AT HOME IN THE STREET
Street Children of Northeast Brazil

TOBIAS HECHT

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INTRODUCTION

Once the place where most of Northeast Brazil's political elite was educated, the Faculdade de Direito, or Law Faculty, is situated in Recife's bustling center. The faculty is neoclassical French in design, and its cream-colored walls are surrounded by benches, tightly cropped grass, and a variety of lush trees. Around its perimeter runs a wrought-iron fence, separating the repose of the faculty from the chaos of the surrounding streets of this port city.

It's a Tuesday afternoon in 1992. Four government social workers sit nervously in the lazy shade of a broad-leafed tree. On the other side of the faculty are two "street educators" from Ruas e Praças (Streets and Squares), a street-front, activist organization. They are accompanied by a Dutch volunteer and an American anthropologist, myself. Two members of a student group concerned about street children join us, followed by a young man from the Pentecostal Christian organization Desafio Jovem (Young Challenge). Next to the eastern gate of the Law School, some 20 women officers from the Military Police survey the grounds. Behind them, across the street, stands a smaller reinforcement of male officers who, for the moment, occupy themselves boyishly surveying their female counterparts.

In all, civil and religious activists, government social workers, police, and foreign onlookers number at least 40. This unlikely assembly has come together because the Law Faculty serves as the daytime hangout for a group of street children and young, homeless adults. Yet there are no more than eight homeless children or adults on the grounds at any one time this afternoon.

I am taping the conversation between Jocimar, a street educator, and Ricardo, a man who has lived for many years in the streets of

Recife. Ricardo is lamenting the loss of his young "adoptive son" to a government vocational program, where he fears the boy will learn to steal, sniff glue, and do *tudo que não presta*, or all things bad. In the midst of this conversation, one of the government social workers comes over to inform us that the police have ordered them to leave and that they have agreed to comply. My companions from Ruas e Praças choose to ignore the warning.

About 15 minutes later, three women officers approach us. I am taping a conversation with Zé Paulo and his *menino*, or child paramour, Pedro. Zé Paulo, 32, was raised at the state reformatory known as FEBEM (the State Foundation for the Well-Being of Minors)[1] and in the streets. Pedro is 12 and has spent three of the past six years in the street, three in a shelter.

The officers belong to one of several battalions that have been deployed in recent weeks to *tirar*, that is pull or uproot, children from the streets, particularly from the city's busy thoroughfares. The officers have targeted specific stretches of some of the busiest and most crime-ridden streets in the city, attempting to remove the children block by block. The newly "cleansed" territory is then heavily patrolled to discourage the children from returning and new ones from moving in. The police are at the Law Faculty because the school's rector, convinced that the presence of the social workers is encouraging the children to loiter on the grounds, even to "satisfy their physiological necessities" there, has pulled strings so that the police will remove both the children and social workers.

There are no arrests today, but the understated recriminations tense the lips of the police and activists alike. By the time the exchange ends, the small homeless contingent has sauntered off, leaving only the social workers and police officers – the foot soldiers in this battle over where children should and should not be. In time, though, the social workers and police also depart, for their respective impoverished homes.

Points of Departure

On the one hand, this book is about street children like those who, notwithstanding periodic attempts to evict them, still lounge in the shade of the trees around Recife's Law Faculty and at many other spots

in the Recife metropolitan area. But it is also about the groups that dedicate their days to working with the children, and in a more general sense it is about the attention and debate that street children elicit from state institutions, local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international observers and do-gooders, and casual observers in Brazil and the world over. Why did a motley group of no more than eight homeless youths bring together this diverse assembly of more than five times as many activists, concerned onlookers, and military police officers?

Over the past decade, street children, particularly those in Brazil, have become a focus of attention in the media, featured everywhere from the *New York Times* to Amnesty International reports, the BBC evening news to *Ladies' Home Journal.* Death-squad murders and underworld exploitation of street children were the subject of the American movie *Boca* (Avancini and Werneck 1994); meanwhile, street children are frequently portrayed in Brazilian soap operas watched by tens of millions. Lucrative direct mail campaigns have been launched in the United States to raise money for projects with street children. In 1985, Covenant House raised more than US$28 million in this way (Walton 1991: 25). And street children have proved a dubious curiosity for visitors to Brazil, a favorite subject for photographers. A travel article in *Ronda Iberia*, the magazine of the Spanish airline Iberia, featured shots of children "who have made their home in the street" amid photographs of *carnaval* dancers, Sugar Loaf Mountain, and the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema (Hernández Çava 1994). Indeed, street children have been made something of a Brazilian cultural emblem. UNICEF has declared street children a top priority, and countless NGOs presenting themselves as advocates for street children have appeared. If one can imagine what sociologist Joel Best (1990) has called a social problems marketplace, street children have come to occupy a prominent place there, never more so than during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

One common trait of the talk about street children is its homogeneity. At the beginning of the 1990s it seemed that conference papers, brochures, and leisure magazine articles about street children were guided by a loosely agreed-upon recipe. The staple ingredients included a definition of the "problem," a pinch of history, a sprig of statistics about the size of the population, a dash on drugs and stealing,

and a final shake in the form of suggestions for policy makers. The recipe was followed so closely by so many that even the opening paragraphs in articles about street children elicit a sense of déjà vu. Four articles began as follows:

> The phenomenon of street children has become an integral feature of the urban landscape of primarily but not exclusively developing countries. . . . In most Third World cities, they are the shadowy presence that fill the background of daily life, doing odd jobs, scavenging for food, begging. (Taylor et al. 1992: 1)

> Street children have become a fixture of the urban landscape in most developing countries – as common as the corner market stall. . . . They can be seen sleeping under bridges, begging in front of restaurants and hotels, shining shoes, selling newspapers, hawking in city markets, hauling garbage, or engaged in an array of other activities, both legal and illegal. (Barker and Knaul 1991: 1)

> Throughout Latin America there are thousands of neglected children struggling to survive in the streets of all major urban areas. These youngsters can generally be seen lingering around parks and street corners, shining shoes, begging at crowded intersections, or singing for small change on city buses. After dark, they sleep huddled together on the pavement. (Connolly 1990: 129)

> Known variously as *street urchins, street Arabs, chinches, garotos, gamines, chinos de la calle, pájaros fruteros, pelones, canillitas*, and countless other names – mostly pejorative – street children inhabit the public spaces of cities throughout the Americas and, indeed, the world. Street children are seen singing for change on public buses, begging in central squares and sleeping on doorsteps. (IAPG 1990: 5)

The last example, I must confess, is from an article I once wrote. It was prepared for an international conference on population attended by parliamentarians. I was asked to write it before meeting any street children, and by the time I finished I still had not met one. Nonetheless, the paper was warmly endorsed by a panel of "technical ex-

perts," including the heads of UNICEF and Childhope, and read enthusiastically by the parliamentarians. It was artistically laid out by professional typesetters, with graphs and emotionally charged photographs, and printed on fine high-gloss paper. The article succeeded in presenting, under a visually appealing façade, a text that coupled bureaucratic assumptions with wishful thinking.

In an informal sense, the research for this book began when I wrote the paper, more than two years before I began my fieldwork. My initial hopes of trying to do something through my article to help street children, whom I imagined as hapless victims of industrialization, were short-lived. Over cocktails in the five-star hotel in Quito, Ecuador that served as our conference headquarters, a member of Peru's Chamber of Deputies praised my work and asked if I had heard of piranhas. I replied in the affirmative to his apparent nonsequitur. He proceeded to describe how, like piranhas, street children are small and innocent in ones and twos, but when enough of them get together they attack like a school of man-eating fish. The parliamentarian had understood my publication as a call for ridding the streets of this public menace. Over time, it became clear to me that my article and the many others of which it was very nearly a replica say more about those who produce and consume the literature than about the group they purport to describe.

The impassioned attention accorded to street children during the gathering at the Law Faculty and their omnipresence in the popular imagination about Brazil raise many questions. In a city where hundreds of thousands of children suffer from hunger, disease, and deprivation in the *favelas* (shantytowns), why did the presence of a tiny number of children and young adults living in the street mobilize such a wide array of social actors? What are the aims of social activists who work with street children? How do such activists portray their beneficiaries, and how, in turn, do the children see their advocates? What are the salient features of the talk about street children, and why have street children – particularly the murdered ones – become emblematic of Brazil?

Research Perspectives and Methods

My fieldwork in Recife was preceded by a short period of research in the United States during which I interviewed representatives of inter-

national organizations that fund projects for street children. I introduced myself, when I did not already know the individuals concerned, by saying that I was a student of social anthropology and that I was conducting research on street children and their benefactors. I asked about the work of the institutions, who they believed street children to be, why they believed it important to work with street children, and how such children could be helped. I also asked for information about institutions in Recife and was in this way able to gain a sense of how different organizations were regarded.

The research in Brazil was conducted during 13 months in 1992 and 1993 and three months in 1995. During the first period I lived with my partner in Casa Caiada, a middle-class neighborhood of Olinda, the colonial city adjacent to Recife. Coming as a couple and living in this location had important implications for my research. My partner had access to certain social settings from which I was barred, such as wedding showers, and consistently lent an extra set of observing eyes. Residing among the newly rich isolated us from the *favelas* from which street children come. On the other hand, our particular apartment building set us across the street from the most popular hangout for street children in Olinda. Living cheek by jowl with the street children, albeit in absurdly contrasting circumstances, allowed me to discover the extensive ties the children forge with the domiciled members of the community. Housewives, shop owners, waiters, pharmacists, and others help the children in different ways, some even taking them into their homes. In addition, this location offered a view of Brazilian middle-class childhood and middle-class life in general, which also became important aspects of my research

During the second period of research I initially lived in a place called Pau Amarelo, a sweaty 25 minutes by bus from Olinda and an even sweatier 45 minutes from Recife. Pau Amarelo is both a summer vacation beach area for the wealthy and a working-class dormitory neighborhood of Recife. For the last month, I moved back to Casa Caiada.

Participant observation is an oxymoron and in the case of my research this was especially true. Participation implies being a part of the events one is studying; observation implies detachment, even invisibility. As a foreigner at least one head taller and several shades

Olinda with Recife in the background. Photo by Isabel Balseiro.

paler than most *nordestinos*, or northeasterners, I was especially visible. In addition, the extent of my participation was sometimes quite limited. During brief visits to the many organizations that work with poor children in Recife, it was not possible to be a true participant, certainly not in the sense of being a part of the work of the institutions. Initially, though, this had its advantages. Not being closely associated with any group, I found many doors open to me that otherwise might have been closed; rivalry among some of the groups is intense.

Over time, however, I strove to be a part of the work of one organization, O Grupo Ruas e Praças. Ruas e Praças, an activist member organization of the National Movement of Street Children, works with street youths in Recife's city center. Although not a full-time volunteer with Ruas e Praças, I participated extensively in its work, going out to the streets several times a week with the street educators, driving children and educators to the group's farm some two hours outside the city, facilitating contact with international organizations, and partaking in discussions about the group's objectives and long-range goals. I chose to work closely with this group because its members

were in the street daily, because I admired its commitment to effecting larger social transformations, and because I enjoyed a close friendship with some of its members.

When I first contemplated studying street children, I was concerned about the inequalities of power. I envisaged myself in the field as the one with the upper hand. While the children would be subject to deprivation of all kinds, I would have a safe place to sleep at night, a wad of travelers checks, all the right vaccinations, and a plane ticket back to the First World. This concern proved to be warranted. I never came to terms with the material inequalities between myself and the street children. But in another sense I had it all wrong. I had the upper hand in terms of the creature comforts, but the research relationship was guided by a different dynamic. The problem of studying street children is that if you do it for long enough, you come to realize that you depend on them, not they on you.

So I searched for ways to treat the children as protagonists of my research, not as mere repositories of data. Because so many street children have been tortured by the police, I was hesitant at first to take notes in their presence, photograph them, or tape-record conversations. But after about six weeks I found, much to my surprise, how eager the children were to have their stories recorded. I discovered this by accident when 16-year-old Beto snatched from my bag the tape recorder I had resolved, precisely that afternoon, never to use. He walked off to speak to the machine on his own and to talk with his chums. Beto posed many of the questions that I had wanted to ask. He began inquiring about robberies, drug use, the families of his chums, their ages, and many other details. He also asked questions that would not have occurred to me – for instance, he asked a girl who protected her at night and how she paid her "watchman." His conversation with a boy went as follows:

Beto: Hey, Carlos, where do you live?
Carlos: In Ibura.
Beto: What part of Ibura?
Carlos: In UR-4.

Beto: You and who else live there?
Carlos: Me, my mother, my father. . . .
Beto: Are they separated?
Carlos: Yes.

I would have stopped at the question "You and who else live there?" but Beto probed further, asking whether it was really true that the father lived in the house. As it turned out, the father only visited from time to time. Although he had already asked where Carlos *lived*, Beto next asked where he *slept*. Carlos said he slept in the street. As I learned many months later, Carlos had not set foot in his "home" for years.

Having my tape recorder requisitioned and my role as interviewer usurped eventually translated into my most important research method. To my surprise, children tended to view the tape recorder not with suspicion but as a means of making themselves heard, of telling stories they rarely if ever had the chance to recount. They asked one another questions that only the most experienced interviewers might think to pose and framed the questions in ways that their companions readily understood. The questions they put to one another proved to be easily as important as the answers provided. I left the field with some 900 typed pages of transcriptions from these sessions, which the children came to call *oficinas de radio*, or radio workshops.

The term "radio workshop" evokes the sense in which many of the children used the tape recorder. They approached it at once as a toy and as a means of projecting their voices to other audiences. But whose voices were being projected and who was the audience? In the radio workshops, individual children often expressed multiple voices. In CAP (the Center for Provisional Reception), the state-run juvenile detention center, child interviewers frequently cloaked themselves in the chiding tones of the institutional social worker. Tape recorder in hand and endowed with the power to question, interviewers often suggested that their peers quit "that life" (*essa vida*) of crime and return home to work, help their mothers, and stay out of trouble. But in a moment, when they had finished asking questions and offering guidance, they would speak boastfully of their own use of drugs and participation in street crime.

In Desafio Jovem, a drug rehabilitation camp run by Pentecostal

A radio workshop at a shelter for boys.

Christians, children would often assume the voices of those who proselytized them. They would recite psalms and other passages from the Bible and utter warnings about the temptations of the devil. In other settings, children would make up stories, for instance about bank robbers. One of the most popular voices was that of real television personages from *Aqui, Agora* (Here, Now), an investigative docudrama that uncovers the grisly details of actual cases of rape, murder, or any sufficiently gruesome crime. The television program, a sort of marriage between the crime pages of the tabloid press and *The Twilight Zone*, seemed to blend easily with the children's everyday experience of violence in the street. Imitating the show's hosts, the children often used the names of their peers in describing hideous but imaginary crimes.

The interaction in groups varied with such factors as the gender of the participants and the physical setting of the workshop. For instance, in CAP, boys would discuss with bravado their participation in all sorts of crimes, even homicide. Yet in the men's prison, youths who had recently attained their majority categorically denied any involvement in the crimes of which they were accused.[2]

Some youths were more assertive in front of the microphone than others, and in small groups there tended to be intense competition for

control of the microphone. It was thus inevitable that in some conversations one or two individuals dominated. But as a general rule, even those most assertive initially would pass on the microphone to others once they had made their points. Sometimes it seemed that the girls were less interested in speaking when among boys or even other girls, so I tended to interview them one-on-one. This might suggest that whereas the boys were often engaged in a form of public play-acting, the girls were more focused on their own private life stories and day-to-day concerns.

I never attempted to assemble a random sample of children. Yet the small size of the population, coupled with my own fascination with the method, meant that by the end of my initial 13 months in Recife at least half as many street children around the city had participated in the workshops as were counted in a municipal survey of homeless children (see Chapter 4).

In addition to the radio workshops, I taped many one-to-one conversations with children, private but recorded exchanges, which were an invaluable complement to the radio workshops. The group interviews had a group dynamic, since children, like adults, speak differently among their peers than in private conversations. For example, children who presented an almost formulaic adoration of their mothers when in a group might, in private, speak of maternal rejection.

I was wary of being seen as a social worker bent on convincing the children to quit their lives in the street. Inevitably there were times when the children saw me in that light. But there were many others when I felt confident I was hearing something not aimed at pleasing the judgmental adult. It was not infrequent for a single child to speak in two quite distinct "voices" in a single interview, that of the repentant child and that of the defiant ruffian. As I argue in Chapter 4, it is the blending of these two personae that is so characteristic of street children.

The questions the children asked in the radio workshops allowed me to define categories that were essential to my analysis. For example, my initial queries about home and the street were not readily understood by the children. But when I listened carefully in the radio workshops, I found that these themes arose spontaneously under the rubric of what children called *essa vida* ("that life" in the street) and its opposite, what I refer to as motherdom, that is, the moral logic of the

matrifocal household. In other words, home is proximity – physical, affective, moral, and economic – to one's mother, whereas the street is a lifestyle, *essa vida*, that implies sleeping in the street, stealing, using drugs, and doing other things the children consider to be "no good" (*coisas que não prestam*).

In the end, the radio workshops, albeit the most important of my methods, were only one research tool, and the information gained from them was complemented by long interviews, life histories, a semi-structured survey, examination of secondary sources and publicly available statistics, and participant observation over the long run. The contradictions between the spoken word and behavior took on important meanings. Where street children seemed to be most duplicitous was in describing their relationships to their mothers. For instance, an 11-year-old boy asked me to record a special mother's day message in which he apologized for being in the street, thus suggesting that his mother would really rather have him at home. But he had recently made a brief return home. According to the street educator who escorted him, the mother's first words to her son were, "But I thought you were dead. There's no room for you here."

What I inferred from the radio workshops and other sessions changed as a result of interacting with the children and others. I believe I developed a keen ability to discern when children were recounting fantasies, when they were saying what they thought their listeners wanted to hear, and when they were speaking what in everyday language might be called the truth. But like any ethnographer, I could never really be certain. There were times I was looking for something like a fact: Does a particular girl have a sibling? Has a particular boy ever been ill in the street? At other times, it was impossible to disentangle facts from the web of fantasy. For instance, one youth spoke about how he was roused in the street by a group of men, but one cannot discern from his narrative whether these men were thieves, policemen, thugs, members of a death squad, or simply elements of a story he had fabricated from beginning to end. Yet his narrative need not be pinned down as fact or fiction: the central concern of the story remains the same – the nature of violence in the street.

The survey, as Connolly and Ennew (1996: 140) note, is employed "not only as the first, but also as the only tool" in much of the research being done with street children. I twice had occasion to participate in the survey research of others while in Recife. On the first occasion, I introduced some psychologists to a group of street children living in a shelter. Their questionnaire was largely a translation of a survey designed for use with homeless adults in London and included questions such as, "On a scale of one to five, how important is it for you to decorate your room?" this notwithstanding the fact that the children had never had their own rooms and did not comprehend the abstract numerical scale. Although I had enjoyed a certain rapport with the children at the shelter before I introduced them to the psychologists, the children did not wish to speak with me the next time I went. I could only hang my head low and bemoan my poor judgment at being a helpful participant in an experiment that had treated the children a bit like rats in a laboratory. Yet the psychologists were able to collect "data" – that is, numbers capable of being analyzed by a sophisticated statistical software package and written up in a scholarly fashion.

On the second occasion, I took part in a municipal census of street children that included a brief questionnaire. The children, wakened in the middle of the night (which in many cases required forceful shaking) were offered a snack and subjected to about fifteen questions. Ticking off boxes, the researchers attempted to record such "facts" as why the children were in the street. Although there are facts involved in leaving home, I believe one can only begin to understand the torturous decisions and circumstances that lead children to find themselves in the street by knowing the children and, if possible, their families over time.

In the end, I did use a questionnaire in my own research, but it was one that grew out of the radio workshops and that was used to complement the other methods of research, not replace them. The content of the questionnaire, used with 50 street children, was not assembled until I had spent more than half a year in the field. Many of the questions used had initially been posed by street children to their peers in the radio workshops. Others were questions I devised but that the children corrected and were encouraged to reformulate in their own words. Camilla, then 17 and relatively new to the streets,

gave me especially thorough coaching on how to frame the questions. The questionnaire was devised as a recorded conversation. The participants were allowed to meander, to pursue tangents that interested them, but were always steered back in due course to a common core of about 200 questions covering a wide range of topics including family life, interaction with institutions, gang participation, health, sex, education, violence, happiness, and future aspirations. I designed the survey as a guided conversation (see Rubin and Rubin 1995, especially chap. 6; Kvale 1996, especially chap. 1), beginning with questions I knew intrigued them, such as about the places where they hung out, whether they were part of a gang or had a leader, only turning to more bureaucratic issues such as their age and place of birth toward the middle of the interview. The survey suggested ways of distinguishing the merely anecdotal from something that formed part of a trend. For instance, the odd comment in conversations regarding the relationship between sniffing glue and hunger could be translated into a question that all respondents were asked in the same way: "Does glue take away your hunger or make you feel more hungry?"

Like the pool of children who participated in the radio workshops, the sample that responded to the questionnaire was not randomly assembled. The participants were chosen largely on the basis of their being in the right place at the right time. In other words, if I felt I was in a safe enough spot to use the tape recorder and the children seemed in the mood for talking, I would propose the idea. Very few refused. I conducted 33 of the interviews, and three *educadores* conducted 9. The remaining 8 were done by a young woman named Iracy who described herself as a *menina de rua*, or street girl. She lived in a house with her grandmother, but had hung out in the past with a group of kids who lived in the street, and she generally considered herself to be one of them. She added a few questions of her own at the end of the survey, such as "What do you think should be done with the police?" and "What do you think the government should do for street children?"[3]

Questions were occasionally skipped, sometimes for reasons dictated by common sense. For instance, it made little sense to ask eight-year-old boys whether they had ever used condoms. Other times questions were omitted because it seemed unfair or unrealistic to pose them to respondents in the presence of others. For example, since in Northeast

Brazil such a strong stigma is attached to being the victim of rape, it made little sense, if others were present, to ask the children whether they had ever been forced to have sex. For this reason, the sample size for a particular question varies, with 50 being the maximum.

The questions that referred to time were difficult for the respondents. For instance, the question asked of the children in shelters, "How long have you been here?" was regularly answered with such replies as *um bocado de tempo*, meaning, loosely, "a bunch of time." Various tactics were attempted to overcome this problem. For instance, those who did not know how old they were when they left home were asked if they remembered what soap opera was being shown at the time. Events that had occurred over the past year were related to important holidays such as *carnaval* or *São João*, the June festivals. Respondents might be asked "Did you last see your mother before or after *carnaval?*"

Of 50 children and young people in the sample, 36 were male, 12 were female, and 2 were biologically male transvestites who referred to themselves as women. The proportion of females included in the sample (one-third) is higher than that actually found in the general population of street children,[4] but this was intentional since I wanted to gain a comparative sense of experience by gender. The participants ranged in age from 8 to 23, the median age being 15½. Respondents who were 18 or older were included only when they had lived in the street before attaining their majority. The children lived in divergent situations: 26 were in the street at the time of the interview, 16 in shelters, and 8 at home. Many of those from the first group were interviewed in the street, in as quiet an alley or square as could be found. Others were interviewed indoors, for instance, at Ruas e Praças.

Some researchers studying illegal activities have found it necessary to partake in those very activities in order to have access to reliable data. For example, Patricia Adler (1993), who studied drug dealers and drug smugglers, writes,

> Although we never dealt drugs (we were too scared to be seriously tempted), we consumed drugs and possessed them in small quantities. Quite frankly, it would have been impossible for a

> nonuser to have gained access to this group to gather the data presented here. This was the minimum involvement necessary to obtain even the courtesy membership we achieved. (24)

In my case, I did not sniff glue or steal with the children or sleep in the street. The children would have found it incongruous, even absurd, for a foreign adult to attempt to live as they do, and I drew my own limits. It was far easier to fit in among the street educators than among the street children themselves. I spent much of my time in the street hanging out, playing checkers or dominoes, talking, drawing, or commenting along with the children on the passersby. Many of the children in Recife's downtown associated me with Ruas e Praças, whose street educators I often accompanied. But when they asked about my role, or when I thought it was appropriate to tell them, I explained that I was spending some time in Brazil learning about street children and that I frequently worked as a volunteer for Ruas e Praças.

I visited the shelters where street children frequently elect to go, making quite a number of trips to two in particular. These were especially good places to conduct radio workshops because the children were not high and were especially eager for recreation. In these contexts, they tended to be gentler and their attention spans longer. The practicalities were also far simpler, since I did not have to worry about the tape recorder being stolen or the ever-present background noises of the street. For these reasons, CAP, the state detention center for children and adolescents, proved, ironically, an ideal location for these interviews. I was allowed to work there over a four-day period until a foreign free-lance photographer of street children, who happened to talk her way into the facility just after I did, drew so much attention that we were both expelled.

I spent considerable time in the *favelas*. On a few occasions I was able to visit the estranged families of street children. In a *favela* near the colonial center of Olinda I acquired some young friends and eventually even a godson, who, in a brilliant act of emotional blackmail by his adoptive mother, was named after me. I continually found reasons to visit *favelas* around the city, most frequently to visit day care centers or to accompany health promoters on their home visits.

All of the research, except when accompanying foreign visitors, was