



***Beyond the Industrial  
School — Past and Present***

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# Schools as Factories: The Limits of a Metaphor

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1467-9752.12525>

# **‘Our Schools Are Factories’— What Might it Mean?**

- Sir Ken Robinson (RIP)— ‘Schools are Factories but should be Farms’
- The Rhetorical-Pejorative Argument from Resemblance—and objections
- The Philosophical-Genealogical Argument from Shared Characteristics—and objections
- The Historical Argument from Shared Origins: Factory Schools and the Myths of the Machine

# The Supposed Affinities

- *Congregation*
- *Massification*
- *Compulsion and Compliance*
- *Credentialisation*
- *Standardisation*
- *Alienation and symbolic violence*

# The Factory School: Arkwright and Cromford (1776)



# Roots of the Affinities: The Factory Schools (1770-1820)

## Joseph Lancaster and the 'New Plan'

- *by means of which, one master alone can educate one thousand boys, in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, as effectually, and with as little Trouble, as Twenty or Thirty have ever been instructed by the usual modes of Tuition (1806)*

- Andrew Bell and 'Machine Logic'

*Machinery has been contrived for spinning twenty skeins of silk, and twenty hanks of cotton, where one was spun before; but no contrivance has been sought for, or devised, that twenty children may be educated in moral and religious principles with the same facility and expense, as one was taught before. (1809)*

## Thomas Barnard and the Division of Labour (1809)

- *The grand principle of Dr. Bell's system is the division of labour applied to intellectual purposes...It is the division of labour in his schools that leaves the master the easy task of directing the movements of the whole machine, instead of toiling ineffectually at a single part. The principle in manufactories, and in schools is the same.*



## Jeremy Bentham and the Panopticon Anticipated (*Chrestomathia*, 1816)

*the object of the inspection principle in education is ..to make them not only suspect, but be assured that whatever they do is known, even though that should not be the case... Would happiness then be most likely to be increased or diminished by this discipline? Call them soldiers, call them monks, **call them machines**: so they be but happy ones, I should not care*

# Testing the Metaphor

- 'Liberty's Dawn' (Griffin, Mokyr) and the factory space
- Industrial culture, working class solidarity and experiment
- Owen and the Factory School as technological-ecological emancipation
- The 'new vision' of the industrial school and the experience of its pupils
- (Factory) Schools, mass education and the paradoxes of faith. Stow and the 'non-factory' school
- Schools **were** not factories

# The Factory School: Dale, Owen and New Lanark (1800)



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Plate 18.2 G. Hunt, Dancing Class, The Institute, New Lanark, c.1820, coloured engraving, New Lanark Conservation Trust. Photo: reproduced by kind permission of New Lanark Conservation Trust.

This shows a schoolroom scene in the Institute for the Formation of Character, with the dancing children and famous visual aids. The aids were the work of Catherine Whitwell, sister of the Owenite architect Stedman Whitwell and allegedly an advocate of free love.

# Alternative Metaphors?

- Schools and belonging
- Schools and the poetics of **place**: schools and their communities and neighbourhoods and ecosystems
- Schools and values affiliations
- Schools *as* communities
- COVID 19 and the virtual school
- Schools **are** not factories