Strangers to Ourselves: On the Displacement, Loss and "Homelessness" of Migrant Experiences

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Abstract

This article is taken from the Rethinking Childhood Series book: O'Loughlin, M. (2009). The Subject of Childhood. NY: Peter Lang. The book is a collection of essays that examine childhood through psychological, psychoanalytic and cultural studies perspectives. The specific text reprinted here includes O'Loughlin's personal narrative and theory as he theorizes about how social, historical and cultural forces influence a child's subjectivity. The reader is referred to the complete book for further autobiographical narratives, theoretical reflections and examples from the author's work in schools and in private practice.

Full Text:

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Why do veterans experience homelessness? Veterans are more likely than civilians to experience homelessness. A 2015 study of veterans initiating medication-administered treatment screened each of these patients for risk of homelessness and found that the prevalence of homelessness in veterans with opioid use disorder is 10 times more than the general veteran population. Among the recent Iraq and Afghanistan cohort of veterans—who are more frequently female than their older counterparts—an experience of sexual trauma while serving in the military greatly increases the risk of homelessness. Homelessness and Addiction by the Numbers. Drug and alcohol abuse constitutes the most pressing public health problem among the homeless. Varying reports exist on the percentage of homeless individuals with a substance abuse problem. Some studies estimate that about 40 percent of the population is dependent on drugs or alcohol. Others say the figure is more than 50 percent. Homelessness erases the past and blurs the present. It is an odd paradigm of instability in which a person is collectively viewed through a kaleidoscope of race, economics and socio-politics. I existed in an whispered purgatory. The sort of instability causing strangers to glance quickly away and in a moment decide - without ever having spoken to me - who I was. To some I must have deserved this, they speculated on a possible drug addiction or perhaps I was a prostitute. To be poor, black and a woman with no home is an equation for fracturing invisibility.