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# Children, Cities, and Psychological Theories

Developing Relationships

Edited by  
Dietmar Görlitz  
Hans Joachim Harloff  
Günter Mey  
Jaan Valsiner



Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York 1998

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In memoriam  
Joachim F. Wohlwill  
(1928-1987)

To the genius loci  
of the city of Herten  
(Ruhr District)



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## Keynote

*Roger Hart*

With the poorer cities of most southern countries continuing to grow at rapid rates and the older cities of the northern hemisphere suffering from increasing alienation and violence, the problems of urban children seem so overwhelming that it is often difficult to imagine how academia can be useful. But seeing this impressive collection of theoretical papers feeds my optimism that psychologists may yet be able to address this most critical domain of concern for all societies. This volume is a remarkably broad and self-critical review of psychological theories on children's relationships to cities. It has long been needed. It sets the stage for what must be a dramatic reorientation of the attention of psychologists toward useful research on the pressing issues of planning and managing cities with children in mind.

Many psychologists would argue, of course, that their general theories are relevant to any setting and that it is up to practitioners to interpret them. But such responses are indicative of the problem. With the erosion of child study came a more theoretically oriented and abstract developmental psychology divorced from children's everyday life. Related to this has been the emphasis on cognitive development at the expense of a more wholistic view of children. More generally, psychology has been trapped by adherence to experimental methods that lead most psychologists to avoid the complexities of research on real problems of children in their environment. Without detailed study of children in the context of their everyday lives, social scientists are unlikely to generate the rich theory they need.

Empirical research and theory on the ecology of children in cities is in an impoverished state. When I look through my shelves for the books that inform readers about the lives and experiences of city children, I find so few that are by psychologists: Barker and Schoggen's (1973) analysis of the different behavior settings found in cities of different sizes in the United States and England; Muchow and Muchow's (1935/1978) ecological study of children in Hamburg; Newson and Newson's (1970 and 1977) longitudinal studies of social class and child-rearing in Nottingham, England. There has been a reliance upon the creativity of people outside psychology to write of the behavior and experience of children in cities; urban planners and designers such as Cooper (1975), Lynch (1977), Moore (1985), and Ward (1978) pop out of my bookshelves as the practical psychologists and social scientists of the city. Most sources are autobiographies or works by journalists and lack the system-

atic and comparative qualities needed for improving cities. Scientists probably know more about the natural history of other primates in the wild than about the everyday activities of children in cities.

To be fair, the situation is not only a reflection of the methodological orthodoxy of psychological research. It is also indicative of the orientations of other disciplines. Anthropologists, with some rare exceptions (e.g., Lewis, 1963, Whiting & Edwards, 1988) have until very recently focused almost entirely on adults and their child-rearing practices. Similarly, though there is now an incipient field of the sociology of children, sociologists used to focus narrowly on deviant youth (Chombart de Lauwe, 1976, Michelson, Levine, & Michelson, 1979; are important exceptions). A growing number of valuable interdisciplinary books are now appearing concerning children living in difficult circumstances in the cities of the Third World (e.g., Blanc, 1994; Boyden & Holden, 1991; Hardoy, Mitlin, & Satterthwaite, 1992; Myers, 1991). Unfortunately, they are largely limited to the reporting of large-scale survey and epidemiological data, illustrated by brief profiles of individual children, because of the same lack of detailed accounts of children's activities and experiences.

The broad theoretical sweep of this book is in part the fruit of interdisciplinary collaboration in the study of child-environment relations that was fostered in the 1970s. Unfortunately, this development seems to have slowed down and even regressed, probably as a result of the retreat of academic disciplines to the safe, protected confines of their home territories during times of economic cutbacks. Because this book illustrates the exciting and extremely important new questions and theoretical insights that can grow out of interdisciplinary work with children, I hope it will help challenge the straitjacketed world of psychology conferences and journals and spur a new interdisciplinary wave of integrated and socially relevant theory and research on children's lives in cities.

Having established through this book a clear picture of the state of relevant psychological theories, psychologists are now in a better position to join the broader theoretical debates on urbanization and the quality of urban life, which involve economists, sociologists, political scientists, geographers, anthropologists, and urban historians. By contributing psychological theory on children to these discussions we researchers will be better able to understand the impact of urbanization on human development. Social scientists need to understand how cities of different sizes, with different degrees of wealth, and in different cultures and political systems affect people who live in them and how these relationships change as a result of the global economy. Within cities, there is a need to integrate psychological theories with economic analysis in order to inform efforts to achieve social justice for children. The landscape of cities is structured to afford very different opportunities for different children. Some of these discrepancies are obvious. Suburbs, for instance, were created specifically to improve opportunities for middle-class families with children.

But other important environmental variations in quality lie outside the researcher's knowledge and await investigation.

An unstated assumption in much of this book is that policy-makers and planners will draw on the good research of psychologists and social scientists. This notion of rational planning is too limited. Though the planning process in some cities (in the Netherlands, for example) includes research, such as regular surveys documenting the *use* of city play and recreational facilities, this approach is the exception rather than the rule. But providing practical guidelines for planners is not the only role for child-environment research. The theoretical work of this book provides the bases for research at multiple levels. At the most local level, psychologists need to forge with communities a working relationship like that in the city of Herten, where this book was born. The "Children's Friends Committee" of Herten is a superb base for supporting communities in research and in the ongoing monitoring of environmental quality for children. That kind of socially relevant action research is what Kurt Lewin called for 50 years ago (Lewin, 1948). We should build upon Lewin's thinking by also incorporating children themselves into this research endeavor (Hart, 1997).

There is still a place for research that aids the traditional rational planning of large-scale services and facilities, but it is probably at the most local level that our research efforts on behalf of community planning and management offers the greatest opportunity for building cities that truly foster children's development. To this end there is a need for psychologists who can contribute their theoretical insights to the modest enterprise of countless local social experiments with communities in cities. In this way, theory on children's behavior and development can be better brought to bear on the real problems of communities, families, and children struggling to improve their lives. There should, of course, be a continuation of some strategic top-down research and planning, but this model for applying psychological theory cannot be the only standard in a world where the problems of children require the collaboration of all. Though there is a long way to go in constructing a comprehensive research agenda for children in cities, my colleagues in this book have created an important foundation of theory on which we can confidently build.

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# Foreword

*Urie Bronfenbrenner*

This book offers rich and variegated gifts to the thoughtful reader. Its commendable, but modestly unstated, aspiration is to present what is known, and what still needs to be known, about the role of cities in shaping human development. To be sure, what is already known is very little compared to what has yet to be discovered. Nevertheless, the knowledge gained thus far is substantial. Some of it goes back more than a century. For example, in a chapter tracing the history of studies of children growing up in urban environments, Dietmar Görlitz gives due prominence to two little known early investigations of the effects of neighborhoods on the content of children's concepts by the time they enter school. The first study was carried out by the Pedagogical Society of Berlin well over a century ago (Schwabe & Bartholomäi, 1870); the second, a cross-cultural replication, was conducted in Boston a decade later by the well-known American psychologist G. Stanley Hall (1883). Both investigations were remarkably ahead of their time in terms of theory and research design. As a result, they yielded unexpected findings that foreshadowed key contemporary issues. For instance, within neighborhoods both in Berlin and Boston, children who had attended kindergarten before entering school exhibited a richer store of concepts than those who had not. Even more instructive for today's scene, again in both cities, was a marked difference by gender, but in the reverse direction from what prevails in the United States today. In those days, boys outshone the girls. A clue to the turnaround is contained in the following prescient comment by the Berlin educators back in 1870: "It is plain, therefore, that the school must assume an attitude with reference to boys different from that assumed toward girls" (quoted in Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983, p. 361).

Overall, however, the chapters in the present volume look more to the future than to the past, and, in doing so, they often break new ground. For example, Werner and Altman argue compellingly that neighborhoods cannot be viewed simply as static environments in which behavior and development take place; instead, they maintain, neighborhoods should be treated as dynamic contexts that generate changes over time. As a first step in moving from theory to research design, the authors propose a richly differentiated and dynamic taxonomy of neighborhood characteristics and activities posited as furthering the development of friendships, feelings of solidarity,

territorial investment, and shared identity, both within and across successive age levels.

Werner and Altman's chapter is but one of many that could be cited as making significant contributions. However, their authors often draw upon different theoretical traditions and empirical work and, thereby, call attention to other influential factors, among them physical features of the environment, cultural traditions as sustainers of neighborhood life, cities and neighborhoods as objects of emotional attachment, and environmental features especially important to the development of young children (e.g., opportunities for exploratory behavior, reality testing, and learning from the feedback of their own activities). What is notable about these elements is not so much their diversity as their complementarity and, therefore, their capacity to be included, in combinations of two or three variables, within the same research design. An instructive example is Frieder Lang's chapter, in which he analyzes features of urban life that have different significance for the young and the old, and then looks at structures that can bring the age groups together, thus fostering intergenerational ties.

Paradoxically, one of the most distinctive and potentially promising features of this volume is its inclusion of chapters that have little to say about the specific characteristics of cities that influence human beings. The future potential nevertheless exists because the theories presented lie at the frontiers of contemporary developmental science. These formulations have certain features in common. All are multivariate systems-theories that cut across and integrate concepts and findings from different disciplines, ranging from comparative and evolutionary biology on one side through developmental psychology, sociology, and cultural anthropology to economics, political science, and both micro- and macroeconomics. A second defining property is the bidirectionality of processes and effects. A third distinctive characteristic, and perhaps the most elusive, appears under the rubric of "transactionalism." A succinct definition that has the additional virtue of including concrete examples is provided by Rolf Oerter:

Transactionalism, a concept that is sometimes used very vaguely . . . [refers] to the assumption that individuals change their environment through their own actions in such a way that personal ideas, designs, and goals are transported into the environment and 'materialized' there. As part of the human-made environment, however, these products have impacts on the individual. . . . Everyday objects like tools and cars may serve as examples. Using a tool means that the constructors' ideas that are imposed on the object are realized and transformed into action. (p. 253)

On a broader level, the book's editors have employed an ingeniously simple strategy to help readers understand, think critically about, and apply creatively these newly evolving theoretical models; namely, in the second half of the volume, the original authors change roles to become constructive critics of a theoretical position differing from their own. This procedure often has the additional advantage of providing a perspective from another culture or scientific discipline.

In conclusion, I turn to a theme appearing in this volume on which there is both division and emerging integration. I refer to the distinction frequently made in the social and behavioral sciences between the world as perceived, and so-called objective reality. The nature of the former is perhaps best conveyed in the Thomases' inexorable dictum: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." In a monograph published almost two decades ago, I referred to the foregoing statement as "perhaps the only proposition in social science that approaches the status of an immutable law" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 23). The qualifying "perhaps" turned out to be well-advised. Since that time, an analysis of accumulating theoretical and empirical writings, including my own, has led me to a second, complementary formulation that is no less immutable: "Situations *not* perceived as real are also real in their consequences." The inexorable realities to which I refer are the biological requirements and imperatives for the effective functioning and development of members of our own species: *Homo sapiens*.

The nature of these requirements and imperatives, their bases in research findings, and their implications for theory and social policy are set forth in several recent works<sup>1</sup> that specify the defining properties of what I now call the bioecological model. Their relevance to the present volume lies in the fact that violation of these biological requirements has been producing profound social changes in our own times.<sup>2</sup> I refer to this phenomenon as the mounting chaos in the lives of children, youth, and families. Today, it is occurring at an increasingly rapid rate in all post-modern societies at all class levels, and it is especially pronounced in large cities. Even if unwittingly, many of the chapters in the present volume shed light on this phenomenon, both in terms of the forces that produce it and those that have the power to turn it around. Here, once again, I see the promise of Kurt Lewin's classic maxim: "There is nothing so practical as a good theory."

## Notes

- 1 Bronfenbrenner, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996; Bronfenbrenner, McClelland, Wethington, Moen, & Ceci, 1996; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, in press.
- 2 These changes are documented in several of the publications cited above.

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## How it all began – Background to this book

*Dietmar Görlitz*

This book arose from encounters; it lives on dialogue, on exchange and discussion. When Joachim Wohlwill was in Berlin for the first time, oppressed by the proximity to things German, he was intent on finding a way to move from research in environmental psychology back into developmental psychology. Our aim, with his aid, was to bring the everyday world into psychology (Fietkau & Görlitz, 1981). This contact nurtured confidence and grew into an extended stay for Wohlwill in the then still divided city. And developmental psychology spread into zones of everyday life, where it was infused by amazement at children and adults observed in situations that piqued their curiosity on the streets.

They were city streets, but not yet the city itself. Our fascination was with process models, with the putatively brief moment of time. Wohlwill, a native of Hamburg, was keen at that time (in the early 1980s) on seeing the city where Martha Muchow, as an associate of William Stern, had sought out other children and followed their activities through participant observation. Our research on play and exploration became an exploration by the researcher and an adventure for those accompanying him along the way. Wohlwill was always the advisor on the findings and on what was preserved for further reflection (Görlitz & Wohlwill, 1987), the purpose of which was to analyze the course of play and exploration in context. Their urban context was kept in mind but not elevated to a topic in its own right, let alone a complex topic, although the mentor was always aware of it. Wohlwill bequeathed American psychology new traditions by reminding us Germans of our own past traditions and helped us tie into them again (Wohlwill, 1985). What would Martha Muchow make of children's doings in the West Berlin of the 1980s? Which city would her methods allow us adults to see and experience?

In long discussions between the primary editor of this book and the researcher to whom this book is dedicated, the idea was born to look at the modern city as seen from the perspective of the children there, remembering that cities in today's world may have become more problematic, more menacing – or at least dubious – in the contribution they make to children's development. Beyond playing and exploring, what would children themselves want to do or even make possible in the first place if they were to participate in planning streets, dwellings, or larger units of the city?

Wohlwill's death in the initial stage of joint work with Germans suspended this project (Görlitz, 1989), as it did many others.

As strange as our viewpoint was to architects in Berlin, however, some of them liked it, and the adventure of engaging in the development of psychology by actually walking the streets and sharpening the focus on children acquired an interdisciplinary dimension. Among psychologists, Gerhard Kaminski's work group in Tübingen was particularly supportive of this orientation, which was soon expanded further by the contributions of town and regional planning. All this interest, however, still lacked a place where it could strike roots. The encounter with Herten, an average sized mining town in the northern part of Germany's Ruhr District, quite literally gave our project life.

This introduction is purposely written in a biographical and historical mode, for only enthusiasm or necessity drives psychologists onto the streets; as a research topic, curiosity can be confined to labs and left at that. Streets, by contrast, are a promising start, for they are "a primary ingredient of urban existence . . . [on which] the urban process never stops [. . . They] are as mutable as life itself," as Çelik, Favro, and Ingersoll (1994, p. 1) wrote when they introduced their portrait of streets in major cities of the world. In Herten, in our small circle of psychologists, architects, town planners, and students – vulnerable in our lack of a model and in our effort to span disciplinary boundaries – there was the pioneer spirit of turning to a city whose patrons had a long record of pursuing child-oriented town planning and settlement design. "Go west!" From our vantage point in Berlin, that meant happily embracing Herten as a venue that augured well. The then three-year-old project of getting acquainted with children's perspectives on the city and becoming familiar with ways that children at different phases of their development can help design the settings of the settlements in which they live has been described elsewhere (Görlitz, 1993; Görlitz & Schröder, 1994; Schröder, 1995, 1996).

Upon successful completion of this initiative, it was logical for like-minded, experienced, and interested thinkers at home and abroad to be invited to Herten to exchange their views on the city as a framework for children's development. That dialogue took place at a four-day conference hosted in the town's renaissance castle in the summer of 1992 as planned by this book's four editors along with students and their partners in Herten, especially Richard Schröder, a graduate of the Technical University of Berlin who is currently the director of Herten's "children's friends" office.

Were we able to think in terms of development despite the impressive immobility of a city and its buildings amid the constant flow of traffic? It is true that Wohlwill had regarded the adaptations made by developing children as the true subject of psychology (Wohlwill, 1981, pp. 108-111), but when Jaan Valsiner joined the project it was through that younger author's serious reconsideration of the developmental subject matter (Valsiner, 1987, Wohlwill, 1973) that the Herten adventure found the way back to Wohlwill's disciplinary roots (see also Valsiner, 1988). It explicitly

acquired the dimension of environmental psychology with Hans Joachim Harloff (Harloff, 1993; for a characteristically broad approach, see also Harloff, 1995), and the Herten planning staff gained Günter Mey from Heidi Keller's circle in Osnabrück, which, as Jean Paul might have put it, was one of the project's "preparatory schools" (Mey & Wallbrecht, 1988; Mey, 1989).

As the conference organizers, we wished to achieve what Gary Moore and Roger Hart had taught us and what Urie Bronfenbrenner had outlined as a developmental model. We wished to engage in an exchange between adults from the academic, administrative, and decision-making communities in order to sharpen our senses for and our knowledge about these purportedly so permanent artifacts – cities as "the greatest works of art that a culture can produce"<sup>1</sup> – and their formative and formable effects on the children growing up in them. Are cities "a work of art, a design to be controlled and orchestrated" (Kostof, 1994, p. 12), and "unendurable contradiction of itself and human life" (Barber, 1995, p. 33)? Can the voices of children in the city be detected amid all that is superimposed upon them? And what is taught about them by closely listening trained psychologists with their major theories? And how is it with the attempts to formulate objectives for thriving, fruitful development among children in the city as a framework and space for living? There is no "language" more piercing than the earth one treads upon; than the buildings with their windows, stairways, and doors that intermittently shelter us; than hard stone. In the same vein, we wanted the participants, who represented different backgrounds, countries and languages, to be in the right mood, so we walked, waited, and watched together in the host city.

As we did, conversation centered first on theories that could be considered important to developmental and environmental psychology focused appropriately on specific inner-city areas. Those discussions are not recounted here (see the excerpts in Görlitz et al., 1992). I note here only that the authors of the main theory chapters entered the desired frame of mind before even setting foot in Herten or composing their contributions. While still in their home countries, they were familiarized with the town through artistically edited videotaped clips, a medium as theoretical as their writings: which were kindly prepared for us by Tyrone Greene. Architects and city planners were the authors and target audience of the related publications that appeared after the conference. After all, much that is decided in their offices has a bearing on cities, and even more on children and their families (see Görlitz et al., 1993).

With theory understood today as "that explanation of the range of appearances that allows their control" (Gadamer, 1997a, p. 87), the following presentation of psychological theories about the development of children in the city would be more closely linked to the creative hand of the architect or city planner than might be generally presumed were the overriding characteristic of theories not the very antithesis of practical application (Gadamer, 1997a, p. 86). The reader should not expect a textbook presenting concise extracts of theory assessable according to

detailed rules indicating how children actually live their lives and how to increase their developmental possibilities. Despite the focus on the city and physical structures, this book is not intended to be as fixed as they. The reader should see it as a process in which meaning is gradually clarified through constant contact with urban reality, be it that of a town or a major city.

The theoretical dialogue originated first in and with the work on this volume. Thus, the book lacks most of what would lend it utility, as shown by the confining images of New York's Fifth Avenue and a little scene in the tropical rain forest of Ecuador. If this book's quasi-musical structure succeeds, it will leave the reader more informed than we authors were, more serious and more proximate to the essence of what is urban, the main form of settlement inhabited by people and their children today. We were serious about the idea that the socially defined materiality of urban life worlds were highly salient for psychology theories emanating from their hard-to-differentiate subdisciplines, environmental and developmental psychology. We thank our colleagues that they joined us on this so promising yet so uncertain path. In this book science does not carry off her heroes to the Valhalla of theory-builders; she lives more from the flow and contention of contradiction. And I do not mean battling over moot property rights – an act reminiscent of the Scottish nobleman who, according to a travelogue by Prince von Pückler-Muskau (1832/1991, pp. 345-346) threw his severed hand upon unclaimed land before his brother could take possession of it. This book is about gaining and getting used to an unobstructed view of the city while still keeping one's footing on the bedrock of familiar theoretical positions and developing tradition further in a personal way as well (Elias, 1993, p. 140). Looking back, the nearly one-hundred-year-old teacher of one of the editors stated, "Controversy is always the thing. We erring humans should never forget that, and all our effort to overcome our prejudices are based on it" (Gadamer, 1997b, p. 285). In this culture of controversy, too, our topic and its presentation seems to be just a beginning, something capable of development. As it develops, fronts and horizons shift, movement that is considered and described in the final part of the book.

The volume is divided into three parts, the first being of an introductory and preparatory nature. In the first chapter of Part I, Dietmar Görlitz explores the subject matter and its structure, illuminating selected aspects of it and calling attention to the history of the topic by adding biographical experiences, which always articulate the predispositions and biases of urban researchers, too. Unfortunately, lack of time ultimately made it necessary to forego a closing chapter on the history of this subject in psychology by Jürgen Zinnecker, who deserves much of the credit for the current topical interest in Martha Muchow's work in Germany. Many German writings and traditions still await discovery by an international readership. In place of his concluding piece, Behnken, du Bois-Reymond, and Zinnecker (1989) is recommended. In the subsequent chapter, Hans Joachim Harloff, Simone Lehnert, and Cornelia Eybisch elaborate upon a systematic way to arrange children's living space

in the city. Transcending Muchow's early efforts, they provide a structural outline in which environmental and developmental thinking in psychology are brought together. The authors especially emphasize the contribution and role of adults and the structure of networks in children's life worlds in the city. Harry Heft, a close research associate of Joachim Wohlwill in the latter's final years, ends the first part of the book by depicting Wohlwill's achievements in lending psychology a modern – environmental and developmental – orientation. He also points out overarching characteristics of Wohlwill's thinking, and readers who are relatively unfamiliar with Wohlwill's work are given a close look at his research and the wide range of topics he treated. The chapter is the most visible expression of the fact that we editors jointly dedicate this book to Wohlwill.

The main section of this volume, Part II, is an elaborate exposition of theoretical perspectives commonly taken in environmental and developmental psychology when it comes to the specific subject of children's development in urban living conditions. After initial treatment at the Herten conference in July 1992, many of them were discussed further and considerably elaborated upon and changed by their authors, to whom the editors owe special thanks for the willingness and patience they showed throughout that process. These presentations of theoretical positions are complemented by the contributions of colleagues who joined the project more recently. Nonetheless, the individual concepts are still not finished works but rather more like compact summaries in an ongoing conversation, a dialogue expanded in particular by the commentators of each theoretical position and, in many cases, by the rejoinders by the authors.

The structural principle of the theory section was to place three contrasting theories together, an approach that yielded four groups. After Günter Mey's general introduction to the theory section as a whole, the treatment of each group is introduced in turn by one of the four editors. The theories are then interrelated in the respective section's last contribution by one or more integrators, who come from widely different national backgrounds. Given such extensive texts, there is little need for further amplification here. The reader, who is certain to follow his or her own preferences or newly awakened curiosity when browsing through the book, may wish to use these special introductions to become attuned to the material, choose texts to digest, and eventually, as we may wish, to take in all of them. The editors themselves address the reader in a reflective intermezzo entitled "What has happened," a title chosen to capture as faithfully as possible the event-related, perhaps dynamic character of all that has been presented up to that point. The contribution is also an attempt to see which strategies we and the authors of this book have used against and learned from each other in considering children in the city, the ways in which psychology reaches children, and what may still be standing in the way.

A passionate discourse cannot be intensified; it is easier to subdue it. But instead of presenting a synopsis or an outline of an integrating theory, we offer perspectives

complementing the theme of the book. In this vein the two chapters of Part III deal with additional facets of our interest. Building on some of Bronfenbrenner's early precepts, Richard Lerner and Alexander von Eye develop trains of thought in which discussion of a dense, richly patterned context is held up as a model for the development of children and adolescents. Their discourse brings in more than just the preoccupation of our book with children. They also present a developmental model as a multifaceted approach to developmental contextualism in which interindividual differences and the developing subject's changing relationships to his or her context are emphasized with recognition of the dynamic and plastic character of human development. The reader will recognize in this approach engaging links to earlier theoretical positions and will note at the same time the increased prominence given to developmental thinking as well as the attention devoted to ethnic differences and demographically important subgroups of children and adolescents that have been neglected in research.<sup>2</sup> To Lerner and von Eye, one of the implications that their approach has for policy and intervention is the need for research in real-world settings, cooperation between the disciplines, and harmonization between academic and community interests.

The modern version of an ecology of human development in Lerner and von Eye's chapter also touches on the prevailing practice of seeing development as a life-span phenomenon and taking it seriously as such, a position that acquires definite shape in the concluding chapter by Frieder R. Lang, who enriches the context of discussion about children and the city by bringing in the later periods of life – the phases of the aging and the elderly person – as elaborated by Paul B. Baltes and Margret M. Baltes. It almost seems as though the contours of our topic – childhood and children – will gain clarity especially through the eyes of an old person. But it is a comparatively young author who contrasts the "city of late life" with the "city of childhood," elaborates the aspects particular to each, and then concentrates on the area in which they overlap, "the urban zone of intergenerational contact." Wohlwill, in his day, had suggested that contrasting life worlds be selected in developmental psychology if it were not possible to represent or apprehend the entire continuum (see Wohlwill, 1981). Lang, however, selects contrasts to illustrate the mutual dependence of young and old in the city. The city, with its constraints and opportunities specific to developmental phases, becomes richer with people who interact. The city itself acquires "a face," and life-span oriented developmental psychologists find opportunity to test new theoretical models of their work in the urban context, find a chance for their scientific endeavor in the realm of the city, at least as far as social embedding and the costs and benefits of intergenerational relations are concerned. In a short chapter concluding section III, the editors reflect upon their path through the topic (guided by the insight and insistent questions of Bettina Koböck) commenting on what has been achieved and on the attempt to come to a structural outline of future theory on the development of children growing up in urban living conditions. Recommendations for planning supplement these proposals.

The clear summer days prevailing now as we editors close the work on this book are similar to those we had at the time of the Herten conference. It is a book on the way to the city. Only the reader will be able to judge how close we editors and the contributing authors have come to the city, the children living or merely surviving there, and his or her own idea of what *urban* means to psychologists. That is all this book can help with. Bringing a work to its end, however, affords the opportunity to thank the many people who assisted in its development and completion. The manuscript's final form in American English has profited from the gracious perseverance shown by our technical editor, David Antal, in his translations of the contributions originally written in German and his sentence-by-sentence review of the book. At the 1992 Herten conference, too, he greatly facilitated communication in English and German with his judicious and constant focus on the essence more than the form of every text passage. The institutional backing we received despite the difficult conditions confronting the academic community and the university in Germany since the country's unification was also encouraging and helpful. The research award that the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation conferred upon Jaan Valsiner, one of this volume's four editors, provided the basis for the work we had agreed to undertake on the book as its parts took shape. The close collaboration that blossomed from this mutual interest shows how felicitous and seminal his nomination had been. Its culmination in a book on this scale is due to our publisher, especially de Gruyter's Dr. Bianka Ralle, whose initial surprise at the presence of all the editors during most of the planning discussions soon gave way to astute and invaluable guidance. Her spirited involvement and confidence in our project was an abiding source of motivation, and her patient willingness to accommodate the length, content, and scheduling in de Gruyter's commercial realities were immensely appreciated, as were the efforts of her colleagues, particularly Ms. Elisabeth Abu Homos and Mr. Christoph Schirmer.

As only the first step of this project, Herten was no longer our only priority after the conference there in the summer of 1992. Nonetheless, the unbureaucratic assistance we continued to receive from Herten's officials during the periodic organizational difficulties we faced demonstrated the deep commitment that this community has to fostering child-centered urban planning and design not only as a practice but as a philosophy reaching beyond the city limits. We express our gratitude to all the offices and individuals who lent their support in Herten, a city that welcomed us, or better, the entire outlook on which our project was based. Special mention, though, must be made of "ProKids" and its director, Richard Schröder; former city director Friedhelm Hodde; Mr. Heinz Lauzenings; and Mr. Hans-Jürgen Ahmann as the "fathers" of the agreement that enabled such productive cooperation between Herten and Berlin. The task of keeping the budget of this time-consuming and costly project within the realm of the possible – and during turbulent times at that – was entrusted to the Technical University of Berlin, which hosted one of this book's editors and employs the other three. The university's

chancellor, Mr. Ulrich Podewils, and the heads of the administration have our sincere thanks for their dedication in meeting that challenge.

With this framework firmly in place, others in our immediate circle ensured that the book could take shape. Our department's teaching assistants in developmental, environmental, and social psychology compensated for our involvement in the book by assuming an increased part of our equally important teaching and research responsibilities. If this book achieves something, part of the credit goes to them. We are indebted to Heidi Pissoke-Wegner for the exceptional care and precision she invested in putting the edited texts into an inviting, legible form, in some cases more than once. Without her teamwork and sharp eye, it would not have been possible to document the contribution our authors have made. We also thank Stephan Felbermayr for his knowledgeable, essential, and ever-willing assistance with the frequently tedious text comparisons, corrections, and standardizations and the bibliographical research that were required to bring the book into line with the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association. Working with us even after he completed his course work in psychology, he also took on the meticulous job of compiling the subject index. Sandra Geirhardsdottir, assisted by Sigrun Würfel, proofread much of the manuscript despite the pressures of finishing her degree, and Martin Mühlpfordt, who was responsible for the author index, layout, and the redrawing of figures, repeatedly proved his skill and creativity in electronic data-processing. Our team also benefited from Bettina Koböck, a graduate student in psychology who came to us from the work group on cognitive developmental theory in Darmstadt and who made us aware, through her own curiosity, of new facets of developmental psychology that this book explores. Elvira Valamanesh coordinated our activities, oversaw the correspondence, maintained a reassuring degree of order in the office, and constantly managed to keep an overview of things even during the adventure and complications of moving the entire institute to new, separate "islands."

The list of those involved in the creation of this book is so long that we inevitably risk failing to name many who were important to us. Among them are certainly our seminar students, who made it clear in correcting and encouraging us in their presentations, discussions, and project work that our hope of having developed a rather promising topic for psychology was not in vain, at least as far as university education is concerned. In addition to our partners in Herten's municipal administration, the group of key participants includes the close circle of bilingual students who helped our foreign guests with more than just language obstacles at the Herten conference.

If, as Leonardo da Vinci is said to have declared, all truth is in the picture (Schumacher, 1981), then the pictorial material included in this book reflects our conviction that we could not do without the truth conveyed in the way a city and its related themes are, or can be, presented. In this regard we are obliged to a variety of copyright holders, many of whom granted permission for the gratuitous reproduction

of pictures the editors considered valuable for this volume. We express special thanks to Verwertungsgesellschaft Bild – Kunst in Bonn, Germany; the Oskar Reinhart Museum in Winterthur, Switzerland; Edition Lidiarte in Berlin; Tushita edition in Duisburg; the Verlag Kunst und Bild in Berlin; and all the other sources of this visual enrichment for their generous cooperation; to the de Gruyter publishing house for willingly allowing it to enhance the volume; and to Niklas Görlitz, the well-traveled son of one of the editors, for donating this book's opening and closing photographs, which de Gruyter agreed to reproduce in full size. Within that frame lies what moved us to invite similarly interested, often better informed, and always reflective colleagues to present their approaches and misgivings in the international forum provided by a book with wide circulation and to see the project through despite the often convoluted road it has traveled toward publication. We deeply thank them all once again for doing just that.

Gratefully acknowledging the many people who have carried this work forward for so long, I have reserved my final and highly personal thanks for my coeditors, who saw not only a frequently contentious privilege of seniority in having me write this introduction on their behalf. It speaks for all four of us. If the thinking person's state of mind tends toward melancholy (Böhme, 1989), just allow me to say that being centrally involved in this book's publication has truly been fun. We wish our readers a little of it, too.

## Notes

- 1 As formulated by Cesar Pelli, an important modern Argentinean architect, in a television broadcast entitled "New York – Millennial Architecture" (Bavarian Broadcasting System, 29 July 1997, 8:15 p.m.).
- 2 Incidentally, it has been unjustifiably forgotten that this call to focus on marginal groups was made by Berlin urban researchers in Hans Ostwald's series *Großstadt-Dokumente* years before it was heard in the so meritorious urban research of the Chicago School of Sociology. Indeed, Jazbinsek and Thies (1997) have shown that the idea had a hitherto unknown influence on the Chicago School, as reflected by the work of Louis Wirth (information for which this author is indebted to Cornelia Eybisch and Hans-Joachim Fietkau). In the 50 titles published in Ostwald's series from 1904 through 1908, an impressive spectrum of topics related to cities, especially Berlin, are elaborated by 40 authors. Though none of them expressly touched on children of this city, the subjects of unwed mothers (vol. 27) and endangered and neglected youth (vol. 49) are examined (cited after Jazbinsek & Thies, pp. 2-6).

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# **Part I**

## **Prelude and dedication**



# Themes in the relation between children and the city

*Dietmar Görlitz*

## 1 The others

"Children, cities, and psychological theories" and "developing relationships" are the subject of this book. By that is meant children, "perennially the others." Formulated as in the title of this volume, however, it is one that puts everyone in a quandary because of the expectations it raises and the many different ways there are of treating it. The reader can see it as a list of nouns that can be randomly sequenced and connected by "and" or, at the other extreme, made to interrelate variously, including the possibility of "children in cities, as shown and depicted in psychological theories" or "the naive theories that young urbanites formulate about cities and other living conditions affecting them." It will be easier to agree on a spectrum of specific children than on the concretion known as the city. One of the parties that "has" psychological theory in these two sophisticated versions of the title is specialized science, the other is children with their developing knowledge systems. These versions give a certain substance to relations imagined to be developing, be they ones blossoming wholesomely or initially underdeveloped ones awaiting *to be* shaped. It is easier for psychological theories, particularly those in developmental psychology, to be focused on developing children than on cities, not to mention cultures and regions, which themselves are places of change that figure in the myriad interrelations of developing individuals.

Turning to examine a more complex version of relations, one may ask what developmental theory does with naive, piecemeal theories or concepts that children form about the city in which they live. Furthermore, is there in developmental psychology also a systematic theoretical discussion (as called for in Kindermann & Valsiner, 1995) revolving more around the nature of and change in *relations* than around the agents that create, introduce, maintain, or disrupt those relations as child, adult, material artifacts, or traffic regulation? For example, do the structural elements, or rather the essential structural parts, of exchange relations engaged in by urban children in the course of their development differ significantly from those frequently favored or promoted in the life situations characteristic of small village communities or settlements widely scattered across a region? If so, which special features stem from the wider context of culture and history? Which overarching

shared characteristics arise from participation in the surrounding media and news culture of modern times – as a way of balancing "the world in which we live" with "the world we know about, the one shown to us"?

In terms of a methodological and strategic research decision, these questions make relations the focus of interest, with less attention being accorded the children and urban things serving as the agents of those relations. But this de-emphasis, at least as far as the physical dimension is concerned, can also be due to historical and violent changes to which cities, city dwellers, and urban architecture fall victim – along with the supporting and controlling social systems. It can constitute hovering attachments that are no longer anchored to any existing urban reality. After moving or fleeing from a city, the bonds with it that a person has developed or maintained fade as it recedes from daily awareness. Conversely, those relations may be accentuated or may appreciate, as when a sick child must temporarily be denied access to the "outdoors," where "the others" are.

Lastly, relations are articulated in each component mentioned in the title of this book. Children develop and maintain their individual ranges of changing relations to others whom they know, like, admire, envy, imitate, or cooperate with. Does growing up in cities bring about special colorings? Does it interrupt common threads of destiny, making the mutual relations upon which adult villagers can rely (including the necessity of protecting themselves from each other) different even from those villagers who have become urbanites? Does "the air of the city" make one "free" in that sense as well? There are also relations, such as those between playmates "I" encounter, in which it may be important where the other comes if he or she is a stranger. The relation between the area from which the other child comes and "my" region may be important. Is that new child's home area one I have heard about in the media? Is he or she "from the country" or perhaps from the rival town whose fierce pride in its difference from my town is made clear to later teenagers and adults in sports and other arenas of life? Is the child possibly even a refugee or a son or daughter of asylum seekers? Some children, when it comes to their attractiveness in a game or to parental warnings against playing with them, will become more familiar with their urban surroundings and more inclined to outdoor activities than children who remain within the more confined, controlled space defined by disciplinary rules laid down by their parents. It may be remembered that in middle-class German families of previous decades children were to be kept from encounters with "dirty, grimy street children," who were actually envied.

In discussing the connections within each of the components in this book's title, one has to include relationships between cities, especially their regions, districts, and quarters. These relationships often covary with socioeconomic characteristics of which children become surer as they develop their socioenvironmental knowledge and come to value their own regional situation in their city. Children do so as both residents and waifs, as castaways in the manner practiced by street children in every city even of the modern world. Concluding this reflection, I wish to add relations in

the sense of metatheoretical analyses. One may look for links between several psychological theories dealing with children in their urban environment. One may articulate an abundance of relations between these theories, ranging from mere unrelatedness, irreconcilability, mutual exclusiveness, and contrast to toleration, integration, or, better, shared basic concepts.

But it cannot be that I, in trying to make out all the configurations of relations between the parts of the topic, remain above it as though the background and development from which I come did not have a bearing, as though it did not matter which research strategies a scientist uses in treating the topic of child, city, and psychological theories. I am bound to attend to certain facets and not others. In this unsettling discipline, developmental psychology, one is always involved, one's own remembering always accompanies the memory of the field's history.

## 2 Oneself

As Alfred described his city – Berlin, from which he and his parents had been evacuated to rural areas during the first bombing raids – we six-year-old school beginners playing in the front and back yards of our homes in a town were amazed at everything his repeated comparisons told us we lacked. Older now, I remember only the frequent embarrassment, and defiance, I felt at having to counter his trumps with what was familiar to us. That exercise had its limits, as when it came to escalators, which we did not have and whose use always awed me for the dexterity with which cityfolk were able to ascend or descend as if on so many rolling logs. But telephones, which to me were miniature tubes barely suitable for talking through, were as familiar and commonplace in our small town as in Berlin. Besides, what we received direct from the sky was hailstones, which lay scattered in the yard, beckoning to be sought and gathered by us children after thunderstorms, lightening, and rain. Something else we had that was unknown to the Berliners, who sounded so strange when they spoke, was a magnifying glass, with which we could set newspaper alight and brand our bare hands in sunny weather. In burying dead mice, however, these other children did join us.

Children seldom live, develop, thrive, or waste away on an island. They are rarely confined to a circumscribed region that they hear older people refer to as "our city." In asserting themselves, knowing, experiencing, or comparing, children have more. The internal structure and specifics of the place where children are compelled to develop with others or to fend for themselves are articulated through inexpressible interrelations and contrasts, and probably even more through induced environmental change they have experienced and the related stories about what older people do (or plan to do). Only one facet of my story is touched on by recalling the middle-class European family custom of traveling "to the countryside" or to a little seaside resort

during the hot weeks of summer, a well-known alternative for leisure among western teenagers and adults even today.

It seems that concepts as expressed in accepted words conveying a general idea concerning the nature or dimension of such things as "city," "metropolis," "world city," "my" town, or "our" village consist of many different comparative processes and contrasting direct and indirect experiences. Each person's position and perspective, along with the particular region and culture in which they are framed ("I come from," "I am headed for," or "I am talking to"), will have an important bearing on the substance and salience of such knowledge structures and their valuations, alternatives for action, and expectations of interaction.

### 3 Remembering some parts of history

#### 3.1 *Idleness and work in Goethe's notes on his journey to Naples*

Perhaps the history of this book's focus did not begin with what is presented below, but in this part it is authenticated in especially lively terms. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who was the great figure among the German poets of the classical period and who was himself "a town child" (Boyle, 1991, p. 46), had theory "in his head" when he stopped off in Naples for two weeks in late May and early June of 1787 on his return from the south during his richly documented journey through Italy. If the meaning of "theory" includes the personal manner in which a given individual takes note of and comments on things, often by explicitly using and drawing on previous knowledge or previous expectations, then Johann Jakob Volkmann, whose book was the main work read by all people traveling through Italy in the late 18th century, shaped Goethe's expectations just as other texts shape the expectations of today's travelers (see pp. 819-820 of the stupendous commentary in the 1992 edition of Goethe's *Italian Journey* by Beyer & Miller).

Volkmann had put Goethe, the traveler, into the right frame of mind to encounter tens of thousands of idlers in Naples. It was this introduction that Goethe, before mightily contradicting it, examined in carefully formulated observations that he made on the streets of the city, beginning "early in the day" (according to his entry for 28 May 1787; see Beyer & Miller, 1992, pp. 404-410). These passages provide a superb basis for the microgenesis of an observational process in which from an initial "monstrous jumble" there emerge various familiar figures whose shabby, "vile" apparel stand out, but not their idleness. To him, they fall into categories of "form, clothing, conduct[, and] employment." In keeping with their vocations, it is not that they "are this" or "do that" but rather "are in the process of doing." In their own time frame of action, they can be either standing still or resting. When they pause in doing something, they do not turn the break into idleness.

In this vein, Goethe takes advantage of several opportunities to observe as the day wears on, believing himself able to observe ever more precisely the way each person does, or is about to do, something at particular places and, as Goethe saw it, in keeping with his or her station in society. Children variously preoccupied along the paths to kitchen gardens on the edge of town ensure the vitality and credibility of his account. It brings them to life in their myriad relations to the adult world as they walk, run, even crawl with the help of older children, in going about their chores of carrying water, gathering wood-cuttings, reselling the fruit they just bought from older people, or taking the garbage out on donkeys (not forgetting the animals' manure either).

Having taken in these many scenes of shopkeepers and secondhand dealers, sellers of ice water and lemonade, and those purveying other kinds of merchandise, the author soon begins to theorize, albeit it with self-critical circumspection, about why he finds the varied doings of the people he sees in Naples so different – so different the industrial development, the painting and scholasticism, and the sheer pleasure taken in working by these people intently observed one day in Naples. By nature, as Goethe says, they work "to enjoy" in intensely emotional colors, exchanging jokes and open-minded glances. As though unnoticed by the author, the upper classes are happiest passing the time by indulging themselves in idleness. For his attempt to develop a national character from southern climates in contrast to that in northern countries, children as highly vivid guarantors vanish completely from the picture. As active as they were, though not in play, they no longer find mention in the concluding passages.

Nonetheless, Goethe's annals – except for the romantization of poverty – are widely and admiringly considered an accurate record that reveals more than "an army of social scientists," as the commentary by Beyer and Miller (1992, pp. 1070-1071) add from recent assessments. Much later, incidentally, the impact that landscape and climate have on the natures of their inhabitants is a basic question addressed in *Geopsyché*, by Willy Hellpach, a German psychologist working primarily in Heidelberg in the first half of the twentieth century. He is to thank for the first concepts (as of 1937) about the effect that urban settings, namely cities, have on the people who live in and move to them (see pp. 44-52 in this chapter). Goethe's work was an intense, inquisitive beginning in which the present topic develops out of and in contradiction to the basic assertions made in a travel guide intended for a talented, engaged person journeying to see things with his own eyes. (Incidentally, Goethe was a traveler to whom is attributed one of the first uses of the subsequently so momentous word *Umwelt* [environment], which appears in a passage he wrote early in his trip to memorialize the "magnificent images of the Umwelt" [Beyer & Miller, p. 22, line 37]). Out of historical and comparative interest in children in the city, one could flip through travel guides illustrating and telling about the same town and instilling anticipation, could "browse" through epochs to see how, if at all, the

faces of children change (something that would perhaps not be possible for Naples but certainly for Rome and Paris, perhaps also Vienna).

### 3.2 *The Pedestrian of Paris in prerevolutionary France (Mercier)*

In occasional candid snapshots of everyday Parisian life, Louis Sébastien Mercier had earlier reported about things "that struck and occurred to him while strolling across the boulevards and in the lanes of Paris" (as Jean Villian wrote in the afterword to a 1979 German edition of selections from Mercier's work, p. 419).

These notes by a "pedestrian of Paris" (Villian) appeared in a two-volume edition in 1781 as a "tableau," the "true-to-nature and lively depiction of something, whether by means of the spoken word or the quill" (in a definition that Villian [p. 423] cites from the Académie française of 1694). During and after Mercier's years of exile, they were expanded into a 12-volume edition containing more than one thousand chapters and were published in the 1780s, the decade that saw the onset of the French Revolution. Mercier's "Tableau de Paris" still ranks (according to Villian) as a socially critical, literary commentary that strove to capture what was authentic and verifiable, an account of which only the 140 some-odd chapters chosen for inclusion in the small German edition can be used for my purposes here, without weighing and pondering the criteria that guided the selection ("the most interesting and amusing facets of this work," as stated on the dust jacket of the 1979 Insel edition).

There were children in the Paris of prerevolutionary France, perhaps not interesting or amusing enough, perhaps taken for granted too much, to acquire their own faces for today's anthologist or yesterday's reporter (Mercier). Those children are there, as is necessary for the continued existence of city and country (see the chapter entitled "About the Population of the Capital" [1979, pp. 22-24]), and as a part of a generally growing population whose sufficient fertility sustained it and its fragile balance between the number of births (mostly boys) and deaths (mostly men). For the living, Paris would have been a paradise to the women, purgatory for the men, and hell, no longer for the children mentioned earlier but rather for the horses, whereby Mercier in this regard initially uses a source from the first half of the 18th century (Count de Buffon), knowledgeably bringing in his own observations only in the factual description of the city. One reads of the "barbaric luxury of traveling around in carriages," an inexorable ill to whose danger almost all Parisian streets were succumbing and to which not only outstanding thinkers of their age fell victim, as happened with Jean-Jacques Rousseau when he was badly injured by a mastiff running ahead of his master's coach (cited from the chapter "Watch Out! Watch Out!" 1979, pp. 37-39). Despite the praise of broad and splendid thoroughfares ("Boulevards," 1979, p. 53), one also hears the complaint about "polluted air" in poorly laid-out lanes, and buildings that are much too high (1979, p. 39). Those

observations turn the chronicler's attention to children, too, in this case to breast-feeding infants, to whose mothers he recommends rural wet nurses, for whom the "air of the countryside and balanced, quiet village life" had mitigated the damage to which urban mothers were exposed, quite apart from all the distractions of maternal responsibilities (1979, p. 226). Such hazards, at least as far as the use of streets and squares go, have their own diurnal rhythm. Mercier's exquisite chapter entitled "The hours of the day" allows the reader to glimpse the radiance of life and richly varied cast of characters in 24 hours of light and dark (1979, pp. 227-235), reveals what there is to see, hear, and smell, without explicitly mentioning children but rather delighting in the special circumstances, such as a clap of thunder or the slam of a carriage door at night (p. 231), that inspires their origin. As victims of robbery and mugging – say, by malicious women on the street who scolded children as if they were the proper guardians only to strip them of their jewelry and fine attire and garb them instead in burlap before fleeing (see the chapter by the same name, p. 132) – children do not figure much in the urban ensemble of everyday configurations. They do not stand in front of the diorama peep show surrounded by adults interested in history and stories, nor do they undertake "journeys around the world without mishap" (see the chapter entitled "The peep show," 1979, pp. 295-297). But in summer, enjoying their frothy licorice juice, they happily crowd, big and small, around the vendor, who especially frequents the major boulevards, plying his prosperous business as "consoler of the thirsty nation" in full regalia with silver mugs hanging from chains, and who is never sparing "with song, jokes, and licorice" (1979, p. 300) except when treating himself not to licorice but to the "fruity wine" in the cups during a break (1979, p. 300).

Endangered particularly by the distraction of the mothers and by breast milk that has been tainted by the city air, by the upper class's reckless use of carriages in the streets, or by outright highway robbery, children are nevertheless present in this city for Mercier, this passionately involved and curious diarist of urban life at the end of the 18th century. They are necessary for the continued existence of city and countryside but, in contrast to both, are more incidental, are demonstrably engaged in the more pleasurable aspects of everyday urban life after having grown up in a different manner than their rural counterparts. But these Parisian children do not yet give rise to a theory in terms of the social class, change, form, substance, and specific places of their activities. They are probably not especially meant when Mercier writes of "people," of "masses and throngs."

In a more detailed examination of the unabridged edition of *Tableau de Paris*, that assertion would have to be tested. It would also have to be clarified what was not written, what was not intended and not permitted to be written – the kind of consideration for the public that guided Heinrich Heine in his *Letters from Berlin* (1822, see the 1980 Insel edition of Heine's *Reisebilder*, p. 595). Furthermore, it would have to be corroborated that Mercier was more concerned with "children in the plural," with "children in the plural of old and young" – to the extent that they appear at

all – with that other, equally warranted (or indifferent) partner. That kind of focus was destined to change in novels of inner development, such as those standing in the tradition of Rousseau, the same Rousseau who, according to Mercier, had once stumbled in the streets of Paris. They were novels in which the already heralded threat posed by certain living conditions of civilization and society became the central theme, in which nature in all her richness of flora and fauna acquires a locally specific visage that could be looked in the eye.

### 3.3 *Thriving far from cities (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre)*

At the same time, the year before the gathering storm of the French Revolution, an author of almost unimaginable success in his epoch, Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, a trained military engineer (Kappler, 1987, p. 270) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's faithful partisan (p. 272), published a novel about a utopia of the natural, of children's thriving in the attentive care of their mothers far from the cities and centers of power of their time. Read in more than 200 French editions and approximately 260 editions in other languages since its appearance in 1788 (Kappler, 1987, p. 285), the novel depicts and imagines the blossoming of Paul and Virginie, a pair of children bonded like brother and sister. Without a real upbringing in the middle-class sense of the word, they grow up learning with and from nature, falling back upon it, and gaining experience that nourishes and supports a Christian maternal code of values. Temporal knowledge based on nature is not the only thing that separates them from the clocks of the city (Saint-Pierre, 1789/1987, pp. 77, 177). Doors went unlocked and door locks were an object of amazement (p. 94). And despite one region's remoteness from another, the neighborly relations that the novel's fictive narrator observes make him think about how much streets and even simple walls in Europe's metropolises can prevent people from coming together (p. 21). These country people live happily in cottages they have built themselves. The old culture from which the protagonists fled does not invade until one of the mothers who comes from the higher classes begins thinking ahead about the development of her daughter, Virginie.

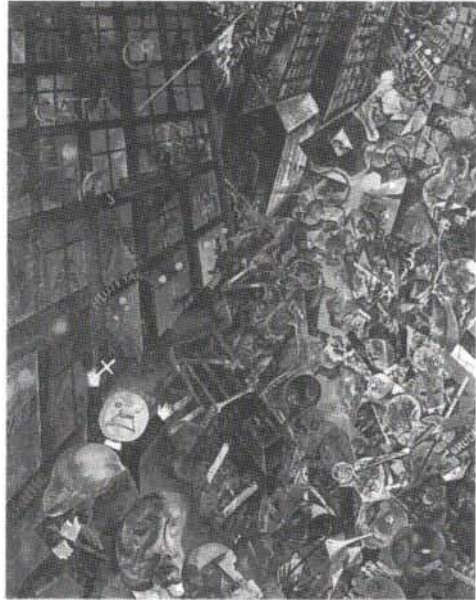
In writing letters to arrange for Virginie's future, she entangles herself in the ethics of the "old France." Piety and moral chastity nevertheless remain the key regulators of hope and fear (Saint-Pierre, 1789/1987, p. 49) in the basal praise of God-guided nature (p. 66). Far from the "calumnious stories of society," she is filled with delight and joy in nature (p. 63), which also encourages feelings of "not falling prey to unhappiness" (p. 84).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who claimed to be the first person to really bear in mind the natural state of the human being (Figal, 1989, p. 26), created all the same an anthropological conception rich in aporias, one against which the contrasting reality of urban living conditions cannot be measured, not even for children, that is, for

humans in their development. The "originally assumed (construed) primitive human being is by no means the ideal of . . . humanity" (Fetscher, 1989, p. 4). Still, from Rousseau's approach, and as encouraged by Rousseau, there followed the condemnation of certain sociocultural conditions that destroy "the natural goodness" of the human being, making it desirable to create "pedagogical provinces" far removed from the city – for an *Emile*, for example – so that the stultifying impacts of urban society can be resisted later as well (pp. 5, 7). Perhaps these ideas can be demonstrated in the contrast between Plate 1 and Plate 2.



**Figure 1:** Paul et Virginie, dessin fin 19<sup>e</sup> siècle [Drawing, late 19th century] © Imagerie d'Epinal 1997



**Figure 2:** George Grosz (1893-1959): Widmung an Oskar Panizza [Dedication to Oskar Panizza] (1917-18) © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 1997

Nor is Anglo-Saxon culture the only one that seems to have "a deep and enduring tension between the image of the city and that of the countryside" (Saunders, 1981, p. 80), where the virtues of country life correspond to the burdens of the city. Indeed, the contrast between the urban and the rural goes back to classical antiquity (Williams, 1973).

This aspect of urban and nonurban upbringing, of development in harmony with nature, is treated by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1789/1987) in his positive idyll of Paul and Virginie's life in the bounded region of Ile-de-France, or the island of Mauritius as it is called today. The reality of the city and of class and court society, however, is always present – as a negative foil contrasting lucidly and positively char-

acterized living conditions. Analyzing a city's negative components described by the author of this once highly esteemed source (which was even read by Napoleon in exile; see Kappler, 1987, p. 285) may even be one way of gaining an impression of the unique features (including threatening ones) of what makes a city a city. The pair of happy children, Paul and Virginie, blossomed in part because they knew nothing of the city. Upon returning from the city, Virginie was undone by the corset of shame and virtue.

To the author of this novel, the city figures more as a foil than detailed depiction of individual characterizations. He applies his art of description entirely to nature on Ile-de-France, whose vibrant colors were so remote from France that even Alexander von Humboldt believed that he could learn from this novel a good deal about describing nature when documenting his travels (see Humboldt's *Ansichten der Natur*, 1807/1986). The city thus came across as a cultural entity of high form and dubious values rather than a descriptive presentation of its characteristics, but, as seen by Mercier, it also figured as a space and framework that provoked no questions about children. It was not only the privilege of a few who took children "out" of the city in utopian novels of inner development, who kept them out of the city for the sake of child-raising ideals.

### 3.4 "The cry of the street" (Ariès)

Writing in the looser tone of the times in the field of history, Philippe Ariès (1994) stated: "In the past the child, with or without its parents, was quite naturally a part of the urban setting." And he added that "such a city really did exist, a city in which children lived and ran around, some outside their families, others without them" (p. 75). In other words, the changing presence of children in the urban setting of certain cultures is attributable not only to differing foci of research interests. Historically speaking, one not only finds a shift in interest of chroniclers, an interest I document with early sources; entities, too, and that includes cities, have their historicity in which the manner and frequency of use that children make of individual, structurally similar regions can change drastically. Ariès outlines this historicity as it applies to the network of urban streets – that significant place. It is not just that the city grows over time, that it has multiple layers, or that it teaches history and how to understand it. It shows historical change in the appreciation and use of its places and regions. It appears in such entities as rows of houses and streets, which, having been laid out with an eye to comprehensible use, embody what is known, demanded, expected, feasible, and (in the case of children, for instance) granted.

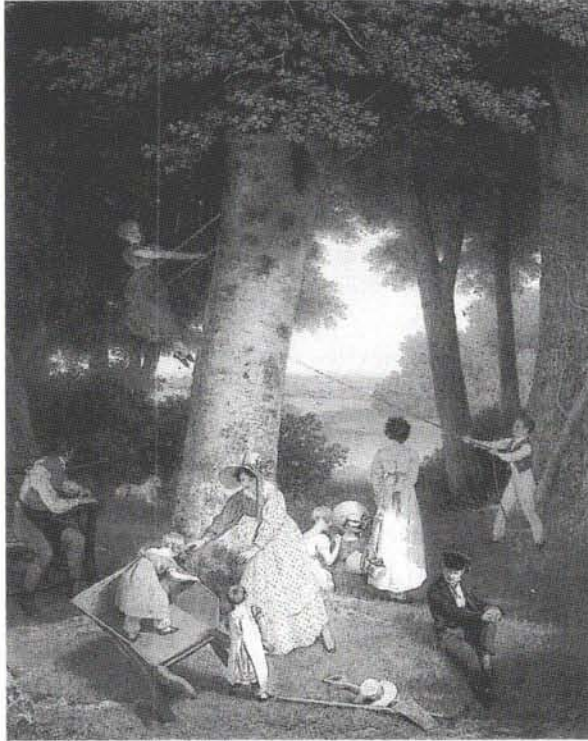
Asking about what entities were to people in the past is the job of historical anthropology, a theory that opens a way to the materiality and sociability of past living conditions. It makes use of something that has been physically preserved, passed on; something of which at least a trace has survived. According to Bakhtin,

as Gurjewitsch (1993) pointed out, only historical anthropology will be able to understand how to ask new questions in dialogue with the dead (in this context, meaning bygone texts and entities) and, paradoxically, will be able to find children precisely because it does not seek them and their physical living conditions. What remains for psychologists is the surface structure – what was said, witnessed, written, and built. But the fact that psychologists examine handed-down texts and other documents for information about children reveals psychology, too, in this "dual dialogue."

In a narrative and sometimes sweeping fashion, Ariès does help the reader remember history in a saliently different way, and that for very specific urban regions. In this case, it is streets of the city, which in his mind are interwoven with an air of regret about what has been lost to cities and their children (in the western world, particularly France). He believes he can document that urban streets remained fascinating to children for hundreds of years from medieval to early modern times (Ariès, 1994, p. 76); that the sociability of the street continued even into the twentieth century after life in society broke up into private, occupational, and public dimensions; that streets have only recently been changing from stopping places to thoroughfares, and that urban centers have been allowing themselves to change from cities to agglomerations interconnected by expressways. He asserts that the oft-lamented segmentation and impoverishment of functions – for city streets, in the present context – had its beginnings in 18th-century Paris; Paris, the lightning rod for his arguments, the city in which the streets are increasingly taken over by the poor as a hard, unsympathetic, yet common place to live, a place from which the private sphere of the middle classes shut themselves out more and more. Prior to that time, according to Ariès, children had no place of their own in the house, so they extended "their living space quite naturally to the street," and the houses of the better classes did not separate their "private" sphere from any others (p. 77).

What, then, is it in the value judgments about such regions that changes so that the "street clears"? Ariès (1994) is reminded of an earlier principle of his according to which the state does not like seeing areas of life move beyond its influence and control (p. 86). At least, so he says, the concern of pedagogical philanthropists was the origin of the tendency to lock up and keep children in the deurbanized space of house and school, to transplant them to the closed world of "privacy." What used to be common was, because it was dangerous, soon said to be no longer worth learning. Out of precautionary concern for their upbringing, children were taken off the street; middle-class children in particular were placed under restrictions. To Ariès, it was the "frightened philanthropists" since the 18th century for whom the streets (and taverns) became dangerous places against which children were to be protected and paupers were to be turned (p. 81) – with a cogent diptych of the urban street as seen by children themselves, for whom "an archaic image of festivities and familiarity" blend with a modern image "of insecurity and disquiet" (p. 82). And he points out how the street was replaced upon the advent of cafés and parks in the 18th and 19th

centuries, but it remained a free zone into which children steal away and in which, according to the contemporary police reports cited by Ariès, they were also apprehended by the police who were pursuing them according to the laws of time. A painting of that period shows a "counterpart" of the space desired for middle-class upbringing (see Plate 3).



**Figure 3:** Jacques-Laurent Agasse (1767-1849): *Der Spielplatz* [The playground] (1830), Museum Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur (reprinted by permission)

It is Ariès's familiar, often sweeping rationales that deserve closer inspection (as Trefzer, 1989, offered on the basis of documents from the city of Basel that trace the "construction of middle-class man" at the end of the 18th century; see also Sennett, 1974, which is especially rich in sources on "the decline and fall of public life and the tyranny of intimacy"). But Ariès's arguments allow one to see that a city's squares, stones, buildings, and courtyards do not consist purely in materiality. There is more to them than that. To the person who uses them, "may" use them, or disobeys in order to do so, they are both witnesses and evidence of child-rearing ideology that admonish one to heed them. The city has pedagogically solicitous and arranged places as well as those that are off limits. Children on city streets therefore not only demonstrate the benefit of appropriating streets and other public regions

without colliding with anything. Their activities may also reflect both the visible and obscuring expression of what the resultants of profound social friction can be. It has never been decreed for all places, times, and classes that children in such regions always do only what is "appropriate" for them – as Goethe wrote in the diaries quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The city as a framework also puts frames into the hands of active mediators, educators, planners, and designers. Identical regions can change from familiar to lost space or can be obstinately or secretly reacquired, which is Ariès's concern about children in the street as he gives free play to dreams after the "intentional death of the street."

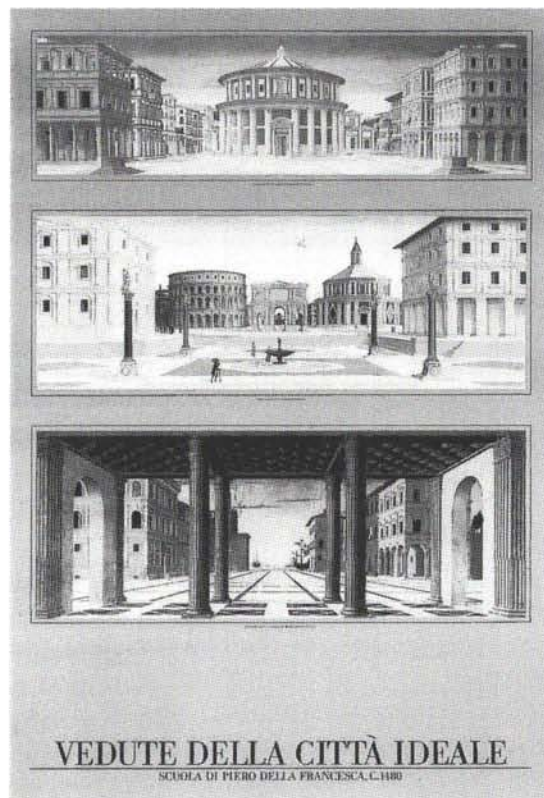
### 3.5 *Utopias of society*

These reflections end the brief series of bygone ideals and counterparts relating to the child and the city. It remains to expand on and probe more deeply into the role that children play in the city in communal dreams, or dreams intermittently shared by the members of a society. To the extent that social utopias also take the city into consideration, do they have their own design specifications when children are the focus?

It may be that social reformers and utopian thinking in general has always been honest or self-critical enough never to want to project cities, the polity, upon children. At least the first narrative history (one told as a utopia of the past at that) – Plato's history of *Atlantis*, as discussed by Brentjes (1993) – contains a great deal about construction, irrigation, and fortifications, but nothing about children, except that they were in many cases conceived and born as twins, the future rulers. State, belief, power, and polity were handed down through them, through children. And the fact that they always grew did not violate any utopia (as exemplified in Renaissance paintings of cityscapes; see Plate 4). Even today's visions of "the new man" for an urban culture of modern times allow him to reflect upon "the real values" and keenly feel "experiences for himself," and yet tacitly he is always grown up (Lampugnani, 1995, pp. 100-102).

Why design utopias without feeling distress or suffering oneself? Has a new quality of concern (concern for *children's welfare*, for example) entered the projections of occidental thinking? It is the ideal state, as designed by others long after Plato's utopia had been forgotten, not necessarily the ideal city, or it must be founded on such cities. An ideal polity need not be established only in the form of urban living structures, although they were the preferred setting (as in Campanella's city of the sun). On the other hand, cities have often inspired ideal designs (see Krufft, 1989), and have even been the source of revolutionary movements (Zimmermann, 1996, pp. 106-107, 113). But all that had little or nothing to do with how *children* fit into these entities, be they niches or plateaus. It was as if only the grown-ups carried the cross of life's distress and the need to provide for daily existence (recalling medieval

pictures of the Passion). The little ones and those growing up appear indifferent or unthreatened – progeny taken for granted. Child-centered urban planning (Görlitz & Schröder, 1994) would certainly be just that: a counter-utopia. To put it differently, theory-building, particularly that in psychology, is not the only mode in which one can relate child and city and have them interact. Another way to do so is to create utopias in which urban design that responds to the needs and desires of children would supplant the older utopian vision of a prospering, happy polity. As was made clear at a recent symposium (Bellebaum, 1992), a happy childhood and child-centered urban planning have not yet been placed on the agenda of research on happiness.



**Figure 4:** School of Piero della Francesca (1480): Vedute della città ideale. Edition Lidiarte, Berlin (reprinted by permission)

But that omission has not kept entrepreneurs, architects, and educators, even at the beginning of this century, from creating garden cities such as Hellerau outside Dresden in "reaction to the sprawl of filthy tenement cities and their desolate living conditions that characterized Germany's industrial revolution during the early years of

the Second Empire" (Sarfert, 1993, p. 12). Based on the concept of public benefit, the intention there was for the contrast between city and country to be integrated into urban planning modeled on systematic precepts and initial architectural experience with a garden city (built in 1903 by Howard in Letchworth, outside London; see Sarfert, pp. 13-14). It was a matter not only for adults, for the workers in Karl Schmidt's workshops in Hellerau. It included their families as well, the children growing up there, for whom Hellerau was indeed intended, planned, built, and for whom it prospered, as a "pedagogical province" at the end of the first decade in this century (Lorenz, 1994, pp. 48-49). What Paul Claudel lauded as a "laboratory of the new man" (*laboratoire d'une humanité nouvelle*, Lorenz, p. 17) in an obituary on the founder, Wolf Dohrn, shortly before the outbreak of World War I was a brief developmental reality – given the visions of an apocalyptic city in the art of the fin-de-siècle and its poems about the end of the world (Hüneke, 1994, p. 18), given the crumbling city of corrosive human relations that Alfred Kubin's *Dream City* (1909) became (Hüneke, p. 20), until Europe's historical reality matched, and ultimately eclipsed, the horror of such visions.

### 3.6 What do children "know" about their cities? (Schwabe & Bartholomäi)

According to the daily reports of police commissioners, as Ariès (1994, p. 86) reminds us, officers began pursuing daylight vagabond juvenile thieves in Paris at the end of the 18th century. Children's action in outdoor regions, the streets, was vehemently challenged by officialdom, which soon legally sanctioned intervention based partly on educational concerns about the potentially criminal careers that "little tramps" could be developing. These actions were restricted to the child as a *user* of the environment, as an active participant in his or her city. But pedagogical concerns, the foresighted opinions of educators, lent our topic of child and city another dimension quite early, illuminated other epistemological interests. They, like the persuasions from which they sprang, are just as interesting.

In the late 1860s an educational institution, the "Pädagogischer Verein in Berlin," commissioned a survey intended to document what children knew about their environment, about their city (Schwabe & Bartholomäi, 1870). Basically (for details, see Görlitz, 1993), the conviction was that living conditions in the city had a specific impact on the individuality of the children growing up there, at least impacts other than those that the living conditions of small towns had on their young inhabitants. Indeed, various inner-city districts were already contributing to such differentiation. To the clients of the survey, the theory ranked as "indisputable fact" (cited in Schwabe & Bartholomäi, 1870, p. 60), even without details about the directions of the effects and factors governing how it worked. That survey stemmed from the definition of purpose in applied psychology. Proceeding from the average individuality of city children as characterized by their urban environment, the idea was to

help improve Berlin schools and compensate for shortcomings by offering appropriate curricula in the formal educational system. The survey was not concerned with school children in the course of their specifically urban development; it documented a cross-section of boys and girls who were beginning their education at any of 84 elementary schools in Berlin. A wide spectrum of topics elicited information about the city's specific squares, markets, streets, and monuments; the animals and trees in the forests and meadows; facts about the observable sky, and religious beliefs concerning the heavens. As seen by the authors of that day, this environmental knowledge in first-year school classes, a truly vexing, panoramic epistemological mosaic, was reliably framed in a kind of learning theory about the organization of environmental knowledge. The environmentally, urban "conceptual range [of children] at the outset of formal education in school" seemed a useful starting point for using its richness or gaps to put concomitant scholastic measures on the road in the conviction that environmental knowledge is regionally specific, that it contributes to the individuality of the cognizant child, and that it can be recorded by inquiry comprehensive enough to serve as a foundation for compensatory educational actions.

In this respect, too, but in very specific terms, in physical architectural details, one encounters the *city as an active agent* that builds individuality and makes it possible to differentiate children according to their regional background, all after just a few years of development, of growing up, although the researchers themselves (Schwabe and Bartholomäi) tended to see "social rank and property" as a greater part of what defined the essence of children's individuality (Schwabe & Bartholomäi, 1870, p. 20). That was in the stratified 19th-century society of the kingdom of Prussia.

### 3.7 *But how can one know what children know? (Hall)*

Referring explicitly to the issue addressed in the Berlin survey, Stanley Hall (1891) of Clark University pursued the thought that "[although] concepts from the environment were only one important cause of diversity of individuality, this cause once determined, inferences could be drawn to other causes" (p. 139). And he pointed out the supposition made by the Berlin researchers: By the time urban and rural children entered school, there was already a marked difference between them in that the former had a good deal of experience with moving things; the latter, with objects at rest (including scenic ones); and that each group dealt with corresponding questions with different degrees of ease. Confined to city schools as it was, the Berlin survey was unable to test this assumption on its own, of course. Hall took this supposition and the Berlin data into account when weighing educational measures (geography lessons) and ways to fill obvious gaps, for "few knew the important features of their city at large" (p. 139). At that time, as nearly a century later in the influential psychological studies by Roger Hart (1979), interaction in geography classes was what prompted, and benefited from, surveys on children's environmental knowledge, with

Hall praising the focus on specific local places that characterized the style of instruction in German schools (Hall, 1891, p. 144). His retrospective, rich in information and insight (e.g., about a comparative Saxon study of urban and rural children), could only serve as a reminder without solving the associated methodological problems for him. The knowledge children have of their environment became the center of occasional interest among educators (in Germany), but suitable survey methods did not. One interviewed children, relied on their answers, and documented them, but not the way in which the questions were asked.

In the hands of a psychologist like Stanley Hall, it is not just a matter of repeating questions in a different country. As he complained, "little is told of . . . methods (Hall, 1891, p. 145). Repeating questions cannot just be about learning what school beginners know about their environment, especially their city. Instead, researchers must also ask themselves in what ways *they* can know and learn what others, in this case, little ones, know about specific things, such as a city. One does not simply transliterate or translate batteries of questions; the issue itself has to be thoroughly and methodologically reconceived. It is not enough to ask, one has to consider "why that and why in that way." Interviews with the child should be so conducted that pondering and remembering can freely enter into play, although local knowledge in the microgenesis of the individual child's remembering did not become the subject for Hall. A tentative list of 143 questions for children entering the primary schools of Boston was compiled in test trials, with no answer seeming reliable enough to go without follow-up questions. Interviewed in very small groups, the school beginners showed and elaborated their conceptual, their local, knowledge in response to the questions, which were posed by interviewers trained to aim for agreement so that answers like a "cow" that is "blue" and is "the size of my fingernail" did not slip through as correct answers. Nonetheless, Hall indeed had the development of the elicited concepts in mind when he figured there would be a "process of gradual acquisition . . . in the mind of a child" (Hall, 1891, p. 147) and recorded the answers in the children's own words as much as possible. Hall at least intended the documentation of gaps to be authentic.

Linguistic labeling and words have always been the arduous and problematic path (as is still true according to Seiler & Wannenmacher, 1987) along which to get at conceptual thinking. In this case, among children, Stanley Hall had the reader take part in it, conceding the researchers' arbitrariness in attributing or not attributing conceptual knowledge. "Men's first names seemed to have designated single striking qualities, but once applied, they become general or specific names according to circumstances" (Hall, 1891, p. 147). Phylogenetically, or as far as the speaking adult is concerned, that viewpoint of 1891 maps out the course of semantic development in language without already attributing urban – as opposed to rural – children with their own, typically urban trajectories of concept development. That task is not considered feasible even in research today. Urban life certainly has its idiosyncrasies, but does it create its own concepts? Is urban knowledge organized differently than

rural knowledge? What does "city" mean to the person who grows up there? What do "countryside and village" mean to those who live far away from cities? And which precepts does each unique culture determine? Concerned more about the representativeness of his findings, Stanley Hall documented and compared the knowledge gaps that questions about country and nature, animals and plants exposed among more than two hundred Boston and Kansas City school beginners. It was astounding what they did not know. Even more astounding were the differences between the ignorance levels of children in both cities or between white and non-white first-year schoolchildren in one of the cities. Documentable differences between the knowledge shown by boys and that shown by girls also surfaced.

In all there were 50,000 items that, taken as a whole, led Stanley Hall to formulate a law holding that human perceptual knowledge is guided by interests, that people do not see and know about what is near them but rather what their attention is drawn to when their interest has been aroused. Children bring "more or less developed apperceiving organs with them into school," organs on which classroom teachers can count and with which they must live, for "the mind can learn only what is related to other things learned before" (Hall, 1891, p. 154), an observation to which Hall appended detailed recommendations for classroom instruction with a heavy emphasis on "natural objects." In a peculiar reversal, knowledge gaps, which showed up in tables, made a case for using what was available, but what was available, be it Boston or Kansas City in their urbanness, did not need to be focused on. In fact, it did not even warrant follow-up questions, for nothing about cities appeared in the tables. As "knowledge of cities," the other things that had previously been learned (to the extent that children could learn them) were not asked about. It remained open as to when and how they would determine, even break through, the natural order in the sequence of concept acquisition, which varies "very greatly with every change of the environment," with each location determining the sequence of concepts uniquely and anew for the children developing there, "save within comparatively few concept-spheres" (Hall, 1891, p. 154).

### 3.8 *What the city "makes" out of children (Tews)*

In subsequent decades the city, particularly the large city, became a topic of its own as an actor both instructive and morally menacing in its public places. One of the aspects considered was how, in its eternal presence, the city shaped individuality and how it organized knowledge. Once again, it was an educator who tackled the subject. In nine lectures delivered before a lay audience at the Humboldt Academy in Berlin in 1911, Johannes Tews expounded on thoughts, observations, and demands relating to metropolitan education. He envisioned a kind of education located in and tailored to cities as well as a perspective in which the physical conditions of the city were taken seriously as a *pedagogical* element, as something that contributed to

rearing the children who grew up in the urban setting. To Tews, it was an auspicious, thoroughly optimistic undertaking, for to him the big city had an entirely new, unique life that demanded recognition. The city became a place for learning and was taken seriously as such.

Tews taught first to look at the city, if the city was meant, no matter if it initially raised more questions than were already being asked by this favorably disposed defender of the city. He resolutely pursued a strategy of seeking out the life of children where it was lived, where it was visible. Those places were no longer in teachers' questionnaires handed out in classrooms. As Goethe did in the regions of Naples, Tews went into the streets of Berlin in the interest of the metropolitan education he was calling for. He went into the many interlocking rear courtyards as well as into apartments, describing what was in some cases a desperately wretched Berlin. He did not forget the institutional educators, the teachers themselves, but "the things in the child's surroundings, life on the street, the display window" (Tews, 1911, p. 21, italics in the original deleted here) were more important to him in their capacity as the city's educators. To him, the metropolis becomes the "great teacher" that educates its people typically, that is to say, into types. The metropolis was the teacher that steers everything, particularly all informal effects of metropolitan life, toward a rather uniform type, the urbanite, starting as a child.

But that process begins in many different places and needs a suitable amount of time, perhaps more than childhood offers. Martha Muchow's early experiences showed that she, too, was impressed by such milieu-centered, city-oriented educational theory before she raised the awareness, through her own classical studies, that children essentially act on their own in their life space of the city (Muchow & Muchow, 1935). In Tews's thinking, the directions of impact are more unilateral, more partial. To him, the urban setting is not particularly benevolent, but thorough, in attending to a widely supported and probably also thwarted educational work, starting at many different places whose contribution, however, is not yet specified. It is the local tie of basic needs and their satisfaction with which his agenda begins, with living, sleeping, and eating and the concomitant temporal structure of the day. "In what way does the city child live and sleep? What does it eat and drink? How is it dressed, where is its playground?" (Tews, 1911, p. 43, without the italics contained in the original).

That is a rich spectrum of interests; then come the trappings and decoration of the dwellings. It is a spectrum that has not been exhausted even today. Not until Sennett (1994) has anyone again turned, in historical comparison, from the city in its perceptibility, sensuality, and sensuousness to the feeling, sensing human being. In Tews's work, children's dwelling and living in the big city begins in the most intimate, personal areas, whose imbalance and possibilities for compensation the public space of streets and squares become the focus of attention. It is true that no dwelling, especially an urban one, is an island. But neither does the city lie only *in front of* the

windows of buildings. To Tews, it begins and its effect continues in the most private of spheres, as private as the bed shared with others.

In this network of manifold and changing linkages between one's own space and the public regions of the city, Tews begins weaving theory here and there without reflecting upon it as such, still unconcerned about it. I focus here solely on that aspect (for further detail on Tews, see Görlitz, 1993, pp. 100-110) in saying that Tews's rather narrative lecture to the audience at the Humboldt Academy in Berlin in 1911 can be condensed into seven theses. Beginning with the urbanite, the city dweller, I call them the type-building rules of delayed effect experienced by a response-oriented person who develops according to his or her environmental conditions or who lives in such correspondence. This type of person is exposed in "herd-like receptivity" to the variegated educational work of the city, where places in particular, especially their range of material affordances, favor adaptation and conformance. Streets, the streets of the city in this capacity as places of education and training, acquire a value that cannot be compared to any other. In their additional functions, however, they also vary with the size of the settlement (town versus city), so some of their functions can be shifted into the domestic sphere of dwelling and family.

Let me now elaborate a bit on each of these theses (marked below by italics), which Tews himself did not formulate in precisely this manner. Tews saw the city as being active in the formation of types (as a *type-building rule* that had scant regard for individual manifestations and differences, see Tews, 1911, pp. 21, 23). To him, the typical city dweller seemed more tangible as an adult than as a child. Tews thought that children needed a certain period of incubation to become typical urbanites, as if all their development began in virtual villages, in local microsystems that do not initially anchor one or the other type of development explicitly to the city, as if a kind of sleeper effect governed one's development into an urban child or adolescent. It seemed to be a sleeper effect in two senses when the idea was taken up again and formulated by Jean Piaget late in his life, some 70 years after Tews: "Furthermore, I am . . . of the opinion that the child is closer to the origins of the human being than any adult is, including primitive man, . . . [even though] today's small child develops more rapidly" (Bringuier, 1977/1996, p. 142-143; translated here from the German edition). Tews spoke of the predominance of a generalized nature of children, as if the time it took to have an impact on city children was not long enough to make them sufficiently distinguishable from children from other life spaces, as if the "genuine" urbanite needed more time to live and develop (see Tews, p. 58).

And he sees the person more in terms of malleability than as an active shaper, more in terms of *resonance* with environmental conditions (Tews's second thesis so to speak), with which the person is so intimately intertwined that, according to Tews's *correspondence* thesis, the knowledge about the environment and its characterization also allow reliable statements about the children who live there, about the

urban child in its intellectual and physical uniqueness. The person becomes a mirror, acquires from his or her documentable circumstances of life the nature of a type (Tews, 1911, p. 33), or, as it was called in the studies cited earlier in this chapter, the "typical individuality" acquired by a person from a particular city district. The person is the target of the city's wide-ranging pedagogical work, becomes the focus of the instructional function and intention of major cultural artifacts – the completely new kind of metropolitan education that Tews brings together in, as I call it, the *functionality of the city* (Tews, pp. 34-35).

Of course, professional educators themselves are involved, too, but it is mainly places and local things that provide for correspondence (which I refer to as *the rule of place effect*). In the physical realm, the "great educators" in this sense are not only buildings whose inhabitants often had to settle for the worst imaginable living conditions, as Tews speculates, not only the developed and undeveloped spaces in the suburbs, but primarily the streets of the city. To Tews, streets are a reflection of the widest possible forms of life in the "river bed" of the throngs, too (p. 105), animated by thousands of figures for whom or which everything "is calculated for its external effect, its appearance" (p. 107). Loss threatens, a life bereft of "its inner meaning," as a recurrence of the aforementioned ambiguities of the street. Abounding in display windows filled with arrays of real things (pp. 112-113), the street is nevertheless totally indispensable as a place for the "all-round spiritual and intellectual development of the child" (pp. 115-116). To the child, who participates in "the great community of passers-by," the street is primarily also "a school with a democratic and social world view," (Tews, 1911, p. 109). That role undoubtedly has more dimensions than the thesis of what I call the *ambiguous educational value of the street*. The street is irreplaceable as "one of the hardest working assistants" (pp. 115-116), although, as Ariès lamented, that was precisely why only a short period in history sufficed for it to be lost. Even at that time, however, the home had to absorb many of the social needs that public space still remaining on the streets of towns and in the countryside was able to meet – unlike the situation in the city (or, in brief, the thesis of *functional compensation and functional shift* of places as a function of settlement size).

There is much forgotten history that 20th-century psychology, oriented to the type of human that the city adapts and develops, could have tapped when it began work on the topic addressed in this chapter. Initial reflections on it reaching back to Tews's time were offered by Willy Hellpach, whose public lecture on "Mensch und Volk der Großstadt" (Man and the Population of the City) in Paris in 1937 marks the point at which the subject began to take shape in that author's work.

### 3.9 *When the city is unavoidable (Hellpach)*

What later (1939) came to distinguish urbanites and determine their social psychology and characterology (Hellpach, 1939/1952, pp. 67-112) – their *Reizsamkeit* (perhaps translatable as the keen awareness and processing of sensory stimulation) – had been the only topic important to Hellpach at the congress on international demography where he delivered the lecture cited above (Führ & Zier, 1987, p. 215). As early as 1904, in his *Fundamentals of a psychology of hysteria*, Hellpach praised Karl Lamprecht, the humanist researcher who discovered "the mental condition of *Reizsamkeit*" (Hellpach, p. 80), a frame of mind whose genetic (and historical) foundation Hellpach explained in terms of excessive mental demands and heavy pedestrian and other traffic. Reaching back even further, Zimmermann (1996, p. 35) has pointed out that "the growing nervousness of our time" was mentioned in a lecture delivered in 1893 by Wilhelm Erb, a Heidelberg physician, who attributed this characteristic to life in the big city. Perhaps the city, with its effects, was becoming remotely perceptible.

Not long afterward (1906), they were expressly given a name in Hellpach's more popular book, *Nervenleben und Weltanschauung* (Nervous life and world view), which built on advances in psychopathology such as the discovery of neurasthenia by an American physician named Beard (p. 45). Subsuming it etiologically under the heading "The problem of nervousness" (pp. 46-47), Hellpach attempted to unravel the "knot of causes" and delimit the group of those suffering from them. In so doing, he characterized "the new nervous life of the middle-class." Nervousness, he wrote, "is the historical psychosis of the advanced capitalistic bourgeoisie" (p. 49) stemming from living conditions that violate the normal alternation of emotional states, precipitating new tensions before the resolution of the previous ones has been brought to an end (p. 50). In Hellpach's view, this disorder was fed by modern undertakings, uncontrolled traffic, and the transformation of all consumption. The entire description reflects middle-class urban living conditions as opposed to those of the rural population and the working class, even of the gentry, and does not grant this one-sided metropolitan life much of a future (p. 72).

That was in 1906, written when Hellpach was still a Karlsruhe neurologist dealing with the "nervous collapse" of the middle class. But in Germany, the country to which he was referring, the cities continued to grow – indeed the 19th century was "decisive in the history of European urbanization" (Zimmermann, 1996, p. 13) – and the speed of the traffic he lamented increased "in its colossal development" (p. 51). From today's perspective, mobility is necessary . . . in order to take part in urban life at all," an observation of which Flade (1994, p. 5) reminded her readers. As Belschner (quoted after Flade, 1994, p. 5) said, the modern city is characterized by an "imperative of mobility."

The German poet Rainer Maria Rilke once prophesied that "the cities [were] . . . the lost and the dissolved . . . and their ephemeral time is passing" (quoted after

Hellpach, 1939/1952, p. 1), but there was a migration to urban centers around the turn of the 20th century – documentable with impressive statistics on Germany, for instance – that certainly made it sound to inquire about the features of these migrants, these "rural refugees," before characterizing cities. It was a subject with which Willy Hellpach (1939/1952) commenced the second edition of his monograph about the city (which he dedicated to the German Society for Psychology). Bismarck, in his own day, had believed he knew why even "quiet, orderly, and honest people" fled from the countryside to the city. In Bismarck's final speech in the German imperial parliament in May 1889, quoted by Hellpach, the city became the place "where there is music outdoors and where one can sit and drink beer at one's ease" (Hellpach, 1939/1952, p. 5), according to the admission of some of the similarly described, embarrassed farm hands from Varzin, Bismarck's estate. A picture of Berlin in those days may bring those words alive (see Plate 5).



**Figure 5:** Alt-Berlin mit dem Brandenburger Tor [Old Berlin with the Brandenburg Gate] (Color reproduction of an old postcard), Kunst und Bild, Berlin (reprinted by permission)

Focused on *Reizsamkeit*, the tenor of Hellpach's presentation soon loses this feeling for positionality, that is, for the specific situation from which the desired, probably also the feared – the life in the city – acquires its contours. It gets lost in the subsequent passages of the monograph on the city. At the beginning, however, it is still so pronounced that Hellpach interprets Bismarck's passages about the motives for fleeing the countryside to mean leisure that is personally freer and more agreeable.

Hellpach acknowledges that leisure as the desired goal of at least the socially dependent person living on the land and having to do hard, exhausting work, the person to whom the city promises greater personal discretion over his existence instead of entrapment in the feudal way of life (pp. 7-9). To Hellpach the flight from the countryside, this migration to the cities, had assumed such proportions that it was necessary to think in terms of more than *one* group of motives (a point that he [1939/1952, pp. 11-12] helps document with contemporary writings), but it is both impressive and amazing how, without realizing it, he allows this hope for leisure to shatter against the unforgiving surface of urban reality. As more of an emphatic than a precise observer of the city dweller's reality, Hellpach saw the urban tempo increasing to *haste* in every sphere, spreading from body movement and speech to the entire "mental demeanor" to become the dominant characteristic of urbanites (p. 30) regardless of whether the hope for limited, discretionary leisure had brought them there or whether they lived as urbanites without caring about the origins of, indeed the change in, their frame of mind.

It is odd how few traces this frustration of hope left in Hellpach's developed thoughts, which are often cited only in abbreviated form. Given the polarity between the leisure that is hoped for and the haste that is experienced, it is also peculiar how little this dashed hope prompts consideration of whether special places teach special ways of coordinating, scheduling, and experiencing time, as was common to the film settings of that era (see Plate 6).

But this lesson might change in the course of culture and history. The idea of city as a *polis* emerged in a culture that still demanded "time as a natural human treasure" for the stranger, a culture that experienced time in a different manner – and surely in different places, too, as in her groves of olive trees, whose very age made time tangible (a thought from Kästner's book on Greece, 1974, pp. 27, 222). And the lesson must be differentiated for earlier decades as well. More recent discourses on Berlin's cultural history show what became of such thwarted hopes, how the issue of poverty reached unprecedented dimensions in Berlin and other cities "through the migration of the countryside's pauperized and proletarianized strata" (Pokiser, 1995, p. 23). But let me return to Hellpach's questions.

Is it really that, once in the city, one becomes different "through and through" (Hellpach, 1939/1952, p. 34)? At least some questions remain: "How does the city change the person who lives in it" (p. 34)? "What does the city make out of the human being who lives in it" (p. 34)? And if it effectively changes that person, are the changes irreversible? After study of the type of human being represented by the urban population and by those drawn to such cities, these questions led Hellpach to his second group of topics: the investigation of the "psychophysics of urban existence" as a contribution to understanding the mutability of organisms (p. 35). He reminds the reader that mutability has its limits, for creatures perish under living conditions hostile to their species. He did not mean climatic conditions only, whose effects are often overrated (p. 37), and shortly thereafter (p. 39) he formulated a law

of "Lebensraum" stating that "a species or subspecies of organisms . . . is fit for a location if it is able to develop viable *breeds*" (p. 39; spaced in the original). The city is an excellent location of this kind, a viewpoint that raises what to Hellpach was the legitimate and essentially scientific question of whether a city forms such a breed, "human breeds" of a special type that could be not only characterized as "special" in comparison to townspeople or the rural population but also – and in this regard Hellpach was thinking in very sociobiological terms – shown to possess undiminished powers of reproduction.



**Figure 6:** Harold Lloyd in "Safety Last" (1923), Tushita edition, Duisburg (reprinted by permission)

Much as Goethe in his own day had thought he could tell the structure of work processes on the basis of regional climate when he noticed the idleness in Naples, Hellpach pondered the urban climate as one of the "impositions" with which large cities burdened their inhabitants. Hellpach, who in his thinking and abundance of observations was curiously similar to Goethe in many respects, also contemplated "city-air bodies" and "urban climatology" as well as the contribution and particular

aspects of the radiation that produces the light-deficient "existence of the urbanite" (p. 44), referring to the much higher proportion of artificial illumination experienced by the city dweller. According to Hellpach, the climate produced by urban lighting shifts from biactive to "psychologically stimulating" (spaced in the original). In addition to a tendency toward thermal attenuation and toward photic stimulation (pp. 49-50) as other possible components of *Reizsamkeit* caused by the urban environment, it is peculiar to the city that its ground surface is characterized almost everywhere by such closed structures as asphalted streets and other ways of sealing off the earth. Conscious that he was able only to hypothesize about the effects and directions of effects that these features had on the nature of urbanites, of "the" city dwellers, Hellpach shortened his list of potential agents more and more. His exposé increasingly became an argument for urban research, which, as he saw it in the early 1950s, was more impressive for its gaps in knowledge than for its store of insights.

But it is striking in these perceptive descriptions of place how little the city acquires its own physiognomy in terms of houses, windows, streets, and corners. The term metropolis communicates something more generic than specific. The city remains an entity that is largely unstructured, even from region to region, an unarticulated artifact in which a person is, incidentally, changed in a way that still needs to be studied. The person becomes a human breed but does not actually develop. Hellpach's metropolis has no children; at least he does not call them that. "Human breeds" form there, breeds whose ontogenetically earlier phases are altogether murky. He is deeply troubled by the question of what contributes to the urban population's lack of biological reproduction (Hellpach, 1939/1952, pp. 61-66). It is just that if the urban population ever were successful at biological reproduction, "the consequences" would not acquire a character of their own, unless it be acceleration in the sense of excessively early sexual maturity. But remember, what a long road urban childhood has before it reaches that point.

That emphasis comes across plainly in Hellpach's "characterology" of the urbanite, the core attributes of which are often cited. Hellpach began with what to him – and not only to him (see Simmel, 1903/1995, for example) – was a basic characteristic of coexistence in the cities, the fact of *quantity* (*Menge*) as distinguished from mass (Hellpach, 1939/1952, pp. 67, 142). Quantity is impressively and always palpable or visible in re-encounters with the city at its most congested places. Correspondingly, urban life is played out in unavoidably *close physical proximity* (*Enge*) characterized by inescapable motion or turbulence, by incessant and urgent change. Hurried change is simply the only way that the confines of the city can cope with the quantity imposed upon it. "The watchword breathlessness" thus belongs to the "mode of existence of urban street life" (p. 67) just as *haste* is "an integral part of urban existence" (p. 68) – though experience today shows that at least a Berliner can experience the peace of gently gliding through the Spree Forest on a skiff before returning to the busy metropolis.

That breathlessness indicates an altered way of dealing with time, to other forms of time in urban living reality. It is formulated according to a central psychological law of irradiation (extension) versus contrast. In this case, haste extends into the most private psychological spheres and feelings of humans in the city, which pushes people not only when they cross the street. Condensed into a sociophysical and sociopsychological haste in living, the impatience of city dwellers (through which children should actually have to be purged of their dreaming and dawdling) becomes part of their "nervousness," which Beard described in terms of the late-19th-century megalopolises of the U.S. east coast (see p. 44, in this chapter). But Hellpach sees nervousness more as the endpoint of a pathogenic sequence beginning with the more inclusive characteristic called *Reizsamkeit* (at this point in his text, he thus assesses Lamprecht more critically) and set apart from the more leisurely tempo of life in cities of intermediate size. In the large cities, "the stimuli crowding in upon the urbanite, . . . are much greater in number [and], above all, more diverse and rapid in sequence than those that townspeople and villagers have to cope with" (Hellpach, 1939/1952, p. 69). From this observation Hellpach derives a second main characteristic, the urbanite's increased *alertness* – a shifted, not broadened, process of perception that would lead city dwellers into hazardous situations on the street and elsewhere under other circumstances.

What, then, is the special, unique aspect of the excessive demands the city makes on its inhabitants, the impositions with which they must deal with and to which they must adjust? It is the city as a cramped, crowded, hurriedly changing environment (see Hellpach, 1939/1952, p. 70) to which the coping urbanite responds by developing a "second nature" of not inconsiderable potential for conflict, a secondary personality that forms around perceptual acuity, keen awareness and processing of sensory stimulation, and haste. Modern sociobiology, represented in this volume by Charlesworth, would find a fundamental ontogenetic rule that could be ramified and spelled out according to limits and risks of plasticity and environmental adaptability compatible with and specific to this species of human being. To Hellpach, the counterpole to the urban setting would be the villager's much less predictable, overpowering, yet more leisurely world of fields and stalls (Hellpach, 1939/1952, p. 70).

In biology today it is still believed that the most obvious ecological characteristic of cities is that they confront the human inhabitant with completely new kinds of environment:

The most obvious ecological characteristic of cities is that they present their human inhabitants with a completely new and altogether different environment to anything else found on Earth. They constitute as distinct an ecosystem as an entirely new biome. (Campbell, 1983, pp. 178-179)

In modern behavioral research, it is still doubted whether the human being's "first nature" is biologically in harmony with these environmental conditions of what is

actually a "pathogenic environment" (Eibl-Eibesfeldt & Hass, 1985, quoted after Fischer, 1995, p. 6). As John Berger (1992) disconsolately stated about a position articulated in an earlier age, it could be countered that

life in the city . . . is apt to lead to a sentimental view of nature. One thinks of nature as a garden or as a window-framed vista or as a place of freedom. Farmers, mariners, and nomads know better: Nature is energy and struggle. She is what exists, with no promises of any kind. . . . Her forces are terrifyingly indifferent. (pp. 9-10; for earlier opinions, see this chapter, pp. 30-32)

Following Hellpach's train of thought, let me summarize at this point what the city demands of its inhabitants and those growing up in it. A basic law of biology is that a species can adapt to the "rigors" of its immediate environment in a wide variety of ways (though certainly not without consequences). Nevertheless, documentable contemporary adaptations to the demands of urban life are difficult to distinguish from previous selection brought about by immigration. Given this restriction, one can formulate the following rules based on Hellpach's ideas: (a) Confined space shared under the local urban conditions inevitably accelerates the rate at which persons and their locations get rearranged. (b) The greater and more rapidly changing range of stimuli arising from urban living conditions inevitably makes for keener and more flexible corresponding perceptual alertness. Accordingly, the city can be characterized as a living space that both compels and facilitates the adaptation of its fast-paced, alert, and highly responsive human inhabitants. These two rules lead to a third: (c) For the urbanite, successful adaptations constitute a "second nature" that can become an increasing, then probably pathogenic, contradiction of the human being's first nature as a nonarbitrary, at least not inconsequential, distortion of preadaptation. These rules pertain to city dwellers without spelling out models of development and effect over the human life span, without individualizing claimed effects or conceding that urbanites may have compensating (or other) strategies for actively reshaping their environment. It was not until Anselm Strauss and Richard Wohl that the urbanite was seen as more active and less suffering, that urbanites were considered to have the vigor to cope with the incomprehensible whole of the city by drawing on a variety of ingeniously analyzed personal strategies (see Strauss, 1976, pp. 5-17). As Graumann (1990, pp. 70-72) points out, though, Hellpach did in principle think about possibilities for regulating and intervening in the city-dweller's "sociopsychological system of constraints."

Hellpach teaches his readers how city dwellers see, feel, speak, deteriorate, how they get on in the world, in which form of time, with what degree of urgency, and with how much consideration for others this occurs with urbanites, born as they are of the perpetual squeeze of the teeming crowds. And he does so in a prose whose linguistic and conceptual flourish rivals that of Luther's tracts. All the while, he is actually also teaching how humans defer their hopes, make key decisions in their lives, create out of wretched childhoods an urban living experience that leads them

to enter into partnerships more cautiously and to practice family planning, all the while not underestimating the pedagogical value of the urban environment as a limited phase in the life of the young adult.

Yes, Hellpach teaches all that, too, concerned as he is about the well-being of peoples, especially in their big cities. Paying tribute to the educational (assimilative) dynamics of the city in more global terms than Tews did from his perspective on metropolitan education, Hellpach considers its ineluctable power to absorb and assimilate those who move to the city in huge waves and encounter those who have long been living there already. To Hellpach, it is once again the urban life's fundamental characteristics of quantity and close physical proximity that offer liberally apportioned opportunities for the daily workings of Carpenter's law – as at least a rudimentary imitation of seen or imagined behavior, quite apart from desired assimilation (Hellpach, 1939/1952, pp. 94-95).

The city is thus presented to modern readers through idiosyncratic language describing experiences with earlier living conditions, an urban environment whose inhabitants live in strata of unequal positions, unequal desire to escape those conditions, and incessant variety of fleeting and indifferent encounters, including encounters with children (see Hellpach, 1939/1952, p. 96). All the while, these inhabitants remain subject to the "law of the city," according to which the pull toward assimilation, "the inescapable pressure to comprehend rapidly, and the interaction of quantity and close physical proximity, of haste and change," makes itself felt in more than just the differences between the language of the city and that of the countryside (p. 98). That law is rooted "in the city's peculiarity of gathering so many people in so close a space that it generates the power to largely *standardize* the appearance and gestures of these throngs" (p. 107). What distinguishes cities from each other is the localized variations they form in their populations, or as Hellpach put it, "cities are forming a new kind of regionally specific demographic species" (p. 106). In many different ways he illuminates what they do, but they are nonetheless artifacts for which he wishes no further growth. What remains is "the unnaturalness of the phenomenon called the city" (p. 108), for it lacks fresh air, fresh light, and fresh soil (quoted after p. 82) even after the reconstruction from the wastelands of debris left by times of war. To compound the problems, the city now also suffers from growing motorization and, literally, the "derailment" of technology. How hard it is to be a child swaddled in the fabric of all the possible derailments without being able to figure as a topic inherently worthy of interdisciplinary urban research – a science that Hellpach enthusiastically invokes. Though it sings no song of "woe about the cesspools of vice of the megalopolises" (p. 132), neither does it give a voice to the children who grow up there. Cities develop, it is true, but not the people living in them, although they *are* transformed "by the fact that so many *fellow humans* are gathered in so small a space." To Hellpach that fact is the crucial point of departure for everything that distinguishes urbanites from those who are probably happier, those in towns and villages (p. 73). But Tews's legacy passed to other hands, to

researchers who eagerly and alertly inquired about urban children, seeking them out where one encounters them: on the streets, in the courtyards, and on the squares of the city. What remained of those precepts? What did they contribute to children, the city, and theory? Meanwhile, the second generation after Hellpach has kept the subject of urban research very much alive in Heidelberg (Graumann, 1990, and, now in Munich, Weinert, 1992).

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# Children's life worlds in urban environments

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## 1 Terms and Issues

This chapter may serve as a kind of introduction to the entire book. We wish to ask what children's life worlds are in the city. That is, what are the urban spaces in which children live, play, learn, and linger? We describe them and point out the significance they can have for children's development. In so doing, we largely set aside the historical aspect of this topic and confine ourselves to changes that have occurred since World War I. (For children's urban living conditions before that point, see Görlitz, in this volume, and Görlitz, 1993.) We present children's urban living spaces as a network of organism-environment units in which children participate (see section 3 for a definition of our concept of network).

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, we wish to show that there are as many such networks at any given moment as there are children in the city, that the network of every child changes according to that child's state of development, and that some parts of the network may compensate for other parts. Second, we stress that development can be conceived of as a life-long process of person-environment transactions in whose course both the cognitive and emotional-motivational structures of the person change. In this manner, the individual's knowledge of the city is modified, places and elements of the environment acquire new meanings, and the person's mental representation of the city is updated. Third, we intend to demonstrate that both the concept of home range (the area in which children are permitted to move about alone or in the company of persons other than their parents) and the "island-forming thesis" (the assumption that the places significant to children today are widely separated and that children must be helped to reach them) can be integrated into our conception of networks.

We need not take this chapter to review the research bearing on the theories about the relation between children on the one hand and urban spaces on the other, for those theories already constitute the core of this book, and the respective authors cite the most important results pertaining to them. But before we can describe children's urban life spaces and explore their potential significance for children's development, we must state our own theoretical position. First, however, we turn briefly to the two concepts of *child* and *city*. Actually, it seems they do not need to be defined. After

all, everyone knows what a child and a city is. But even contemplating the seemingly straightforward job of counting up and describing the more or less important spaces in which urban children act and experience life makes one thing crystal clear: *The child and the city do not exist*, so one cannot speak of *the child in the city*. As trivial as that statement is, there are many different children (different in their abilities to experience and act because, say, they are handicapped; different in age or family background; different in the urban space in which they live, go to school, and so forth; and different in the strata to which they belong, just to mention a few of the aspects involved). Similarly, one city is not like another (differing, for example, in size, architecture, geographic location, state of economic development, and significance to the surrounding areas). To the environmental psychologist, the differences between cities may seem almost more numerous and weighty than those between children. Then there are also linguistic and cultural differences. For instance, the German visitor to the United States must first learn that the English word *town*, the equivalent of the German word *Stadt*, is used to refer even to settlements with perhaps fewer than 200 inhabitants, places that Germans would not even call a hamlet or a village, let alone a *Stadt*.

It goes without saying that this short chapter cannot even come close to treating the entire range of variety in the nature of cities and children. For precisely that reason, however, we find it important to make at least a few rough delimitations. In the following pages the kind of people we are speaking about are those of "normal ability" in the age span ranging from birth to 13 years. That is, we are speaking mainly about preadolescents, and we do not deal with the broad spectrum of different handicaps or special abilities. In terms of the city, our observations pertain to communities with at least 100,000 inhabitants.

Now to our theoretical position. As social and environmental psychologists, we consider ourselves committed to Altman and Rogoff's (1987) transactionalism, which we have gradually developed into a theoretical approach of our own. In our eyes, the subject of "child in the city" and the intent to work with planners to optimally shape urban spaces to meet the developmental needs of children requires the approach outlined below.

1. The units of analysis always consist of an organism, or of organisms, in addition to the milieu (e.g., a small child playing in a sandbox), whereby the organism and the milieu must not be seen as two independent, juxtaposed units but rather as two units that embrace each other, that are part of one another.
2. The organism and the milieu (both physical and social) do not interact in the sense of reciprocal response but rather act simultaneously with or against each other, transforming each other into new states. The child and the sandbox, for instance, change one another in mutual action (Harloff, 1995). In our eyes, the difference between the kind of activity engaged in by organisms and that engaged in by things is only a

matter of degree. It is true that the activity of things lacks intentions and emotions, that it is nontelic, but the physical milieu, through its affordances (Gibson) or valence (Lewin), "speaks" to the organism, invites certain action, and thereby contributes actively to transformation if an appropriate response is forthcoming.

3. Transactions, changes of state, occur over time, need time. In many cases they do not have a definite beginning and a clear termination but always have a before and after. Imagine a 3- or 4-year-old child who is awakened by its mother in order to get to church on time. Stretching and yawning, the child gradually wakes up, while the mother talks with him and a visitor. Transactions occur in and with the child, the mother, the visitor, and the physical milieu. It also becomes clear that the units (behavior episodes) later identified by the researcher overlap, that they can be grouped into larger units, and that they are interwoven and interlocked in several ways (Wright, 1967).

4. An additional idea is closely linked to point 3:

Human beings and things change over time. *Change is normal and generally needs no special explanation.* Humans and their environment take part and are the object of many different dynamic processes of change. Social, economic, biological, and physical forces are perpetually at work. They bring about changes in us, the environment, and under certain circumstances even without any conscious act by the individual. . . . Through intentional human intervention (or the activity of other living organisms), situations may change quickly and radically. Transactions, however, always take place between inanimate objects as well, sometimes very slowly, at a snail's pace, almost imperceptible to the human senses. Such is the case, say, with water that gradually seeps into the walls of an uninhabited house. . . . At other times, transactions between inanimate objects can be rapid and abiding as well, as when a storm blows the roof off a building. (Harloff, 1995, pp. 26-27)

5. Person-environment units vary in size and affect each other. Depending on the question posed in research or planning, the size that is selected depends on the question being addressed. When studying ways in which action is carried out in "household kitchens," one will form synomorphs (Barker, 1968), such as rinsing ingredients, preparing food on the cutting board, cooking on the stove, setting the table, and eating at the kitchen table, and will consider the ways in which they interrelate. When designing a housing estate, however, one deals with larger synomorphs such as apartments or even apartment buildings, playgrounds, preschools, schools, and grocery stores.

6. Larger units are composed of smaller ones. (Dwellings, for instance, consist of their individual rooms and the uses to which they are put.) Reciprocal impacts exist not only horizontally (that is, between the synomorphs of the same level, as in the kitchen example, above) but also vertically. What can happen at the kitchen table, and what under certain circumstances must happen there (as may be the case with school homework), depends on the overall layout of the dwelling and on the living concept of the family residing in it. Moreover, the same synomorph can be part of

very different patterns of relations, or "different authority systems," as Barker (1968) put it. Action sequences that take place in a child's bedroom are thus a function not only of living that is simultaneously going on in other rooms but also of what is happening on the playground, in the nursery, or in the school (before, after, and at the same time). In many ways, then, person-environment units are horizontally, vertically, and temporally interwoven and interlocked.

7. Human action must always be viewed in its physical (and social) milieu. The nature of and closeness of the reciprocal relations between person and environment varies greatly. For example, the weave

is strong, tight, and direct if the milieu is directly manipulated or if it is otherwise constitutive (as a bathtub is for bath). It is wide, open, and indirect if the milieu is rather a coincidental framework for the action (as a kitchen is for conversations between a household member and a visiting neighbor). (Harloff & Ritterfeld, 1993, p. 34)

The concept of synomorphy cited above in reference to Barker suggests that people deliberately often shape environments in a way that makes it possible to execute recurring actions or "standing patterns of behavior" (Barker) quickly, precisely, and easily. However, the relation between a milieu and a standing pattern of action is usually not so close that the milieu precludes action complementing or diverging from the intention of the planning that has been undertaken. Over time, both the patterns and the milieu are changed (Wicker, 1987).

We close this introduction with a brief explanation of our concept of development. (On a wide variety of developmental theories and on the development of the concepts of *development* and *developmental psychology*, see Trautner, 1991-1992; Moshman, Glover, & Bruning, 1987; Montada, 1995; Carlson & Buskist, 1997; Fernald, 1997.) Building on our theses of transactionalism, we understand development as an engaging, life-long process that takes place as transactions. The individual at the center of consideration and that individual's social and physical surroundings have a part in the process. Each of these three agents is both active and passive. (a) An individual, for example, acquires new cognitive and motivational-emotional structures. That person appropriates his or her physical setting, thereby "developing" in this sense (and simultaneously contributing to the "development" of other organisms and the physical environment). (b) At the same time, the individual is subject to, is affected and shaped by, the active influences exerted by the social and physical milieu through transactions. Development of that individual is *brought about*. (c) Lastly, person-environment units develop as such in the context of the dynamic processes of change that their parts or larger surrounding units go through. (Views of development such as those by Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky come close to such a transactional concept.)

When describing and analyzing development, one can shift the focus from one element to another: from one individual to the next (e.g., from the child to the