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– Carl Upchurch, *Convicted in the Womb*

*Rico found his way and grew accustomed to the coded diction and syntax of his instructors. (In Catholic school his teachers always talked about life and school as a communal experience, as in “We must pray,” or, “We must study.” In public school the teachers were more tentative about their relationships to the students: “Which of you can answer that question? Anyone? You there . . . Anyone?” In this school the teachers spoke in a detached but certain manner: “One must be prepared. One must study. One must be resilient.”) He worked hard, and not for one moment, for all his misgivings, did he forget that, among the sons of investment bankers, advertising executives, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, corporate presidents, he was the son of a waiter and a cleaning woman.*

– Oscar Hijuelos, *Empress of the Splendid Season*

*The nearly uniform advantages received by the children of the college-educated professionals suggest the evolution of an increasingly distinct subculture in American society, one in which adults routinely transmit to their offspring the symbolic thinking and confident problem solving that mark the adults’ economic activities and that are so difficult for outsiders to acquire in mid-life. A trend toward separation into subcultures jeopardizes the upward mobility that has given this nation greatness and presages the tragedy of downward mobility that produces increasing numbers of working poor. If this trend is to be reversed, a beginning must be made now. The issue is no longer one of eradicating poverty or of putting welfare recipients to work but of reversing a trend, the downward drift of the working class.*

– Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley (1995). *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. (p. 204). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.