

Caught Napping: Images of Surveillance, Discipline and Punishment on the Body of the Schoolchild

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The authors' research is concerned with the use of visual imagery as data to examine schools and schooling. In attempting to develop knowledge further by incorporating the visual in educational research, they draw on a hybrid mix of disciplines including sociology, ethnography, history and the humanities. Many scholars and historians writing about the history of education emphasize written texts (e.g. formal curricula, school board minutes); photographers and visual artists depict the physical arrangements, postures and facial expressions of bodies within socially constructed spaces. Currently, some historians are attempting to open up new methodologies and theoretical perspectives for the inclusion of images as data, while others remain ambivalent about the legitimacy of visual data of educational history. In this article, the authors discuss images of three lessons that the body is subjected to as essential elements of schooling: surveillance, discipline and punishment. They argue for the usefulness of the visual as data informing historical and sociological imaginations and research.

Introduction

This article is concerned with the use of visual imagery as data to examine schools and schooling. It is therefore about interpretation but focuses on images of school discipline as an 'exemplar', which is the term Thomas Kuhn used to describe stages in the development of knowledge that serve as paradigms for future researchers.¹ We make no claim for a paradigm shift or the priority of visual data; we simply argue for inclusion in the study of schooling. While historical sources are used, it is not the intent to examine school discipline systematically in any specific area or historic period, even though such approaches would be fruitful. In attempting to create an

¹ 'Exemplar' was Kuhn's 'small' sense of the word paradigm, related to but not to be confused with paradigms as grand theories. Kuhn, T. S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 1970: 173.

exemplar for incorporating the visual in educational research, we draw on a hybrid mix of disciplines including sociology, ethnography, history and the humanities. The title of the paper comes from an engraving published in *Harper's Weekly*. It is common in ethnography—but perhaps not in history—to take expressions from everyday life like ‘caught napping’ and use them to elucidate larger theoretical or methodological points. Like commonplace expressions, drawings and photographs can fuel professional imaginations, as Clifford Geertz put it, ‘to bring us into touch with the lives of strangers’, and to ‘see things from the other’s perspective’.² (Images that you do not make yourself always show things from another’s perspective.) But by themselves photographs, like statistics and written records, are conceptually ‘thin’. Each requires reading and interpretation to become the ‘thick descriptions’ that Geertz suggested was the goal of hermeneutic sciences.

Figure 1 illustrates three quotidian elements of pedagogical authority: the teacher is empowered by society to keep a sharp eye on student behavior, maintain discipline, and administer punishment when required.³ The caption indicates an everyday school-room scene from the 1860s, but the image conveys a great deal of information that



Figure 1. Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, March 10, 1866 'School Room Scene: Caught Napping.' Engraving by A. H. Burr. From the Margolis collection.

² Geertz, C. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays*, edited by C. Geertz. New York: Basic Books, 1973: 16. See also Geertz, C., ed. "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding." In *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1983: 55–70.

³ The notion of pedagogical authority was developed in: Bourdieu, P., and J. C. Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990.

words alone cannot express. There is a disciplinary problem; a student has fallen asleep. The teacher has come down from his high position to administer punishment and restore order. Even in the mid-nineteenth century Harper's editors recognized the polysemic nature of images and the difficult inferences necessary to translate image into words: 'Here we find one bending manfully to his task, there another makes faces at it ... a third neglects it altogether. ... Even some of the softer sex, it seems by this picture, are capable of sharing the tempting pleasure ... however, it also appears, there are little womanly hearts attuned to thrill with pity and compassion at misfortune and pain'.⁴

Thanks to scanning devices, digital technology and the Internet, enormous archives of photographs and other graphic images are publicly available—a virtual silver mine. Included in these collections are both photographs and artwork revealing certain practices of surveillance, discipline and the punishment meted out on students' bodies.⁵ Photography, in particular, has been implicated as a mechanism of school surveillance since its invention, and at the same time produced visual records of other types of discipline. John Tagg made that point expressly in his application of Foucault's lens to the concrete study of the function of photography in the domestication of human beings. Tagg investigated the use of 'before and after' photographs made in 1874 at the 'Home for Destitute Lads' at Stepney Causeway. Margolis and Rowe noted similarities in the re-photography of American Indian students at the Carlisle Boarding School (see Figures 4a and 4b below).⁶

Photography is particularly good at representing visible *things in the world* that are typically not discussed, ranging from details too trivial to bother with to trauma too painful to speak about.⁷ Where many scholars writing about the history of education emphasize written texts—formal curricula, school board minutes, inspectors' reports and learning as assessed mental processes—photographers and visual artists depict the physical arrangements, postures and facial expressions of bodies within socially constructed spaces. Photography records visible elements of school climate, e.g. architecture, furniture and the rituals of schooling. Artwork and photographs reveal

⁴ "School Room Scene: Caught Napping." *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization* 10 March 1866: 158.

⁵ We draw on images from American classrooms between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. No doubt images from other cultures could produce similar but different analyses.

⁶ Tagg, J. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988: 83–84ff. See also Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. See also Margolis, E., and J. Rowe. "Images of Assimilation: Photographs of Indian Schools in Arizona." *History of Education* 32, no. 6 (2003): 629–60.

⁷ As the critic and photographer John Berger noted, photos are representations of things in the world, even though their use and understanding is governed by socially established symbolic codes. Berger, J., and J. Mohr. *Another Way of Telling*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982. Images can help break some of the silences of the classroom. See Grosvenor, L., M. Lawn, and K. Rousmaniere, eds. *Silences and Images: The Social History of the Classroom*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999. For problems in the interpretation of images of 'the pain of others', see Sontag, S. *On Photography*. New York: Dell, 1977. She recanted some of her earlier analysis of photography as desensitizing in Sontag, S. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2003.

effects of schooling on the body (and of the body on schooling), but remain mute about what goes on inside the heads of teachers or students. A photograph of an adult standing in front of a room full of children suggests teaching and learning because of cultural associations with that *mise-en-scène*. But the pose only symbolizes; viewers have no way of knowing if the teacher is ‘teaching’ or if the students are ‘learning’. Representations of surveillance, discipline and punishment lead us to consider the meanings of other ubiquitous postures of education. As in the written description of ‘Caught Napping’, mental states—pain, humiliation, domination, or triumph—must be inferred from the visible poses.

In the same way that an ethnographer selects quotes that are articulate, succinct, unique and well phrased, we selected images that had the peculiar quality that Roland Barthes called ‘punctum’. In *Camera Lucida* he divided the qualities of photographs into two categories: ‘studium’ is informed by a ‘kind of education (civility, politeness)...’. Studium is the socially prescribed, statistically ‘average’, meaning of the historian, the social scientist, interested in describing what the image depicts: a date, a location, an event, a caption and so on. While we are of course interested in studium, it is Barthes’s second category, ‘punctum’, that informed our selections. It has two forms, which can penetrate the viewer.⁸ The first form of punctum is ‘that accident, which pricks, bruises me’.⁹ It stops you in your tracks; fascinating, bewitching, enchanting. It is punctum that connects photography to art ‘annihilat(ing) itself as a medium to be no longer a sign but the thing itself...’.¹⁰ The first form is applicable to all images including artwork. Barthes’s second form of punctum is ‘time’ and is applicable to photography alone; it has to do with the indexical quality that all photographs share of directing our attention at that which is not there. Barthes called photographs ‘flat death’—the student whose image the photographer left with us is not there, but was once. As snippets of time past, punctum makes us aware of our own mortality.

In sum, in our processes of collecting, coding and categorizing we screened thousands of images in what Barthes called ‘fields’ and were left with strong impressions of the ‘average effect’.¹¹ But in selecting the very few we could reproduce we have not

⁸ Barthes, R. *Camera Lucida*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1981: 22–26.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 26. Funding for visual work is no longer particularly important. Images were copied from free sites including the Library of Congress and the National Archives, state libraries and historical societies, as well as from ‘fee’ sites like Time-Life and Corbis. In addition, some of the most arresting images were purchased at eBay auctions where ‘school photographs’ can frequently be bought for a few dollars. Full pages from nineteenth-century magazines like ‘Caught Napping’ are only slightly more expensive, maybe US\$40. Currently Margolis has on his hard drive more than 10,000 school images and associated text including caption and provenance. Many software packages facilitate coding and retrieval with key words. Thus images can be studied using the conventional approaches of qualitative research. For a more detailed discussion of methods see Margolis and Rowe, in “Images of Assimilation”, and Margolis, E. “Looking at Discipline, Looking at Labor: Photographic Representations of Indian Boarding Schools.” *Visual Studies* 19, no. 1 (2004): 72–96.

sought the typical or most artistic; we have chosen those whose punctum has ‘pricked’ us. Of course that which attracted our emotional attention might not attract another viewer. Punctum has everything to do with the position of the observer. In Nick Peim’s recapitulation of ‘signs’ in ‘visual history’, he noted: ‘It is clear that accounting for the meaning of images also means accounting for ourselves, our own subjectivities. Often the engagement with the visual involves a visceral element (as Roland Barthes’s account of the “punctum” suggests) forcing our engagement to be dislocated from the strictly conventional’.¹² In the following we discuss both photographic and artistic images of three lessons that the body is subjected to as essential elements of schooling: surveillance, discipline and punishment.

Lesson One, Surveillance

... spatial relations are only the condition, on the one hand, and the symbol, on the other, of human relations. Georg Simmel¹³

Robert Dreeben examined school culture and concluded students learned to ‘form transient social relationships, submerge much of their personal identity, and *accept the legitimacy of categorical treatment*’ (emphasis added).¹⁴ Whereas Dreeben emphasized the social interactions of schooling, categorical treatment is embedded in the built environment: schoolhouse and schoolyard. As Benito observed in his article on school architecture: ‘the material structures of the school may be analyzed as a record of educational discourses and practices, as well as the social norms of the actors...’.¹⁵ Schools as material spaces are read not just by analysts but by everyone, as symbols and forms of discourse that convey distinct messages. Schools are role expectations literally made concrete. Sturken and Cartwright asserted that, ‘Form ... embodies the politics and ideology of a culture as much as if not more than content’.¹⁶

The first lesson is that your body is constantly monitored and under surveillance. School buildings, grounds and equipment have long been designed for the observation and control of student bodies. Schools are constructed, as Foucault put it, to be ‘pedagogical machines’. ‘A disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly.’¹⁷ At the end of the eighteenth century Joseph Lancaster began designing a remarkable system for orchestrating the bodies of large

¹² Peim, N. Introduction: “The Life of Signs in Visual History.” In *Visual History: Images of Education*, edited by U. Mietzner, K. Myers and N. Peim. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2005: 23.

¹³ Simmel, G. *The Stranger: The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited and translated by Kurt Wolff. New York: Free Press, 1950: 402.

¹⁴ Dreeben, R. *On What is Learned in School*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1968: 147.

¹⁵ Benito, A. E. “The School in the City: School Architecture as Discourse and Text.” *Paedagogica Historica* 39, nos 1–2 (2003): 53.

¹⁶ Sturken, M., and L. Cartwright. *Practicing of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001: 246.

¹⁷ Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by A. Sheridan, New York: Vintage Books, 1979: 173.

groups of students by small numbers of teachers and ‘monitors’. His concern with efficiency, bodily hygiene and the visual is evidenced in the following excerpt:

... to know that the hands of every boy in school are clean, a command is given “show fingers,” each pupil at once holds up his hands and spreads open his fingers. The monitors pass between the desks of their respective classes.... In a school of three hundred pupils, three thousand fingers and thumbs will be exhibited in a minute, and the effect on the eye is as singular, as the examination is beneficial.¹⁸

In an 1817 floor plan for a Lancasterian school, the text reads: ‘In order that all the children should be completely seen by the master, it is of great importance that the floor should be an inclined plane, rising one foot in twenty from the lowest part, near the master’s desk, to the upper end of the school...’¹⁹ Thus, schools as ‘built environment’ constitute invisible sets of carefully designed constraints and pathways to guide the body. As Wanda Pillow noted: ‘Architecture operates as a form of disciplinary power that is exercised in its invisibility.’²⁰ Walls and fences contain the bodies safely within a controlled space.

The need to keep student bodies visible at all times extends to the stairwells and corridors of the buildings. Donal O’Donoghue’s research asked students to describe dangerous places at school.²¹ The students mentioned hidden corners, outside the teachers’ gaze, where bullying took place. Architects seek to eliminate such unobserved spaces. Figure 2, an architectural photograph from 1956, depicts the open stairwell of typical modern schools. These places are designed to be ‘safe’ spaces for young bodies because there is literally no place to hide. Many architectural photos of schools have been archived; most have no persons in them. This shot caught our eye because of the lone child navigating the pedagogical apparatus that makes him visible to all.

Furniture design and classroom architecture dictate bodily postures and relationships of authority that are irrespective of the will of the current occupants. John Goodland described the typical classroom as: ‘devoid of amenities likely to provide comfort, unattractive or at least aesthetically bland, and cramped for space...’²² Literally, thousands of photographs made over a century in rural and urban places confirm Goodland’s observations. School pictures show ranks of desks standardizing the spaces and

¹⁸ Lancaster, J. “The Lancasterian System of Education.” Baltimore, MD, 1821 [cited 15 April 2006]. Available from http://www.constitution.org/lanc/lan_sys.htm; INTERNET.

¹⁹ Detailed drawings of the building plans exist but were not reproduced in the interest of space. See British and Foreign School Society. *Manual of the System of Teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needle-Work: In the Elementary Schools of the British and Foreign School Society*. Philadelphia, PA: William Fry, Printed for the Philadelphia Society for the Establishment and Support of Charity Schools, 1817: 3.

²⁰ Pillow, W. “Exposed Methodology: The Body as a Deconstructive Practice.” In *Working the Ruins: Feminist Poststructural Theory and Methods in Education*, edited by E. St. Pierre and W. Pillow. New York: Routledge, 2000: 34.

²¹ O’Donoghue, D. “Situating Space and Place in the Making of Masculinities in Schools.” *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* 3, no. 1 (2006): 15–33.

²² Goodland, J. *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984.



Figure 2. Public School 220, Horace Harding Blvd., Forest Hills, Long Island. Stairway 1956 September 25. Gottscho-Schleisner, Inc., photographer. U. S. Library of Congress CALL NUMBER: LC-G613- 69807.

postures available to teachers and students.²³ Furniture positioned bodies in ways that enforced education as a top-down activity As John Dewey observed:

[I was] trying to find desks and chairs which seemed thoroughly suitable from all points of view—artistic, hygienic, and educational—to the needs of the children. We had a great deal of difficulty in finding what we needed, and finally one dealer, more intelligent than the rest, made this remark: ‘I am afraid we have not what you want. You want something at which the children may work; these are all for listening.’ That tells the story of traditional education.²⁴

Classroom doors had transoms or windows, which facilitate observing and listening to students and teachers. In schools today this kind of surveillance is done electronically. Increasingly, microphones and video cameras monitor what is going on in

²³ For an elegant description of school discipline and its ritual aspects see Eggermont, B. “The Choreography of Schooling as Site of Struggle: Belgian Primary Schools, 1880–1940.” *History of Education* 30, no. 2 (2001):129–40.

²⁴ See Dewey, J. *The Child and the Curriculum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900. Also see Dewey, J. *The School and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956: 31.

classes. Biloxi, Mississippi, for example, installed security cameras in about 500 classrooms. In certain set-ups it is even possible for parents to log into websites and watch their children's classes.²⁵ In some school buses, global positioning systems and video cameras extend school surveillance from portal to portal.²⁶ Foucault, and his followers, tended to emphasize record keeping. However, Grosvenor and Myers quoted Edward Higgs, to make the point that surveillance was more than the collection of statistics and documentation; it: 'has the narrower meaning of watching identifiable individuals to ensure that they do something, or more frequently that they do not do something. Such surveillance can be either physical, or based on information gathering, or a combination of both'.²⁷ Nick Peim argued that in the modern classrooms teacher surveillance is 'pastoral' to mark it as different from monitorial schools.²⁸ Our point is simply that surveillance, as in visibility, is an essential quality of school architecture and an essential function of the teacher and the lines of sight can be observed in nearly every visual representation of a schoolroom. Moreover, the ubiquitous 'class photograph' is itself a form of surveillance, a public demonstration of the orderliness of teacher and students.²⁹

Lesson Two, Discipline

He must come to class regularly; he must arrive at a specified time and with an appropriate bearing and attitude. He must not disrupt things in class. He must have learned his lessons, done his homework, and have done so reasonably well, etc. There are, therefore, a host of obligations that the child is required to shoulder. Together they constitute the discipline of the school. It is through the practice of school discipline that we can inculcate the spirit of discipline in the child. Emile Durkheim³⁰

The second lesson is discipline; learn to do what you are told. Discipline is best internalized using regimes of surveillance amply reinforced by peer pressure. Schooling consists of fossilized structures inherited from the past that impose specific institutionally required practices of the body—disciplines, as the Durkheim quote above suggests, that are essential to social reproduction but perhaps not to education.³¹

²⁵ Hafner, K. "Where the Hall Monitor Is a Webcam." New York: New York Times Company, 7 May 2003.

²⁶ Guernsey, L. "Where's Johnny? Smart Cards and Satellites Help Keep Track." New York: New York Times Company, 3 August 2005, at G7.

²⁷ Higgs, E. *The Information State in England: The Central Collection of Information on Citizens since 1500*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004:11. Quoted in Grosvenor, I., and K. Myers. "Progressivism, Control and Correction: Local Education Authorities and Educational Policy in Twentieth-Century England." *Paedagogica Historica* 42, nos 1–2 (2006): 225–47.

²⁸ Peim, N. "The History of the Present: Towards a Contemporary Phenomenology of the School." *History of Education* 30, no. 2 (2001): 177–90.

²⁹ Eggermont, B. "The Choreography of Schooling", 133. Eggermont observed that: 'If the stereotypical, simultaneous actions of a group of children transformed them into a class, the photograph was its identification.'

³⁰ Durkheim, E. *Moral Education*. New York: Free Press, 1968: 148.

³¹ Ivan Illich did a good job pointing out the differences between education and schooling. Illich, I. *Deschooling Society*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.



Figure 3. Yonkers, NY, 1943. ‘Children in line at teller window to practice banking at PS12 school in Yonkers, NY. Children learn by projects. Keeping their own savings account straight helps train both in arithmetic and thrift habits.’ U. S. Library of Congress CALL NUMBER: LC-USZ62-104017.

Notice how the student bodies in Figure 3 obey the sign ‘Keep in Line’, as the ‘monitor’ observes his fellow students. This photo of banking education is also remarkable for the sign ‘Be Thrifty’, which is the fundamental body-state of the Protestant ethic and the antithesis of immediate self-gratification. Deferred gratification is probably the most important lesson of the hidden curriculum of schooling.³²

Attendance is required and from raising hands, to performing recitations, ritualized songs and salutes, to acting in school plays, students are required to enact bodily performances and ceremonies. As an element of the ‘hidden curriculum’ children are trained to sit still for long periods of time;³³ sitting still is easily the most photographed posture of schoolchildren. From nursery school on up, schooling is scheduled into

³² See note 33, below.

³³ Michael Apple and David Gordon traced the specific term ‘hidden curriculum’ to Philip Jackson in Jackson, P. W. *Life in Classrooms*. New York: Harper & Row, 1968: 10–33. Kathleen P. Bennett and Margaret D. LeCompte noted that the sociologist Edgar Z. Friedenberg had used the term in a conference in the late 1960s. Regardless, the view that more is taught and learned in schools than the official curriculum is both ancient and plain common sense. See Portelli, J. P. “Dare We Expose the Hidden Curriculum.” In *Reason and Values: New Essays in Philosophy of Education*, edited by J. Portelli and S. Bailin. Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Detselig Enterprises, 1993: 171–97; See also Margolis, E., M. Soldatenko, S. Acker, and M. Gair. “Peekaboo: Hiding and Outing the Curriculum.” In *The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education*, edited by E. Margolis. New York–London: Routledge, 2001: 1–19.

regular activity blocks. Clocks are visible in nearly every photograph of classrooms, measuring out activity periods. ‘Seat time’ and ‘time on task’ are still considered essential for education to take place. The clock, the bell and the course schedule regulate the bodily process through the notion of ‘periods’; repetitive physical practices become embodied memory of set times for specific actions: reading, mathematics, lunch, recess and so on.³⁴ Children learn bodily action to respond to bells and other signals; from fire alarms to a raised index finger to bring young children to silent attention, the main function of such training is the performance of Durkheimian social order. Foucault termed it ‘dressage’—the precise movement of trained horses to almost imperceptible commands of the rider: ‘The training of school children was to be carried out in the same way: few words, no explanation, a total silence interrupted by signals—bells, clapping of hands, gestures, a mere glance from the teacher....’³⁵

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 exemplify how far society will go to establish social order. Socialization to school norms is best seen in the staged ‘before and after’ photographs made in the American Indian Boarding Schools. In these institutions, like reform schools, photography played a major role in manufacturing images of school discipline.³⁶ The Lakota boys in the second image have been ‘schooled’. School discipline goes far beyond the notion of discipline as ‘good behavior’ celebrated by some critics of the importance of the visual and notions of hidden curricula.³⁷

Lesson Three, Punishment

Each of us has interests which conflict with the interests of everybody else. That’s our original sin and it can’t be helped. Now, ‘everybody else’ we call ‘society.’ It’s a powerful opponent, and it always wins ... for it has the advantage of numbers and age. Many prevail against one, and men against a baby. Society attacks early, when the individual is helpless. It enslaves him almost before he has tasted freedom. B. F. Skinner³⁸

The teacher is society’s agent. The third lesson is that your body is no longer your own and if you break school rules you will be punished. While schooling functions predominantly as an ideological apparatus relying on symbolic violence, corporal punishment has been applied to the student body whenever necessary.³⁹ Physical punishment was always more quickly and vigorously applied to the bodies of the ‘other’, particularly the poor. The first reform school in the United States, the ‘House

³⁴ Taylor, D. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham, NC–London: Duke University Press, 2003.

³⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 166.

³⁶ See Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*; Margolis and Rowe, “Images of Assimilation”; and Margolis, “Looking at Discipline”.

³⁷ Catteuw, K., K. Dams, M. Depaepe, and F. Simon. “Filming the Black Box: Primary Schools on Film in Belgium, 1880–1960: A First Assessment of Unused Sources.” In *Visual History: Images of Education*, edited by U. Mietzner, K. Myers and N. Piem. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2005: 217.

³⁸ Skinner, B. F. *Walden Two*. New York: Macmillan, 1948: 95.

³⁹ Althusser, L. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation).” In *Lenin and Philosophy*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971: 127–86.



Figure 4. Soix Boys, Carlisle Indian School [between 1880 and 1900?]. The first was taken as they arrived at the Carlisle Indian Boarding school in Pennsylvania, the second three years later after they had been ‘acculturated’ through the discipline of the school. The bodily change was seen as a change in the soul. (Note: ‘Soix’ or Sioux is a French word and means ‘cut-throat’ or snake in the grass. The traditional name is Lakota). Denver Public Library Collection CALL NUMBER DPL X-32086 b) DPI X-32085 Used by Permission.

of Refuge’, was constructed in 1825 in New York City. The first inmates were six boys and three girls. Within 10 years, 1500 children were added. While children of wealthy parents who were convicted of crimes or remanded as incorrigible by their parents could be sentenced to the House of Refuge, this was seldom the case. Most of the inmates were children of the poor, including children convicted of vagrancy (homelessness). Boston built a similar reformatory in 1826 and Philadelphia in 1828; eventually every state had one.⁴⁰ In ‘reform’ schools inmates had their clothes taken; they were washed and deloused; given uniforms and subjected to rigid regimes of time clocks and military-like discipline. Locked in cells at night, they spent the days at chapel, school and hard labor.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Schlossman, S. L. *Love and the American Delinquent: The Theory and Practice of “Progressive” Juvenile Justice, 1825–1920*. Chicago–London: University of Chicago Press, 1977: 27.

⁴¹ Burrows, E. G., and M. Wallace. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

While in some writings the institution was described as a sort of boarding school for poor children—guards were called ‘teachers’, inmates were ‘scholars’ and there was much discussion of ‘pedagogical necessity’—infractions of school rules were dealt with harshly.⁴² The Refuge’s first manager noted the following infractions and punishments in his journal for 1825–1826:

E. D. paddled, with his feet tied to one side of a barrel, his hands to the other...

J.M. ... neglects her work for play in the yard, leg iron and confined to House...

Ann M.: Refractory does not bend to punishment, put in solitary.⁴³

The legal justification for the incarceration of children was *parens patriae*.⁴⁴ Imported from Britain, the statute gave the state power to assume the guardianship of minors. In 1838 the power of the state was affirmed an infamous court case called *Ex Parte Crouse*. Because her mother thought her incorrigible she had her daughter, Mary Ann Crouse, sent to the Philadelphia House of Refuge. When her father found out he asked the court what crime had been committed, but his application for *habeas corpus* was denied. The father then retained a lawyer to argue that locking his daughter up was unconstitutional without a jury trial. He lost. Administrators of the House of Refuge successfully argued that the Bill of Rights did not apply to minors and the court found unanimously that Mary Ann should remain in custody until she reached 21 years of age. In their decision, the court spoke with a voice that determined the fate of American children for generations:

May not the natural parents, when unequal to the task of education, or unworthy of it, be superseded by the *parens patriae*, or common guardian of the community? It is to be remembered that the public has a paramount interest in the virtue and knowledge of its members, and that, of strict right, the business of education belongs to it....⁴⁵

The consequences went far beyond the issue of poor Mary Ann Crouse. Philadelphia was trying to build a public school system. Advocates of public schools served as friends of the court advocating that reform schools be considered schools not prisons, and that both reform and public schools be covered by the doctrine of *parens patriae*.⁴⁶ They sought to establish ‘once and for all time that the state’s provision of education for the poor was a legitimate exercise of its police powers’. The court agreed: ‘As to the abridgement of indefeasible rights by confinement of the person, it is no more than what is borne, to a greater or less extent, in every school; and we know of no natural right to

⁴² Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent*, 28.

⁴³ Quoted by Joseph Curtis in Burrows & Wallace, *Gotham*, 502.

⁴⁴ The Wikipedia website defines *parens patriae* as Latin for *parent of the homeland*. In law, it refers to the public policy power of the state to usurp the rights of the natural parent, legal guardian or informal caretaker, and to act as the parent of any child or individual who is in need of protection, such as a child whose parents are unable or unwilling to take care of him or her, or an incapacitated and dependent individual. Available from <http://www.wikipedia.org>; INTERNET.

⁴⁵ Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent*, 8–9; quoted from the judgment in *Ex Parte Crouse*.

⁴⁶ British ‘progressives’ were engaged in similar political action at roughly the same period. See Grosvenor and Myers, “Progressivism, Control and Correction”.



Figure 5. ‘In School’ Tuer, A. W. (1896). *History of the Hornbook*. London and New York: London, Leadenhall Press; New York, C. Scribner’s sons. From the Margolis collection.

exemption from restraints which conduce to an infant’s welfare.⁴⁷ In this way the legal underpinnings were established to consign children’s bodies to two institutions for youth: state-run public schools and state institutions for troubled or adjudicated youth.

Almost all schools had quick recourse to force when deemed necessary. As the old song states: ‘Reading and ‘riting and ‘rithmetic were taught by the tune of a hickory stick.’⁴⁸ Figure 5 is reproduced from an 1896 *History of the Hornbook* and illustrates the centuries-old element of schooling.⁴⁹ Adopting the ‘stand and deliver’ posture common to schools to this very day, a young girl is showing the teacher that she can read from the hornbook attached to her waist by a cord. Hanging from the high teacher’s desk as a threat is the ubiquitous switch routinely used to discipline students.

In *Governing the Young*, Barbara Finkelstein⁵⁰ examined the functions, prevalence and incidence of corporal punishment in nineteenth-century America. Poor academic

⁴⁷ Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent*, 10–11.

⁴⁸ ‘School days, school days, dear old golden rule days, Reading, and writing, and ‘rithmetic, taught to the tune of a hickory stick ...’ Lyrics by Cobb, W. D. “School Days”, 1907.

⁴⁹ Tuer, A. W. *History of the Hornbook*. New York–London: Leadenhall Press, 1896.

⁵⁰ Finkelstein, B. *Governing the Young: Teacher Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in Nineteenth-Century United States*. New York: Falmer Press, 1989.

performance was considered a moral failing, the result of inattention, sloth, or worse yet, resistance. The remedy was physical punishment, the whip a visible deterrent. The arrangement of the tools of the craft too, reflected the teacher's reliance on corporal punishment and humiliation to inspire achievement and maintain order.... The prominent display of quince, birch, maple or hazel tree whips and the conspicuous placement of whipping posts 'spoke volumes as to order and lessons well learned'.⁵¹

The use of switches and rods was not seriously questioned before the mid-nineteenth century. Corporal punishment continued in schools for poor children and in segregated schools for children of color in the United States long after it was gradually extinguished in schools serving some middle-class communities. Well into the twentieth century children were routinely hit for speaking Native American languages, or Spanish in the American Southwest.⁵² In the US African-American children were thought to be in particular need of corporal punishment. White representation of schooling the Black body has a long history of vicious stereotyping. As Dorothy Roberts noted in *Killing the Black Body*, 'The powerful western image of childhood innocence does not seem to benefit Black children. Black children are born guilty'.⁵³ Black males have frequently been portrayed as especially dangerous and resistant to school. In Figure 6 the beating is administered before any offense.⁵⁴

Twenty-one year old Walt Whitman's first published work of fiction, *Death in the School-Room*,⁵⁵ gives a view of punishment eerily similar to Figure 1. By the time his story was published, Whitman had taught in eight schools on Long Island, so presumably he knew what he was talking about. Dark enough to have entertained Edgar Allen Poe, Whitman depicts 'the old-fashion'd school-masters, with his cowhide, his heavy birch-rod, and his many ingenious methods of child-torture', who will in the future 'be gazed upon as a scorn'd memento of an ignorant, cruel, and exploded doctrine'.

The story begins with the schoolmaster accusing an 'unearthly' and 'fair' pupil of stealing fruit from a garden. The boy denies the charge—to no avail. The schoolmaster gives the student two hours to retract his protestations of innocence.

'Now, Barker,' he said, 'we'll settle that little business of yours. Just step up here....' The boy did not stir any more than if he had been of wood.... 'Asleep! are you, my young gentleman!' said he; 'let us see if we can't find something to tickle your eyes open.' ...

⁵¹ Ibid., 96.

⁵² Adams, D. W. *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875–1928*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995. Students reported being 'spanked' for speaking Spanish on school grounds in Texas until the 1960s. Valencia, R. A., S. R. Garcia, H. Flores, and J. R. Juarez, Jr. *Mexican Americans and the Law*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004: 29.

⁵³ Roberts, D. E. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1997: 21.

⁵⁴ "Preparing for School." *Harper's Weekly* 2 November 1872: 849.

⁵⁵ Whitman, W. *Death in the School-Room*, 1841. [cited 15 April 2006]. Available from http://www.schooltales.com/death_schoolroom/text.html; INTERNET.



Figure 6. Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, November 2, 1872, p. 849 'Preparing for School'. From the Margolis collection.

Lugare lifted his ratan [*sic*] high over his head, and with the true and expert aim which he had acquired by long practice, brought it down on Tim's back with a force and whacking sound which seem'd sufficient to awake a freezing man in his last lethargy.... Without waiting to see the effect of the first cut, the brutal wretch plied his instrument of torture first on one side of the boy's back, and then on the other, and only stopped at the end of two or three minutes from very weariness. But still Tim show'd no signs of motion.... When Lugare saw it ... [h]is countenance turn'd to a leaden whiteness; the ratan dropp'd from his grasp; and his eyes, stretch'd wide open ... and when he at length stretch'd forth his arm, and with the end of one of his fingers touch'd the child's cheek, each limb quiver'd like the tongue of a snake; and his strength seemed as though it would momentarily fail him.... Death was in the school-room, and Lugare had been flogging A CORPSE.

Whitman's was just one of many progressive voices that spoke out against physically hurting children in the name of 'education'. But corporal punishment has not been extinguished in the US. In fact, a recent *New York Times* article cited federal statistics that during the '2002–3 school year, more than 300,000 American school children were disciplined with corporal punishment, usually one or more blows with a thick wooden paddle'. Frequently the paddle has holes in it to maximize pain; one mother who had authorized 'padding' was horrified when her son came home: 'with a

backside that was a florid kaleidoscope of plums and lemons and blood oranges'. Only 28 states have bans on corporal punishment.⁵⁶

Stephen Humphries, in his oral history of British working-class youth, documented the continuing use of physical punishment with a variety of rulers and canes, noting: 'their experience of schooling bears little or no resemblance to the rhetoric of educational providers'.⁵⁷ As in the US the struggle over corporal punishment continues in Great Britain, although the House of Lords recently unanimously rejected an attempt by some parents and teachers to reinstate corporal punishment in private schools.⁵⁸ In both the US and the UK corporal punishment is typically justified by appeal to the biblical injunction about 'sparing the rod', and Evangelical Christians are among the strong supporters.

However, even as beatings subsided, the symbolic violence of social shaming continued. Figure 7 is interesting for the girl in the background; to stand on a box in front of the class is truly a modern punishment meted out to the body to mark and transform the soul.⁵⁹ Her posture is one of 'shame'—hiding her face is intended to cover up the shame.⁶⁰ There are many additional drawings from postcards and stereoviews to magazines like *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* of children in 'dunce caps', or standing in the punishment corner, and photographs have been made of degradation rituals like cleaning the schoolyard on hands and knees.⁶¹

Today, many teachers have eschewed public humiliation as a threat to self-esteem, and prefer to use 'time-out' and discussion to enforce discipline. Nevertheless, bodily force comes in many guises, as suggested by the eighth image. In a 1999 article, Margolis noted that disciplining has rarely been photographed. Figure 8 is an exception to the rule and a good example of the way the visual can inform on a level beyond the power of words. The photograph of teacher and student was purchased from eBay with little provenance (perhaps taken in Montana in the 1950s); on the back is handwritten 'Leveling off'. 'Leveling off' is remarkable in that it is the only snapshot we have found showing school discipline taking place. It is also important because while most of the written discussion on schooling speaks of 'the teacher' and 'the student',

⁵⁶ Lyman, R. "In Many Public Schools, the Paddle Is No Relic." *New York Times* 30 September 2006.

⁵⁷ Humphries, S. *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889–1939*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981: 62.

⁵⁸ Regina v. *Secretary of State for Education and Employment and others (Respondents) ex parte Williamson (Appellant) and others, House of Lords* [cited 24 February 2005]. Available from www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld200405/ldjudgmt/jd050224/will.pdf; INTERNET.

⁵⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

⁶⁰ Connerton, P. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989: 31.

⁶¹ Margolis and Rowe, "Images of Assimilation", 220.



Figure 7. Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, September 19, 1874 'A Village Public School: The Young Orator.' From the Margolis collection.

photography (as opposed to graphic art) is incapable of such generalizations.⁶² 'Leveling off' confronts the viewer with an 'irrefutable' 1/125 of a second of interaction between this specific teacher cornering this specific student by a door near a storeroom, but the lack of words creates an enigma, as Berger and Mohr wrote: 'the photograph begs for an interpretation, and the words usually supply it. The photograph, irrefutable as evidence but weak in meaning, is given a meaning by the words. And the words, which by themselves remain at the level off generalization, are given specific authenticity by the irrefutability of the photograph'.⁶³

'Photographs do not translate from appearances. They quote from them'.⁶⁴ Human beings are particularly good at comprehending the symbolic interactions of

⁶² Distinguishing between art and photography is far beyond the scope of this paper; suffice it to say that engravings like 'Caught Napping' represent general cases (studium) and punctum in Barthes's first meaning. Photographs like 'leveling off' exhibit the second meaning of punctum, the indexical quality that draws attention to a real student and real teacher who are no longer present but once were. It may also produce intimations of our own mortality.

⁶³ Berger and Mohr, *Another Way of Telling*, 92.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.



Figure 8. ‘Leveling off’. From a Montana area photo collection. Circa 1950s. From the Margolis collection.

other human beings conveyed by bodies: facial expression, head cant, posture, and so on—even though bodily communications are hard to express in words.⁶⁵ We understand the viewer’s ability to infer and interpret the ‘Leveling off’ photograph. Each interprets the photograph through his/her reflections and memories. In Peim’s summary of the phenomenology of seeing he wrote that: ‘as human subjects’ [we] cannot be written out of the identity of the things that we see. How we are positioned, what perspective we take on things, where we come from’—all these factors of subject identity are involved in determining the nature of the things in the world that we inhabit’.⁶⁶ It is this subjective quality, this punctum, which led Margolis to purchase ‘Leveling off’ in an eBay auction. No doubt his grammar school experiences in American schools in the 1950s produced a particular bruising reaction to the image, one

⁶⁵ Attempts to codify body language have not been completely successful. See Darwin, C. *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. New York–London: D. Appleton and Company, 1924; See also Goffman, E. “Gender Advertisements.” *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 3 (1976): 69–154; and See Morris, D. *Gestures, Their Origins and Distribution*. New York: Stein & Day, 1979. Perhaps this is because the body speaks in languages different from words.

⁶⁶ Peim, “The History of the Present”, 177.

perhaps not shared by someone whose memories are of girlhood in a Catholic school. Still the photo has the punctum quality of pulling the viewer beyond the frame and into the scene.

Learning our Lessons

There can be no words without images. (Aristotle, 384–322 BC)

Viewing photographs is the act of seeing a fraction of a second in time and the viewer draws upon society's collective memory when reading the image. Halbwachs posited that, 'memories ... are recalled by me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them...'.⁶⁷ Photographs are thus one means by which memories of practices inscribed upon our bodies are remembered. As new technologies make our culture more visual, photographs are increasingly part of the collective memory. Yerushalmi reminded us that: 'collective memory ... is drastically selective. Certain memories live on; the rest are winnowed out, repressed, or simply discarded by a process of natural selection which the historian, uninvited, disturbs and reverses.'⁶⁸

Many of the images in this chapter were published widely when they were made, and, as a return of the repressed, they are on public view today because of new digital technologies. While we argue the usefulness of the visual as data informing historical and sociological imaginations and research, scholars are not the only ones viewing school pictures. Images recovered from obscure sources and concentrated in archives increasingly are circulating in the present where they inform the imaginations of many who will never read a history of education, including teachers, students and policy-makers.⁶⁹ Alan Sekula has noted that:

⁶⁷ Halbwachs, M. *On Collective Memory*, edited and translated by L.A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992: 38.

⁶⁸ Yerushalmi, Y. H. *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982: 95.

⁶⁹ Catteeuw and others, "Filming the Black Box", 218. The authors argue that photographs are of little use to historians of education seeking to understand how 'reality' is created, favoring instead the press. But of course the press published images extensively to shape and 'create reality'. Academic historians do not own history; images appear increasingly in public venues like 'The History Channel'. See also, Mondale, S., and S. Patton. *School: The Story of American Public Education*. Produced by Stone Lantern Films, 2001—a profusely illustrated companion piece to a PBS documentary series that made extensive use of historical photos in the positivist 'seeing is believing' style made popular by the producer Ken Burns. The producers selected images and academic historians were summoned to make this or that point.

Mass culture and mass education lean heavily on photographic realism, mixing pedagogy and entertainment in an avalanche of images.... But awareness of history as an interpretation of the past succumbs to a faith in history as representation. The viewer is confronted, not by historical-writing, but by the appearance of history itself.⁷⁰

Arguing against the use of photographs is support of naïve positivist readings of history; Sekula was making the point that ‘photographic meaning depends largely on context. Meaning is always directed by layout, captions, text and site and mode of presentation’.⁷¹ Historians, archive fetishists or not, ignore the mix of words and images at the cost of their own hard-won ‘truths’.

Currently, some historians are attempting to open up new methodologies and theoretical perspectives for the inclusion of images as data, while others remain ambivalent about the legitimacy of visual data of educational history. One particular article by Catteeuw *et al.*⁷² inveighed against attempts to include the visual in such fields as education, history and sociology. The authors criticized visual sociologists such as Eric Margolis,⁷³ and Ian Grosvenor,⁷⁴ a theorist in emergent visual historiographies in education, as myopic ranters about ‘visual rhetoric’ and ‘hegemony’. Proposing written sources as the only data needed to represent educational history, and bravely defending ‘The clear, great humanist ideals that characterize educational texts against those seeking “hidden text”, the manipulation behind the rosy smoke screen’, Catteeuw *et al.*⁷⁵ argued that ‘visual images have little to teach us about the daily reality of education’⁷⁶ and that those who do ‘read’ visual representations only do so with ‘*hineininterpretierung*’ (hind-sight interpretation).⁷⁷ While humanist ideas are of great importance to us, we also think hidden but often-visible curricula and ‘manipulation behind the rosy smoke screen’ cannot be ignored.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ Sekula, A. “Photography between Labor and Capital.” In *Mining Photographs and Other Pictures: A Selection from the Negative Archives of Shedden Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton: 1948–1968*, edited by B. H. D. Buchloh and R. Wilkie. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983: 198.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁷² Catteeuw and others, “Filming the Black Box”.

⁷³ Margolis, E. “Class Pictures: Representations of Race, Gender and Ability in a Century of School Photography.” *Visual Sociology* 14, nos 1–2 (1999): 7–38.

⁷⁴ Grosvenor, I. “On Visualizing Past Classrooms.” In *Silences and Images: the Social History of the Classroom*, edited by I. Grosvenor, M. Lawn, and K. Rousmaniere. New York: Peter Lang, 1999: 83–104.

⁷⁵ Catteeuw and others, “Filming the Black Box”, 215.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 215. The absolutist position taken in this polemic about ‘unused sources’ vitiates arguments made in an earlier work by some of these same authors in which they note that classics scholars have moved beyond the writings of the masters to ‘focus on potsherds and seek to decipher obscure inscriptions in an attempt to see beyond that horizon. Historians of education have to make a similar effort to be able to look further than the standard sources, in this case official reports and data.’ Depaepe, M., F. Simon, and A. Van Gorp. *Order in Progress: Everyday Educational Practice in Primary Schools Belgium, 1880–1970*. Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2000.

Historians of such papyrophilic persuasion might reflect on this: for each academic, school was a visual field long before taking up the study of education. It is only because we glimpse our own schooling in the rear-view mirror that we can even begin to make sense of written data about life in classrooms. Moreover, the subject position of academics is suspect. Those of us with advanced degrees and professorships in the academy loved school; we worked for grades; we inculcated the three lessons best of all. For academics surveillance is enshrined in the vita and open publication of our work; discipline is peer review, and punishment? All the degradation rituals personnel committees and critics can muster. Most of our school chums resisted such an institutional life long ago; many would cheerfully never set foot in a classroom again. Let us not forget that it is academics that blow the 'rosy smoke screen'. In cap and gown, we are visibly better schooled than the Lakota boys in Image 4b. As usual, history is written by the victors.