Liebow's book is fascinating but it begins to wear thin and lose its convincing qualities as the picture sinks home to the reader of a relatively stable group which never develops structure and which, at least in the book, seems to exist in a vacuum. For me Hannerz's book is a refreshing antidote to Liebow's unconvincing report.

The street corner men are still there. They still are reported as leading a relatively fluid instructed sort of existence, but it becomes much more comprehensible when presented as one of a number (Hannerz suggests four) of coexisting life styles which takes its meaning from and is sustained by the others. It is because the picture of social organization and everyday life is so much more complete and rings so true that I find this such a worthwhile contribution on the lot of the black man in the city.

Despite these virtues, the book leaves much to be desired. Perhaps because it is a series of essays, there are too many lacunae left. Work and school to mention just two contemporary facets of ghetto concerns in Northern cities are not treated in any depth. In contrast, family relations, drinking, and religion are dealt with extensively and in a fashion that adds little to what we already know. More generally, the organization of the book is poor. Too little attention has been given to how the essays are strung together with the result that there is much avoidable repetition. With some judicious editing, such irritating distractions as the metaphoric use of the phrase "zero-sum game" on pages 86, 99, and 216 certainly could have been expunged.

Similarly there are numerous complex quibbles over points of contention in anthropological theory that really add nothing and distract the reader. It is never clear either that the theory informs the observation or that the observations resolve or clarify any of the theoretical issues. Basically, Soulside comes through as an ethnography of the area and as such it suffers from the twin handicaps of incompleteness and arbitrariness shared by most ethrographies.

In Soulside we have in microcosm most of the contradictory strengths and weaknesses of an urban anthropology. One gets a feel for the richness of life and the way in which it is experienced (albeit that one must have reservations as to the adequacy of the report) at the same time that one is treated to a display of contorted calisthenics required to make such broad-gauged anthropological concepts as "culture" appear useful. Finally, all social scientists will want to know the answer to the question Hannerz suggests only belatedly, namely, given that numerous ghetto cultures coexist in the same space (i.e., the fact of intra-ghetto variation), how much and how important is the inter-ghetto variation about which Hannerz's own respondents informed him? With such information we shall really be able to assess the value of Soulside. I suspect that it will prove to be considerable.

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This book is revised version of a Ph.D. dissertation presented to Columbia University in 1964. The field study was conducted in 1963-64 at Agra, a large
urban city in North India. Lynch stationed himself at Agra close enough to Jatavs who were his subjects for this study on untouchability.

The Jatavs at Agra are leather workers and are called Camars or Chamars. According to the traditional caste system of India, Camars are considered a low caste. Because of the dirty and polluting nature of their work, the leather-workers are considered dirty and as such untouchable by the upper castes. They are objects of discrimination; and, because of this low caste rank, they have remained, on the whole, illiterate, poor, and virtually powerless.

To analyze the upwardly mobile Agra Jatavs, Lynch relies heavily on reference group theory as developed by Merton. Lynch recognizes three types of reference groups: the reference groups you (1) imitate, (2) identify and (3) negate. The Jatavas at one time sought a claim to a higher caste of kshatriya and later they identified themselves with neo-Buddhism. In fact, they became Buddhist converts under the charismatic leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, himself an untouchable. Buddhism gave them a non-caste status and presented the Jatavs as “the original Indians.”

There came an important landmark in the history of India, when in 1947, India achieved independence. This historic event brought with it parliamentary democracy, freedom of the individual, and, more importantly, the establishment of the universal franchise in India. This new dispensation created a basic change in the status set of the Jatavs. They henceforth were both citizens, equal to all other individuals, and voters equipped with a powerful tool, the vote. Also, to overcome the centuries-old handicaps of disadvantaged status they were promised special concessions in educational, vocational and political institutions for some years.

Lynch contends that caste is an adaptive structure. Caste organization changed internally to preserve caste integrity and it changed externally in relation to other castes to maximize its share of power, prestige, wealth and education. The traditional headmen, called Chaudhries, were replaced by political leaders. The caste is also functional in monopolizing shoe production and in winning certain exclusive, though interim, concessions educationally, vocationally and politically. There are certain reserved positions for untouchables (called scheduled castes) in schools, universities, government jobs, and legislatures. The untouchables can activate either their caste or citizen status, suiting their best advantage.

Lynch maintains, “There is a paradox in the government’s ‘protective discrimination’ policy. On the one hand, it is breaking down caste by opening some channels for individual mobility within the larger society. On the other hand, it creates a vested interest in the preservation of scheduled caste status.”

A concept given the name of Sanskritization by Indian anthropologists deserves brief mention here. To Lynch, Sanskritization means “a technique of social mobility,” a strategy for keeping up with Joneses. Whereas the Indian anthropologists use this ethno term to describe social mobility in their unique culture, Lynch likes to call it a part of “elite emulation.” Elite emulation, according to him, is cross cultural and a property of social structure.

The book shows how the untouchables in India combine their old caste-status with their new citizen status and make use of both statuses to achieve greater social mobility in the Indian society. Although Lynch’s study may not seem to make a spectacular contribution to theory, his work should be of