
Review by Richard Gilman-Opalsky

With a little effort, one could imagine the Institute for Social Research at the Goethe University Frankfurt establishing a school in the US, at some point in the early 1950s, at which David Riesman would have played a significant role. This imaginary school, perhaps a sibling of The New School for Social Research, would include some teachers and researchers who were not as clearly connected to Hegelian and Marxist philosophy as those from the German school. During the intense decades of the Cold War, members like Riesman would tread gently around such controversies as the grand stand-off between socialism and capitalism, at least as much as they could, and would—perhaps for that reason—never be distinguished as one of the school’s most serious theorists. Michael Maccoby was right to point out in the collection here under review that “Riesman characteristically exchanged theory for thick description” (186).

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