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Expanding Educational Access in the Age of Social Realism

INTRODUCTION

In 1855, the Danish parliament enacted a law allowing anyone with twenty children to form a school. The path to a private option was part reaction formation, part pragmatism. In 1822, Frederik VI strongly recommended that the newly formed state schools adopt a harsh version of the Bell–Lancaster method as a means of instilling military discipline (Bugge 1965; Reeh and Larsen 2015, 47). But after a decade, educators, intellectuals, and parents agreed that Bell and Lancaster's monitorial approach was a poor fit with Danish educational culture (Larsen et al. 2013). When many parents boycotted the public system, a patchwork of private, evangelical schools developed across the countryside to fill the gap. Although the ruling National Liberals initially opposed the private schools, politicians across the political spectrum ultimately voted for the 1855 bill permitting parental control of education, because they viewed it as the best means to expand rural access to schooling (Kålund-Jørgensen 1953–1956). Subsequent laws established an assessment regime that allowed local communities and schools to make their own decisions about curricula, pedagogical methods, examinations, and quality (Gjerløff and Jacobsen 2014). Danish leaders accepted that the people wanted some control over their own schooling.

How different then was the British experience during this period! In 1870, the British Liberal Party government finally enacted a public primary school system, to be overseen by newly created local school boards. Many elites only begrudgingly came around to the idea of educating workers and establishing a public system; yet, they were persuaded at last when the Second Reform Act of 1867 extended suffrage to most white males. Nearly everyone agreed that the new group of working-class voters needed to be educated if they were to wield their new power responsibly. But while Liberal and Whig politicians

agreed on the need for a public system, sharp antagonisms about voluntary church schools divided the parties. After a political bloodbath, the 1870 act retained the sharply contested voluntary church schools but eliminated other alternative forms of instruction. British reformers also developed increasingly stringent assessment protocols at the national level during this period; in particular, the Revised Code of 1862 established a payment-by-results system that made school funding dependent on elementary school students' outcomes on examinations. Thus, while Danish reformers made access a greater priority than establishing quality standards, British reformers closed some schools to ensure quality, even if this reduced educational access for poor children.

The cultural frames of British and Danish authors informed struggles over education in both countries. British authors continued to hold that the primary purpose of education was to build individual character and they also increasingly perceived schools' utility for maintaining social stability. Liberal ideas increased leftist support for the rights of the working class to education, but even Victorian social reform novelists sympathetic to structural injustices often blamed the poor for their own predicament and paid scant attention to the social investment benefits of workforce training (Collini 1985, 31). Writers' depictions of the poor quality of schools lent support for quality control measures, more uniform pedagogical methods, and assessment regimes implemented by national rather than local authorities. In addition, the authors' depictions of the poor quality of working-class schools motivated the closure of many alternative educational programs.

In contrast, Danish narratives linked education to the project of building a national culture and celebrated schooling for farmers and workers as a vital tool for preparing every individual to contribute to society (Nygaard 2009). Unlike in Britain, writers neither blamed the working class for their own circumstances nor expressed fears about the dangers of working-class literacy. Rather, Danish authors from all political persuasions supported education as a means of cultural formation ("dannelse") to produce useful citizens and a strong society. Concerns about quality did not prevent alternative school forms, but motivated national government subsidies for school construction and teacher education. The king's imposition of the monitorial method on the public schools drew widespread criticism because the mechanistic methods were unsuitable for the Danish mentality (Grundtvig 2013/1838). Finally, authors depicted government authority in much more benign terms than their British colleagues; yet they also affirmed the importance of local government in community self-determination.

Some British and Danish authors became involved in movements to expand schooling to underserved populations. Writers such as Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, and Elizabeth Gaskell wrote heart-wrenching stories that stirred charitable impulses toward the poor. Authors consciously recognized their power to fan the flame of public attention and they used their stories to

give emotional weight to studies conducted by their reforming friends such as James Kay-Shuttleworth. Dickens complained that Kay-Shuttleworth's dismal statistics about poverty were difficult to fathom, but nevertheless, he and Gaskell brought these numbers to life. Matthew Arnold sustained a drumroll of attention to the importance of preserving culture and, as a brother-in-law to William Forster, he played a direct role in shaping the 1870 legislation.

In Denmark, J.A. Heiberg, the most important playwright of the early nineteenth century, wrote vaudevilles for mass audiences in Copenhagen that conveyed his message of education for cultural formation. Heiberg was an active member of the National Liberal Party and his Hegelian notions of an organic society had an enormous impact on the party's political formulations. NFS Grundtvig inspired the free school and folk high school movement that greatly expanded education among rural peasants. The poems, songs, and stories of Grundtvig and Bernard Severin Ingemann enveloped rural laborers in the mists of God and patriotism and expanded their appreciation for Danish literature and history.

CHALLENGES AND SCHOOL CHOICES IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Both Britain and Denmark encountered strong economic, political, social, and educational challenges in the nineteenth century – all of which contributed to the pressures for school reform. In Britain, continuing industrialization created several incentives for developing an educational system. Early industrialization, during the period from 1760 to 1830, had been driven by labor-saving technologies that diminished workforce skills, but the next phase, which began around 1830, entailed technological innovations that demanded higher levels of human capital investment and arguably created a demand-pull for education (Galor and Moav 2006, 89; Becker et al. 2011, 97). Industrialization also created the factory system and industrialists' habit of hiring children lead to considerable social malaise; by 1835, children under the age of thirteen constituted about 15 percent of textile workers (Nardinelli 1980, 740–2). The Factory Act of 1833 prohibited the labor of children under the age of 9 years old and slowed somewhat the pace at which children were being funneled into factories, but this put more children back on the streets and fueled the need for urban schools (Evans 1985, 2).

Political changes – especially those associated with democratization – also had implications for schooling. The Corn Laws instituted protectionist tariffs that helped agricultural workers by driving up prices; but tariffs hurt exports by cotton textile manufacturers, who waged war on the tariffs. Parliament repealed the Corn Laws in a series of acts culminating in 1846; however, the repeal drove down grain prices, impoverished agricultural workers, created significant social unrest, and leant momentum to the push for democratization (Schonhardt-Bailey 2006).

Social movements such as the Chartist movement protested the politics of impoverishment, and demanded full male suffrage, secret ballots, and the opportunity for those without property to join parliament. British elites saw education in a new light, a vehicle for diminishing social unrest, refining the work habits of the poor, ameliorating the casualties of industrialization, and instilling obedience in future workers (Evans 1985, 3). The competition between various religious groups, meanwhile, continued to fuel school expansion, yet this competition aggravated tensions between those with differing educational philosophies. Dissenting sects advocated for a secular national education system while the Anglican Church sought to slow that project and preserve voluntary church schools (Roper 1975, 185–202).

Finally, reformers grappled with educational deficiencies in both the access to and the quality of education provided to the middle and lower classes, as the shortcomings of the voluntary church societies schools became clear. Geographical disparities were immense and urban children, in particular, were underserved. The Manchester's Education Aid Society found that the poorest children were in neither education nor work (Marcham 1973, 184). Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth's national statistics on the proportion of elementary students to the general population suggested that 1 in 5 people attended elementary school in Zurich, 1 in 7 in Denmark, 1 in 11.5 in England, and 1 in 17.6 in France (Kay-Shuttleworth 1862, 220). The quality of schools was also extremely uneven (Millgate 2004, 52).

Denmark confronted its own economic, political, and social problems in this period. After Nelson decimated the fleet in 1807 and the country declared bankruptcy in 1813, Denmark languished economically until the late 1820s (Kjældgaard 2012, 28–31). Agricultural production replaced commercial shipping as the dominant sector and the center of wealth shifted from Copenhagen to provincial cities (Kirmmse 1977, 3). Land reform narrowed the gap between the landed gentry and former serfs, but reforms also amplified divisions between those who had land and those who did not (Lindhardt 1951, 5–9). The economic slump ended around 1828 when Britain eased Corn Law restrictions on Danish exports of grain; and production increased by a third between 1815 and mid-century. Land reform succeeded in creating a new stratum of middle-class farmers who were ready to take an active role in society. Until 1870, agriculture constituted over half of the country's total commercial production; yet industrial sectors started expanding as well and new technological breakthroughs, such as the steam engine and railroad transportation system, inspired the need for greater practical skills (Jespersen 2011, 152–6). The resurgence of the economy and technological change expanded interest in the skills of farmers and workers.

Danish policymakers also grappled with political challenges during this period. As the economic crisis took its toll, many Danes began to lose their faith in absolutism. Inspired in part by the growing popularity of liberal ideas across Europe, the urban bourgeoisie and intelligentsia formed the National

Liberal Party to advocate for constitutional reform. The bourgeoisie and the rural middle-class farmers were accorded a more formal role in public affairs in the 1830s. Ordinances in 1831 and 1834 established advisory estate assemblies to consult on laws governing civil rights, property rights, and taxes, and municipal self-governance was established. These dynamics heightened the perceived need for higher-education for at least the bourgeoisie and middle class (Larsen 2010, Vol. 1, 82).

Economic and political tensions aggravated the divide between urban and rural areas, spurring a religious social movement in the countryside. Revivalists distanced themselves from the dry rationality of enlightenment-era Christianity, and focused instead on the Bible and the direct experience of God (Lindhardt 1951, 5–9). Evangelical farmers sought to scale back the national governments' interference in their communities; they developed schools to obtain knowledge and to enhance their capacities for political participation (Larsen 1899, 202–3). Meanwhile, religion became less important to urban intellectuals; for example, as one indication, only 5 percent of Copenhagen's population could fit into its churches at any one time. Poet Adam Oehlenschläger celebrated the deistic spirit and was accused of paganism. Some urban intellectuals became so contemptuous of religion that in 1799, a royal pronouncement was issued barring the press from mocking religion (Lindhardt 1951, 5–9).

Despite Denmark's early creation of a national education system, reformers also grappled with problems of educational access and quality, particularly in rural communities. Market towns were required to provide two types of public primary schools (almueskoler): fee schools (borgerskoler) for the bourgeoisie and free schools (friskoler) for the working class. But an 1837 study found that only sixty-six towns had both types (Larsen 1899, 56–63). The share of children attending paying (as opposed to free) schools was 30 percent in Aalborg but 75 percent in Federicia. Poor rural parents preferred keeping their children at work and out of school; fines were preferable to losing income. Secondary Latin schools largely served upper-class youth and had few slots (Larsen 1899, 101–3). Even market towns chronically underfunded education and school buildings were often of poor quality. Most schools had only one teacher and many Jutland teachers taught at two schools (Larsen 1899, 97). Teachers had low wages, limited skills, and were frequently expected to carry out religious duties on top of their teaching responsibilities (Larsen 1899, 105–6).

Despite similar challenges, British and Danish reformers chose different reforms to improve the access to and quality of mass education. First, Britain began with voluntary church society schools and finally created a *public system* in 1870. At the same time, educationalists initially expanded *access* with educational experiments, but quality concerns eventually motivated them to eliminate alternative schools. Thus, urban school boards created "ragged schools" for the poorest children; but the 1870 act provided no funding for these schools due to quality concerns. Third, the monitorial method remained the leading *pedagogical* method (especially after alternative forms were eliminated) and

reformers (driven by quality concerns) developed increasingly standardized curricula with fixed lesson plans. Finally, on mechanisms for *administrative oversight*, the national government's role in education was limited to setting rules of the game until 1870, but reformers pushed for a stronger national assessment regime to assure quality in schooling (Taunton Commission 2018/1868). By demanding that schools meet the criteria of school inspectors, these reforms diminished community efforts to expand access (Schupf 1972).

Danish bureaucrats made different choices from British ones. First, Denmark began with a *public system*, but politicians subsequently expanded access by permitting and subsidizing private schools (Ydesen and Andreasen 2014). Second, on the issue of *pedagogy*, after the widespread outcry against the mechanistic techniques used by monitorial teaching, Philanthropen methods again became popular and schools gained control over their own curricula (Larsen 1899, 142–3). Thus, educator Provst Michelsen noted that the "school ordinance of 1814 failed because it forced all students without exception to attain a specific knowledge level" (Skovmand 1944, 41). Third, regarding *administrative oversight*, reformers placed municipalities, schools, and teachers in charge of assessment (Ydesen and Andreasen 2014). Danish policymakers addressed quality concerns by improving teachers' skills. An academy for training teachers, the Blaagaard's Academy, was established in 1791 and an 1857 act set a goal for educating teachers with a three-year course combining theory and practical learning. In 1860, an exam was created for teachers ("Skole og undervisning 1814–2014").

The following sections explore how networks of authors framed the issue of education and contributed to movements for educational reform.

AUTHORS AND SCHOOLING IN BRITAIN

Authors' Networks

In the mid-nineteenth century, fiction evolved from romanticism into realism with novels about ordinary people in a wide range of life circumstances; writers strove for authenticity in their aching portrayals of social problems. Even when realists such as Dickens waxed sentimental about their characters, they explored weighty themes associated with industrialization and urbanization (Guy 1996).

Activist novelists congregated with philosophers and journalists in several overlapping networks. The Christian Socialist movement and the *Westminster Review* staked out early ground for writers pursuing social justice issues. In 1848, F.D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and Thomas Hughes developed the Christian Socialist movement to advance social justice within the church, to protect workers from exploitation, and to curb the revolutionary tendencies of the working class (Kingsley 1877, 92–4; Winn 1960, 64–5). Charles Kingsley was an Anglican country priest, educational enthusiast, and novelist, whose

novel *Yeast* became a best-seller among social activists. Kingsley's childhood friend, Thomas Hughes (Liberal MP), wrote the classic schoolboy novel, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857). Kingsley worked tirelessly for the poor as a country parson and, during the Chartist uprising, he distributed placards around London to recognize the protestors' suffering, express the concern of the working clergy, and urge restraint: "WORKMEN OF ENGLAND! You have more friends than you think…Workers of England, be wise, and then you *must* be free, for you will be *fit* to be free" (Kingsley 1877, 95–6).

The *Westminster Review* was another center of gravity for social justice warriors. Utilitarians Jeremy Bentham and John Mill initially created the magazine in 1823 as an organ for Radical political views and it was rejuvenated by John Stuart Mill. In the 1850s, editor John Chapman and assistant Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) fostered an informal salon of writers and philosophers (Hale 2012, 977–87). John Stuart Mill wrote to Charles Kingsley that "There are few men between whom and myself any nearer approximation in opinion could be more agreeable to me" (Kingsley 1877, 297). Evans was extremely close to political philosopher Herbert Spencer, so much so that rumors circulated after her death that they had been lovers. Political activist and novelist Harriet Martineau, who also wrote for the Review, self-deprecatingly claimed to be better at popularizing political-economic concepts than at striking new theoretical ground. Lord Brougham and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge commissioned Martineau to write a fictional work, *Poor Laws and Paupers Illustrated* (1833–34), to depict the new poverty regime in appealing and engaging vignettes (Freedgood 1995, 48).

An overlapping network of social reform novelists associated with Charles Dickens included William Makepeace Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, Wilkie Collins, Matthew Arnold, and Anthony Trollope, among others. Thackeray, who ran for Parliament as a Liberal, was perhaps the leading novelist of the age besides Dickens (Bryce 1903, 120–1). But the two became estranged when Thackeray publicly mentioned Dicken's affair with the actress "Nellie." Gaskell was at the epicenter of Dissenting politics in Manchester, as she was the daughter of one Unitarian minister and wife of another, social reformer William Gaskell. Charles Dickens adopted Gaskell as protégé after reading her *Mary Barton*, and she contributed extensively to Dickens' *Household Words* and then *All the Year Round* (Pollard 1965, 19–21). Gaskell resented Dickens' edits and demands for faster turnaround; Dickens, in turn, expressed frustrated with her resistance in the disturbing comment, "If I were Mr G, oh heaven how I would beat her!" Gaskell socialized with Thackeray (their daughters were best friends), Matthew Arnold and his wife, Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charlotte Brontë, Harriet Martineau, John Ruskin, and Thomas Carlyle, often in their summer homes in the Lake District (Hopkins 1931, 58). Gaskell met Brontë at James Kay-Shuttleworth's summer residence and later wrote about their close friendship in her biography of Charlotte Brontë (Peterson 2007, 902–6).

Matthew Arnold, whose "White Cliffs of Dover" cemented his reputation as a leading poet of the nineteenth century, bridged the worlds of literature, politics, and education like no other and had unparalleled influence in education reform. Arnold supported his career as a poet by serving as a school inspector for Dissenting schools for thirty-five years, after being private secretary to Lord Lansdowne (Whig MP and education council member) (Russell 1904, 11, 54). Arnold's favorite sister, Jane, was married to William Forster, the architect of the Elementary Education Act of 1870; Forster sponsored Arnold for membership in the Athenaeum Club (Arnold, December 19, 1855). Arnold was close friends with Thackeray and a great fan of Dickens, noting about *David Copperfield*, "Intimately, indeed, did Dickens know the Middle Class" (Russell 1904, 70). Arnold ardently admired Coleridge and Wordsworth, was close to Coleridge's nephew, and was inspired in his educational philosophy by Coleridge's conceptions of individual self-development (Raleigh 1957, 11).

Trollope (a self-identified "Conservative-Liberal") characterized most Victorian authors as Liberals (Nardin 1990, 684); however, novelists such as Benjamin Disraeli and Edward Bulwer-Lytton left the Whigs to become important Conservative politicians. As prime minister, Disraeli advocated for Tory Democracy or one nationism, and he laid out the foundations of Tory Democracy in the immensely popular novels, *Coningsby* and *Sybil*. Disraeli articulated a Janus-faced political strategy: telling workers that Tories were their ally against industrial ills and telling the bourgeoisie that Tories were a bulwark against a revolutionary revolt by the Chartists. Ultimately Disraeli's social reforms between 1874 and 1880 did more for the middle class than for workers and he was more interested in imperialism than in social reform (Smith 1967, 2–6).

Bulwer-Lytton encouraged Disraeli artistically and politically. Upon reading *Sybil*, Bulwer-Lytton congratulated Disraeli on "the remarkable felicity with which you make the coldest insipidities of each life entertaining & racy" (Bulwer-Lytton, April 10, 1830). Bulwer-Lytton recognized the importance of reaching a broad reading audience and was an early subscriber of cheap paperback novels. In a letter to Bulwer-Lytton's son on July 15, 1891, Thomas Hardy was "struck with the way in which the late Lord Lytton" recognized the importance of "cheapness"; therein "lay the secret of the future in wide literary fame, & abolished prohibitiveness as between himself & the mass of the thinking public" (Hardy and Millgate 1990, 64). During Disraeli's first political race, Bulwer-Lytton served as his de facto campaign manager and helped his candidate to wield the power of spectacle. After Disraeli's opponent's pompous entrance, Disraeli mounted the porch roof of the Red Lion Inn and stressed that, as an independent, he was beholden to no one. At the conclusion of a stirring speech, Disraeli pointed to the inn's mascot, a statue of a lion, and with characteristic verve claimed, "When the poll is declared, I shall be there," pointing to the head, "and my opponent will be there," at the unfortunate tail. While Disraeli lost that battle, Bulwer-Lytton helped Disraeli to look like a man of the people (Cline 1942, 125–7).

Authors' Narratives about Education

Victorian writers were generally more enthusiastic about a mass public education system than their predecessors. Granted, authors of diverse political persuasions held to different ideas about what role religious authority should play in schooling, but as in the earlier period, there was also much on which authors agreed in the realm of education.

First, writers helped to define the purpose of public education by depicting schooling as a means of individual self-development, although many only imagined it being extended to the upper and middle classes. John Stuart Mill posited education as *the* mechanism for the cognitive and moral formation of character, and in his Inaugural Address as Rector of the University of St. Andrews, Mill argued that education was essential to the construction of the individual (Mill 1984/1867, 217; Ryan 2011, 654). In his autobiography, Mill credits his father with giving him during childhood "an amount of knowledge in…the higher branches of education, which is seldom acquired…until the age of manhood… the experiment shows the ease with which this may be done, and places in a strong light the wretched waste of so many precious years as are spent in acquiring the modicum of Latin and Greek commonly taught to schoolboys" (Mill 2009/1874, 15). Dickens promotes education both to nurture "individual selfhood" and to reduce the danger posed by illiterate men to society (Hughes 1903, x, 6). Inspired by Coleridge and Mill, Matthew Arnold asserts that the primary goal of education is not to make good citizens but to create the best individual. "Its prime direct aim is to enable a man TO KNOW HIM-SELF and the world" (Arnold 1964, 290, italics in the original; Kuhn 1971 53–4). Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays* also advances the notion of education for individual self-development; to this end, Hughes recommends study and sport as the twin secrets for personal growth (Hughes 2012/1857, 156). Public school sports help students to gain moral integrity and self-control, and Hughes' ideal boy has a strong mind in a strong body with a strong character (Reed 1974, 66).

A few writers did see education as a potential means of improving society, but this view was less commonly found in Britain than in Denmark. Mill despairs at the lack of collective sentiment in England, where everyone considers everyone else to be "either an enemy or a bore" (Mill 2009/1874, 26). "Interest in the common good is at present so weak a motive…because the mind is not accustomed to dwell on it as it dwells from morning till night on things which tend only to personal advantage" (Mill 2009/1874, 90). For Mill, the promise of education is that it can show individuals how their own happiness meshes with broader societal goals: "the object of education should be to form the strongest possible associations of the salutary class; associations of pleasure with all things beneficial to the great whole, and of pain with all things hurtful to it" (Mill 2009/1874, 54). Similarly, Disraeli writes in *Sybil*, "It is that increased knowledge of themselves that teaches the educated their social duties" (Disraeli 2020/1844, 297). For Arnold, education can help to

build British culture among the middle-class, a deficiency that greatly agonizes the poet activist. He despairs of the "bourgeois and ignoble spirit which tends to become rampant in our middle classes" (Arnold, May 18, 1861).

Second, fiction writers were also increasingly convinced that educating the working class was the only way to restrain labor radicalism and maintain social stability; but at the same time, they paid scant attention to workers' positive contributions to society and economy. After the passage of the 1834 Poor Law and followed by economic depression in the late 1830s, workers' lives became even more precarious, and a new wave of social-problem novel depicted scenes of individual suffering, starvation, and despair. In her break-through novel, *Mary Barton*, Elizabeth Gaskell presents a pitiful picture of working-class suffering: "the weaver, who thinks he and his fellows are the real makers of this wealth, is struggling on for bread for his children, through the vicissitudes of lowered wages, short hours" (Gaskell 1848, 22). Disraeli observes in *Sybil* (2020/1845, 71) that Britain is composed of "Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones or inhabitants of different planets…and are not governed by the same laws."

Writers largely viewed industrialization as a necessary evil and class conflict as the natural consequence. Harriet Martineau's *The Rioters* (1827) and *The Turnout* (1829) tells tales of industrial turmoil and the degradation of the working classes (Kestner 1985, 36–9). Yet while Martineau is genuinely critical of the plight of the working classes, her accessible *The Illustrations of Political Economy* (1932–3) presents happy stories about the benefits of the free market. In these stories, Martineau fleshes out the logic of Malthus and Ricardo but provides a happy ending (Logan 2010, 1–3; Freedgood 1995, 33–5). In Brontë's Shirley (Brontë 1849), one has sympathy for the novel's starving, unemployed Luddites, who are viewed as a necessary victim of industrialization. At the same time, the angry laborers are *not* portrayed as foot soldiers in an industrial revolution who deserve investment in skills and will contribute to the economic good of the country as a whole, as in the case of Denmark. A famous poem by Scottish Chartist poet Charles Macay illustrates the essential expectation of conflict in the Anglo world:

> You have no enemies, you say?
> Alas, my friend, the boast is poor.
> He who has mingled in the fray
> of duty that the brave endure,
> must have made foes. If you have none,
> small is the work that you have done…
> You've never turned the wrong to right.
> You've been a coward in the fight (www.poetrynook.com/poem/no-enemies).

Many social reformers deemed militant labor movements and unions to be part of the problem (Roberts 1979). JS Mill writes that mass schooling can

instill rational thought in the poor, but he also feels that working-class citizens should demur to educated elites. "It is good for man to be ruled; to submit both his body and mind to the guidance of a higher intelligence and virtue" (quoted in Letwin, 334–5). The eponymous heroine in Disraeli's *Sybil* initially believes that the wisdom of "the people" will be sufficient to make the transition to a post-factionalized world: "She thought that the People, calm and collected, conscious at last of their strength and confident in their holy cause, had but to express their pure and noble convictions" (Disraeli 2020/1845, 312). But she comes to see the ugly politics of the deeply factionalized labor movement in which riots prevail. In *North and South*, Gaskell paints a dismal picture of unions and does not fundamentally challenge the political economy (Haldane 1930, 47–8; Colella 1981). Heroine Margaret finds it exceedingly strange that "two classes dependent on each other in every possible way…[were] always running each other down" (Gaskell 2011/1854, 138). The unions do not understand the international pressures on prices and simply believe that "trade has been good for long, and the masters have made no end o' money" (175). Thornton, a factory owner, and Margaret's love interest, disparages workers who "think trade is flourishing as it was last year" (137). When unions strike; the effort ends in disaster as the employers win the battle but lose market share during the industrial conflict. One worker, John Boucher, resists joining the union: "Yo' may be kind hearts, each separate; but once banded together, yo've no more pity for a man than a wild hunger-maddened wolf" (180). Boucher capitulates, starts a riot to end the strike, and then drowns himself. Margaret blames the union: "Don't you see how you've made Boucher what he is, by driving him into the Union against his will" (Gaskell 2011/1854, 336; see also Bodenheimer 1979, 290–1).

Dickens draws attention to the horrors of industrialization and resents Malthusian descriptions of the poor; yet he also criticizes unions and expresses ambivalence about class distinctions, as is seen in *David Copperfield*. David becomes a victim of the industrial economy, when sent to do factory work by his evil step-father, and "felt my hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my bosom" (Dickens 1850, 148). The upper class is portrayed as loathsome, particularly in the character of Miss Dartle, who wonders whether the poor are "really animals and clods, and beings of another order?" She then goes on to remark, "It's such a delight to know that, when they suffer, they don't feel" (279). Dickens depicts with fondness kind, working-class individuals such as Clara Piggotty, David's nurse, and the Micawber family who are forced into debt by ferocious creditors (151). Yet Dickens' arch-villains are those who seek to rise above their class (Brown 2013). Uriah Heep of "base, unrelenting, and revengeful spirit" (545) projected humility, but used this subterfuge to advance above his station. The key is to "abase ourselves before our betters…Father got made a sexton by being umble" (544). Similarly, Jane Austen's *Emma* makes a fatal error when she generates undue expectations of marital bliss in her low-born friend (Austen 1980/1816).

Writers on both the left and right partially blamed conditions of the poor on a culture of poverty that spawned morally bankrupt behaviors. Compassionate progressives such as Kingsley believe that poverty contributes to cultural dysfunction: "I am, in my way, trying to do good, but what is the use of talking to hungry paupers about heaven" (Kingsley 1877, 75). In Disraeli's *Sybil*, alcohol is the enemy of the working class and fuels a community of workers that abandons all trace of the rule of law. Everyone – including babies – gets drunk on their days off: "There is no municipality, no magistrate, no local acts, no vestries, no schools of any kind" (Disraeli 2020/1845, 176). In his archly funny, political novel *Pelham*, Bulwer-Lytton writes that the "distinguishing trait of people accustomed to good society, is a calm imperturbable quiet…while low persons cannot take up either a spoon or an affront without making such an amazing noise about it" (Bulwer-Lytton 2015/1828, 2).

Perceptions of the culture of poverty meant that the liberal Whigs (inspired by Bentham and Malthus) rather than the conservative Tories led the campaign resulting in the New Poor Law of 1834, which ended outside benefits for the poor and drove impoverished citizens into the poor house (Chandler 1980, 756). Writers urged upper- and middle-class people to ameliorate poverty's worst abuses (particularly among children) with Christian charity. Charlotte Brontë declares, "if you are a Christian you ought not to consider poverty a crime" (Jane Eyre 2011/1847, 215). Jane Eyre's work to educate working class youth is on par with imperialistic evangelicalism (Gargano, dissertation, 19). In Gaskell's *North and South*, Margaret's father suggests that there are always "acute sufferers for the good of the many," but the key question is whether "everything has been done to make the sufferings of these exceptions as small as possible" (Gaskell 2011/1854, 8).

Third, authors' narratives were relevant to the debates over pedagogical techniques. James Mill's *In Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (2018/1829) conceptualized the linear processes necessary to the training of a mind. Following this idea of a set curriculum for optimum cognitive development, many British authors defended highly structured learning and eschewed the experiential learning techniques favored by Danish authors. Kingsley posits that standardization of education is necessary to fulfill the stages of evolution from childhood to adulthood. In "The Water-Babies" (2019/1862), the protagonist evolves through education (provided by mechanical fairies) from a body made of soot into a very different kind of being. Kingsley develops these themes in an 1870 lecture entitled "The Human Soot," in which he argues that standardization of education is necessary to extend equality of educational opportunity (Wilson-Bates 2015, 388–90). In *Essays on a Liberal Education*, Farrar advocates for classical education, which recognizes "the relations in which the Greek and Latin languages have stood, in the past, to the whole higher life, intellectual and moral, literary and scientific, civil and religious, of Western Europe" (Farrar 1867). In Farrar's *Eric* (1858, 121), lax control at a British public school destroys the title character: "Had the monitorial system

existed [whereby older students teach and check the behavior of younger ones], that contagion could have been effectually checked…[A monitor system] prevents bullying, upholds manliness, is the bulwark of discipline, and makes boys more earnest and thoughtful."

Certainly, some writers also recognized that rote memorization could be problematic and they criticized the cramming culture found within private preparatory schools and universities. Dickens ridicules rote memorization and set lessons in *Hard Times*, when during a class on the attributes of horses, children are told that horse wallpaper is impossible because horses do not walk on walls (Gargano 2008, 79). Hughes chastises reformers who fail to recognize that sports builds character and prepares boys for the rigors of military service and life. He advocates for "something to try the muscles of men's bodies, and the endurance of their hearts, and to make them rejoice in their strength. In all the new-fangled comprehensive plans which I see, this is all left out; and the consequence is, that your great mechanics' institutes end in intellectual priggism" (Hughes 2012/1857, 19). Bulwer-Lytton's protagonist in *Pelham* is an unfortunate graduate of an elite, private "public school," where he learns to read Latin and Greek fluently, but is never taught a syllable of English and forgets all he knows by the age of five and twenty (Bulwer-Lytton 2015/1828, 4). Pelham's mother points to the true goal of schooling – to provide a sorting mechanism for social class: "Remember, my dear, that in all the friends you make at present, you look to the advantage you can derive from them hereafter; that is what we call knowledge of the world, and it is to get the knowledge of the world that you are sent to a public school" (3).

Writers also wrote passionately about the benefits of humanistic education instead of either the grammar-heavy study of Latin or a science-based education. Matthew Arnold sought a national commitment to humanistic study to elevate British culture. In *Culture and Anarchy* (1867–8), Arnold contrasts the "sweetness of light" in "Hellenism" (developing spontaneity of consciousness, beauty, and the capacity to see things as they really are) with "Hebraism" (obedience to God's will and doing above knowing). Human "life in the hands of Hellenism, is invested with a kind of aerial ease, clearness, and radiancy…the beauty and rationalness of the ideal have all our thoughts" (Arnold 2001/1867–8, 134). Young protagonists are often transformed by reading great books in coming-of-age novels. Poor orphaned Jane Eyre is denied books by her evil foster family: "You have no business to take our books…you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg" (Brontë 2011/1847, 3). Jane later opens with missionary zeal a school for "coarsely-clad little peasants" and hopes to develop the "germs of native excellence, refinement, intelligence, kind feeling" (345). Certainly, some authors also promoted scientific education. Charles Kingsley, for example, joined biologist Thomas Huxley in promoting Darwin and the study of natural sciences in education (Hale 2012). But advocates of humanistic study were far more numerous.

Fourth, many fiction writers also expressed grave concerns about the quality of private schools, but they also questioned the efficacy of *state* intervention. Thackeray abhors the English preparatory schools and his own school, Charterhouse, becomes "Slaughterhouse" in *Pendennis*. Dickens repeatedly attacked for-profit, "cheap schools" and after an exploratory trip through Yorkshire, he set out to destroy these institutions. The trip motivated Dickens to write *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839) and Dickens was amused when several school heads claimed to be the model for his fictitious headmaster, Mr. Squeers (Dickens 2011/1839, 4). When Nicholas first encountered Squeers' school, "He could not but observe how silent and sad the boys all seemed to be. There was none of the noise and clamor of a schoolroom; none of its boisterous play, or hearty mirth. The children sat crouching and shivering together, and seemed to lack the spirit to move about" (61). The novel's immense success helped to close a huge number of the Yorkshire schools in the wake of its publication (Collins 1955, 104).

But many social reformers questioned the integrity and capacities of government, and writers generally portrayed state institutions in an extremely negative light. Dickens was wary of parliamentary solutions, bringing some to cast him as a conservative (Goldberg 1972, 62–7). While he doubted that laissez-faire economic policies would redress class inequalities, he questioned the capacity of government to provide appropriate remedy and made the case for philanthropy (Goodlad 2003, 527). In *David Copperfield*, courts are corrupt and a source of personal profit (Dickens 1850, 323–4). When David's aunt, Betsy Trotwood, visits her lawyer, he is relieved to hear that she has not come about the law: "You had better come for anything else" (209). Dickens' *Bleak House* (2023/1852–3, 491) tells the tale of a court case that ruins all involved. He observes about the British court system:

> The one great principle of the English law is, to make business for itself. There is no other principle distinctly, certainly, and consistently maintained through all its narrow turnings. Viewed by this light it becomes a coherent scheme, and not the monstrous maze the laity are apt to think it. Let them but once clearly perceive that its grand principle is to make business for itself at their expense, and surely they will cease to grumble.

Tory authors expressed even more skepticism about state action, as is demonstrated in Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845). The narrator laments that the English "glorious and ancient realm…The wisdom of the Saxons, Norman valour, the state-craft of the Tudors" have all been lost in the smash-up of party politics. When grand political solutions are attempted, party politics snatches victory from the jaws of defeat: "Would you promote or prevent some great measure… – take, for example, a system of national education, – the minister must apportion the plunder to the illiterate clan…Such a system may suit the balanced interests and the periodical and alternate command of rival oligarchical connections: but it can subsist only by the subordination of the sovereign

and the degradation of the multitude" (Disraeli 2020/1845, 39–40). Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (2016/1875) similarly tells the tale of political corruption and financial scandal.

Still, some authors supported a national education system and, lacking that, wished for a stronger assessment regime to monitor access and quality problems in education. JS Mill argues that a national education system was necessary due to the breakdown of market logic in schooling: "The uncultivated cannot be competent judges of cultivation…Education, therefore, is one of those things which it is admissible in principle that a government should provide for the people" (Mill 1848, 947–48). Arnold wanted the government to provide oversight, set standards, develop a literary canon and monitor an educational system administered at the local level (Epstein 1982, no page).

Authors in Episodes of School Reform

Experiments to Expand Access to and Quality of Schooling

Some authors participated actively in the struggles to extend mass education that culminated in the Elementary Education Act of 1870. Thus, in addition to framing schooling in distinctive cultural ways, they worked with other activists to draw attention to the deficits of working-class education and supported experiments to improve the access to and quality of schooling. Certainly, party conflict and religious wars delayed the British national education system. Parliamentary Radicals proposed nonsectarian national education bills but met with stiff resistance from the Anglican Tories, who viewed schools as a tool to win the hearts and minds of the people. By the 1840s, even some Dissenters also questioned the advantages of nonsectarian state schools. Yet some choices in school design reflected more than these internecine struggles, and authors worked closely with political figures to define and promote culturally familiar solutions to problems of access and quality.

The earliest government department focused on education, the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, was established in 1839 by Lord John Russell (head of the Privy Council under Whig Prime Minister Earl Grey and a vice-president of the British and Foreign School Society). Radical reformers had proposed a national education bill in 1833, and although this failed, a small Treasury grant program was passed to encourage the construction and to provide oversight of local schools. The grants were inadequate to their mandate and the National Society schools received about 80 percent of the total (Doheny 1991, 336). Therefore, Russell envisioned creating a centralized national education unit with better funding and more ambitious goals. The private societies resisted ceding school inspection duties to government in their battle to shape young minds and souls. Gray requested an order by the Queen to avoid a Parliamentary vote and Russell claimed the queen as an ally; she invited the men to form an education committee, adding that "it is Her Majesty's wish that the youth

of this kingdom should be religiously brought up, and that the rights of conscience should be respected" (Smith 1923, 80).

Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth became the first Permanent Secretary of the Committee on Education, which was given responsibility for allocating grants and inspecting schools receiving grants (Kay-Shuttleworth 1862, 179). Russell urged Kay-Shuttleworth in May 16, 1839 to be "general and impartial" in allocating grants to the two school societies (Russell, May 16, 1839). Kay-Shuttleworth recognized the importance of education for the improvement of the masses: "The ignorance of the lower classes…encourages superstition, impairs industry, and corrupts the manner of the people; but a well instructed, industrious, & religious working class is one of the most fruitful sources of prosperity in peace and security in war." But Kay-Shuttleworth also wished to maintain elite control over education, particularly in large towns where "Public school meetings are impossible" (Kay-Shuttleworth, October 11, 1839).

Kay-Shuttleworth was a great believer in data, which he used to show correlations between educational deficiencies and various problems of the working class, including poverty, criminal behavior, and reluctance to perform civic duties such as military participation (Kay-Shuttleworth 1862, 202). He visited school systems in France and Switzerland and proposed to Russell, in an October 11, 1839 letter, the creation of a body for the "appropriation of Parliamentary Grants," "Inspection of all Schools aided by Parliamentary grants," funding for secular schools and greater regulatory powers for the Committee on Education. Kay-Shuttleworth wanted Parliament to make grants of 100,000 to 500,000 pounds for school development, but recognized that such a plan was unfeasible. Instead, he recommended that local governments (using local taxes) be made responsible for schools, just as they already were for poor supports (Kay-Shuttleworth, October 11, 1839).

The Committee on Education encouraged innovative private experiments to improve working-class education. The ragged school movement provided training and care to poor inner-city children, whom Mary Carpenter called the "perishing class" and who were too poor to pay even a very low rate (Schupf 1972, 163–5). By 1851, there were 132 ragged schools in London alone, serving 26,000 pupils (Schupf 1972, 169). In 1846, the Committee on Education also enthusiastically endorsed pupil-teacher schools; these used older pupils to teach younger students as with the monitorial system but they required more teacher training. A devote of teacher-training, Kay-Shuttleworth developed a college for teachers at his own home in Battersea; however, as few graduates wished to teach at schools for the poor, he offered free tuition to students who promised to teach in poor house schools for some time upon completion of the program (Ross 1967, 176, 179). The Committee of Council on Education also developed reports on industrial schools (such as the Mechanics Institutes) that paved the way for Parliament's passage of industrial school acts in 1857, 1861, and 1866 (Roper 1975, 185).

The Committee on Education drafted a proposal for a national public education system, even while recognizing immense political opposition from the Anglican Church. Kay-Shuttleworth sent a confidential proposal to Russell; however, someone leaked the plan to the Bishop of London. Russell was furious about the leak: "I had considered the Paper so strictly confidential, that I was greatly surprised when it was mentioned to me by one who had seen & read it, & who imagined that it had been circulated" Russell, John, fol. 286.

Finally, in 1840, the Committee on Education set up a system for school inspection to monitor quality and to ascertain schools' eligibility for government funding (Doheny 1991, 336–7). During his stint as Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, Kay-Shuttleworth monitored local authorities, developed an inspection regime, and directed poor law reform from the center; subsequently, he sought to apply this model to education (Ross 1967, 275). The idea of a national inspection regime received added support from the 1861 Newcastle Commission. Matthew Arnold – who worked for the commission and journeyed abroad to study French, Dutch, and Swiss schools – was impressed by the state capacities of these other countries.

The Revised Code of 1862 expanded the national government's control over educational assessment, by making government-funding for secular state schools contingent on student performance on examinations by school inspectors (Hansard, House of Commons, May 5, 1862, column 1268). Robert Lowe (Liberal vice president of the Committee of Council and architect of the code) linked the system of results-based funding to the concept of free trade: "we have been living under a system of bounties and protection; now we propose to have a little free trade" (Smith 1923, 263; Roper 1975, 183).

Yet Arnold, Kay-Shuttleworth, and other critics considered the code to exceed former proposals for regulatory control and they particularly worried that withholding funds due to inadequate student performance would destroy schools (Doheny 1991, 338; Gargano 2008). Kay-Shuttleworth complained that the Revised Code violated the spirit of the inspection regime, going beyond its initial purpose of raising teaching standards and inspiring communities to expand schooling (Smith 1923, 264). The code limited instruction to the rudimentary topics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Kay Shuttleworth noted: "The three rudiments are the indispensable foundation of knowledge; but if the child, when at school, were only drilled in a mean, mechanical drudgery of spelling, writing, and ciphering, his faculties would be rather stunted than developed" (Smith 1923, 277). The code has been likened to the neoliberal initiatives of Thatcher's 1988 education act (Lee 2019).

Politicians and civil servants working on education issues enjoyed close relations with social reform novelists, and the two groups often joined forces in efforts to expand the access to and quality of working-class education. Dickens

became close to Lord Russell when (as a young journalist covering Parliament) Dickens recorded Russell's stirring speeches. Dickens dedicated *A Tale of Two Cities* to Russell and at a speech for the Warehousemen and Clerks' Schools (where Russell was president) on November 5, 1857, Dickens recognized Russell's "faithful, long, and great public services…[and] manly, gallant, and courageous character" (Dickens 1960, 242–4). At a banquet given in Dickens' honor in Liverpool on April 10, 1869, Dickens made fun of his very close relations with Whig elites and said specifically about Russell that there was "no man in England whom I more respect in his public capacity, whom I love more in his private capacity, or from whom I have received more remarkable proofs of his honour and love of literature" (Dickens 1960, 388–9).

A budding novelist himself, Kay-Shuttleworth was also close to Charles Dickens, Matthew Arnold, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, and Harriet Martineau (Russell 1904, 69; Haldane 1930, 129). The Kay-Shuttleworth couple hosted regular literary parties; and Elizabeth Gaskell first met Charlotte Brontë during a weekend with the Kay-Shuttleworth family at their country home at Briery Close, Windermere. Elizabeth Gaskell received much support from the couple after being savagely criticized for *Ruth* (Pollard 1965, 23). The authors appreciated Kay-Shuttleworth's deep understanding of poverty, although the notoriously diffident Charlotte Brontë was simultaneously fascinated by Kay-Shuttleworth's commanding grasp of social problems and a bit overwhelmed by his strong personality (Smith 1923, 226).

Charles Dickens and Kay-Shuttleworth met in 1846 and immediately bonded over their mutual interests in ragged schools. Upon reading Kay-Shuttleworth's *Public Education* (1853), Dickens was a bit bored by the "supernatural dreariness" of the author's statistical analysis, but Dickens admired Kay-Shuttleworth's commitment to mass education in general and the ragged schools in particular (letter of April 1, 1853). Dickens and his friend, Angela Burdett-Coutts, began regular visits to the ragged schools in 1843 and Dickens praised the schools in his Household Words (HW 4, March 13, 1852). In a letter dated March 28, 1846, Dickens proposed to Kay-Shuttleworth that they develop a model ragged school together (Litvack 1996, no page numbers). Dickens wrote about ragged schools in *The Daily News* on February 4, 1846:

> They who are too ragged, wretched, filthy, and forlorn, to enter any other place: who could gain admission into no charity school, and who would be driven from any church door; are invited to come in here, and find some people not depraved, willing to teach them something, and show them some sympathy, and stretch a handout, which is not the iron hand of Law, for their correction ("Charles Dickens on ragged schooling.")

Authors joined Liberal/Radical politicians in support of the Mechanics Institutes, a private initiative that offered scientific and technical education to retrain workers as skilled artisans, engineers, and mechanics. By 1850, 610 Mechanics Institutes existed, although the schools never managed to provide skills training on the level of Germany or Switzerland and over time offered more humanistic

courses to clerks (Allen 1965, 147–8; Gowing 1978, 6). Moreover, the institutes attempted to morally indoctrinate young working-class men, as demonstrated by an 1849 Leeds Permanent Building Society handbill: "Young men are especially recommended to join this society…The Temperance movement has removed temptation out of the way of thousands, and the Mechanics Institutes and Reading Rooms have taught them many useful lessons" (Morris 1983, 115).

Social reform novelists supported the Mechanics Institutes and other industrial schools during this period. Dickens was the president of the Chatham Mechanics' Institution and gave charity readings to help fund schools in Birmingham, Chatham, Reading, Coventry, Bristol, and Sheffield, among others (Collins 1955, 117–22). Dickens trusted that worker education would both reduce dangers posed by ignorance and expand working-class representation in positions of power (Collins 1955, 124–6). Thomas Hughes was a leader of the Christian Socialist Working Men's Colleges and also endorsed the Mechanics Institutes. While presiding over a Mechanics Institute festival in Halifax, he wrote to his wife that the leading manufacturers had built "the most magnificent almshouses & schools…college, etc for the town…There are few instances of such splendid citizens…as our money making class has taken to spending all their immense gains in stupid & useless luxury" (GB 1499 THL/4/1/26).

Elizabeth and William Gaskell backed the Manchester Working Men's College, where William both lectured and served on the board of directors. William Gaskell was a leading activist in the Manchester community, taught English literature and history at Manchester New College, served on countless committees to address social problems, and was editor of *The Unitarian Herald* (Pollard 1965, 15–9). Elizabeth solicited advice for the Manchester school from John Ludlow, who formed the Working Men's College in Wimbledon (Gaskell 2000, 181, xvi). Elizabeth Gaskell's political projects also included child labor, day nurseries, emigration of workers, and homes for female factory workers, and she taught at a girls' Sunday School. Gaskell wrote to Mrs. Mary Rich on March 10, 1853 that she and William were threatening to turn informants against people who were hiring children as chimney sweepers (Gaskell 2000, 83).

Authors also became involved in discussions of school quality and the Revised Code of 1862. Despite Arnold's work for the Newcastle Commission, he strongly opposed the Revised Code and published a hostile letter in *Fraser's Magazine* in March 1862, characterizing the code as overly mechanistic (Burt and Machann 1990, 80). Kingsley mocked payment by effects in *Water Babies*, which he wrote while the Revised Code was being debated (Rapple 1997, 52). Arnold, Trollope, Dickens, and Ruskin all protested rigid examinations for civil servants; Arnold (an education inspector) and Trollope (a postal inspector) were part of the inspection system and knew its faults intimately (Shuman 2000, 5–14; Cordner 2016).

Yet in another way, writers had enabled the political path to the Revised Code with their incessant drumbeat for quality control. Lowe wished to develop a cheap but effective formula for mass elementary education. He sought to

reconcile competing aims: to stipulate knowledge necessary for the middle and working-class schools but to avoid paying too much for the mastery of this knowledge (Gordon and White 1979, 67). Lowe himself was a student of the classics, so valued by the British ruling class, and he had a commanding knowledge of classical literature, history, and economic theory. James Bryce noted, "Robert Lowe was…the idol of a large part of the educated class…that plumed itself upon its culture" (Bryce 1903, 298). Yet Lowe believed that making classical education available to the working classes would strain government coffers and subject elite culture to undo democratization (Lowe 1867; Bryce 1903, 304). Authors such as Kingsley and Arnold believed in the Newcastle Commission's mandate of improving quality; but they felt that the Revised Code simply went too far (Rapple 1997, 52).

The Elementary Education Act of 1870

Movement toward a national education system began in earnest with the 1864 Schools Inquiry Commission, also known as the Taunton Commission. The commission was vested with reviewing problems of access and quality and it concluded decisively that the voluntary system was failing to provide education to poor children. Arnold, now Chief Inspector of her Majesty's School Inspectors of primary schools, lobbied to be appointed to the commission and argued for the investigation of foreign systems. After again touring European schools, Arnold promoted a rationalized educational system similar to the German or Swiss model, and he recommended that a national minister of education be appointed to oversee local initiatives (Taunton Commission 2018/1868, Rapple 1997, 161–2; Connell 1950, 88–9). Arnold wrote about his efforts to his sister Jane:

> I wrote to [Lord George William Lyttelton] because I would not for the world have asked William [Forster], connected as we are, to start the matter in the Commission… but now, when Lord Taunton brings the matter before the Commission and reads my letter, I daresay William will support it. I think I have made out a strong case for sending some one; and perhaps even the Anti-State members of the Commission will be willing enough to collect *information* as to State Systems (Arnold January 3, 1865)

The Taunton Commission Report inspired a coalition of moderates from both parties to endorse a national, comprehensive school system, and social science research bolstered this growing support. For example, the Manchester and Salford Education Aid Society issued a report stating that 57 percent of children between the ages of three and twelve did not participate in school. The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science held a conference to discuss education problems and this further stimulated support for expanded working-class education in Manchester. The city subsequently passed an initiative in 1866 to educate all poor children; the program would be funded by

local rates that were collected by the municipality. The Birmingham Education League, organized by Mayor George Dixon, undertook similar school initiatives (Roper 1975, 186–93).

The Second Reform Act greatly expanded suffrage and provided new urgency to solving the education question. In a speech in the House of Commons in July 1867, Liberal Robert Lowe famously stated that we must educate our "future masters" (Marcham 1973, 180). The appeal of mass education spread beyond its core Liberal supporters, as some Conservative members of Parliament also expressed interest in a national system (Roper 1975, 196–7).

The same year that the Second Reform Act passed, in 1867, Liberals in parliament, including H.A. Bruce, W.E. Forster, and Algernon Egerton, developed a national education bill that anticipated the 1870 act. Bruce cited statistics from the Manchester Education Aid Society in his exhortations for expanded educational access for the poor. The bill stopped short of recommending compulsory schooling, a nod to the problem of forcing religious children to attend secular schools; yet even with that important concession, the bill still failed to pass (Roper 1975, 188–203). Tories subsequently introduced their own bill in the House of Lords, as Prime Minister Disraeli feared that the Liberals would gain political advantage with the working class and offered education as part of his Tory Democracy or one-nationism platform (Smith 1967). While most Tories sought a strong Minister of Education, the party remained divided over other comprehensive reforms (Marcham 1973, 182–3).

The Liberals under Gladstone regained power in December 1868 and finally passed the Education Act of 1870, which created a comprehensive public primary education system with stipulated compulsory attendance by children between the ages of 5 and 13. It also created local school boards to govern schools and enforce mandatory attendance; school rates or taxes were to fund both secular and religious schools (Roper 1975, 185–202). Gladstone was personally indifferent to the education issue, but he put William E. Forster in charge of developing a proposal with the help of H.A. Bruce and Lord Russell (Marcham 1973, 185–8).

A major conflict over school reform concerned the status of church schools within the new compulsory state system. Tories refused to accept a system that eliminated Anglican schools and one group of nonconformists, the Voluntaryists, opposed any state schools that would challenge religious freedom (Smith 1923, 158). Nonconformists opposed allowing local districts to decide their schools' religious teaching and favored elected school boards. W.V. Harcourt, a Liberal international law professor from Oxford, negotiated a compromise that would allow religious schools to receive funding from local taxes or school rates and prohibited interference by the local boards in religious instruction (Marcham 1973, 180–8; Armytage 1970, 125–7). Many others were displeased, however. Radicals, such as Joseph Chamberlain and members of the National Education League, had wanted a comprehensive,

compulsory, free, and non-denominational education and felt that the negotiated outcome catered excessively to Anglican interests (Auspos 1980, 184–7).

Another bone of contention concerned the authority of local school boards and persistence of alternative school forms. Liberals wanted to free communities from church control by empowering school boards to construct new local schools (Evans 1985, 13). The 1870 act did give the new school boards this power, but in the ensuing power struggle, the charitable ragged schools became collateral damage and largely disappeared. Ragged schools were funded by voluntary contributions and this format did not fit with the comprehensive government system. The Committee of Council on Education was reluctant to take charge of the ragged schools, given their problematic clientele and questionable standards. The law also prohibited school boards from offering separate technical schools at the primary level (Schupf 1972, 172).

Authors participated in the campaign for comprehensive mass education. J.S. Mill and Thomas Hughes worked within Parliament to advance education, before Mill lost his seat in 1867. Mill strongly opposed the expansion of state funding to church schools and feared that local ratepayers could be forced to subsidize schools from religious denominations to which they did not belong. He also implored Gladstone to unite Radicals and Liberals in a single party that would represent a core working-class constituency (Kinzer 1997, 24–44). Charles Kingsley strongly supported Mill's work and wrote to Tom Hughes on May 21, 1865, that "I wish I were a Westminster elector for the time, that I might work for him and with you" (Kingsley 1877, 373). Elizabeth Gaskell died in 1865, but her husband, William, joined a delegation of Nonconformist ministers who lobbied Gladstone on education (Marcham 1973, 180). Charles Kingsley joined the National Education League, and in 1869, Kingsley also became president of the education section of the Social Science Congress. At a conference in Bristol in 1869, Kingsley gave a stirring speech on education, urging that it be comprehensive and compulsory for men and women alike and across classes. The League printed his remarks and distributed 100,000 copies. Kingsley initially joined the Education League, because he felt hopeless about getting compulsory national education but he later "gave his warm allegiance to Mr. Forster's Act" (Kingsley 1877, 403–4).

Matthew Arnold (who wore many hats) was undoubtedly the most important literary advocate for a public system. In a letter to Goldwin Smith (a journalist, historian and member of the Popular Education Commission of 1858), Arnold argued that government control could help to overcome the "bourgeois and ignoble spirit which tends to become rampant in our middle classes" (Arnold, May 18, 1861). Arnold made a case publicly for comprehensive education in the late 1860s with his hilarious but pointed fictional letters to the *Pall Mall Gazette* that were subsequently published as *Friendship's Garland*. In the story, a sage German observer, Arminius, Baron von Thunder-Ten-Tronckh, discusses education with a buffoon named Matthew Arnold, and gently advocates for

the sorts of education reforms favored by the real Arnold. Arminius explains to fictitious Arnold:

> what this principle of compulsory education really means. It means that to ensure, as far as you can, every man's being fit for his business in life, you put education as a bar, or condition, between him and what he aims at. The principle is just as good for one class as another, and it is only by applying it impartially that you save its application from being insolent and invidious. Our Prussian peasant stands our compelling him to instruct himself before he may go about his calling, because he sees we believe in instruction, and compel our own class, too, in a way to make it really feel the pressure (Arnold 1883/1871, 52).

Arminius asks the fictitious Matthew Arnold to explain the qualifications for becoming magistrates in Britain and is told that their birthright gives them this privilege. Arminius responds that prospective workers are examined in their fields in Germany. The fictitious Arnold considers imposed examinations as an assault on the rights of the ignorant gentry and an "abominable liberty" to take with the working class: "do you really mean to maintain…that a man can't go bird scaring or sheep-tending without all this elaborate apparatus of a compulsory school?" (Arnold 1871).

Arnold's involvement with education reform transcended his work on royal commissions and public works that contributed to public debate. As Forster's brother-in-law, Arnold reviewed drafts of the bill and helped Forster to work out detailed proposals for a national educational system with local control, minister of education, and linkages between primary and secondary schools (Connell 1950, 88–9, 112). Kay-Shuttleworth enlisted Arnold and Forster to join an education club "to indoctrinate a number of rising young men with current information and sound principles about education" (Letter, V3P105D2, Matthew Arnold to Mary Penrose Arnold, January 18, 1867). Arnold informed his mother about the many ways that he was involved in the political struggle for education reform:

> I am being taken into their secrets, *very confidentially*, by three different centres of educational power at once—Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, Lingen, and our Council Office chiefs. I have been for two hours with the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Robert Montagu this morning, at their request; and I think and hope I have been of some use; I do not mean to them but to the cause. Say nothing at all, even in your letters to the family, about this consultation (Arnold, January 18, 1868).

Arnold did not wish his political agency to be known because he sought to protect his public identity as a neutral, somewhat removed author. On behalf of Kay-Shuttleworth and other leading education policy experts, Edwin Chadwick asked Arnold to consider running for the president of the Education Section of the Social Science Congress; in part, Chadwick and company were motivated by a desire to stop the election of Lowe to this position. Arnold declined to run and in an 1868 letter to his mother, he explained that he did so to avoid jeopardizing the influence he enjoyed as a writer:

I am convinced that while perhaps my writings come with even more effect by coming from a man without station when once they have attracted notice, yet I am sure my being put into a prominent station would excite a certain amount of jealousy which would diminish the effect what I write now has. Prominent station is so connected in men's minds here with politics and public life, that a mere writer should be very careful in taking it (Arnold, June 20, 1868).

AUTHORS AND SCHOOLING IN DENMARK

Authors' Networks

Danish literature and art flourished during the so-called Golden Age of culture from 1800 to 1850. Writers congregated in two overlapping networks, both of which supported expanding education for the working classes. One group, organized around Johan Ludvig Heiberg, rejected the romanticism genre that became dominant at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and members were closely linked to the National Liberal political movement that sought constitutional reform. The second network was organized around Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, and included both romantic writers such as Bernard Severin Ingemann, and those embracing greater realism such as novelist Steen Steensen Blicher. These authors were also nationalists, although Grundtvig and others were initially skeptical of the urban, bourgeois National Liberal movement. Hans Christian Andersen had ties to both circles.

The first group of authors, artists, and philosophers with National Liberal sentiments engaged in a lively debate about culture and politics for the new age. Philosopher/playwright J.L. Heiberg – with his famous actress wife, Johanne Luise, and writer-mother, Thomasine Gyllembourg – opened his home as a salon for literary figures and National Liberal politicians who were engaged in the cultural-political work necessary to pull off a bloodless, constitutional revolution.[1] The "Heiberg factory," as their home was called, was frequented by leading upper-class and bourgeois cultural, religious, and political elites, such as Johan Madvig, Ditlev Gothard Monrad, Henrik Hertz, Herman Hentz, Jakob Peter Mynster, Hans Christian Ørsted, Søren Kierkegaard, Hans Christensen Andersen, and Hans Lassen Martensen (Nun 2013, 43–51; Kjældgaard 2012, 28–34).

[1] Both generations of Golden Age writers were intricately connected to one another. Among writers of the earlier period, Johan Ludvig Heigerg's parents, P.A. Heiberg and Thomasine Gyllembourg, were close friends with the major literary critic, K. L. Rahbek. Rahbek's wife, Kamma Rahbek, ran an important literary salon that brought together cultural leaders ranging from JP Mynster (future "Primate of the Established Church"), Oehlenschläger, Grundtvig and Steffens. One of Kamma's sisters was married to Adam Oehlenschläger; another was married to AS Ørsted, a future prime minister and brother to scientist, HP Ørsted. Henrik Steffens and NFS Grundtvig were first cousins, and J.P. Mynster was their step-cousin. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, together with his wife and mother, carried on the salon tradition (Kirmmse, 160–3).

Heiberg was a scholar of Hegelian philosophy and an immensely popular playwright who viewed the cultural formation of the masses as crucial to societal development (Hansen 2008, 449). He was the spiritual heir to Ludvig Holberg in his efforts to revive Danish theatre with plays depicting details of everyday life among all classes (Heitmann 2011, 5). Heiberg used simple plots and catchy tunes in his vaudevilles to entertain, educate about social problems, popularize literature, and disseminate principles of Hegelian philosophy (Vinten-Johansen 1982, 301–2; 295). This was a period of transition to capitalism and liberalism; yet, Denmark had historically been constructed on feudal values and Heiberg sought to rework those values for the new age (Lisi 2008, 430). Heiberg wished to sustain collectivist values against capitalist development and viewed cultural formation as a crucial tool in this endeavor (Nygaard 2009, 93–6; Lisi 2008, 423). Thus, Heiberg's cultural constructs referenced an older moral order and sense of society as an organic unity, and he advanced these constructs as a defense against the atomization associated with capitalism and liberalism (Weschel 2008, 397–9).

Heiberg's vaudevilles had enormous impact. The reading public was small, so plays were better suited than books for shaping the public's collective views of contemporary topics. Heiberg believed that people had a legitimate need for entertainment; for example, when Knut Rahbek denounced vaudeville as taking theatre to the fairground, Heiberg – the laughing Hegelian – held a play at the Deer Park in a tent (Weschel 2008, 397–9). Fifteen hundred people could attend a single Royal Theatre performance and Heiberg's plays were performed 1659 times by 1889 (Vinten-Johansen 1982, 303). Heiberg was also immensely influential through his periodical, *Copenhagen's Flying Poste* (*Kjøbenhavns Flydende Poste)*, which had a broad and diverse base of subscribers, and one-third of readers came from outside of the academic community. Only 10 percent of the copies went to individual subscribers; the remainder were circulated widely among non-elites, who also gained access through reading rooms. Perhaps 36 percent of the urban, adult male population read the magazine (Vinten-Johansen 1982, 296–301).

Heiberg's mother, Thomasine Gyllembourg, had been married to Johan Ludvig's father, the philosopher novelist Peter Andreas Heiberg, who was exiled to France for his attacks on the monarchy. After their divorce, she became a leading novelist in her own right and with charm and wit reminiscent of Jane Austen, she documented everyday life in the capital city, though Gyllembourg wrote anonymously, as women were largely excluded from the male-dominated literary world (Mai 2010). The network also included Carl Ploug, a major poet and leading politician of the National Liberal movement. Ploug was editor of the National Liberal journal *Fatherland* (*Fædrelandet*) from 1841 to 1882 and he used this forum to circulate the ideas of the National Liberal movement to the public. Another network member was Henrik Hertz, a lyric poet, playwright, and novelist who was born to Jewish parents, but converted to Lutheranism. Hertz anonymously wrote "Letters from a Ghost" when Heiberg

came under attack in 1828, and Hertz ultimately became a highly successful playwright with his arch, sardonic comedies. He also wrote historical dramas evoking themes of Danish grand triumphs and tragedies.

Finally, novelist and political activist Meïr Aaron Goldschmidt was somewhat removed from the Copenhagen golden age writers. Goldschmidt's outsider status undoubtedly reflected strong currents of antisemitism (particularly sharp during the economic recession following the Napoleonic war) and Goldschmidt's lack of full citizenship, which did not develop for Jewish people until 1849. Goldschmidt was deeply committed to cultural formation within Danish society, but he also reflected on the difficulty of sustaining Jewish identity within that society (Gurley 2016, 5, 66). Goldschmidt was an ardent liberal and published a political journal, *Cosaren* (1840–6), that addressed freedom of the press, anti-absolutism, constitutionalism, and universal suffrage; indeed, Goldschmidt went to prison for this work (Rossel 1992, 251). Yet sensitive to minority rights, Goldschmidt broke with National Liberals on the question of incorporating Schleswig (Gurley 2016, 54).

The second network of writers included many romantic and some realistic authors and was loosely organized around the Sorø Academy and Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig. Grundtvig conceptualized an organic unity of the spirit that tied people to God; the Danish people, he argued, constituted a historical body unified by this spiritual unity and a common language, rather than by racial or political criteria. Thus, the people constituted neither humanity as an abstraction nor man as an individual in the state of nature (Lindhardt 1951, 15–6). Grundtvig drew inspiration from Ludvig Holberg, the old Nordic myths, and German Romanticism (brought to Denmark by his cousin, Henrik Steffens). Grundtvig devoted his life to improving the lot of peasants and wrote hundreds of hymns and songs, believing that song and the spoken word could be a unifying force for the people (Michelson 1969, 295).

Another member of the group was Bernard Severin Ingemann, Grundtvig's closest friend and godfather to Grundtvig's son. Ingemann became a lecturer at Sorø Academy in 1822 and wrote novels that elevated attention to the Middle Ages and peasant folkloric culture. Oehlenschläger was a major inspiration to romantic writers and his 1807 *Nordic Poems* (Nordiske Digte) aroused widespread interest in Danish premodern history and Nordic mythology. Ingemann also drew inspiration from Walter Scott's work; but he felt that Scott lacked an "all-encompassing grand idea." In contrast, Ingeman organized his own novels around a fundamental principle: the virtues of ancient Denmark saved the country from existential threats and the country could become great again by resurrecting the old values (Rossel 1992, 186–92). Without cultural rebuilding, Ingemann told Grundtvig, "Denmark's sons" could "drown in the contemporary political and economic maelstrom" (Aakjær 1904).

Steen Steensen Blicher was also part of the Grundtvig-Ingemann circle and, for many years, this astonishingly modern rural author received little recognition from cultural elites in Copenhagen. Yet his realist, psychologically

breathtaking short stories captured the character of the Danish countryside and ultimately reached a broad audience with nationalist themes crucial to the events of 1848 (Mai 2010, 13 percent). Blicher became popular among the emerging teacher-writers of the 1860s, including C.A. Thyregod, founder of the Danish Teachers' Association (Danmarks Lærerforening) in 1874 (Mai 2010, 14 percent). Johannes Carsten Hauch was a poet, playwright, and zoologist; Hauch taught at the Sorø Academy and shared a commitment to Sorø's diverse curriculum. He wrote romantic historical novels but particularly excelled as a lyric poet.

HC Andersen, part of both groups, was at once the most famous fiction writer in Denmark and a rather solitary individual. Andersen viewed himself primarily as a novelist and diverged from the romantics in setting his stories in contemporary times with social, psychological themes, and with realist – even modernist – language (Mai 2010; de Mylius 2006, 174). Andersen felt kinship with Dickens, as both suffered early childhood poverty and punishing school experiences. Andersen held revolutionary views about social justice and education for the down-trodden, even while he was somewhat desperate to be accepted by the upper class (Zipes 2006, 225).

Differences in genre drove the divisions between these two groups, as Heiberg and company poked fun at the older national romantic tradition represented by Grundtvig and Ingemann. Ingemann wrote a tragic play "Blanca" that evoked themes of Romeo and Juliet; subsequently, never missing the opportunity for a good joke, Heiberg wrote a sardonic parody in 1816 entitled "Christmas pranks and New Year's jokes" ("Julespøg og Nytaarsløjer") that ridiculed Ingemann's flowery language and lofty sentiments. Grundtvig and St. St. Blicher were deeply offended and quickly came to Ingemann's defense (Sørensen 2017, 71).

Authors' Narratives about Education

Despite their sharp differences in literary genre, authors in the Heiberg and Grundtvig networks presented similar depictions of schooling. Most crucially, both sides understood education as fundamentally beneficial to society and as an important means of nurturing useful members of society through cultural formation (or dannelse). The Heiberg network sought to preserve top-down elite control over cultural formation, while the Grundtvig group encouraged the bottom-up creation of schools and acculturation. Thus, National Liberal Orla Lehmann stated in 1861 that the "center of gravity" in society had to be the intellectuals who had acquired culture; these figures would lead those with less learning and good taste. In contrast, farm leader J.C. Drewsen characterized the National Liberal version of dannelse as "our time's nobility and rank" and emphasized the importance of acculturation among farmers and workers (Skovgaard-Petersen 1976, 11). Both sides favored expanded mass education to build national culture and strengthen the collective spirit.

The importance of society was an enduring and incessant theme in literary works by both groups. In Ingemann's *The Village Children* (*Landsbybørnene*), the protagonist is a poor but happy person who is deeply attached to Danish society. He becomes a famous flautist and travels the world, but misses the treasures of Danish folk songs and returns home to a happy life (Rossel 1992, 195). Herman Hertz dwells on the importance of benefiting society in his comedic play, "Savings Bank" ("Sparekassen"), in which a family debates what to do with an unexpected inheritance. Each family member offers a self-interested suggestion; for example, a daughter's fiancé urges his future parent-in-laws to purchase a school and to appoint the fiancé as headmaster. A wise friend urges the family to stop thinking in terms of their own personal interests and to consider the common good (Hertz 1902/1836, Loc 248).

Hans Christian Andersen's *Only a Fiddler* (*Kun en Spillemand* 1908/1837) presents the tragic consequences of excess individualism. Protagonist Christian is a talented but fragile, restless and dreamy young man, who never fits into his rural community. After Christian's father longs for the freedom to explore the world and abandons the family, Christian also seeks liberation from societal bonds in order to become a great artist. But alienation begets despair for both father and son and Christian reflects on problems inherent in prioritizing individualistic achievement over social bonds: "What comfort would it [fame] afford him, what comfort to mankind…It is not all one how high we may be placed in life, if we are only firmly placed?" (Andersen 1908/1837, 37). Christian rejects aid from kindly patrons from his own social class and becomes even more morose (117). In a book review, Søren Kierkegaard criticized the bleak novel for focusing narrowly on the failings of the individual protagonist rather than on universal truths and the universal path of man. Kierkegaard wished that Andersen had offered a philosophy of life to give meaning and coherence in a well-ordered world (Kierkegaard 1997/1838, 30f).

Herman Frederik Ewald's *The Story of Valdemar Krone's Youth* (*Valdemar Krones Ungdomshistorie*) provides a similar lesson about society as salvation. The foolish Valdemar turns his back on pastoral wisdom and is seduced by glamorous, aristocratic but morally suspect Francisca, who (unpatriotically) dreams only of France (Ewald 1868/1860, 254). Valdemar is saved when he reaffirms his close bonds with his rural community and marries a good Danish girl from the countryside (252). Patriotism and the broader good of the nation are major themes of the book; for example, Valdemar is credited with a "fund of constitutional ardor that marked him out from the young men of the day" (205).

Heiberg also stressed the importance of folk life for the Danish collective mentality. In his musical play, *The Elf Hill* (*Elverhøj*), an aide to King Christian IV (appearing in the play as a wise and benevolent sovereign) recognizes peasants as important keepers of the Danish folk spirit. The aide describes an old woman as "a living archive for all of our old superstitious songs: they bloom still from her lips and spread themselves from there over all the land. When she finally dies, our folk poetry will be over" (Heiberg 1915/1828, 32).

Education is an instrument for nurturing organic society, enabling the cultural formation of the people, creating useful citizens and cultivating good taste in Thomasine Gyllembourg's *Two Ages* (*To Tidsaldre* 2013/1845). Protagonist Claudine has a child out of wedlock; however, she becomes educated, constructs a good life for her son, develops good taste, and contributes to the community (24). Because Gyllembourg views cultural formation as more important than bourgeois morality, Claudine is ultimately rewarded for her efforts to better society with marriage to her son's father when he returns home from war. In this novel and in others, Gyllembourg's heroines use their good taste and cultural formation to overcome the struggles of daily life (Mai 2010; Nun 2013, 17–25).

For Grundtvig, educating all citizens was essential to building a collective people. In his 1808 Northern Mythology, Grundtvig suggests that "myth is a symbol of the eternal which lives in man" and that all Danes must master the myths of their forefathers to understand themselves as a people (Lindhardt 1951, 15–6). For Grundtvig, a certain measure of equality was essential to the organic unity of the people. This view can be seen in a famous stanza:

> Far more of those metals so white and so red
> Find others by digging and selling
> We Danes though can point to everyday's bread
> In even the lowliest dwelling –
> Can boast that in riches our progress is such
> That few have too little, still fewer too much (Lindhardt 1951, 27).

Regarding *access* to education, Danish authors portrayed schools for peasants and workers as absolutely essential: advances in agricultural and industrial productivity were a national project, and strengthening workers' skills was an issue of national security. For example, in *Montanus the Younger (Montanus den Yngre)*, Thomasine Gyllembourg tells the story of Conrad, who wishes to bring the technological revolution to Denmark during the 1818 to 1828 depression (Gyllembourg 2019/1837). Conrad is brash, inconsiderate, and disruptive of social harmony, but he has great ideas. He recognizes that mechanization can eliminate jobs and drive unemployment, but he argues that, in the long term, it will expand production and even increase employment (Loc. 696). Conrad insults a bureaucrat, but the civil servant still offers Conrad a state subsidy for the factory because "I honor my land's well-being, and such a factory I hope will become a great gift for the land" (Loc. 2028). The book describes Conrad's personal growth and offers a blueprint for how Denmark as a society may integrate new technology, preserve social harmony, avoid harm to redundant workers, and espouse a national project for economic growth. Whereas British novelists such as Dickens and Eliot view the market as damaging but necessary, Gyllembourg believes that social solidarity, cultural formation, education, and economic productivity reinforce one another and together form the basis of a strong society (Heitmann 2011, 11–9).

In Andersen's *Only a Fiddler*, protagonist Christian also recognizes that education has the potential to ease his malaise, but the option is unavailable to him, as the town lacks schools for the working class (Andersen 1908/1837, 38). Christian's landlady reads books from the local lending library to follow "the advance of literature as well as she could in a provincial town" and wonders, "Why should not poverty enjoy the advantage [of reading]?" (117–8).

On matters of *pedagogy*, writers in both groups strongly favored Philanthropinist methods rather than the monitorial system imposed by the king. Grundtvig criticized the state primary schools' use of the Bell–Lancaster methods and rote memorization of Latin, because "writing according to rules and learning the words of others means that one does not learn to speak and write well for oneself" (Larsen 1899, 204). He sought instruction through narrative and what he called the "living word" and argued against written assignments until the eighth grade (Grundtvig 2013/1838; Fain 1971, 78–82; Bjerg et al. 1995, 31–2).

Grundtvig's views of pedagogy combined a strong belief in literature and history as a unifying force for society with a belief in experiential learning over a devotion to the past. Grundtvig wanted students to read Danish literature and history, and felt that it was particularly important to do so in the mother tongue, so that heart and head would be united (Grundtvig 2013/1838, 14, 69). His philosophy of pedagogy inherited much from the Philanthropinist school, especially with his emphasis on virtue, the people and happiness; yet Grundtvig cast these ideas in a more romantic light and paid greater attention to individual development in addition to societal life (Bugge 1965, 105). He celebrated "school for life" and rejected "school for death," or the study of dead languages and book learning that does not resonate with lived experience, annihilates both body and soul, and turns half-grown boys into shadows. In his words, "Dead are namely all letters, even if they are written with angel fingers and star pens, and death is possibly all book knowledge which is not merged with the corresponding life of the reader" (Grundtvig 2013/1838, 12).

In keeping with our story of generational cultural transmission, Grundtvig as a young man was a serious student of Holberg and Holberg's *Epistles* in particular were a big influence on Grundtvig's views about education. As Bugge shows in his analysis of Grundtvig's annotated volumes of Holberg, Grundtvig learned that there is a difference between learning and wisdom, that one does not have to be learned in the classic sense to be wise and that peasants played an important role in societal life. The measure of the person is to find his/her correct place and only in this way can he/she benefit the collective. Grundtvig learned from Niels Klim that the middle way between the extremes was the most sensible political course of action, and Grundtvig was impressed by Holberg's fight against superficial learning. The young Grundtvig also intensely studied Rahbek, who put forth similar sentiments (Bugge 1965, 74).

Grundtvig's proposals for lively and engaging education resonated with many Danes. In remarks at a society for reading, Johan Adolph Fibiger (Land

and Sea War Commissioner and father of novelist Mathilde Fibiger) agreed with Grundtvig that requiring subjects too advanced for young people's mental development could put them in danger. Instead, students should be taught to read by instructing them in subjects that were drawn from their life experiences (Larsen 1899, 74, 76).

Ingemann praised useful, skills-oriented education achieved through experiential learning in his historical novel, *King Erik and the Outlaws* (1833). A character reflects on the futility of education dominated by classics and religious studies: "All learning here is expended in theological subtleties, and what are called godly things – which, however, they know nought of – poor fools!" Instead, the character argues that "an intimate knowledge of the essence of things is of the highest importance" (Ingemann 1843/1833, Loc. 20435–9).

Grundtvig-inspired theologian C. Henrik Scharling celebrates the joys of experiential learning, community and purity in a pastoral parsonage in *Nøddebo Parsonage* (*Ved Nytaarstid I Nøddebo Præstegaard*). A Buddha-like pastor warns a young, urban visitor, Nicolai, against the dangers of over-reading because people may become so fond of reading that they never know what it is to live (Scharling 1867, 133). Nicolai wishes to become a clergyman, yet he has never been beyond the capital and feels inadequate to offer spiritual guidance (134–5). The pastor encourages Nicolai to live in the moment: "a young man like you…should be looking about you in the world and in life, the time will come fast enough, when you may sit yourself down, and read yourself blind" (74–5). When Nicolai wishes for more books on ecclesiastical law, the clergyman responds: "here we live together like good Christians, and agree like brethren – that is our ecclesiastical law" (77).

Writers also attacked the learned schools' fixation on classical studies. In Gyllembourg's *Montanus den Yngre* (2019/1837, Loc. 73), protagonist Conrad says that a boy should not waste his time on Greek, Latin and theological books; rather he should study mathematics and natural sciences. Conrad's fiancé, Hanne, is not gifted academically, but she is highly cultured and creates beautiful arrangements that are "little works of art" (Loc. 162, 186). JL Heiberg's vaudeville, *A Soul After Death* (*En Sjæl efter Døden* 2017/1841), offers an amusing treatise on the value of various forms of knowledge and speaks to the need for Learned School reforms. The protagonist, Soul, was a "faithful husband, dear father, honest friend and citizen" (Heiberg 2017/1841, 3); and upon his death, he must search for his perfect afterlife (of which there are many alternatives). He first approaches St. Peter at the pearly gates of heaven and St. Peter tells him that admission requires traveling everywhere in Jesus's footsteps and mastering religious studies. Soul admits to having sore feet and a woefully inadequate comprehension of (and indeed interest in) Christian doctrine, and St. Peter directs him to the land of the classics instead. The heaven for classical scholars is "a place by the water and forest, an earthly paradise where lithe girls dance" (15). The overseer Aristophanes chides Soul

for his ignorance of Greek, Latin, and classical art; the fact that Soul reads the news and has been active in the Freedom of the Press Society carries little weight (21–8). Soul then visits Hell, where the literary and enlightened Mephistopheles puts forth his notion of education as a process of cultural formation: schools are a place "where one becomes prepared for life by learning that which is necessary…and where all classes are cared for so that each may find his place" (41). Hell is a land of philosophy, politics, and free-thinking, where one may find newspapers, scholarly journals, and debates, and Soul has finally found his eternal resting place (37–8).

Depictions of the *state* and the rule of law are presented more favorably in Danish fiction than in British works. In Blicher's *The Pastor of Veilbye*, the evil Morten Bruus falsely accuses a good pastor of killing Morten's brother, Niels. In reality, the brothers bury another body in the brother's clothing and frame the pastor. Morten demands a hearing because "we have law and justice in this country" (Blicher and Hawthorne 2014/1829, 10), and the local judge (coincidentally betrothed to the pastor's daughter) is compelled to comply with his request. The brother demands the rack to force the pastor to confess; the judge responds that "forced confession can never be reliable" (117). The pastor proclaims his innocence until he realizes that the murder might have happened when he was sleepwalking; he then accepts his sentence to preserve harmony and delivers a moving speech against anger at his execution. The story was based on a real case and was responsible for the adoption of jury trials in Denmark (127). While a miscarriage of justice occurs in the story, officials act honestly – albeit tragically – and the case prompts improvements to the criminal justice system (Blicher 1996). In Heiberg's *A Soul after Death*, the good citizen "sacrifices his work and his sweat to alleviate the misery of the state…The state is one collective that is obtained with the work of all" (Heiberg 2017/1841, 66). Authors also stress that state legitimacy rests on the support of the people. Ingemann writes in *The Childhood of King Erik Menved* (*Kong Erik Menveds Barndom*), "The mere external domination, which has not its roots in the deepest heart of the people, and is not bound up with the popular mind and true renown, is worthless and despicable, did it even extend over the whole universe" (Ingemann 1913/1828, 8261). The novel also stresses the importance of free speech and the resolution of church-state conflicts in favor of the state in the early fourteenth century. Thus, the wise Drost Peter states:

> In Denmark, God be praised, thoughts, and their rudest expression, are still free, when the law of the land is not transgressed; and I regard no Dane as the enemy of his country because, perhaps, he does not join in our common wish for its welfare, and in personal attachment to the royal house, with the same warmth as myself…[Yet] If variance and discord are not soon to rend asunder all, even the best of Danish hearts, and if the people are not to rebel and sink into ruin by such devastating strife, we must necessarily be united in one object; and that is, in lawful obedience to the majesty and divinity of the crown (Ingemann 1913/1828, Loc. 5216–22).

Authors in Episodes of School Reform

Danish authors influenced educational policy in several ways during this period. First, eight years after the 1814 royal proclamation created a public system, the king strongly urged all state schools to utilize the monitorial method. This drew sharp criticism from men and women of letters across Danish society, who helped to end the monitorial experiment. Second, authors participated in the National Liberal struggle for constitutional reform and a society-building campaign to strengthen Denmark's hold on Schleswig-Holstein. Third, authors joined in the lively debate over post-primary education and the proposals for the "real" schools (as a supplement to the more academically inclined learned schools). Fourth, authors inspired and lent their support to the private evangelical school-building project. These struggles culminated in the Free School Act of 1855 and the administrative reforms of 1856.

Authors and the State Schools Immediately after 1814

In the years after 1814, the task of expanding education in Denmark took on new urgency, as the country grappled with the dual loss of Norway and the Danish fleet. Concerned about national security, the king pushed the Chancellery to impose the Bell–Lancaster monitorial method ("Den indbyrdes Underviisningsmethode") on schools. The king believed that an educated, disciplined, and obedient peasantry was necessary to populate the standing army, and he viewed the Bell–Lancaster method as the best pedagogical method for accomplishing his goals. In 1816, when he first suggested experimenting with the methods in urban Copenhagen schools for the poor, both the Danish Chancellery (populated by Philanthropists) and the clergy objected (Reeh and Larsen 2015, 41–6). But Philanthropenism was falling out of fashion, and critics charged that it called for too much attention to the *intellectual* development of children and not enough to their *moral* development (Bugge 1965, 189).

In 1819, the king bypassed Chancellery objections and asked Joseph Abrahamson, a military leader, to institute monitorial methods in a Copenhagen military school; by 1822 a special commission including Abrahamson had developed a plan for implementing monitorial pedagogy at schools across Denmark. Although the state apparatus encouraged, rather than mandated, the method, administrators tried to force teachers to master the techniques and to implement them without deviation (Larsen et al. 2013, 220–7). Abrahamson's military background combined with the king's concerns about conscription produced a comparatively strict version of monitorial teaching. In 1830, Abrahamson distributed to schools detailed instructions for the implementation of the method, and urged teachers to attend special training programs in Copenhagen. Philanthropinist methods were incapable of producing the discipline required by the military and monitorial methods were cheaper because they used older students to teach younger ones (Reeh and Larsen 2015, 46–8).

Authors initially hesitated to attack the king's initiative. Steen Steensen Blicher hoped that the monitorial system would work, because he liked the idea of children helping one another and believed that children should be made to become good moral citizens. His work to promote the system and his interest in rural economics soon brought Blicher to the attention of the king (Sørensen 2017, 82). Around the same time, Grundtvig (1819) wrote an article entitled "The Lancaster Method" that politely urged caution in the forced implementation of monitorial teaching. The life of the school is internal and cannot be altered by a mere method, he argued; moreover, success of teaching depends on the relationship between teacher and student. The interruption of this relationship with a mechanistic method, he worried, could perhaps even damage children's moral and religious development. What had worked abroad was not guaranteed success in Denmark. Grundtvig concluded by stating that many men joined him in praying that our "life-loving, beloved King will not command the introduction of the method," but would rather through trial by fire allow the method to garner Danish educators' "favor and applause" (Grundtvig 1819, no page numbers).

Future literary critics of the monitorial method would not maintain such a polite and cautious tone. A decade after the commission's plan for implementing the monitorial method, negative reactions to the method had intensified across literary and educational communities. In an 1831 article in the *Monthly Magazine for Literature* (*Maanedskrift for Litteratur*), H.N. Clausen scathingly criticized the monitorial method and Abraham proffered his resignation that December (Bugge 1965, 191). Goldschmidt attacked the method in his satirical periodical "Cosaren" and poet F. Paludan-Muller slammed the method in his poem, "Adam Homo" (Hedegaard 1974). Ultimately, the method would not survive because the mechanical methods of Bell–Lancaster were at odds with Danish educational culture.

Authors and the Constitutional Struggle

Authors also participated in the National Liberal movement to establish a constitutional monarchy and educational access was a core objective in this battle. National Liberals sought to avoid a revolutionary break with the past, preserve the political power of the bourgeois intelligentsia, and nourish an organic society led by cultural elites. Cultural formation through education would remind citizens of the general spirit of the people and would forge unity (Nygaard 2009, 95–6). A large percentage of Danish citizens spoke German, especially in the contested Schleswig-Holstein duchies, and National Liberals viewed schooling as a way to reinforce use of the Danish language, especially among those who spoke Danish in the duchies (Nygaard 2009).

Golden Age authors helped the National Liberal Party to construct its political ideology. Novelists, playwrights, and poets were deeply connected to the political leaders of the National Liberal Party, all of whom had a background in journalism and/or literature. Ditlev Gothard Monrad was editor of the journal

Fatherland, member of parliament, minister of culture (1855–9), and the prime minister who lost Slesvig-Holstein in the 1864 war with Germany. As a fellow student of Hegel, Monrad was close to Heiberg and the two men conceptualized two sources of legitimacy for the new political order: rights associated with constitutionalism and the bonds of civil society that were necessary to sustain the organic unity of the collective people. Political reform based solely on rights was insufficient; a cultural element was also necessary to preserve the unity of Danish society (Nygaard 2009, 95–6). In order to reconcile individual freedom with the organic unity of the people, the state should work toward the evolution of civil society in the spirit of the people (folkeånd), shared public awareness (folkebevidsthed), and the life of the collective people (folkeliv) (Nygaard 2009, 99–100). Monrad wrote that to "'feel the pulse of the spirit' the people must be organized as an organism" (Koch and Kornerup 1950–66, 17). Because farmers and workers had limited understanding of politics, public opinion support for organic unity should be first cultivated within the middle class and then extended to the working class (Nygaard 2009, 104–5).

Johan Madvig (MP, minister of culture, and head of the party from 1856 to 1863) was a cultural maven within the National Liberal's highest echelons. At the age of twenty-nine, Madvig had cofounded and edited the *Monthly Journal of Literature* (*Maanedsskrift for Litteratur*), a publication that became a crucial venue for Heiberg's work. Heiberg served as the ideologue for the journal and also was editor for a time (Larsen 2006, 27). Madvig also worked on for the magazine, *Dansk Litteraturtidende*, for which he reviewed authors such as Gyllembourg and Blicher (Madvig 1887). Monrad and Madvig were frequent visitors to the Heiberg home and Madvig secured Heiberg's appointment as theater director in 1849 (Munksgaard 1955, 11). Madvig arranged stipends for authors who had made a great contribution to the country, such as HC Andersen, Hertz, and Paludan-Müller, and he helped Ohlenschläger to receive the Grand Cross of Dannebrog (Madvig 1887, Before ff 70).

Orla Lehmann (editor of *Fatherland*, MP and Minister of the Interior) was the fiery orator of the movement. Lehmann was particularly attuned to the importance of public opinion to National Liberal success and connected the party's revolutionary project to Danish folkloric traditions, the idiosyncratic spirit of the Nordic region, and foreign constitutional arguments (Jensen 1985, 43, 612). Lehmann believed that when Denmark "carried out the bold, daring move to transfer power to all the people, the object was not to put government in the hands of unenlightened commoners" (Nørr 1979, 212). Self-governance by parliament would enhance both collective well-being as well as individual work effort: "Self-esteem and Self-awareness, Joy and Desire will awaken in every Danish Man's Chest…many brave people, whose powers now lie unused, would see the opportunity and desire to work for their fellow citizens…In short, it will be easier to do something good, more difficult to do something bad, most difficult to do nothing at all" (Reinhardt 1871, 67). Lehmann's attention to public opinion pointed him toward the extraordinary

importance of the press, which he referred to as the "seed for all who would strike deep roots in the hearts of the people" (Reinhardt 1871, 20). While still a student, Lehmann initiated a campaign to support freedom of the press with letters from allies in diverse parts of Danish intellectual life. The king suspected Lehmann of engineering the campaign because the messages – allegedly coming from diverse sources – were so similar in content and form that they seemed to originate from the same source (Reinhardt 1871, 58).

Lehmann's background helps to explain his interest in using culture to sculpt public opinion. He initially studied literature with HC Andersen, before switching to law, and Andersen continued to serve as a mentor throughout Lehmann's life. Lehman was also very influenced by Grundtvig (Jensen 1985, 40). As a student, Lehmann worked with the *Monthly Magazine for Literature* and at the age of twenty-two, he published an influential article suggesting that Denmark's spiritual maturity should permit people to participate in governing their own affairs and that Denmark could take a different trajectory to end absolutism from that of France. Through education, some members of the lower classes were able to join the enlightened bourgeoisie and this provided for greater class equality than was found abroad (Reinhardt 1871, 18–9). But Lehmann was very critical of the absolute monarchy and was jailed in 1841 after claiming that the king had failed to help peasants. Kings had built so many luxury palaces, he wrote, that "one could stand on their balconies and play featherball from one to the next" (Reinhardt 1871, 66).

Beyond their personal ties with politicians, authors influenced National Liberal struggles through their organizational work. The writer, editor, and politician Carl Ploug, for example, was one of Lehmann's closest friends (Reinhardt 1871, 12), and as editor of *Fatherland* for decades, Ploug helped to coordinate various authors' support of the National Liberal agenda. Heiberg reported on politics and literature in his magazine, *Copenhagen's Flying Post* (*Kjøbenhavns Flyvende Post*). The government tried to limit the press with an 1837 act that punished publications exhibiting what it deemed a "lack of responsible attention." The act increased convictions of journalists and five Copenhagen newspapers paid 17,980 Rigsdollars in fines. In the following years, the Freedom of the Press Society (Trykkefriheds-Selskabet) repeatedly petitioned the Assembly (Stænderforsamlinger) to change the law (Reinhardt 1871, 60–4).

Ploug and Lehmann worked closely with authors in the "Scandinavianism" movement that began with student associations' efforts to unify Nordic countries. In the winter of 1837–8, students walked across the frozen sound from Copenhagen on the western bank and from Malmo on the eastern bank for a frigid meeting in the middle, where they established the Scandinavian Society. Future meetings would take place on safer ground in Lund and Copenhagen, and would be led by Ploug and the renowned Swedish poet Carl Vilhem August Strandberg (Tersmeden and Dhondt 2011, 103–5). HC Andersen wrote to Lehmann on November 16, 1843 that he would do everything in his power to help the society

(Andersen, November 16, 1843). At a January 1844 meeting, Madvig spoke "On Scandinavianism's Relationship to Ordinary Culture" and warned the students that Nordic cooperation should not include a self-congratulatory and overblown celebration of Nordic culture ("selvgod, sig afsondrende og overvurderende Nordiskhed"). Orla Lehman ironically responded with a call for "moderation in moderation" (Madvig 1887, Before ff 53).

Authors also participated in society-building festivals to build devotion to the fatherland. In 1839, for example, Steen Steensen Blicher organized the Himmelbjerg folk meeting (Himmelbjergmøder) on the summit of Himmelberg Mountain, the highest point (482 feet) in Denmark. The group celebrated the fatherland with patriotic speeches, poems, and songs; Blicher (unsuccessfully) invited the king. Artists exhibited works, gymnasts tested their skills in competitions, and musicians greeted the arrival of the participants. An article in *Randers Avis* on August 6, 1839 reported that five to six hundred Danes of all ages and classes gathered on the mountain: "Here were the General and the Soldier, the Count and the Peasant, the Priest, and the Deacon, the Child at the breast and the old one with Silver Hair" (Aakjær 1904, 290–7; Mai 2010, 14 percent).

After Blicher's Himmelbjerg success, National Liberals organized folk meetings to advance Danish language and culture in Schleswig. A central plank of the National Liberal program was Eiderpolitik, which supported setting the southern border of Denmark at the Ejder River separating Schleswig from Holstein (Ejderpolitik). The Society for the Promotion of Danish Teaching in Southern Jutland campaigned to give Danish-speaking students there a right to courses in Danish (rather than in the German used by schools).[2] Huge folk meetings were held at Skamlingsbanken; the first on May 18, 1843 drew 12,000 participants from all over Denmark (Reinhardt 1971, 94–8). Andersen wrote to Lehmann on April 1, 1843 about the contribution of writers at the meeting: "the poet is the priest of his people, who must…with the torch of promise show the way to the rebirth of blessed peace" (Lehmann April 1, 1943). Speakers at the second meeting included Lehmann, Ploug, Grundtvig, Goldschmidt, and Blicher, among others. At the third meeting, in July 1845, Ploug, Blicher, and Grundtvig were guest speakers, participants danced for hours, and the evening ended in a massive fireworks display ("Fyens Stifts Kongeligene privilegerede Adresse- og politiske Avis samt Avertissementstidende," 346–7). English poet Edmund Gosse noted the immense importance of the Golden Age authors and their concept of cultural formation in his *Two Visits to Denmark*: "there was a wide appreciation of literary speculation of a certain kind, kept within the bounds of good taste, reverently attached to the tradition of the elders" (Gosse 1911, 166).

In 1846, Orla Lehmann set up the "Friends of the Peasants Society" (Bondevennernes Selskab) to help the National Liberal and peasant parties

[2] The society is called the Selskab til dansk Undervisnings Fremme i Sønderjylland.

find points of common interest and unite in opposition to royalist landowners. Authors played an important role in forging this alliance, which they viewed as essential to the functioning of the constitutional form of government (Gibbons 1979, 32–3). Ingemann wrote to Grundtvig that while he "did not feel compelled to take part in the political machinations, yet neither could he ignore the essential unrest in the state machinery. Without repair, the axis of the state may well break" (Aakjær 1904, 262).

Finally, in March 1848, the new King Frederik VII permitted the formation of a parliament with a National Liberal government in a highly celebrated bloodless revolution. A Constitutional Assembly met on October 23, 1848 in Christiansborg; the group produced a document for the king to sign that ended the absolute monarchy in June 5, 1849. This document created the parliament (Rigstag), including the lower body (Folketing) and the upper body (Landsting). All males over thirty could vote for Folketing members, although some status requirements (e.g. not being poor or in domestic service) prevented suffrage. Rigstag chambers would pass bills, but the crown could veto them and ministers would be appointed by the king (Gibbons 1979, 33–4). Many authors participated in the Constitutional Assembly; for example, Grundtvig served as a delegate from the National Conservative party, although he moved closer to the National Liberal position with time.

Real Schools and the Fight between New Humanists and Moderate Realists

Educationalists perceived a need for more advanced skills after Denmark climbed out of its economic slump in the 1830s, and this motivated greater attention to post-primary education. Reformers were increasingly dissatisfied with the learned schools that continued to offer a classical curriculum of Latin and Greek (Jespersen 2011, 154–6). In addition, technological changes within the growing railroad sector created the demand for more evolved practical skills, and this increased an interest in "real schools" that specialized in providing such skills (Haue 2010, 327).

Despite agreement on the need for higher skills, intellectuals, authors, and policymakers drifted into two camps regarding post-primary education. On one side were the moderate realists, associated with Grundtvig, who sought cultural formation and the instruction of practical skills for a broad cross-section of youth and who specifically promoted a national real school to be built at the Sorø Academy. On the other side were the moderate New Humanists, associated with Madvig and National Liberals, who sought reforms of the learned schools with a humanistic rather than a classical curriculum. Madvig also supported the expansion of real schools but wished to do this within the framework of the learned schools. Authors were important allies for both sides in this battle over higher education, which came to a head in the debate over the proposed Sorø Academy real school (See Larsen 2006).

Post-primary "real schools" that taught practical subjects first developed in the late eighteenth century and were based on Philanthropinist ideas. The

Descendants' School, created by activists at the Drejer's Club and discussed in Chapter 3, was one of the earliest. King Frederik VI encouraged the construction of real schools for bourgeois boys in his school ordinance for market towns (Larsen 2010 1, 81). Yet in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the ideas of the enlightenment came under attack – as did Denmark herself! – and many real schools went bankrupt during Denmark's economic crisis. In the 1830s, reformers once again sought to establish higher-level courses designed for young people who would not need Latin in their chosen professions. Knud Gad issued a pamphlet entitled, "Where should I put my son in school?" setting off an intense debate about practical alternatives to the learned schools. Gad argued that future merchants and traders needed cultural formation as well as the clergy and upper classes; this need was not only for the individuals involved but would serve the interests of society as a whole (Glenthøj 2010, 60).

Grundtvig and his followers proposed a post-primary real school, which he entitled the "School for Life," to be built at the Sorø Academy, and together with his moderate realist allies, he embarked upon a long campaign to realize his dream. The school would offer courses in Danish language, literature, history, geography, sciences, mathematics, engineering, and other practical subjects. Grundtvig and his allies wanted post-primary education to be accessible to a broader cross-section of society; therefore, the school would admit students from all classes (Hørby 1967). The real-school coalition believed that difficult subjects such as Latin grammar could hamper students' mental development (Fibiger 1838, 75–6). Moreover, making Danish literature and history available to farmers and workers would strengthen their understanding of themselves as part of a broader Danish people. Thus, the school was designed to join together goals of cultural formation (with humanities courses) and skills-building (with science and practical courses). Nationalism and romantic ideas about a national education also motivated the proposal. Grundtvig believed that the extant learned schools and universities were overly shaped by foreign influences, and he sought to build a truly Danish institution (Larsen 2006, 100).

Ingemann (novelist, teacher, and Sorø director) was perhaps Grundtvig's closest ally in the campaign. An astute political observer, Ingemann wrote to Grundtvig on January 10, 1843 expressing concern that the administration governing the universities and learned schools would oppose the real school. Ingemann feared that the administration would instead try to use the Sorø Academy endowment to reform other higher education institutions. To preempt such a move, Ingemann and Grundtvig proposed placing the Sorø real school directly under the king's jurisdiction (Hørby 1967, 69–75).

Novelist Johannes Carsten Hauch was another supporter of practical training; in fact, as a "radical realist," he was even more passionate about practical skills than Grundtvig, who cared deeply about the study of literature and history, even while recognizing the advantages of training in science and math (Larsen 2010, 85). Hauch shared Grundtvig's passion for cultural formation,

but he believed this should transpire through the teaching of sciences and mathematics, which were as important as literature and history to building the spirit. In September 1842, Hauch gave a speech at Sorø on real education that was later published as an influential pamphlet. In it, he explained that he could not understand why Denmark's youth should "look back at the abandoned temples, the foreign groves, the dark and desolate paths of antiquity, instead of immediately, without wasting time, treading the path on which contemporary families walk" (Larsen 2010, 85).

New Humanists led by Madvig (who became cultural minister in 1848) strongly opposed the Sorø real school proposal. They joined the Grundtvig contingent in rejecting Latin-laden classical curricula, but they placed priority on learned school reforms and favored humanistic curricula concentrating on literature, history, and modern languages. Madvig did support some real schools to study practical subjects, but he argued that school reorganization needed to be orderly, and that real schools should be monitored by the administration governing the learned schools (Larsen 2006, 98). The new humanist view was well-represented in the *Monthly Journal of Literature*; for example, Madvig wrote in 1832 that upper-level education should serve more purposes than training bureaucrats; it should be a vehicle for the cultural formation for those entering many different professions (Skovgaard-Petersen 1976, 129). Madvig argued that Grundtvig's proposal for a national real school housed at Sorø was unnecessary because the learned schools and universities already cultivated Danish sensibilities. Instead, Madvig favored reform of the learned schools and universities; and as Ingemann had feared, the new humanists sought to use the rich Sorø endowment to fund their desired reforms (Hørby 1967, 59–60). Heiberg wrote a piece in *The Flying Post* in 1834 attacking Professor Sibbern's thesis that natural sciences are best able to awaken the logic in every person's soul. Heiberg maintained that cultural formation was necessary to develop self-understanding and this task is best furthered by the humanities (Heiberg 1834, 37).

Thus, despite the pitched battle over real schools, Grundtvig (with the practical realists) and Madvig (with the new humanists) were not terribly far apart *ideologically* in their thinking about secondary education, as both understood cultural formation to be the object of highest importance and both supported the study of Danish literature and history. But where Grundtvig and his allies wanted to create a new, national school aimed at instruction in practical skills, Madvig and company wanted to reform the existing learned schools. In addition, Grundtvig wanted a broader cross-section of society to have access to higher education than Madvig, who concentrated on expanding advanced schooling to the bourgeoisie. Finally, both sides lusted after the Sorø endowment (Hørby 1967, 80; Larsen 2006, 98).

Ultimately, Grundtvig persuaded Christian VIII to support the project, arguing that the school would strengthen the link between the state and the people. On February 1, 1843, Grundtvig gave the king a pamphlet entitled

"New Year's wish for the Danish Society" suggesting that the real school could be an institution for ordinary people's cultural formation and enlightenment. He wanted it to be a place: "Where ordinary enlightenment should be more than an empty word or a mere appearance, where government and the people really should learn to understand each other, where administration is by the people" (Hørby 1967, 66). The king issued a decree on March 27, 1847 for a real (middle) school at Sorø based on Grundtvig's pedagogy. Yet, the king's death the following year also signified the demise of the "School for Life" (Skovmand 1944, 29–32).

After the failed Sorø experiment, a learned school reform bill passed parliament in 1850. Madvig's reform bill clearly stated its goal of providing true cultural formation and covering more humanistic subjects (Skovgaard-Petersen 1976, 129). Grundtvig pushed for a Nordic line specializing in Nordic language, history, and literature within the revised learned schools. Yet Madvig successfully argued that an excessive focus on Nordic studies would isolate Denmark from collective European culture (Skovgaard-Petersen 1976, 130).

The Private Evangelical Schools

The contentious experiment with monitorial instruction stifled the government's efforts to educate peasants and inspired a vibrant movement to create private free schools for primary school children and folk high schools for older students (Kålund-Jørgensen 1953–6, 460). Grundtvig was the guiding light of the movement, which was spurred from the bottom up by self-help initiatives in agricultural communities rather than through top-down cultural formation efforts driven by elites (Kirmmse 1977, 3). Yet the folk high school and free school movement shared with the National Liberals a deep commitment to nationalism, folkish views of organic society, and education as means for cultural formation (Fain 1971, 78–82).

Beginning in the 1830s, Evangelicals lobbied for greater local control over schools, attacking Bishop Balle's reader and keeping their children from attending public schools. In one locality, religious activists seized and burned state schoolbooks that they viewed as poisoning the souls of children. The mainstream clergy feared that parental control of schools would weaken schools' Christian character and teachers suspected that some parents were motivated to keep their children home to work. Yet in 1839, the government finally relaxed the requirements for homeschooling (Larsen 1899, 123–4).

In 1844, Kristen Mikkelsen Kold, began developing "free schools" for elementary children in rural communities to fill gaps in coverage, to experiment with methods other than Lancaster-Bell, and to support the religious awakening movement. Kold based his schools on Grundtvig's principles and sought to replace mechanistic learning with oral instruction (Larsen 1899, 141, 127). Attacking both the form and content of the common state schools and Bishop Balle's reader, Kold wrote that "people in the country are really tired of the

useless" textbook (Skovmand 1944, 72). Instead, he proposed instruction organized around myths, narrative, and the living word, and he promoted experiential techniques to stimulate the imagination (Gjerløff and Jacobsen 2014, 117–9).

Kold subsequently developed folk high schools for secondary education for older children and adults. These stressed both learning from everyday experiences and humanistic studies to prepare peasants for participation in civic life. While the schools would also nurture Christian morals, they were not merely a tool for religious conquest; indeed, Grundtvig himself wanted education to rise above church divisions (Skovmand 1944, 67 & 418). Christian Flor observed the schools' important function of expanding the political participation of peasants:

> [The Danish farmers] did not want to only come to high school to be educated as a farmer …The farmer felt pressured by the fact that he could not really participate in the life of society; he got a seat in the Folk council, if he sat frightened and embarrassed, put down by the feeling: you know nothing and understand nothing (Skovmand 1944, 26).

Not all folk high schools emphasized humanistic studies for cultural formation. Even before Kold's school-building project, some communities developed higher-level folk high schools to teach agricultural skills and, in a ministry survey, many agricultural schools did not even mention Grundtvig. The North Slesvig Farmer's Organization described its goals for a folk high school in the 1841 issue of *Dannevirke*: to obtain knowledge among and advance the standing of farmers, protect the fatherland, and strengthen the mother tongue (Aakjær 1904, 285). The ministry responsible for administering funding for private schools recommended an examination process and many post-primary schools developed exams to document skills acquisition, although the exams remained under local control (Skovmand 1944, 58–9, 41).

Grundtvig advocated for funding private schools during the constitutional debates in 1848–9, and described mandatory school attendance as "a horrible cloud [that made] school into a prison for both parents and children." He felt that when parents came to see the value of education, the state common schools would no longer be necessary (Larsen 1899, 202). When critics during parliamentary debate felt that the measures for funding agricultural schools were insufficient, Grundtvig responded that "one must start at the beginning and not at the end…to do something more for the enlightenment of the people…wherever they sit in society" (Skovmand 1944, 104).

Grundtvig provided the central inspiration for the private free schools and folk high schools, but others writers were also important to the movement. Grundtvig's *Nordic Myths*, *Handbook on World History* and *Tiden Strøm*, Oehlenschläger's *Hakon Jarl* and Ingemann's *Valdemar the Great and his Men* all were core texts for the schools. The works nurtured students' historical, poetic sensibilities and their sense of belonging to the people (Skovmand 1944, 416–7). In addition to the schools, Kold formed a group called the Danish

Society (Danske Samfund) to sing hymns, read great Danish literature, plan schools, and study Grundtvig's ideas (Grundtvig 2013/1838; Fain 1971, 78–82; Bjerg et al. 1995, 31–2). When the Copenhagen chapter of the Danish Society held a festival in 1840, Kold read from Ingemann's *Valdemar the Great and his Men* and led the assembly in song (Bruun and Klaveness 1896, 295).

Blicher was a strong advocate for the folk high schools and participated in the movement to expand the national literature (Aakjær 1904, 283). Blicher shared Ingemann's fears that liberalism could harm the organic unity of the Danish people and that individual interests would interfere with the collective good: "In the public sphere, there should be only one consideration and that is res publica [the state], the general good" (Aakjær 1904, 279–80). While Blicher strongly supported the expansion of the public sphere and a strong military, he criticized corruption within the administrative state, sought better record-keeping, and demanded transparency. He saw education as a crucial means of keeping the public alerted to the possible misuse of public authority (Aakjær 1904, 266–9). In *Dannevirke* Nr. 37, Blicher issued an invitation to Danish farmers across the land to form high schools to teach the Danish mother tongue, as well as the history and geography of the fatherland: "High schools for the Danish peasantry! High schools in Southern Jutland, in Northern Jutland, in the islands and everywhere in the Dane kingdom!" (Aakjær 1904, 286).

Free School Act

Struggles in the wake of the 1814 proclamation led to two parliamentary acts that affirmed parental choice in education, formalized a place for private schools in the Danish system, and reinforced local community control. First, the movement to build free and folk high schools in rural communities culminated in the passage of the Free School Law of 1855 (Friskoleloven af 1855), which allowed parents to form their own schools and gave students who had met academic goals the option of being excused from class. The law also made it easier for children in rural areas to work in the fields and structure instruction around employment requirements. The state began fully funding Free Schools in 1899 (Larsen 1899, 218).

Orla Lehmann had tried to make school freedom a plank at the constitutional convention; however, his National Liberal allies vetoed his suggestions. Lehman wanted to establish a right to a free education for those who could not afford to pay and a right for parents to educate their children as they pleased. Councilor Jesper Peter With explained in November 1846, "As the peasantry obtains greater freedom – and as all are called to great work in the municipalities' interests – the farmer's need to procure more skills and a higher education also increases, so that he may take his place in the municipal council and estate council, and so that he may really use his freedom and thereby advance prosperity" (Skovmand 1944, 27). But Monrad disliked placing the power to educate children in parental hands, which he felt would have detracted from the authority of the state. Ultimately little was done on education because the

National Liberals were focused on the first German war and on crafting the new constitutional monarchy (Kålund-Jørgensen 1953–56, 453–5).

Monrad and other National Liberals continued to oppose the loss of governmental control over schooling, but they finally came to realize that voluntarism might work to increase the attendance of children in schools (Larsen 1899, 214). In 1854, Prime Minister Anders Sandøe Ørsted distributed a circular to assess school directors' views about education and discovered much discontent with prohibitions on choice. Dean Bloch in Ringkøbing pointed to a fundamental problem with teachers' salaries: farmers did not "fully appreciate the scope and content of the work." Bloch doubted that the common people would ever be happy "until the implementation of the freedom principle." Only when local residents felt that they had the right to choose their school would they value teachers. In similar fashion, County Representative Schulin announced "freedom versus compulsion in schools – that is the main question on which everything else turns on…If you give up compulsion, all other favorable improvements will come by themselves, everything will fall easily into place with little help from and adjustment by the state" (Larsen 1899, 200–1). Culture Minister Hall finally endorsed parental choice in 1855 and the National Liberal strength in parliament critically aided the passage of the act (Gjerløff and Jacobsen 2014, 125).

Administrative Reform of the State Schools

Second, in 1856, the parliament finally passed a limited law to reform the public schools called the Law on some Amended Provisions for Citizens and Regular Schools in Market Towns and in the Countryside (Lov om nogle Forandrede Bestemmelser for Borger- og Almueskolevæsenet i Kjøbstæderne og paa Landet af 1856). National Liberals had been discussing different possibilities for reform since Pastor C.L. Børresen published his widely read (and prize-winning) *Treatise on General Instruction* (*Afhandling om Almen Oplysning)* in 1841. Børresen argued that the state school system lacked expert oversight and control: it was administered at the national level by Chancellery lawyers who knew little about education and was implemented at the grass-roots level by priests who also knew little about education. Børresen pressed for less attention to souls, greater emphasis on demonstrable skills, and better teacher training; in short, experts should be put in charge of education. Before the constitutional convention, National Liberals such as Lehmann and H.N. Clausen were anxious to rationalize education and sympathetic to teachers, who sought better pensions, permanent employment, and fewer auxiliary work demands such as carrying letters across the realm. The Friends of Peasants Society developed a school reform proposal that would have created adult evening schools for farmers and workers who lacked both academic skills and knowledge of their political rights. But the king's Chancellery rejected proposals for improvement (Larsen 1899, 88–96).

School inspection was widely perceived as a big problem. Clergy had been responsible for assessing the religious instruction of children since the 1536 Church Law. The 1814 education act required some local officials – the vicar, school commission, or county-level school directorate – to examine schools on a regular basis, but the act left implementation up to the district. As such, implementation of inspection varied widely across communities. Vicars were expected to visit on a fortnightly basis and deans were asked to make yearly visits; however, many communities fell far short of these expectations. The basis for inspection was also not clear. Farmers and parents who were dissatisfied with the clergy's oversight sought more autonomy for the local community and greater democratic input into the process of assessment (Ydesen and Andreasen 2014, 5–13).

With the new constitution, many anticipated that reforming educational administration would be a top priority for the National Liberal government, yet the war from 1848 to 1850 delayed any action to address teachers' salaries and working conditions (Larsen 1899, 176–7). As new Culture Minister, Monrad surveyed school directors and county officials to document school practices and problems. Local officials encouraged Monrad to build county upper-level agricultural schools in rural areas to promote skills development, Danish language instruction and social harmony. Monrad also created a national-level administrative unit within the Culture Ministry to inspect Latin schools; the unit offered support to primary schools but left oversight to municipal control (Skovmand 1944, 13–36). Madvig, an educational specialist, became head of the new unit in 1849, investigated problems with the state common schools and drafted a proposal for state school reform (outside of Copenhagen) in 1853. Yet his proposals again competed with more pressing worries about Slesvig-Holstein and action was delayed until Monrad's initiative in 1856 (Larsen 1899, 189–90).

Disappointed by the inaction of the National Liberals, teachers began meeting to formulate their own demands for reform. Teachers were a growing part of the National Liberal coalition and eleven teachers participated in the constitutional assembly. As a cohort, teachers generally favored a system with plural forms of schooling, a school ombudsman, a guarantee of religious freedom, local autonomy and a right to free education for the poor (Larsen 1899, 178–85). Teachers throughout the country held three large school meetings in 1850, 1851, and 1852. The first meeting addressed religious instruction and proved quite productive – even the clergy recognized that time-consuming religious courses prevented sufficient knowledge development in other subjects (Skovmand 1944, 40). One-hundred-twenty-five participants supported the continuation of religious instruction (with two opposed and two abstaining); yet, the vast majority opposed teaching religion as *the* major subject of education and sought courses imparting practical knowledge. Many felt that parents could more appropriately cover religious topics (Larsen 1899, 69). The 1852 meeting took up the question of private schools, and most supported parental

oversight of education contingent on state intervention if the private system failed. Teachers supported the widely held position that municipal governments should provide regulatory oversight of schools and the national government should subsidize school development (Larsen 1899, 188–94). Teachers were supported in their efforts by the Friends of the Peasants Society and both the National Liberal *Fatherland* and the magazine for farmers, *The Common Friend* (Almuevennen), wrote about teachers' issues (Larsen 1899, 94–6, 71–5).

In 1857, Cultural Minister Carl Christian Hall requested funding from the Finance Ministry to create a director of education within his own ministry. Monrad assumed the position and drafted reforms of the free common and fee citizen schools that would expand the national government's engagement with them while maintaining the prerogatives of local governments. Hall circulated to educators a draft school law, and used his widely admired diplomatic skills to secure a deal. The teachers initially felt that Hall's draft did not go far enough in raising low salaries and contained excessive top-down regulation. But these issues were quickly settled (Larsen 1899, 222–5). While the boundary dispute over Schleswig Holstein continued to limit the scope of educational reform, the School Law of March 8, 1856 created a new school board that gave the national level some influence on how local school boards spent their funds for school, but also accorded local communities greater influence into the hiring of teachers (Gjerløff and Jacobsen 2014, 71–2). The law also increased teachers' salaries (funded by county and national government), improved teachers' pension, pass regulations about school size and design and provided funding for agricultural schools (Skovmand 1944, 124, 112–3).

CONCLUSION

In the mid-nineteenth century, economic, political, and social challenges put the expansion of mass education on the public agenda in both Britain and Denmark. British politicians grappled with the instability brought on by industrialization and came to see educating workers as a necessary precondition to democratization and social stability. Danish politicians sought constitutional reform, agricultural productivity growth, and the retention of Schleswig-Holstein; to these ends, they harnessed the evangelical peasant movement's school-building project. Education expansion became a vehicle for cultivating a national cultural identity, increasing skills, and defending the fatherland.

Despite some shared motivations, policymakers in Britain and Denmark made different strategic choices about primary education. The British 1870 education act finally established a public-school system; at this point, politicians retained the voluntary church schools, but eliminated alternative school experiments such as the ragged schools. In contrast, Danish politicians harnessed the power of a private school movement to expand educational access to rural workers and supported parents' rights to control their children's education. Both countries adopted monitorial methods; however, the Danish episode

was short-lived, as the rigors of set lessons and rote memorization were less compatible with the educational culture in Denmark. Britain strengthened the national assessment regime with the Revised Code of 1862 while Denmark continued to permit local control over assessments at the primary level.

Through all of this, British and Danish authors provided cultural context to the deliberations over educational access and quality, and framed education in nationally distinctive ways. British authors were more divided along political lines than Danish authors. Compared to their Tory counterparts, Liberal and Radical writers expressed greater support for the rights of labor, assistance to the poor, and a national system; and conservative writers were much stronger supporters of the voluntary church schools. Yet British authors across the political spectrum converged in other ways that were distinctive from Danish views. British authors depicted education in terms of benefits to the individual rather than investments in society. They perceived a culture of poverty as an unfortunate but unavoidable side-effect of industrialization and viewed efforts to support the poor as a matter of charity. They pressed the need for quality controls, even to the detriment of access. While many authors of this period favored working-class educational institutions, they embraced standardized curricula as essential to individual self-development.

Danish authors with diverse political leanings held surprisingly consensual views of education and the working class; moreover, they expressed more positive views of the "small people" than did British writers. Danish writers considered industrialization to be an important collective project and sought expanded access to education to meet collective goals: schools for farmers and workers were crucial to social investment, skills development, and nation-building. Charitable appeals to rescue the poor were largely missing from Danish stories, and authors were significantly less concerned about political rights or equality than about building a strong society.