

trends and developments, and several pertinent papers by others." Two of these papers are interesting applications of decision theoretic methods to testing problems; a third is entitled "Teaching a digital computer to assist in making decisions." A fourth paper, by Cronbach and Gleser, essentially specializes the main arguments of the book to (again) argue that, under certain circumstances, tests with apparently very low validities can be more useful than previously believed. Birnbaum and Maxwell's paper, "Classification procedures based on Bayes formula," is a very readable description of that topic. A paper by Finney, "The statistical evaluation of educational allocation and selection," and the discussion following the paper are noteworthy for their consideration of some of the practical problems that delimit the relevancy of currently available statistical models for testing problems.

The key to the proper appreciation of this book, in my opinion, is contained in the following comments made in the preface to this second edition: "Work since 1955 has reinforced our [the authors'] judgment that decision theory is more important as a point of view than as a source of formal mathematical techniques for developing and applying tests." The exposition accompanying the authors' technical presentations and explicating the authors' point of view makes much wisdom available to the reader of this book. However, in relation to the discussion of formal decision theoretic models, some of this comment appears to be *obiter dicta*. Also, it strikes me that the book is written primarily from the point of view of the test *user*. It may be well to remember that a test publisher must produce instruments that have applicability for a wide range of decision problems and that a reasonable measure of the overall value of any instrument may well be a weighted average measure of its value over a set of situations in which its use is recommended.

Because much of the text can be read and understood neglecting its more technical presentations, this book is deserving of a very wide readership. For anyone having professional contact with problems in which psychological tests are or can be used, this book must be considered required reading.

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## Self Esteem and the Adolescent

### Society and the Adolescent Self-Image.

Morris Rosenberg. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1965. xii + 326 pp. \$6.50.

According to the teachings of any school of psychology, the interaction between the way we behave and the way we perceive and judge our behavior is inordinately complex. It would be absurdly simplistic to hold that our self-appraisals represent an accurate, or even a consistently inaccurate, picture of our actions. This book is based on the contrary premise, which in my view is still less defensible, that an individual's self-image "largely determin[es] his thoughts, feelings, and behavior." The basic flaw in the study lies in this notion that one can isolate and meaningfully analyze a single causal chain in a network of complicated interactions.

The initial negative reaction to the book is strongly reinforced, moreover, when one reads how Rosenberg proposes to measure what he terms his "pivotal" independent variable—the subjects' self-esteem. In a ten-item questionnaire administered to 5024 juniors and seniors in ten New York State high schools, the students were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, in various paraphrases, that "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself," or "I certainly feel useless at times." In some of his attempts to validate this index, Rosenberg showed a correlation between it and another version of essentially the same question, such as "What do you think most people think of you?" The correlations with such "psychosomatic symptoms of anxiety" as "nervousness" or "loss of appetite," or with their parents' interest in the respondents' welfare, are hardly any less incestuous, for one would expect *reported* attitudes and *reported* behavior patterns to overlap.

Having established his measure of self-esteem in this fashion, in successive chapters Rosenberg analyzes its relation with personality factors and such key social institutions as religion and the family. The underlying hypothesis reflects an abecedarian egalitarianism: prejudice results in low self-esteem, which by a self-fulfilling prophecy results in poor achievement. As one would expect, the author continually finds it necessary to explain deviations from this supposed pattern. In

spite of the prejudice against Catholics, for example, their self-esteem is identical with that of Protestants, while Jews have a significantly greater self-esteem than either. Or, high self-esteem may act as "a deterrent to accomplishment," for the need to prove his worth may spur on a student with doubts about himself.

Rosenberg, in short, has not fashioned the tools to prove anything; and if one accepts, with whatever misgivings, his indices as meaningful, they do not in general support his case. Indeed, one can rejoice that his implied value system is not well based, for it demands an utter conformity with a totally uniform social world. When qualities admired in one group are rejected in another group, he writes, the resultant "sense of difference may lead the individual to question himself, doubt himself, wonder whether he is unworthy," and this "negative self-picture may generate anxiety," which is defined as evil.

The book was a co-winner of the annual sociopsychological prize of the AAAS. It has four technical appendices and an index.

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## Note

**The World of Learning, 1964-65** (Europa Publications, London, 1964. 1502 pp. \$23.50) provides a comprehensive, worldwide list of scientific, educational, and cultural organizations, international as well as national. Pages 1 through 46 are devoted to UNESCO, the International Council of Scientific Unions, the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, and other international organizations. The remainder provides information (in alphabetical order by country) about academies, learned societies, research institutions, libraries and archives, museums and art galleries, and institutions of higher education. The members of the leading academies and learned societies are listed; for other societies, associations, and institutions, the name of the principal officer and the address of the organization is provided. In some, but by no means all, cases the senior faculty members of educational institutions are listed. There is an alphabetical index of institutions.