create a middle ground between science and theology. It was to have a profound influence upon Strauss who came to see himself as part of a cultural elite, a Goethean figure, tasked with maintaining a tradition of learning and European culture stretching back to the Greeks and Romans. He recalled that the gymnasium was 'the benevolent guardian of European culture'. Strauss blended academic study with his prodigious musical talents. It inculcated a notion of bildung, so that intellectual improvement remained central to the rest of his life. Following two world wars, at the end of his life, Strauss would lament the subsequent turn to maths, science and vocational education. Indeed, from 1890, Wilhelm II had opposed what he saw as a harmful hierarchy of schools and argued that, 'It is our duty to educate young men to become young Germans and not young Greeks or

Romans'. From 1900, greater equality between schools was introduced.[48] The learning needs of a larger segment of the population was tied into military and national histories to justify the unification of Germany under Bismarck.

Traditions of learning were not to be replaced completely and modernity was birthed with instruments and ideas from an older world. As in Latin America, religion was to be complemented by a belief in science and progress and the salvation of the soul was to be accompanied by the secular education of the individual. Religious influences on learners often continued to be felt with the onset of state authority. Even in Prussia, where the cultural struggle or kulturkampf over the role of religion in schools led to the assertion of the right of the state rather than the Catholic Church to supervise schools, they remained denominational and teachers were appointed according to religious faith. The coming of state education could ironically lead to an intensification of battles over religious control of education with various denominations vying for pre-eminence within the state. For instance, in Australia a dual system of national and denominational schools was instituted in the 1840s. The British North America Act of 1867, while conferring educational authority on Canadian provinces, guaranteed denominational rights if they already had legal recognition. These measures created diverse educational systems and meant that religion at least remained part of the assumed backdrop for many learners.

From the late nineteenth century, impulses and movements for change coalesced within educational systems. The school became embedded in national cultures and teachers were gradually professionalising. Systematic learning theory responded to social changes in technology, urbanisation, industry, organised labour and demography. There was a greater focus on a more defined sense of childhood, exemplified by the Swedish reformer Ellen Key's, *Century of the Child* and G Stanley

Hall's popularisation of 'adolescence'. Learning came to be viewed as a natural process of individual and social growth related to personal expression and citizenship within an expanding notion of welfare. Pestalozzi and Froebel were taken more seriously. In terms of the curriculum, learners were presented with a wider range of content in elementary education, broadening out from literacy, maths, moral character and discipline to citizenship, individual development and additional subjects.

Greater emphasis was placed upon the learner's experience and understanding. The language of psychology and psychoanalysis would be adopted into everyday language with great rapidity and came to inform twentieth century education as a whole. Psychology had an accumulative impact upon the classroom and teacher training. In the USA, William James established a psychophysiological laboratory at Harvard in 1891 and wrote *Principles of Psychology* proposing behaviourist ideas and viewing education as a means to organise children and fit them for their future social and physical environment. His student Edward L. Thorndike went on to publish *Educational Psychology* in 1903. John Dewey would play a key role in shifting educational assumptions about human development. The University of Chicago Laboratory School, founded in 1896, and directed by Dewey complemented a plethora of other experimental schools. Dewey saw schools as societies where life happens, not just as a preparation for life; as such, they should be organised more democratically. Other examples included the Play School and Walden School in New York; William Wirt's 1908 Gary Plan in Indiana which embraced work, study and play. In 1919, the Progressive Education Association was formed and Helen Parkhurst's Dalton Plan was launched in 1920 at Dalton Massachusetts.

Child centred learning also featured in Europe. Herbart's psychological ideas were applied more systematically. Wilhelm Wundt, who wrote *Principles of Physiological Psychology* in 1874, established a psychological laboratory at the University of Leipzig in 1879 to examine consciousness and experience. Ovide Decroly's École de l'Ermitage (the Hermitage School), set up in Brussels in 1907, aimed to transform the classroom into a workshop where pupils would extend their individual interests through a framework addressing food, shelter, defence and work. Maria Montessori's Casa dei Bambini (Children's House) highlighted experiential and tactile learning by deploying a range of didactic materials to train the senses of the child through stages of mental growth. In Poland, the children's author and director of the Dom Sierot orphanage, Janus Korczak, produced influential ideas on pedagogy, working with 'difficult' children and encouraging pupil participation. In Britain, Henry Caldwell Cook's *The Play Way* laid stress on the importance of play, experience and the wholeness of the child. Open air schools, which spread from Germany across Europe and beyond, attempted to re-introduce a sense of nature into learning, working outdoors to improve the health of children. The headmistress of Birley House open air school in Britain observed that the results of the school were 'marvellous' in transforming 'neglected and ill-nourished children, who had improved by leaps and bounds, while those suffering from organic weakness made slower but steady progress'.[49]

Progressive education also related to a process of systematisation and socialisation, involving measurement, study and control of children and learners. The progressive concern with the young child, linked learning to health and social efficiency, was to have far-reaching effects. Care and control overlapped in contexts of learning.[50] Progressive educators were attracted not only by democracy and creative

pedagogies but also by scientific study and intelligence testing.[51] Herbert Spencer had argued in favour of evolutionary thought which suffused much educational thinking at the time, from eugenicist views to recapitulation theories, which argued that children grew through the 'stages of mankind', from 'savagery to civilisation', which could be found even in anti-militarist youth organisations such as the Woodcraft Folk.[52] Ironically, Russian anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin challenged evolutionary thought derived from Charles Darwin and Thomas Malthus in arguing the case for the kind of co-operative organisation that would be championed by the Folk.[53]

New pedagogical ideas had a symbiotic relationship with universities where many theories of learning were refined. Higher education was indeed an important aspect of embryonic education systems. German universities exerted an international influence on learning. Under the guidance of Humboldt, the University of Berlin was founded in 1809 and was to become associated with the notion of academic freedom and the education of the individual along classical lines. It dedicated itself to scientific knowledge, a complementary mix of research and teaching and a range of academic activities. By the end of the nineteenth century there had been a widespread adoption of 'Lernfreiheit', the freedom of the student to choose their programme, and 'Lehrfreiheit', the freedom of the professor to research a topic. This had the effect of advancing the division of knowledge into various disciplines, which were supported by the organisational politics of higher education and ultimately impacted upon programmes of learning, especially in the USA, for instance, with the foundation of Johns Hopkins University in 1867. These functions only emerged gradually. Until the end of the century, research was generally done outside universities. In Britain the Royal Society and other institutions that encouraged research. It was the function of

a university, J. H. Newman stressed, to prepare young men for leadership, 'to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility'.[54]

Throughout the century, higher education was extending to the middle classes and offering training in commercial skills. In 1877, the University of Tokyo was founded with departments in law, physical sciences, literature and medicine, with teaching in English and German. In Britain new universities formed away from Oxbridge, partly to replace the dissenting academies, and centres of higher learning flourished in London, Durham, Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham, Liverpool and elsewhere. Very gradually women were allowed into universities although progress was sporadic. In the USA, girls' and women's education was influenced by the utopian socialist wave of enthusiasm and included the co-educational Oberlin College in 1833, and Antioch College in the 1850s with Horace Mann serving as the first president.

As universities engaged with constituencies beyond the upper classes and on a range of social issues, the curriculum would begin to move away from the classics towards science, modern languages, literature and economics. Adult education, people's universities and university settlements all provided opportunities where university academics connected with working class people and the poor in order to build 'fellowship', but the process also generated self-reflections on how universities could construct curricula more suited to the modern world.[55] Tutors such as R. H. Tawney learnt from working class people in tutorial classes as much as he did from soldiers in the First World War trenches. Universities were being integrated into social movements – Korczak would study at the Polish 'Flying University' which developed a nationalist agenda hidden from Russian eyes.

Western learning from the outside

Rapidly multiplying ideas and practices of learning within education systems were also being extended beyond Europe and the west. 'Modernisation' and 'westernisation' were complex processes in post-1868 Meiji Japan. Prior to this, schools were organised hierarchically with the ruling samurai studying literature and Confucianism at *hankō* or domain schools and others attending *terakoya* or temple schools where they learned reading, writing, and arithmetic from both monks and lay teachers. They were complemented with a network of private schools. The Meiji Restoration did lead to important educational reforms based upon western ideas, notably the 1872 Gakusei or Education System Order that was initiated to create a national education system. However, western ideas encountered a conservative reaction and could not be implemented overnight in a non-western context. In 1890, Motoda Nagazane drafted the Imperial Rescript on Education which re-emphasised Confucian and Shintō values, moral education, national identity and imperial authority. Traditional forms of Chinese learning, kangaku, perhaps comparable to a western classical education, would retain considerable hold and influence in Japan until the 1890s when it was replaced by history, literature and philosophy that would, in fact, adopt many features of the older practice. In addition, the inability of the state to devote adequate resources to education meant that many small private schools cropped up offering traditional learning. Miwada Masako opened a school in Matsuyama in 1880 which aimed to study texts (dokusho gakuka) over three years including important works of the Chinese classical canon and histories of Japan written in Sino-Japanese. The teaching involved traditional methods of lecture, group readings and group discussions and exams were held each month. Over time,

temple schools were converted into primary schools and domain schools into secondary schools and universities.[56]

In China the Manchu dynasty came under pressure, especially after the humiliation of the Opium Wars and defeat by the Japanese in 1894-5. In 1898, the Hundred Days of Reform proposed to reorganise the military, broaden civil service exams and introduce modern schools but it generated considerable opposition and contributed to the 1900 Boxer Rebellion. Despite the limited structural changes, learning was developing as part of a 'New Culture Movement' which introduced many western ideas, including Marxism, and the spread of vernacular language. Mao Zedong himself read extensively, much in the style of an autodidact, within the walls of the Hunan Provincial Library where he studied books by Adam Smith, Charles Darwin, J. S. Mill, Rousseau, Herbert Spencer and Montesquieu: 'During this period of self-education I read many books, studied world geography and world history. There for the first time I saw, and studied with great interest, a map of the world … I mixed poetry and romances, and tales of ancient Greece, with serious study of history and geography of Russia, Armenia, England, France and other countries.' Geography in particular created a tangible sense of national identity as it enabled students to see the country whole. As a library worker at Peking University, Mao would be treated with contempt and indifference by arrogant professors and this helped him to reflect upon the need for cultural change to end feudalism, that education and learning should not be the sole preserve of elites.[57]

In colonialised countries, the relationship to western learning took on a different set of meanings. The two-way transfer of resources, people, inequalities and ideas was to have a profound impact upon both the metropole and the colony.[58] Colonial issues did occasionally flare up in public debates, as in Britain in the wake of the uprising in

Morant Bay, Jamaica, and in the lead up to the 1867 Reform Act, when tensions were exposed which directly affected the way that education and learning were apprehended.[59] Commonly, the colonial story was integrated into a Whig version of improvement, as in Thomas Babington Macauley's argument in 1848 that the 'history of our country during the last hundred and sixty years is eminently the history of physical, of moral, and of intellectual improvement':

> in America, the British colonies rapidly became far mightier and wealthier than the realms which Cortes and Pizarro had added to the dominions of Charles the Fifth … in Asia, British adventurers founded an empire not less splendid and more durable than that of Alexander.[60]

These assumptions were to come under considerable scrutiny and challenge, not least from the diverse range of colonised peoples. It is possible to discern a number of overall themes which pervade colonial education: the tensions between traditional learning, religion and western models; debates over the language of instruction; the desire to educate a cadre of local people necessary for colonial leadership and administration but not to create an idle educated class who might turn against colonial authority; the considerable conflict between and within key groups – missionaries, the state and various local religious and ethnic groups and independence movements; the partial nature of learning opportunities that tended to be half-hearted imitations of the country of origin; and the exportation of hierarchies based on class and gender which became intertwined with racial hierarchies. Crucially, colonial nations confronted a dilemma, that the nationalism that suffused the expansion of organised learning at home, posed a danger of generating independence abroad.

From the advent of the East India Company, India would play a central role in British culture and was a place where debates on learning took on great significance. Although the Company was initially a trading concern, it moved into government and administration. Educational grants were made from 1813 and, in 1823, a General Committee on Public Instruction was formed in Calcutta (Kolkata).[61] Many of the members were Orientalists who supported teaching Sanskrit and Arabic and translating English works. Missionaries also supported some vernacular education but were disturbed about aspects of Indian culture which they considered unchristian. Reformers considered Oriental learning to be condescending and unhelpful to reform and progress. Macauley's famous Minute on Education in 1835 stipulated that instruction should be in English, which marked the shift towards prioritising Western knowledge. Some Indians supported the move. The reformer Ram Mohun Roy argued for English education and founded the Hindu College in Calcutta which helped to stimulate the setting up of schools and the expansion of Western learning in Bengal. However, surveys carried out by Baron Curzon of Kedleston after 1898 revealed the parlous state of education and lack of schools. The colonial power had neither resources nor commitment to education so much was left to private provision where rote learning, memorisation and passing examinations became standard.

There was a growing opposition to British control and some resentment of the priority accorded to western learning as opposed to Indian languages. This movement would also receive support from the founding of the universities of Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras in 1857, the same year as the Indian rebellion. They would become engines of nationalist thought that energised the swadeshi movement which boycotted foreign goods. The promise of white-collar jobs in colonial

administration had created unrealistic expectations, among a 'babu' class, that could not be fulfilled. Following a government crackdown and a boycott of the University of Calcutta, accused of producing 'slaves', the National Council of Education organised literary, scientific and technical education. The movement was to influence Rabindranath Tagore who founded a school in West Bengal 1901 which started with open air education and eventually transformed into a university. In 1921, the Indian constitution transferred education to Indian control. It did not quell the urge for independence and Mahatma Gandhi would launch the non-cooperation movement which intensified protest and built further national schools and 'national universities' where some Hindi and mother tongue teaching took place.[62]

In Africa, great diversity of learning existed according to historical and religious context. This included Christian influenced education in Ethiopia; Qur'anic schools in East Africa; and English and Afrikaans schools for settler communities in South Africa.[63] But for the bulk of sub-Saharan Africa, traditional education prepared children for the roles they were to play in their homes and villages as well as tribal duties. It involved what we might call socialisation, vocational learning and initiation into religious customs. By the end of puberty young people would have been taught the myths, stories and religious beliefs of their tribes as well as fishing, hunting or farming in addition to community responsibilities, and was often differentiated according to gender. It might vary from basic instruction to more complex educational systems. The dispersed Poro society of West Africa maintained a quasi-community government, fortified by religious belief. Its primary responsibility was to train mainly men for participation in community life for which families would pay a fee. A few women were also accepted into membership or formed their own society. Full initiation might last several years and involve remaining in the bush for weeks

where not just practical skills of hunting and crafts but secrets and passwords that were imbided, symbolised by rites of passage and the paying of homage to ancestral spirits.[64]

Missionaries in Africa came with the aim of converting the population to Christianity and, by 1900, there were an estimated 100,000 European missionaries on the continent. The array of missions in Uganda, Kenya and the Gold Coast (Ghana) included those of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Wesleyan Methodists, Roman Catholics, White Fathers, the Church Missionary Society, the Universities Mission to Central Africa, and the London Missionary Society. Initially, the Christian faith would confirm rather than dispel traditional modes of life although the long-term impact would work in that direction.[65] To win converts they studied African languages, translated texts and give Christian lessons in indigenous languages. Attempts to convert people could backfire and meet with resistance as when the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast took a strong stand against 'pagan' participation in rites of passage.[66] Assumptions about class, gender and race inequalities were also carried across to the new setting. For example, missionaries in Sierra Leone imposed a gendered curriculum with the creation of an Anglophile elite and other girls were socialised into a Christian vision of obedience, fidelity, modesty and piousness. A disproportionate amount of time was devoted to needlework in comparison to boys who were able to concentrate on arithmetic, reading and writing. At the Female Captured Negroes School in Freetown in 1816, girls spent two hours 45 minutes a day sewing and one hour 45 minutes reading and writing.[67]

Indeed, educational provision was frequently limited and policy ideas half baked, governments being content to leave the field to missions and private schools. It would not be until the 1920s when indifferent attitudes to education changed with the

circulation of the League of Nations' concept of trusteeship. In 1922, the Phelps-Stokes Commission was to note the passing of the tribal system although many traditions would persist. Indeed, the British remained attracted to the idea of 'adaptation' to the specific cultural needs of Africa, which was often resisted by Africans who demanded British education.[68]

In the very different setting of South East Asia, colonial expansion led to debates over the role of western education. Prior to conquest, education in Southeast Asia had been based around family, community and religious traditions including Confucianism, Islam, Buddhism, Daoism and Hinduism. Learning centred upon the transmission of cultural values and memorisation which acted as a buttress to religious and cultural hierarchies. Western colonisation introduced technologies of schooling including a secular curriculum, age grading, examinations and qualifications which might provide the opportunity of employment in colonial administrations. However, the impact of western schooling would again be inchoate. In Myanmar, traditional Buddhist schools were complemented with western schools after the British occupation of 1886 which also led to some recognition of women's education and the development of higher education that resulted in the University of Rangoon in 1920.[69] Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos became integrated into the French Indochina Union where some primary education along French lines was provided. Even in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), where the Dutch government committed itself to the provision of schooling, actual outcomes were curtailed. Rather, schools tended to cater to the children of colonial classes.

In Thailand, which was not colonised, western influences were still felt. Traditional education drew upon Buddhism, support for the king and loyalty to the family. From

1897 the King Chulalongkorn set up a department for education with mainly English advisers who initially addressed themselves to the learning needs of a leadership class. Temple schools were established, a medical school, a law school and a royal pages' school for sons of nobility which became the Civil Service College in 1910.[70]

Conclusion

The history of learning in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveals important oscillations between modernity and religion, equality and hierarchy, social change and social reproduction. Places of learning came to proliferate with the school and university becoming dominant institutions that helped to embed social practices which remain familiar today. New ideas of the learner emerged based upon educability, personal exploration and social engagement. But the basic equality implied by learning was not to be achieved as institutionalisation entrenched social divisions. Long-established forms of learning, ranging from traditions of scholarship to cultural practices imbued with religious meaning, did not disappear and have recently been rediscovered as a means of coming to terms with changes in current times. This was not immediately apparent in the early twentieth century when ideas of progress and modernity still held sway. By 1920, there was considerable hope that education was to be extended considerably. Proponents of New Education believed that their ideas and plans, although blunted by the First World War, augured well for the future. Sites of learning multiplied as a result of changes in technology and the means of communication. Colonised countries experienced the strengthening of independence movements in which learning featured prominently. In Russia, wide-ranging educational reform would generate equal measures of hope and fear as the Bolsheviks attempted to counteract historically low levels of education. Learning was

to remain a site of struggle that nonetheless would be augmented throughout the

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