

Assessing Morality: The Ontario Provincial Survey of 1896

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In this essay the published results of the 1896 Ontario survey into the moral standing of teachers and pupils are analyzed. The commentaries of school inspectors are used to make connections between morality and the formation of moral character. A distinction between abstract moral obligations and concrete moral customs provides a framework for understanding the moral activity under investigation. Remarks by inspectors indicate the manner in which the conception of morality was perceived and provide the essential content of the inquiry.

Dans cet article nous analysons les résultats de l'enquête, faite en Ontario en 1896, sur la position morale des professeurs et des élèves. Les commentaires des inspecteurs d'école sont utilisés pour faire les liens entre la moralité et la formation du caractère moral. Une distinction entre les obligations morales abstraites et les coutumes morales concrètes sert de cadre pour comprendre l'activité morale étudiée. Les remarques faites par les inspecteurs indiquent la manière dont la conception de la moralité est perçue et forment à la fois la majeure partie du contenu de l'enquête.

On the 18th of December, 1896, George Ross, the Minister of Education in Ontario, signed a circular for distribution to all Public School Inspectors requesting them to submit a report on the moral standing of pupils and teachers in their jurisdictions. In the cover letter Ross remarked on the need for such a report. The primary task of any educational system maintained by the state, he said, was to produce good citizens. "Intellectual power and acumen," he acknowledged, contributed to good citizenship, but "the forces which lie at the foundation of the best and strongest character are moral and religious. Whether these forces are growing stronger and more effective in the formation of better manhood and womanhood should be known to the teachers and inspectors of the Province" (Ontario, 1896, p. xv). A focus for the survey was "the character and deportment of the school population" (Ontario, 1896, p. xv), both pupils and teachers. Morality could thus be practically defined as the quality of persons in their relation to the Canadian state. Perhaps Ross's sentiments regarding this project were best summed up by one of his inspectors, D.A. Maxwell:

Believing that the wealth or power of a nation does not consist in its material possessions but in the worth of the individuals composing it, and that personal worth consists in the power of thought and in the power to decide and act wisely and rightly, civilized peoples have been led by their political instincts to seek the best possible system of instruction to fit their youths for citizenship. (Maxwell, p. 138)¹

This essay contains an exploration of the report on the "moral standing of the province" published as a part of the 1896 Ontario Annual Report of the Ontario Ministry of Education. It is intended to promote an understanding of the conceptions of morality of those persons close to educational practice and evaluation. In this essay I take advantage of a framework for the Report advanced by Ross — namely, three references to the educational system in Ontario which sustained his belief that such a survey was both necessary and practical. First, he acknowledged that public schooling was a state system with the goal of educating the province's youth to participate in society as political subjects. A primary function of systematic education in the province had been the formation of persons for citizenship. In this context, *citizenship* meant the affirmation of the social order through one's social interactions (Millar, 1899). Citizenship was not confined to political expressions such as voting, from which women and a sizable proportion of the male population were formally excluded.

Secondly, because of denominational antagonisms in the history of education in Ontario, Ross understood this exercise to be an investigation of religion and morality as educational subjects. The retention of this distinction was a practical as well as a political measure, for it corresponded to the distinction in pedagogy between direct and indirect methods of moral education. In the analysis which follows I propose that Ross's use of *religion* was categorically equivalent to divine law and abstract moral norms and that his conception of *morality* referred to concrete moral norms, civil law, and public opinion. These distinct but not exclusive categories were historical products of systematic schooling in Ontario. Because of his own views on the separation of church and state, Egerton Ryerson's formative efforts at educational system-building eventually led to a state morality highly informed by Christian principles, but cautious of a didactic application of them (Ryerson, 1883, pp. 427-432; French, 1978; Fiorino, 1978). By the 1890s the teaching of morals was a matter of public debate; it was through a survey of pupils and teachers that Ross hoped to substantiate the value of the indirect method of moral training which could reduce denominational conflict and prove decisively that Christian values were being maintained in the socialization of children.

Thirdly, Ross acknowledged the historical role of school inspection and of inspectors as state servants, suggesting that their experience would be invaluable in assessing the evolution and the qualitative changes in schooling. For example, questions in the memorandum to inspectors asked for their evaluation of quarrelling among pupils at the time of inspection as compared with "ten or

twenty years ago." Ross wanted to tap an organic source of knowledge possessed by his inspectors. The inspectorate had been professionalized in 1871 and, while some nonteachers were appointed after that date, most had had considerable teaching experience before their appointments. Andrew Grier, for example, had never been a teacher but by 1896 had been inspecting schools for 44 years. On the other hand, David Robb had taught school for 24 years before being appointed in 1890. Of the 63 inspectors whose comments were printed in the 1896 Annual Report of the Ministry of Education, I have been able to trace both the teaching and inspection careers of only 11 (17.5% of the total). But these 11 had, by the time of the Survey, an average of 24.5 years of teaching and inspection experience ranging from 10 to 44 years. These inspectors, then, possessed a professional knowledge of the practice of education in the province. It is for this reason that I feel justified in referring, in the data below, to what inspectors "thought," "felt," and "believed" through a synopsis of their written responses. (This is largely a practical measure as well considering the 63 responses of varying degrees of similarity and difference contained in 100 pages of text.)

Thus, given the framework expressed by Ross, I argue that the Survey was about an assessment of the entrenchment and practical value of concrete moral norms to guide everyday life, informed by abstract moral obligations. (These concepts are defined in the following section.) For reasons inherent in these distinctions I contend that the mid-1890s was an appropriate time for such a Survey because the simultaneous development of education and the separation of church and state had reached a level that allowed for a degree of secularization in the implementation of indirect moral education without threatening the Christian basis of the state or of education.

Foundations of Morality

In their use or meaning for persons in schooling, the cultural referents of morality are both symbolic ideals and practical demands; they include attainable as well as elusive ideals. For example, the Scottish Moralist, Adam Ferguson, suggested that a true system of morals "has to set goals which only a hero or a saint can approach" (Kettler, 1965, p. 117). Justice Burbidge, in a speech before the Dominion Education Association (1901, p. 389), argued similarly that the "highest and best" character was that which was most "Christ-like," acknowledging at the same time the conundrum presented by religious teaching in the schools. These conceptions represent the double-sidedness of morality which needs to be distinguished and explained as abstract or idealistic as well as practical or concrete.

Reflecting on Darwin's concept of shame as a person being "ethically 'ill at ease'" when he or she "*deviates* from what is customary," Heller (1978, p. 71, author's italics) argues that shame is an expression of conscience and therefore

an expression of morality, of being aware that one has violated the normative relationship between individual and community. Heller suggests that this relationship emerged simultaneously with class society. "From the time the human being emerges, historically, into individuality, morality in this sense characterizes the ethical attitude of every man in every age" (Heller, 1978, p. 71; see also Heller, 1985, pp. 1-56; Allard, 1985, pp. 172-175). She argues that morals are present in every human relationship and historically in "every societal sphere." But the relationship of person to community requires that particularistic needs be subordinated "to the demands of the social order." The act of subordination "becomes morals when [it] is internalized and turns into a personal motivation: that is to say, when the external social expectation appears as an expectation made by the person upon himself" (Heller, 1984, pp. 70-71). Morality always involves judgement and evaluation in terms of community norms (Hudson, 1986, p. 1). The subordination of personal needs in the manner Heller describes rationalizes the basis of those evaluations and reduces the abstract character of morality as a mediator between person and society to more visible and tangible moral customs.

Heller (1984) distinguishes between concrete and abstract norms or morals.

Abstract norms fix the output of a continuous value development in [the] form of imperatives or virtues . . . the abstract norms appear on the historical stage in the form of concrete demands of a given society, in the same way as the concrete norms do. Their abstractness is expressed in their continuity, their stability: often it is only retrospectively that it becomes clear which norms are susceptible of universalization and which are contingent, particularistic, embedded only in a specific system of expectations. (pp. 79-80)

The cultural durability of such abstractions is explicit in Marxist commentary where, as Lukes (1985, p. 2) provisionally defines it, morality consists of matters of duty, obligation, right, good, character, and the nature of man. What must be shown by any argument about the value of such abstractions is their content relevant to social situations (Lukacs, 1978).

Concrete norms, on the other hand, make up the "system of custom and habit which assumes (or may assume) the formation of an imperative addressed to the person." That is, certain social values may exist at least partly outside the abstract norms, or moral obligations. Whereas "Thou shalt not kill" is the most well known of moral obligations, Heller points out that legal and moral possibilities exist whereby the transgression of this abstraction is required by concrete norms, or what she calls moral customs (Heller, 1984, pp. 79-80).

It is in such contingencies — the juncture of moral obligations and moral customs — that "ideological moments" in morality can emerge; that is, "ideology is projected or mapped onto" morality (Heller, 1984, p. 70). Morality requires that "purely particularistic" needs, motives, and initiatives be displaced for a behavior which embodies the capacity and willingness to demonstrate a

commitment to historically durable norms of the society. This is a necessary caveat in moral theory from John Stuart Mill to Emile Durkheim to Heller. But the danger is that "ideological moments" of "moral demand structures" may also require the subordination, alienation, or abandonment of legitimate personal goals (Heller, 1984, pp. 82-84). In a capitalist society, such as Ontario in the 1890s, such discrepancies between individual and abstract goals illuminate the class character of morality. Moral customs are defined by a dominant class, for it is the dominant class that has carried over moral abstracts from one historical period to another. Class societies do not have uniform moral customs across their social strata; thus, moral customs are subject to the relatively different contributions of varied strata to the social order.

The pervasiveness of morality as a principle of social and individual formation was affirmed by John Locke in a similar frame of reference. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) Locke delineated three essential forms of law which established the context for his theory of moral rules: divine law, civil law, and opinion or reputation. Each of these refers to some degree of self-government in relation to the needs of the commonwealth. Among these it is the civil law which has the most direct, institutional impact. But it is the third category which is important for moral customs, for Locke saw the analogy for law-based right and wrong in virtue and vice, determined by custom and expressed as judgments and evaluations by persons "in the several societies, tribes and clubs of men in the world." Once persons have organized themselves into groups they "have resigned up to the public the disposing of their force" (Locke, 1969, p. 157) except where law permits persons to exercise judgement against other citizens. But people "retain still the power of thinking well or ill; approving or disapproving of the actions of those whom they live amongst, and converse with" (Locke, 1969, pp. 157-158; see also MacPherson, 1962, pp. 252-257) to affect the conscience of persons, as Heller would argue, to make them feel accepted or ill at ease. It is not unimportant that Locke's *Essay* was among the formative texts of Ryerson's thought: religious, educational and political (French, 1978).

Thus, two types of morality exist simultaneously in both Heller's and Locke's definitions: the conformity to concrete community norms and abstract moral obligations. The latter contain the possibility that aspects, or the entire process, of self-formation will be usurped for ideological purposes (Lukes, 1985, pp. 3-26). Abstract or concrete, each of these conceptualizations could be objectified by persons, as moral customs, in their social interactions. Such approval-seeking, character-formative actions of persons, especially in schooling, are an example of the paradox, as Lukes (1985, pp. 1-4) refers to it, in which there may lie a critical element of meaning within the accepted definition of morality, but one which can be realized virtually only within a context of prescriptive, constraining action. That is, while the concrete situation is most pertinent in the

development of a moral character, a critical element may also exist within the abstract conception of morality.

While such abstract concepts as honesty, courage, and truth must be analyzed according to their concrete content, they nevertheless reflect a social context in which most persons would prefer to live; these concepts reflect a belief that a better quality of life is present when relations are based on truth rather than lies, when being honest and altruistic succeed over their alternatives. Thus, we cannot dismiss Heller's (1978) celebratory commentary on the morality of the Renaissance wherein "the character of virtue *as an end in itself*" (p. 111) was radically restored because it emphasized the concrete content of moral abstractions and the historical interdependence of moral obligations and moral customs. In other words, there is a language of morality, of rights and duties, which explicitly, as Marx recognized (Lukes, 1985, pp. 6-7), denotes both real possibilities for the improvement of the human condition, and expresses the ideological constraints upon persons. This duality poses a paradox which may not be resolvable and in the context of this essay such a resolution need not be attempted. In this case we must sustain the paradox in order to understand it. Its existence perhaps provides a vehicle through which the following may be appreciated.

The Assessment of Pupils' Morality

It is possible to see how this two-fold conception of morality can be operational in a historical sociological analysis. While much of the commentary from the Report on Moral Standing is prescriptive of moral custom, I argue that inspectors' remarks were informed by their commitment to a system of moral obligations which influenced everyday life. The concept of citizenship itself perhaps rendered a number of moral abstractions obtainable by the strategies proposed for moral education.

On the whole, the picture presented by inspectors' comments was one of "general improvement" but the content of the answers to Ross's inquiry reveals a more extended assessment by inspectors. The Memorandum which Ross sent out with his letter to inspectors included 30 questions, 12 pertaining to students and 18 to teachers. Among these were inquiries about conduct and behavior in and out of school, hygiene and personal appearance, and matters of curriculum regarding religious and moral training. Together, these questions situated students, teachers, and the school environment in a frame of contemporary morality. Of the questions in Ross's memorandum, my comments will be directed primarily at those dealing with students, which I have reduced to four topical categories; those regarding teachers' work and attitudes will be secondary.

The commentaries of inspectors make connections between accepted definitions of morality and the formation of moral character. Throughout their

reports schooling acts as a mediator, prescribing the practical processes through which a moral character could be achieved. What follows in the next few pages is an explication of moral customs associated with schooling.

Truancy. Few inspectors felt that attendance had not improved over the previous decade or two, although for some jurisdictions irregularity of attendance was still a major problem. In industrial centers like Toronto where work was available on the streets and in factories, truancy was on the rise in spite of efforts to force truants into industrial schools (Chapman, pp. 212-213). Compulsory school legislation (implemented in its earliest form in 1871) had reduced child labor. In 1891 attendance was required throughout the school year; employers were fined, and parents formally subject to fines if this was violated. But the Annual Reports from 1880 to the turn of the century attest to the persistence of the attendance problem (Althouse, 1967, p. 83; Davey, 1978, pp. 221-253; Houston, 1972, pp. 254-276; Barber, 1859). (In spite of these acts and other attempts at enforcement only two-thirds of registered students were attending school in 1916; see Phillips, 1957, p. 187; Collins et al., 1919, pp. 314-317, 356-361). Even so, inspectors felt that compulsory attendance laws and factory regulations had had some effect.

But this view was also based on the belief that schooling had become a valuable part of life in Ontario and that attendance at school had become a social expectation, even if consistency in attendance was not a reality. The benefits of schooling to both individuals and society were perceived more readily by the population in terms of immediate cultural and economic value. This attitude influenced the positive, if not overzealous, interpretation of attendance as improved, perhaps more than actual figures justified. While 91% of the respondents believed attendance had improved, in some jurisdictions the improvement may still have been far from 100%. Three years earlier, for example, inspectors Craig and Tom stated that average attendance in their jurisdictions were, respectively, 46% and 54% (Ontario, 1893, pp. 144, 159). Additionally, the ever-present potentiality of conflict between school administrators and teachers, and between teachers and parents, was offset by some inspectors who made distinctions between truancy and absence with parental consent. However poor actual attendance was, the feeling that there had been improvement reflected a belief in the improved social position of the school.

Quarreling, Politeness, and Courtesy. In the category of Quarreling there was no disagreement regarding its improvement (100%) and similarly so with regard to the separate question on Politeness and Courtesy (92%). By implication in the Report, the former pertained to interactions between children, the latter to relations between children and adults, both in and out of school. As institutional subjects, children's relations with others may be seen to represent the social value bestowed upon that institution, as well as to personify the

school's success in achieving its stated goals. Thus, problematically or affirmatively, the school was seen as an integral part, if not the core referent, of many of the social relations of children.

M. J. Kelly (pp. 125-126) of Brant County regretted somewhat the reduction of quarreling among pupils in comparison with earlier periods when the boxing match was "frequent . . . and . . . sometimes not without its good moral effect when the sneak, the humbug or bully got his deserts." Kelly invoked the judgement of Matthew Arnold who did not consider such offenses worth the trouble of inspectors. Webern Atkin (pp. 136-137) of Elgin County believed that children's quarreling and politeness had to be viewed as activities of a distinct group, and as such children were "not truthful and trustworthy any more than other people." The City of London inspector, W. J. Carson (pp. 219-221), put his belief in children's improvement emphatically: "Any man who thinks children are not better behaved now than they formerly were would do well to have himself carefully examined by a physician who is a specialist in nervous and mental diseases."

Inspectors Deacon (pp. 152-153) and Tom (pp. 159-161) noted that improvement in these areas of inquiry was a result of students' parents having benefited from Ontario schooling 25 years earlier. Similarly, others felt that improvement had much to do with the influence found in the homes of the "best" or "well-regulated families" (Fotheringham, pp. 208-210; Dearness, pp. 176-177). The "educational career" of children was begun "in homes pervaded by an atmosphere of culture and refinement." Economic growth in the province, as exemplified materially in these well-regulated families, was itself a distinct influence. Archibald Smirle (pp. 129-131), for example, regarded greater politeness as more of a product "of better and more luxurious homes, than a product of school training."

All was not rosy, however. While moral improvement reflected the progress of systematic education and economic progress, some inspectors remarked on the persistence of certain problems or the re-emergence of them because of the changing social order. In some jurisdictions "rudeness" was on the increase (Gordon, pp. 131-132). Continued disrespect toward older persons outside the school and the use of disrespectful language was a significant problem in N. W. Campbell's jurisdiction (pp. 148-150), especially where it went unchecked by teachers, as he claimed it frequently did. This may have been common discourtesy or insubordination. In either case, William Spankie (pp. 142-143) could cite few instances of "willful opposition to the teacher," but in every case referred to him, he claimed, "the offender was an immigrant to this country."

The shift into "ideological moments" of the moral system is evident in what inspectors considered the most common and serious moral offenses. "Copying" seemed to be an extensive problem (Kelly, pp. 125-126; Smirle, pp. 129-131; Campbell, pp. 128-129; Colles, pp. 161-163) that was connected with other

moral issues such as dishonesty, cheating, and "misrepresentation." Other offenses cited had to do with the regulation of individual self-expression and interactions with others. These included whispering and borrowing from one another (Girardot, pp. 137-138); irregularity, heedlessness, rashness, and lack of will power (Maxwell, pp. 138-141); neglect of duty, disregard for the rights of others, and abuse of school property (Moses, pp. 151-152); the use of slingshots; and carving and writing in the outhouses (Brebner, pp. 166-167).

Inspectors suggested a number of structural problems that might have contributed to negative behavior, such as overcrowding in the schoolrooms, poor furnishings, and problems with ventilation and sanitation. The youth and inexperience of teachers was seen as another possible cause. Inspectors did not propose solutions to structural problems as much as they encouraged new strategies of school management. J. J. Craig (pp. 203-204) argued for more playgrounds which would reduce many of the disciplinary problems. The use of music as an incidental form of moral instruction would produce "a feeling of oneness with others, of social unity" (Ballard, pp. 215-218). Other strategies, such as that of Theodule Girardot (pp. 137-138), demonstrated an appreciation of the dynamics of children's interactions in their own groups. In order to ensure that moral teaching in the classrooms was retained, teachers would have to promote "games which prevent the pupils from congregating in small groups" and impose "a great strictness in forbidding familiarity between the sexes." David Fotheringham provided an example of the benefit of regimentation in school organization and practice: "It is now almost a universal custom for pupils to rise in a body and return in a military or informal way the salute of the inspector or other visitor, and, on his retiring, to say good-bye in the same manner" (pp. 208-210). To Fotheringham and others, such actions were not merely a display of courtesy and propriety, but morality in practice.

Corporal Punishment. The undisputed decrease in the administration of corporal punishment (100% among the 61 inspectors directly responded to this question) likely reflected some of the conflicts among teachers, parents, and educational state servants over the right to punish and the appropriate means of doing so. The intensity of some of these struggles has been recently recorded by Curtis (1988, pp. 312-365). He demonstrates the conundrum of family and state jurisdiction over children, and the move away from potential dilemmas provoked by corporal punishment and toward more subtle but durable methods of discipline. W. S. Clendening (pp. 126-127) stated that where corporal punishment was used it was "milder," but in any case it was considered a weakness in the teacher's character and professional ability to have to resort to it. Clendening's concern reflected the general sentiment of inspectors and teachers as a group on this issue.

The remarks and discussions on the moral standing of teachers, and its practical exhibition in the schoolroom, amounted to a defacto prohibition of

physical punishment. Teachers had improved with regard to their use of alcohol and their personal appearance and demeanor; as a consequence their status in the community had been raised. But the rapid growth of the profession brought in large numbers of young teachers, many without "the principles, feelings and motives which should be wrought into the life of the child" (J. J. Craig, pp. 203-204; see also Mackintosh, pp. 153-156). This situation undoubtedly had an effect on the types of punishment used; most often these included discredit marks, loss of recess, sitting alone, detention, reproof, loss of privileges, and forfeiture of class standing (Kelly, pp. 125-126; Clendening, pp. 126-127; Moses, pp. 151-152). Punishments centered on the internalized relations, or those which had yet to be internalized, of pupil, teacher, and school. Since a component of education, and more specifically moral training, sought to have children appropriate an identity as an integral element in, and product of, schooling, forms of discipline and punishment directed at this sense of self would have greater effect than physical attacks on a reluctant or rebellious body. Some indication of the schoolroom interactions in which this could be played out was suggested by J. S. Deacon: "Thus a word or a look from the teacher has greater effect than more severe punishments had formerly" (pp. 152-153). This suggestion referenced the internalization of forms of customary behaviors, or the practical expressions of morality.

Personal Habits and Appearance. Views of the inspectors recorded in the Annual Report provide a synopsis of a general social feeling on the issues of hygiene and sanitation, and the particular concerns of educators. Compared to previous years, the personal appearance of children had unquestionably improved; as with questions on courtesy and politeness, this had as much to do with the progress of morality associated with economic improvement as it had to do with the morals of individuals. Pupils were considered to be more "tidy," particularly "Canadian children," according to one inspector, a consequence of prosperous homes and the examples set by good teachers (Campbell, pp. 128-129; Mitchell, pp. 167-169; J. J. Craig, pp. 203-204). But W. F. Chapman (pp. 212-213) recognized that the variety of economic conditions within the city of Toronto meant that only some families could affect a better appearance in their children. Nevertheless, parents and teachers needed to understand that "cleanliness [was] a condition of the enjoyment of school privileges."

Economic progress meant improved conditions of school houses. Such aspects as better furniture, ventilation, and painting or whitewash made the premises more comfortable and attested to the significance of the school to the community. William Johnston (pp. 169-170) predicted that the increasing wealth of the province would improve personal habits and appearance just as it had these material features. The connection between this improvement in physical appearance and the overall moral attitude of the pupils was described by Robert Park, inspector for Kent-West.

The improved conditions of school premises and the cleanliness manifested in water closets, bears evidence that the pupils are cleanly in habit, while the absence in marking and whittling in at least ninety-five percent of the closets marks a great advance morally. (pp. 163-165)

This was an important achievement to Park. His remark was a positive evaluation of the improved respect for property among pupils. It indicated how much inspectors and educators felt that pupils needed to identify with such culturally common property as that belonging to the school and objectify their moral attitude toward it through self-discipline.

As I have indicated, the school had become an entrenched feature of the community and therefore its pattern of moral education was to both reflect *and* form the pattern of morality for the community itself. Such concrete exhibitions of rebelliousness thus came under the rubric of deviation from a consensus of feeling about common interests and property. Such feelings reflected not only community norms but "the continuous value development," as Heller put it, of attitudes and behaviors which make up a more durable abstract morality.

Indirect Moral Education

It is worth noting at least some of the suggestions inspectors made for the moral education of pupils before proceeding to a discussion of the social context beyond the Report. As I have previously noted, the large numbers of persons entering the teaching profession, especially the large numbers of young women, was a concern for inspectors. The good teacher, effective in the presentation of school knowledge and a moral disciplinarian, was crucial to the success of any program of moral education. The good teacher was an ideal: the saint, or the Christ-like figure suggested by Ferguson and Burbidge. This message was contained in such aphoristic phrases as "the silent influence of the teacher," in the suggestion that teachers must be "positively moral," or in the notion that they constituted the most moral group in the community (Moses, pp. 151-152; J. A. Craig, pp. 172-173). Teachers were the personification of moral customs; they were exemplars, in Heller's (1984) terms, of the internalization of morality; they were to convey moral lessons by association. Certainly this was quite an ideal to live up to and was encouraged or enforced in two ways. Public scrutiny motivated by concrete moral norms had aided in reducing the numbers of teachers who abused children, alcohol, or both, or who were simply lazy or without the intellectual commitment to be effective teachers (Curtis, 1988). Secondly, the gradual professionalization of teacher training, as Varga (1991) has shown, included the promotion of a character ideal closely associated with publicly accepted moral norms.

But there were some inspectors such as M.J.Kelly (pp. 125-126), who recognized the simple effectiveness, moral and otherwise, of teachers interacting with pupils on the latter's own turf. Participation in sports, for example, could

"make [the teacher's] influence felt good for years [sic]." This and other forms of indirect strategy allowed an important detour around religious instruction, which was most often direct and didactic and thus avoided denominational conflict. The indirect method encouraged the practice of a moral education which stressed culture and tradition but which also directed such education to the effective social participation of pupils as citizens. As such, this preferred strategy appropriated the historically durable norms inherent in moral obligations. The indirect approach, in other words, stressed the natural integration of the child into a frame of normalcy assumed to be traditionally sound and of practical value in reproducing ordinary life.

But there were those who continued to believe in the didactic, if not manipulative, form of moral instruction. James McBrien (pp. 181-183), the inspector for Ontario County, believed that teachers should single out each child to observe his or her habits. "The [habits]," McBrien argued, "are dissected and when one is found vicious or sinful, [the pupil] is lead [sic] to cast the searchlight of his imagination upon the fearful consequences of his conduct and thus to change his motive and course of action; more — knowing the expansive power of a new idea, we inoculate him with the opposite [habit]." How successful this strategy would be was probably dependent upon a teacher's belief in the right to employ coercive authority in the classroom. But to John Millar, the Deputy Minister of Education, the power of this "new idea" would be classified as simple knowledge, forced upon the child as an instrumental mode of behavior. Millar's preference was that new ideas be appropriated intellectually and internalized through the emotions and the will to become second nature to the child (Millar, 1900; see also Lanning, in press).

The Social Context of Indirect Moral Education

The indirect approach to moral education certainly had historical precedent in Ontario. Advice to teachers on the use of stories to inculcate moral ideals was advanced in *The Journal of Education for Upper Canada* as early as 1857. Several years earlier Ryerson's address on "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People" (Hodgins, 1900, p.148) had confirmed the view that no course in the school day except the half hour of moral instruction could be done with "so much ease." By the last quarter of the century this approach was widely assumed by educators in the province as the only means by which moral education could have any lasting effect. The Headmaster of Toronto's Dufferin School, Richard Lewis (1879, pp. 352-353), told teachers that the idea that moral education "means suppression" was based on an attitude he called "jail discipline." A. Vesiot, writing in the *Canadian Educational Monthly* (1884), claimed that once the teacher openly stated the moral lesson to be learned, it was at risk of "being lost" altogether. "Moral instruction," he argued

should be combined with everything, but insensibly, like those nutritive elements which the scientist finds appearing in all sorts of food, but which are

concealed under the infinite variety of colour and form in which nature clothes animals and plants, and which man unwittingly assimilates without suspicion. (pp. 69-71)

Like Lewis, who did not consider moral education to be suppression but rather the development of self, Hume (1898, pp. 161-164) saw that self-control could be learned only if it was promoted through self-expression. It was necessary that this be achieved in all areas of the curriculum from history to arithmetic. Similarly, J. M. Harper (1903, pp. 322-324), the Inspector of Superior Schools in Quebec, spoke of the "new pedagogy of the pleasurable" which could properly harness the "exuberance of the moral qualities of the child."

Indirect moral education had to be practical and concrete, such as an instance in the biography of a great man, the everyday but exemplary character of the teacher, or an incidental occurrence on the playground or in the neighborhood. The use of history lessons, literature, and the more informal Friday afternoon talks were among the most productive opportunities. As Campbell (pp. 128-129) suggested, "A few words may occur in a history lesson, which may form the basis of an important lesson in ethics" (see also Clendening, pp. 126-127; Brown, pp. 132-133; Moses, pp. 151-152; J.A. Craig, pp. 172-173). Even those who advocated religious instruction along with, or instead of, moral education took a similar approach, suggesting, for example, that opening prayers were more useful for "producing that calm and quiet with which a good industrious day's work should begin" (Park, pp. 163-165). David Fotheringham (pp. 208-210) suggested that religious instruction should be retained and be a subject for examination, although taught under the headings of honesty, filial duty, patriotism, industry, courage, reverence, and moral power. Fotheringham's proposed categories of instruction embody the interdependent relationships between moral customs and moral abstractions, between practical activity, and between more historically stable norms of cultural reproduction.

For most educators in 1896 the indirect approach did not mean that moral education was to be *disguised* as an otherwise innocuous discussion of an occurrence on the playground. However indirect, moral education was to be made explicit by infusing morality into every aspect of the curriculum. Where it had potentially negative consequences was precisely in this pervasiveness. Every aspect of social life, individual activity, and expression was claimed to be endowed with a degree of moral quality and therefore subject to moral assessment. Further, education for moral character was an integral part of the promotion of culture. Moral education was a development of the moral self to cultural norms, the standards of social order, and the integration of self into the whole way of life of the culture — that is, the affirmation of moral customs.

The opinions of others, which Locke suggested was one manifestation of moral customs, mattered a great deal as contingent moments in the formation of

self. John Watson, in *An Outline of Philosophy* [1908], put forward a position similar to Locke's on the inherent sociality and interdependence of persons. One indication of that, he argued, was

the feeling of dissatisfaction experienced by the individual when he acts contrary to the common opinion It is because he has the same consciousness of a social self as is embodied in common opinion that the individual man is dissatisfied with himself when he has sought for the satisfaction of his own separate self at the expense of others. (Armour & Trott, 1981, p. 228)

In terms of sustaining a culture this position can hardly be denied. The difficulty (although this is not the case with Watson) is that the power of moral customs expressed as public opinion can assume a manipulative character. Watson, for one, argued convincingly against an imposed uniformity of individuals in society, although, like many other Canadian philosophers, he proposed a model for the social participation of individuals which had as its source an analogy with nature (Armour & Trott, 1981, pp. 223-226). Proposing a model which was symbolically permanent, whether in nature or Christianity, is perhaps where the danger lies. A pattern of social behavior is clearly a category of moral customs, as demonstrated by the Report itself. Creating an analogous relationship between behavior and a natural cosmology imposes a correspondence between the patterns of social and natural order. The formation of moral customs based upon such an analogy is, in other words, an ideological moment (Lanning, 1991).

Opinions based on the assumptions of such a permanent order could be readily found. In the year following Ross's Report, David Fotheringham, the inspector for York-South, presented a paper at the Ontario Educational Association convention (1897, pp. 360-366). It was based on curriculum guidelines in use in Canada, England, Germany, France, Italy, and the United States. His premise was that for these countries moral education had become essential for the promotion of good citizenship and that it had acquired greater importance "than intellectual training in its power to make for the safety and prosperity of the state (p. 360)." Fotheringham affirmed the unassailable place of moral obligations contained in the Decalogue and the cultural meaning of religion as the essence of morality. The state, too, recognized that morality must be based upon the "justice and final authority" of the Christian God. In fact, citing John Millar, no nation could be a moral nation that relied on human authority as opposed to divine authority. "In confirmation of this position," Fotheringham stated, "I need only call your attention to the abject and ruinous failure of the moral systems of Confucious and Buddha" (1897, p. 363). The history of the denominational conflicts in Ontario schooling and the numbers of neglectful parents who permitted, Fotheringham estimated, some 300,000 children to escape moral training in Sunday schools, demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the Church alone as a socializing institution. Considering that

morality was explicitly a matter of security for the state, the state itself had an obligation to ensure the construction and promotion of a system of morals in the schools.

In part this was carried out as an administrative procedure. Many of the problems denoted by Ross's questions were, or would become, matters of legislation and subjects in the school curriculum: truancy, punishment, temperance, religious and moral instruction, hygiene, manners, and the sanitation of public places: in other words, legislated moral customs. Further, as moral instruction became more indirect yet pervasive in the curriculum, educators were able to extend, through moral education, support to the state in the form of educated political subjects when crises warranted: the retention of the Imperial connection (Berger, 1970; Stamp, 1973), the Boer War, and the World War (National Conference on Character Education, 1919).

The influence on Canadian intellectuals and public servants of the English political philosopher, T. H. Green, should not go unrecorded (McKillop, 1979; Armour and Trott, 1981). In Green's opinion the democratic state could never directly promote moral good. But part of its mission was to provide, through enforcement if necessary, the conditions which would permit the realization and exercise of moral good (Green, 1964). Green's position was one of a dual character, wishing the state to maintain an overseer's role while being involved at the practical level in the reproduction of moral subjects. It would seem that some inspectors wished the state to lean more toward the latter part of this formula, although perhaps merely the legislative provision of moral-producing conditions was all that was needed for state servants such as Fotheringham. Nevertheless, the indirect promotion of moral obligations and the conundrum produced by the tension between self and society in the internalization and expression of moral customs produced conditions for the formation of political subjects.

That this was accomplished through a "final" debate on the question of religion and citizenship as represented by the Report did not devalue the moral obligations espoused by the traditionally powerful churches in Ontario. As I indicated earlier, the class character of Canadian society meant that the content of moral customs differed within each social stratum. This, in combination with the duality within the complex of obligations and customs, of rights and duties on the one hand and ideological constraints on the other, meant that the content of some moral customs would reflect an ideological program. Thus, virtually all the moral customs under review in the Report may be said to have been defined by economic and cultural interests of the dominant class. For that reason we may question the outcome of an assessment of morality which purports to be a morality of the whole society, which in this case was not only seeking a means of moral and citizenship training, but a program of stability as well. However, by equating religion with moral obligations and morality with concrete norms, it

is possible to perceive an entrenchment of the more abstract values of Christianity, while simultaneously providing a practical, administrative direction for reducing denominational conflict and standardizing the moral basis of Ontario society.

Notes

1. References to inspectors' comments, unless otherwise noted, have been taken from the Annual Report of the Ontario Ministry of Education, 1896.

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