

“Liars May Photograph”

Image Vernaculars and Progressive Era Child Labor Rhetoric

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- 1 In 1909, photographer and social reformer Lewis Hine spoke at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in New York.¹ His lecture, “Social Photography, How the Camera May Help in the Social Uplift,” argued that the camera should be used as much by social reformers as by advertisers and businesspeople. “I wonder, sometimes, what an enterprising manufacturer would do if his wares, instead of being inanimate things, were the problems and activities of life itself, with all their possibilities of human appeal. Would he not grasp eagerly at such opportunities to play upon the sympathies of his customers as are afforded by the camera.”² For Hine, what makes visual images persuasive is their capacity to create sympathy in the viewer through a compelling depiction of reality: “Whether it be a painting or a photograph, the picture is a symbol that brings one immediately into close touch with reality. It speaks a language learned early in the race and in the individual.” Hine argued that photographs, in particular, are powerful because of their perceived realism: “the average person believes implicitly that the photograph cannot falsify.”
- 2 Almost as an afterthought, Hine added, “Of course, you and I know that this unbounded faith in the integrity of the photograph is often rudely shaken for, while photographs may not lie, liars may photograph.”³ Hine’s aside acknowledges lay assumptions about photography even as it praises his audience’s sophistication in reading photographs. While the “average person” may believe photographs always tell the truth, he confides, “*of course, you and I know*” that they are more complicated. “*Of course, you and I know*” that photographers are sometimes “liars.” This “of course” moment is what interests me here. Hine’s offhanded observation about what “you and I know” tells us much about the rhetoric of social documentary photography early in the twentieth century.⁴
- 3 In 1912, a disgruntled former federal investigator named Thomas Robinson Dawley Jr. published *The Child That Toileth Not: The Story of a Government Investigation*, a 490-page polemic containing more than one hundred photographs and based on field investigations that Dawley conducted in Southern cotton mills while working for the U.S. Bureau of Labor.⁵ In *The*

Child That Toileth Not, Dawley uses word and image to refute the rhetoric of child-labor reform. Dawley argues that children do better working in the mills than staying on the hardscrabble mountain farms of their families. Life on the farm damages children physically and morally; life in the textile mills offers children education, good health, positive moral development, and wages in exchange for what Dawley suggests is only “light” work. Contrary to what child-labor reformers asserted at the time, Dawley claims that the mill saves children rather than dooms them.

- 4 Throughout the Progressive Era, corporate interests joined religious leaders and politicians to argue vociferously against child-labor reform. *The Child That Toileth Not* was by no means the only publication to claim benefits for child labor. But the book is unusual in the extent to which its argument is *visual*. Dawley parallels an exhaustive chronicle of his investigations of child labor with a visual narrative constructed from photographs and captions scattered throughout the text. Most of the pictures are of two types: photographs of life on mountain farms and photographs of life in mill towns. The farm photographs feature images of destitute, unhealthy-looking children and families struggling to live on inhospitable land. The photographs of town life offer a glimpse of what Dawley argues is a better world. They feature pictures of such “positive” aspects of childhood in the mill towns as training in patriotism and access to safe spaces of education and play.⁶
- 5 In arguing that child labor can benefit children, Dawley was responding to an activist narrative of child-labor reform advanced by the privately-funded National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) and its most potent rhetorical weapons, the compelling photographs of Lewis Hine.⁷ From 1908 to 1918, Hine traveled the country as an investigator for the NCLC. He documented working conditions of women and children from the city streets to the cannery, coal mine, and cotton mill.⁸ Working under the auspices of the NCLC, Hine made thousands of photographs, assembled them into lantern slide shows, wrote and illustrated reports, and created exhibit posters of what he termed “time-exposures” that paired images persuasively with texts.⁹ His work also circulated widely in articles and images for national magazines such as *The Survey*.¹⁰
- 6 Hine’s photographs and texts powerfully framed public deliberation about child labor. Owen Lovejoy, who hired Hine at the NCLC, remarked years later in a letter to the photographer, “In my judgment the work you did under my direction for the National Child Labor Committee was more responsible than any or all other efforts to bring the facts and conditions of child employment to public attention.”¹¹ The plainly composed, skillfully executed photographs by Hine were poignant evidence in Progressive Era debates on citizenship, work, health, and the changing nature of childhood early in the twentieth

century.

- 7 Here I analyze Dawley's *The Child That Toileth Not* as what I call an image vernacular. The focus is on a moment in American rhetorical history when photography served as a powerful exigence in public policy debates about child labor.¹² Despite important antecedents, the social-documentary tradition of photography was still in its infancy early in the twentieth century, when it began to gain traction as a conscious representational practice.¹³ As Maren Stange observes, "At the turn of the twentieth century, social documentary began to distinguish itself from other forms of photographic expression, exploiting conventions that would come to include black-and-white prints, uncontrolled lighting, and informal composition. Throughout the century, the documentary mode testified both to the existence of painful social facts and to reformers' special expertise in ameliorating them, thus reassuring a liberal middle class that social oversight was both its duty and its right."¹⁴
- 8 The rise of social documentary photography in general, along with the ubiquity and rhetorical power of Lewis Hine's images in particular, make it no surprise that T. R. Dawley included photography in his refutation. Dawley responded visually to child labor reform activism in two ways.
- 9 First, Dawley joined Hine in tapping cultural arguments about child health. While Hine depicted children in unhealthy spaces of work, however, Dawley avoided pictures of children working. Dawley's photographs present mill towns as spaces of education, play, and patriotism. In this way, his photographs argue indirectly that mill towns turn children into productive, healthy citizens.
- 10 To challenge the reform rhetoric directly, Dawley recontextualized photographs made by Lewis Hine and circulated by the NCLC. Dawley walked readers through his own, alternative interpretations of Hine's images. In doing so, Dawley schooled readers in how to see photographs as valuable but vulnerable forms of evidence. In doing so, he implicitly asserted the rhetoricity of social documentary photography itself.
- 11 *The Child That Toileth Not* should be understood as an early and rich example of rhetoric that wrestles with the paradox of documentary: while social documentary offers realism, it always proceeds by invention. This leaves it especially vulnerable to refutation and critique. Hence Dawley's book is as much an argument about the politics of photography as it is a polemic about child labor.
- 12 Initially I explore the concept of image vernaculars. Then I situate Dawley's and Hine's photographic practices in the context of early twentieth century

beliefs about children and national health, showing how the photographs visualize these beliefs. Ultimately, I show how *The Child That Toileth Not* uses Dawley's own photographs and his refutations of Hine's work to provide an alternative visual rhetoric of child labor that encourages readers to question representational practices of social reform photography.

Image Vernaculars and the Rhetorical History of Photography

- 13 Art historian Geoffrey Batchen says that photography should not be viewed so much as a specific technology as a “desire, conscious or not, to orchestrate a particular set of relationships between . . . things like nature, knowledge, representation, time, space, observing subject, and observed object.”¹⁵ To see how photography was mobilized in child-labor debates, then, is to notice more than child-labor photographs. We need to examine ways that beliefs about photography in general participated in public conversations about child labor.
- 14 Elsewhere I introduce the concept of image vernaculars for analyzing rhetoric that mobilizes beliefs about photography in deliberations on social or political issues.¹⁶ By “image” I mean both pictorial representation (i.e., a concrete image such as a photograph) as well as the broader understanding of image as mental picture, appearance, or product of the imagination.¹⁷ Hence the “image” in *image vernacular* refers to photographs themselves as well as to our mental images or beliefs about photography, or the ways we *imagine* photographs to function. “Vernacular” refers to a mode of common or localized expression used in particular places or during particular historical periods. Vernacular connotes not only the everyday, the common, or the colloquial (the word's typical adjectival synonyms) but also, when used as a noun, their expression. For example, we may speak of the way teenagers playfully taunt one another during pick-up basketball as “playground vernacular.” My use of *vernacular* is meant to signal such common, localized communication practices.¹⁸ Thus an image vernacular is a rhetoric that taps into the historically specific ways we imagine images; these ways emerge from the visual conventions and beliefs we absorb into our knowledge and experience. Image vernaculars can be about many topics, such as child labor, but what makes them image vernaculars is that they are also arguments about our experiences of images.
- 15 These rhetorics have three features. First, they are enthymematic because they are grounded in a given rhetorical culture's implicit social knowledge about images. Thomas B. Farrell observes that social knowledge is enthymematic because it is tacit, context-bound, and tied to the everyday experiences of audiences. Social knowledge is also grounded in consensus, actual or attributed.¹⁹ Image vernaculars take advantage of the enthymeme's

power to normalize and naturalize what is socially constructed. Hine evoked this when he observed that people believe “*implicitly* that photographs cannot falsify.” We perform the social knowledge in image vernaculars implicitly through everyday experiences of life in our visual cultures. Such experiences not only give us things to look at, they also teach us how to see.

- 16 Because they are grounded in social knowledge, image vernaculars remind us that vision and visual practices are historically situated. This second feature has important methodological implications for the rhetorical critic. People respond differently to images in different places and times. As art historian Michael Ann Holly puts it, “The viewer of today not only sees things in a different way but also sees different things.”²⁰ Attending to image vernaculars means accounting for the difference that those differences make; it means recognizing and reconstructing the ways that specific audiences view and interpret images. Thus image vernaculars tap into concerns of art historians such as Holly, David Freedberg, and James Elkins, who explore how to construct histories of viewing.²¹
- 17 For a rhetorical critic of image vernaculars in public culture, however, uncovering histories of viewing is only a first step. The critic needs to go beyond simply naming the social knowledge about images that circulates in visual culture (i.e., “figuring out” the missing premise of the enthymematic argument) to consider how that social knowledge shapes concrete practices of rhetoric. This brings us to a third feature of image vernaculars: they “visualize” rhetorical culture. They do this by making explicit what is often only implicit in our studies of rhetoric: our communication practices are often grounded in unrecognized assumptions about visual images.
- 18 The study of image vernaculars thus contributes in a distinctive way to the growing scholarship on visual rhetoric. Image vernaculars account for the persuasive impact of images but also our social knowledge about images.²² My goal in exploring image vernaculars as a distinctive form of rhetoric is to write a rhetorical history of photography that explains the power of specific images and, more broadly, the power of visuality in American public discourse. In treating *The Child That Toileth Not* as an image vernacular, I mean to demonstrate the value of visualizing political culture through critical attention to images and the ways that our experiences of images manifest themselves in rhetorical practice.

Contextualizing Child Labor Photography: Visual Fictions of the Sacred Child and the Health of the Nation

- 19 In 1880, one million American children ages ten to fifteen worked. That is one in every six children. By 1900, the number had nearly doubled to more than

1.75 million.²³ Reasons for the increase are well-documented. As child-labor historian Hugh D. Hindman says, “It is generally understood that the industrial revolution changed everything.”²⁴ Children had always worked, of course, especially on the family farm. But throughout the nineteenth century and especially after the Civil War, immigration and industrialization transformed American work. Between 1880 and 1890, for example, the number of cotton mills in the South rose from 180 to 412, while the capital invested in cotton manufacturing more than quadrupled.²⁵

- 20 Economic necessity dovetailed with cultural ideologies of the day. Beliefs that “idle hands are the devil’s playground” combined with a deeply ingrained Protestant work ethic to produce cultural tolerance for white child labor. Some states had child-labor laws, but their scope was narrow, and they seldom had much impact. By arguing for education, reformers in the North succeeded somewhat in limiting work hours for children. Such arguments appealed less in the South, which had little tradition of universal public education. Business leaders said that poor children would do better working in mills, canneries, and agricultural fields than living “idly.”
- 21 Progressive reformers sought to connect child labor to a broad constellation of questions about national health. They also encouraged a relatively new belief in the “sacred” status of the American child. Thus child-labor debates were dominated on all sides by arguments about the health of the nation. Illustrative are the reform rhetorics of Progressives such as Theodore Roosevelt, Senator Albert Beveridge, and NCLC President Felix Adler. These rhetorics of health constructed children as “products” in need of “right training” and equated physical “degeneracy” and moral “degeneracy” in order to support arguments that the telos of the American republic should be the achievement of a “pure” national “manhood” and “womanhood.”
- 22 In 1911, former President Theodore Roosevelt addressed a child-labor conference in Birmingham, Alabama. In “The Conservation of Childhood” Roosevelt argued that child labor was “one of the great, fundamental questions of our citizenship in this republic.”²⁶ Ironically Roosevelt used metaphors of the industrial age to urge protection of children from industry. “I want you to take pride in getting the very best machinery. . . . In the same way it is even more important to have the right kind of man behind the machine than it is to have the right machine. And you cannot have the right kind of man unless you have the child trained in the right way, unless you have the child brought up amid right conditions.”²⁷ For Roosevelt, children are “products” and child labor damages the goods.
- 23 After defending specific legislation for working women and children, Roosevelt ended with a metaphor of “conservation” strongly associated in the public mind with his presidency: “Remember, that the human being is the

most important of all products to turn out. . . . If you do not have the right kind of citizens in the future, you cannot make any use of the natural resources. Protect the children – protect the boys; still more, protect the girls; because the greatest duty of this generation is to see to it that the next generation is of the proper kind to continue the work of this nation.”²⁸ What kind of citizenship did Roosevelt encourage? The language of “machinery,” “product,” and “conservation” emphasizes the cultivation and training of future workers. Yet he also speaks of “work” in another sense, the “work of the nation.” The “greatest duty” is for adults to see that children, as the next generation, are “of the proper kind to continue the work of this nation.” The telos of citizenship is the production through “proper” means of the “right” kind of citizen.

A CHILD'S CREED

I BELIEVE IN BEING HAPPY
I BELIEVE IN BEING BUSY
I BELIEVE IN BEING A BOY
BYE-N-BYE - I'LL BE A MAN



GIVE US A CHANCE!

WE ARE CITIZENS TO MORROW

There are 1,990,225 children under 16 at work in the United States today. 818,784 of these are working in non-agricultural occupations or are hired out to work on farms.

8,300 men and women have already joined the National Child Labor Committee, but we need ten times this number if the citizens of tomorrow are to have their chance.

PRINTED BY CLARENCE S. NATHAN, New York.



Figure 1

- 24 A parallel case appears in a poster by Lewis Hine, whose metaphors are agricultural: “We must not grind the seed corn.” Children are the seeds of national citizenship; to “grind” them down is to ignore the duty to the nation to “turn out” a good product.

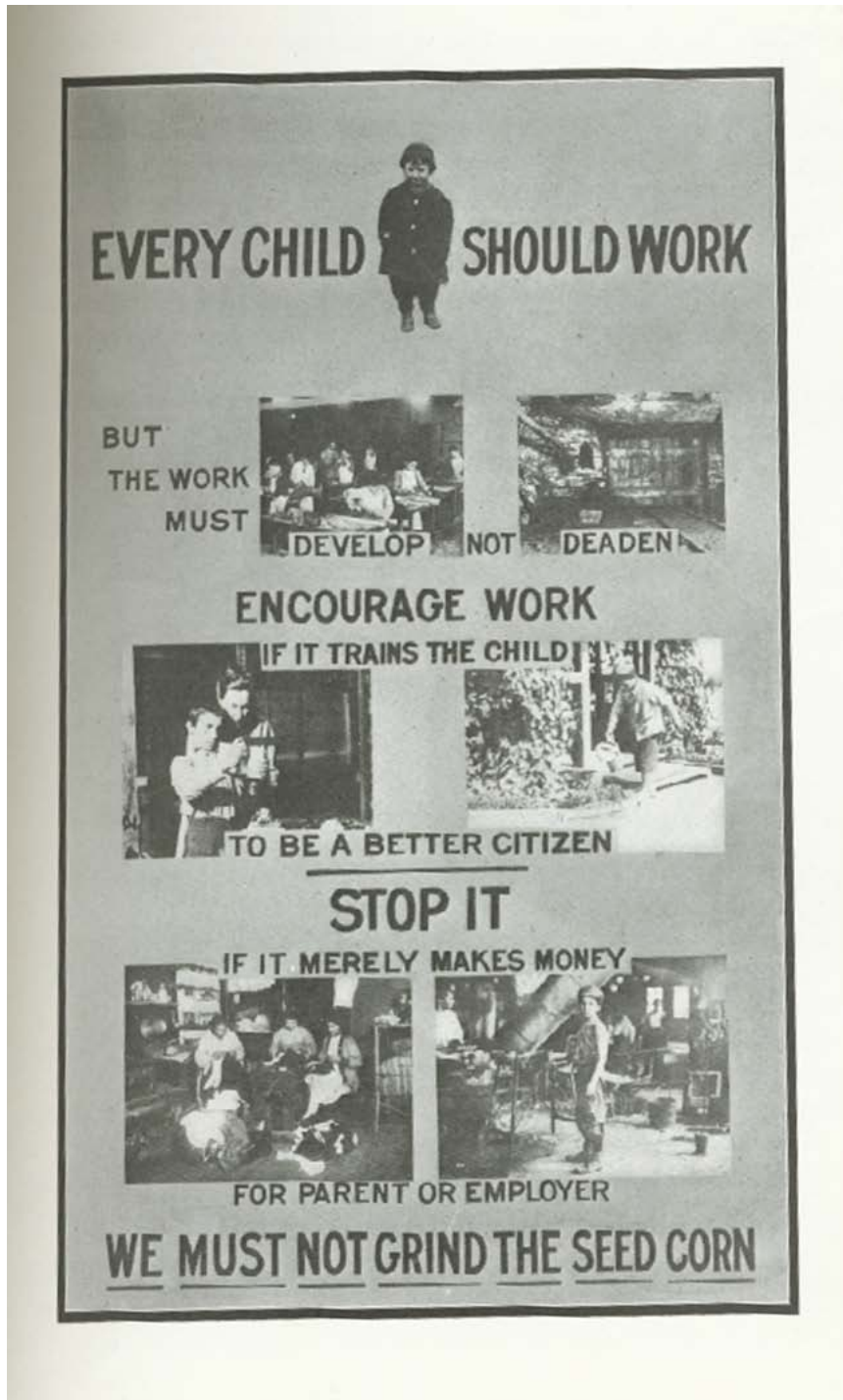


Figure 2

Not all children, of course, get to be seed corn. It includes only the best seeds, reserved for planting and producing future generations of quality crops.

- 25 Motivating the talk of children as products, industrial or agricultural, was intense anxiety about “degeneracy.” Hine, the NCLC, and other reformers emphasized the physical damage that child labor could do. Speaking to the NCLC in 1906 as its president, Felix Adler made explicit the tie of physical to moral health: “this premature toil . . . physically and mentally and morally . . . lowers the standard of civilization. . . . this next generation will become degenerate, and the standard of American civilization will be lowered.”²⁹



Figure 3

Through child labor, declared Senator Beveridge in a 1906 on “Child Labor and the Nation,” children’s “bones are made crooked, their backs bent with the stoop of age, their minds stunted, their characters malformed.”³⁰ Degeneracy was most of all a moral problem, and reform rhetoric featured cause-and-effect arguments that child labor would produce what Beveridge called the “social and political poison” of criminality and anarchism:

When they grow up . . . They feel that they have been robbed . . . of intellect, health, character, of life itself. And so they become, all over the land, living engines of wrath against human society itself. When the lords of gold tremble for the safety of their widespread investments, let them remember that child labor is daily creating an element in this republic more dangerous to their physical property itself than ever was packed in dynamiters’ bombs.³¹

Beveridge insisted that “this making of possible anarchists and degenerates in America has got to be stopped.” Beveridge explicitly tied the “degeneracy” of child laborers to that of society as a whole, using threats of anarchism and “dynamiters’ bombs” along with disease metaphors to cultivate fear.³²

- 26 The image of physical and moral degeneracy in children stood in stark contrast to the Progressive *telos* of American politics. Beveridge began his 1906 speech by invoking this *telos*: “The purpose of this republic is to make a better type of manhood and womanhood.”³³ Later he asked about American values such as liberty, “What do all these things mean, if they do not mean the making of a splendid race of clean, strong, happy, noble, exalted characterized men and women.”³⁴ Adler echoed, “If we continue to sanction premature child labor we not only degrade and lower the standard of citizenship, but we prevent that future growth, that development of American civilization, that new type of manhood which we must give to the world in order to contribute to the world’s riches. We prevent the evolution of that type; we cut off that dream.”³⁵
- 27 The language of “race,” “type” and “evolution” was literal; Beveridge and Adler were not speaking metaphorically. Discourses of eugenics and racial purity crowded public conversations about national identity and morality, so concerns about child labor reached beyond justice for children to morality for all Americans. The nation would degenerate if the “race” failed to evolve “purely” and “cleanly.”³⁶ T. J. Jackson Lears observes that the political and social upheaval of the period – immigration, labor disputes, anarchism – contributed to cultural anxiety about the potential “degeneracy” of the “Anglo-Saxon” race. Statisticians warned that “Anglo-Saxons were being replaced by

inferior immigrant stock.” Racist rhetorics of biological essentialism dominated immigration debates. Theodore Roosevelt warned middle- and upper-class whites that they would commit “race suicide” if they chose to limit sizes of their families.³⁷

- 28 Southern child-labor historian Shelley Sallee argues that reform anxieties about “degeneracy” appeared to concern class but also included race. Both southern and northern reformers invented “fictions of whiteness” to create solidarity among southern whites and between northerners and southerners in a period when the “spirit of regional reconciliation” was politically expedient and racial segregation was the law of the land.³⁸ This rhetoric functioned to separate poor white children from identification with white lower classes as so-called “Cracker” families: “Reformers removed children from categories such as *poor whites*, *mountain whites*, *low whites*, and *crackers* – terms that increasingly dubbed them inferior – and began referring to ‘our pure Anglo-Saxon stock.’”³⁹
- 29 Images of children helped construct these fictions of whiteness. They indexed not merely the good or ill of child labor but the good or ill of civilization. Photography historians like George Dimock and Stanley Mallach explain that Hine’s child labor photographs resonated with Progressives in part because these depictions of children at work dramatically contradicted the ways middle-class viewers typically saw children and imagined them: “Hine composed his photographs to allow middle-class viewers to look through unfamiliar and sometimes brutal activities and surroundings to see that the children of the poor were not unlike their own.”⁴⁰
- 30 The rhetoric of “degeneracy” had traction because the culture was coming to value children as never before. In earlier centuries, Anne Higonnet observes, western children were conceived primarily as “faulty small adults, in need of correction and discipline” – and born in sin.⁴¹ Between 1890 and 1920, however, middle-class Americans became obsessed with the status and quality of childhood. They framed it as a preciously short time of innocence and a psychologically important time of personal development that easily could be disrupted by the “wrong” training. Much of the nineteenth century had emphasized the “usefulness” of children. By that century’s end, though, they emerged paradoxically as “economically worthless” yet “priceless.” What Viviana A. Zelizer calls the “sacralization” of childhood was nearly complete. For Americans, children had become valuable more for sentimental than utilitarian reasons.⁴²
- 31 This ideal, precious child did not appear or circulate in a vacuum: “Precisely because the modern concept of childhood was an invented cultural idea, it required representations.”⁴³ American visual media, especially photography, not only reflected the new ideology of childhood, they helped to invent it.

Writes Higonnet, “visual fictions played a special role in consolidating the modern definition of childhood, a role which became increasingly important over time.”⁴⁴

- 32 Photographs of my grandmother, Isabel Chase Finnegan, and her siblings illustrate these visual fictions.⁴⁵



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Like the Chases, many families late in the nineteenth century first encountered photography at the portrait studio. There portrait photographers carefully lit and posed angelically-dressed children of the middle and upper classes. Displaying all the Victorian trappings of furs, hats and fancy clothes, these photographs do little to betray the geography of their production in the frontier lumber towns of Walker and Brainerd, Minnesota. In the 1890s, these rustic towns boasted more saloons than churches and more lumberjacks than middle-class families, yet the Chase children of the photographs appear to

exist squarely in the frame of Victorian respectability.

- 33 The arrival of George Eastman's Kodak camera in 1888 put handheld cameras directly into the hands of consumers, revolutionizing photography's role in the family. Though families still took advantage of the portrait studio, Eastman empowered a growing cadre of parents to take up their own cameras and document every aspect of their precious children's lives. "To no small extent," Nancy Martha West observes, "snapshot photography gained its cultural currency from the promise that children could demonstrate for the first time in photography history all the characteristics – spontaneity, playfulness, innocence – recently discovered as uniquely their own."⁴⁶ Posed portraits emphasized children's romantic innocence and purity; candid snapshots communicated spontaneous play and family fun. No less constructed than other kinds of images, family snapshots illustrate the culture's increasing conviction that childhood should be a unique, protected space for healthy development.⁴⁷



Figure 9

- 34 Photographs of children embodied and created the period's normative image of children and childhood. Their visual fictions served as powerful inventional resources for rhetors such as Hine, whose photographs were meant to be read in dialectical relation to such idyllic visions. As Alan Trachtenberg argues, Hine's method was designed "to show contradiction between the rhetoric and the reality of American life."⁴⁸ Relying on a logic of antithesis, Hine's images worked enthymematically to shock viewers, and shock was needed. Wrote Olivia Howard Dunbar in 1911 in the *North American Review*, "It has been observed that messages of vital important to the many do not get very far if they are merely staidly set down in print; and that however effectively spoken or shouted, they are still only half understood or vaguely remembered.

Properly to impress their audience, they have to be brought to the market-place and told through symbols that must be both simple and startling. What Miss Jane Addams calls 'startling statistics' have become an accepted educational medium."⁴⁹

- 35 Thus Hine's moral marketing of "startling statistics" and symbols tapped familiar visual fictions of childhood to mobilize broader arguments about perils for national identity. In *The Child That Toileth Not*, Dawley countered with his own image vernacular. It contested Hine's narrative about the degenerative effects of child labor and mounted a rhetorical challenge to Hine's practice of social documentary.

***The Child That Toileth Not* as a Critique of "Representation"**

- 36 *The Child That Toileth Not* is part muckraking exposé, part sociological investigation, and part polemic. It used yet also challenged the period's relatively new interest in visual social science. As a result, the book presents the critic with something of a generic paradox. In the book's introduction, Dawley reports that he encountered resistance to the findings of his investigation when he returned to Washington: "I was told to write a report, but upon starting to write that report, my findings respecting child labor and the improvement of the families at the mills, were met with protests." This trouble Dawley traced to assumptions by the federal agency that sponsored his investigation: "I was told that it was an established fact that factory employment was detrimental to the employed, that the captains of industry who employed the children, never worked a day in their lives and that they exploited the lives of the little children whom they employed, for their own personal gain."⁵⁰ In *The Child That Toileth Not*, Dawley shaped a public refutation of the activist narrative he ascribed to the federal government. To do so, he combined elements of the new discourse of social science with a vivid narrative reminiscent of muckraking journalism.
- 37 Published in 1912, *The Child That Toileth Not* contains 121 photographs. Photographs were ubiquitous in the era's print culture, where halftone technology tracing to the 1880s meant that publishers of newspapers, books, and magazines could reproduce photographs at high quality but low cost.⁵¹ Still, the large number suggests that Dawley did not offer the photographs as mere illustrations.⁵² From the first page, photographs have a primary role and personal observation becomes a dominant trope of the text.
- 38 The book opens with a photograph, not of the conditions addressed but of the author. The frontispiece is a full-page portrait captioned, "the author and his horse rubberneck, as he appeared in the Mountains of North Carolina on his

second investigation.”



Figure 10

It is a fascinating visual epigraph, the caption situating the author in a particular space and time to suggest firsthand experience of the conditions he will describe. Dawley himself cuts an imposing, if also amusing, figure. Attired as a Rough Rider and sitting smartly astride his trusty horse “Rubberneck,” Dawley depicts himself as a serious man of action. Although he is a government bureaucrat and social investigator, the frontispiece frames Dawley as a muckraking loner exploring the frontier of mill country in order to seek out the “truth” about conditions.

- 39 By no means an exercise in Progressive social reform, the book still embodies some of the period’s sociological and journalistic methods. Dawley’s self-presentation signals a zeal for firsthand observation that reflects the rise of social science and the influence of muckrakers early in the twentieth century.
- 40 Progressive social reform methods and the social sciences developed together in this period.⁵³ The most prominent example was the Pittsburgh Survey, launched in 1907 as a multiyear effort to chronicle urban life and labor. Known today as the first “modern” sociological study of an American city, its focus, scale, and methods were pioneering. Investigators combined quantitative data with qualitative information from personal observations, interviews, and narratives. Alice O’Connor observes that it “laid the groundwork for many of the research techniques that would later become

essential to more self-consciously ‘scientific’ social research.⁵⁴

- 41 Dawley’s book may also be read in the context of muckraking journalism, where self-styled crusading journalists sought to expose large-scale corruption in economic, political, and social institutions. Fueled by Progressive fervor and supported by editors of popular magazines such as *McClure’s* and *Cosmopolitan*, muckrakers typically aligned themselves with broad federal efforts at social reform.⁵⁵ What we remember today as the most famous muckraking efforts, Lincoln Steffens’s “Shame of the Cities” series (1902-03) and Ida Tarbell’s exposure of corruption in the Standard Oil Company (1902), relied on extensive field research.⁵⁶ Early muckrakers shied away from claims to science, embracing more partisan standards instead. To criticisms that his work was not “scientific,” Steffens replied that he sought not objectivity, but “to see if the shameful facts, spread out in all their shame, would not burn through our civic shamelessness and set fire to American pride.”⁵⁷ Analyzing the period’s magazine culture, Matthew Schneirov notes that child labor was a common topic for magazine muckrakers. Essays such as “The Child at the Loom” and “Little Slaves of the Coal Mines” describe experiences of child laborers in the patented, dramatic style of muckraking: direct address of the reader, vivid descriptions and visual illustrations of conditions, and rhetoric designed to shame.⁵⁸ “This was the ‘new realism,’” says Schneirov, “which sought to ‘speak not the pleasant but the true.’ But speaking the truth did not mean separating facts from advocacy of a position. Instead, facts were to be exposed precisely to open the public’s mind to the need for reform.”⁵⁹
- 42 Dawley turned aspects of muckraking style against its usual politics. *The Child That Toileth Not* appeals to the ideology of objective research in the Pittsburgh Survey, yet it rejects reform ideology as an outcome of such investigations. It relies on strategies shared by social scientists and muckrakers – extensive fieldwork, dramatic visualization, vivid detail, and firsthand observation – yet it muckrakes the muckrakers by charging that the federal government ignored his early findings because it favors the activist narrative of Hine and the NCLC. Early in the book, Dawley muses about “the extent to which we are often led blindly by propaganda, which in its inception may have a good cause to sustain, but, upon becoming the means of subsistence for those who make its furtherance their source of livelihood, degenerates into chicanery and blinds even those who have eyes to see and hearts to feel, and who honestly desire to lift the fallen, strengthen the weak, alleviate suffering, and at least leave the world better than they found it.”⁶⁰ Propaganda exists merely to serve itself, its “chicanery” blinding even those with the best intentions. It creates “misrepresentations” and “blinds” even the well-intentioned. By contrast, Dawley tells us, his text offers truth supported by direct observation and undistorted vision.

- 43 From the outset, Dawley treats child-labor reform activities as a distorted set of rhetorical practices grounded in half-truths, questionable images, and misrepresentations. Eventually the book re-contextualizes several of Hine's photographs, but a verbal critique of representation dominates its early pages. The first chapter, "Beveridge's Speech," describes a notorious talk by Senator Beveridge in 1907, when he commandeered the Senate floor to push a child-labor bill. It emphasizes the powerful "word pictures" created by Beveridge and others, quoting their reports on child labor: "Little children *were represented* as working in dyehouses in vats of poisonous dyes"; "These child toilers *as represented* were the 'infant factory slaves;'" "It *was represented* that capitalists . . . were little less than human monsters;"⁶¹ children " *were pictured* as beginning their labors in the mills as young as four years."⁶² Beveridge and his reform friends " *presented a word picture* of the children in the mills,"⁶³ the book concludes, that was seductive but skewed. (All the italics are mine.)
- 44 At least initially, the book suggests, Dawley too was seduced by these "word pictures." It describes his first forays into Southern textile mills as structured by expectations of disastrous conditions.⁶⁴ These were the direct result, he says, of ways that child labor had been visualized by activists and legislators. Thus he meets a female social worker at a local mill worker's house: "In our search for the worse conditions, the lady under whose direction I was required to point my kodak at cow-sheds and other unspeakable necessities, took me to an abode which she described as particularly bad, and which evidently was the worst she had been able to find. She said it was filthy, and as we entered it she gathered her skirts about her intuitively; but as I looked around I failed to discover any filth."⁶⁵ Dawley finds life in mill towns more healthy, moral, and civilized than in the mountains. Notwithstanding the "word pictures" circulated in Washington, Dawley's methods and findings are "truer" than those of child-labor reformers. Dawley lays the groundwork for his pro-child labor argument by positioning not only his photographs but photographic practice itself as important linchpins in that argument.

Class Pictures:

Dawley's Images of Children at the Mill

- 45 Dawley uses image and text for a logic of antithesis that contrasts life in mill towns to life on mountain farms. He dismisses the healthy yeoman farmer as a myth by using images of "decadent," "degenerate" people doomed to ill health and moral decay. This is not the place to detail Dawley's case against farm life, but a representative image may suffice. In a photograph captioned "a child of the mountains," Dawley features a small, squinting girl with long, wavy hair grown down to the middle of her back.



Figure 11

- 46 In front of a small mountain cabin, she stands uncomfortably for the camera. The caption quotes an informant, who observed of such children, “In the summer they live on berries like bears; in the winter they get nothing but corn meal. ‘Thar ain’t enough cotton-mills for them.’” In contrast to the supposedly animal existence of this “wild child,” Dawley sees mills as potential salvation for children “lucky” enough to work there.
- 47 Dawley’s strategy of antithesis was not uncommon: southern mill owners often claimed with some truth that mill work was better – *healthier* – than scraping together a living on mountain farms. As Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis and colleagues discuss in their oral history study of the Piedmont region, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*, “There were many paths leading from southern farms to Piedmont cotton mills. Any number of considerations might prompt the decision to move, but in one way or another the journey from field to factory had its origins in the transformation of the countryside that was making it more and more difficult to earn an adequate living from the land.”⁶⁶ Mill owners argued that they were offering “salvation,” even though they were largely responsible for the economic changes that made it difficult to stay on the farm. “Fusing the profit motive and a philanthropic impulse, mill promoters often cast themselves as public benefactors who were creating jobs for the growing number of rural poor.”⁶⁷ They claimed to help former farmers who would learn “the virtues of thrift, regularity, and industrial discipline” as a result of mill work.⁶⁸
- 48 The book echoes these claims in emphasizing that mill life exerts a civilizing

influence on lower-class white children. Strikingly, the only photographs in the book featuring mill children actually working are Lewis Hine photographs that Dawley reproduces in order to refute. Dawley's own photographs of mill life situate children's bodies in the contexts of school, play, and patriotism but *not* work. They are "class pictures" in a double sense. Dawley uses photographs of large groups of children being educated together— *class pictures*—to contradict reformers' arguments that child laborers are not receiving education for good citizenship. Dawley also mobilizes these images as *pictures of class*; that is, the images explicitly reference early twentieth-century, class-based visual rhetorics of children and healthy childhood. Thus Dawley attempts to replace the powerful visual narrative of Hine with one that features child health and that dissociates the body of the white child from the body of the laborer.

- 49 The "class pictures" serve two functions. First, they embody a rhetoric of representativeness meant to counteract Hine's often poignant images of individual child workers or small groups of children. By offering photographs of very large numbers of children, Dawley suggests that the majority of children in the mill towns are healthy and educated—just like other middle class children in other, culturally ubiquitous class pictures. Furthermore, the spaces in which groups of children are photographed highlights not the mind-and-body-numbing labor typically depicted in activist narratives, but instead the benefits of education, healthy play, and training in patriotism.
- 50 In these photographs Dawley uses not only a logic of antithesis but also a logic of similitude to suggest that mill children are ultimately not all that different from "your" children.⁶⁹ Critics of child labor argued that children who worked long hours could not possibly get a proper education, civic or otherwise. In rebuttal, Dawley includes photographs of mill life that signal Progressive commitments to education for citizenship. These images show large groups of children gathered in school settings. In Hine's similar images adults nearby hover as threats, but Dawley's adults are benevolent figures.
- 51 Thus Dawley's photographs frame company towns as welcoming havens for families and especially for children who would otherwise have little access to education or training. The construction of healthy play spaces, reformers argued, would enable exercise and foster good health, particularly important in the confining spaces of industrial America.⁷⁰ Dawley's attention to play counters images of children at work, but it also portrays mill owners as Progressive in helping children. Dawley offers the mill owners' attention to education and health as evidence of paternal beneficence. In many mill towns such attention was indeed present, though not entirely for the reasons Dawley suggests. Schools run by teachers hired by mill owners, company housing, baseball leagues, "domestic science" classes, public libraries, parks, and other "experiments in welfare capitalism" helped control the population and reduce

the mobility of workers who might vote with their feet and seek better wages at nearby mills⁷¹

- 52 Dawley lavishly illustrates *The Child That Toileth Not* with representations of these organized, healthful places of play.



Figure 12

This photograph shows more than thirty small children gathered with their teachers in a fenced play area outdoors. Two barefoot boys share a swing, while in the background little children are stacked like sardines on a slide, the boy at the bottom bracing his arms and legs as if to avoid being crushed by the flood of children behind and above him. Four teachers, all women, pose with the children, who appear clean and well-behaved despite their young ages. Trees are visible in the background of the image, as is a broader expanse of sky, suggesting something of the health of the outdoors. The photograph is an image of middle class childhood, a “class picture” in both senses of the term. Children are gathered outdoors, under watchful but caring adult supervision, getting exercise and having fun. They are not working or suffering.

- 53 “Special interests” such as Hine and the NCLC might claim that such children work in the mills, but Dawley’s caption says that “The above was taken at the Eagle and Phenix Mills, Columbus, Ga., where such children are represented by special interests, as marching in daily procession into the yawning mills.”⁷² The caption emphasizes that the playground photograph is a direct visual contradiction to claims by “special interests.” If there are children at the mills,

Dawley implies, they are not hidden but in plain view outdoors, on a healthy playground. They go to school and play just like “your” middle-class children.



Figure 13

- 54 In the photograph just above, Dawley reiterates the theme by presenting thirteen young boys, perhaps nine to twelve years of age, amid tall pine trees. Dawley identifies them as “doffer boys [who] were playing ball between doffs,” and suggests that such boys “play two-thirds of the working day.”⁷³ These children might work, but their labor does not prevent healthy play.⁷⁴ They can be effective producers for the mill while becoming healthy products themselves.
- 55 If mill life afforded children education and healthy exercise, the mills were creating precisely the kind of citizens that Progressives sought. In Dawley’s images and words, the child laborers embody middle-class aspirations for healthy children. The rhetoric is not subtle. Another class picture depicts more than a hundred children outside the local school at Pelzer mills.



Figure 14

The large, new school building dominates on the right, competing for viewer attention with an equally tall flagpole near the center. An American flag flutters over the scene. The students appear well-behaved and orderly. They pose for the camera with hands grasped firmly in front of them or held stiffly at their sides. Above all, this is an image of order, control, tidiness. Stiff and upright, the children's bodies repeat the clean lines of the school building.

- 56 With Dawley's usual sarcasm, the caption reads, "one of the results of Pelzer and its despotism. In searching for the awful conditions of woman and child labor, we find the cotton-mill children going to school at the expense of the mill corporation. At the closing exercises for the day, they are preparing to sing our National Anthem around the flag."⁷⁵ The mill cultivates in its smallest charges the positive values of patriotism. As if the image and its caption were not enough, the text waxes eloquent about this scene:

As we stood looking at them a group of younger ones went dancing around the pole which bore aloft that emblem of liberty which they never would have seen, perhaps, had those little doffer boys and child spinners of the previous generation been barred from the cotton-mill. As I too looked up at the flag I thought what a cruel mockery of that liberty were those misrepresentations by paid agents seeking to bar children from coming down from their isolated mountain homes.

In the end, “the childish voices burst forth singing our National anthem.”⁷⁶ Life at the mill has saved these lucky children from the illness and degeneracy borne of “isolated mountain homes.” More, it has given them *liberty* and made them into patriotic citizens. In contrast to what “paid agents” have described as the “lint-laden atmosphere of the cotton-mill,” Dawley (himself a paid agent) finds as “the living proof of the actual result, half a thousand ruddy-faced, well-dressed school-children performing their evening exercises before going home.”⁷⁷ The “real” effect of child labor? Healthy, “ruddy-faced” children bursting spontaneously into patriotic song.

- 57 Dawley suggests that such patriotism, fostered in the worker-child by the benevolent corporation, pays off later for society. Offering a photograph of a rifle company in the State National Guard, Dawley says that these soldiers, “made up of the very mill boys whom the Socialistic reformers and labor committees tell us are being stunted in growth and ‘murdered,’ present as fine a type of young manhood ready at their country’s call, as may be found anywhere, and I doubt whether many of our Northern cities present any better.”⁷⁸



Figure 15

Captioned “ready at their country’s call,” the photograph features some fifty teenaged boys, dressed in uniforms similar to those of the Rough Rider or the Boy Scout. Lined up for review, they pose in an empty field. Each stands with a rifle at his side. These fine young men, so orderly and alert, so ready to work on behalf of their country, are “one of the results of child labor.”

58 Dawley's class pictures – middle-class images of school, play, and patriotism – visually and verbally reference beliefs about the status of American children in the early twentieth century. Dawley rejects a dichotomous choice between degraded, debilitated, economically exploited children at labor and the healthy, precious, but “economically worthless” children in middle-class life. By book's end, there is little difference between the visual fiction of the ideal child and Dawley's children who labor *and* play. Dawley thus replaces Hine's antithetical logic with an analogical one. In the world according to Dawley, child labor and healthy citizenship are not opposed. His photographs show how child workers can be healthy proto-citizens.

Refuting the Photographer, not the Photograph: Dawley on Hine

- 59 Ultimately, it seems that we are left with two competing rhetorics of child labor: Hine argues that child labor inhibits healthy child citizenship while Dawley argues that it enhances it. But close study of *The Child That Toileth Not* makes it clear that Dawley's goal is not simply to offer a competing narrative of child labor. He also wants to challenge the practices of Hine and the NCLC and encourage readers to think critically about photographic representation itself. Recall that Dawley begins the book by challenging the idea that what child labor reformers wanted to communicate was unbiased, “scientific” evidence; he accuses them instead of “misrepresentation.” Throughout the book Dawley develops this argument by reproducing images made by Hine and then refuting what they purport to show.
- 60 Dawley reproduces six Hine photographs in *The Child That Toileth Not*, suggesting that all were taken from NCLC publications. Although scattered widely in the book, with the first on p. 19 and the last on p. 438, they are worth studying as a group. In presenting them, Dawley schools readers on how to “read” photographs properly. First, he contends that what Hine depicts is not representative of child labor in general. Second, he insinuates that Hine manipulates the photographic scene in deceptive ways. Lastly, he encourages the reader to focus on evidence to be found in the photograph itself. Dawley's refutation of Hine teaches readers to look for manipulation in the world around the image but not in the image itself.
- 61 Dawley holds that Hine's photographs are not representative of what Dawley found in his field work. Reproducing an image that Hine titled “a child spinner,” Dawley captions it: “Such as is represented as marching in daily procession into the mills, but I find that the employment of such a child is exceptional, and then she is only employed as a ‘learner,’ and not because of any adequate returns to the mill corporation.”⁷⁹



Figure 16

Dawley does not deny that the child works in the mill, but he does deny that there are many like her. His claim about the employment of “learners” may be true, at least in part, but it cannot be tested by looking at the photograph.⁸⁰ Likewise his claim that the girl is an “exception” cannot be tested by studying Hine’s photograph in isolation. Hine’s genius in emphasizing the individuality and uniqueness of the “sacred child” is evident here, as the image shows us the girl working in solitude with only the barest hint of a co-worker visible in the background of the image. Dawley repositions Hine’s child spinner as atypical of child labor practices rather than representative. In doing so Dawley urges readers to question her typicality and thus disrupt the narrative offered by Hine, which would frame this girl as representative of the whole class of spinners.

- 62 Dawley also uses Hine photographs to contest arguments about adults as well. Reformers often claimed there was an available pool of adults who could fill jobs done by child laborers, making child labor unnecessary. Dawley reproduces a Hine photograph that purports to show such a group of adult men.

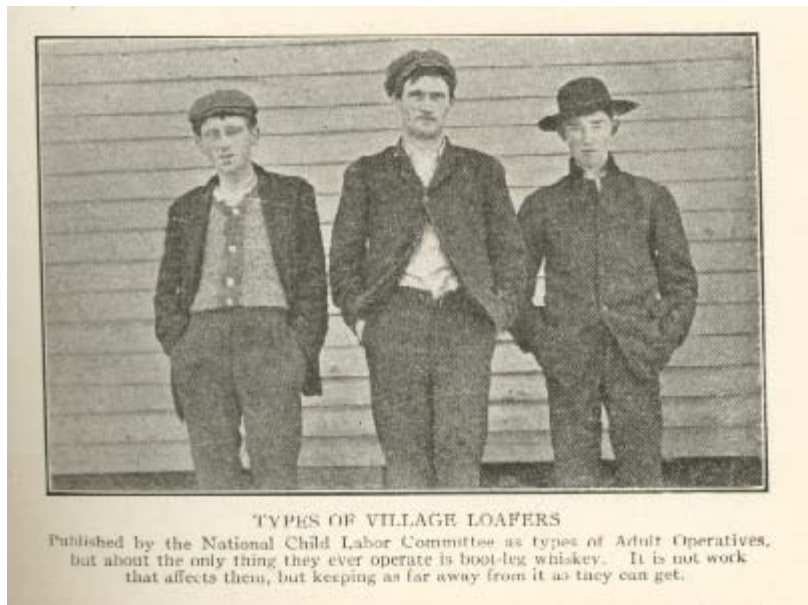


Figure 17

Retitling the photograph “types of village loafers,” Dawley adds a caption: “Published by the National Child Labor Committee as types of Adult Operatives, but about the only thing they ever operate is boot-leg whiskey. It is not work that affects them, but keeping as far away from it as they can get.”⁸¹ If these men represent anything, Dawley insinuates, it is vice and sloth.

- 63 In the text, Dawley tells of a conversation when a local mill boss explained why the mills did not employ more older men: “He called my attention to the town loafers . . . who came from the farms after they were grown, having already acquired idle ways, and he believed the children of the mill families would turn out pretty much the same, unless they were taught to work and acquire industrious habits. There were always jobs open to the young men in the mill village, if only they would take them.”⁸² Here Dawley makes the image of adult men represent not the availability of adult labor in the mill towns, but the adult population of “loafers” who lack the advantages of training in the mill towns.
- 64 At times, Dawley directly charges Hine with deception. Dawley reproduces a photograph of a very small child who stands with a spool in his hand in a mill work space.



Figure 18

Under the title “how the camera lies,” Dawley captions: “Photographed by Lewis W. Hine and represented as a child worker in the mill. The child never worked and the photograph was obtained by deception.”⁸³ Nowhere in the text does Dawley offer explanatory evidence about the child in question, though it may be likely that the child was in the mill because he accompanied a family member to work.⁸⁴ Nor does he elaborate what he means when he says that the photograph “was obtained by deception.” But simply retitling the picture “how the camera lies,” shifts readers’ attention away from the child and toward the camera as a tool of the photographer. By introducing the idea of deception and implying that the image was staged, Dawley encourages readers to question the practices of photography that produced the image.

- 65 Dawley charges the NCLC, too, with misrepresenting the origins of its photographic subjects. He reproduces a Hine photograph of four hunched-over, unsmiling, forlorn-looking girls.



Figure 19

Dawley's title is "hook-worm suspects such as Dr. Stiles found," and his caption says, "Reproduced from one of the National Child Labor Committee's publication [sic] in which such types are represented as products of the mill."⁸⁵ Dawley refers here to Dr. Charles Stiles, a public health researcher who explored effects of hookworm on the area's rural people. Stiles found that many new at the mill came from farms infected with hookworm, and he argued for continuing child labor because he believed that the disease would be easier to treat if rural people kept moving to mill towns.⁸⁶ Dawley does not dispute that these girls work in the mill or that they might be ill. By suggesting that they are like people studied by Stiles, though, Dawley challenges the representation of them as "products" of the mill. He cites a mill official as saying that they are "Cracker girls' suffering disease" and that they "proved to be recent arrivals from the 'farms.'"⁸⁷ Dawley re-reads the Hine image using the race- and class-based term "cracker" to cast the photograph as an image of the dangers faced by lower-class white girls when they do not have access to child labor.

- 66 To reinforce the point, Dawley places the girls with hookworm on a page opposite a photograph of his that features a smiling, round-faced, apple-cheeked young girl who stands outdoors.



Figure 20

She draws water from a faucet. Her feet are barefoot, but she is clean and smiling. The caption reads, "a true product of the cotton mill. She is a spinner at the Graniteville Mills. Note her robust form, strong limbs, and bright and

smiling countenance. The cotton-mill has done for her and her generation, what it has done for hundreds of others from the poor farms of the sterile sections.”⁸⁸ Dawley offers this girl as a kind of celebratory “after” for the depressing “before” of the diseased girls. That the mill girl has running water is not a minor visual detail in the context of a disease that results from poor sanitation.

- 67 The direction to “note” the apparent health of the “robust” girl indicates a third way that Dawley refutes Hine. Dawley encourages readers to scrutinize the photographs themselves for evidence of child health. This frames photography as a valuable form of documentary evidence. Dawley asks readers to study Hine’s images to see the *benefits* of child labor rather than the ills. In one instance, he urges readers to “compare the faces and physique” of child laborers to non-mill children.⁸⁹ In another, he retitles an NCLC image of mill workers “doffer boys who earn as much as school teachers.”



Figure 21

Dawley tells readers to “note the bright intelligent faces, even to their hair being combed, as compared with the picture of the three loafers shown on page 79” (Figure 17).⁹⁰ Advancing a body rhetoric that reflects the contemporary culture’s value of child health, Dawley re-reads Hine’s photographs for evidence of the healthy bodies that reformers claim to want.

- 68 By appropriating and refuting Hine’s images, Dawley schools his readers in how to read photographs as vulnerable but valuable forms of evidence. Dawley shows readers how to question social documentary photographs by paying

attention to information about the context in which photographs were made and by being skeptical of photographers' practices. In doing so Dawley both advances his own argument about child labor and seeks to inoculate readers against social reformers' attempts at visual persuasion. But never in refuting Hine does Dawley contest the veracity of the photographic image itself. He does not, for example, dispute that the photographs show children whom Hine encountered during his field work. In several instances, moreover, Dawley directs readers to engage in close readings of Hine photographs to locate specific evidence in them.

- 69 As an image vernacular, then, *The Child That Toileth Not* takes us to the heart of the paradox of documentary: while Dawley's rhetoric emphasizes that the world around photographs can be manipulated, he needs at the same time to preserve the relationship of the photograph to something like reality if his own argument is to have any traction.⁹¹ In this way, Dawley offers an ironic echo of Hine's own contention that "photographs cannot lie, but liars may photograph."

Conclusion: Questioning Social Reform by Challenging Social Documentary

- 70 Predictably Dawley's book received terrible reviews from northeastern Progressives and scholars active in child-labor reform.⁹² Perhaps just as predictably, Dawley's work gained praise from southern textile interests who invited him to speak at their annual meetings and, at least according to the NCLC, hired him as a paid operative.⁹³ Historians, too, have tended to dismiss Dawley's efforts as "transparent" propaganda designed to serve the interests of mill owners.⁹⁴ Certainly one way to read *The Child That Toileth Not* is as an excessively partisan work by a political gadfly.
- 71 Yet this analysis shows that Dawley's arguments about child labor have at least some merit, and the same goes for his challenges to the practice of social reform photography. Lewis Hine and the NCLC knew that poignant images of child laborers would be interpreted by Progressive Era audiences in the context of a visual culture that romanticized and idealized childhood. Yet it certainly was not the case that all children "protected" from child labor would be in any economic or social position to become idealized, precious citizens. Even NCLC historian Walter Trattner acknowledges that many of the period's arguments to support child labor were "plausible defenses" of a system that seemed to many preferable to a difficult life of poverty on the farm.⁹⁵ Dawley's attempt to reframe the norms of middle class visual culture to include the image of the child laborer offered an alternative view that combined beliefs about childhood and "right training" with a pragmatic

recognition that for some children, the mill was the best they were going to get. Furthermore, his challenges to Hine's photographic practices encouraged viewers of Hine's photographs and social documentary photography more generally to be critical and skeptical of what those images purported to show.

72 Beyond the specific issue of child labor, *The Child That Toileth Not* is a fascinating example of an image vernacular in that Dawley grapples strongly, though often implicitly, with the changing role of photography in public culture. His book publicly challenged social photography at precisely the moment when it was in its infancy as a representational practice. The term "documentary" originated in the 1920s, and its theorization did not begin in earnest until what William Stott has called the "documentary decade" of the 1930s.⁹⁶ Hine himself spoke and wrote about photography, but his contributions to theorizing social documentation were largely forgotten until he was "rediscovered" during the heyday of documentary in the 1930s.⁹⁷ The book thus allows us access to a moment in which audiences and rhetors were attempting to come to terms with the rhetorical implications of social documentary but did not necessarily have the language for it yet. From the standpoint of visual rhetorical studies, the book is both conceptually and historically important because it stands as a rich, early instance in which American social documentary photography was theorized, albeit implicitly, as thoroughly rhetorical.

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Notes

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented at the School of Communication summer seminar at Northwestern University in July 2005. Thanks to the seminar participants for their generous feedback and Kassie Lamp for research assistance. Helpful comments on earlier drafts came from Robert Hariman, Debbie Hawhee, Stephen Hartnett, the editor, and three anonymous reviewers.

² Lewis Hine, "Social Photography," *Classic Essays on Photography*, Alan Trachtenberg, ed., Stony Creek, CT, Leete's Island Press, 1980, p. 110.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁴ "Social documentary photography" is Maren Stange's term. See Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890-1950*, Oxford, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

⁵ Thomas Robinson Dawley Jr., *The Child That Toileth Not: The Story of a*

Government Investigation, New York, Gracia, 1912.

6 In some of his investigations, Dawley suggests in the text, he worked primarily as a photographer with other investigators. The implication is that these are photographs made by Dawley during his investigations. While the images are never specifically credited to him in the text or in the captions, it is reasonable to infer that these are Dawley's images.

7 On Hine and his photography, see Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History from Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*, New York, Noonday Press, 1989, pp. 164-230; Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life*, pp. 47-87; Judith Mara Gutman, *Lewis W. Hine and the American Social Conscience*, New York, Walker, 1967; Verna Posever Curtis and Stanley Mallach, *Photography and Reform: Lewis Hine and the National Child Labor Committee*, Milwaukee, WI, Milwaukee Art Museum, 1984; Weatherspoon Art Museum, *Priceless Children: Child Labor and the Pictorialist Ideal*, Greensboro, NC, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2001.

8 Hine's creative strategies for gaining access to industrial spaces are well-documented by Hine scholars. As the stories go, Hine would often pose as a factory inspector or equipment salesman. Walter I. Trattner writes in *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America*, Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1970, p. 105: "Using any pretext he could get away with, he entered factories, sheds, mines, and homes by night or day, to photograph and interview working children." In order accurately to represent what he saw in the spaces he infiltrated, Hine "measured children's height according to the buttons on his coat, and scribbled notes while keeping his hands in his pockets" (ibid, p. 106). See Alan Trachtenberg, "Ever – The Human Document," *America and Lewis Hine*, Walter Rosenblum and Naomi Rosenblum, eds., Millerton, NY, Aperture, 1977, p. 129. When Hine could not get inside the workspaces, he would photograph child workers coming and going from the area or on their lunch breaks.

9 Trachtenberg, "Ever – The Human Document," p. 130.

10 On *The Survey*, see Clarke Chambers, *Paul U. Kellogg and The Survey: Voices for Social Welfare and Social Justice*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1971.

11 Quoted in Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life*, p. 66.

12 Following Lloyd Bitzer, Cori E. Dauber notes in "The Shot Seen 'Round the World: The Impact of the Images of Mogadishu on American Military

Operations,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 4, 4, 2001, p. 677: “Photos are exigencies: a rhetorical exigence is a moment that demands a response, calls forth a response.”

13 In the U.S. context, acknowledged antecedents to the social documentary photography of the early twentieth century include the Civil War photography of Mathew Brady, the slum reform work of Jacob Riis, and surveys of the western landscape produced by photographers such as Timothy O’Sullivan and Carleton Watkins. See Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*.

14 Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life*, p. xiii.

15 Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1997, p. 213.

16 See Cara A. Finnegan: “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth Century American Culture,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, 8, 1, 2005, pp.31-58; “Image Vernaculars: Photography, Anxiety, and Public Argument,” *Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation*, Frans H. van Eemeren and others, eds., Amsterdam, Sic Sat, 2003, pp. 315-318. A concept related to image vernaculars is “implicit communication theory.” See Thomas W. Benson, “Implicit Communication Theory in Campaign Coverage,” *Television Coverage in the 1980 Presidential Campaign*, William C. Adams, ed., Norwood, NJ, ALEX, 1983, pp. 103-116.

17 On various ways to define “image,” see W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp. 7-46.

18 See Finnegan, “Recognizing Lincoln,” p. 34. Other scholars who employ the notion of the vernacular include John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1992; Geoffrey Batchen, “Vernacular Photographies,” *History of Photography*, 24, 3, 2000, pp. 262-271; Gerard Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Sphere*, Columbia, University of South California Press, 1999; and Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California’s Proposition 187*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2002.

19 On p. 145 in “Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory,” *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*, John Louis Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit, and Sally Caudill, eds., New York, Guilford, 1999, pp. 140-152, Thomas B. Farrell describes social knowledge as that which “is assumed to be shared by other persons in their collective capacity as audience.”

20 Michael Ann Holly, *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the*

Rhetoric of the Image, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 26.

21 In addition to *ibid.*, see James Elkins, *Visual Studies: A Skeptical Introduction*, New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 152; David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989.

22 On the history and current status of visual rhetoric in the field of communication, see Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope, eds., *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 2008; Charles Hill and Marguerite Helmers, eds., *Defining Visual Rhetorics*, Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003; and Lawrence J. Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, Columbia, SC, University of South Carolina Press, 2006.

23 Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, pp. 32 and 41.

24 Hugh D. Hindman, *Child Labor: An American History*, Armonk, NY, M. E. Sharpe, 2002, p. 21.

25 Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, p. 37.

26 Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, "The Conservation of Childhood," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, New York, National Child Labor Committee, 1911, p. 2.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

29 Felix Adler, "The Attitude of Society Toward the Child as an Index of Civilization," *Child Labor and the Republic*, National Child Labor Committee, ed., New York, American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1907, p. 139.

30 Albert Beveridge, "Child Labor and the Nation," *Child Labor and the Republic*, p. 116.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

35 Adler, "The Attitude of Society Toward the Child as an Index of

Civilization,” p. 139.

36 On the rhetoric of eugenics, see Marouf Arif Hasian, Jr., *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought*, Athens, GA, University of Georgia Press, 1996.

37 T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981, pp. 29-30. See Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 116-117.

38 Shelley Sallee, *The Whiteness of Child Labor Reform in the New South*, Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2004, p. 2.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

40 Stanley Mallach, “Child Labor Reform and Lewis Hine,” *Photography and Reform*, p. 25.

41 Anne Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1998, p. 8.

42 Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 5 and 11.

43 Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence*, p. 8. For a discussion of nineteenth-century photography and children, see Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children, and Nineteenth Century Photography*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998.

44 Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence*, p. 8.

45 These images are in the possession of the Finnegan family and are used with permission.

46 Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia*, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2000, p. 78.

47 On the family photograph, see Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1997. Art photographers in this period also mobilized changing views of children and childhood in their work. Pictorialist photographers such as Gertrude Käsebier and Clarence White emphasized a romantic, dreamy, painterly style. Their subjects frequently were children, often their own or those of people they knew. On the pictorialist style in

photography, see Beaumont Newhall, *The History Of Photography from 1939 to the Present*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, fifth edition, 1994, pp. 140-165; Alfred Stieglitz, "Pictorial Photography," *Classic Essays on Photography*, Alan Trachtenberg, ed., Stony Creek, CT, Leete's Island Books, 1980, pp. 115-123.

48 Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs*, p. 166.

49 Olivia Howard Dunbar, "A Crusade for the Child," *North American Review*, January, 1911, p. 96.

50 Dawley, *The Child That Toileth Not*, p. 280.

51 On the importance of halftone, see Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene*, New York, Dover, 1938, pp. 436-446. Taft observes on p. 445 that halftone, "more than any other factor, has been held responsible for the tremendous circulation of the modern periodical and newspaper. It has, indeed, revolutionized the mechanics of journalism, for it has completely changed methods of advertising, of paper and ink making, as well as of press construction and press work."

52 The book might be described as a "photobook," which photography historians Martin Parr and Gerry Badger define as a book that advances its case primarily through images or images mixed with text: *The Photobook: A History, Volume I*, London, Phaidon Press, 2004, p. 6. Photobooks are largely under-explored artifacts of photographic circulation, even though the genre is nearly as old as photography itself. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, photobooks like Thomson and Smith's *Street Life in London* (1877) and Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) collected images of the poor and the immigrant in order to document and classify the changing urban landscape: Parr and Badger, *The Photobook*, pp. 48 and 53. Also see Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography*, Boston, McGraw-Hill, 2000, p. 146.

53 On early social science methodology, see Mary Jo Deegan, "Social Surveys," *Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, and Policy, Volume 2*, Gwendolyn Mink and Alice O'Connor, eds., Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2004, pp. 685-687. On the rise of social-reformer "experts," see Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*, New York, Basic Books, revised edition, 1996, pp. 164-177.

54 Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 44. In addition to a commitment to firsthand

observation, Kellogg made sure the Pittsburgh Survey was visual in other ways too: the painter Joseph Stella drew sketches of the city's residents, and Lewis Hine photographed them. On the Pittsburgh Survey, see Chambers, *Paul U. Kellogg and The Survey*; Sarah Case, "Pittsburgh Survey," *Poverty in the United States*, pp. 547-548; Cara A. Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photographs*, Washington, DC, Smithsonian Books, 2003, pp. 61-62. Maren Stange discusses Hine's photographs for the Pittsburgh Survey in *Symbols of Ideal Life*, pp. 1-46.

55 On the role of magazines in muckraking, see Matthew Schneirov, *The Dream of a New Social Order: Popular Magazines in America, 1893-1914*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 213.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 220.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 232-234.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 239.

60 Dawley, *The Child That Toileth Not*, p. 7.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

66 Jacquelyn Dowd Hall and others, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1987 and 2000, p. 31.

67 *Ibid.*

68 *Ibid.*

69 On similitude and visual argument, see Robin E. Jensen, "The Eating Disordered Lifestyle: Imagetexts and the Performance of Similitude," *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 42, 1, 2006, pp. 1-18.

70 The playground movement, begun in the late nineteenth century in the United States and in full force by the time of Dawley's writing, argued that

increasing urbanization made children of the industrial age particularly vulnerable to ill health and disease. See Dominic Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.

⁷¹ Hall, *Like a Family*, pp. 128-131. On pp. 138-139, the authors argue that much of this “welfare work” ultimately was not successful because workers were aware of the motives of mill owners in offering such activities.

⁷² Dawley, *The Child That Toileth Not*, p. 290. The NCLC digitized collection at the Library of Congress includes four photographs made by Hine at Pelzer. All feature children outside the mill before or after a work day. Hine’s captions emphasize that the children depicted, all of whom look to be under twelve years old, are not the youngest children he saw at the mill.

⁷³ “Doffers” were young boys who would be on hand in the mills to remove full bobbins from the giant mechanized spinning frame and replace them with empty ones.

⁷⁴ For doffers, such a claim actually had some truth to it. As Hall and others write on p. 88 of *Like a Family*, “Each mill had its own rules, but in 1907 the typical doffer spent almost half of each working day at rest or play. Ralph Austin and his friends used their free time to ‘play baseball, cut up, and throw rocks at one another, just like kids would.’”

⁷⁵ Dawley, *The Child That Toileth Not*, p. 106.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸⁰ On young girls as “learners,” Hall and company (*Like a Family*, p. 61) explain, “Most children first learned about factory labor when they tagged along with a parent or sibling, carried hot meals to the mill at dinnertime, or stopped by after school.” Often during these visits the younger children would learn how to operate the machinery in “a form of apprenticeship by which basic skills and habits were transmitted to each new generation.”

⁸¹ Dawley, *The Child That Toileth Not*, p. 79.

⁸² *Ibid.*

- 83** Ibid., p. 113.
- 84** Adult women workers would sometimes bring their babies to the mill if there was no one else to care for them. One of the oral history sources for Hall and others (*Like a Family*, p. 60) reported that a neighbor who was still nursing her baby would “take a quit and lay that baby in her roping box while she worked. And she’d bring her baby down and keep it in the mill all day long.”
- 85** Dawley, *The Child That Toileth Not*, p. 438.
- 86** Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, pp. 103-104.
- 87** Dawley, *The Child That Toileth Not*, p. 437.
- 88** Ibid., p. 439.
- 89** Ibid., p. 226.
- 90** Ibid., p. 139.
- 91** On the paradox of documentary, see Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty*, p. xv.
- 92** See “Defending Child Labor,” *New York Times*, January 26, 1913, p. BR36; Roy William Foley, “Review: *The Child That Toileth Not*,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 19, 1, 1913, p. 94; Owen Lovejoy, “The Child Workers,” *New York Times*, February 12, 1913, p. 14.
- 93** Dawley was well-known to NCLC activists even before his book was published. As Alexander J. McElway, NCLC Secretary for the Southern States, wrote, “After his separation from the service [the Bureau of Labor] Mr. Dawley occupied himself with addressing Southern cotton mill associations, telling the members of these associations how humane and kind-hearted they were, while at one of the conventions suitable financial arrangements were made for the publication of his articles” (“Mr. Dawley’s Charges,” *New York Times*, January 25, 1912, p. 10). Hugh Hindman reports that Dawley’s work was well-received by corporate interests in the mill communities: *Child Labor*, p. 57). A search of the *Southern Textile Bulletin*, the main print organ of the mill owners, turned up no specific references in 1913-14 to Dawley or his book.
- 94** Sallee, *The Whiteness of Child Labor Reform in the New South*, p. 13. See Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, p. 103; Hindman, Hindman, *Child Labor*, p. 57.
- 95** Trattner, *Crusade for the Children*, p. 102.

⁹⁶ William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986. See Pare Lorentz, "Dorothea Lange: Camera with a Purpose," *U.S. Camera 1941*, pp. 93-100+. The term "documentary" was coined by filmmaker John Grierson in 1926. Grierson called it the "creative dramatisation of actuality": see Paul Rotha, *Documentary Film*, London, Faber and Faber, 1966, p. 105.

⁹⁷ See Elizabeth McCausland: "Portrait of a Photographer," *Survey Graphic*, October 27, 1938, pp. 502-505; "Hine's Photo Documents," *Photo Notes*, September, 1940. On McCausland's life and work, see "Elizabeth McCausland, Critic and Idealist," *Archives of American Art Journal*, 6, April, 1966, pp. 16-20.