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Author(s): David Hogan

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The Market Revolution and Disciplinary Power: Joseph Lancaster and the Psychology of the Early Classroom System

David Hogan

Esteem and disgrace are of all the others, the most powerful incentives to the mind, when once it is brought to relish them. If you can once get into children a love of credit, and an apprehension of shame and disgrace, you have put into them the true principle, which will constantly work, and incline them to the right. But it will be asked, How shall this be done? John Locke¹

The great secret of education is to direct vanity to [its] proper objects. Adam Smith²

Recent reports on the state of American education underline again and again the importance of competitive individualism in contemporary classrooms and the extraordinary uniformity of classroom organization and pedagogy across the country. John Goodlad, for example, reports that despite “the rhetoric of individual flexibility, originality and creativity,” American pedagogy invariably emphasizes simultaneous instruction (“frontal teaching”) in teacher-dominated classrooms, competition, individual performance and achievement, “listening, reading textbooks, completing workbooks and worksheets, and taking quizzes,” “seeking right answers, conforming, and reproducing the known.”³ This paper

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¹ Peter Gay, ed., *John Locke on Education* (New York, 1964), 36.

² Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. A. L. Macfie and D. D. Raphael (Indianapolis, 1976), 259.

³ John Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York, 1984), 241, 105–6, 123–25, 213. See also TheodoreSizer, *Horace's Compromise* (New York, 1984), pt. 1, chs. 4, 5 and pt. 11, ch. 1; Arthur Powell, Elizabeth Farrar, and David Cohen, *The Shopping Mall High School* (Boston, 1985), ch. 1, 2; Gerald Grant, *The World We Created at Hamilton High* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), intro., chs. 1, 4; Robert Connell, et al., *Making the Difference* (Sydney, 1983); Philip Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (New York, 1968), ch. 1; Jules Henry, *Culture against Man* (New York, 1965), 296; Sarah L. Lightfoot, *The Good High School* (New York, 1983), ch. 3; Talcott Parsons, “The School Class as a Social System: Some of

will argue that the social relations, organization, and psychology of the contemporary classroom system are interdependent and that they entered English and American education with the penetration of the classroom by the market and “disciplinary” revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In particular, the educational practices of the English charity school reformer Joseph Lancaster (1778–1838) provided an especially important point of entry of the market and “disciplinary” revolutions into modern pedagogy.⁴ Historians have long recognized Lancaster’s importance as a pioneer of a nonsectarian, publicly funded, and bureaucratically organized system of mass education.⁵ This paper does not so much dispute

Its Functions in American Society,” *Harvard Educational Review* 29 (Fall 1959): 297–318; Robert Dreeben, *On What Is Learned in School* (Reading, Mass., 1968); Kingsly Davis and Wilbert Moore, “Some Principles of Stratification,” *American Sociological Review* 10 (Apr. 1945): 242–49.

⁴ My argument is not that Lancaster’s pedagogy was the only point of entry of the market and disciplinary revolutions into educational practice, rather that it was an especially important one. The notion of a disciplinary revolution is derived from Michel Foucault’s writings on “disciplinary power,” although “disciplinary revolution” is not a term Foucault himself used. For Foucault’s notion of “disciplinary power,” see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1977), pt. 3; idem, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York, 1978); idem, *Power/Knowledge*, ed. C. Gordon (New York, 1980); idem, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2: *The Use of Pleasure* (New York, 1986); idem, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3: *The Care of the Self* (New York, 1986); idem, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. D. Bouchard (Ithaca, 1977); P. Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York, 1985).

⁵ For instance, one prominent historian, Carl Kaestle, concludes that Lancaster is “a central figure in the period 1800–1830, a crucial transition period for education in both England and America.” Above all, “Lancaster popularized the idea of a uniform system of instruction, and in America, the broader concept of organized systems of schools . . . under central direction.” Indeed, Kaestle claims that the “efficiency ethic in education found its early expression in the monitorial movement” and that “the seeds of school bureaucracy were borne on the wings of Lancaster’s instructional scheme.” Finally, Kaestle concludes that Lancaster’s “nonsectarian religious and moral training . . . cleared the way for uniform, tax-supported schools.” Carl F. Kaestle, ed., *Joseph Lancaster and the Monitorial School Movement: A Documentary History* (New York, 1973), 46, 47. For similar views, see M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (London, 1964), 336; Harold Silver, *The Concept of Popular Education* (London, 1965), 43; Joseph McCadden, *Education in Pennsylvania, 1801–1835, and Its Debt to Roberts Vaux* (Philadelphia, 1937), 44; and Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States* (Boston, 1919), 94. In the past decade or so, a number of historians have mounted two kinds of revisionist challenges to the conventional wisdom about Lancaster—one identifying Lancaster’s connection to the triumph of capitalism, the other linking Lancaster to the disciplinary revolution. On the one hand, David Hamilton suggests that the “moral economy” of the Lancasterian classroom is very similar to the moral economy recommended by Adam Smith and that Lancaster’s innovations in school organization were to the creation of the classroom system what the emergence of factory production was to the creation of modern manufacturing. On the other hand, Keith Hoskins and Ian Macvie link Lancaster to the disciplinary revolution, although not to the market revolution. Karen Jones and Kevin Williamson link Lancaster to the disciplinary revolution and to nineteenth-

these claims as suggest that they do not reflect Lancaster's role in promoting the *embourgeoisement* of the modern classroom by organizing educational practice around market processes, meritocratic principles, and the technologies of what the late Michel Foucault called "disciplinary power." If John Locke was the first "bourgeois" pedagogical theorist, we might easily consider Joseph Lancaster the first bourgeois schoolmaster.⁶

Lancaster's role, however, is full of paradox for he did not regard himself as an agent of disciplinary power, an apostle of a secular market society, or a proselytizer of bourgeois education. In fact, Lancaster pursued essentially utilitarian and moralistic purposes—promoting "useful learning" and a nonsectarian Christian morality among the children of the laboring poor.⁷ He established his own school, he claimed, not "to promote the Religious Principles of any particular Sect," but "to instruct Youth in useful Learning, in the leading and uncontroverted principles of Christianity, and to train them in the practice of moral habits, conducive to their future welfare, as virtuous men and useful members of society."⁸ He also had no intention of disturbing traditional social hierarchies. As he once put it, the children of the poor could be taught to be "more useful and intelligent, without elevating them above the situations in life for which they may be designed."⁹ In promoting social usefulness and morality among the laboring poor, Lancaster was no different from eighteenth-century charity school promoters or the many

century class politics, but not to the market revolution. David Hamilton, "Adam Smith and the Moral Economy of the Classroom System," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 12 (1980):281–98; Keith Hoskin and Robert Macvie, "Accounting and Examination: A Genealogy of Disciplinary Power," *Accounting, Organizations, and Society* 11 (1986): 105–36; and Karen Jones and Kevin Williamson, "The Birth of the Schoolroom," *I and C: Governing the Present* 6 (Autumn 1979): 58–110.

⁶ "Bourgeois" here designates not so much a particular social group as a particular structure of social relations—and its ideological representations—characterized by competition, isomorphic contractual commitments, individual achievement, meritocratic mobility, and free markets in land, commodities, and labor. Broadly speaking, bourgeois social relations began to appear piecemeal during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but it was not until the triumph of capitalism during the eighteenth century that they came into their own as a recognizably distinct social formation qualitatively different from the estates world of feudal Europe or the ancien régime.

⁷ Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education As It Relates to the Industrious Classes of the Community*, 3d ed. (London, 1805), in *Joseph Lancaster*, ed. Kaestle, 62–63. Because I found significant passages missing from Kaestle's expurgated edition (the third edition published in 1805), and because other editions include important passages not included in the 1805 edition, I have also used the original unexpurgated 1805 edition and other editions. When I have used Kaestle's edition, I have noted this in parentheses.

⁸ Lancaster, *Improvements*, 3d ed., 27.

⁹ Joseph Lancaster, *A Letter to John Foster, Esq., Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, on the Best Means of Educating and Employing the Poor, in That Country* (London, 1805), 10.

apostles of “Vital Religion.”¹⁰ He differed only in his insistence that the moralization of the poor be based on nonsectarian religious principles and in his willingness to experiment with the traditional organization and psychology of schooling in order to promote the more effective moralization and “useful” learning of students. But even as Lancaster looked to reformed charity schooling to create an industrious and Holy Commonwealth, he did not derive his educational psychology from Protestant notions of the calling or a Protestant psychology of conversion and regeneration. Instead, the intellectual assumptions and constructions he employed to fashion his psychology of achievement were those of a secular market culture, not those of Protestant piety; his controlling concepts and metaphors were commercial and disciplinary, not religious, however much he employed a religious vernacular. The school that Joseph Lancaster designed and built was not so much a church of piety and deference as a manufactory of desire and ambition, a marketplace of competitive achievement, and an engine of disciplinary power.

A more complete account of Lancaster’s pedagogy would detail the organization and pedagogy of eighteenth-century charity schooling, identify the processes that linked Lancaster to the market and disciplinary revolutions, and explain how Lancaster’s innovations influenced nineteenth-century education. The objective here, however, is much more limited. It is simply to isolate the structures of meaning that shaped Lancaster’s pedagogy—to show how a close examination of Lancaster’s writings reveals the impact of the market and disciplinary revolutions on his educational practice and to outline the manner in which the institutionalization of meritocratic principles in the classroom provided a point of entry of the market and disciplinary revolutions into contemporary education.¹¹

¹⁰ “Vital Religion” was an eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century apostolic effort to moralize English society that encompasses Methodism, the Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge, the Society for the Reformation of Manners, evangelicals, Sarah Trimmer and Hannah More, the Clapham sect, Sunday schools, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and humanitarian reformers of every variety. See Elie Halévy, *England in 1815* (London, 1949), pt. 3, ch. 1; Asa Briggs, *The Making of Modern England, 1783–1867* (New York, 1959), 66–74; Thomas Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780–1850* (New Haven, 1976), chs. 1, 2, 7; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1968), ch. 11.

¹¹ My approach then is more “structural” than causal, less an intellectual history of the market and disciplinary revolutions, than of the intellectual constructions implicit in Joseph Lancaster’s pedagogy. Clearly, such an approach is not without its drawbacks. Above all, such a procedure ignores historical process—the manner and mechanisms of influence and change—that would in principle explain the sources and development of Lancaster’s ideas and practices. But I have to confess that I am uncertain as to how the eighteenth-century revolution in moral psychology reached and influenced Lancaster.

Lancaster's Organizational Revolution

According to his own account of his life, Joseph Lancaster was born in Southwark, near London, in November 1778. His father, a Non-conformist cane-sievemaker and “author” of his own business, kept his family in “decent and comfortable” circumstances. At age fourteen, after reading an account of slavery in the West Indies, Lancaster abortively attempted to reach Jamaica to teach slaves. Shortly after, he joined the Society of Friends, taught at two different schools, and in 1798 opened a school for the poor of his neighborhood. To finance the school, he turned to local philanthropic Quakers. In 1803 he published the first edition of his *Improvements in Education As It Relates to the Industrious Classes of the Community*. Its publication brought him immediate fame, lecturing engagements around the country, patronage of the great, and, to top it all, an audience with George III in 1805.¹²

Joseph Lancaster proved to be a strikingly effective and appealing teacher. His first school grew very quickly, but his success soon forced him to find “more capacious buildings,” a process that he had to repeat several more times until he finally moved in 1801 into a large room on Borough Road in London that would accommodate upwards of 350 pupils. The number of students, however, made individual instruction and recitation impossible in the eighteenth-century manner. Unable to pay for an assistant, he conceived—or borrowed—the idea of employing a system of “mutual instruction” or “monitorial instruction” to teach

Given Lancaster's limited education, it is highly unlikely that Lancaster was especially aware of these intellectual developments, yet the similarity of his views to this broader intellectual revolution cannot be denied.

¹² Thereafter, Lancaster's fortunes fell as his educational influence grew. Impetuous, undisciplined, and self-important, he gradually alienated his financial and moral supporters in England, including the leadership of the British and Foreign School Society founded in 1813 to promote Lancasterian education and to reform British charity schooling. Eventually, in 1818, bankrupt and convinced that he was not adequately appreciated in his own country, he migrated to the United States. His considerable fame as a pedagogical innovator had preceded him by at least a decade, so he had no trouble getting an initial appointment as director of the Philadelphia Model School. But this, too, did not satisfy him. Eventually, after a series of unhappy school appointments elsewhere in the country, he left the United States to reside in Argentina with a rich widow. That arrangement also failed to work out, and he returned again to the United States, penniless as ever. Walking across a New York street in 1838, he was trampled and fatally injured by a run-away horse. For further details, see Joseph Lancaster, *Epitome of some of the chief events and transactions in the life of Joseph Lancaster, containing an account of the rise and progress of the Lancasterian system of education and the author's future prospects of usefulness to mankind. Written by himself and published to promote the education of his family . . .* (New Haven, 1833), 5; idem, *The Lancasterian System of Education with Improvements* (Baltimore, 1821), vii; David Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster* (London, 1904), 1–2, 16–18.

the students with very little expense and considerable “efficiency.”¹³ This “led to one invention after another, till he had perfected every part and prescribed every mode of action.” He explained that “having no means of paying ushers, he was compelled to employ one pupil in teaching another, and as his scholars increased, to digest a plan of conducting his school, which should be a guide to his juvenile teachers, and render their duties systematic and regular. Thus originated, from unpremeditated causes, a system which has gradually advanced to maturity, and bids fair for extension, much higher than the elementary knowledge to which it originally gave its powerful aid.”¹⁴

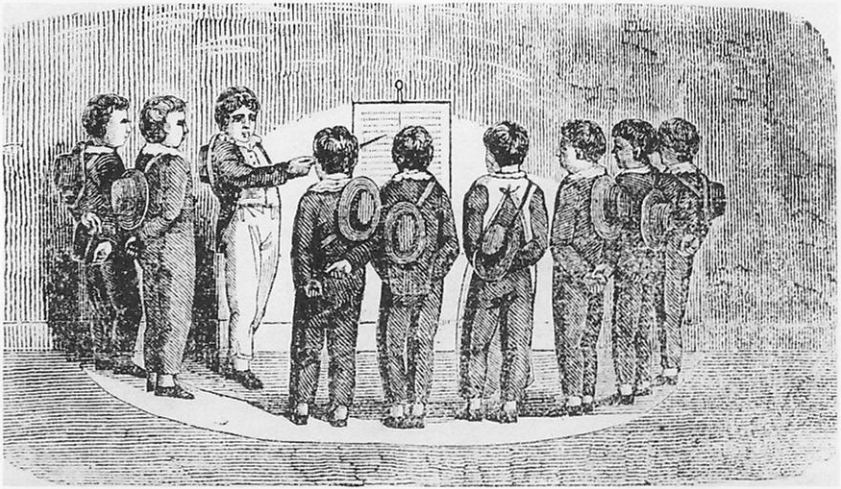
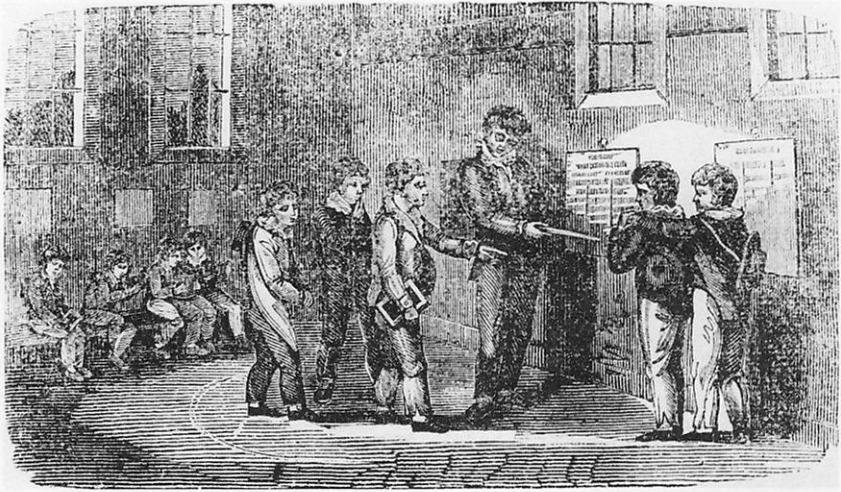
Historians have long regarded Lancaster’s system of mutual or monitorial instruction the most important of his organizational innovations. But it was only one of a number of innovations, and by no means the most important one. First, Lancaster “classified” students and distributed them into “classes.” In an imaginative pedagogical application of the division of labor, Lancaster herded upwards of three or four hundred children of various ages into one very large room, divided them into reading, spelling, and arithmetic “classes” of ten or twelve students “whose proficiency is on a par,” and assigned them a monitor. “Any number of boys, whose proficiency is nearly equal in what they are learning,” he wrote in 1808, “should be classed, and taught together.”¹⁵ Second, Lancaster replaced the traditional pedagogy of individual recitation with a pedagogy of simultaneous instruction: when monitors taught, they did not instruct each student individually, but taught a whole “class” simultaneously. And third, Lancaster permitted the individual promotion of students whenever their performance warranted, and he created the

¹³ Lancaster was not the first to employ older students to teach younger ones—the practice dates back at least to Elizabethan times—but he was apparently the first to use the term “monitors.” Dr. Andrew Bell had begun to use older students or “ushers” to help younger students sometime after he began teaching in Madras, India, in the late 1780s. In 1797 Bell explained the principles of his system in *An Experiment in Education*. Bell later insisted that Lancaster stole the idea of employing student monitors from him, although David Salmon dismisses this claim and suggests that Lancaster borrowed the idea of monitorial instruction from a dissenting charity school that he attended in his neighborhood. Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 2, 7. On the Bell–Lancaster controversy generally, see Joseph Fox, *A Comparative View of the Plans of Education as Detailed in the Publications of Dr. Bell and Mr. Lancaster* (London, 1808); Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, chs. 5, 6. See also Hamilton, “Adam Smith and the Moral Economy of the Classroom System,” 285–86.

¹⁴ Lancaster, *Epitome*, 6; idem, *A Short Account of the Rise and Progress of the Lancasterian System* (1821), reprinted in *Joseph Lancaster*, ed. Kaestle, 55–61; David Salmon, ed. *The Practical Parts of Lancaster’s Improvements and Bell’s Experiment* (Cambridge, 1932), vii–ix.

¹⁵ Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education Abridged, Containing a Complete Epitome of the System of Education invented and practised by the Author* (London, 1808), 1–2, 58.

Improper and Proper Classroom Instruction
According to Joseph Lancaster



These illustrations appeared in Lancaster's manual, *The British System of Education . . .* (1812) and were also used in later editions of the manual. In the upper drawing, Lancaster portrayed what could happen when his system was not correctly implemented. The students in the upper picture lack the proper discipline; they are not giving the monitor their undivided attention, and some are unsupervised. In the lower picture, Lancaster depicts the proper method of instruction; here, the students are orderly and are giving the monitor their full attention. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

machinery to foster it—a system of continuous “inspections” and examinations by class monitors and monitors specially appointed to examine students by subject area: “inspectors of reading,” “inspectors of arithmetic,” and so on. In Lancaster’s school, then, students were grouped and instructed on a class basis, but they were evaluated and promoted on an individual basis.¹⁶

Joseph Lancaster was not the first pedagogue to sort students into separate classes, to rely upon simultaneous rather than individual instruction, to inspect and examine students continuously, or even to provide an educational ladder based on a rudimentary graded course of instruction.¹⁷ But by virtue of his influence on British and American schooling, his innovations had an immense impact on the organization, psychology, and normative structure of the modern classroom. Classing students according to equal “proficiency” transformed the social topography of the schoolroom into a level playing field on which student performance could be meaningfully compared and measured along a single dimension.¹⁸ Classing thus provided the organizational basis for

¹⁶ Lancaster, *Improvements* (Kaestle), 66, 67, 64, 70, 74–75, 76–77. See also Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, ch. 3; “Monitorial System,” the *American Journal of Education* 101 (June 1861): 461–66; “Joseph Lancaster,” *ibid.*, 355–62.

¹⁷ Philippe Ariès reports that during the course of the fifteenth century, French grammar school masters began to divide their large numbers of “heterogeneous” students into distinct groups within the same room, “according to the extent of the pupil’s knowledge,” and to instruct each group or “lectio” separately. By the early sixteenth century educational writers had begun to use the word “class” instead of “lectio.” Erasmus (borrowing from Quintilian) used it in 1519, Baduel in 1538, and Sturm in 1539. In England, at St. Paul’s in London, John Colet divided students into classes in the early sixteenth century. By the late sixteenth century, French Jesuits had created a sequence of studies and separated students into classes, although they remained committed to individual instruction and recitation. Later, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Jean Baptiste de la Salle divided French Christian Brothers’ charity schools into “classes” of “anything up to a hundred boys.” Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (Hammondsworth, 1973), 173, 175–77, chs. 11, 12; Emile Durkheim, *The Evolution of Educational Thought* (London, 1977), chs. 20, 21; W. J. Battersby, *De La Salle: A Pioneer of Modern Education* (London, 1949), 79. Given that Lancaster attended a dissenting charity school in his youth and that a Jesuit charity school was also located close by, it is possible that Lancaster adopted their classing and instructional practices. See W. H. Armytage, *400 Years of English Education* (Cambridge, 1964), 41.

¹⁸ The Lancasterian *Manual* used in the public schools of Philadelphia in the late 1820s underscores the new conception of the classroom. The *Manual* states that “in the first organization of a school, there must be a division into classes, those pupils being placed together whose abilities or proficiency are nearly equal, either in reading or arithmetic.” Its author, J. L. Rhees, then commented that “the consequence of this arrangement is, that the pupils of a class of reading or arithmetic are on a level; they have the same degree of knowledge to acquire, and the same duties to fulfil, in order to qualify them for a superior class.” J. L. Rhees, *A Pocket Manual of the Lancasterian System of Education in its Most Improved State, as practised in the Model School, First School District of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1827), 11.

the creation of what seventeenth- and eighteenth-century advocates of a market economy called a “natural society” of individual achievers.¹⁹ In addition, simultaneous instruction increased the opportunities for comparative evaluation: all students were exposed to the same content and instructed with the same materials, at the same time by the same monitor. Furthermore, classing students on the basis of “proficiency,” together with the system of continuous examinations or “inspections,” imposed a wholly new structure of social relations on the school. “Inspections” opened up channels of educational mobility for the meritorious, tested and rewarded competence, punished the indolent, and in matching merit to social position, created meritocratic hierarchies within a natural society of competitive individuals. In effect, the Lancastrian language of the school “class” was the bourgeois language of social “class”—a hierarchical but continuous structure of opportunity in which the rate of mobility was determined by meritocratic performance in competitive examinations.²⁰ And finally, the use of monitors, the careful classification of students according to “proficiency,” the elaborate differentiation of classroom space, the precise regulation of student activity, and the continuous examination of students contributed to the transformation of British and American schooling into a system of “disciplinary power.” But to understand better this double moment in educational history, we first need to examine briefly the nature of the market and the disciplinary revolutions and their relationship to each other.

Markets and Discipline

Although historians differ in their assessments of the dynamics of the market revolution that transformed British society from the sixteenth century on, the essential features of the market revolution are relatively clear. Broadly speaking, the market revolution had four principal components: the initial development of free markets in goods and services, and later, in labor as well; the decline of traditional principles of assigning status and their gradual, contested replacement by meritocratic notions;

¹⁹ See, for example, Joyce Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth Century England* (Princeton, N.J., 1978); C. B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford, 1962); Joseph Cropsey, *Polity and Economy: An Interpretation of the Principles of Adam Smith* (Westport, Conn., 1977).

²⁰ Ironically, as David Hamilton points out, the theorists of the Scottish Enlightenment adopted the Renaissance notion of school “class” as a cohort of students at different levels on the same course of study and put it to a very different use—as a model for the social structure of a commercial society, replacing the static idea of ranks and stations of the ancien régime. Like the Renaissance language of school “class,” the Scottish language of “class” was a language of mobility, not of fixed status. See Hamilton, “Adam Smith and the Moral Economy of the Classroom System,” 285–88.

the organization of production in the factory system and the application of mechanical power to the production process; and a new configuration of market-based processes of class formation and class conflict.²¹ Over time the market revolution undermined the social foundations of the ancien régime and replaced it with a “bourgeois” society dominated by market relations and, increasingly, by meritocratic principles.

The nature of the disciplinary revolution, however, is much less well known and its relationship to the market revolution relatively unexplored. The principal theorist of the disciplinary revolution, of course, is the late Michel Foucault, and the principal text is *Discipline and Punish*.²² Foucault’s analysis of disciplinary power goes beyond Hobbes’s analysis of “sovereign” power. For Foucault, domination and social control in contemporary western societies are less a function of an omnipotent state, capitalist exploitation, class oppression, or psychic repression, than of a ubiquitous, decentralized disciplinary power.²³ While sovereign power is centered in the state, disciplinary power “is everywhere.” It operates at the lowest extremities of the social body in everyday social practices or “discursive regimes”; it is “capillary” rather than centralized. Disciplinary power is not a “structure,” an “institution,” or an “apparatus,” but a “whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology.” Sovereign power is negative or judicial and functions through rituals of terror and repression; disciplinary power is “positive” and “constitutive,”

²¹ Still the best introduction to the market revolution is Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, 1957).

²² For especially useful reviews of Foucault’s work, see Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London, 1980); P. Dews, “Power and Subjectivity in Foucault,” *New Left Review* 144 (Mar./Apr. 1984):72–95; James Bernauer and David Rasmussen, eds., *The Final Foucault* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988); B. Smart, *Foucault, Marxism and Critique* (London, 1983); Allan Megill, *Prophets of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley, 1985), pt. 3; Charles Lemert and Garta Gillan, *Michel Foucault: Social Theory as Transgression* (New York, 1982); Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, 1982); J. G. Merquior, *Foucault* (Berkeley, 1985); Pamela Major-Poetzl, *Michel Foucault’s Archeology of Western Culture: Toward a New Science of History* (Chapel Hill, 1983); Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull, eds., *Social Control and the State* (New York, 1983), 75–105, 141–88; N. Fraser, “Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions,” *Praxis International* 1 (Oct. 1981):272–88; David C. Hoy, ed., *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (New York, 1986); J. O’Neill, “The Disciplinary Society: From Weber to Foucault,” *British Journal of Sociology* 27 (Mar. 1986): 42–60.

²³ Or, as Foucault himself puts it, his analysis of power aims to “cut off the king’s head.” Foucault, “Truth and Power,” in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Gordon, 121. Foucault’s strategy here then is very different from the strategy of more structuralist theorists of the state (Louis Althusser and Nicos Poulantzas, for example) who attempt, so to speak, to inflate the size of the “king’s head” by making the state synonymous with all power relationships.

a “technique” that operates through highly localized political “technologies of power” based on the accumulation of knowledge about individual subjects—what Foucault calls “power/knowledge” relations or “pouvoir-savoir”—and the dispersal of these technologies throughout the society. Disciplinary power thus both constructs individual subjectivities—regimented, isolated, and self-policing subjects or “docile bodies” that “may be subjected, used, transformed and improved”—and creates a vast web of regulations and mechanisms for the supervision, administration, and discipline of entire populations. To investigate disciplinary power is thus to investigate, on the one hand, the “formation of the modern subject” or the “genealogy of the modern soul,” and, on the other hand, “the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms” across the body politic—a “bio-politics of the population” within a “disciplinary society.”²⁴

Foucault argued that the earliest technologies of disciplinary power first appeared in medieval monasteries, but that they principally developed during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries independently in army barracks, factory workshops, prisons, hospitals, schools, and the state itself as officials struggled to find new ways of controlling inmates and managing populations. By the end of the eighteenth century, a “new economy of power” had been created that “allowed the effects of power to circulate in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted, and ‘individualized’ throughout the entire social body.” This “new economy of power” primarily depended on two “technologies” or “procedures” of power—“hierarchical observation” and “normalizing judgements”—that together constitute the “examination,” the principal technique of disciplinary power in modern society. “Hierarchical observation” consists of the continuous “surveillance” of subordinates by superordinates, whether by visual (“architectural”) means or through the keeping of extensive written records or “dossiers.” In principle, “panoptic” surveillance induces “in the inmate a sense of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.” Ideally, individual subjects become the “bearers” of their own surveillance by internalizing a sense of perpetual “visibility”: “The per-

²⁴ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1:92–93; idem, *Discipline and Punish*, 215–16, 136–38, 170, 30, 222. Through his notion of “genealogy,” Foucault distinguishes his own intellectual method from that of traditional historians preoccupied with the search for “origins” and various “indefinite teleologies”—the idea of progress, dialectical materialism, etc. For Foucault, the practice of “history” is mired in a quest for power; genealogy seeks to expose the relations among power, knowledge, and the body in modern societies. For useful discussions, see Sheridan, *Michel Foucault*, 113–34; and Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, ch. 5.

fection of power should render its actual exercise unnecessary.”²⁵ “Normalizing judgements,” on the other hand, assume a formal equality between individuals, but classify and distribute individuals along a “normative” continuum. In the modern world normalizing judgements have replaced status or judicial rights with “the power of the norm” as the currency of evaluation and form the basis of a “penal accountancy” or a “micro-economy of privileges and impositions.” Social control in bourgeois societies is thus exercised through the continuous surveillance of individuals and the “normalization” of behavior rather than overt repression of the body. And when combined with hierarchical observation, normalizing judgements form the “examination.” The examination integrates knowledge and power in a unified field of discipline; it “transforms the economy of visibility into the exercise of power.” By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the widespread employment of “hierarchical observation” and “normalizing judgement” had created a “carceral archipelago” that enveloped the entire population in a dense web of localized networks of disciplinary power.²⁶

Foucault’s analysis of disciplinary power thus repudiates Hobbesian conceptions of social control. “We must eschew the model of Leviathan in the study of power,” Foucault advises.²⁷ The study of modern power cannot be limited to the study of sovereignty and state power, or to overt and repressive acts of class oppression by the bourgeoisie or its agents. Instead, it has to focus upon the “productive” or “normalizing” nature of modern power and the development and deployment of a network of power/knowledge relations over the population at large in multiple and localized institutional contexts. But if Foucault is often compelling and always provocative, he also fails to capture and explain key aspects of social discipline in bourgeois societies. For example, Foucault fails to offer anything like an adequate account of the relationship between the process of state formation and the deployment of disciplinary power—particularly of the manner through which localized, micro-technologies

²⁵ Foucault, “Truth and Power,” *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York, 1984), 61; idem, *Discipline and Punish*, 201, see also 172. Foucault argues that the military camp was the first general model of hierarchical surveillance, but that it was soon followed by hospitals, schools, and workshops. Bentham’s *Panopticon* (“all seeing”) was simply the culmination of a long history and exemplified, rather than invented, the basic principles of “hierarchical surveillance” in its purest architectural form.

²⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 170, 176, 177–78, 180, 183, 184–94. For a useful brief analysis of Foucault’s theory of “discipline and social regulation,” see Smart, *Foucault, Marxism, and Critique*, ch. 5.

²⁷ Foucault, “Two Lectures,” in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Gordon, 102. It is important to be clear about what exactly Foucault is and is not saying here. He is not saying that we should not study Leviathan—that is, state power. He is merely saying that we should not conceive all power on the model of state power.

of disciplinary power were incorporated into the state apparatus, although in his last works he belatedly began to address the issue in his analyses of “bio-power,” “pastoral power,” and “policing.”²⁸

This essay, however, is especially concerned with Foucault’s neglect of the relationship between the disciplinary revolution and the market revolution. *Discipline and Punish* does provide an account of the relationship between the disciplinary revolution and the industrial revolution, but it is brief, highly schematic, and decidedly equivocal in its causal claims.²⁹ He especially fails to acknowledge the role played by the expansion of market relations and meritocratic ideology in the deployment of disciplinary power. However much it might be true that the deployment of disciplinary power was a prerequisite to, although not a cause of, the market revolution, it is equally true that the deployment of disciplinary power was in good measure a product of the market revolution and part of that vast bourgeois project that Max Weber called the rationalization of the world.³⁰ After all, the competitive market itself is a major form of disciplinary power—a “decentralized panopticon,” as John Lea notes. What Marx described as “the silent compulsions of economic relations” increasingly dominated social life over the course of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The extension of market

²⁸ See, for example, Foucault’s “Politics and Reason,” in *Michel Foucault*, ed. Kritzman, ch. 4; and “The Subject and Power” in Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 208–26.

²⁹ First, Foucault argues for an interdependent and reflexive relationship between the industrial and disciplinary revolutions: “Each makes the other possible and necessary; each provides a model for the other.” One revolution did not parent the other; the two revolutions grew up together, feeding and nurturing each other, linked together by a “whole intermediary cluster of relations,” and united by a common interest in promoting a “parallel increase in usefulness and docility.” But second, because the techniques of disciplinary power first appeared independently in monasteries, education, the military, and medicine a century or more before the rise of industrial capitalism, Foucault also suggests that the disciplinary revolution is the older and stronger brother. While the disciplinary revolution did not cause the industrial revolution, it provided an essential precondition for its success: the triumph of industrial capitalism depended upon the earlier deployment of disciplinary power during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and its extension and consolidation afterward. Technologies of disciplinary power made possible the disciplining of bodies and populations and the accumulation of capital; it became possible to make men, women, and children work efficiently and productively only after they had been disciplined and “caught up in a system of subjection.” The body “becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body.” And finally, Foucault employs a third argument—namely, that capitalism determined the “modalities” of disciplinary power. “The growth of a capitalist economy,” he writes, “gave rise to the specific modality of disciplinary power, whose general formulas, techniques of submitting forces and bodies, in short, ‘political anatomy,’ could be operated in the most diverse political regimes, apparatuses or institutions.” Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 136–38, 218, 221.

³⁰ For a more elaborate argument along these lines, see S. Spitzer, “The Rationalization of Crime Control in Capitalist Society,” in *Social Control and the State*, eds. Cohen and Scull, ch. 13.

relations progressively subjected Europeans and Americans of all classes to the impersonal logic and discipline of market competition and a system of power that, as Lea suggests, “works against, and without reference to, the conscious decisions of the individuals who are its bearers.”³¹ Moreover, as Weber understood so well, the rationalization of worldly activity promoted the rationalization of subjectivity. Or, as Thomas Haskell has recently reminded us, the spread of competitive relationships profoundly altered individual behavior, personal psychology, and “cognitive style.” “The spread of competitive relationships,” he suggests, “not only channeled behavior directly, encouraging people through shifting wage and price levels to engage in some activities and disengage from others, but also provided an immensely powerful educational force, capable of reaching into the depths of personal psychology.” The commercial revolution intensified market discipline and pushed “the penetration of that discipline into spheres of life previously untouched by it.”³²

Foucault’s account of disciplinary power is plagued by three further difficulties. The first grows out of Foucault’s denial that ideology and intentionality (“projects”) have any place in explanations of the deployment of disciplinary power because power is not “possessed” by a subject.³³ For Foucault, power is not a substance, a possession, a privilege, or a property of individuals or groups. Rather, it is merely “exercised” in action and is discernable only in its “effects” on action or what he calls its “strategies.”³⁴ Foucault’s theory of power has often been sharply criticized on this point, for it can easily result in an entirely vacuous

³¹ John Lea, “Discipline and Capitalist Development,” in *Capitalism and the Rule of Law: From Deviancy Theory to Marxism*, eds. Barry Fine et al., 1979), 79, 81; Karl Marx, *Capital* (Harmondsworth, 1976), 1:899.

³² Haskell went on to conclude: “The market altered character by heaping tangible rewards on people who displayed a certain calculating, moderately assertive style of conduct, while humbling others whose manner was more unbuttoned or who pitched their affairs at a level of aggressiveness either higher or lower than the prevailing standard.” Thomas Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Parts 1, 2,” *American Historical Review* 90 (Apr./June 1985): 342, 547, 550.

³³ In his “Two Lectures,” for example, Foucault urges that an analysis of power “should not concern itself with power at the level of conscious intention or decision; that it should not attempt to consider power from its internal point of view and that it should refrain from posing the labyrinthine and unanswerable question: ‘Who has power and what has he in mind? What is the aim of someone who possesses power?’ Instead, it is a case of studying power at the point where its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices. What is needed is a study of power in its external visage.” Foucault, “Two Lectures,” and “Truth and Power,” in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Gordon, 97–98, 102, 118.

³⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 26–27; idem, “The Subject and Power” in Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 216–7.

concept of social and historical process.³⁵ Historical events depend upon human agency and intentionality. This is not to say that history happens as humans will it, but only that history happens because humans will. As Charles Taylor points out in an essay on Foucault, “the text of history, which we are trying to explain, is made up of purposeful human action.” It is true that “not all patterns *issue* from conscious action, but all patterns have to be made *intelligible* in relation to conscious action.”³⁶ And to explain “purposeful human action” requires some notion of ideology and some account of the intricate interplay of intention and ideology. Indeed, despite himself, Foucault could not entirely ignore the role of ideology, although he failed to give an adequate account of the complexity of the ideological sources of disciplinary power. For example, Foucault’s (limited) attention to the secular and utilitarian rationalism of Bentham belies his own methodological injunction against ideology, even as *Discipline and Punish* ignores the role played by Quaker and Evangelical religious principles and aspirations in the deployment of disciplinary power.³⁷

Second, Foucault adamantly insists that the deployment of disciplinary power cannot be explained by an analytical schema dependent on what he calls a “totalizing” logic—the development of capitalism, or processes of rationalization and state formation, for example. Disciplinary power is localized and capillary. Paradoxically, although he rejects Leviathan as a model of power, Foucault shares with Hobbes (at least the Hobbes of the state of nature) an image of society as a decentered world of universal and reflexive domination. Not for him Adam Smith’s view of a structured society of interdependent actions coordinated by an invisible hand or Marx’s concept of a society structured by class relations.³⁸ In his eagerness to avoid both Leviathan and voluntarism, Fou-

³⁵ For one such criticism, see Charles Taylor, “Foucault on Freedom and Truth,” in *Foucault*, ed. Hoy 83–90. For an effective defense of Foucault on this point, see D. C. Hoy, “Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes, and the Frankfurt School,” in *ibid.*, 124–35.

³⁶ Taylor, “Foucault on Freedom and Truth,” 87–88. Emphasis in the original. See also Haskell, “Capitalism and the Humanitarian Sensibility,” 346–47, especially footnote #22.

³⁷ See, for example, Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850* (New York, 1978), ch. 3; and *idem*, “State, Civil Society, and Total Institutions,” in *Social Control and the State*, eds. Cohen and Scull, 87–88. See also David Ingleby, “Mental Health and Social Order,” in *ibid.*, 178–79.

³⁸ As Foucault once put it, power is not an “institution,” or a “structure,” but a localized practice that arises in “action” found “everywhere.” “Power,” he asserts, “is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and . . . it exists only in action.” He then goes on to substitute Clausewitz’s aphorism that war is politics continued by other means with the claim that “power is war, war continued by other means.” (Foucault, “Two Lectures,” 89–91). Of course, this also suggests another problem. If “power” is nominalistically defined and if it is “everywhere,” then Foucault must intend it to explain everything. But if it explains everything, how can it explain anything in particular? Or, as Dreyfus and Rabinow note, “If power is nominalized, how is it explanatory?” Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 207.

cault fails to recognize the extent to which social behavior—and intentions—have been progressively patterned or structured by market processes. Instead, in his efforts to avoid recourse to a “totalizing” logic, Foucault appears to have relied on an essentially anthropomorphic ontology in which the deployment of disciplinary power is said to be a function of impersonal “opposing strategies,” rather than subjects with “projects” acting in patterned ways. I am not suggesting that the deployment of disciplinary power can be reduced to intentions or projects, but I am suggesting that the deployment of disciplinary power has to be made intelligible in terms of intentions and projects and that it can result from unintended consequences and/or the patterned nature of social behavior. History only happens because humans will, and they usually will in patterned ways that are systematically linked to the dominant structures of social relations in which they are embedded.³⁹

Finally, while Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power provides a remarkably incisive analytical tool for understanding the nature and role of power in everyday social life, Foucault failed to distinguish adequately between the disciplinary function of power (“normalization”) and “pouvoir/savoir” as a specific technology of disciplinary power. Many forms of power—market relations (Marx, Weber), “gift relationships” (Marcel Mauss), “sympathy” (Adam Smith), and the “internalization” of moral authority or “norms” (whether through Freudian or Parsonian mechanisms), for example—do not necessarily depend on “pouvoir/savoir,” even though they all have important “disciplinary” or “normalizing” consequences.⁴⁰ In other words, the “disciplining” subjectivity does not always depend on the deployment of “hierarchical observation” and “normalizing judgement.” But if Foucault neglected Marx, Weber, Smith, Mauss, and Freud, the latter theorists overlooked the development of disciplinary power. Weber, for example, even as he traced the rationalization of subjectivity to the victory of Protestant asceticism and its extension into the world of work, family, and politics, neglected the rationalization of subjectivity promoted by the capillary normalization of subjectivity in many seemingly unconnected contexts—confessionals, schools, prisons, families, factories, asylums, the military, and hospitals—

³⁹ This argument was in part suggested to me by Taylor, “Foucault on Freedom and Truth,” 85–88.

⁴⁰ Michael Ignatieff, on the other hand, suggests, incorrectly in my view, that family relations, “gift relationships,” and relations based on “sympathy” do not exhibit the characteristics of disciplinary power. As Foucault suggested in an interview in 1983, “power relations . . . are multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration.” Ignatieff, “State, Civil Society, and Total Institutions,” 98–99; and Foucault, “Critical Theory/Intellectual History,” in *Michel Foucault*, ed. Kritzman, 38.

through the development and deployment of hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement. For Foucault, the normalization of the subject was a vastly more complicated process than Weber allowed in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Both the strengths and weaknesses of Foucault's account of disciplinary power are clearly revealed in an analysis of Joseph Lancaster's pedagogical system. After all, Foucault himself identified the monitorial school as an exemplary site of disciplinary power: the spatial and social distribution of students into separate classes under the supervision of monitors, the regime of ubiquitous surveillance—"hierarchical observation"—over the student body, and the continuous "inspection" of students and the exercise of an ordinal form of "normalizing judgement." And he was surely correct to do so: along with Joseph Bell, Lancaster invented a modern "disciplinary" pedagogy based in part on hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement. But Joseph Lancaster's school was much more than a site for deployment of disciplinary power. The organization and psychology of Lancasterian schools also suggests something of the way in which the deployment of disciplinary power, at least in education, depended on the institutionalization of meritocratic principles and market processes within the classroom. As I suggested earlier, Joseph Lancaster's school was as much a manufactory of desire and ambition and a marketplace of competitive achievement as it was an engine of disciplinary power.

In addition, exploring Lancaster's pedagogy underscores the necessity of focusing on the nexus linking ideology, intention, and outcomes—rather than on Foucault's notion of impersonal "opposing strategies"—to explain the deployment of disciplinary power. Joseph Lancaster devoted his life to the moralization of the poor in order that they might lead contented, pious, and industrious lives without disturbing traditional social hierarchies. Yet while Lancaster assumed that he was moralizing the poor in a way that did not threaten the ancien régime, in fact the school he created expressed the moral code of an ascendent bourgeois culture. At heart, Joseph Lancaster's pedagogy was not a pedagogy of renunciation, regeneration, piety, and deference, but a pedagogy of ambition, desire, competitive individual achievement, and industry. Despite his religious and conservative objectives, the school that Lancaster fashioned was very much a pedagogical facsimile of the market revolution rather than a traditional institution of social control. In short, an adequate explanation of the deployment of disciplinary power requires a much richer account of the relationship between the disciplinary and market revolutions than Foucault provided and an understanding of the relationship between ideology, intentions, and outcomes.

Desire and the Psychology of Achievement

Eighteenth-century charity school teachers typically attempted to motivate their charges through the threat—and the liberal use—of the rod. Lancaster categorically rejected physical punishment, either to motivate students or to keep order in the schoolroom. If eighteenth-century charity school teachers largely relied on a “repressive pedagogy,” Lancaster sought to develop a “disciplinary pedagogy.”⁴¹ “In the education of youth, it is the mind which is the proper object of action; by forming that to virtue and usefulness, the true end is obtained. Education, as a science, must therefore consist in knowing *how* and *why* to make the right impressions on the mind.” Lancaster therefore urged his fellow teachers to recognize that “the passions of the human heart must be their study.”⁴² The passions were not inherently wicked and destructive but could be safely freed from their Stoic, Augustinian, and Calvinist shackles in appropriate circumstances. “Our heavenly father does not require the annihilation or depression of these passions,” he argued. “We must treat our children according to what they are, and not according to what they are not.” The passions, “which the Great Author of our being no doubt formed us with,” could serve “the best and wisest of purposes.” Education required neither repression of the passions with the help of Divine Grace nor the exercise of absolute and coercive authority by a sovereign teacher. The passions were to be employed, not repressed; they were to be viewed as “auxiliaries, to assist us in great and beneficent designs.” Teachers should “be trained in the practice of developing the latent principles, or passions, that actuate the mind, and in stimulating them to usefulness.”⁴³

Lancaster’s moderately prelapsarian view of the passions thus differed dramatically from Augustinian and Protestant views of human nature which stressed the rigorous denial and control of the passions. His views reveal him to be an unwitting supporter of, and even a minor participant in, a revolution of moral psychology that had challenged Augustinian and Calvinist views of the passions for almost two centuries.

⁴¹ My formulation of the notions of “disciplinary” and “repressive” pedagogy grew out of my original reading of Foucault. Since then I have read Bruce Curtis’s work on Ontario in which he employs similar notions that I have found provocative and useful. See Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836–1871* (London, Ont., 1988). See also Philip Corrigan, “On Moral Regulation: Some Preliminary Remarks,” *Sociological Review* 29 (1981): 313–37; and Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (New York, 1985).

⁴² Lancaster, *Letter to John Foster*, 10; idem, *Improvements in Education*, 3d ed., 37; idem, *Improvements in Education* (Kaestle), 66, 64.

⁴³ Lancaster, *Letter to John Foster*, 29, 17–18.

From at least the mid-seventeenth century, theorists of human nature had developed elaborate and exhaustive taxonomies of the passions, determining which were the dominant ones, and openly celebrating the positive functions of the passions as sources of social progress and as means of promoting virtue. In particular, many commentators had come to regard “pride” and its associated passions—ambition, emulation, approbation—as the dominant passions and consistent with Christian religion if directed toward socially beneficial ends. The passions did not necessarily turn men from God; they could promote individual effort and social progress.⁴⁴

Lancaster shared their optimism. To promote “useful learning,” he principally relied, not on fear or the threat of punishment, but on two devices—constant activity and proper motivation. “Every child at every moment” should have “something to do and a motive for doing it.”⁴⁵ Lancaster’s reasoning here is revealing. In his hands the moral dicta of the Protestant notion of the “calling”—diligence, industry, frugality, self-denial, accountability, and purposefulness—are put to pedagogical work but without the overriding religious teleology of the original Protestant notion of the calling. Instead, constant activity would promote a central objective of an ascendent bourgeois “moral economy”—industry—and keep children out of trouble by keeping them busy and accountable.⁴⁶ But Lancaster did not merely intend to make them be industrious; he also intended that they learn to want to be industrious—to desire in-

⁴⁴ For Calvinist conceptions of the passions, see John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. J. Allen (1559; Philadelphia, 1928), vol. 1: bk. 11, ch. 1–6; bk. 111, ch. 1–15. For the eighteenth-century revolution in moral psychology, see Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* (Princeton, 1977), pt. 1; Lester G. Crocker, *An Age of Crisis: Man and World in Eighteenth Century French Thought* (Baltimore, 1959), esp. ch. 7–11; Arthur O. Lovejoy, *Reflections on Human Nature* (Baltimore, 1961), esp. chs. 2, 4–7; idem, *Essays on the History of Ideas* (New York, 1948), ch. 4; F. B. Kaye, ed., *The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Publick Benefits, by Bernard Mandeville* (Oxford, 1924), 1: xvii–cxlvi; Marvin L. Meyers, *The Soul of Modern Economic Man: Ideas of Self-Interest from Thomas Hobbes to Adam Smith* (Chicago, 1983); Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edward’s Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill, 1981), ch. 4; Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The Science of Freedom* (New York, 1969), ch. 5.

⁴⁵ Quoted by Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 9. Elsewhere Lancaster wrote in the same vein that “education is too much confined to mere knowledge, mere precept. If the lessons are performed, it is deemed sufficient; and there is but little idea entertained of watching continuously over the conduct of youth, lest they should form connections, or engage in pursuits, inimical to their happiness and virtue.” Lancaster, *Letter to John Foster*, 5.

⁴⁶ On the new “moral economy,” see E. P. Thompson, “Time, Work, and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past and Present* 38 (1967): 56–97; and Sydney Pollard, “Factory Discipline and the Industrial Revolution,” *Economic History Review* 14 (1963): 254–71. For one attempt to link Lancaster to the new moral economy, see Hamilton, “Adam Smith and the Moral Economy of the Classroom System”; and for one attempt to link Foucault to the new moral economy, see O’Neill, “The Disciplinary Society.”

dustry. "The benefits resulting from a system of education which will create motives in the minds of youth, and induce them to exert their powers, is far superior to any benefit the exertions their master can produce to them," he suggested. Teachers should employ "to good purposes" or "to useful ends," "the youthful disposition" toward an "irresistible propensity to action." This, rather than the suppression of their natural energies, was the surest means of "acquiring a proper dominion over the minds of the youth."⁴⁷

Lancaster had no doubt that the key to proper motivation was "emulation." Lancaster employed emulation in two ways. On the one hand, he used it to refer to the practice of "copying." But he also employed it as a disciplinary "grammar of motive"—as a means for representing and shaping subjectivity in a particular way.⁴⁸ Emulation, he argued, provided the "most useful . . . stimulus" to learning, even for "those scholars who possess no more than common abilities."⁴⁹ Emulation promoted ambition and ambition, learning. Lancaster, like Adam Smith and Bernard Mandeville, derived emulation from the passions, rather than from calculations of self-interest, as Hobbes had done. But unlike Mandeville, Smith and Lancaster did not always regard the passions in a negative light: because the passions were not necessarily vicious, there was every reason to expect benefits to result from their unfettered operation. Smith thus derived emulation—"the anxious desire that we ourselves should excel"—from "approbation" or "our admiration of the excellence of others." That is, our proclivity to emulate reflected our desire for approbation. He then argued that our desire for approbation did not so much reflect "self-love," as Hobbes and Mandeville had argued, but expressed our capacity

⁴⁷ Lancaster, *Letter to John Foster*, 10; idem, *Improvements in Education*, 3d ed., 37; idem, *Improvements* (Kaestle), 66, 64.

⁴⁸ I have borrowed the notion of a "grammar of motive" from Jean-Christophe Agnew, who in turn borrowed it from Peter Burke. Agnew argues that the early market revolution created a crisis in the "representation" of individual subjectivity. In an era when the simplified cash nexus of commerce had begun to replace the human nexus of social relations, Englishmen had great difficulty in knowing how to represent "the nature of social identity, intentionality, accountability, transparency, and reciprocity in commodity transactions." Grammars of motive filled the void left by the collapse of traditional social identities and "representations" by providing "ideological solutions to cultural confusions produced by the spread of market exchange." Grammars of motive, however, were more than just intellectual representations, as Agnew suggests. When deployed in institutions, they became the foundation of what Foucault calls "discursive practices"—in effect, a disciplinary grammar of motive intended to shape individual subjectivity as much as represent it. Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750* (Cambridge, 1986), 5, 6–7, 9, 60–61, 68, 79–80, 82–83, 90–93. See also MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*; idem, *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* (Oxford, 1973), ch. 1–3; Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*; and J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (New York, 1985), ch. 2.

⁴⁹ Lancaster, *Improvements* (Kaestle), 77.

for “sympathy”—our capacity for, and pleasure in, “fellow feeling with any passion whatever.” Sympathy provided the foundation of sociability, and emulation, activated by a desire for approbation, promoted self-improvement and social progress. Sympathy and emulation were complementary rather than contradictory “passions.”⁵⁰

For Lancaster, similarly, emulation was an “innocent” passion of the human mind, “planted in our natures for our wise ends” and “capable of serving very excellent purposes, if kept under proper restrictions and regulations.”⁵¹ Like Smith, Lancaster collapsed economic motives into sociability and assumed that emulation, rivalry, and competition were not necessarily antithetical to morality in a well-regulated moral order and a cohesive community. Lancaster’s competitive pedagogy presupposed a moralized student body bound together by sociability made possible by the classing of students and the normalization of subjectivity.⁵² Lancaster recognized no tension between the schoolroom as a site of moralization and the schoolroom as an arena of emulation and competitive achievement. Neither “emulative approbation”—the desire for superiority over and the esteem of others—nor an elaborate system of “inspections,” rewards, and prize-giving in the zero-sum environment of the competitive classroom threatened the proper moralization of the stu-

⁵⁰ Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 10, 13, 9–11, 116, 114. In discussing the origins of ambition, for example, Smith asks, “From whence . . . arises that emulation which runs all through the different ranks of man, and what are the advantages which we propose by that great purpose of human life which we call bettering our condition?” Smith’s answer is that they were the products of our desire “to be observed, to be attended to, to be taken notice of with sympathy, complacency and approbation.” “Fellow-feeling” and the desire for approbation, rather than greed or rapacity, motivates individuals to emulate the successful and to improve themselves. Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 50, 52. For a similar analysis that provoked my own and to which I am much indebted, see Hamilton, “The Moral Economy of the Classroom System,” 289.

⁵¹ Lancaster, *Letter to John Foster*, 19. See also idem, “The Psychology of Monitorial Instruction,” in Kaestle, ed., *Joseph Lancaster*, 97, 99.

⁵² Adam Smith made a similar assumption. As we have seen, Smith considered the human sentiments sociable by nature; consequently, he did not anticipate that the pursuit of individual interest would tear apart the social fabric. In addition, he assumed that most individuals in society internalized a “sense of duty” through learning a “sacred regard to general rules” derived from religion. Together, sociability and the internalization of moral rules protected moral order. The “moral faculties” direct “our conduct in this life . . . [as] the supreme arbitrars [*sic*] of all our actions, to superintend all our senses, passions, and appetites, and to judge how each of them was to be indulged or restrained.” In other words, Smith assumed, without ever proving, that the prior moralization of individuals would preserve moral order and community in a society of “self-interested” actors even as the “invisible hand” of market competition promoted the general welfare. Or, to put the matter in terms of disciplinary power, Smith assumed the viability of a market society because he presupposed the prior normalization of subjectivity. Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 162, 163, 165.

dent.⁵³ Indeed, they were necessary to the promotion of “useful learning.” As Lancaster put it, “emulation enables me to combine encouragement and reward with it, in a manner more than usual where this is practised.” Approval for meritorious behavior, for example, resulted in expressions of “approbation” and “commendation” by monitors and “senior boys,” as well as the master, to “lesser boys.”⁵⁴ In addition, “rewards, for the encouragement of children, greatly facilitate their proficiency in anything to which their attention is turned.” Emulation and rewards, when “closely united with continual inspection and application to learning,” were “a most useful stimulus to exertion.” Elsewhere, he wrote that “Premiums and Rewards for merit have proved highly serviceable: it is proverbial that “The hope of Reward Sweetens Labor; and the Practice has verified it.”⁵⁵

In accordance with these principles, Lancaster rewarded students in a variety of ways for outstanding competitive performance: by promotion to the top of the class; by promotion to a higher class; by promotion to a monitorship; by awarding “merit badges” and “insignia of merit” for meritorious performances within classes; by the creation of an “order of merit . . . distinguished by the wearing of a silver medal suspended from his neck by a plated chain” for outstanding aggregate performance; and in a revealing penetration of the cash nexus into pedagogical practice, by the awarding of prizes of nominal cash value. Rewards for perfor-

⁵³ Lancaster’s notion of emulation is of the kind that A. O. Lovejoy designates by the term “emulative approbation.” “Emulative approbation” was a combination of two passions; “approbativeness” or “that peculiarity of man which consists in a susceptibility to pleasure in, or a desire for, the thought of oneself as an object of thoughts or feelings, of certain kinds, on the part of other people,” and “emulativeness,” or the desire for superiority, or the feeling of superiority, over others. Combined, they formed “emulative approbation”—a desire or craving for superiority over, and the esteem of, others. Where approbation was a noncompetitive concept, “emulative approbation” transformed social interactions into a zero-sum calculus of winners and losers. See Lovejoy, *Reflections on Human Nature*, 88, 112, 115–16, 134, 129. See also Crocker, *An Age of Crisis*, ch. 11. Lancaster was not, of course, the first pedagogue to think of emulation in this way. In 1512 Erasmus suggested that group teaching, unlike individual tutoring, could arouse a “state of mutual rivalry” among students. During the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, French Jesuits took Erasmus one step further by linking the love of fame with intense competition and emulation.

⁵⁴ Lancaster, *Improvements* (Kaestle), 74; idem, *Improvements in Education*, 3d ed., 30–31; idem, *Improvements in Education*, 2d ed., 23; idem, *Letter to John Foster*, 19. Indeed, in a review of Bentham’s attempt to adapt Lancaster’s pedagogy to the needs of middle-class children published in the first issue of the *Westminster Review*, Sydney Smith linked Lancaster’s stress on emulation with the cultivation of “sympathy.” “The stimulus of emulation,” he wrote, “produces no anger, no malignant feelings.” Instead, “children are better taught . . . because of the sympathy they take in each other.” [S. Smith], “The Psychology of Monitorial Instruction,” *Joseph Lancaster*, ed. Kaestle, 99, 97.

⁵⁵ Lancaster, *Letter to John Foster*, 28; idem, *Improvements in Education Abridged* (1808), 63, 65.

mance or merit, however, were not like lifetime knighthoods but always had to be renewed in competition with other students. Medals received for making the “order of merit” list, for example, were quickly lost if the student failed to continue to compete successfully. “Every individual so honored, is conscious that he stands in a conspicuous situation; and, that his medal proclaims his merit to all who see him,” he reported. “He also knows, that it was only obtained in consequence of his diligence, either in teaching others, or in improving in his own learning; and that no indifferent or bad boy can obtain this reward—also, that if he becomes such, he will forfeit his distinctions. This is a stimulus to order and improvement, which children, taught only the influence of the cane and the rod, can never enjoy.⁵⁶ Moreover, Lancaster did not limit emulation and competition to individuals within a class. He also used them to create competitive achievement between classes. “It is common practice for one class to try to excel another,” he wrote. “The industry and exertion this creates is surprising . . . each monitor and scholar is interested in such a degree, in the contest, that he exerts his utmost abilities.”⁵⁷

Adam Smith would have been entirely comfortable with much in Lancaster’s social psychology. Like Smith, Lancaster held that the moralization of the subject was a precondition for competitive social relations. Like Smith, Lancaster linked emulation and sympathy, and emulation and self-improvement. But there is a quality in Lancaster’s pedagogy that suggests Ricardo and Malthus rather than Smith.⁵⁸ Lancaster linked emulation to competition and rivalry more closely than did Smith, and did so in a pedagogical environment—the meritocratic classroom—in which rewards and approbation were distributed according to competitive individual performance. Despite his avowed determination to promote “useful learning” among the children of the poor without disturbing the social arrangements of the ancien régime, Lancaster developed and employed a social psychology that was thoroughly bourgeois. In relying upon emulation and the creation of competitive hierarchies to motivate students, he transformed social interactions within the classroom into a zero-sum calculus of winners and losers and promoted a social psychology based on a nexus between desire and scarcity of the kind that Rousseau

⁵⁶ Lancaster, *Improvements in Education*, 2d ed., 17, 12, 74, 76, 64, 65, 70, 75, 78–79.

⁵⁷ Lancaster, *Improvements in Education*, 3d ed., 83–84.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Thomas Malthus, *On Population*, ed. G. Himmelfarb (New York, 1960), bk. 3. Hamilton makes a similar point. Hamilton, “Adam Smith and the Moral Economy of the Classroom System,” 289. See also Kenneth Dennis, “*Competition*” in *the History of Economic Thought* (New York, 1977), ch. 3, 4.

had described as “amour-propre.”⁵⁹ Lancaster’s religious project was betrayed by innocence rather than by insincerity.

Of course, the social psychology of Adam Smith had also depended on a nexus between desire and scarcity, but his construction of the nexus differed from Lancaster’s. For Smith, the growth of desire reflected the capacity of individuals for sympathy and their need for approbation. For Lancaster, the demands of meritocratic achievement dictated the manufacture of desire; the manufacture of desire in turn depended on a pedagogy that generated scarcity. Emulation, competition, approbation, and rewards generated psychological scarcity—what Locke described as “uneasiness”—and multiplied desire. The multiplication of desire thus nurtured ambition, competitive achievement, and useful learning.⁶⁰ “The mental powers of boys are similar to those of men, but in embryo.—The same stimulus that animates men to action, will have a proportionate effect on juvenile minds.—‘The hope of reward sweetens labor,’ and the prospects of something to be attained in future is very pleasant to the human mind: no man, or class of men are more useful to society, or rendered more happy by their labors, than those whose hopes depend solely on their exertions,” Lancaster insisted. “In proportion as the expectation increases, so does exertion keep pace with it, almost beyond conception. The very nature of expectation, is to operate as a wire-drawing machine to human industry. In proportion as this sweetener of human toil is intermingled in our cup, so do we remit, or increase, our activity.” Accordingly, “every man has a stimulus to action, which varies with his prospects of retribution; and it is not in the power of our minds to conceive a more unhappy being, than he has no wants; whose wishes are completely gratified, or evidently incapable of gratification—such a being desponds from mere listlessness.”⁶¹

Lancaster was not the first to link scarcity, desire, and learning. Locke had recommended doing so more than a century before. “For

⁵⁹ Jean J. Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origin of Inequality,” in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, ed. L. G. Crocker (New York, 1967); idem, *Emile; or On Education*, ed. Allan Bloom (New York, 1979). The first important modern statement of this nexus can be found in Thomas Hobbes’s discussion of human “motion” in chapter six of the *Leviathan*. Later, as MacPherson reminds us, Locke and then the utilitarians assumed that man had an unlimited desire to defend the right of unlimited appropriation of property. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or the Matter Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, ed. M. Oakshott (London, 1962); MacPherson, *Possessive Individualism*, chs. 2, 4; and idem, *Democratic Theory*, ch. 1. See also Frederick Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. W. Kaufman (New York, 1969); and Lovejoy, *Human Nature*, ch. 3.

⁶⁰ For a penetrating analysis of the role of “uneasiness” and desire in Lockean psychology, see Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston, 1960), 327–31.

⁶¹ Lancaster, *Improvements in Education*, 2d ed., 9–10.

where there is no Desire, there can be no Industry," Locke had written. The teacher should "plant and increase" desire in order to promote learning.⁶² Lancaster agreed: the classroom constituted a psychological economy in which emulation, approbation, competition, and rewards generated psychological scarcity, multiplied desire, and nurtured ambition—a decentralized panopticon for the disciplining of subjectivity.⁶³ But it was obviously a particular kind of subjectivity—one constituted in terms of desire and competitive achievement, rather than piety, renunciation, and deference. A political economy of desire underpinned the political anatomy of the "docile body."⁶⁴ What profit is to the economist of capitalism, desire is to its psychologist—and pedagogue.

In the final analysis, therefore, the rationalization of pedagogy depended on the rationalization of subjectivity. Yet it also depended on the rationalization of the social organization of the school. Lancaster implicitly recognized that emulation and approbation were, by nature, social motives and that they would not operate in a traditional learning environment based on individual instruction and recitation. Emulation and approbation designated competitive social interactions; they required a particular kind of psychological community that bound each student to every other student in a psychological economy of competitive achievement and disciplinary power or what Jeannie Oakes, describing the modern classroom, calls "negative interdependence."⁶⁵ "Classing" students together according to their proficiency," simultaneous instruction, continuous inspection, and individual promotion created such a community,

⁶² Gay, ed., *John Locke on Education*, 92–93. William Godwin came to the same conclusion shortly before Lancaster did. After arguing that motivation is the wellspring of successful pedagogy, Godwin goes on: "The most desirable mode of education is that which is careful that all the acquisitions of the pupil shall be preceded and accompanied by desire." William Godwin, *The Enquirer, Reflections on Education, Manners and Literature* (London, 1797) 3, 78. Cited in Silver, *The Concept of Popular Education*, 89.

⁶³ Locke, too, had recognized a link between emulation and classing. But because he feared the corrupting effects that the example of others might have on the virtue of the gentlemen's son, Locke recommended private tutoring rather than schooling. Lancaster, however, was interested in the education of the poor. Unlike Mandeville who had believed that "knowledge both enlarges and multiplies our desires" and therefore should be denied the poor, Lancaster believed that the increase of desire provided a solid psychological foundation on which to base the education of the poor, not a reason to keep the poor in ignorance. And he did so because he did not believe, as Mandeville had insisted, that the source of emulation is envy. Even less did he agree with Rousseau who argued that emulation and approbation increased our desires and who therefore condemned it as a source of psychological dependency and moral corruption. See Jean J. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality*, in *The First and Second Discourse: Jean Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Roger D. Masters (New York, 1964); and idem, *Emile*.

⁶⁴ After Lemert and Gillan, *Michel Foucault*, 76.

⁶⁵ Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven, 1985), 209.

unlike the classrooms of traditional charity schools that mixed students of different ages, abilities, and competencies together and instructed students on an individual rather than a simultaneous basis. "To promote emulation, and facilitate learning," Lancaster wrote, "the whole school is arranged into classes, and a monitor appointed to each class. . . . Every boy is placed next to one who can do as well or better than himself: his business is to excel him, in which case he takes precedence of him." The combination of classing and emulation promoted "lads of genius and quickness of intellect" to effort and success. "I believe," Lancaster argued, "that many lads of genius are unknown in the schools they attend, even to the masters themselves, because they have no stimulus to exertion, no opportunity of distinguishing themselves—or, that nothing happens to develop their latent powers."⁶⁶

All of this is not to suggest that Lancaster introduced his organizational innovations or his emulative psychology as a self-conscious apostle of *embourgeoisement*. But even as he insisted that he merely wished to promote useful learning and a nonsectarian morality, rather than undermine the ancien régime, his critics feared otherwise. Dr. Andrew Bell, Lancaster's chief rival as the inventor of monitorial instruction, bitterly attacked Lancaster's scheme of education as likely to unsettle social hierarchy by "elevating . . . the minds of those doomed to the drudgery of daily labour, above their condition, and thereby rendering them discontented and unhappy in their lot."⁶⁷ Davies Giddy feared that Lancasterian education would undermine "subordination," teach the poor "to despise their lot in life," and "render them factious and refractory."⁶⁸ Robert Southey believed that Lancaster's reliance on emulation and rewards was "unnecessary" and "mischievous, because thus to constantly hold out the stimulus of gain is inconsistent with any system of sound morality, to say nothing of Quakerism."⁶⁹ And Sarah Trimmer warned that Lancaster's schools were "training schools for the army of the approaching revolution."⁷⁰ She especially feared that "the *kind* of emulation" Lancaster excited and the orders of merit he sponsored would

⁶⁶ Lancaster, *Improvements* (Kaestle), 67, 76, 77–78. Elsewhere he wrote that "the object in view, in forming a School into classes, is to promote improvement. If only four or six scholars should on examination be found in a school learning the same thing, they should be formed into a class as their proficiency will be nearly doubled, by being classed, and studying in conjunction." Lancaster, *Improvements in Education Abridged*, 1."

⁶⁷ Bell, *An Experiment in Education*. . . (1805), 62, quoted in Salmon, *Lancaster's Experiments*, xivi.

⁶⁸ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 9 (1807) col. 798.

⁶⁹ Robert Southey, "A Comparative View of the Plans of Education . . .," *Quarterly Review* 6 (Oct. 1811): 280, 281, 282, 284, 285, 303.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Silver, *The Concept of Popular Education*, 47.

cultivate false and dangerous notions about the “origins” of social hierarchy, especially in light of the “extinction” of the French nobility during the French Revolution. “Boys, accustomed to consider themselves as the *nobles of a school*, may in their future lives, form a conceit of their own *trivial merits*, unless they have very sound principles, aspire to nobles of the land, and to take the place of the *hereditary nobility*.”⁷¹

Lancaster’s critics were wrong to see him as purposely undermining the social order; but they were correct to sense that when he married a commercial social psychology to a meritocratic system of classroom organization, he transformed schooling into a meritocratic marketplace and undermined the traditional role of the charity school as a nursery of pious believers and passive subjects. Lancasterian education depended on the manufacture of scarcity, the multiplication of desire, the creation of fluid and achievement-based academic hierarchies in a “natural society” of individual achievers competing against each other for scarce rewards and approbation. Adam Smith attempted, in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, to formulate a social psychology for a commercial society; Lancaster, on the other hand, endeavored to develop a social psychology for meritocratic schooling. But whereas Smith had been content to argue that commerce “civilizes” the passions, Lancaster had insisted on the commercialization of subjectivity.

School Discipline and the Rationalization of Authority

In addition to transforming the organization of learning and employing a secular, market-based grammar of motives to motivate children, Joseph Lancaster also developed an elaborate, impersonal, and highly “mechanical” system of school discipline that enveloped each student in an omnipresent system of constant and regimented activity and continuous surveillance. Like his motivational schema, Lancaster’s system of classroom discipline depended on the techniques of disciplinary power.

In part, Lancaster’s close attention to matters of discipline reflected his need to attend to the urgent practical necessity of imposing order on upwards of 350 students assembled in one large room. But Lancaster aimed for much more than bureaucratic order—he also hoped to moralize

⁷¹ Sarah Trimmer, *A Comparative View of the New Plan of Education Promulgated by Mr. Joseph Lancaster in his tracts concerning the instruction of the children of the labouring part of the community . . .* (London, 1805), 39, reprinted in part in *Joseph Lancaster*, ed. Kaestle, 105–106. See also Sarah Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity* (London, 1787), 3, 27–28, in which Trimmer defends “the various orders of people as the creations of “our wise and beneficent CREATOR” and the lack of discipline among servants.” Salmon, *Joseph Lancaster*, 25–32, discusses the clash between Lancaster and Trimmer at some length.

the poor. Lancaster willingly acknowledged that "On the subject of Order, and the necessity of it in all human affairs, the teacher may observe, *That Order is Heaven's First Law.*"⁷² Yet "order" did not require corporal punishment. Children by nature were not given to doing "wrong for *the sake of doing so.*"⁷³ Obedience did not necessarily depend on pain, intimidation, fear, terror, or awe; terror did not moralize. Disciplinary systems should simultaneously promote school order and moral education by promoting the internalization of moral authority through the cultivation of desirable habits. "[T]he force of habit is often more powerful than that of principle," he wrote. Education was "the art of conveying instruction, remedying bad habits, and creating good ones."⁷⁴ This was not a mere matter of "precept," but of "good instruction" and "practice," so that even "before the dawn of reason," children would have internalized correct habits as a "second nature."⁷⁵ Lancaster understood the word *habits* not only to refer to the "mental constitution, disposition or customs" of an individual, as it had throughout most of the eighteenth century, but also to refer to specific behavioral traits that could be deliberately and artfully cultivated through orderly, systematic, persistent repetition.⁷⁶ So understood, the cultivation of "good habits" opened up new possibilities for moral education by providing a powerful tool of internalized moral regulation that did not depend on the conscience or spiritual regeneration. Lancaster's deployment of disciplinary power thus helped transform the meaning and social role of habits into a powerful mechanism of normalization based on moral regulation through self-discipline. Habits would do for moral education and the disciplinary revolution what mechanical power had done for the industrial revolution.⁷⁷

⁷² Lancaster, *Improvements*, 3d ed., 126.

⁷³ Lancaster, *Improvements* (Kaestle), 79.

⁷⁴ Lancaster, *Letter to John Foster*, 10.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 5–6, 18.

⁷⁶ This is not to say that relying on habit was a new emphasis in moral philosophy. For centuries philosophers, as Norman Fiering notes, had defined habits as "an acquired power of the soul that gave a person a facility and consistency in some activity," whereas the modern meaning stresses "merely autonomic behavior." Moral philosophers until modern times thus understood the habit of virtue as a "conscious, intelligent, internal disposition that underlies and gives rise to virtuous acts." For short but useful histories of the place of habits in moral philosophy, see the entry under "Habit" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1933), 5: 4–6; Norman Fiering, "Benjamin Franklin and the Way to Virtue," *American Quarterly* 30 (Summer 1978): esp. 202–13; and John Passmore, "The Malleability of Man in Eighteenth-Century Thought," in *Aspects of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Earl Wasserman (Baltimore, 1965), 27–46.

⁷⁷ The image was suggested by Lancaster's rival, Andrew Bell, who described his own monitorial system as "the steam engine of the moral world," an "intellectual engine" that "has the seat of its power and operation in the human breast, is everywhere in action, and, by an infallible and irresistible impulse, in giving motion to the moral and intellectual

The key to Lancaster's integration of moral education and school discipline was his elaborate mechanism of continuous surveillance and rationalized control of all student activity.⁷⁸ School discipline should not rest on the sovereign power of the teacher. Nor should it rely on a judicious combination of love and authority as recommended by John Locke.⁷⁹ Instead, teachers should create, and rely on, new structures of impersonal power and rationalized authority. "There is an error teachers are too generally apt to fall into," Lancaster argued. It consisted "of giving commands themselves, of calling aloud for order, and silence among the scholars."⁸⁰ Merely personal authority needed to be replaced so that, as "in the army, authority is vested in the system, more than the person; the *station*, more than the man, commands obedience."⁸¹ "Personal obedience," he argued, "will not be found transferrable, and this is the case with a master, whose authority is wholly concentrated in himself, instead of being systematically diffused over the school, and capable of delegation, without diminution, to any agent." Lancaster wished to replace the personal authority of the schoolmaster with the impersonal authority of rules—what he described as "*defined duties*"—so as to prevent, echoing criminal law reformers of the period, "the existence of discretionary and arbitrary power."⁸² As much as possible, the school should run itself as a kind of self-regulating machine. "The master," he insisted, "should be a silent by-stander and inspector":

What a master says should be done; but if he teaches on this system he will find the authority is not personal—that when the pupils, as well as the schoolmaster, understand how to act and learn on this system, the system, not the master's vague, discretionary, uncertain judgment, will be in practice. A command will be obeyed by any boy, because it is a command, and the whole school will obey the common, known commands of the school, from being merely known as such, let who will give them. In a common school the authority of the master is personal, and the rod is his scepter. His absence is the immediate signal for confusion and riot; and in his absence, his assistants will rarely be minded. But in a school properly regulated and conducted

world." Andrew Bell, *Manual of Public and Private Education Founded on Discovery* (London, 1827), 15–16, quoted in Eugene and Asterie Provenzo, "Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster: An Examination of the Emergence of the Theme of Knowledge and Power" (Paper presented at the History of Education Conference, Toronto, Nov. 1988.) For an excellent "disciplinary" account of habituation in Ontario during the mid-nineteenth century, see Curtis, *Building the Educational State*, 14, 142, 367–78.

⁷⁸ Indeed, Foucault relies upon monitorial instruction and Lancaster's school to highlight key features of the disciplinary society. See *Discipline and Punish*, 175–76.

⁷⁹ Gay, ed., *John Locke on Education*, 29–31, 32, 38–39.

⁸⁰ Lancaster, *Improvements in Education Abridged*, appendix.

⁸¹ Lancaster, *The Lancasterian System of Education*, 89.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 91.

on my plan, when the master leaves school, the business will go on as well in his absence as in his presence, because his authority is not personal. This mode of insuring obedience is a novelty in the history of education.⁸³

Lancaster institutionalized his vision of rationalized authority in three ways. First, he developed a detailed plan of the spatial organization of the school and the distribution of students into “classes” and within classes. By precisely prescribing the seating and standing arrangements of all students in all classes, and by positioning a monitor in front of each class, and himself at the head of the school, Lancaster artfully created a political economy of space that made each student continuously visible to at least one monitor in a system of hierarchical observation.⁸⁴ Lancaster claimed that “education is too much confused with mere knowledge, mere precept” to the neglect of “watching continually over the conduct of youth, lest they should form connections, or engage in pursuits, inimical to their happiness and virtue.”⁸⁵ He did not intend to make the same mistake, and to this end he paid particular attention to the architectural requirements of the Lancasterian schoolroom. In 1811 he published a small pamphlet entitled *Hints and Directions for Building, Fitting Up, and Arranging School Rooms on the British System of Education*. While not strictly a panopticon, Lancaster’s schoolroom was designed around the panoptic principle—continuous surveillance. The classroom should be designed as a long square with the master’s desk on a platform at the head of the room because it would give the master “a commanding view of every child, when the floor is properly elevated, and the desks suitably arranged.” Such an arrangement would place “all the children in school . . . under the master’s eye whenever he pleases.”⁸⁶

Second, Lancaster constructed a detailed plan of the timing and nature of all student activity and movement. This included an elaborate system of uniform and standardized procedures and a quasi-military system of commands and signals given by monitors that minutely regulated the movement of pupils in and around the school, the purpose of which was to “secure implicit obedience and prompt attention.” Everything children did had to be “brought into account, or rendered visible in some conspicuous way and manner.”⁸⁷ The system of commands and

⁸³ Joseph Lancaster, *The British System of Education: Being a complete epitome of the improvements and inventions practised at the Royal Free School, Boroughs Road, Southwark* (London, 1810), 45.

⁸⁴ See Figure 1–3 in Lancaster, *Improvements* (Kaestle), opp. 74.

⁸⁵ Lancaster, *Letter to John Foster*, 5.

⁸⁶ Joseph Lancaster, *Hints and Directions for Building, Fitting Up, and Arranging School Rooms on the British System of Education* (London, 1811), 9, 17.

⁸⁷ Lancaster, *The Lancasterian System of Education*, 91, 92.

signals, for example, demanded strict economy of movement and simultaneous execution, thereby disciplining bodies through habituation and subjecting the body of students to continuous surveillance. The effect was so dramatic as to strike Sydney Smith as “quite astonishing.” “Every boy seems to be the cog of a wheel—the whole school a perfect machine. This is so far from being a burden or constraint on the boys, that Mr. Lancaster has made it quite pleasant and interesting to them, by giving it an air of military arrangement.”⁸⁸

Finally, Lancaster’s system of continuous “inspections” formed the basis, in Foucault’s terms, of a “penal accountancy” or a “micro-economy of privileges and impositions.”⁸⁹ As I suggested earlier, “inspections” served double duty in Lancaster’s pedagogy: they created a meritocratic structure of educational opportunity, and they subjected students to continuous surveillance of their academic performance and moral behavior. This system enabled Lancaster to rank order the students in every class in an ordinal system of normalizing judgement.⁹⁰ In addition, Lancaster rewarded students with various insignias, honors, and prizes, or fined and subjected them to a highly standardized and graded calculus of “physical”—but not corporal—punishment—from putting signs around their necks to placing students in wooden shackles or hanging them in a basket from the ceiling like “birds in a cage.”⁹¹ The element of spectacle and ceremony in Lancaster’s system of physical punishments contradicts the notion that Lancaster was committed to promoting a system of disciplinary power, but a closer examination of his psychology of punishment underscores his disciplinary objectives and his commitment to the “normalization” of subjectivity. Lancaster insisted that punishment could not be reformative if it was associated with anger and intimidation.

⁸⁸ Smith, “Comparative View,” 111. Another reviewer in the *Philanthropist* was also struck by the “military order” of the school and the way it was “interwoven into the school discipline, but without the least severity.” “On the Importance of Promoting the General Education of the Poor,” *Philanthropist* (1811): 83. Foucault, of course, makes much of the military origins of the techniques of disciplinary power.

⁸⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 180–84.

⁹⁰ It is important to note, as Hoskin and Macvie point out, that Lancaster’s system of “inspections” and evaluation was ordinal rather than interval-level: while it ranked students in a hierarchy, it did not measure or signal the value of the differences or “gaps” between students. Later, during the nineteenth century, other reformers would develop far more precise interval-level measures of academic and moral performance. Nor was Lancaster’s system “grammatocentric” in that Lancaster did not keep written case histories of each student that became the basis of the student’s record. For these reasons, Lancaster did not employ a fully “modern” system of human accountability as in an examination system based on interval-level units of measurement and written case histories. See Hoskin and Macvie, “Accounting and Examination,” 126.

⁹¹ Lancaster, *Improvements* (Kaestle), 74–76, 80–92; idem, *The Lancasterian System of Education*, 92–96.

Without “coolness” of mind, punishment could have “no salutary effect on the youthful mind” necessary to the development of an understanding of the consequences of behavior and the development of reason and virtuous habits. Lancaster also assumed, echoing the criminal law reformers of his day—William Allen, Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir James MacIntosh, Henry (later Lord) Brougham, Jeremy Bentham, and James Mill—that certainty of detection and punishment, rather than the dramaturgical demonstration of authority, would convince the offender to abandon his waywardness.⁹² “When he finds how easily his punishments are repeated—that he himself is made the instrument—and no respite or comfort for him, but by behaving well, it is more likely that he will change for the better,” Lancaster concluded.⁹³

Despite a readiness to resort to physical restraints and ceremonial punishments, therefore, Lancaster’s psychology of punishment did not depend on intimidation and coercion, but on a combination of habituation and shame.⁹⁴ In particular, Lancaster assumed that since his system of punishments promoted feelings of shame and disgrace, it promoted habits of order and industry. Public, impersonal, and individualized punishments of the kind he employed brought public ridicule and disapprobation upon the offender. Disciplinary power and moralization, no less than meritocratic achievement and useful learning, depended on a particular kind of sociability; disapprobation and shame, much like emulation and approbation, were fundamentally social processes that presupposed a psychological community with sufficiently strong interpersonal bonds, not merely to guarantee their effectiveness, but to make their use possible. Indeed, emulation and shame, approbation and disapprobation were simply complementary idioms of the same grammar of motives, as Locke had insisted more than a century before.⁹⁵ In Lan-

⁹² From the late eighteenth through the early nineteenth centuries, three issues particularly agitated criminal law and penal reformers: the heavy reliance of the criminal law on capital punishment to deter crime, the wide discretionary power of judges to set aside capital punishment if they so wished, and the state of the prisons. Lancaster’s disciplinary system was remarkably similar in its principal components and psychology to the ideas of the leading criminal law and penal reformers of his day. Undoubtedly that similarity partly explains why they were, for the most part, such fervent supporters of Lancaster, or at least Lancasterian education. For the history of penal reform, see Randell McGowen, “The Image of Justice and Reform of the Criminal Law in Early Nineteenth Century England,” *Buffalo Law Review* (1985); idem, “A Powerful Sympathy: Terror, the Prison, and Humanitarian Reform in Early Nineteenth Century Britain,” *Journal of British Studies* 25 (July 1986): 315–19; Douglas Hay, “Property, Authority, and the Criminal Law,” in D. Hay, et al., *Albion’s Fatal Tree* (New York, 1975); Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, chs. 1, 2; Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain*, ch. 2.

⁹³ Lancaster, *Improvements* (Kaestle), 81–82.

⁹⁴ Gay, ed., *John Locke on Education*, 34–35.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 36. Durkheim describes a similar combination in the Jesuit disciplinary system. Durkheim, *Evolution of Educational Thought*, 263–64.

caster's school, therefore, unlike later nineteenth-century models of disciplinary pedagogy that depended upon a combination of conscience and habituation, Lancaster's psychology depended on shame and habituation.

Lancaster's moral psychology then, together with his system of continuous surveillance and rationalized authority, threw a dense net of "panoptic" or "disciplinary" power over students so as to render each student continuously busy, visible, individualized, classified, accountable, moralized, and rank-ordered. Lancaster transformed discipline into a complex structure of minute and diffuse micropractices of rules, duties, requirements, punishments, and commands intended to secure order through promoting individual moralization. In replacing the authority of the teacher with the authority of rules, he rejected the ritualized exercise of sovereign power and substituted an anonymous and functional power that was not so much personal, negative, and direct as positive, impersonal, individualized, affective, and constitutive. Lancaster used power to construct new forms of subjectivity, not simply to intimidate students into compliance: pedagogy should be constitutive rather than imperative, disciplinary rather than repressive. As Lancaster himself proclaimed, a new day had dawned in the history of moral discipline; the teacher as inspector-general had replaced the teacher as sovereign master.⁹⁶ The significance of Lancaster's disciplinary system, therefore, resides not so much in his use of mechanical and factory metaphors to describe his system of school discipline, but in his conception of the classroom as a competitive market and in his attempt to create a psychological economy held together not by bonds of fear and intimidation, but by processes that simultaneously individualized students and integrated them into new forms of sociability and social discipline.⁹⁷

Conclusion.

Lancaster's use of monitors, the classification and classing of students, the adoption of simultaneous instruction, the employment of emulation, competition, rewards, and approbation, the dependence upon continuous surveillance and inspection, and the development of impersonal structures of power and authority, all reveal Lancaster to have been much more

⁹⁶ Bentham for one also recognized this after reading Lancaster's *Improvements*. Lancaster's innovations inspired Bentham to write his *Chrestomathia* (1816), a work that sums up the reformist spirit of hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement as his *Panopticon*. See Jeremy Bentham, "Chrestomathia," in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. J. Bowring (Edinburgh, 1843), 8: 1–192.

⁹⁷ On Lancasterian schools as "factories" or as means for socializing students into the habits of "industrial discipline," see Kaestle, ed., *Joseph Lancaster*, 11; Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 415.

than an innovative and pragmatic economizer. Lancaster may have simply hoped to promote “useful learning” and Christian morality, but his innovations reveal him to be an unwitting champion of essentially bourgeois assumptions about human nature and social relations in the classroom. While Lancaster and most of his supporters look upon Lancasterian pedagogy as an effort to produce an industrious and disciplined populous and create a harmonious and Christian society bound together by bonds of “sympathy” and “benevolence,” in fact, as his Establishment opponents feared, Lancaster’s pedagogy was a Trojan horse in the schoolyard of the ancien régime, adding to the threat posed by Catholic emancipation, parliamentary reform, repeal of the corn laws, and the new poor laws.⁹⁸ Lancaster’s school was not simply a cheap and effective engine for the education of the poor in industry and morality, but a complex machinery of individual ambition, achievement, and moralization based on bourgeois assumptions about human nature and modeled on bourgeois images of social relations. While Lancaster clearly intended his pedagogy to expand the social boundaries of moral authority by promoting the more effective internalization of moral authority, his pedagogy also promoted the transformation of social discipline by promoting the *embourgeoisement* of subjectivity.

Lancaster’s importance lies, then, in the seminal contribution he made to the *embourgeoisement* of the school—to the development of a secularized meritocratic classroom and its associated normative structures and psychology. Lancaster bequeathed to nineteenth-century England and America a model of schooling organized around an individualized, competitive, and meritocratic structure; a classroom psychology based on scarcity, desire, ambition, shame, habituation, and the construction of a new form of commercial sociability—the meritocratic achiever driven by ambition to excel over others but yet needing their approbation; and a highly rationalized structure of school authority and continuous surveillance. In a word, Lancaster’s endeavors helped create the school organization and social psychology of a developing bourgeois education; he replaced a pedagogy of subordination, piety, deference, and social

⁹⁸ For the theory and ideology of the ancien régime, see J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1688–1832* (Cambridge, 1985). For the popularity of the language of “sympathy” and “benevolence” among Lancaster’s supporters, see William Allen, *Life of William Allen with Selections from his Correspondence* (Philadelphia, 1847), 1: 71; “On the Duty and Pleasure of Cultivating Benevolent Dispositions,” *The Philanthropist* 1 (1811): 1, 3, 5, 7; [W. Allen] “On the Importance of Promoting the General Education of the Poor,” *The Philanthropist* 1 (1811): 78; H. Brougham, *Lives of Philosophers of the Time of George 111* (London, 1866), 200; R. MacIntosh, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir James MacIntosh* (London, 1836), 11: 365–66, 134; [J. Mill] “Schools for all, not Schools for Churchmen Only,” *The Philanthropist* 3 (1813): 160–62.

estates with a pedagogy much more appropriate to a fluid class society organized around market relations and processes.

More broadly, Lancasterian education might be seen as part of a much broader process associated with the market revolution—the rationalization of subjectivity and the transformation of social discipline. On the one side, the creation of new agencies of moral authority responsible for the moralization of individual subjectivity—the bourgeois family, the prison, the hospital, the asylum, the charity school, the Sunday school—significantly expanded the social boundaries of moral authority. At the same time, by employing new psychologies to promote the more effective internalization of moral authority, pedagogues hoped to penetrate and shape subjectivity to an extent unknown previously. It is this transformation of the relationship between social authority and subjectivity that is at the heart of the “disciplinary” revolution and locates the disciplinary revolution within the market revolution, and Joseph Lancaster within the disciplinary revolution. Together, the expansion of social boundaries of moral authority and the moralization of the individual institutionalized new forms of “disciplinary” power and nurtured the growth of the modern “soul.”

The great irony of all this, of course, is that Lancaster was not so much a self-conscious partisan of either the market or the disciplinary revolution but an innocent practitioner of both. Lancaster saw himself as a practical educational innovator and a nonsectarian Christian moralist attempting to promote useful learning and the moralization of the poor. But his commitment to social utilitarianism and Christian moralism prompted him to use organizational and psychological expedients that transformed the social relations and social psychology of charity schooling. In effect, in pursuing his objectives, Lancaster naively adopted or developed innovations that were either themselves expressions of the market or disciplinary revolutions, or promoted them. Some innovations—monitorial and simultaneous instruction, for example—were pragmatic responses to organizational needs but carried within them the latent technologies of disciplinary power and meritocratic sorting. Others were innocently borrowed from military and mechanical models of disciplinary power and rationalized authority. And yet others—emulative approbation, competition, and the use of rewards and prizes especially—were innocently borrowed from an emergent market culture. Lancaster was not, therefore, a self-conscious ideologue of the market revolution, or the disciplinary revolution, or bourgeois society. But because he was a committed social utilitarian, moral reformer, and pedagogical innovator, he helped play the role of “midwife” to the birth of a disciplinary

pedagogy and a class society as much as anyone in education.⁹⁹ Or, to put the argument in somewhat different terms, Joseph Lancaster promoted the *embourgeoisement* of modern schooling not because bourgeois schooling was simply an “unintended consequence” of his reform activities but because he incorporated into his own pedagogy the ascendent “cognitive structures” and cultural codes of late eighteenth-century England—the grammars of motive, the normative commitments, the moral economy—that had long since been penetrated by bourgeois constructions and assumptions even though they were often expressed in a conservative religious idiom. In the last analysis, the *embourgeoisement* of English schooling was an expression of a “cultural revolution” linked to the formation of the bourgeois state.¹⁰⁰

In an important sense, therefore, the story of Lancasterian schooling in the history of education loosely parallels the process of rationalization that Weber made the subject of his most famous work—the transmutation of the “Protestant Ethic” into the “Spirit of Capitalism.” In much the same manner that the Puritan idea of the calling nurtured (but did not create) the norms and behavioral patterns of capital accumulation, so did Lancaster’s pedagogy nurture and legitimate the norms and organizational arrangements that promoted rationalized and meritocratic schooling. Lancaster did not will a meritocratic society any more than Puritans willed capitalism, but his innovations did much to institutionalize meritocratic education. But the Weberian analogy has its limits, and for reasons related to one of R. H. Tawney’s criticisms of Weber’s thesis. Tawney criticized Weber for failing to recognize the influence of bourgeois intellectual assumptions in the construction of the “Protestant ethic.” Where Weber described a Protestant Ethic corrupted over time by the Spirit of Capitalism, Tawney described a Protestant ethic conceived in original sin. Similarly, bourgeois notions of human nature and social relations shaped Lancaster’s pedagogy. We can no more talk of the transformation of Lancaster’s “Quaker ethic” into bourgeois education than we can talk of the transformation of the “Protestant ethic” into the “Spirit of Capitalism.”¹⁰¹ C. B. MacPherson has written similarly of the way in

⁹⁹ Harold Perkin makes a similar but not identical argument in discussing the making of a “class” society in England. Perkin argues that religion was the “midwife of class,” but he conceives class in conventional terms as a social grouping, rather than as a particular structure of social relations, institutional arrangements, and broad social *processes* of class formation. See Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780–1880* (Toronto, 1969), 196. For a view of religion as the midwife of “class” much closer to the one I have suggested here, see Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium* (New York, 1978).

¹⁰⁰ On state formation as a process of cultural revolution, see Corrigan and Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*.

¹⁰¹ R. H. Tawney, “Forward” to Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (1904; New York, 1958), 4–5, 7–8, 10.

which Hobbes and Locke and their successors incorporated “market concepts” of human nature (what he calls “possessive individualism”) and social relations into liberal political theory.¹⁰² Joseph Lancaster did something similar in pedagogical theory and practice, and therein lies his significance in the history of education and the history of disciplinary power.

¹⁰² MacPherson, *Possessive Individualism*; idem, “Market Concepts in Political Theory,” in *Democratic Theory* (Oxford, 1973), ch. 10. The fact that Locke wrote from a religious rather than a secular perspective as MacPherson assumed, only heightens the similarity between Locke and Lancaster.