

variations in tribal culture," stated on the grounds that such adaptation would limit the comparability of results obtained in different regions. For it is these very considerations that may be responsible for departures of future population trends from those expected from the present analyses. By the use of such material one may hope to pursue further "a rather strong suspicion of some differential under-enumeration by age," and not only to demonstrate that this occurred but also to measure its incidence and magnitude—a task which is

regarded (p. 274) as "near impossible." Demographers are aware of the earlier local surveys—Kuczynski's demographic survey volumes on Africa intensively reviewed those carried out before the 1939–1945 war. A similar compilation and further analysis of the more recent material would be a worthwhile, indeed will be a necessary, companion to this volume.

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What Do We Do to Adolescence?

Society's Children. A Study of Ressentiment in the Secondary School. CARL NORDSTROM, EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG, and HILARY A. GOLD. Random House, New York, 1968. xii + 209 pp. \$4.95.

"Donkin felt vaguely like a blind man feeling in his darkness the fatal antagonism of all the surrounding existences, that to him shall forever remain unrealizable, unseen and enviable. He had a desire to assert his importance, to break, to crush; to be even with everybody for everything; to tear the veil, unmask, expose, leave no refuge—a perfidious desire of truthfulness."

Thus Joseph Conrad describes a character in terms that suggest the quality of "ressentiment" described in the writings of Scheler and Nietzsche and in this short volume. Ressentiment emerges as a secret, unconscious, unfocused tension felt in members of a group who vaguely sense their own impotence and whose rage is contained by a transformation of their inadequacy into a virtue. The resentient man is the self-righteously weak-willed, the sick-souled, the nay-sayer, the man in bondage to a slave morality; Donkin, Uriah Heep, Smerdyakoff—literature and life abound with such individuals.

It is, however, in its institutionalized form that ressentiment may do its most subtle and devastating damage. The classic study of the phenomenon in its social context (unfortunately ignored by the authors of this book) is *Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology* (1964) by the Danish sociologist Svend Ranulf. *Society's Children* is an attempt to identify, measure, and determine the effects of ressentiment in some American high schools.

The authors' interest in this phenomenon grew out of previous studies

of college students who began as science majors but then dropped science. They found a peculiar built-in selection and de-selection process going on among students of the natural sciences wherein the most dutiful, uncritical, and conforming students—whom the authors call "conventionals"—stayed in science and got good grades, whereas the more inquiring, skeptical, adventurous, and intellectually restless students—designated as "adolescents" (how refreshing to see this word used in a nonpejorative sense!)—tended to drop out of science. The conclusion troubled the authors (as it should trouble us) because, if this process continues, science will more and more include cadres of smug technologists preoccupied with technical problems, their personal daemons and spirit of inquiry smothered by a need for organizational approval. Aren't we, in fact, even now uneasy over the delivery of science into the hands of plodding mechanics whose attention can be absorbed by biological warfare and weapons delivery systems and whose social consciences are quieted by institutional rhetoric and unexamined righteousness?

In the work described in the book under review, the investigators studied nine high schools, focusing on a random sample of students and teachers and on the rules as articulated by handbooks and administrators, to determine to what extent ressentiment was present and whether it seemed to mold "adolescents" into "conventionals." The schools represented a broad range of social, ethnic, and religious classifications. A number of tests were developed and used to provide a "ressentiment index" of the institution and the responsiveness of its students. Unstruc-

tured but guided interviews were used to determine how the "institutional press" of the school was mediated by its teachers and how the aspirations and frustrations of the students fit or deviated from the expectations around them.

A well-designed and well-described social science investigation can illuminate much of our world even if its hypotheses are not validated. The nine schools were found to differ in their ressentiment indices, and these measures did approximately vary with social class; but it could not be determined that the greater the measure of ressentiment in the school the higher the incidence of "conventionalism" among the students. There was no clustering of "adolescents," only a depressing and overwhelming smear of conventionality that cut across any discernible differences between the schools. The sanctions of the higher-class schools were more subtle, but their concern with "propriety" was every bit as stultifying of individuality as the preoccupation of the lower-class schools with "obedience."

There is something in the institution of secondary education itself, regardless of its variety, that provokes or sustains or exploits the conformistic impulses of its charges. And perhaps the impulses themselves are too strongly fashioned by a larger society that derogates adolescence at the same time that it prolongs it.

This book represents a beginning of a line of inquiry about American education that had better become a major order of business. It is urgent reading for educators. The style is light, and every once in a while the prose is rewarding. The biases of the authors are open, accounted for, and very welcome.

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Estuary Life

The Biology of Estuarine Animals. J. GREEN. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1968. x + 401 pp., illus. \$9.50.

Any author who can condense knowledge of the entire realm of estuaries and their fauna and flora into one readable book deserves to be commended. J. Green has done this, and,