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## **ROBERT OWEN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOOD CITIZENSHIP IN 19TH CENTURY NEW LANARK**

*Enlightened Reform or Social Control?*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the ideological significance of the early 19th century experiment in education introduced by Robert Owen at New Lanark and its implications for contemporary students and educators. Furthermore it aims to address the question of the efficacy and feasibility of organised field studies to New Lanark as part of the curriculum and as a source for the education of young people designed to enhance their appreciation of issues related to citizenship. Should Robert Owen's experiment at New Lanark therefore be hailed as an ideal that Scotland should cherish? Might students, teachers and pupils (not only from Scotland, but from the world beyond) benefit from analysing and interpreting afresh this 19th century utopia in the 21st century? Is it a useful case study for education for global citizenship in a contemporary world?

### THE CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP IN CONTEXT

The concept of citizenship has emerged prominently in Scotland, Britain and the wider world over recent years. The adoption in the UK of 'Citizenship Tests' for immigrants, the proposals for identity cards for all UK citizens and the inclusion of 'Citizenship' as one of the five main educational priorities of the Scottish Government are only some indications that citizenship is a concept 'whose time has come'. Faulks (2000, p. 1) has described citizenship as a 'momentum concept' and explains that the reason for its universal appeal is that the idea of citizenship contains both individualistic and collectivist elements: it recognises the dignity of the individual, as a citizen with certain rights, but at the same time reaffirms the social context in which the individual acts – a social context that introduces the ideas of community, mutual respect and civic responsibility. Humes (2002) cites other examples of why the concept of citizenship has been important recently both in the UK and internationally – riots in towns such as Burnley, Oldham and Bradford, and the position of asylum seekers in a number of European countries. *A Curriculum for Excellence*, when identifying the purposes of the schools curriculum in Scotland, states that the fundamental purpose of the curriculum is to enable young people to develop their capacities as successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals and effective contributors (SEED, 2004).

The Scottish consultation document on *Education for Citizenship* (LTS, 2000) defines its overall goal as 'the development of capability for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life'.

The citizenship agenda can be used by different groups for different purposes and Faulks (2000, p. 1) provides a useful insight into the current interest in citizenship when he observes that radicals and conservatives alike feel able to utilise the language of citizenship in support of their policy prescriptions.

In a similar manner, Robert Owen has been adopted and praised by commentators from both ends of the political spectrum. Paradoxically, he has been described as both the 'Father of Socialism' and as the 'Father of Scientific Management' as a result of his social experiment at New Lanark. For this reason, among others, his 19<sup>th</sup> century utopia provides a useful case study for education for global citizenship in the contemporary world.

## HISTORY OF THE NEW LANARK SITE

In 2001 the historic village of New Lanark was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and this makes the case for the study of New Lanark even more compelling. The first year of the new millennium was a key moment in what had been a long history marked by highs and lows. After having passed into the possession of a rope work company in the 1950s and subsequently falling into a dilapidated state in the 1960s, New Lanark received a new lease of life in the 1970s. New Lanark Conservation Trust – its stated aim being to preserve New Lanark as a sustainable community with a resident population and new opportunities for employment – was formed in 1974 as a charity dedicated to the restoration and development of the historic village. The Trustees serve in a voluntary capacity. New Lanark Trading Ltd. and New Lanark Hotels Ltd. are wholly owned subsidiaries of the Trust and surpluses generated by these companies are returned to the Trust for reinvestment in the project.<sup>1</sup> What of the origins of this remarkable site?

Although Robert Owen (1771–1858) is now the name most closely associated with New Lanark, the unique cotton spinning community was in fact established in 1785 by the prominent Scottish entrepreneur David Dale (1739–1806) who ran it from its inception in 1785 until New Year's Eve, 1799. A typical development of the water power stage of industrialisation, it was, however, quite exceptional in scale, having four massive mills employing more than 2000 workers, including many women and children (Donnachie, 1993, pp. 17–58). Dale had a reputation as a philanthropic employer and his regime was soon noted and celebrated for its humanity (Donnachie, 2004, p. 145). He was a deeply religious man, who from the age of thirty had been a lay preacher in an Independent church in Glasgow, learning Greek and Hebrew so that he could study the Bible more effectively. At New Lanark he paid better wages and provided better working conditions than any employer of his time. He built good houses with effective sanitation for his workers and gave them opportunities for education. While from our contemporary perspective some aspects of working life appear extremely harsh, they were, relative to this time in history, 'good conditions'. For example, the 500 orphans, whom he collected from Edinburgh and Glasgow poorhouses, worked 11½ hours a day (with sometimes 2 additional hours of schooling) and received no holidays except Sundays which Dale permitted because of his religious objections to Sunday work (MacPhail, 1956, p. 73–74).

It was, however, Robert Owen, David Dale's more famous son-in-law, who made New Lanark one of the showpieces of European industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Owen took over management of New Lanark on 1 January 1800 and ran it until December 1824.

Donnachie's research has been invaluable in focusing on how Owen's agenda at New Lanark emphasised improved factory conditions (in particular for children), popular education, citizenship, planning, environment and, ultimately, cooperation. Owen also had progressive views on gender relations, marriage and birth control, to which he often alluded, though he rarely articulated these directly (Donnachie, 2004, p. 146).

In particular, from 1 January 1814, when he acquired what he considered to be more enlightened partners, Owen accelerated and broadened the scope of his 'social experiment' in relation to childcare, education, healthcare and cooperative shopping; these are still held up as examples of enlightened reform for the amelioration of social conditions.

Anderson (1995) cites Owen's influences and the central place education had in them:

The desire to change society by changing individuals was a feature of utilitarian doctrines, which had affiliations with the Scottish Enlightenment, but reached Scotland in an updated form through the influence of Jeremy Bentham. Utilitarians believed in universal education as the instrument of human progress, and their 'environmentalist' psychology sought to achieve social harmony by moulding the individual character and personality from earliest childhood. (p. 33)

These ideas, in a radical form, inspired Owen's experiments at New Lanark. Owen wrote extensively on the subject of education and in order to determine whether his experiment in education represented enlightened reform or simply mechanisms of social control it is necessary to examine the situation at that time and assess the motives that lay behind his experiment.

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### ROBERT OWEN: BACKGROUND

Robert Owen was born in Wales in 1771 and, after an apprenticeship in the textile retail trade, moved to Manchester where he progressed quickly through the various levels of the cotton industry and became manager of one of the largest businesses in Manchester in a period of substantial expansion in the industry. He travelled widely for his firm and during a visit to Glasgow met Dale's daughter, Anne Caroline Dale. Dale sold New Lanark to Owen and his partners for £60,000 in 1799 and in the same year, Owen married Anne Caroline Dale. After a short period in Manchester, Owen and his new wife returned to New Lanark where he became managing partner from January 1, 1800. Over the next 25 years, as managing partner to three groups of collaborators, Owen made huge profits and at the same time gained an international reputation as a humanitarian, educationist and creator of a model industrial community (Pollard & Salt, 1971).

Owen's first impression of New Lanark was that it had great potential for profit but that the workforce was in need of serious attention and improvement:

The population lived in idleness, in poverty, in almost every kind of crime, consequently in debt, out of health and in misery... (Owen, 1813, p. 14)

He describes the workpeople who he found to be dirty in their habits and houses, intemperate and demoralised, and writes of the community:

It may with truth be said, that at this period they possessed almost all of the vices and very few of the virtues of a social community. Theft and the receipt of stolen goods was their trade, idleness and drunkenness their habit, falsehood and deception their garb, dissensions, civil and religious, their daily practice; they united only in a zealous systematic opposition to their employers. (p. 16)

He immediately set about improving the economic performance of the mills. First he replaced the managers whom he thought were inefficient with his own management which included fellow Welshman, Robert Humphreys. He made clear his intention to reassert control over the labour force and to establish tighter discipline, to the extent that, amongst his contemporaries, he acquired very rapidly the reputation of being a very strict man (Butt, 1971, p. 523).

### ROBERT OWEN IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It is fundamentally important to emphasise that the unplanned growth and development of towns was one of the major social problems at this time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This expansion was inseparable from the main political issues of the day such as parliamentary reform and the perceived threat of revolution. There were minor outbreaks of machine breaking, riots and strikes during the time that Owen was at New Lanark and he thought that he could solve the problems of what he interpreted as a bitter class struggle. Paradoxically, one of the features of his management is that he was regarded as an ideal employer by his workforce at the time. The most obvious manifestation of this occurred after 1807–8 when there was a minor cotton famine arising from American policy and the increased price of cotton, so much that, in Owen's view, it was uneconomic to keep the mills open. He closed the mills down but kept the labour force on at their normal wages. After this gesture he seems to have had no problems of faith, trust or loyalty from his labour force.<sup>2</sup>

Two main questions arise that must be addressed. First, why was New Lanark and Owen's experiment there of such significance during this period? Second, were Owen's experiments in education and community living 'enlightened reform' or 'mechanisms of social control' or both?

There are three main reasons why Owen's experiment at New Lanark was of particular significance at this time in history: urban population increase; a growing interest in the purposes of education; and the issue of social control. The population of Britain more than trebled between 1800 and 1900, despite significant emigration. The political problem of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – an epoch unprecedented in that it was preserved from warfare on the Western European mainland for much of its duration – was how to provide for the needs of the new urban populations. A rapidly changing mass urban society had taken the place of a stable agricultural community. In practice, the government tried to meet the needs of the urban poor with welfare legislation and came to realise that a national system of education would have

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to be put into place. Education would be used as an instrument of enlightened reform and/or a mechanism of social control. How the masses were to be educated, and whether the education they received would have a moralising influence on them, were two questions that needed to be addressed urgently.

In addition to this, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was growing interest in education outside the sphere of Royal Commissions and state intervention. Among the chief exponents of a reforming educational philosophy then were figures of the intellectual stature of John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), Matthew Arnold (1822–1888), John Ruskin (1819–1900), Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872) and Charles Kingsley (1819–1875). It was precisely at the time when these formidable minds were deliberating about the purposes of education that Owen attempted his ambitious practical experiment in education at New Lanark.

Owen believed strongly that the violence of character in the working classes was fostered by their environment. Deeply influenced by Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715–1771) and his belief in the total influence of external circumstances, rational government and educational provision, Owen's experiment, as he saw it, was successful in proving the truth of the principle that the character is formed for, and not by, the individual. Politically the most considerable of the *philosophes*, Helvétius combined an abstractly rationalistic account of human nature – generalising Locke's doctrine that the human mind is at birth a blank slate, a *tabula rasa* in Locke's terminology, acquiring its entire character from environmental influences by which it is completely malleable – with a rejection of Locke's rationalistic ethics in favour of a clear and explicit utilitarianism (Kenny, 1994, p. 329). Helvétius held that morality is not innate; it must proceed from education, 'education makes us what we are'.<sup>3</sup> Like Condillac (Etienne Bonnot, Abbé de Condillac, 1714–1780), Helvétius took a radical empiricist position, that man was born a *tabula rasa* and formed his knowledge from the senses and association of ideas. A radical hedonist, Helvétius also argued that actions and judgments are generated by the natural desire to maximise pleasure and minimise pain. Consequently, human behaviour is completely determined by education and social environment.

In April 1812, at a dinner in Glasgow in honour of the educationist Joseph Lancaster, Owen made his first public statement that '...we can materially command those circumstances which influence character...',<sup>4</sup> and it is clear from the context that he was thinking of the effects of education on a community. Similarly the famous passage in the first essay of *A New View of Society* referred to the influence of the environment on a community:

Any general character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large, by the application of proper means; which means are to a great extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men. (p. 1)

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Britain, it became increasingly recognised by employers, churchmen, educationists and politicians that the Industrial Revolution created, as Owen called it, a 'ferocity of character' among the labouring classes, and Owen was particularly determined to moderate this. To Owen, enlightened reform and mechanisms of control need not be mutually exclusive. They could in fact be complementary. One way to handle the 'ferocity of character' was to change the forms of schooling so that the younger generation would be brought up in new ways. In Owen's view, the problems of mass production and mass schooling were essentially the same. They were about balancing productive efficiency with social regulation. At the heart of Owen's educational programme was the determination to create a disciplined, docile but contented population for his factory. Initially Owen saw the problem simply as one of establishing habits suitable for factory life, but increasingly he believed as well that it was necessary to establish a certain mental outlook, on the part of the children in particular and the workers in general, and his experiments or innovations in education are a response to that. He believed that if children could understand their place in the world through, for example, History lessons or Geography lessons, they would be better prepared to appreciate and understand their place in the world as, in Owen's words, 'workpersons' or 'domestics'.<sup>5</sup>

This is evident in sentiments such as:

...the children are, without exception, passive and wonderfully contrived compounds; which, by an accurate and previous subsequent attention, founded on a correct knowledge of the subject, may be formed collectively to have any human character. And although these compounds, like

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all the other works of nature, possess endless varieties, yet they partake of that plastic quality, which by perseverance and judicious management, may be ultimately moulded into the very image of rational wishes and desires. (Owen, 1813, p. 11)

Owen was a paternalistic employer and the ideals of the society at New Lanark were imposed from above. Miles removed from the large industrial towns, Owen carefully established his microcosmic kingdom where his absolute rule determined what was good for people. His use of devices such as the 'silent monitor' and the establishment of the 'Institution for the Formation of Character' strongly suggest an extended regime of social control. Further evidence of this is the fact that he fined people for drunkenness, for immorality and for stealing. He even fined them if their homes were untidy. But at the same time he eased the cost of living by providing cheap food in the village store, free entertainments, free lunches and schooling for the young, and this undoubtedly constituted enlightened reform at that time. The romantic ideal he strove towards was that of the simple community of his childhood in Wales, with a benevolent gentry and contented workforce. Owen's experiment at New Lanark was utopian and was, literally and figuratively, a considerable distance from Glasgow.

The idea that human beings were '... passive and wonderfully contrived compounds which may be formed to have any character and be ultimately moulded into the very image of rational wishes and desires' did not *only* apply to the children in New Lanark, nor was it only relevant to the school day. At night too, in the Institute for the Formation of Character, the adult workers were encouraged to come to evening classes, to concerts or to use the library. It was a centre for adult education where the courses included health and hygiene, domestic economy and thrift. By the standards of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Scotland these were certainly enlightened reforms, although the contemporary poet, Robert Southey, was scathing about some of Owen's practices (Bell, 1929, published posthumously). Referring to Owen's description of the inhabitants of New Lanark as 'human machines', he said:

But I never regarded man as a machine: I never believed him to be merely a material thing; I never for a moment ... suppose, as Owen does, that men may be cast in a mould (like other parts of his mill) and take the impression with perfect certainty.

Southey added:

He keeps out of sight from others, and perhaps from himself, that his system instead of aiming at perfect freedom, can only be kept in play by perfect power.

Despite his criticisms of Owen, Southey described him as 'one of the three men who have in this generation given an impulse to the modern world' and continued:

Clarkson and Dr Bell are the other two. They have seen the first fruits of their harvest. So I think would Owen ere this, if he had not alarmed the better part of the nation by proclaiming, upon the most momentous of all subjects, opinions which are alike fatal to individual happiness and to the general good... A craniologist, I dare say, would pronounce that the organ of theopathy is wanting in Owen's head, that of benevolence being so large as to have left no room for it.

On New Year's Day, 1816, when he was opening the Institute for the Formation of Character, Owen addressed the inhabitants of New Lanark as follows:

What ideas individuals may attach to the term 'Millennium' I know not; but I know that society may be formed so as to exist without crime, without poverty, with health greatly improved, with little, if any misery, and with intelligence and happiness increased a hundredfold; and no obstacle whatsoever intervenes at this moment except ignorance to prevent such a state of society from becoming universal.

In the same year, 1816, Bell also published the full version of his *A New View of Society*, which proclaimed (among much else) that 'the best state will be that which shall possess the best national system of education' (Owen, 1927, p. 73). The Institute for the Formation of Character was, in effect, a community education centre and in his speech at its opening Owen outlined his visionary plans for an astonishingly progressive and enlightening system of education which he believed was the key to a happier society and universal harmony.

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Under Owen's management, the cotton mills and village of New Lanark became a model community, in which the drive towards progress and prosperity through the new technology of the industrial revolution was tempered by a caring and humane regime. New Lanark had the first Infant School in the world, a crèche for working mothers, free medical care, comprehensive education and evening classes. Leisure and recreation were not forgotten; there were concerts, dancing, music-making and pleasant landscaped areas for the benefit of the community. The village attracted international attention in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Donnachie, 2004). While at New Lanark, Owen demonstrated management policies that are now widely recognised as the precursors of modern theories relating to human resource management, as well as skilful and ethical business practice. His work inspired infant education, humane working practices, co-operation, trade unionism, and garden cities.

Owen looked forward to the new Millennium with optimism and with confidence (Donnachie, 2004) and wrote in 1841:

It is therefore, the interest of all, that every one, from birth, should be well educated, physically and mentally, that society may be improved in its character, – that everyone should be beneficially employed, physically and mentally, everyone should be placed in the midst of those external circumstances that will produce the greatest number of pleasurable sensations, through the longest life, that man may be made truly intelligent, moral and happy, and be thus prepared to enter upon the coming Millennium.

As a consequence of Owen's contributions and philosophy, he was first taken up by the Fabian Society in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as they searched for an authentic voice of British socialism in contrast to the communism of Karl Marx. Owen had moved into the socialist pantheon for three main reasons. First, he had spoken up for the Tolpuddle Martyrs (Hopkins, 2000, p. 5; Gregg, 1971, p. 179; Powell, 2002, p. 47). Second, his mills at New Lanark represented an alternative model to the actual 'dark satanic mills' elsewhere that disfigured lives and landscape. Third, he stood for co-operatives rather than existing capitalist hierarchies.

In recent years some historians, notably Butt, Finlayson and Hamilton have questioned Owen's standing as an unambiguous figure in socialist hearts and minds. Some argue that Owen's rightful place in history is as a Victorian industrialist, a man who believed in enlightened reform but knew that enlightened reform was often the most effective way of making huge profits.<sup>7</sup> As Butt (1971) comments: "... business efficiency and good morals went hand in hand!"

Should Owen therefore be regarded as 'the father of British socialism', 'the founding figure of all co-operation', 'the instigator of all things co-operative'? If, like the co-operative society, we see Owen in this light, he was a great social reformer; he founded a mill which could only be described as the most progressive of its time. On the other hand, should Owen be regarded as 'the prince of cotton spinners', 'the founding father of scientific management'? – in which case the reality of his career at New Lanark is that he was a self-made businessman and capitalist who used sophisticated mechanisms of social control to achieve his utopian ideas alongside profit.

When Owen came to New Lanark in 1800 he was placed in charge of the largest cotton mills in Scotland with a labour force of around 2,000. This business had been created over a sixteen year period and was considered to be '...one of the most humanely conducted factories in the Empire' (Cole, 1953, p. 44). Owen's debt to David Dale therefore perhaps was greater than he would lead readers to believe in his later writings and particularly in *The Life of Robert Owen, Written by Himself* (Owen, 1857, pp. 57–59). However favourably the conditions for child workers at New Lanark compared with those elsewhere, they were still firmly situated within a capitalist logic of production. Owen had seen appalling examples of cruelty and exploitation in Manchester, Leeds and elsewhere and considered the practice of using child labour both abhorrent and inefficient and set out to do away with it. His first improvement at New Lanark was to get rid of unreliable child labour recruited from the charity houses and to employ local village women instead. The practice of employing children of less than ten years of age was discontinued and their parents were advised to allow them to acquire health and education until they were ten. This was enlightened reform, but in a statement of his intention to extend the children's time at school until the age of twelve, there is a hint of the capitalist with a thorough knowledge of cost-efficiency:

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... far better it would be for the children, their parents and society that the first should not commence employment until they attain the age of twelve, when their bodies would be more competent to undergo the fatigue and exertions required of them. (Owen, 1813, p. 18)

Neither were the motives behind the education of the children completely enlightened, unselfish or altruistic, as is evident from Owen's words:

By the arrangements formed for the education of children, they will be trained regularly for their employment, and all their habits, bodily and mental, formed to carry them to a high state of perfection; and this alone, in its consequences, will be of incalculable advantage for the concern; for to these people are entrusted the care and use of nice and valuable machinery, with a great variety of materials requisite for the business. (Owen, 1812)

On the other hand Owen saw that the employment of children at too young an age had been the real weakness in Dale's educational scheme and by refusing to employ any child under the age of ten and by improving the conditions for adult workers Owen had created the opportunity to put into practice educational projects which, by any standards, would have to be considered as more enlightened than any that had been envisaged at the time. He soon became involved in cost accountancy and he costed every production process within the mills in an attempt to improve production flows and raise productivity and profitability. He installed new machinery and streamlined production. He also applied what he regarded as the latest management practices, some of which were of his own devising, notably, the use of the 'silent monitor' which was hung on the front of each machine and was used to assess the workers' performance on a daily basis, thus encouraging peer competition among the workers.

Owen's methods were certainly productive but his success at New Lanark coincided with a period of great unrest in the large industrial cities he had left behind. Industrial expansion had brought with it the exploitation of factory labour, chronic overcrowding in slums and profound poverty. Owen observed this potentially dangerous situation from the rural security and safety of New Lanark.

Owen had grand schemes and his appeal to spread his ideas was addressed to the elite in society, people like William Wilberforce, the Prince Regent, Lord Liverpool and political leaders of the day. He believed that society should reform itself from the top and not from the bottom – for Owen that was the key lesson of the French Revolution. Owen associated with royal dukes and government ministers and carried the message of New Lanark to Europe (1818) and Ireland (1822–1823).

His activities generated worldwide interest among reformers, because he seemed to offer solutions to critical social and economic problems that had arisen after the Napoleonic Wars. Unlike the radicals of the time, he appeared to eschew political action which might upset the existing order. So apart from the community he had made famous, the charismatic Owen became a celebrity, attracting large audiences, including many women. As an agent for social and cultural change, the benevolent Mr. Owen thus became a major attraction in his own right (Donnachie, 2000, pp. 133–155). Donnachie's research reveals the types of visitors that came to New Lanark at the time. The entries in the visitors' book for 1795 and 1825 highlight a preponderance of lawyers, merchants, clergy, naval and army officers. Doctors and teachers, including those from colleges and universities, are also evident. Most of the visitors had a professional interest in the place: cotton merchants; doctors concerned about public health; clergy or ministers of the Kirk involved in the administration of poor relief; or teachers interested in the school and its curriculum. Although perhaps not professionally involved, the remaining 90% of male visitors probably had enough interest in social reform to see Owen's community for themselves as they made their way to the nearby waterfalls on the River Clyde. Foreigners had similar backgrounds, as social reformers, educators, merchants and industrialists. There were also many diplomats, government officials and civil servants interested in industry or education (Donnachie, 2004).

In numerous other countries, therefore, Owen's ideas were acknowledged and his memory honoured. When 20<sup>th</sup> century socialists rediscovered Owen after his death, they ignored the side of him that did not fit their historical vision. It is important to realise that, in a sense, Owen was a figure of myth as well as a figure of reality. It would be just as appropriate to describe him as one of the founding fathers of scientific management – Robert Owen, this prophet of modern management, who kept his workforce employed even during times of slump, has been largely ignored until relatively recently. Tarlow (2004) points out that Owen's self-proclaimed utopian community at New Lanark was a cotton mill and, irrespective of the amelioration of conditions for his Scottish labourers, continued to process



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cotton grown on American plantations under institutionalised slavery. Paradoxically, Owen dedicated one of his books to William Wilberforce, the abolitionist, and was himself a forthright campaigner against slavery (Harrison, 1969, p. 22).

Visitors from all over the world are still interested in the social experiment that Owen carried out at New Lanark. Is there a case, therefore, for promoting New Lanark as a venue for field studies for school pupils, students, teachers and educators in general and those with an interest in citizenship and education? The interpretive framework is certainly in place. Donnachie (2000) examined early visitor data, typologies, origins, occupational profiles, motivations, and visitor experiences. A high proportion of visitors, he concludes, were interested in social and educational reform, as well as seeing romantic scenery. It also suggests that, in line with Owen's agenda, the interpretation of the site for modern visitors is strongly influenced by similar social, educational, cooperative and environmental concerns (Donnachie, 2004).

McKinlay (2006) follows the lead of Michel Foucault and his central text for historians *Discipline and Punish* (1977) by focusing on the influence of Jeremy Bentham upon managerial theory and practice and the case of Robert Owen at New Lanark. Arguing that business history has become an increasingly inter-disciplinary space and has been rejuvenated as a result, McKinlay uses the cases of Bentham, Owen and New Lanark as the basis for a discussion of Foucault and the implications of Foucault's work for business history.

Tarlow (2004) emphasises that utopia is a 'hot topic' in academia, and adds: 'Moreover, Utopia is a place where a number of disciplines have converged, including architecture, history, geography, art history, film criticism, and social and political philosophy' (p. 304).

She cites New Lanark as an example of a place where the ideas developed in a communitarian setting were significant in wider society:

...the educational methods pioneered in Owenite communities were widely influential and provided models for the establishment of national educational programmes in Europe and North America, even after the collapse or transformation of Owen's own communities at New Lanark, New Harmony, and Queenswood. (Tarlow, 2004:306; see also Kumar, 1991, p. 77)

Harrison (1989), in his assessment of the legacy of Robert Owen, draws out of Owenite thinking a fundamental belief in the capacity of humans to bring about their own destiny. Tarlow (2004) argues that this belief is equally evident in most other utopian thought and that personal power rather than the power of a benevolent state or the fulfilment of an obscure economic force, can bring about the ideal state.

In November 2004, the Scottish Executive published *A Curriculum for Excellence: The Curriculum Review Group* alongside *A Curriculum for Excellence: Ministerial Response*. These documents are expected to be extremely influential in shaping the Scottish Curriculum over the next decade at least. The authors of *A Curriculum for Excellence* have the stated objective of 'decluttering the curriculum' (SEED, 2004); in other words, reducing the compulsory elements of the curriculum in Scottish schools. Undoubtedly New Lanark has a strong claim to be included in a pared down curriculum in schools, colleges and universities, and as an essential field study destination for people of all ages.

Now that the major restoration programme on site has been completed, the marketing, promotion and reception of visitors have become a major element in the workload of the staff at New Lanark. Educational visits have constituted a major proportion of group visits to New Lanark. The site is seen as being of national significance for the study of the industrial revolution and environmental studies. Schools are prepared to travel considerable distances to get to it even from abroad and, among the schools visiting, there has been a general balance between primary and secondary schools.

Many museums and heritage sites attract predominantly primary school groups but in New Lanark there has been a deliberate policy of tying the visit closely to the needs of the curriculum. There are few areas of the curriculum which cannot be taught more effectively by involving the pupils in fieldwork, which can play an important role in enriching and expanding the different areas of the curriculum. Indeed, a major advantage of fieldwork is that it emphasises the unity and coherence of the curriculum and demands the use of skills, knowledge and evidence drawn from a wide spectrum of disciplines. Many of the outcomes and strands described in curriculum guidelines in schools and universities contain targets which can be partially met through systematic attention to fieldwork since it offers opportunities to develop a range of skills associated with, for example, planning, collecting and

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analysing evidence, hypothesising, discussing and debating, recording and presenting, applying skills and presenting solutions, interpreting and evaluating, and writing reports, dissertations and articles.

There can be little doubt that fieldwork, in general, has a motivating effect on pupils and students, especially when they see the direct relevance of studies they are undertaking to their own lives. Fieldwork at New Lanark can contribute greatly to the development of aesthetic values since it is a location of particular cultural and scenic significance. It has the potential, therefore, to form an important bridge between school work and the world outside school. The connection between the lives of others in the past, the child's, pupil's or student's life today, and the contributions both have made and can make to the world of which they were or are a part, can be more clearly illustrated. The development of informed attitudes to the environment is yet another important issue where the fieldwork experience, involving contact with the environment through immediate local or national environmental issues, offers considerable scope for fostering such attitudes and raising pupil and student awareness as it poses important questions for education for citizenship in a contemporary world.

New Lanark is unique in that the industrial history, the social history, the superb restoration and the beautiful natural environment have been brought together to produce a truly living and thriving village with a wide range of attractions for visitors. What Hewison described as 'the true continuity between the past and the present' (Hewison, 1987, p. 143) is also very evident in the interpretation of New Lanark for modern visitors in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## CONCLUSION

Having made his fortune at New Lanark, Owen embarked latterly on a career as social critic and great inspirer of social movements of his time. He had by that time, however, earned his place in the histories of economic thought, enlightened reform and educational thought. As a result of his pioneering work in social reform, New Lanark became internationally famous.

Owen is seen by some as an internationally recognised pioneer of enlightened management. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century New Lanark attracted attention as a model village and one of the great sites of Scotland. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it has enjoyed something of a renaissance as one of the greatest sites of Scotland with its unique buildings, sense of history, industrial archaeology and natural setting.

The educational value of visiting New Lanark is not merely about reaching conclusions but about the educational experience itself. The fact that this chapter itself does not reach a conclusion about whether Owen's work at New Lanark constitutes enlightened reform or social control or, indeed, something of both, is not crucially important. Visitors, including school children, are left to ponder the paradoxes of Owen's approach and legacy for themselves. One of the things that *A Curriculum for Excellence* is trying to address is life beyond industrial society – a post-industrial ethic for a post-industrial economy. New Lanark illustrates the capacity that human beings have to take charge of seemingly impersonal processes. It demonstrates that human beings can re-invent their civilisation. It will be up to the next generation to adjudicate New Lanark for themselves. Furthermore, in a context where there are growing concerns about the working conditions of young people in some developing economies, the site may also provide pause for reflection, as well as an impetus for an active response by children, in relation to contemporary issues as well as historical events.

For these reasons Robert Owen's experiment at New Lanark should be hailed as an ideal that should be cherished. There can be little doubt that great benefits would accrue from analysing and interpreting this attempt at utopia. It is, therefore, a most useful case study which contributes towards the enhancement of education for global citizenship in the contemporary world.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See website at <<http://www.newlanark.org>> (last accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007).
- <sup>2</sup> BBC Television Timewatch broadcast on BBC 2 on 1/05/1984. This programme examined three Victorian buildings: the Empire Building, the Victorian Asylum and the New Lanark Mills. The programme was presented by John Tusa, reporter David Drew produced by Andrea Conway, executive producer, Timothy Gardam, edited by Bruce Norman and featured contributions from:

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Geoffrey Booth, President of the North West Pioneers Cooperative Society, John Whyte, former works manager, Professor John Butt of the University of Strathclyde and Dr. Geoffrey Finlayson and Dr. David Hamilton of the University of Glasgow.

- <sup>3</sup> Helvétius, C.A. 'Discourse XXX', Ch. 30, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations New Edition* (1981), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 244.
- <sup>4</sup> The Glasgow Herald, 20 April, 1812, as recorded in Owen, 1857.
- <sup>5</sup> BBC Television *Timewatch* documentary, broadcast on BBC2 on 1/05/1984.
- <sup>6</sup> Extract from Robert Owen's 'Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark', New Year's Day, 1816.
- <sup>7</sup> BBC Television *Timewatch* documentary, broadcast on BBC 2 on 1/05/1984.

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