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they are unhappy there … Why do so many boys run away? This is the question which should have been asked. Almost all boys run away because they are starved of affection. It is not surprising that they will respond to the affection offered by the first stranger who comes along. The social services attempt to 'look after' their economic and moral needs, but are incapable of satisfying their basic emotional needs. Johnny doesn't *want* to go home."

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The situation revealed to a vast public by "Johnny Go Home" received immense public discussion, if only for its revelation of how Roger Gleaves was able to exploit the welfare system, and take in the Charity Commissioners, the Department of Health and Social Security, the police, the probation service, several borough councils and a prison governor. It led to demands for better advice back home for children likely to flee to London, and for a more effective travellers' aid service at the London stations as well as demands for the closing of amusement arcades in the West End where the runaways congregated and were picked up. Official guesses at the time the film was made assumed the number of vagrant children in London to be between 25,000 and 30,000. The police in their "juvenile sweeps" of the West End round up and send home a dozen a week, usually the least experienced. But another twenty arrive in London every day. Those who are sent home seldom stay home. Tommy for example was taken back to his home by the television company. Di Burgess says, "We took him back to his parents' council flat on one of those grim estates just outside Glasgow. His parents were good, down-to-earth Glaswegians who genuinely didn't know where he was and worried about him. But it didn't work. He wouldn't even stay the night." What happens to the runaways in the end? Deakin and Willis concluded that "for a surprising number of the cases we followed, in the end things turned out better for the kids than we at least had ever expected."

In all the acres of sanctimonious comment that the episode provoked, the wisest summing up came from Don Busby, the editor of a homosexual newspaper who remarked that the more sheltered members of the viewing public "would be very likely to identify the monster Gleaves with all those men who befriend boys. Indeed one of the major effects of the programme is that it has now made it difficult for *anyone* to befriend these boys apart from the authorities. In fact the greater percentage are running away from local authority 'Care' homes because

and sent to register for social security payments giving his age as 17.

The £9 a week was collected by Gleaves for each inmate. They lived in squalor on canned beans and old frozen food. Mr Willis's story would have ended there, but when the television crew went back to the hostel to get more film, they found it full of police investigating the brutal murder of a 19-year- old resident, by three employees of Roger Gleaves. The second part of their film investigated the events surrounding his death, and it ended back in Piccadilly to comment that the children drifting there were getting younger every year, and to watch Johnny, just 11, finding his way to the bright lights.

The viewers were not told Johnny's story, but when John Willis and the executive producer Michael Deakin recounted the background to the film they explained Johnny's mode of survival in the city. "To describe Johnny as a truant would be mild. Quite simply he cannot remember when he last went to school … When he swaggers down the street in the Elephant and Castle where he lives, other kids' mothers turn their heads. He is at once pretty and masculine, an irresistible combination in a young boy." He lived with his drunken father in two squalid rooms, and "A couple of years ago he evolved a pattern of life, better adapted to surviving in so uncaring an environment, and up till now it has succeeded in making him both happy and, after a very special fashion, educated." After his father had gone to work, Johnny would climb over the back fence to see his friend Ernie, an ex- boy prostitute in his middle twenties, to go up west. "They all treated Johnny as though he were one of them, and an adult. Better still, they admitted him to a club, a society of people who lived outside the regulations of what they called straight society. In their world people stole, or ripped things off, naturally and logically." When Ernie was arrested for a car theft, Johnny was devastated, and went again to the West End to see what would turn up.

Foreword

This book is an attempt to explore the relationship between children and their urban environment. It asks whether it is true, as very many believe it to be true, that something has been lost in this relationship, and it speculates about the ways in which the link between city and child can be made more fruitful and enjoyable for both the child and the city.

But the title, and perhaps the very concept, are open to criticism because they imply that it is possible to speak in general terms about either children or cities. We need to be reminded, as Margaret Mead never fails to remind us, that "It's a good thing to think about the child as long as you remember that the child doesn't exist. Only children exist. Every time we lump them together we lose something". It is not just a matter of the enormous differences between individuals. Every child is in a different state of being or becoming. The legal definition of childhood varies from one place to anther, and according to the kind of right or obligation we are discussing. In Britain a whole series of laws, or rather a random accumulation of laws, grants rights or imposes duties at different ages, which in very general terms define the status of childhood. This book is concerned broadly with people within the age-range of compulsory schooling in Britain: five to sixteen. But many would claim that, in terms of life-chances and formative experiences, the most crucial things have already happened to us by the time that as five-year-olds in Britain, or as seven-year-olds in many other countries, we first attend school. The most important thing of all is the accident of whose children we happen to be.

Similarly in most parts of the world it would be foolish to describe a fifteen-year-old as a child. We may adopt the word adolescent to describe those fellow-citizens who are between puberty and the age of full adult rights, an age which, without much debate or opposition, has been lowered from 21 to 18 in

many countries in the last decade. But is adolescence simply a creation of society? Frank Musgrove, in a memorable phrase, claimed that "the adolescent was invented at the same time as the steam engine. The principal architect of the latter was James Watt in 1756, of the former Rousseau in 1762." Today not merely adolescence, but the self-evident condition of childhood is under questions as a timeless and universal concept. The work of sociologically-minded historians like Philippe Ariés and Peter Laslett has made us realise how recent is our concern for childhood as such. "Children are a modern invention," remarks the playground pioneer Joe Benjamin. "They used to be part of the family."

The family is almost always a more crucial element in a child's destiny than the city, and in diagnosing the social ills of the city moralists point to the high incidence of "broken families" and lament the death of the "extended family", but the social historians point to the mortality statistics. A walk through any old graveyard supports the view that in breaking families the divorce court has simply taken over where the funeral undertaker left off, and explains a great deal about our ancestors' attitude to childhood. By selecting the evidence we can show that the child in past societies was accorded something of the dignity that accrues to someone with an economic role in this world, or we can exhibit the child as the victim of grotesque exploitation, or we can show that the history of childhood, as Lloyd Demause argues in the opening chapter of his book of that name, "is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken."

Mr Demause believes that the history of child-rearing can be seen as a series of six overlapping modes, of which the newest, the "helping mode" begins (he thinks) in the mid-twentieth century and results in a child "who is gentle, sincere, never depressed, never imitative or group-oriented, strong-willed, and un-intimidated by authority." Few adults would deny as individuals that they sought to adopt a helping mode in relation-

that "Next day, everybody at the documentary department had nagging doubts. Everyone knows about winos, squatters and tramps. But these were healthy young boys, and although only half a dozen sentences had been exchanged with them, what struck us was their acceptance of the essential normality of their existence."

The situation in British cities is that hostels run by official or reputable voluntary bodies are not available for "children", which in the legal sense means anyone under seventeen. It would in fact be illegal to make such provision. The large number of vagrant children, many of them runaways from Scotland and the North-East, have no official existence in London. There was more provision for them in Victorian times than today. Then as now, they arrived at the main line stations which were the hunting ground of the charitable organisations then, and of "Bishop" Roger Gleaves and his assistants a hundred years later.

The first part of Mr Willis's film picked out just a few of the young wanderers from the West End. One was Annie, who began to leave home for a few days at a time, sleeping on the Circle Line, when she was 10. At 12 she became a junkie, later she was raped, and by now she had been through eleven institutions, always running away. Sixteen when the film was made, she got her breakfast from the nuns in Blandford Street and spent her days "bottling for a busker" (collecting the money for a street musician). Another was Nicholas, a boy prostitute who, after wandering homeless for a week, found it possible to make £80 in a few hours, charging £5 for 'tossing off' his clients. "It was a frightening experience at first but it dawned on me that it was an easy way to get money. It's a boring and lonely life. Others don't like you if you're 'one of them' ". Yet another was Tommy, who ran away from his parents' home in Glasgow. He had been picked up at Euston Station, used for pornographic photographs and thrown out again. Then he was collected by Gleaves and installed in one of his chain of hostels at Lambeth,

present himself at a London comprehensive school to ask for an education. In the first place he wouldn't be wanted, and in the second, the initial telephone call made on his behalf would be to the police. The example never actually arises because the first thing the child has discovered is that the system is something to be avoided, or at most exploited, rather than to be used.

A variety of networks are at the disposal of the runaway child who knows the passwords and links. Those who don't know them learn very rapidly, or fall very soon into the hands of the police. One is the world of squatting, which in London has become absolutely essential to the young incomer of any age since the cheap rented room has disappeared. Another is the drug subculture, another is the world of clubs and discos, and the final one is that of prostitution. The migrant juvenile has pathetically few assets to exploit, so it is not surprising that one of them is catering for minority sexual tastes. The prostitution of young girls was one of the unmentionable commonplaces of the Victorian city, made mentionable by the trial of the crusading journalist W. T. Stead in 1885 following his series of articles "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon". Kellow Chesney says that "According to the chaplain of Clerkenwell Jail, the appeal of immaturity had so increased by the early 'eighties that) where it had once been common for child prostitutes to ape the appearance of adults, it was now grown prostitutes who got themselves up to look like children."

The event which brought home to a wide public in Britain truths known to any observer of the city scene, was the Yorkshire television programme "Johnny Go Home". This grew from the experience of two members of the firm's documentary team who, leaving a film cutting room off Wardour Street in the early hours of the morning, stumbled over two young boys asleep on the pavement. Asked what they were doing there in the depth of winter, the boys replied, "We live here". John Willis, who eventually directed the programme, recalled

ships with the children who share their lives and their cities, even though they might feel less confident that it would produce this particular combination of attributes. But our question in this book is whether the city, as a human institution, adopts a helping mode towards its young citizens, or whether Paul Goodman was right when he declared years ago that "the city, under inevitable modern conditions, can no longer be dealt with practically by children" because "concealed technology, family mobility, loss of the country, loss of neighbourhood tradition, and eating up of the play space have taken away the real environment".

A child is… well, a child is what you recognise as a child, and I am going to be equally evasive in defining the city. Traditionally there are differences between the British and American usage of the word. The expansive founding fathers of some Western town may have named it as the city it never quite became. Sleepy British towns that happen to contain an Anglican cathedral are called cities and indeed this may be just for as Leslie Lance once remarked, "Canterbury and St Davids are cities in a way that hundreds of large nineteenth and twentieth century towns are not." A city is loosely defined as a human settlement larger than a town, and there are already seventy-five cities with populations greater than a million. Soweto, whose children were provoked into revolt in June 1976, has over a million inhabitants, but is known as a township. It is estimated that by the end of the century the greater part of the world's population will be living in million-sized cities.

But the distinctions between city, suburb, small town and village, grow less tenable as the years go by. In what sense is the village-dweller who commutes to the city, and whose children commute to the nearest urban school, to be thought of as a villager? Claus Moser and William Scott in their study of British Towns warn us that "One is all too ready to speak of the urban dweller, the urban pattern, the urban way of life without appreciating the variations found both within and between the

cities." There are more similarities between urban and rural life in Britain than between urban life in Britain and urban life in Burma. THere is much more in common in the experiences of children in affluent families, rural or urban, than in those of rich and poor children in the same city. In practice it is more sensible to think of the city region than of the city itself and it is only fiscal and administrative realities that persuade us that the city as an entity still exists. These considerations profoundly affect the viability of cities but our considerations of the lives of children should not be limited by some obsolete political boundary.

As a third disclaimer I should warn the reader that this book is not the product of interviews in depth with a random sample of a thousand children in a hundred cities. Much might be learned from such an enterprise, but not acted upon. I have met a great many people who have found fulfilment in trying to meet the needs of city children, from Alex Bloom to Marjorie Allen of Hurtwood. Their motivation came, I am convinced, not from statistical surveys, but from empathy, from their own and other people's recollections and from sympathetic observation of what children actually do. Everyone has been a child, and the philosopher Gaston Bachelard devoted a book The Poetics of Space to evoking, through daydream, meditation and the resonance of the evocations of others, the newness of childhood experience of the environment. "After 20 years," he says, "in spite of all the other anonymous staircases, we would recapture the reflexes of the 'first stairway', we would not stumble on that rather high step. The house's entire being would open up, faithful to our own being. We would push the door that creaks with the same gesture, we would find our way in the dark to the distant attic. The feel of the tiniest latch has remained in our hands… We are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house, and all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme. The word habit is too worn a word to express this passionate liaison of our bodies,

the scene has a kind of familiarity, Slowly it dawns on him that he has been prepared for the scene by Tom Jones and Oliver Twist. When he doesn't get this feeling he knows he is in a police state, and the children are out there in enormous black townships like Soweto, or that they dare not show themselves for fear of the police. The late Robin Copping went to Ecuador to collect zoological specimens and found that the authorities in Quito and Guayaquil imposed a 9 pm curfew on unaccompanied children. He set up clubs for the street children where, besides meals, they were paid to attend classes, to compensate them for loss of earnings. When Richard Holloway went to Addis Ababa he found that the boys of eight to fourteen who throng the city from the countryside perpetually "live on the defensive", but that "when the possibilities of attending school were presented to them these were eagerly accepted, They tended to identify themselves as scholars and therefore a cut above their former associates still on the street. " When Mike Francis of International Children's Aid sought in Dacca to provide facilities for some of the hundreds of children thrown out on the streets as a result of social upheaval and poverty, and living at the mercy of gangs specialising in prostitution and slavery, he found that much of his time was spent in trying to secure the release of untried children from the Central Jail, where their lives were even more perilous than in the streets.

In the cities of the poor world, it is, Richard Holloway remarks, "important to understand that street boys are extremely realistic about the world they live in. However wretched life is on the streets they are keenly aware that the city holds the promise of much more for them than their original feudal farms." But it is also important to understand that the runaway children of the rich world have the same conviction. And in the tightly organised Western city they are *obliged* to disappear into one or other of the urban sub-cultures. Imagine a runaway child from Strathclyde who had the naivety to

and- go character which ensured, as it does with Copetin or Zezé, that they will be among the survivors.

To a child's hopeful vision, the myth is true. Mayhew found that the children of the street could not bear the restraints of a more secure existence, and Sarita Kendall writes today of the real life Copetinos of Bogota that "freedom and adventure are the chief attractions of the streets -*gamines* who have described their lives to me emphasise the excitement and the independence above all, dwelling on the misery only when they expected to get a tip," while a present-day Indian social worker, Jailakshmi, says "slum children are free birds, they want to be free all the time." Well over a century ago a 12-year-old street trader answered Mayhew's question with, "No, I wouldn't like to go to school, nor to be in a shop, nor be anybody's servant but my own."

The Victorians respected this fiery independence, except for the convicted child who was to have his spirit crushed in prison or reformatory, because it fitted the ideology of self-help. Thus the Children's Aid Society in New York, which disapproved of indiscriminate alms-giving as perpetuating pauperism, provided a Newsboys' Lodging House for paperboys and shoeshine boys, with evening classes as well as beds and meals, for which the boys were obliged to pay. James McGregor set up a Shoeblack Society in London in 1851 to house the boys who supported themselves by cleaning the shoes of visitors to the Great Exhibition, and in 1868 Dr Barnardo organised a Woodchopping Brigade. Such occupations for vagrant children were more susceptible to literary romanticisation than the more characteristic trades of begging, crossing-sweeping, theft, prostitution, or the variety of "street-finders" listed by Mayhew: the bone-grubbers, rag-gatherers, pure-finders, cigar-end and old wood collectors, dredgermen, mudlarks and sewer-hunters.

The visitor to the cities of Asia, Africa and Latin America, swarming with children, scratches his head and wonders why

which do not forget, with an unforgettable house." It is with this kind of experienced reality that I am trying to entice the reader to stand in the footprints of the contemporary urban child.

There is a final apology to be made. I have referred to the generalised child as he, when I meant he or she, since I can scarcely use the word it. But even granted that it is conventional to use the male pronoun to subsume both sexes, and granted that my own experience as individual, as parent and as teacher has been confined to boyhood, I have been made conscious in compiling this book that very often when I use the word he, this is what I mean, Boys do experience, explore and exploit the environment much more than girls do. They are also, in all but one vital respect, much more exposed to its hazards. Some of the implications of the differing environmental experiences of boys and girls are discussed in this book.

In attempting to convey the intensity, variety and ingenuity of the experience of urban childhood, the photographs are probably more effective than the text, and I am especially indebted to Ann Golzen who instantly grasped what pictures were needed and went out and took them. I am grateful too to the other photographers and especially to Becky Young and to Sally and Richard Greenhill. I also have a debt to innumerable children and adults who have talked to me about their environmental experiences and to all those people whose written accounts I have gratefully looted. Anyone writing on a theme like this must be conscious of an indebtedness to Iona and Peter Opie. It's hard to imagine that they have not said the last word on children's games. I am certain too that Paul Goodman was the first to articulate the misgivings of many who have been concerned with the obstacles faced by the children of our cities in attempting to grow up. John and Elizabeth Newson's long-term study of children growing up in an English city is going to be increasingly important for anyone examining urban childhood, as is the National Child Development Study directed by

Mia Kellmer-Pringle of the National Children's Bureau. I must also acknowledge my indebtedness to the work of Kevin Lynch and his colleagues.

Godfrey Golzen first suggested this book, and I owe much for particular insights and items of information to Eileen Adams, Joe Benjamin, Jeff Bishop, Pauline Crabbe, Lois Craig, Felicity Craven, Aase Eriksen, Anthony Fyson, Roger Hart, Muffy Henderson, Brian Goody, Robin Moore, Rose Tanner and David Uzzell.

It would be impossible to write about childhood without exploiting one's own family and I am conscious of what I owe to my wife Harriet War, and to my five children of the city, Alan Balfour, Douglas Balfour, Barney Unwin, Tom Unwin and Ben Ward.

5. Privacy and Isolation

> "At some stages parents are aware that their children would dearly like a room of their own. At yet other ages children may appear to create separate places for themselves and their friends, places into which the intrusion of an adult is a profanity. To my knowledge, no researcher has attempted to trace the development from the den made with a cardboard box under the kitchen table by the three year old, to the den made at the bottom of the garden out of branches by the nine year old, to the 'private´ room of the teenager, to the study, library or den of the adult. There are clearly similarities in these different uses of space but differences in the way in which these places take on their form and meaning at the different stages in development."
>
> DAVID CANTER

he'd give me a good hiding when the folks had gone in, if I partly missed the second turn and was awkward for him to catch. I became so supple that I'd go down backwards and pick up ha'pennies in my mouth from the street which he invited people to put down. As long as there were ha'pennies coming, there I'd got to stop, picking them up and he'd take them from me. I don't think I liked it, my mouth and lips were dirty and nasty as I tried to get hold of the coins." Travelling theatrical companies and music hall or vaudeville acts, when they needed children to complete the act, used to take them off the street. "Fred Carno in his week in town would take some kids straight off the street to complete the reality of his show. And I knew a kid that Harry Tate engaged one Monday morning for the week, nightly for the six-thirty and eight-forty shows and three shows on Saturday, when the kid would be given ten shillings and depart feeling like a millionaire."

A chance in a million certainly: the intoxicating contact with the world of entertainment, the glamour of being part of it in the theatre of the street are and always were, illusions for the children of the street, but they are part of its myth for observers and street kids alike. Hence the Bogota daily *El Tiempo* has a cartoon of Copetin, the archetypal *gamine,* and hence too José Mauro de Vasconcelos' novel *O Meu Pé de Laranja Lima,* about Zezé, "the most ingenious entrepreneur among the shoe-shine boys of the city, superb at conning rich customers, untiring in his efforts to help support his huge, hungry, angry, penniless family, and absolutely unable to curb his infinities of leftover energy and inspiration," which was the best-selling novel in Brazil in the early nineteen-seventies. A hundred years earlier in London and New York there was a similar vogue for books like the novels of Horatio Alger or his English equivalents. In the English genre the city waifs usually died of hunger and cold, but in their innocent virtue were an inspiration to all around them; in the American versions they had that plucky get-up-

rary railing, with his hair sweeping the ground. On quitting it, he goes to a retired corner of the plot, and, gravely putting his head and hands upon the ground, at a short distance from the wall, turns his heels up in the air, until he touches the house with his feet. This accomplished, he whistles a melody, claps his shoeless soles together, goes through certain telegraphic evolutions with his legs, and then calmly resumes his normal position … This boy is destined to become an Acrobat-at a more advanced period of his life to perform fears of suppleness and agility in the mud of the streets, the sawdust of the circus, or the turf of a race-course. The young Olympian gradually learns his business. He first of all runs away from home and joins a troup of these agile wanderers to whom he serves an apprenticeship. It is his task, whilst sufficiently light and slender, to be tossed about on the elevated feet of a 'Professor'-to form the top figure of the living column or pyramid, or to have his heels twisted round his neck, and then to be thrown about or worn as a turban by the strongest man of the party. Next, in his hobbledehoy state of transition — when he has grown too big for the business just named, his office is to clear the ring with the large balls at the end of a cord, and to solicit the contributions of the spectators. And finally, he proves his fibres to be as firmly braced as those of his companions and comes out in the ocre cotton tights, the rusty-spangled braces, and the fillet of blackened silver-cord, as the perfect Acrobat."

From Gavarni the acrobat to Edith Piaf, to have started as a street entertainer as a child is part of the folklore of the entertainment industry. Boys still do cartwheels for pennies in the shopping mall of Düsseldorf and dive for the tourist's small change in the harbours of the East. When Andie Clerk was a ten-year-old in Liverpool, he worked for a queue entertainer: "He was what in the world of gymnasts was known as a good catcher. He'd chuck me up, somersault me and catch me, and if the crowd looked promising, I'd have to do a double one. 'I'll give yer an extra fling an mind yer over twice, he'd say, and

The quest for personal privacy and the sense of social isolation are not opposites in the experience of the urban child. The same child who is most deprived of a private and personal place is likely to be the child who is most isolated socially. Inner city teachers, even very experienced ones, are so accustomed to mobility, freedom of access to transport and social competence in getting around, that they are continually surprised that so many of the children they teach lead lives confined to a few streets or blocks. A survey conducted for the Community Relations Commission found that just under half of the children under five in the Handsworth district of Birmingham *never* went out to play. "They have no access, either exclusive or shared, to play spaces at the front or back of the house and their parents feared for their safety if they let them out."

Describing an infant´s school in Islington in North London, Sue Cameron remarks that "The experience of many of these children during the first five years of their lives has been so limited that they come to school like so many blank pages. Near the school is a park and a busy Underground station, but many of the children have never been inside the park and some of them don't know what a tube train looks like. Asked what they did a the week-end, they usually say they just stayed at home." Even when we assume that they *must* have been around by the time they reach thirteen or fourteen, we find that such children´s world is fantastically restricted. Teachers in a school on a housing estate in Bristol told me of the shock with which they learned that some of their teen-age pupils had never been to centre of the city. Teachers in the London borough of Brent told me of 13 and 14 year olds who had never seen the Thames; teachers in the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, in schools a few hundred yards from the River told me of pupils who had never crossed it.

It is difficult to convey the psychological isolation of the deprived urban child, though readers of George Dennison´s account of the First Street School, may gather something of

its implication, and of the paradox that many city children are just not hooked onto those "educational networks of fantastic riches and variety" that the city through its very existence provides. The hero of Vittorio de Seta´s *Diary of a School Teacher* found that his pupils in a working-class suburb of Rome "did not feel that the belonged to the big city" and when he took the class to explore the ancient heart of the city, they were "like tourists in their own town." Even the adolescents of Kevin Lynch´s UNESCO study, were, in his view, the victims of "experimental starvation". He found that distance is not the essential restriction on the movement of young adolescents away from their local areas. More important is the mixture of parental control, personal fear and a lack of knowledge of how to get about, as well as the availability and cost of public transport. "It is thus not surprising that many of the children speak constantly of boredom. There seems to be little to do or see that is new."

Innumerable studies of delinquent or potentially delinquent children in the world´s cities stress their insecurity and isolation. Aryeh Leissner, with experience of both New York and Tel Aviv, remarks that "street club workers were constantly aware of the feelings of isolation which pervaded the atmosphere." He says of the latter city that "the young, as well as the adults of these poor communities identify themselves as inhabitants of their own immediate neighbourhoods. But they say that they are 'going to Tel Aviv´, when they leave their own areas to attend to some business in other parts of the city, sometimes only a few minutes' walk or a short bus ride away. They distinguish between shops, cinemas, cafes, etc., in their own neighbourhood and 'in Tel Aviv´. Although their own communities are geographically and administratively integral parts of the City of Tel Aviv, the people who live in the these communities do not seem to feel as if they are."

In Chicago, J. F. Short and F. L. Stodtbeck noted that "the range of gang boys´ physical movements is severely restricted"

by their Intemperance, a Mother is left with many helpless Children, to be supplied by her Industry: whose resource for maintenance is either the Wash Tub, Green Stack or Barrow. What must become of the Daughters of Such Women, where Poverty and Illiterateness conspire to expose them to every Temptation? And they often become Prostitutes from Necessity before their Passions can have any share in their Guilt…."

Mr Hawes carefully follows this theme through the cities of 19th century America. The Common Council of New York City were begged by the Rev. John Stanton in 1812 to "make an attempt to rescue from indolence, vice and danger, the hundreds of vagrant children and youth, who day and night invade our streets," and in 1826 in Boston, the Rev. Joseph Tuckerman complained about the "hordes of young boys who thronged the streets and at times disrupted the operations of the city market" while by 1849, George W. Mansell, chief of police in New York, reported to the Mayor calling attention to "the constantly increasing numbers of vagrant, idle and vicious children" who swarmed in the public places of the city. "Their numbers are almost incredible…"

In the same year in London, Albert Smith reported in a graphic vignette not on the attractions of crime and vice for the horde of children adrift in the city, but on the magic of show-biz:

"As you pass through one of those low, densely-populated districts of London you will be struck by the swarms of children everywhere collected. These children are not altogether the result of over-fecundity of the inhabitants. Their parents live huddled up in dirty single rooms, repelling all attempts to improve their condition and, whenever the rain is not actually pouring down in torrents, they turn their children out to find means of amusement and subsistence, in the streets. Picture such a bit of waste ground on a fine afternoon, alive with children. Among the revelers there is a boy, who for the last five minutes has been hanging by his legs to a bit of tempo-

John Holt has to emphasise, for the sake of idiot readers, that he is not in favour of infants living alone in graveyards, but the story is worth considering in the light of those pampered children who can stand everything except being pampered. It was, curiously enough, a pair of twin boys, aged 15 not five, who made headlines in the British press because they succeeded in "evading" help from the social services department of an English city for more than a year. Their borough´s assistant director for casework whose office was 200 yards from the boys´ home explained "We were told these boys were living alone and even their teachers did not know. The boys have admitted that they used forged notes to explain why they were not at school. The neighbours were apparently aware of the situation but nobody told us." And the chairman of his committee complained that the boys "deliberately and successfully avoided their situation becoming known to the council." Nobody mentioned the thousands of pounds the pair saved the council by refraining from being taken into care or suggested that they were entitled to some kind of pay-out as a reward.

The drifting child population always was considered a menace to the city. In 1703 and 1717 vagrant, begging and thieving boys in the streets of London were rounded up and shipped off to Virginia, following the precedent of a century earlier when, Joseph Hawes tells us, "The Virginia Company made arrangements with the Common Council of London to have 100 young vagrants collected from the streets of London and sent to Virginia in 1618. The Virginians were glad to have the children, and in 1919 they persuaded the Common Council to send a hundred more."

Henry Fielding, in his capacity as a London magistrate, remarked of the children who had come before him in in the year 1755–6 that "these deserted Boys were Thieves from Necessity, their Sisters are Whores from the same cause; and having the same education with their wretched Brothers, join the Thief to the Prostitute… The lives of the Father being often shortened

not only for fear of other gangs, but also because of a "more general lack of social assurance." James Patrick found the same "social disability" in the Glasgow boys he observed.

The lack of social assurance certainly does amount to a social disability for many city children. Some children steal, not because they have no access to the purchase money, but because they find it a less arduous transaction than the verbal encounter with the seller. They move like strangers through their own city, so that one is forced to admire those cheerful rogues who know every inch of it backwards and get involved in much more serious and sophisticated offences, just because they have absorbed the structure and functions of the city.

The poor child, who is usually the most isolated from the life of the city *as* a city, is also, paradoxically, the child who is denied the solace of solitude. He is seldom alone; he is the child who is least likely to have a bedroom or a bed to himself. In many of the cities of the world, the very concept of privacy for the child is meaningless. What sense does it make in Hong Kong or Manila to speak of the child´s right to privacy? We may suggest that people don´t miss what they have never experienced, and there is evidence that different cultures have different concepts of personal space, though even the poorest of cities, one of the things that wealth buys is privacy. Gaston Bachelard pitied those children, who lacking a room of their own to go and cry in, had to sulk in the corner of the living room, though the boys interviewed by Florence Ladd, because their bedrooms were shared, mentioned the living room or sitting room as a place where one might be alone.

What does privacy actually mean to the child? Maxine Wolfe and Robert Laufer of the City University of New York have been investigating the concept of privacy in childhood and adolescence, by questioning children aged between five and 17. Not surprisingly, they found that the idea became more complex with age, but they found four major meanings at all ages. The first was that of being alone and uninterrupted, or of being

able to be alone. The second was that of controlling access to information – being able to have secrets. Once the child goes to school, he is able to reveal some things to one set of adults, the parents, and other things to others, the teachers, and to differentiate between siblings and other children in the disclosure and withholding of information. The third meaning was that of "no one bothering me", and the fourth was that of controlling access to spaces. Three of these four meanings were given more frequently by those children who had their own rooms – being alone, no-one bothering me, and controlling access to spaces ("no one being able to go into my room; no one can come in unless I want them to"). Keeping secrets, and not telling what you are thinking, were available to all groups, though this aspect of privacy, the control of information, is obviously important to those children who were not able to secure it physically. The researchers point out that "a child who has never had a room of his own may not define privacy as a physical separation from others but may develop techniques of psychological withdrawal. A child in a small town, once aware that control of personal history is impossible, may not see this as a relevant aspect of privacy."

The comparison with the situation of the small town child raises the question of the relative isolation and privacy of children, all along the rural-urban continuum. We assume that the country child is more isolated, but he is usually part of a far more homogeneous community, just as he was in the "village in the city" when urban communities were more stable. We assume that he had more privacy, but as Maxine Wolfe and Robert Laufer suggest, "if city children walk around the corner or a few streets away from home there is a high probability they will not be known. The child living in a small town may have to go further (i.e. into the woods) to achieve the same type of privacy."

The isolated child in the city is unfamiliar with the public transport system, with the use of the telephone, with the pub-

has been the romanticised legend of the hobo, the vast migrations of the depression years, *On the Road* in the fifties, the pilgrimage to Haight-Ashbury in the sixties, and a great chorus of railroad songs, folk, rock, country-and-western and pop which cry out that to have beat one´s way from Frisco Bay to the rockbound coasts of Maine, is a kind of *wanderjahre* or initiation rite which everybody goes through. Everybody doesn't of course, and perhaps we should wonder, not at the numbers of American children who take off, but at the number who resists the pressure to do so in favour of the daily round, the common task, the ordinary domestic affections and local ties.

If you´re not involved, if the parental heartaches are not yours, you wonder, not only at the foolhardiness of the kids in taking off, but at the independence and intrepidness that leaves them as survivors in the city thousands of miles away. The children we never hear about are those who make out on their own, the ones who don´t fall into the hands of exploiters, the police or the social agencies. "The Helping Hands Strikes Again!" as John Holt remarks, and wanting to stress the *competence* of children, he tells us about the Italian twins who came to the school in Colorado where he first taught. "When they were very small, at most four or five years old, during World War II, their parents had disappeared – killed or taken prisoner. Somehow these two small boys had managed to live and survive for several years, in a large city, in a country terribly torn and dislocated by war, in the midst of great poverty and privation – *all by themselves*. They had apparently found or made some sort of shelter for themselves in a graveyard and lived by begging and stealing what they needed. Only after several years of this life were they discovered and brought under the wing of the state." The twins were not like those feral children found in the woods. When an American adopted them and brought them home, Holt found them "friendly, lively, curious, enthusiastic" and "quick, strong and well coordinated, by far the best soccer players in the school."

the busy sociologists of the day said they had left home so that there would be one less mouth to feed. More than half came from homes broken by death, separation and divorce. Most of them, Thomas Minehan found, remained within five hundred miles of home doing the circuit from city to city, forced to keep moving by relief policies which were harder on juveniles than on older vagrants. Allsop says that "Where an adult was given six meals and two nights´ lodging, the boy tramp got one of each. (A girl tramp was sent to jail.) By forcing the youngsters out of town and onward, the relief men argued, they were forcing them back home. In reality, because few had homes, they were being forced into beggary and theft."

Over forty years later in the mid-1970s there were estimated to be not half a million, but a million runaway children in the United States, with an average age of fourteen. Few were driven by hunger or poverty. Indeed, the motives they reported to solicitous interviewers – usually a mild parental rebuke – seem a trivial reason for finding one´s way thousands of miles to the cities of the West Coast just to hang around begging for change from passers-by. The issue only gets highlighted because of some tragedy – the murders of missing girls in Tucson, Arizona in 1966 or of missing boys in Houston, Texas in 1973 – when weary policemen explain that in any city there are so many child runaways many not reported to the police, that it is pointless to investigate each case, when the child is probably somewhere in the San Francisco Bay waiting for, or perhaps ignoring the message on the pin-board: Come home. All is forgiven.

It is easy to homilies about the decline of family solidarity, and to stress that one sixth of the children of the United States are growing up in one-parent families (as are one tenth of the children of Britain) but the American child is also the heir to an immense and exhilarating tradition of Get Up and Go, Go West Young Man, folklore which is reinforced every decade. Apart from the rags to riches myths of the 19th century there

lic library, with eliciting information from strangers, with the norms of behaviour in cafes and restaurants, with planning his activities an advance, with articulating or responding to requests outside the immediate family circle. The reader might well ask whether such a child really exists, and the answer from any inner city teacher would be that children as isolated as this from the mainstream of urban life, exists in very large numbers. Various attempts are made to provide an explanation for their isolation: the idea of a "culture of poverty", the idea of a "cycle of deprivation", and the idea of a "restricted language code." Each of these explanations has its passionate opponents, who see them as modern versions of the Victorian equation of poverty with sin, the idea that the poverty of the poor is their own fault, or as an assumption of the superiority of middle class values.

But if we simple want to know why so large a proportion of inner city children grow up unable to manipulate their environment in the way that is taken for granted in the middle class home, we are bound to look for explanations in the social isolation of the home of the modern inner city child, soberly analysed by Martin Deutsch in these terms: "Visually, the urban slum and its overcrowded apartments offer the child a minimal range of stimuli. There are usually few if any pictures on the wall, and the objects in the household, be they toys, furniture, or utensils, tend to sparse, repetitious, and lacking in form and colour variations. The sparsity of objects and lack of diversity of home artefacts which are available and meaningful to the child, in addition to the unavailability of individualised training, gives the child few opportunities to manipulate and organise the visual properties of his environment and thus perceptually to organise and discriminate the nuances of that environment…. It is true, as has been pointed out frequently, that the pioneer child didn´t have many playthings either. But he had a more active responsibility towards the environment and a great variety of growing plants and other natural resources

as well as a stable family that assumed a primary role for the education and training of the child."

The tragedy of the isolated city child, and the dilemma of all our efforts to alleviate his deprivation were most poignantly expressed by John and Elizabeth Newson as they reached the third stage of their long-term study of child-rearing in an English city. They remarked that they are continually asked to specify how children should be brought up, while they have never claimed to be capable of giving such advice. They have, however, reached a conclusion: "Parents at the upper end of the social scale are more inclined on *principle* to use democratically based, highly verbal means of control, and this kind of discipline is likely to produce personalities who can both identify successfully with the system and use it to their own ends later on. At the bottom of the scale, in the unskilled group, parents choose *on principle* to use a highly authoritarian, mainly non-verbal means of control, in which words are used more to threaten and bamboozle the child into obedience than to make him understand the rationale behind social behaviour: and this seems likely to result in a personality who can neither identify with nor beat the system. In short, privileged parents, by using the methods that they prefer, produce children who expect as of right to be privileged and who are very well equipped to realise these expectations; while deprived parents, also by *using the methods that they prefer*, will probably produce children who expect nothing and are not equipped to do anything about it. Thus the child born into the lowest social bracket has everything stacked against him *including his parents´ principles of child upbringing*."

This is a bleak conclusion, made all more pointed by the fact that it is the outcome of many years of investigation and reflection. It underlines the vital compensatory role of nursery education, of efforts to improve the quality of child-minding, and of all those attempts, in and out of the schools, to enlarge the environmental experience and capability of inner city chil-

Dick Whittington to the latest tv advertisements, persuades the present day Tuvache kids that the big city is where the action is and every kind of change and excitement is to be found.

The reality is totally different of course, but perhaps the surprising thing is not how many young people make the enormous emotional and psychological leap to the big city, and with such inadequate preparation for experience, but how many resist its magnetic attraction because the ties of family and familiarity, of place and reassuring routine are sufficient to hold them in an environment which has pathetically little to offer. Spend an afternoon on early closing day in an English or Scottish provincial town, and ask what it has to offer for the young. A hundred years ago George R. Sims (author of Christmas Day in the Workhouse) met a hopeful pair at Highgate nearing their destination as they saw the city lights, and wrote the ballad that brought him, but not them, fame and fortune:

> O cruel lamps of London, if tears your light could drown,
>
> Your victim´s eyes would weep them, O lights of London Town!

Its American equivalent, from 1877, had words and music by the Rev. Roberts Lowry, pastor of Plainfield, New Jersey. Kenneth Allsop called it the song that impaled America, because it "stated a commonplace truth a precisely the emotional pitch a which it is felt by us all." It was "Where Is My Wand 'ring Boy Tonight?" and considering the vast numbers of children in the United States who leave home every year, its success was predictable. "In 932 a Chicago University research team reported for the Children´s Bureau that there were probably 200,00 juvenile hobos then in movement on America´s highways and railroads – and then apologetically adjusted their estimate to that appalling sum of half a million… "Most of those interviewed by

school, home and parents, because these seem no longer relevant to their needs, set out for the big glowing city, like moths fluttering towards the light. In the late nineteen-sixties they came from the stricken cities of Northern Ireland, from Scotland and the North East. By the mid-1970s they were coming from a much wider and more dispersed series of home towns. What jobs are open to the school-leavers of Herefordshire, for example, in the summers of the late seventies? In the hinterland of other world cities, the same juvenile migration is far more obvious.

Their elders, from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey, and North Africa, flocked to the industrial conurbations of Western Europe to provide labour for the jobs the natives were no longer willing to undertake themselves. Those who returned, bringing the hard-earned consumer goods of the big city, showed those who remained, as well as their children, what thy had missed. The situation was beautifully and bitterly described by Guy de Maupassant in his story of the peasant families who "laboriously tilled the unfruitful soil to rear their children. All of them were brought up with difficulty on soup and potatoes and fresh air." A rich lady seeing the youngest of the Tuvache children grubbing around in the dust, took a fancy to him, plied him with pennies, sweets and kisses, and finally sought the reluctant parent´s agreement to his adoption. Indignantly they refused, but she was more successful with the Vallin family next door. Little Jean Vallin was adopted, and years later returned to visit his parents, who proudly displayed him to the priest, the schoolmaster and the mayor. Charlot Tuvache watched sourly from the doorway of his parent´s cottage, listening to their tut-tutting about the family next door. "Fools" he said in the darkening porch, "it´s parents like you who bring unhappiness to their children."

The rich lady, Mme d´Hubiéres, is the city beckoning the young, for opportunities, experiences and joys thy never thought could be theirs. Everything, from hoary traditions like

dren. But it also leads us to speculate on the difference between the "slums of hope" and the "slums of despair". Oscar Lewis, who invented the concept of the culture of poverty, remarked that in Cuba, or in the squatter cities of Peru, Turkey, Athens, Hong Kong and Brazil, there are millions of poor people, but little sign of the culture of poverty. For the child in such places there are few of the blessings of privacy, but we may speculate that there is little of the crippling isolation that envelops the poor child in the rich cities.

6. Adrift in the City

> "In the meantime I wait for my clients. Let the children – our examiners – come with their hot hands and fragrant round heads, their laced shoes that swing like pendulums, and the smiles they display like medals, their atavistic fears and amazing ability to learn, their obsessions and cajoleries, their relentless selfishness and irresistible weakness, their vulnerable docility and their mirror images of our own depravity…
>
> "Let the runaways come, those caught after nights spent in the woods, in confessionals, cotton bales, sandboxes, or empty pigsties; the boy who is inconsolable because his mother has moved him to the floor to make room in bed for her new lover; the girl who was going to put her half-sister´s eye out with a red-hot poker but dropped it at the last minute; the youth whose father chased him around the yard with a knife and almost caught him when a pious widow next door tripped the father up with her broomstick, pulled the boy in, and laughed and cried, and covered him with kisses while he ate and sleet…

> "Let all the others come, those whom no amount of candy, tears, and toy trains can keep at home, who climb out of the window, toss their school bags into the cellar, hide stolen money under their inner soles, arm themselves with compass, kitchen knife, paper mask, and flashlight, and set out for the border, for new worlds across the sea, but end up un jail…"
>
> GEORGE KONRAD

The city is an irresistible magnet. For the young in small towns and villages where nothing ever happens, it pulls with the promise of variety and excitement. It draws those who chafe against the daily round and common task, those who feel that they can no longer stand Mum and Dad and the constraints they represent, those who know that back there in Deadsville there are going to be no jobs and no prospects, that nothing is *ever* going to happen.

When Theodore Dreiser was a child in Evansville, Indiana, his older brother came back from Chicago and declared, "You never saw such a place!… that´s the place for a family, where they can do something and get along! Not stuck off in a little hole like there! Why, say, there must be four or five hundred thousand people there! And the shops! And the high buildings!"

Literature, tradition and the conventional wisdom have sanctified the small town, in Europe, America and the rest of the world. The town was small enough to be home: "not just the house but all the town. That is why childhood in the small towns is different from childhood in the city. Everything is home." To Eric Sevareid everything was home, and for Page Smith, even the "bad boys" of the small town were pranksters rather than delinquents, and to his eyes the town "offered the boy and extraordinary degree of freedom within the security. A suburban neighbourhood might rival the town in the secure

world that enwombed the growing boy, but it was generally a world of barriers, of barred exits, of nurses and solicitous aunts."

He goes on, "In every recollection of the town we find the symbol of water. In its classic form it is the old swimming hole or the broad Mississippi of tom sawyer or Huck Finn. It is the symbol for freedom and also for mystery and perhaps for something deeper. In the swimming hole, clothes and the conventions of the town are discarded. The adult world is rejected in this unique arena which custom has allowed as the American boy´s special preserve. The pond, the lake, the river, the swamp, the stream; it is as though here the small- town boy is dimly aware that he touches the source of life – dangerous, strangely loving and enfolding."

Dangerous and enfolding, but tolerating rather than loving, the analogy of water fits the city too. *Town Swamps* was the title George Godwin gave to his study of the city in the eighteen-fifties. Immersed in the city, symbol too, of freedom, mystery and the discarding of small- town conventions and assumptions, you sink or swim. The thoughtful youngster in a small or provincial city, unless he has a foothold on the escalator of higher education, knows exactly the job prospects awaiting him if he stays at home. Armies are recruited this way. For the boy from an Egyptian village the army is an education, an initiation into sophisticated urban habits, an opportunity to acquire saleable skills. But you don´t have to go to collapsing traditional societies to see the same phenomena. A young soldier from South Shields said to me, " I reckoned I had only two choices: to become a hippy or to join the army. When I go home, not that I always do go home when I have leave, I meet the boys who were at school with me. The ones who are still there are drawing social security and I just have to buy them drinks. The others have gone to Newcastle or London."

As juvenile unemployment grows, the flight, not only of the young who have left school, but of those who simple abandon