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# Child Labor and Lewis Hine: His Life and Work

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Selection from Robert Gibbs' "Lewis Hine: Two Photographs"

1. *Washing at the Bosh*

His point here—that workers washed
In the same waters in which they cooled
Their tools—has become over time almost
Incidental to the beauty of the photograph,

As has the esthetic of protest and fact
That underlies it, though without them
We'd never have seen the luminous ingot
Of a body, or thought about Hine...[2]


(Click picture for more information)

At the turn of the twentieth century, active opposition to child labor became manifest in the U.S. Although the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) failed to get support for various proposed federal reform bills, it nonetheless had a weapon. His name was Lewis Wickes Hine, a laborer turned educator who became the photographer later credited for advancing documentary photography.[3] The reform efforts of Hine and the NCLC actually came to echo the sentiments of the Progressive Era, which lasted from 1890 to 1913. In the perspective of Vicki Goldberg, who wrote the article, "No choice but work" (Jan./Feb. 1996),

> Hine and the NCLC belonged to the progressive reform movement, which worked on the utopian belief that organized institutions, scientifically run, could change society for the better. The movement reflected a shift away from the old conviction that the poor brought

> poverty on themselves through laziness or moral laxity (or both) to a sense that external circumstances were largely to blame. Hine's photographs could almost be seen as a silent appeal to this argument: The children in his child-labor pictures work hard, they are too young to be judged on their morals, and unknowingly they plead for recognition of their lives.4

More specifically, as Leigh Martinez Wright points out in her article, "Spiders in the Sky" (Jan. 2002), "His photographs of mines, sweatshops and slum housing provided graphic evidence of the need for social reform."5 Thus, while children, according to Viviana A. Zelizer in her book, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (1985), began to be seen in a more precious light by the turn of the twentieth century6, they were not banned from intensive labor until twenty years after Hine first began his production of sociologically-oriented photographs, which focused the lens on the unsanitary conditions of child laborers.

Aside from documenting the factory conditions of working children for the NCLC from 1908 to 1918, Hine also created the board stylings and captions that accompanied his photographs in various media, including NCLC publications and various magazines. Zelizer credits the NCLC for raising awareness of the evils of child labor through the use of Hine's photography7, which, alongside the captions he wrote, incited emotional reactions against the evils of child labor.8

Alan Trachtenberg's *Reading American Photographs* (1989), while placing Hine's work within the social contexts of the Progressive Era reform movement, also considers Hine's importance to the history of photography, as well as the relation of Hine's photography to his interest in teaching. Finally, Trachtenberg reveals Hine's "principle of sociality" (230) as a reminder that Hine was first trained as a sociologist.9

Although the connection between Hine's photography and social reform may seem obvious today, it was not an immediate association in the early twentieth century. It was through Hine's sociologically-oriented photography, which reveal visual and factual truths abut the unsafe working conditions children were exposed to in factories, that he helped elicit public reaction against child labor.10

"No one had paid much attention to America's child workers before," Goldberg argues, "but that was beginning to change. Outraged articles turned up in national magazines, and in 1904, a group of

citizens organized the National Child Labor Committee to bring the problem to the country's attention and see that state laws, such as they were, were enforced."[11]

Photography at the turn of the nineteenth century was still a relatively new technology, and its newness as such attracted interest in its finished products (the photos). The function of a photograph, too, works differently than a created image, because it assumes a lived reality in a moment of truth. A more critically-aware person might also appreciate the processes of production, and share skepticism that a final image was the intended image; today we have editing tools that allow us to more easily change images toward whatever purposes inspire us.

For Hine, the photograph had value, and though many of his photographs appear staged, they nonetheless show that children were in the factories, and that several of them were doing dangerous work. The photograph, then, became a kind of emblem: Look at these children and notice where they are and what they are doing. The information he includes about them (their age, type of work, etc.) made the photographs human and accessible. Yet without the texts and captions that accompanied his photographs, it would be almost too easy to assume that his photographs were only staged and not reflective of real, *lived* situations.

The impetus for documenting "the evils" of child labor (Abbott 15), however, may have begun with Edith Abbott's 1908 article, "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America," in which she connects the exploitative nature of the factory systems to commercialization and poverty. The significance of her article lies not only in providing a lens into the view of child labor during Hine's time with the NCLC, but also in introducing Abbott as a key figure in the fight against child labor.

"That so little interest was taking in the subject until the last two decades is due, perhaps," she argues, "to the fact that our social reform movement belongs to recent, if not contemporary history" (37).[12] Abbott's statement in effect helps to position Hine as a social reform photographer who was interested in child labor because child labor was the hot topic of his day.

During his twenty years with the NCLC, Hine was recognized on several fronts: he was published in various periodicals, invited to speak at different conferences, and presented with an award for his photography. That Hine appears in histories of photography, immigrant labor[13] and child labor indicates the importance of his contributions. Yet, as the national interest in child labor began to wane in the 1920s[14], so did Hine's career.

By the 1930s Hine found it more difficult to obtain photography assignments. This might help explain why his only collection of photographs, *Men at Work: photographic studies of men and machines*15, published in 1932, stands in complete contrast to his earlier work in raising awareness about child labor. Where *Men at Work* documents the positive aspects of adult labor workers, especially construction workers16, his children's photography records the unsavory aspects of labor. Thus, Hine passed through the Great Depression and WWII before being rediscovered by a younger generation of photographers.

Photographer Dennis O'Kain, in 1980, believes that fame eluded Hine because he remained a shadowy figure behind other photographers such as "Alfred Steiglitz, Edward Steichen, and Clarmeont White—founders of the Photo-Secessionist movement" (503).17 Although Hine is included as an important figure in the history of photography, O'Kain provides the specific context to explain why Hine did not warrant greater attention by academics.

Alan Trachtenberg, Neil Gray, Jr. Professor of English and American Studies at Yale University, however, wrote an essay explaining why "Hine was clearly not a Photo-Secessionist.

> He did not share with Alfred Steiglitz and his followers the belief that the fine print, the excellently made photograph that like a great painting could hang alone on a wall, was the critical mark of a true photographic picture…[Hine] was absorbed by social results, not technical perfection. (119)18

Thus we gain a better sense of how Hine's photography differed from the contemporary photographers of his time.19 Hine's marginalized status as a photographer likely explains why, though Joseph D. Thomas touches briefly on it, Robert Macieski is among the few scholars to describe how "[Hine] died suddenly after an operation at Dobbs Ferry Hospital on November 4, 1940" (26); yet Macieski fails to mention why Hine was admitted for surgery.20

In 1994, David L. Parker, like Hine, documented child labor practices in the form of a photo-essay with related captions, which appeared in *Labor heritage*.21 Then, in 1997, Parker published a book collection of photographs of the same name, *Stolen Dreams: Portraits of Working Class Children* (1998).22 The difference between Parker and Hine is that Hine was only documenting U.S. child labor practices, while Parker has a more international focus.

This may simply be a reflection of national trends, in which the 1980s helped cement the continuing interest in the poverty conditions of other countries with songs like Michael Jackson's "We're the World," while the early twentieth century in the U.S. was more economically stable. By the time Hine may have decided to publish a book collection on child labor, the NCLC's social reform efforts had already helped to diminish the presence of children in factories and other areas so that the public's interest in these kind of photographs would have been minimized.

Two years before Hine's death in 1940, Beaumont Newhall became one of the first to take an active interest in the contributions of Hine. Though Newhall admits that Hine's photography might be overlooked because of its propagandist nature, "the photographs of child labor conditions in this country, taken shortly before the war by Mr. Lewis Hine for sociological propaganda, must be considered portraits, poignant in their stark and direct seizure of emotions of both photographer and subjects" (4).23 Newhall's observations of Hine are relevant because they point to discords in the scholarship on Hine.

For example, Judith Mara Gutman, in her book *Lewis W. Hine and the American social conscience*, published almost twenty years later in 1967, is among the first to establish Hine's importance as a social reform photographer. While details about him and his other work, such as his teaching, which show up in later histories, are not included in her scholarship, she does confer to Hine status both as a photographer and as a key person in the reform movement against child labor24. Like Newhall, moreover, she, too, strengthens her focus on Hine the artist:

> The artistic conflict Hine creates in a photograph comes right out of the living conflict he saw. The "purity" of a child and the "natural" expression with which his dammed-up reserves could best spill over: these Hine posed against the factories and the fences. Artistically and historically *that* child conflicted with *that* gate. The movement the child generated in real life provided the basis for the movement he generated in a Hine photograph. (31).25

So while Guman acknowledges Hine the social reformist, she shows more interest in positioning Hine as a photographer, which explains her emphasis on the artistic details of Hine's photographs. She also points out, however, that Hine's interest in art began with an earlier "interest in wood sculpture" (27).26 Thus, although Hine became largely recognized as a photographer, to Gutman, his photography was simply another medium in which to express his artistic inclinations. More important,

she presents a view of Hine as an artist caught up within the reform movement, which in turn provided the inspiration for his artistic visions as he expressed them through his child labor photographs.

Yet the validity of Hine's photography, as evidenced in the scholarship by Walter and Naomi Rosenblum and Estelle Jussim in the late 1970s, raises questions about the ethics and artistry of Hine's work. Though the Rosenblums are negligible when it comes to describing the specific processes of Hine's photography when arguing in "The Art Historian and the Photograph Image" that the photographs in a particular museum display were fraudulently credited to Hine because the specificity of the slides did not correspond at all to what Hine was known to use (139), it is nonetheless clear that Hine's innovative use of photography (as will be introduced by later Hine scholars) was of great interest to those exploring different aspects of photography.27 The Rosenblums' article is important because it raises a specific issue concerning the individual processes inherent in photography.

Jussim's "Icons or Ideology: Stieglitz and Hine," in contrast, can be seen as part of the larger shift in the photography world in the debate between *Beauty* (Stieglitz) and *Truth* (Hine). Thus, the clever boxing analogy she offers is reflective of greater debates that positioned photography on the one hand as art and on the other hand as a visual record, rather than seeing the potential for photography to be both:

> In one corner: *Beauty*, art-for-art's sake, the pursuit of bold experimentation without regard for easy comprehensibility; in the other corner, *Truth*, art-for-society's sake, the pursuit of revelations in which human beings would be made to feel empathy for each other's suffering. The elite versus the hoipolloi. (681)

Where Jussim positions Hine on the side of *Truth*28, Miles Orvell, who follows almost twenty years later in 1992, (re)positions Hine on the side of *Beauty*, that is, Hine regains his status as an artist over his contributions as a documentarian. It seems Orvell's aim in "Lewis Hine: The Art of the Commonplace" is to reclaim Hine's importance as an artist whose "aesthetic innovation…was central to his social and cultural achievement" (87), allowing Hine's artistic vision to stand on its own merits.29 Orvell's main point is that too much emphasis was given on Hine the social reformist rather than on Hine the artist.

Of course, Hine's position as a social reformist should not be overlooked. In the 1980s, about ten years before Orvell, discussion on Hine was divided along the line of artist versus social reformist.30 Much of the focus on him as a documentary photographer reflected regional interests as he visited

different states to document the evils of child labor.31 More to the point, Hine's importance as both a social reform photographer and artist was first recognized and appreciated locally, then appropriated nationally in the context of broader questions and issues.32

Whatever the reason, most of the scholarship on Hine took place during the 1980s. In this time period, there was, among other things, the emergence and increasing popularity of programs such as MTV, greater interest in the social (among them, welfare and AIDS), and more sensitivity and awareness of conditions in Third World countries. Independent films, including documentaries, also began to gain popular appeal, especially toward the end of the 1980s. Hine, whose work directly confronted a problem of social fact (especially considering that child labor had a long history spanning over a millennia), may have resonated with concerns about the poor. More important, the rise of photojournalism, in which images and text (the captions) function together as social commentary, echoed Hine's similar photographic efforts.

Among the first state scholars is Stephen Victor, whose article, "Lewis Hine's Photography and Reform in Rhode Island" (1982) connects Hine's work as a photographer with "the middle class values" of the NCLC and the Consumers' League of Rhode Island, a local organization that worked with the NCLC to expose the problems of child labor in Rhode Island.33 Though Victor, as the project director for the Slater Mills historic Site's exhibit, "Things to be Corrected, Things to be Appreciated: Photography by Lewis Hine," has a special interest in portraying Hine in a positive light, he nonetheless provides important insights about Hine's photography as a social reform medium and as an art form.

For Victor, "[Hine's] choice of subjects and even his treatment of those subjects reflected the concerns of the humanitarian reform organization with which he worked" (38).34 Moreover, in Victor's view, Hine was not exposing the horrible conditions of child labor because he believed in the reform movement, just as he was not doing photography because he had a genuine interest in the medium; rather, Hine was as social reformist/photographer out to make money.35 Certainly, it would explain why Hine quit the NCLC shortly after his salary was lowered,36 especially as the reform movement against child labor was still underway. Even so, Victor argues, "Hine's photographs…reflect the goals, methods, and presuppositions of a particular kind of progressivism, a particular approach to reform that emphasized the humanitarian concerns above all others" (35).

Kiko Denzer's undergraduate thesis, "Social Work and Social Photography" (1982),37 goes further to suggest that Hine was himself middle class and therefore reflective of middle class values.38 Yet clues to Hine's past (*i.e.,* he worked in many blue-class jobs following his father's death) suggest

otherwise. Five years before Denzer, Alan Trachtenberg argues in *America and Lewis Hine: Photographs 1904-1940 [exhibition]* that "Hine's obsession with human labor had its roots in his working-class experiences as a youth" (120).39 It is true, however, that many of the activists in Hine's time were from middle class backgrounds.

However, Mary Panzer's more recent *Lewis Hine* (2002) shines the light on Hine's working class childhood and sociological background. Though she, too, positions Hine's photographic contributions as a product of the time in which child labor was of great concern to many reformists, she also argues that "Hine was typical of his generation in that his career took shape in response to powerful historical forces" (3).40 Thus, one explanation for the innovations Hine took with his photography is as a response to the changing needs of the time.

When he first took the camera and used it, Hine's instruction was to record the activities of children (their play and schoolwork) at the Ethical Cultural School. On his own initiative, he began photographing the immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island with the intention to show that these families were also people, as a way of instructing his students to appreciate diversity, but also because there continued at the national level a leveling of criticisms against immigration. During his time with the NCLC, Hine came into the idea of adding text to his photographs as a means of strengthening the NCLC's message. Propaganda, very broadly defined, is the slanting of information to effect particular responses for something (good or bad); for Hine and the NCLC, the intention was to eradicate child labor as it was then allowed.

As for other state historians of the 1980s, many did not doubt Hine's interest in child labor, thus reflecting a more positive evaluation of Hine. Although scholars like Dennis O'Kain, who wrote "Lewis Hine in Georgia" (1980),41 and Cathryn F. Brower, who wrote "Lewis Hine's Mill Children: From Fall River and Elsewhere" (1982),42 focus more on photo-essays of Hine's work, they also provide other details missing from earlier histories on Hine. Commenting on Hine's dual nature as a social reformist and photographer, O'Kain explains that "his work is widely valued not only for its historically established role in directing the American public to social conditions in need of reform, but also for the aesthetic qualities of the striking photographs that have survived" (535).43

Yet it is ironic that O'Kain, whose article title sounds promising, includes scant information about Hine's impact on Georgia. In fact, the information he does include reads like many other histories about Hine: as a man who had to disguise himself to gain entry into the mills. Brower, in contrast, focuses more on the general history of Fall River than on Hine.

Like O'Kain, Joseph D. Thomas also fails to provide more background regarding Hine's impact on the towns he visited in his article, "Lewis Hine: Portrait of Two Cities—Fall River and New Bedford" (1984).44 Referring to Alan Trachtenberg's *America and Lewis Hine* (1977), Thomas points to a significant passage: "They [Hine's NCLC photographs] were evidence of the beast that confronted society: the effects of industrial labor was having on family life, child education and morality, and the illusion among employees, officials and even parents themselves that all was well and natural" (8).45

Hine's photographs, in this light, perhaps did more to raise awareness of child labor that may account for why, although the NCLC failed to get amendments passed to tighten regulations against employers who hired children for labor, employers became increasingly disciplined to discontinue with child labor as the years passed. "Though the federal government did not ban child labor until 1938," Vicki Goldberg, referring back to her article, "No choice but work," argues, "the NCLC did sway public opinion and helped persuade Washington to set up the U.S. Children's Bureau to oversee children's welfare in 1912."46

Thomas, however, in referring to Hine's involvement as a photographer and educator at the Ethical Culture School, remarks, "It was the first time that photography was promoted to school children as a discipline, rather than just a hobby" (6). Thomas also suggests other things about Hine: immigration history cannot be done without Hine (ibid);47 the NCLC's chairman was Felix Adler, who founded the Ethical Culture School and therefore knew Hine (ibid); how Hine died (2, 6). More important, however, Thomas also argues that

> [Hine] combated child labor by documenting the individual child with the precision and detail that only a photograph can capture. But, by addressing himself to a universal problem, the exploitation of children, he was able to produce images of universal meaning. (8).48

Today when many people look at a photograph of a child, the association is one of innocence and free spirit. In Hine's time, a child in good families might also connote that emphasis, but not among poorer families whose children had no choice but to contribute toward basic needs. However, it was not within the power of these immigrant poor to change the laws or reduce work hours, especially when they were already struggling to survive. Thus, an image of a child to a class of people whose own children

could be schooled without the distraction of work would resonate with the expectations that these people have for their own children.

Because the goal of the NCLC was to collapse the system of child labor, the audience to whom they needed to address the issue had to feel sympathy for the exploited children. The image of the child already assuming universal meaning, Hine used the images of children from educated families alongside those of the immigrant classes and, with the text that he wrote and designed to accompany his photographs, exchanged one universal meaning for another one: child labor is wrong. By allowing the contrasts, Hine appealed to the expectations of the middle classes while also challenging their assumptions.

Maren Stange concurs in *Symbols of Ideal Life* (1989) that Hine's greatest contribution was to the field of documentary photography, in which the social and the art collide. For Stange, "Hine's documentary…proposes a means to connect with, to imagine and respond to, the actual process of social change" (83).49 What Stange actually suggests is that Hine introduced an interdisciplinary way of looking at the world, in which both the image and the text become intertwined in the theater of social change.

For Verna Posever Curtis and Stanley Mallach's *Photography of Reform: Lewis Hine & the National Child Labor Committee* (1984), however, the importance of Hine's photographic contributions can be better understood in terms of "the milestones in two themes in photographic history": "sustained photographic projects" and "the life and the work of the poor" (9).50 Mallach's individual essay, "Child Labor Reform and Lewis Hine," specifically mentions Hine's photography "as a weapon in the work of changing society" (25), that is, without Hine, the NCLC would not have achieved what it did at the local level.51 Jonathan L. Doherty's compilation of *Lewis Wickes Hine's Interpretive Photography: The Six Early Projects* (1978), which appeared in the late 1970s, however, describes the places Hines visited as a photographer for the NCLC:

> He traveled throughout the eastern United States and Texas recording children working in the Carolina and New England textile mills, the Gulf Coast shrimp and oyster canneries, and the Pennsylvania coal mines. He ventured to the cities if Washington and New York to show the 'newsies' selling papers in the late hours of the night and to the west to reveal the beet and cotton pickers and the child performers of the Panama-Pacific Exposition. (20)52

In Lewis W. Hine (photographer) and John R. Kemp's *Lewis Hine: photographs of child labor in the South* (1986), Kemp focuses specifically on Hine's contributions in his introduction, titled "Lewis Hine's Images of Child Labor in the New South." Here he describes the climate and nature of Hine's work:

> The photographs in this book tell the story of Hine's personal, often emotional, encounter with ignorance, poverty, brutality, and human degradation. They were taken in the glassworks, textile miles, and coal mines of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia,53 Alabama and Mississippi; in the cigar factories of Florida; in the cotton fields of Texas; in the oyster and shrimp canneries along the Mississippi and Louisiana Gulf Coast; and on city streets throughout the South. Their realism provided powerful, irrefutable evidence of the horrors of child labor in all its forms—horrors that the mill owners, the New South boosters, and even the desperately poor parents of the child workers tried to deny. (7)54

In "Scandal exposed!: a photographer goes undercover to shed light on the evils of child labor," Tod Olson adds the "canneries in Maine, cranberry bogs in Massachusetts, tenements in New York City…" (17). He also describes a specific aspect of Hine's work: "In 1908, in South Carolina's cotton country, the men who ran the state's bustling textile mills were visited, one by one, by a gaunt intruder with a bag in his hand" (ibid).55

(Click map to enlarge and view descriptions of photos)

Just a few years later, in 1992, Daile Kaplan published *Photo story: selected letters and photographs of Lewis W. Hine*, which includes personal and professional correspondences between and among Hine and his colleagues. "The book's centerpiece," argues Kaplan, "is the correspondence between Hine and Kellogg, Hine's lifelong collaborator." However, he also suggests, though never outright states, Hine's importance to studies in communication: "While much has been written about Hine's contributions as a social documentary photographer, who produces work in which social themes and social goals are paramount, these missives underscore his contributions as a photojournalist, who describes topical events through images and text" (xix). Kaplan elaborates on this shortly afterward,

> [Hine] wrote description captions for his photographs, designed exhibitions for the National Child Labor Committee that featured his own photographs, and, nearly eight years after he started working in this format, coined the term "photo story" to describe his assemblages of pictures and words.
>
> The sequencing and designing of pictures and words would appear in several variations of the photo story format: picture books, exhibitions, and portfolios, a selection of ten to twenty original photographs arranged by Hine and produced in a limited edition.
>
> > By ordering a group of images in multipage graphic designs, Hine recognized the latent power of the iconographical image (along with authoritative text) as an effective and compelling communications tool. (xx)[56]

However, with George Dimock's "Children of the Mills: Re-Reading Lewis Hine's Child-Labour Photographs" (1993), we find the possibility of the latest trend in which Hine comes to be seen within a class and propagandist framework. Dimock begins by outright stating that Hine was classist (37), then proceeds from that to show how the positioning of Hine's working-class subjects fit into positionings based on inferior to superior. That is, Dimock argues that Hine's presentation of forward-facing children represents an ideological positioning that places children into the subordinate position. To strengthen his claims, Dimock contrasts Hine's positioning of working-class children against Hine's positioning of children who attended the Ethical Culture School, in which the disparities become more obvious (48-49).[57]

Deborah L. Smith-Shank's "Lewis Hine and His Photo Stories: Visual Culture and Visual Reform" (2003), on the other hand, focuses more on the idea of "visual culture" (37). With Smith-Shank, we find that the rhetorical practices of our time have finally caught up to studies about Hine. As a result, Smith-Shank assigns a rhetorical approach to photography that emphasizes the impact of the seeing eye in the movement toward social change and reform. In her terms, Hine's photography most clearly expresses "propaganda for a good cause" (35), thus strengthening the position that without Hine, the NCLC might not have succeeded as it did against the evils of child labor.58

In the context of media and visual studies, it seems appropriate here to refer at length to Johanna Drucker's comments on Hine in her article, "Who's Afraid of Visual Culture?," as she also discusses the contexts of Hine's time:

> The complexities and contradictions of class relations revealed in the many works of Sloan, Bellows, and the Soyer Brothers, as well as the photographers Dorothy Lange, Lewis Hine, and Margaret Bourke-White, still read clearly in spite of the falling away of the historical moment in which their specificity resides. The belief system thus sustained such work is pragmatic and positivist in nature rather than founded on the principles of aesthetic negativity that fostered difficulty and resistance to Consumption as tents of avant-garde politics. This latter model, deeply entrenched in late twentieth-century academic art history cultures, continues to justify the production of esoteric work in the name of a politics from which it has long since been disengaged and to which it served, at best, a dubious function even in the early stages of appearance. (40)59

Today we are a media-saturated society in which image has become equal to or more relevant than text. For this reason, it seems appropriate to focus briefly on two visual-oriented productions about Lewis Hine: the documentary *America and Lewis Hine* (1985)60 and Susan Nuernberg, Ph.D.'s one-hour presentation of "Oshkosh Boy, Lewis Hine" (2003) televised at the Sesquicentennial Speakers Series in Oshkosh, WI.61

Both provide a broader view of Hine from a biographical and professional standpoint. Here we see Hine the person, the educator and the social reform photographer in ways that are missing to us in print. In *America and Lewis Hine*, we see the "forty pounds of equipment" that Hine lugged around for his photography and the details of the 1907 Pittsburg Survey in Pennsylvania, "the first full-scale

statistical profile of an American industrial city and the first in which photography would play a crucial role." We also see and hear the stories of grown-ups reflecting back on their time spent as children in labor. Hine also gets credit as the illustrator and photographer for Homer Folks' *The Human Costs of the War*, while we get glimpses into the trials of WWI and his participation as a Red Cross relief worker; in the background his personal story filters through so that we can know him as a man.

With "Oshkosh Boy, Lewis Hine," Nuerenberg focuses in more personally on Hine, providing background about his sisters and brothers, his uncle in Costa Rica and Oshkosh's importance in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century: "Oshkosh at this time was the country's leading producer of matches, the Diamond Match Company, and was one of the largest wagon and carriage factory centers in the U.S.A. Most importantly, Oshkosh was the millwork capital of the nation." She also provides possible motivations for Hine's interest in defying child labor, and also points to his significance locally by referencing "the play 'Out in the Darkness'" in which "one of the actors played the 23 year-old 'Lew' Hine" and how "Rosenblum, a Hine biographer, presented an illustrated lecture at North High School when Hine was inducted into their Hall of Fame."

In the end, what we see emerging is a figure of Hine as a man who helped to advance documentary photography as we know it today, who introduced the possibility of merging the visual and textual toward a specific cause (in this case, the end of child labor), and who captured a period in America when child labor was a tangible and legitimized practice. The propagandist nature of Hine's photographs aside, he also contributed toward an aesthetic of the documentary, in which the photos he used became real with the addition of text to humanize them.

This is significant because without him, the voice of the child, which is often silenced, and the problems of class, which are so readily ignored, began to resonate in ways that changed the way middle and upper class people saw children, while also bringing to their attention the disparity of equality between classes. Hine's travels through almost three quarters of the United States also show that the problem was not specific or regional but national.

Though the problem of child labor was solved more often at the local level, its implications affected national policy in ways that are harder to appreciate today: schools in which poor and non-poor students commingle, opportunities that extend beyond mechanized and related productions for all classes, etc. That Hine emerges within the contexts of histories related to child labor and photography, as well as in histories of immigration, suggests he was a central figure during the early period of the twentieth

century. More important, Hine revealed the potential for documentary photography to be more than story but sociological-political content.

## Notes

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1 Vanessa Raney is currently a graduate student in English at Southern Connecticut State University. Her historiographical paper on Lewis W. Hine came out of a History class she took at Claremont Graduate University in Fall 2003. She later revised and presented her paper at the 2005 Western Social Science Association (WSSA) Conference, then expanded it for publication in 49th Parallel.

2 Gibbs, Robert. "Lewis Hine: Two Photographs: 1. *Washing at the Bosh*." *Southern Review* 38, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 41.

3 Young scholars interested in the juvenile biographies on Hine should see *Little-known and famous Americans* (Prime time library series; Columbus, OH: Essential Learning Products, 1992); Russell Freedman, *Kids at work: Lewis Hine and the crusade against child labor* (New York: Clarion Books, 1994); Ann Gaines, *American photographers: capturing the image* (Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2002); Nancy Jackson, *Photographers: history and culture through the camera* (New York: Facts on File, 1997); Judith A. Plotz, et al., *Work and children's literature* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000); Mark Sufrin, *Focus on America: profiles of nine photographers* (New York: Scribner, 1987). Educators, on the other hand, may take a special interest in Joyce Kasman Valenza and Carl Atkinson's lesson plan on Lewis Hine, titled "Child Labor in America" (The Library of Congress); available online at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/98/labor/plan.html. Finally, for a timeline on Hine, see "The Lewis Hine Document," by Naomi Rosenblum (Brooklyn, NY: 1977); available at San Diego State University Special Collections and University Archives.

4 Goldberg, Vicki. "No choice but work." *Civilization* 3, no. 1 (Jan./Feb. 1996): 58-69. Available as HTML Full Text on Academic Premier Search database. Last accessed: 1 July 2005. Cf. Vicki Goldberg, *Lewis W. Hine children at work* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1999).

5 Wright, Leigh Martinez. "Spiders in the Sky." *Smithsonian* 32, no. 10 (Jan. 2002): 17-18. Available as HTML Full Text on Academic Premier Search database. Last accessed: 1 July 2005.

6 Zelizer, Viviana A. *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1985.

7 Freddy Langer, in his "Introduction" to Lewis Hine, which includes biographical information of his early years while focusing largely on his contributions during the Depression era, said "Hine worked with a plate-back camera on a wobbly tripod, lit lycopodium powder in a bowl for a flash" (16); in *Lewis W. Hine: the Empire State Building*, by Lewis W. Hine, Intro. by Freddy Langer (Munich: New York: Prestel, 1998). It should be noted that while more than one collection of photographs appear under Hine's

name, these were done after his death in 1940; *Men at Work* remains his only book collection of photographs that was published in his lifetime.

8 Zelizer.

9 Trachtenberg, Alan. "Camera Work / Social Work." In *Reading American Photographs: Images as History: Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. Hill and Wang: 1989.

10 For an example of Hine's work, see Pamphlet No. 92 (National Child Labor Committee), available through Documenting the American South, part of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's digitization project (through the Academic Affairs Library); online at http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/childlabor/childlabor.html.

11 Goldberg, no page number available.

12 Abbott, Edith. "A Study of the Early History of Child Labor in America." *The American Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 1 (July 1998): 15-37.

13 See Joseph D. Thomas, "Lewis Hine: Portrait of Two Cities—Fall River and Bedford," *Spinner* 3 (1984): 6-27; he assigns Hine's importance to immigration history on page 6.

14 Peter Seixas, Zelizer and Hugh D. Hindman provide some insight into explaining why the interest in child labor waned; see Peter Seixas, "Lewis Hine: From 'Social' to 'Interpretive' Photography" (*American Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 381-409); Zelizer; Hugh D. Hindman, *Child Labor: An American History* (Armonk, NY and London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

15 Cf. Lewis Wickes Hine and (ed.) Jonathan L. Doherty, *Women at work: 153 photographs* (Rochester, NY: George Eastman House in association with Dover Publications, 1981). See also *Lewis Hine: passionate journey, photographs 1905-1937*, ed. by Karl Steinorth (Zurich: Edition Stemmle, 1996); *The New York School: photographs, 1936-1963*, by Liang & Livingston (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1992); *Lewis Hine in Europe: the lost photographs*, by Daile Kaplan (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988).

16 Hines, Lewis Wickes. *Men at Work: photographic studies of men and machines*. New York: The Macmillan company, 1932.

17 O'Kain, Dennis. "Lewis Hine in Georgia." *The Georgia Review* 34, no. 3 (Fall 1980): 535-544.

18 Trachtenberg, Alan. *America & Lewis Hine: Photographs 1904-1940*. Forward by Walter Rosenblum, Biographical notes by Naomi Rosenblum. Millerton, NY: Aperton, Inc., 1977.

19 See Walter Rosenblum's "Lewis Hine, Paul Strand, and the Photo League," for some of the social contexts behind "the Photo League, an organization for photographers founded in the Depression era" (24); in *Witness in Our Time: Working Lives of documentary photographers*, ed. by Ken Light, Intro. by Kerry Tremain (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000).

20 Macieski, Robert. "'Before Their Time': Lewis W. Hine and the New Hampshire Crusade against Child Labor." *New Hampshire* 55, nos. 3-4 (2000): 91-107. Cf Thomas; "Oshkosh Boy, Lewis Hine," presented by Susan Nuernberg, Ph.D., televised and taped by Oshkosh Community Access Television as part of the Sesquicentennial Speaker Series, VHS (Oshkosh, WI, 17 Sept. 2003).

21 See David L. Parker, "Stolen Dreams: Portrait's of the World's Working Children," *Labor's heritage: quarterly of the George Meany Memorial* 6, no. 1 (Summer 1994): 22-45.

22 See David L. Parker, et. al., *Stolen Dreams: portraits of working children* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Co., 1998).

23 Newhall, Beaumont. "Documentary Approach to Photography." *Parnassus* 10, no. 3 (Mar. 1938): 2-6. See also Kiko Denzer, who argues in "Social Work & Social Photography: Lewis Hine's Image of Social Reform" (Thesis, Hampshire College, 1942) that Hine "gave to the rhetoric of child labor reform a visual (therefore direct, candid, and often emotional dimension which it could not have had otherwise, and which it very much needed to succeed" (41).

24 See "Oshkosh Boy, Lewis Hine."

25 Gutman, Judith Mara. *Lewis W. Hine and the American social conscience*. New York: Walker and Company, 1967. Cf. (eds.) Judith Mara Gutman, et al., *Lewis W. Hine, 1874-1940: two perspectives* (Series: International Fund for Concerned Photography. ICP library of photographers, vol. 4; New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974).

26 Ibid. Cf. "Oshkosh Boy, Lewis Hine."

27 Rosenblum, Walter and Naomi. "The Art Historian and the Photographic Image." *Art Journal* 36, no. 2 (Winter 1976-1977): 139-142.

28 Jussim, Estelle. "Icons or Ideology: Stieglitz and Hine." *The Massachusetts Review* (Winter 1978): 680-692. One of the interesting aspects of Jussim's article is her inclusion of words that suggest the language and contexts of her time, such as hoipolloi and "booboise" (680).

29 Orvell, Miles. "Lewis Hine: The Art of the Commonplace." *History of Photography* 16, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 87-93.

30 For an article of interest see George Dimock, "Duality in Lewis Hine's child labor photographs," in *Priceless children: American photographs, 1890-1925: Lewis Hine, F. Holland Day, Gertrude Käsebier, Clarence H. White, Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Edward Weston: child labor and the pictorialist ideal*, by George Dimock and Lewis Hine (Greensboro, NC: The Museum; [Seattle, WA: Distributed by the U of Washing P], 2001).

31 For a general introduction see *Lewis Hine: Photographs of Child Labor in the New South*, ed. by John R. Kemp (Jackson and London: UP of Mississippi, 1986). It is, however, mostly a photo-book on Hine's photography.

32 Probably one of the best histories on Hine that looked to Hine the photographer and Hine the social reformist is *America & Lewis Hine: Photographs 1904-1940 [exhibition]* (1977), forward by Walter Rosenblum, biographical notes by Naomi Rosenblum, essay by Alan Trachtenberg; it also reflects the trend from local to national interests in Hine.

33 Victor, Stephen. "Lewis Hine's Photography and Reform in Rhode Island." *Rhode Island History* 41, no. 2 (1982): 35-53.

34 This in fact anticipates a later scholar, George Dimock, who argues that Hine's child labor photographs reflect issues of class; see George Dimock, "Children of the Mills: Re-Reading Lewis Hine's Child-Labour Photographs" (*Oxford Art Journal [Great Britain]* 16, no. 2 (1993): 37-54)).

35 Victor.

36 According to John R. Kemp in *Lewis Hine: photographs of child labor in the new South* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1996), "the NCLC decided to cut his monthly salary from $275 to $200" (11).

37 Among other related theses and dissertations see Timothy Abler, "Lewis Hine, social pictorialist" (Thesis, Columbia College, Chicago, 1998); Cecilia Lacks, "Documentary Photography: A Way of Looking at Ourselves" (Dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1987); Ann Lunsford Hunter, "Lewis Hine's child labor imagery: multivalent propaganda for reform" (Thesis, University of Virginia, 1991); Stephen Dane Iseman, "Showing as a Way of Saying: The Photographic and Word Combinations of Lewis Hine in Support of Child Labor Reform (Hine Lewis)" (Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1993); Richard Scott Kelley, "The Spatial Discourse of Realism and Modernism in American Fiction, Photography, and Poetry (Stephen Crane, William Dean Howells, Jacob A. Riis, Lewis W. Hine, Wallace Stevens)" (Dissertation, The University of Oklahoma, 1997); Lindi Marx, "Child photography" (Thesis, Technikon Free State, 2001); Gina Miceli-Hoffman, "The madonna and child motif in the photography of Jacob Riis, Lewis W. Hine and the RA/FSA photographers Ben Shahn, Dorothea Lange, and Russell Lee" (Thesis, Northern Illinois University, 1999); Beneth Brigham Morrow, "Lewis W. Hine: a

study" (Thesis, University of Rochester, 1958); and Frédéric Perrier, "Immigration and social reform: Lewis Hine, his patterns of personal growth and creative expression: 1874-1918" (Thesis, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France, 2002).

38 Denzer, "Social Work & Social Photography."

39 Rosenblum and Trachtenberg.

40 Panzer, Mary. *Lewis Hine. 55*. NY and London, England: Phaidon Press, Inc. and Phaidon Press Limited, 2002.

41 O'Kain.

42 Brower, Cathryn F. "Lewis Hine's Mill Children: From Fall River and Elsewhere." *Spinner* 2 (1982): 33-37.

43 O'Kain.

44 Thomas.

45 Original quote from Alan Trachtenberg, *America & Lewis Hine*: 28.

46 Goldberg.

47 See also Kiko Denzer's "The Documentary Imagination of Lewis Hine" (*History Today* 38 (Aug. 1988): 49-55), which includes information that Hine was also well acquainted with "[Arthur] Kellogg, Hine's advocate and ally from the early days of his child labour work" (50).

48 Thomas. See "Oshkosh Boy, Lewis Hine."

49 Stange, Maren. *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America 1850-1950*. Cambridge, NY, New Rochelle, Melbourne, and Sydney: Cambridge UP, 1989.

50 Curtis, Verna Posever and Stanley Mallach. *Photography and Reform: Lewis Hine & the National Child Labor Committee*. Milwaukee, MN: Milwaukee Art Museum, 1984.

51 Mallach, Stanely. "Child Labor Reform and Lewis Hine." In *Photography and Reform*.

52 "Child Labor Series." In *Lewis Wickes Hines' Interpretive Photography: The Six Early Projects*, compiled by Jonathan Doherty. Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P, 1978.

53 Cf. "Lewis Hine," in *Photographers of genius at the Getty*, by Weston Naef (Los Angeles, CA: the J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004).

54 Kemp, John R. "Lewis Hine's Images of Child Labor in the New South." In *Lewis Hine: photographs of child labor in the new South*, by Lewis Wickes Hine and John R. Kemp. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1986.

55 Olson, Tod. "Scandal exposed!: a photographer goes undercover to shed light on the evils of child labor." *Scholastic Update* 128, no. 5 (3 Nov. 199): 17-18.

56 Kaplan, Daile. "Introduction." In *Photo story: selected letters and photographs of Lewis Hine*, ed. by Daile Kaplan (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992): xvii-xxxvi.

57 Dimock.

58 Smith-Shank, Deborah L. "Lewis Hine and His Photo Stories: Visual Culture and Social Reform." *Art Education* 56, no. 2 (Mar. 2003): 33-37.

59 Drucker, Johanna. "Who's Afraid of Visual Culture?" *Art Journal* 58, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 36-47. For other footnotes to Hine see also Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive" (*October* 39 (Winter 1986): 3-64); Rhonda L. Ljunggren, "Camera lucida, the moving image as evocative: film form, film meaning and the grammatology of archival selection" (M.A.S. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1986; in Alec McHaul and David Willis, "Bar S B R H S Barthes the Late(r) Barthes Constituting Fragment Subjects" (*Boundary 2* 14, no. ½ (Autumn 1985-Winter 1986): 261-278)).

60 *America and Lewis Hine*. Prod. by Nina Rosenblum and Daniel V. Allentuck. Written by Daniel V. Allentuck, John Crowley and L.S. Block. Edited by Gerald Doalan and Lora Hays. Dir. By Nina Rosenblum. Narrated by John Crowley. New York, NY: Daedalus Productions and Cinema Guild, 1985.

61 "Oshkosh Boy, Lewis Hine." Presented by Susan Nuernberg, Ph.D. Televised and taped by Oshkosh Community Access Television as part of the Sesquicentennial Speaker Series in Oshkosh, WI, 17 Sept. 2003.

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