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Qualitative Inquiry 2011 17: 56
DOI: 10.1177/1077800410389444

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Qualitative Inquiry
17(1) 56–73
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School as Ceremony and Ritual: How Photography Illuminates Performances of Ideological Transfer

Drew Chappell[1], Sharon Chappell[1], and Eric Margolis[2]

Abstract

Images of the places and activities called "school" as a formal institution are rich data for the inquiring gaze. This article focuses specifically on historical photos of school rituals and ceremonies through which young people perform particular narratives of schooling through repetitive embodied practice and in turn construct values and beliefs about themselves and wider society. In particular, we look at rituals of the habitual, coming of age ceremonies, patriotic rituals and ceremonies, and degradation rituals and ceremonies. In analysis of these photographs, we ask, what meanings are (re)performed in such rituals and ceremonies? Why are these performances important to consider in the context of young people's identity negotiation and school reform? And, after such an analysis, how might any of the performances contain spaces for (student and teacher) agency, including resistance and transformation?

Keywords

schooling, performance, photography, ideology

Although historic photographs of schools cannot articulate well causal intentions or effects of educative or miseducative experiences, they can illuminate the visible physical and performative contexts in which education takes place (Burke & Grosvenor, 2008; Grosvenor, Lawn, & Rousmaniere, 1999). Images of the places and activities called "school" as a formal institution become data for the inquiring gaze. For these authors, historical photos animate the historical trajectories of school-based performances through ritual and ceremony that influence the relationship between young people's identity negotiation and the broader context of their socialization. If such identity negotiation informs young people's degree of participation in school or other sites of educational development, then an analysis of the power of these performances can inform how schools might make decisions about school effectiveness reform.

Researchers have examined internationally how bodies are arranged in architectural space and in relation to one another socioculturally and ideologically (Burke & Ribeiro deCastro, 2007; Lawn & Grosvenor, 2005; Margolis & Fram, 2007; Thyssen, 2007). Photographs represent how the built environment of the school constrains individual actions; for example, classrooms, auditoriums, amphitheaters, and stadiums "insist" on people becoming actors and spectators. Portraits of formal and informal performances reveal how young people and adults are "cast" into certain roles, often part of prescribed performances that are enacted independent of the will of the actors. These photographs often make visible the invisible voices of children and different cultural groups marginalized in mainstream historical narratives (Grosvenor, 2007; Peim, 2005; Rousmaniere, 2001).

Through examining historical photographs, researchers can glimpse not only how curriculum changes have been materialized as schools are built and rebuilt but also how that change is coupled with stasis. Although children's socialization incorporates aspects of social progress and cultural change, many spaces and rituals that circumscribe their actions look the same over the centuries. This article explores rituals and ceremonies that appear to remain constant over time, revealing the ways that young people are schooled through repetitive embodied practice. We view the use of photographs for this purpose as "memories of seeing" (Thyssen, 2007), where cultural artifacts provide a glimpse into performed behaviors. Archival photographs provide visual access into the ephemeral repertoire of the past although we recognize their

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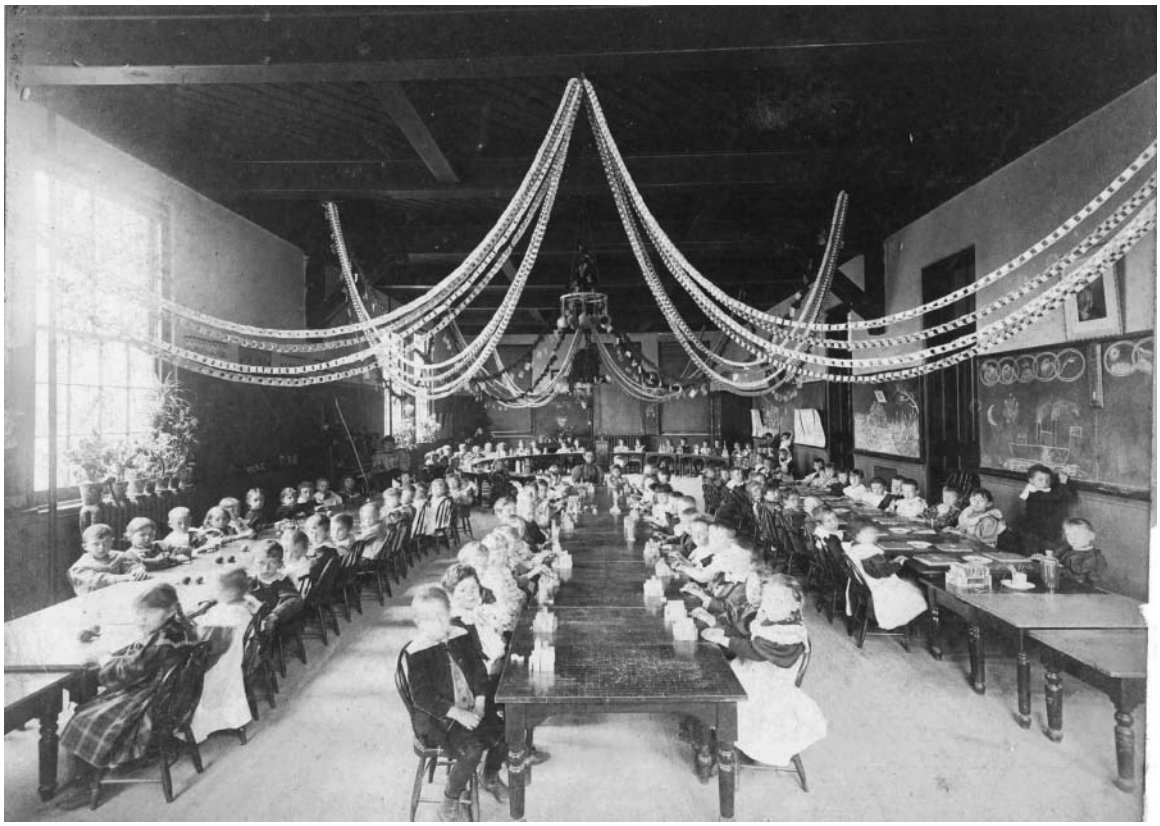

Figure 1.
This photo from the 1870s shows large groups of children in a room decorated for Christmas with paper chains. Plants grow on the windowsill; the children in the middle table have blocks, and those on the left have what appear to be soft balls. Perhaps Friedrich Froebel's "gifts." At the semicircular table in the distance the children seem to have more elaborated constructions, maybe castles or churches made of blocks. The boy on the right has drawn a steamship with what appears to be an American flag. There are three visible teachers, on the left at a piano, at the head of the long center table, and in the far left corner leaning on her hand.
Source: Margolis Collection. Location undetermined. Undated. Bought on eBay.

limitations (Taylor, 2003). We analyze these performances as visual traces of essential social functions that school the body, particularly through rituals of habitual behavior, coming of age ceremonies, patriotic rituals and ceremonies, and degradation rituals and ceremonies, which we will discuss in detail in subsections below.

This research focuses specifically on historiographical questions about schooling raised by examining performed behaviors through a U.S.-centered visual archive of school rituals and ceremonies. Schooling in the United States has demonstrated an historical struggle over managing ideologies around race, class, and gender that continues today. Spring (2005) suggests that cultural domination has been a central theme in educational history from the "culture wars" between colonists and Native Americans to the Americanization efforts of the new public school movement in the 19th century to ensure the dominance of Anglo values over Irish immigrants, Native Americans, and African Americans. Schools have and continue to be a form of ideological management, which includes the management of knowledge construction through performed behaviors responding to different school texts, such as curriculum, rituals, and ceremonies. McCarthy, Chichlow, Dimitriadis, and Dolby (2005) suggest that schools become "custodians of culture . . . presumably to assign different resources, culturally determined expectations, and determinate knowledge outcomes to mutually exclusive groups" (p. xv). Our research contributes to the curricular understanding of how social relations and cultural vernaculars are (re)produced in schooling contexts to the detriment or benefit of different individuals and groups.

Data collection has been an ongoing process. Over the past decade, Eric Margolis has been systematically collecting photographs of schools and writing about them (Margolis, 1999, 2004, 2005, 2006, in press; Margolis & Fram, 2007; Margolis & Rowe, 2004, n.d.; Margolis, Soldatenko, Acker, & Gair, 2001). Currently he has perhaps 10,000 digital images of schools, teachers, and students. Some of the photographs are from well-documented archives like the Farm Security

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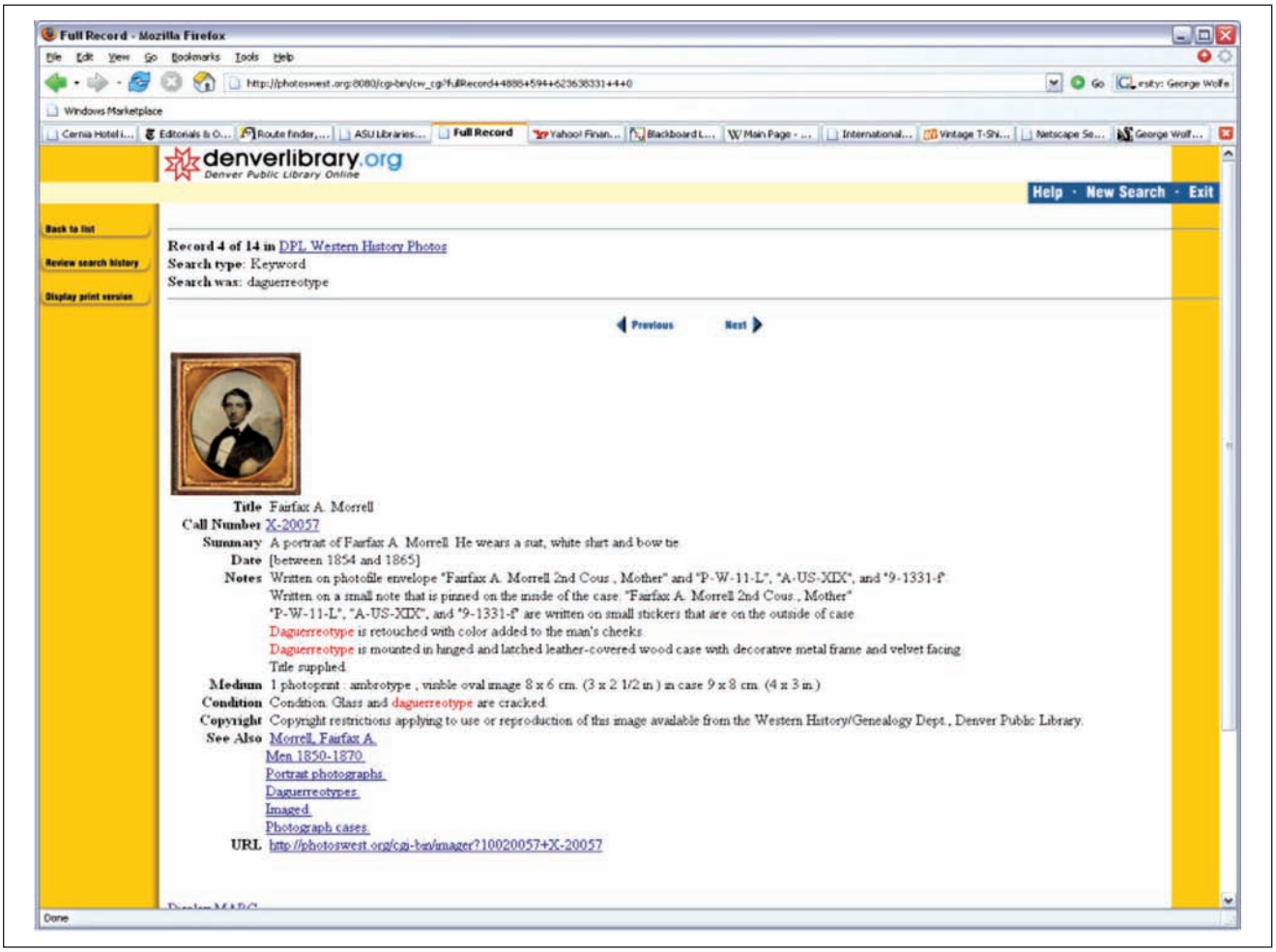

Figure 2. A portrait of Fairfax A. Morrell. Screen shot from Denver Public Library online database of photographs.

Administration files or online photo databases (Figure 2), while others are "vernacular" or "quotidian" photographs with little provenance, bought on eBay, at garage sales, or antique shops (see Ross & McCarroll). For this project, we used a photograph database program called "Thumbsplus®" (Figure 3), which allows researchers to keep text (captions, collection information like date, photographer, location etc.) connected to the image and produces files of thumbnails to examine.

To begin our research, we employed the analytical process of "constant comparison" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), seeking categories that defined the photographic data we examined. Through this process, we identified the following categories: recess and playground activities, school plays, patriotic celebrations, posed class pictures, lessons, and so on.[1] In this initial "open" coding phase, categories were neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. We then examined these initial "open" coding categories "axially," that is, we examined each preliminary category and then compared and contrasted the images. For example, "patriotic ceremonies" yielded subcategories "saluting the flag," "historical reenactments," "costume pageants," and so on. We made new codes and collapsed or expanded categories. This process is both inductive in reaching for hypotheses and deductive in testing theories as they emerge (Charmaz, 2001 p. 1033).

Then we developed overarching theoretical codes. Looking over thousands of school photographs grouped in content categories brought us to a "theoretical" category of "ceremony and ritual" and this idea led us to examine literature that we had not previously considered: symbolic interactionism, performance studies, and critical pedagogy. From this we developed four subcategories discussed in detail below: rituals of the habitual, coming of age ceremonies, patriotic rituals and ceremonies, and degradation rituals and ceremonies.

Because we were interested in looking at the photographs as records of performance, we were influenced by the sociological approach of symbolic interactionism through which small scale interactions are studied to observe how social actors "build" culture. In his germinal essay "Gender Display,"

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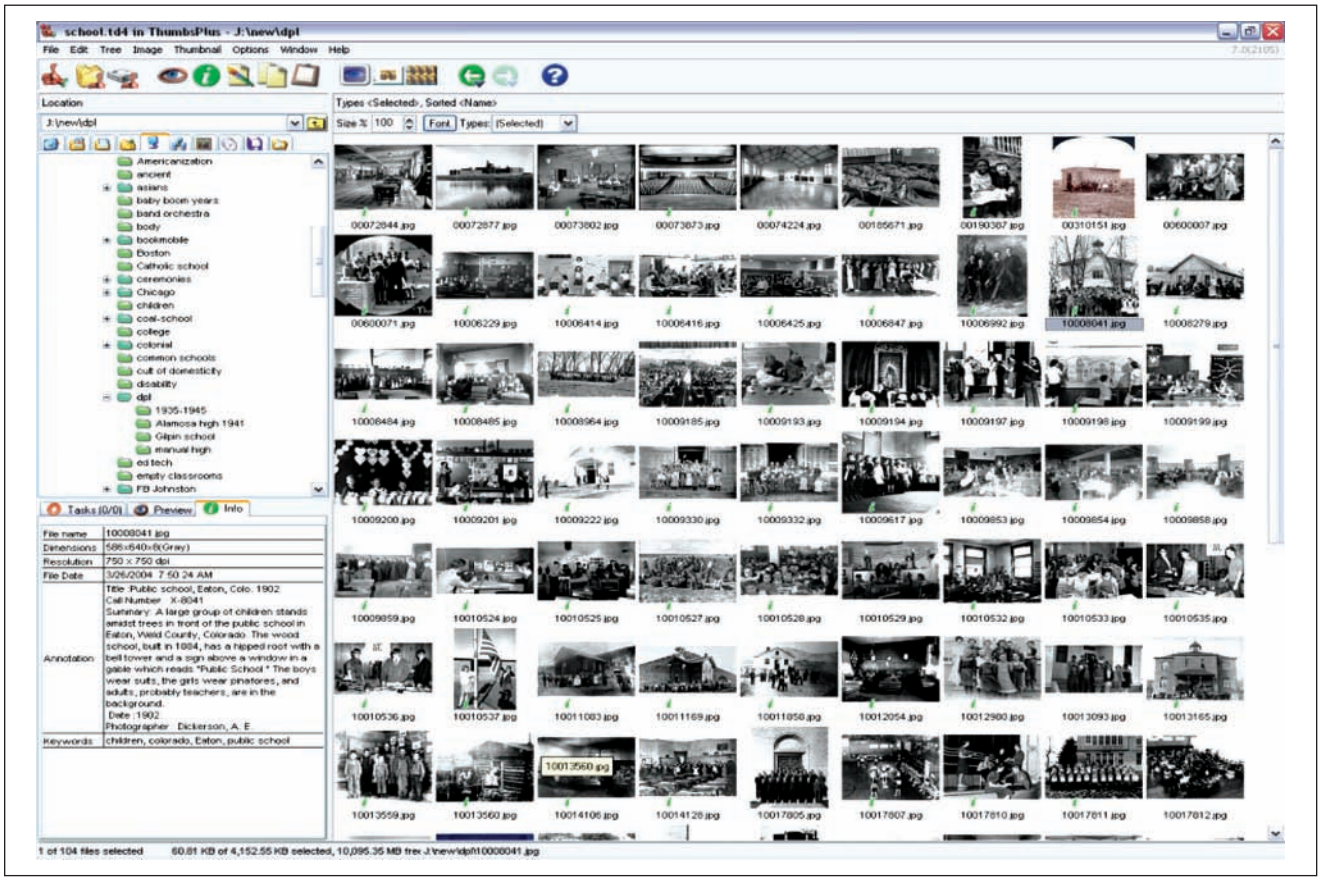

Figure 3. Screen shot from "Thumbsplus®" of our DPL (Denver Public Library) folder.

Goffman (1976) drew attention to the visibility of "human objects" and provided key definitions of ceremony and ritual. He wrote of ceremonies as social arrangements that contain and reflect doctrines, or sets of beliefs and values about the world, and are performed as a "gathering." Rituals are single, fixed aspects of a ceremony, performed to indicate relationships and regard between people.

Many such ceremonies and rituals take place in schools and have frequently been photographed, yet are understudied as a component of the sociological foundation of education. Schools are socially significant sites of ritual and ceremony; like religious institutions and sports teams, schools are places where one generation indoctrinates the next through displays, rituals and ceremonies deemed culturally appropriate. For example, during promotion and graduation, the younger generation is "advanced into" an older, more powerful sphere. Goffman called such ceremonies that mark beginnings and endings "bracket rituals"; coming of age ceremonies are included in this category (see also Wallum, 1978). The other ceremony type he called "ritual transfix" or "overlay" because these continue throughout the journey from one state to another. For example, standing with hand over heart while saluting the flag in homeroom. Much of what is sometimes titled "deportment" on report cards grades students' adherence to these transfix rituals; overlaying ritual behavior (and grading students' investment in same) signifies and validates what has been called the "hidden curriculum" (discussed in more detail below).

The emerging (anti)discipline of performance studies offers useful theories for reading schooling as scripted performance. Schooling, like theatre, includes practiced actions, performance spaces, students and teachers as players, and multiple "scripts" (expectations, taught behaviors, etc.). Through applying the tools of theatre criticism to such real life spaces and activities, scholars can examine how players interact with scripts, who authors such scripts, and how both scripts and spaces affect the actions of the performers. Often, as Schechner (2003) pointed out, the authors of scripts may not be individuals, but rather a universal collective author, a "way things are done" that offers little space for challenge or examination of motive. We consider this article to be in conversation with historian Ian Grosvenor (2007) who calls for a study of the "choreography" of schooling, asking for a visual study of the history of schooling in terms of the ways school performances are

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recorded through photographs and analyzed in terms of their ideological and narrative scripts.

Critical pedagogy has also used performance studies lenses to look at schooling as a series of important cultural rituals, defined by Peter McLaren (1999) as "Forms of enacted meaning [that] enable social actors to frame, negotiate, and articulate their phenomenological existence as social, cultural, and moral beings" (p. 50). McLaren conceptualizes ritualization as "a process which involves the incarnation of symbols, symbol clusters, metaphors, and root paradigms through formative bodily gesture." McLaren's choice of the word "incarnation" is fascinating, as the word literally means "embodied in flesh." Such a process makes invisible ideas visible through bodily action. If ideas are (re)presented through embodiment, then the postures, facial expressions, costumes, and body positions captured in school photographs also suggest ways that children and teachers alike embody certain ideas, values, and beliefs as part of the schooling process. In Goffman's terms, these are the visible performances of "human objects." We find a compelling potential in placing the disciplines of performance studies and the history of education in conversation. Following Grosvenor, Schechner, and McLaren, we expand Goffman's definition to consider and classify informal performances, or practiced actions broadly understood, as "rituals." More formal performances such as pageants, plays, celebrations, assemblies, etc., we classify as "ceremonies."

School photographs have been, and continue to be, taken for different purposes, such as publicity and propaganda, school records, staff and family documentation of events, and children's own recorded memories. These purposes, when known by the historian, affect interpretations. Furthermore, as socially embedded researchers our own experiences and perspectives on schooling affect the analysis. Theatre historian Thomas Postlewait (1991) attended to this poststructural dilemma in his discussion of historiography and the "cruxes" that separate researcher and event, and we the authors acknowledge our own Foucauldian interest in the intersection of the production of knowledge and power in school settings as we viewed the images for this research. In this way, when looking at photographs of ritual and ceremony, we consider how ideology is manifested in the body, how this process can be seen in photographs, and how photographs taken over long periods of time reveal the "cast" changing while the "play" remains the same. We will discuss four types of school rituals and ceremonies, recognizing that these categories are neither comprehensive nor mutually exclusive; we nevertheless suggest that they illustrate the breadth and depth of impact that school rituals and ceremonies have on young people over space and time.

We will examine ceremonies and rituals horizontally and vertically. While other scholars have emphasized positive affective memories built through ritual (such as communion and transcendence), we examine more problematic meanings that register on/through the bodies of young people, raising questions about the reproductive powers of social structures and the agentic potential of schooling. We ask, "What rituals and ceremonies have been captured in primarily U.S. school photographs over time?" "Why are these performances important to consider in the context of young people's identity negotiation and school reform?" And, after such an analysis, how might any of these performances contain spaces for (student and teacher) agency, including resistance and transformation?

Glimpses of School

It is important to briefly discuss the uses to which we intend to put photographs. Here we again borrow from Erving Goffman (1976) who examined the human ability to make categorical inferences about both the glimpsed world in "real life" and those available through photography:

> The totality of viewings of the courses of action of strangers which we obtain throughout our days constitutes our glimpsed world. . . . To glimpse a world . . . is to employ a set of categories more or less distinctive to glimpsing and often entirely adequate for the job they are designed to do." (p. 22)
>
> We are all in our society trained to employ a somewhat common idiom of posture, position, and glances, wordlessly choreographing ourselves relative to others in social situations with the effect that interpretability of scenes is possible. . . . however posed and "artificial" a picture is, it is likely to contain elements that record instances of real things." (p. 21)

There is a long running debate about the nature of photographs as positivist representations of reality, or as "polysemic" images subject to hermeneutic interpretation. For this examination, we will adopt a postpositivist perspective, emphasizing the "indexical" connection between a photograph and the material world recorded by optical/mechanical/chemical processes and the "iconic" nature of photographic images as looking "like" the objects they represent. However, we also assume any assertions about the meaning of photographs have possibilities, as Goffman indicated above, and limitations; meanings can never be certain, but remain in the realm of statistical probability, and statements about them must, in principle, be falsifiable if they are to be considered scientific (see Phillips & Burbules, 2000). Thus photographic glimpses of the interactions of human objects against the backdrop of the material world are in principle no different from "regular" glimpses people make all the time. Interpretations are limited by the evidence available, and such assertions can be overturned at any time by new evidence.

Postpositivism emphasizes photographs as representations of "things in the world," while recognizing that cameras are not simply mechanical transcription devices; that the photographer is creating an interpretation by framing, manipulating

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depth of field and exposure time, choosing when to release the shutter, sometimes giving instructions to the subjects in the photograph, and so on. This perspective insists on recognizing the constructed, contextual qualities of material evidence and its interpretations. For example, human subjects being photographed similarly manipulate their image either as part of their everyday presentation of self, or as self-conscious "posing" before the camera. As Goffman explained,

> Our immediate interest in social situations is that it is mainly in such contexts that individuals can use their faces and bodies, as well as small materials at hand to engage in social portraiture. It is here in these small, local places that they can arrange themselves micro-ecologically to depict what is taken as their place in the wider social frame, allowing them, in turn, to celebrate what has been depicted. It is here in social situations, that the individual can signify what he takes to be his social identity and here indicate his feelings and intent—all of which information the others in the gathering will need in order to manage their own courses of action—which knowledgeability he in turn must count on in carrying out his own designs. (p. 6)

From a postpositivist historian's perspective, these poses of the everyday self make the construction of history(ies) more complex and uncertain (see Margolis, in press). In terms of the history of schooling, looking at contexts, such as values and beliefs performed by different actors with various intentions and interests, problematizes the benign character of schooling practices over time. Historians can do this, for example, through analyzing the purposes and implications of posed or "candid" photographs. Candid, or what Goffman called "caught" shots, capture the symbolic interactions, or that people use to effect society when they are not specifically performing for the camera:

> The human objects themselves employ the term "expression" and conduct themselves to fit their own conceptions of expressivity; iconicity especially abounds, doing so because it has been made to. Instead of our merely obtaining expressions of the object, the object obligingly gives them to us, conveying them through ritualization and communicating them through symbols. (p. 7)

In the case of posed photographs, and certain other situations including stage plays or degradation ceremonies, the performance and communication through symbols is specifically intended as a public display. Here we must disagree with Madeleine Grumet (1980) when (following Sennett) she accuses Goffman and dramaturgic sociologists of "bad theatre": "caricatures of human emotion and action played by actors whose gestures and choices are merely extensions of their wardrobes and makeup" (p. 97). It is precisely this broad "mugging" for the camera that socially constructs and communicates the meaning of ceremonies and rituals. We cannot assume to know the "true" nature or intention of these poses, but we suggest that their archive gives us more insight into the possible repertoire of behaviors of participants in schooling and their ideological characteristics.

Rituals of the Habitual

> . . . there is a whole system of rules in the school that predetermine the child's conduct. 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. . . . [school discipline] is not a simple device for securing superficial peace in the classrooms allowing the work to roll on tranquilly. It is the morality of the classroom, just as the discipline of the social body is morality properly speaking. (Durkheim, 1961, p. 148)

The photos in this article span about 300 years of schooling in the United States. They record an important ritual element that becomes a "habit" of school: showing one's "work" in public. Pupils are not only expected to learn, they must demonstrate that they have learned in front of the teacher and the entire social group in the classroom. As Goffman (1976) explained, "Given that individuals have work to do in social situations, the question arises as to how ritual can accommodate to what is otherwise occurring" (p. 2). *Rituals of the habitual* encompass those everyday schooling performances that have come to be called "hidden curricula." The term probably originated in Philip Jackson's book *Life in Classrooms* (1968) and was augmented by Robert Dreeben's observations (1968). Dreeben followed Durkheim's social reproductionist paradigm by showing how children were taught to do important social work, "form transient social relationships, submerge much of their personal identity, and accept the legitimacy of categorical treatment," for students to develop the social skills to function as adult members of society" (Dreeben, 1968, p. 168). Michael Apple (2004) further defined hidden curriculum as "the tacit teaching to students of norms, values, and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools day in and day out for a number of years" (p. 13). Students showing their work, as well as performing knowledge (re)production, constitutes one of those institutional norms.

Additional habitual routines and expectations include attendance, following directions, period divisions, regimentation, and deportment; standardized activities such as examinations, individual work time, and classification; and noncurricular

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Figure 4. [Arithmetic class, 6th Division] 1899?
Source: Johnston, Frances Benjamin, In album: "Public Schools—6th Division." Call number: Lot 2749 no. 311; [item] [P & P]; Reproduction number: LC-USZ62-8613.

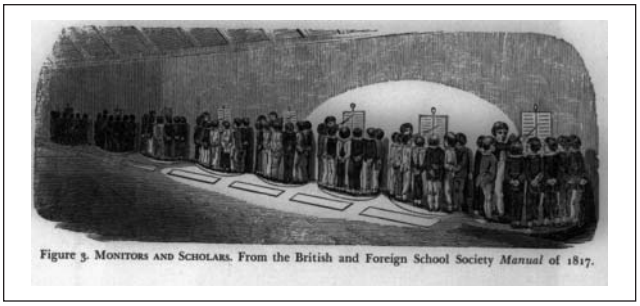

Figure 5. Monitors and scholars
Source: From the British and Foreign School Society manual of 1817 No.1173.

Figure 6. Schools in Yonkers ca. 1943
Note: Grammar is taught by having the pupil correct the mistake in the sentence the teacher has written.
Source: Call No. 9446 Office of war information overseas branch exhibit section 52 11 X 14 Photos exhibit No. 74A.

Figure 7. Showing your work on the blackboard.
Note: Location undetermined. Undated.
Source: Stock photo. Photo Disk 2 Royalty Free www.photodisk.com

Figure 8. 1877. "The hero of the Spelling Bee"
Note: Melander Stereoviews.
Source: Bought on eBay

group activities such as assemblies and celebrations. The school day is regulated by the clock and the bell, and children are habituated to its rhythm of periods: homeroom, pledging, and singing; English, math, and science; lunch, recess, going home, and so on. In general, these structures and performances are not questioned by anyone, unless inadequate performance calls forth negative sanctions (perhaps involving degradation ceremonies, examined later in this article). Establishing and (re)producing social order is the underlying objective.

As an example, Figure 1 at the beginning of this essay demonstrates the remarkable ability of three teachers to

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produce an image of social order. Nearly 100 young children were arrayed so their faces and hands were mostly visible and they held still for what must have been a long exposure. Some were posed as if ritually engaged in showing their work. In all Figures 1 and 4 to 8, ideologies are strikingly clear: the tableaux depict unity and group order, while creativity as individual effort is constrained by rules, time, space, and competition. While the competitive aspect is most visible in "The Hero of the Spelling Bee," (Figure 8) it is implicit in the risks students take every time they show their work, which might well be "wrong" and lead to social embarrassment/shame. While the historical context in terms of time and space are important, 1870s in the first figure and early 21st century in Figure 7, the ritualized behavior of "performing" one's competency, as defined in specific localized ways, has endured.

Although curricula and expectations for young people in the schools slowly change, the institution continues to inculcate the same values about relationships and hierarchies. Pupils and teachers perform distinct roles: those who impart knowledge and training and those who receive it, those who judge and those who are judged. The behavioral expectations of compliance to a universal physical and moral code of conduct have not wavered. In the United States, the flag salute has existed unchanged for decades, and group and individual "class pictures" as representations of order and progress have been standard for a century and a half. While Grumet (1980) and others want to emphasize agency and resistance through forms of "theatre" played out against the backdrop of ceremony and ritual, photography of such performances depicts schooling as a unifying structure that smoothes over resistance, deviance, and the nuances made available through multiple perspectives on various habitual rituals.

Coming of Age Ceremonies

The camera captures ways that embodiment exists as a liminal state, where participants are, as Schechner (2003) suggests, "stripped of their former identities and assigned places in the social world; they enter a time-place where they are not-this/not-that, neither here nor there, in the midst of a journey from one social self to another" (pp. 57-58). As children progress through schooling and socialization, they are interpellated—or hailed—to undergo a series of "becomings" in a linear, developmental model of maturation into adulthood (Althusser, 1971; Lee, 2001). Coming of age ceremonies, or rites of passage, mark the ways that adults construct young people's "becomings," and they are almost always photographed. In this type of bracket ceremony, school photographs memorialize changes in social, economic, or sexual status of various young people. Viewers of the photos are "shown" what these changes might be, how they are materialized, and what values they impart. Yet, like habitual rituals, coming of age ceremonies smooth over the multiple ways children grow and change. Borrowing Tyack and Cuban's term (1997), this "grammar of schooling" constrains young people's socialization by emphasizing particular becomings over others.

Images of the first day of school from three cultures reveal the differences in social constructions of this event. In the Ukraine, children and parents greet teachers with flowers (Figure 9). The tradition in Germany is to give children "school cones" filled with presents and sweets to mark the first day (Figure 10). In the United States, a common image is of the child crying after being "abandoned" by loving parents to the impersonal institution (Figure 11). Photographers in the United States have documented the impact of schooling policy on young people's emotional state not only through first day separation anxiety but also from school's prohibition of using one's native language (when it is not English; Figure 12). These young people's facial expressions raise questions about the value placed on attending school, the affective context of the school site, and school's place in multiple societies as a nurturing or authoritative body.

Graduation is perhaps the most familiar coming of age ceremony, with high school graduation in the United States marking the secular rite of passage of youth into adulthood. Yet this ceremony has increasingly marked change from one grade level to another (or from elementary to junior high/middle school to high school). Graduation ceremonies have migrated steadily down the grades as Figure 13 of a kindergarten "graduation" shows; the children wear mortarboards and robes associated with university ceremonies. In contemporary society, all achievement is recognized; teachers and staff reward children for completing a year of school rather than completing a degree. Yet the emphasis on graduation from one grade to the next also masks the arbitrary distinction of when one aspect of a young person's growth has ended and another has begun. Having formal celebrations of the end of a grade highlights the social importance of bracketed stages of developmental progress, ignoring the fluidity of being in the present and the importance of growth and maturation as uneven, vertical processes. These ceremonies further sanction the social importance and cultural capital of a singular kind of learning (associated with formal schooling), rather than the multiple ways that people develop skills and knowledge.

Another coming of age marker is the class photo or school portrait. Since the invention of photography, parents have collected school pictures to mark the growth and development of their children, as in these four photographs of a boy "growing up" (Figure 14). The ritual documentation of class pictures represents a linear developmental path associated with maturation into adulthood. As parents look at photos of their children through this rephotography, they can see evidence of the changes a year brings, changes that may be too subtle to see from day to day. These photos also represent changes in personal styles or the influence of society on style—hair, clothing, makeup, and so on. Even facial expression can indicate a change in attitude toward school from year to year.

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Figure 9. Ukraine, 1960s
Source: Margolis Collection. Gift of Olena Oliynyk (Helen).

Figure 10. Germany, 1906
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

School's use of portraiture to record growth and development emphasizes how the institution requires young people to perform the role of student and to demonstrate their conformity to ideas of being/becoming an acceptable student. Young people are often asked to wear "nice clothes" on picture day, to make sure hair and makeup are "right," and to smile

Figure 11. Los Angeles. First day of school. 1958.
Note: The smile of the girl at left and the tears of the miss at right tell the story of mixed emotions of Los Angeles' younger set today as school starts for an army of 605,000 youngsters. Diane Dunagan, 7, left, second grader, likes school, but Lori Horwitz, right, wants to go back home. Her brother, Mike, is bewildered! Photo date: September 15, 1958.
Physical Details: 1 photograph : b&w.
Source: Herald-Examiner Collection.

Figure 12. Miss April Lou, teacher at PS 1, Manhattan, with six Chinese children, recent arrivals from Hong Kong and Formosa, who are holding up placards giving his or her Chinese name (both in ideographs and in transliteration) and the name to be entered upon the official school records.]
Source: World Telegram & Sun photo by Fred Palumbo. LC-USZ62-112148 (1964).

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Figure 13. "Our kindergarten graduates 19 April 1959"
Note: Northfield, Minnesota?
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Figure 14. Four carte de viste photos of a boy aging into a young man
Note: Undated. All of the photos were taken by photographers in Pittsfield, MA.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

for the camera. Teen films and television shows sometimes mock this portraiture ritual (as in the title sequence of "Freaks and Geeks," where the photographer snaps the shots at inopportune times), to comment on its normalizing values. Real-life attempts to problematize the portraiture ritual by converting it from ceremony to theatre (through alternative choices in dress, make-up, or held objects or replacing one's photo with another object) may be viewed as deviant or resistant, but such actions do not affect the school's interest in maintaining the ritual. While these school photographs appear benign, they are a set of before/after historical markers that have implications for school reform. For example, in the case of Native American children forcibly placed into boarding schools in the early 1900s, their before/after school portraits demonstrate how such school ceremonies can even function as performed erasures of culture (Margolis, 2004).

Photographs are also taken to record rites of passage and special coming of age ceremonies that signify changes in sexual maturity and the maintenance of heteronormativity, such as school dances. Boys and girls perform the act of becoming young men and women by holding each other and standing close to dance. Normal school rules against bodily contact and other public displays of affection are suspended, and students "show off" their dates in these photographs (Figures 15 and 17). Changes in maturity are also captured in photos of students taking driver's education, an endeavor that leads to getting a driver's license and the associated freedom of movement and personal space (Figure 16). Photographs of agency or resistance in school are rare, but dance, driving, and the kinds of action that might be performed in the private confines of the car might be spaces for personal resistance. Taking one's same sex partner to a school dance and insisting on taking a portrait photograph would be an example, although we have not yet found such a photo.

In the United States, there is another coming of age ritual directly connecting school with demands of the state: registering for the draft or joining the armed forces (Figure 18). This process is, in part, facilitated by high school Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) groups, which advertise their mission as "To motivate young people to be better citizens" (Fourth Brigade JROTC). The ROTC ceremony, with its accompanying mission, forecloses multiple interpretations of citizenship and what it means to be a "good" citizen. To be an "American" means to serve one's country,

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Figure 15. Couple at a freshman/sophmore dance
Note: Location undetermined. Undated.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Figure 17. "High school kiss"
Note: Location undetermined. Undated.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Figure 16. Photo January 25, 1936 Chicago, showing how a Chicago driving school taught its learner drivers by using parts of old cars, essentially the front seat, dashboard, steering wheel and pedals, all mounted on legs
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Figure 18. "P.T.A Gives colors to Lowell High R.O.T.C."
Note: May 1st 1941.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

and this service may require putting oneself in harm's way. Although the draft has not been instituted since the 1960s-1970s, it remains a powerful force in the lives of young men and photographs help to capture moments of dedication such as the one above. Even if these propagandistic images of schooling are idealized, they represent the ways that adults

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use photographs to produce audience's perceptions about schools and about desired nationalistic performances in young people. Other photographs (which may be less prevalently discussed in schools) might show feelings of ambiguity toward service, such as the burning of draft cards.

Patriotic Rituals and Ceremonies

Schools also transmit cultural values explicitly through reenactments of societal values, like flag salutes, plays, holiday celebrations, and other patriotic activities. Ideology is made flesh, as Althusser (1971) noted, "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, by the functioning of the category of the subject" (p.170). School, as the institution doing the hailing, calls out to its subjects—teachers and students alike—inscribing them into being not only for abstract social cohesion but also for unification around a nationalist identity. Connerton (2004) and Roach (1996) both attended to the importance of ceremony in the transmission of communal memory. Connerton noted that taking part in these ceremonies is a reflex action—bodies are trained to (re)act without thinking as students rehearse countless ceremonies through year after year of schooling. Students stand for the flag salute or carry a flag because it is what is done. In this way, the explicit becomes implicit; patriotic activities constitute work young people must perform as part of being a student, but the meanings and values underlying these ceremonies (typically) remain unexamined.

In particular, schools around the world are sites for an embodied enactment of nationalism, as shown in Figure 19 of kindergarten children in the former Soviet Union. In the United States, these performances include the use of the flag (present in almost every classroom) and other nationalist symbolism (Figures 18, 20, 21, and 22). As Callois (1979) observed, patriotic rituals and ceremonies define the character of a society and, through their (re)performance over time, contribute to the public's acceptance of this character and its associated values and beliefs.

Through performance, societies perpetuate themselves, choosing cultural moments to be remembered, forgotten, or transplanted. Figures 21, 22, and 26 demonstrate how society remembers through ritual and ceremony. In Figure 22, young people perform a patriotic tableau, which is accompanied by the caption, "Why has Old Glory been Baptized and Rebaptized in Blood?" George Washington's mythical cutting down of the cherry tree is recreated and memorialized in Figure 21. Many photographs in the archives show the common reenactment of the "First Thanksgiving" meal shared by "Pilgrims" and "Indians" [see Chappell (2010) for a discussion of this ceremony in school textbooks]. A particularly poignant image is Figure 26 showing a group of Native American children in Arizona celebrating Lincoln's birthday by building a log cabin—miles from the nearest tree.

Figure 19. Ukraine. "Utrennik"—A celebratory performance at a kindergarten
Note: Probably the 1980s notes by Olena Oliynyk (Helen).
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Figure 20. May 5, 1976. School festival commemorating both the US Bicentennial and Mexico's Cinco de Mayo
Note: The event took place at the Malabar Street School in East Los Angeles.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Historical reenactments contribute to political indoctrination: In Figure 23, Anglo-American boys dress as Native Americans (for more on playing "Indian, " see Bataille & Silet, 1981; Deloria, 1998). Religious ceremonies also play a role, as shown in photographs of students reenacting sacred stories (Figures 24 and 25). Whether secular or sacred, these moments call for young people to align themselves with portrayed characters through embodiment that is physical (bodily), relational (identifying with characters' beliefs and wants), and ideological (engaging with societal norms and values as represented in a script). Through these reenactments, the past becomes simulation; images suggest a master narrative of "civilization" or "progress," and (re)performing events frames them in specific ways and keeps them in cultural consciousness. This mythology empowers the ruling culture (Figures 20, 23, 25). Ceremonies of competition are similarly essential to capitalist ideology; the hailing of

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Figure 21. "I cannot tell a lie."
Note: Location undetermined. Undated. 1920's?
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

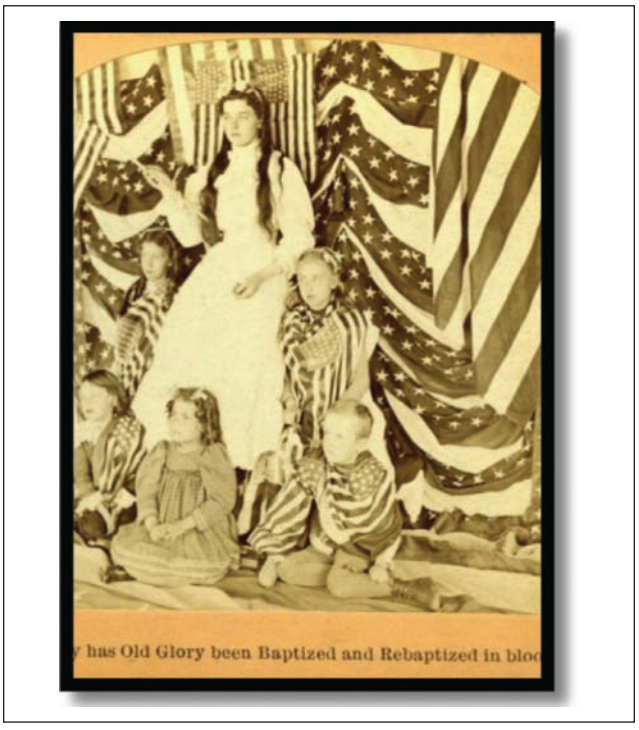

Figure 22. Why has Old Glory been Baptized and Rebaptized in Blood?
Note: 1898. Stereoview. Location undetermined.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

winners and losers is visible in photos of school contests from sports photographs to spelling bees (Figure 8). Of course competitions, especially sporting events, also involve parents in creating the winner/loser dichotomy, extending the competition outside the school into the home.

Figure 23. School children dressed as Indians. The Boy Scouts of America, recognizable from their fleur de lis symbol on the left of the photo, integrate Native American language and symbology–such as arrows, chiefs, and totem animals–into their nomenclature and ceremonies.
Note: Location undetermined. Undated. 1950's?
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Figure 24. Christmas Pageant.
Note: 1957. Location undetermined.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Degradation Rituals and Ceremonies

Harold Garfinkel defined "degradation ceremonies" as

> Communication work directed to transforming an individual's total identity lower in the group's scheme of social types. . . . To reconstitute the other as a social object, the denouncer must get the witnesses to

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Figure 25. American Indian girls in school play portraying Mary, mother of baby Jesus, and angels
Note: Ca. 1940
Source: http://jpg1.lapl.org/pics10/00004914.jpg

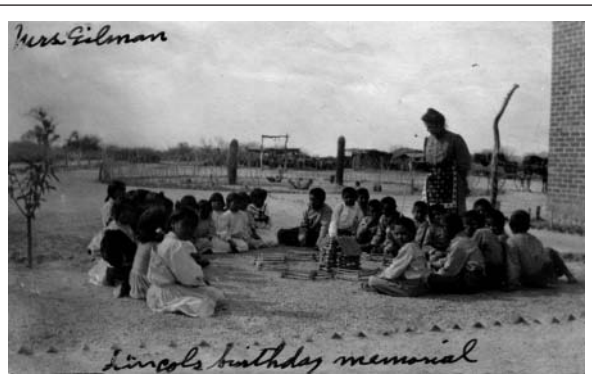

Figure 26. Sacaton Indian School
Note: 1920s.
Source: Margolis Collection. © Jeremy Rowe. Used by permission.

> appreciate the perpetrator and the blameworthy event as instances of an extraordinary uniformity. (p. 420).

School is a public place where the maintenance of status hierarchies are an essential part of the larger social order. "Shaming" cannot be overemphasized as a social practice for maintaining this order. While shaming is probably a daily occurrence, photographs of it are rare (Figures 27-31). One of the oldest images of a degradation ceremony in school is the well-known 1556 drawing by Breugel the Elder called "The Ass at School." The humorous sketch depicts a schoolmaster switching the bare buttocks of a child in front of his misbehaving classmates. It may also be the case, as Ayers Bagley (1984) argues in his masterful deconstruction of the image, that the schoolmaster is similarly the brunt of a degradation ceremony in that his attempt to maintain order is seen as futile by a jackass that stares in through the open window.

Status degradation is not just a teacher's job, although it is something employed in various ways as part of

Figure 27. "Leveling off"
Note: Location undetermined. Undated. 1950's? Montana?
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Figure 28. Sent outside the classroom.
Note: Location undetermined. Undated.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

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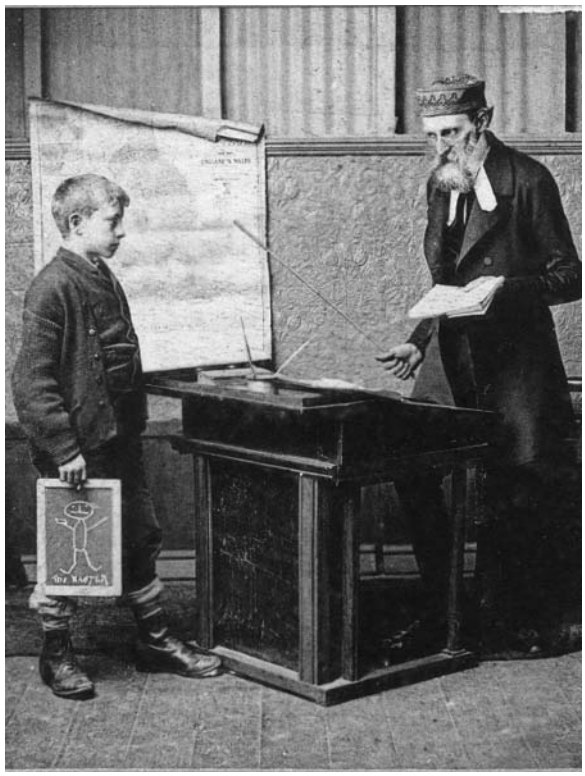

Figure 29. "Schoolmaster"
Note: Stereoview. Location undetermined. Undated.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

Figure 30. School room. Girl in corner with dunce cap
Note: Location undetermined. September 14, 1930.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

school disciplinary action. The public performance of discipline reestablishes hierarchies that allow the tacit physical and psychological degradation of one that is less powerful (the student) by one that is more powerful (the teacher). As these performances are witnessed by the student body, students themselves also enact the general social obligation of policing their peers, as the photograph of a young girl "playing school" by

Figure 31. Play school.
Note: Stereoview. Location undetermined. Undated.
Source: Margolis Collection. Bought on eBay.

participating in the shaming of her "dunce capped" classmate shows (Figure 31). It is important to note that Figures 29 and 31 were published as stereoviews; that is, mechanically reproduced to be made available to a wide audience. Thus we can assume the social practices depicted were considered socially acceptable and perhaps desirable. Status degradation includes various kinds of forced assimilation, including being given new "American" names (Figure 12). In addition, the tracking system that creates groups of "rich" and "poor," "honors" and "regular," "college bound" and "vocational" might be seen as part of the degradation system, as they establish and maintain a hierarchy with some on top and others shamed because they do not meet certain criteria established by the system.

Explicit and implicit degradation ceremonies communicate to young people the importance of not only maintaining social hierarchies, but also the necessity of constructing status difference through the imposition of power. Young people learn that society functions through rule maintenance at the expense of individual/cultural identity, pride, and expression. Ideas such as difference and nuance are subsumed by the need of the classroom to quash any challenge to order, and to create a single, leveled vision of "student."

Implications

Through an analysis of photographs that portray rituals of the habitual, coming of age ceremonies, patriotic rituals and ceremonies, and degradation rituals and ceremonies, we found

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that schools often function as institutions that conserve rather than transform social values. Reformers from many perspectives often ignore the reproductive quality of schooling rituals and ceremonies, which may circumvent the effectiveness of school reform efforts. There are those who seek to reform schools to leverage emergent technologies and provide better trained workers and those who seek open, democratic, and critical reforms. Yet conservative and progressive educational reform proposals do little to address the deep "hidden in plain view" social practices discussed in this article. Through an analysis of school photographs, we have identified some ways that schools reproduce social ideologies and roles for behavior while raising questions about who is advantaged or disadvantaged by these values, beliefs, and actions.

Because of the challenges to using visual methods in the construction and interpretation of history, school reformers and others may not readily accept the implications we have drawn from these photographs of school rituals and ceremonies. We recognize that the photographic image is an incomplete picture: it does not provide information about actions before or after the photograph was taken. Nor does the photograph record the full repertoire of ephemeral behaviors, communication, or other forms of social interaction. Furthermore, photographs can themselves reinscribe hegemony, as discussed, through calling for normalized poses or the selection and display of images that demonstrate desired behavior. However, as Grosvenor (2007) suggests, vernacular photographs can reveal cultural experiences and perspectives commonly ignored by mainstream historical narratives, such as those of people of color and children. Furthermore, images can teach us to look at what we as viewers see and how we see it, including what we hope for from a children's agency against reproductive social norms (Rousmaniere, 2001).

Through this analysis of school photos, we discovered that across history a normalization of social skills and behavior is often accomplished through a narrow set of performances that exclude and devalue other, "undesirable" behaviors (even those of the children being schooled). We found reflected in the photos various kinds of restrictive group identities that schools create through rituals and performances, including "good" and "bad" student behaviors perpetuated and legitimized by degradation rituals. We wonder about the tautological quality of these ceremonies and rituals. Because they are normalized through reperformance, they maintain unspoken norms and structures and disallow transformative questioning of "the way things are done at school." Even teachers and administrators seldom stop to think about the origins and functions of such rituals and performances. They are done because they are done.

The examination of school photos across the historical record suggests additional questions for reformers. Which performances have endured for generations? Which have fallen out of use, and why? Given the points above, is it possible to eliminate or change rituals and ceremonies that have endured for generations? If so, what would these new practices be, and who would decide? (For example, what happens to young people who refuse, because of their political beliefs, to stand for the pledge of allegiance or recite the words aloud?)

How might such "interruption of history" or tradition occur? Interventions such as those suggested by Chappell (2010) in his article on performances called for by social studies textbooks include research into the period including seeking out counter narratives, reframing the narratives expressed in and through the performances, or deconstructing these narratives through arts activities. Authors Levstik and Barton (2005) suggest that students explicitly apply an ethical stance to history as presented in the photos. For example, students might identify rituals or ceremonies in photographs that reflect diverse cultural values or multiple perspectives on traditionally narrow concepts such as patriotism or what it means to be a good boy/girl. They might look at degradation ceremonies of the past and then turn to the present practices in their own classrooms to compare and contrast how social relationships have changed (or not), as well as how circumstances have caused (and continue to cause) people's shaming of one another through legitimate school rituals. The role of historical photographs of schooling performances is also of importance for researchers and university supervisors working in schools and creating action research with young people on questions of social reproduction and agency.

We recognize that the analysis in this article is overtly critical of many everyday practices in schools. If schools continue to ask children to participate in such school performances without an interrogation of their embodied, lived impact on young people, then school reform continues to function under the ruse that knowledge is apolitical. We hope that a response to this article might be a series of local discussions among school faculty, policy makers, and even young people themselves about the functions of school rituals and ceremonies in their districts and states. Through an analysis of photographs, young people in particular can become active participants in choosing the roles that they will play, or creating new roles entirely.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

Note

1. For a more nuanced discussion of photographic meanings in historical photographs, see Eric Margolis (in press).

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