
Critical Theory Meets America: Riesman, Fromm, and The Lonely Crowd¹

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A reading of David Riesman's classic *The Lonely Crowd* is presented that emphasizes its links with the critical theory of German psychoanalyst and social critic Erich Fromm. The intellectual and personal relationship between Riesman and Fromm brings into focus Riesman's adaptation of the insights of European critical theory as well as the strengths of American social science and social criticism. Riesman's relatively neglected theoretical approach has much to offer a sociology concerned with retaining its links to public debate and empirical evidence.

Introduction

Sociologists seldom cite David Riesman in peer reviewed journal articles today. And he has often been dismissed as a populariser and as part of the discipline's pre-professional history (Turner and Turner 1990; Schaar 1961; Abbott 1999). Yet Riesman remains one of American sociology's most famous names, even if his legacy is contested. Riesman's engagement with the work of Freud, Marx, Weber and Tocqueville produced an innovative and creative body of theoretically informed social criticism. Riesman's work has played an important, if under recognized, place in modern North American sociology combining, as it does, American pragmatist thinking with European critical theory.

Numerous sociologists today are arguing that our discipline must reconnect with its history of social criticism and clear writing to the general educated public, pulling back somewhat from excessive professionalization and academic over-specialization (Glazer 2000; Horowitz 1983; Jacoby 1987; Coser 1965; Gans 1997; Goldfarb 1998; Bellah et. al; 1985; Royce 1996). Yet many of the more prominent sociologists taking this position tend to ignore Riesman's contributions and example, preferring to highlight Mills, Du Bois, or Bellah as well as black, feminist and gay novelists and various allegedly neglected intellectuals outside the boundaries of the profession (Lemert 1995; Seidman 1994). It is ironic that Riesman's example would be ignored by born again public intellectual sociologists who are themselves highly professionalized even while

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they romanticise thinkers from outside the borders of sociology as an academic discipline.

The late conservative political philosopher Alan Bloom, in contrast, could never be accused of failing to take Riesman's sociology seriously. One of the seldom remarked upon aspects of the controversial best-selling *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (1987) is the special place given to the ideas of Riesman. Bloom argued that *The Lonely Crowd* facilitated the decline of intellectual and cultural standards in contemporary America. For Bloom, Riesman's sociology turned America upside down.

Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, it should be remembered, claimed that American intellectual life had been corrupted by a nihilism and relativism that had become widespread with the social turmoil of the 1960s and omnipresent in the popular culture of the 1980s. The roots of this cultural decay, for Bloom, were not political or economic, and cannot be blamed on the social conflicts associated with the civil rights movement or the Vietnam war. Instead, the student violence Bloom observed first-hand at Cornell University, the cultural decay epitomised by Woodstock (the Nuremberg rally of the 1960s, according to Bloom) and the study of popular culture in contemporary universities that Bloom sees as a lowering of intellectual standards were the natural consequence of Nietzsche's influence on the American Left. Just as National Socialism, according to some intellectual historians, flowed from German philosophical traditions, the importation of German ideas into American life in the twentieth century laid the foundation for the degradation of North American cultural and intellectual life since the sixties (Bloom 1987).

The American sociologist David Riesman, according to Bloom, played a central role in this whole process by absorbing German ideas from "his analyst" Erich Fromm and then spreading these destructive theories widely throughout the culture through the medium of his academic best-seller *The Lonely Crowd* (1950). There is certainly an element of paranoia in Bloom's attribution of such widespread cultural influence to the work of two once influential but now largely forgotten intellectuals (McLaughlin 1998b).² It is difficult to accept Bloom's one-sidedly negative account of the cultural consequences of the 1960s. Bloom, moreover, is simply inaccurate about much of the intellectual content of both Riesman's and Fromm's work. Bloom's claim that Riesman and Fromm were simplistic popularisers of nihilism is an absurd notion to anyone familiar with their work (Allen 1992; Burston 1991; Bronner 1994).³

Bloom is right, however, that Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* is an important example of how German intellectual traditions and European theories of mass society were transported across the Atlantic, transformed according to American intellectual traditions and then spread broadly into the culture.⁴ Riesman was indeed a sociologist who also functioned as a social critic as well as having a major influence on American cultural life more broadly. At a time when sociologists are rediscovering interest in the sociologist as public intellectual, a reexamination of Riesman's work and its relationship to Fromm's critical theory could not be more timely.

Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) is the best selling sociology book of all time (Gans 1997). Riesman wrote extensively and insightfully for decades about

American popular and intellectual culture, social and cultural theory, higher education in the United States, foreign policy, nuclear weapons, and the consequences of modern consumer culture. Writing in that strange boundary space between intellectual social criticism and academic social science, Riesman provides us with an important role model for the sociologist as public intellectual. Unlike many the European critical theorists Allan Bloom decries and post-modern sociologists applaud, Riesman is a very American theorist whose work flows from the best pragmatist traditions and is free of pretense, anti-empirical abstraction and tortured prose. Yet Riesman's unique and creative positioning at the crossroads between American social criticism and European theory has seldom been remarked upon or analysed sociologically.

Riesman was more than a popular writer and the first social scientist to appear on the cover of *Time*. Riesman's work combined American pragmatist thinking with European critical theory and suggested original and provocative themes that later sociologists and social critics would develop. As historian Rupert Wilkinson suggests,

[*The Lonely Crowd*] heralded later findings to a degree that is seldom appreciated. Narcissism and "diffuse anxiety"; the shifting of authority from "dos and don'ts" to manipulation and enticement; the flooding of attitudes by media messages; the channelling of achievement drives into competition for the approval of others; and the splintering of society into myriad interest groups—all these tendencies of modern American life that so worried commentators in the 1970s and 80s were spotted by Riesman et al. (and well before television had become an everyday staple (Wilkinson 1988:16).

Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* provided the model for such important works of social criticism as Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in An Age of Diminishing Expectations* (1979) and Robert Bellah et. al.'s *Habits of the Heart* (1985).

Sociological theorist Stjepan Meštrovic points out that it would be a mistake to treat *The Lonely Crowd* simply as an interesting museum piece. It is curious that even though Riesman prefigured the recent explosion of post-modern and critical theories, "intellectuals engaged in postmodern discourse have not invoked him (Meštrovic, 1997:43)." Meštrovic also points out that "Riesman is not typically read as a critical theorist" even though "Erich Fromm, a critical theorist, was Riesman's most important mentor (Meštrovic, 1997:43)." Emphasising the similarities between Riesman's work and both post-modern and critical theory, Meštrovic writes,

Those who have read both Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* and Baudrillard's *America* will be struck by the remarkable similarities between the two visions of contemporary societies, as will readers of Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* (Meštrovic, 1997:43).

Meštrovic continues,

It is striking that Riesman's emphasis in *The Lonely Crowd* on the media, culture, tolerance, the cults of fun and being nice, consumerism in politics, and eventual dissolution of authentic passion into a shallow manipulation of instantaneous feelings all seem remarkably fresh (Meštrovic, 1997:43).

Riesman's influential concept of "other-directedness" has been correctly seen partly as an innovative updating of 19th century French theorist Tocqueville's writings on American "habits of the heart" (Tocqueville 1969). It makes sense

that the Festschrift in honour of Riesman should be entitled *On the Making of Americans* (Gans, et. al. 1979). Riesman was primarily engaged in understanding American social life and culture, and was deeply rooted in American intellectual traditions. Yet Riesman's ideas must also be understood as a creative American adaptation of ideas first developed within German critical theory.

When Riesman is discussed among sociologists today, he is often either presented as an American social critic with no connection to critical theory, or, in Meštrović's reading, as a precursor to European post-modern and critical theory. It is far more accurate and useful to see Riesman's work as a creative blend of American sociological social criticism and European critical social theory. Riesman's genius was to combine the exciting and creative aspects of European critical theory with a concrete analysis of middle class American life.

This inability to understand Riesman as a thinker influenced by both European critical theory and indigenous intellectual traditions is rooted in the fact that the intellectual history of *The Lonely Crowd* and the story of the Fromm/Riesman collaboration has not been fully emphasized nor understood in the literature. This paper will outline the story of the intellectual relationship between Riesman's idea of "other directedness" and German social thought as mediated by Fromm, and discuss the influence and value of Riesman's American version of critical theory. Fromm's and Riesman's complementary intellectual strengths and limitations have left American sociology with a rich legacy. Riesman, in particular, used European critical theory in ways that are empirically grounded as well as theoretically interesting.

Emphasizing the linkages between Riesman's work and Fromm's critical theory is not designed to portray Riesman as a derivative thinker as Bloom and others have attempted to do. The adaptation of critical theory by an American sociologist on the margins of his own discipline led to creative and important theoretical innovations, particularly the use of neo-Freudian ideas within sociological theory and research. The story of how European critical theory was used and transformed by David Riesman has implications for understanding Riesman's living legacy as well sociology's possible futures.

Theories Of Mass Society: From Nazism to Suburbia

Riesman's most famous book *The Lonely Crowd* cannot be understood apart from the dialogue between Riesman and critical theorist Erich Fromm. Fromm was a German psychoanalyst, sociologist and former member of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, a group of German Jews who founded what was essentially a Marxist think-tank. Although the "origin myth" of what came to be known as the Frankfurt School has tended to ignore this reality, Fromm was a central intellectual player in the early development of critical theory in German in the early 1930s (McLaughlin 1999; Anderson 2000). The Frankfurt School was concerned with integrating German philosophical insights with modern empirical methods and combining the insights of both Marx and Freud into contemporary radical thought. Fromm, in particular, was responsible for developing the outlines of a social psychology for critical theory based on psychoanalytic theory as well as undertaking a massive empirical project on "the working class in Weimar Germany" that would lead directly to the "authoritarian

personality” research tradition. Critical theory was imported into the United State when the Frankfurt School scholars Horkheimer, Fromm, Lowenthal, Adorno and Marcuse found themselves exiled in the United States after Hitler came to power (Jay 1973; Burston 1991; Bronner 1994).

Fromm broke with the critical theorists in the late 1930s due to various intellectual as well as personal conflicts with Horkheimer and Adorno (McLaughlin 1999). Fromm then gained fame in American intellectual life with his best-selling sociological classic *Escape from Freedom* (1941) (Hausdorf 1972; Burston 1991; McLaughlin 1996). Fromm went on to an enormously successful career as a renegade Freudian theorist and analyst, social critic, radical activist and social theorist and researcher. Fromm wrote such influential books as *The Sane Society* (1955), *The Art of Loving* (1956), and *To Have or To Be?* (1976) and had widespread and often controversial influence in sociology, psychology, radical politics and general intellectual and university culture before becoming a relatively “forgotten intellectual” by the late 1970s and early 1980s (McLaughlin 1998b). Adorno and a group of collaborators at Berkeley had developed the early Frankfurt School study on the social psychology of Nazism into the famed *Authoritarian Personality* (1950) project. Herbert Marcuse replaced Fromm in the late 1960s as the critical theorist of the academic new left. By the 1980s and 1990s, Jürgen Habermas had inherited the mantle of the Frankfurt School within sociology and social theory more generally. Gradually, Fromm was written out of the history and “origin myths” of critical theory in America.

Allan Bloom is thus right to remind us that Fromm played a central role in bringing German theoretical ideas into American culture. Best understood as a modern version of older theories of mass society rooted in both European theory and experience (Kornhauser 1959), *Fromm's Escape from Freedom* (1941) and *Man for Himself: Towards a Psychology of Ethics* (1947) outlined a theoretical orientation that played a central role in shaping David Riesman's sociological concern with individualism, conformity and social character. Scholars are increasingly acknowledging the collaboration between Fromm and Riesman (McClay 1994; Meštrovic 1997, 1993 and 1991). Fully understanding how critical theory met America, however, requires looking closely at Fromm's classic texts from the 1940s.

Capitalism and the Reformation

Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1941) was essentially an attempt to offer a theoretically informed account of Nazism designed for the general reader (Hausdorf 1972; McLaughlin 1996). Its theoretical foundation, however, was an analysis of the social psychology of capitalism. Fromm's account of modern society emphasized the cultural importance of the urban middle classes, the group that Max Weber argued was the “backbone of modern capitalist development in the Western world” and also central to Riesman's account of “the lonely crowd.” Fromm focuses on the economic changes that brought about modern capitalism and the resultant cultural upheaval, arguing that,

Significant changes in the psychological atmosphere accompanied the economic development of capitalism. A spirit of restlessness began to pervade life toward the end of the Middle Ages. The concept of time in the modern sense began to develop. Minutes became valuable;

a symptom of this new sense of time is the fact that in Nuremberg the clocks have been striking hours since the 16th century. Too many holidays began to appear as a misfortune. Time was so valuable that one felt one should never spend it for any purpose which was not useful. Work became increasingly a supreme value. A new attitude toward work developed and was so strong that the middle class grew indignant against the economic unproductivity of the institutions of the Church (Fromm 1941: 76).

The capitalist market place had become the master instead of the servant of human affairs. The ambiguity of freedom emerged during the Renaissance, but became even more extreme during the Reformation. Fromm writes of the influence these changes would have on the individual,

Not having the wealth or power which the Renaissance capitalist had, and also having lost the unity of men and the universe, he is overwhelmed with a sense of his individual nothingness and helplessness. Paradise is lost for good, the individual stands alone and faces the world—a stranger thrown into a limitless and threatening world. The new freedom is bound to create a deep feeling of insecurity, powerlessness, doubt, aloneness, and anxiety. These feelings must be alleviated if the individual is to function successfully (Fromm 1941: 80).

Escape from Freedom develops a critique of Western culture from the Renaissance through to the Reformation and ends with a discussion of conformity, the threats to democracy and cultural decay in America and the West more generally and a theoretical account of Fromm's theory of social character. The bulk of *Escape from Freedom*, however, is taken up with his analysis of Hitler, the Nazi party and the rise of fascism in Germany. It was in Fromm's next book *Man for Himself* (1947) where he first fully develops his social criticism of American "mass society" that would influence Riesman's writings on conformity among the "lonely crowd" in the United States.⁵ *The Lonely Crowd's* famous concept of the "other-directed" personality was, as Riesman puts it, "stimulated by, and developed from, Erich Fromm's discussion of the "marketing orientation" in *Man for Himself* (Riesman [1950] 1961: 67-82).

American Capitalism and the Marketing Character

Man for Himself: Towards a Psychology of Ethics (1947) is, in many ways, a continuation of *Escape from Freedom's* theoretical project of developing a social psychology of modernity. While *Escape from Freedom* dealt with the pathology and destructiveness of Nazism, *Man for Himself* was an attempt to theorize the "problem of ethics, of norms and values leading to the realization of man's self and his potentialities"(Fromm, 1947: vii) in modern democratic societies. Modern capitalism, for Fromm, is fundamentally different psychologically from earlier societies and economic systems. Building on Marx, Simmel and Lukács, Fromm's *Man For Himself* (1947) suggests that,

The modern market is no longer a meeting place but a mechanism characterized by abstract and impersonal demand. One produces for this market, not for a known circle of customers; its verdict is based on laws of supply and demand; and it determines whether the commodity can be sold and at what price. No matter what the use value of a pair of shoes may be, for instance, if the supply is greater than the demand, some shoes will be sentenced to economic death; they might as well not have been produced at all. The market

day is the “day of judgement” as far as the exchange value of the commodities is concerned (Fromm 1947:68).

This economic situation leads, for Fromm, to a new conception of value with regard to people and the self. As a consequence, the “marketing character” emerges, a character orientation that is rooted in the “experience of oneself as a commodity and of one’s value as exchange value” (Fromm 1947:68). Although the explicit ideology of modern society is built around the search for individual life and happiness, Fromm argues that with the development of a “personality market,” people have become more concerned with “becoming salable.” This marketing personality has been growing rapidly only in the last few decades and finds its dominant social base among upper middle class professionals, business executives, clerks, and those associated with sales and the mass media. While the earlier social characters were largely transmitted by the family, this new “marketing orientation” is increasingly being formed by motion pictures, pictorial magazines, newspapers and mass advertising. Instead of identifying with great poets and writers, or saints, modern people are connected to “great people” by movie stars, sports heroes, or, more recently, T.V. personalities and rock musicians.

Fromm insists that the marketing orientation has its positive aspects, particularly a flexibility and openness to change relative to the rigidity of the “hoarding character” typical of those socialized into a 19th century industrial work ethic or the conservative orientation of pre-modern peasants. Yet ultimately Fromm is a harsh critic of the modern personality. Since in modern society worth is determined by market forces that are beyond the individual’s control, Fromm argues that,

one’s self esteem is bound to be shaky and in constant need of confirmation by others. Hence one is driven to strive relentlessly for success, and any setback is a severe threat to one’s self-esteem; helplessness, insecurity, and inferiority feelings are the result. If the vicissitudes of the market are the judges of one’s values, the sense of dignity and pride is destroyed (Fromm 1947:72).

Modern identity is as shaky as modern self-esteem for “it is constituted by the sum total of roles one can play.” Since man cannot live doubting his identity, he must, Fromm argues “find the conviction of identity not in reference to himself and his powers but in the opinion of others about him.” For individuals shaped by the marketing orientation,

prestige, status, success, the fact that he is known to others as being a certain person are a substitute for the genuine feeling of identity. This situation makes him utterly dependent on the way that others look at him and forces him to keep up the role in which he once had become successful. If I and my powers are separated from each other then, indeed, is my self constituted by the price I fetch (Fromm 1947:73).

These ideas had an enormous influence on American intellectual life, as Fromm’s best selling works of social criticism became one of the “seeds of the 1960s” (Jamison and Eyerman, 1994). These ideas also entered American culture mediated by Fromm’s intellectual relationship to Riesman. The story of how critical theory met America in the person of David Riesman has a personal as well as an intellectual history.

Riesman Meets Fromm: From Shrink to Mentor

In the early 1940s, Fromm had been the therapist for a young man named David Riesman, a lawyer who would go on to make major contributions as a sociologist and public intellectual. Riesman was raised in an agnostic and elite Jewish Philadelphia family. Riesman's father was a learned clinical medical professor and his mother a cultivated Bryn Mawr graduate. Educated at Harvard and Harvard Law School, Riesman went to teach Law at the private University of Buffalo at 27 years of age after a clerkship with Supreme Court Justice Brandeis, a brief stint at a law firm in Boston and a short spell as a district attorney in New York. Riesman agreed to undergo psychoanalysis with Fromm to please his mother, who was in analysis with the famous psychoanalyst Karen Horney. Horney and Fromm had been collaborators during the 1930s in the development of what has been called neo-Freudianism (McLaughlin 1998a).⁶ When Horney recommended Erich Fromm to Eleanor Riesman, David would fly or take the train on alternative weekends for two hour sessions with Fromm in Manhattan.

The formal analysis was unconventional, often resembling a teacher/student rather than a psychoanalyst/patient relationship. The analysis continued for some years, however, and was the beginning of a longstanding intellectual relationship and friendship. Fromm furthered Riesman's training in the European intellectual tradition that Riesman had first been introduced to by Carl Joachim Friedrich of the Harvard Government Department.⁷ Fromm, according to Riesman, "greatly assisted me in gaining confidence as well as enlarging the scope of my interests in the social sciences" (Riesman 1990: 46).⁸

Riesman and Fromm had very different politics and this was an important part of the creative mix that went into the making of *The Lonely Crowd* (1950). When Riesman first met Fromm he noticed a large shelf of Marxist texts in his apartment, and worried that his analyst would "would seek to propagandize me" (Riesman 1990:45). Riesman never shared Fromm's radicalism or Marxist theoretical bent and felt that Fromm's "view of the United States and especially its middle classes was too monolithically and stereotypically negative" (Riesman 1990:46). Yet Riesman did integrate Fromm's interest in revising psychoanalytic ideas into his own emerging intellectual agenda, a key theoretical component of Riesman's sociology. Riesman and Fromm, moreover, shared a passionate concern with American foreign policy, particularly the nuclear arms race. In the 1940s and 1950s, Fromm was widely known as one of Riesman's mentors (Wrong 1990; Glazer 1990) and they worked together on anti-nuclear activism during the 1950s and 1960s. They maintained a close personal friendship and an extensive correspondence until Fromm's death in 1980 (Burston 1991).⁹

***The Lonely Crowd* Revisited**

Riesman's most important classic *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (1950), in particular, bears the mark of Fromm's influence. Rooted in the theory of social character outlined in Fromm's work, as well as the "culture and personality" anthropology of the 1930s and the larger sociological tradition of historical comparative analysis from Tocqueville to Weber,

The Lonely Crowd is a book “about the differences in social character between men of different regions, eras and groups” (Riesman [1950] 1961: 3). The most enduring and interesting aspect of *The Lonely Crowd* is, of course, Riesman’s famous distinction between “tradition,” “other,” and “inner” directed social characters which ensure conformity in different historical periods and types of societies. Riesman uses this provocative theory to examine the cultural and political consequences of what he sees as a dramatic change from the “inner directed” character of 19th century America to the “other directed” nature of contemporary life.

Modern American society, for Riesman, is dominated by a concern for “niceness,” not achievement, leisure not competition and “consumerism” not production. Modern parents and teachers are anxiety ridden as their authority over children and students has been undermined by the media, youth culture and a rapid social change that creates a situation where the “other-directed child is often more knowing than his parents.” (Riesman [1950] 1961:50). Political life is also transformed by the rise of “other-directed” characters, as cynical “insider-dopesters” replace the moralizing style of 19th century American politics. Riesman outlined a provocative sociological analysis of conformity in contemporary American society that created a surprise academic best-seller and helped jump-start a rich and provocative tradition of mid-century social criticism.

The originality of *The Lonely Crowd* was its combination of the longstanding sociological interest in the transition from traditional “Gemeinschaft” to “Gesellschaft,” Fromm’s “neo-Freudian” sociology of emotions and Riesman’s own remarkable skills of observation and insight into American culture. Fromm added a sophisticated psychological foundation to the sociological analysis of the decline of community and tradition and Weber’s account of the culture of the modern Protestant ethic (essentially the “inner directed” character). Fromm himself, however, was tone deaf to the nuances and dynamics of the American middle class and overgeneralized as was typical of the German critical theorists.

Riesman’s concept of “tradition directed” societies and character is essentially a social psychological analysis of Gemeinschaft. Human beings with “tradition directed” characters live in societies with a low level of individualism and strong ties to primary groups. Society is held together by belief systems based on religion, magic and tradition. The conformity of an individual to a social role, “tends to reflect his membership in a particular age-grade, clan, or caste” (Riesman [1950] 1961:11) and he “learns to understand and appreciate patterns which have endured for centuries,” (Riesman [1950] 1961: 11). The tradition directed character has, for Riesman, all but disappeared in modern American society, except in pockets of black, French Canadian, Southern, rural and immigrant cultures.

“Tradition directed” is clearly the least well developed aspect of *The Lonely Crowd*, for the concept is a catch all term modelled on earlier sociological accounts of the European middle ages and traditional societies throughout world history. Covering far too much history and anthropological data to be analytically compelling, Riesman’s focus on tradition as an organizing model for conformity simply provides a useful foil for his provocative analysis of modern American culture since the 19th century and the general “inner” “other” directed characters that came into being in modernity. It is Riesman’s sociological analy-

sis of the social psychology of the transition from early capitalism and modernity to contemporary society that remains most useful to social theorists.

For Riesman, as for Fromm, modern capitalism produces a new psychology. As the control of the primary group in a tradition directed society loosened because of industrialization, urbanization, and modern technology “a new psychological mechanism appropriate to the more open society is ‘invented.’” Social conformity is ensured for “inner directed” social characters by “a tendency to acquire early in life an internalized set of goals” (Riesman [1950] 1961: 8) and a “psychological gyroscope.” As Riesman describes this process, “the source of direction for the individual is “inner” in the sense that it is implanted early in life by the elders and directed toward generalized but nonetheless inescapably destined goals” (Riesman [1950] 1961:15). Set in early life, the gyroscope keeps the person “on course” and “capable of maintaining a delicate balance between demands upon him of his life goals and the buffeting of his external environment” (Riesman [1950] 1961:16)

Modern society, particularly 20th century American society, is in the process of replacing both “tradition” and “inner directed” characters with “other directed” character. “Other directed” individuals are not tied to either tradition or an internalized gyroscope. Conformity instead is ensured by people’s “tendency to be sensitized to the expectations and preferences of others” (Riesman [1950] 1961: 8) and a “radar” that clues the individual into the signals of contemporaries “known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media” (Riesman [1950] 1961: 21).

Three different forms of sanctions for deviant behaviour correspond to Riesman’s three types of societies and characters: shame for the tradition directed, guilt for the inner directed and anxiety for the other-directed. Coercion and communal pressures of shame ensure conformity in traditional societies. Internalized guilt keeps the inner direction character in line with social expectations. The need to be “liked” and a diffuse anxiety is the “prime psychological lever” operating on the “other-directed person” living in a society dominated by media messages and the constant pressures for conformity enforced by the inescapable pressure of “a jury of his peers.”

As a result of these social changes, schools in an other directed society will teach getting along more than getting smart and educated, manipulation comes to dominate parent/child relations as well as the work environment, and consumerism enforced by peer pressure dominates culture, leisure activities and popular narratives. The media and eventually higher education and politics will suffer from what Riesman called “false personalization” where the boundaries between the personal and political become blurred and inauthentic emotions dominate public life. Much of Riesman’s analysis is overplayed and his evidence thin. But his insights hit a deep popular cord in the 1950s and still retain relevance today.

The Lonely Crowd, of course, is an idiosyncratic book from sociology’s past. The most glaring problem with the book is Riesman’s attempt to link his theory of character with demographic trends, an aspect of the book that was widely criticised and that Riesman dissociated himself from. Talcott Parsons argued that Riesman’s analysis of American society emphasized psychological character issues at the expense of larger and more important cultural norms and values

best illuminated by functionalist sociological theory (Parsons and White 1961). Seymour Martin Lipset suggested that Riesman's stress on the recent alleged historical transformation from "inner" to "other" directed character obscures the Tocquevillian insight that Americans have always been other directed relative to Europeans (Lipset 1961). Radical sociologists were critical of Riesman's argument that American politics is run by pluralistic veto groups rather than a power elite or a capitalist class (Birnbaum 1961). Such sociologists as Dennis Wrong, Herbert Gans and, more recently, Alan Wolfe argue that Riesman's account of conformity is unfair to the culture, political good sense and personal experience of what Gans has called "middle American individualists" (Wolfe 1996; Gans 1988; Wrong 1992). Riesman's work can be understood as part of the long tradition of sociological analysis of the "state of the masses" that Richard Hamilton and James Wright have shown often lacks empirical evidence and balance (Hamilton and Wright 1986).

Modern American society does not live with the leisure and abundance assumed by Riesman and many other social critics from the 1950s. Nor has American competitiveness been totally undermined by a culture of niceness and concern for feelings—if anything, sports and business competitiveness has spread to young women as well as men as Americans live in an era of mean and lean corporations and the woman's soccer World Cup. And there important elements of Riesman's analysis that could be given a social structural explanation, as opposed to a social-psychological and cultural account. For example, Steven Brint's comparative analysis of schooling around the world suggests that the focus on sociability in American high schools can be understood as a social structural characteristic of a school system weakly linked to job training and career advancement relative to German or Japanese systems (Brint 1998). Riesman's work would not pass the methodological demands of modern social science (Turner and Turner 1990; Abbott 1999). And *The Lonely Crowd* does not deal with gender, race or cultural diversity in ways adequate for contemporary sensibility.

Yet there is much of Riesman's analysis that rings true today. Riesman makes a compelling argument that traditional forms of socialization in family, neighbourhood and schools have been undermined by a culture that produces young "consumers in training" not educated citizens and community participants. Riesman was surely on to something when he pointed to the undermining of traditional sources of socialization by youth peer-culture and mass media. The media mourning of Princess Diana and John Kennedy Jr. and the soap opera crisis of Monica Lewinsky, suggests that Riesman's analysis of "false personalization" is interesting at the least. New age culture, armies of business consultants dealing with team work and getting along and schools that seem to focus excessively on niceness and psychological adjustment do exist along side the highly competitive, achievement oriented and cut-throat culture of modern America (Jackall 1988; Brint 1998)..

While one would want to resist simplistic psychohistories or political psychology, there is sense that Bill Clinton can partly be understood as the perfect "other directed" president with few convictions of his own, who feels everyone's pain, and is a master of emotional manipulation and self transformation in order to please others. And as Meštrovic has pointed out, Riesman's analysis of how

modern other-directed individuals would subject themselves to a “jury of their peers” appears brilliant now in a world of TV and radio talk shows where “ordinary people as well as celebrities literally bare all, disclose details of their lives that are so intimate that previous generations could not have imagined such confessions (Meštrovic, 1997: 44).” For sociologists who believe our discipline should provide the general culture with provocative and useful social criticism, *The Lonely Crowd* was an enormous success despite its limitations.

Psyche and Social Criticism

Riesman’s *The Lonely Crowd* is not simply a well-written academic best-seller, but it is also a serious attempt to theoretically integrate Freudian social theory into American empirical sociology. Contrary to Alan Wolfe who argues that *The Lonely Crowd* “makes far too much of psychoanalytic ideas (Wolfe 1996: 7), Riesman’s use of Fromm’s Freud is one of his most important contributions (Weiland 1989). Riesman’s basic attempt to identify changes in the America character was rooted in an engagement with Freud’s thought as well as the culture and personality school’s writings on social character. Although *The Lonely Crowd* clearly draws on the Freudian anthropology, Riesman differentiated his “neo-Freudian” approach from such orthodox psychoanalytic work as Abram Kardiner. Fromm’s work, according to Riesman, helps close the gap between history and child-rearing. In the preface to the second edition of *The Lonely Crowd*, Riesman writes,

our effort in *The Lonely Crowd* was to deal with an historical problem that was broader than genietality, though narrower than fate. Thus, we ourselves were in the tradition of the neo-Freudians, particularly Erich Fromm, with whom I had studied. Fromm’s *Escape from Freedom* and *Man For Himself* were decisively influential models in the application of a socially oriented psychoanalytic characterology to problems of historical change. Like the anthropologists, the psychoanalysts had been insistent on the importance of previously neglected or underprivileged data: fleeting memories, dreams, the games of children, the modes of weaning, the symbolic content of advertisements, popular stories and films—all had become the stuff of history (Riesman [1950] 1961: xiv).

Riesman writes that “when we were working on *The Lonely Crowd*, we were convinced that the older social sciences—history, political science, economics—gave far too little weight to the understanding of social change that might be gleaned from a better grasp of psychoanalytic psychology” (Riesman [1950] 1961: xxii).

The issues here are complex. Far too much psychoanalytic social science is overly speculative and lacks empirical evidence. Riesman’s often makes interpretations of his data that seem stretched and implausible. Yet Riesman’s early writings on the psychological dynamics of popular culture, politics, education and child rearing are an important precursor to more scholarly developments in the sociology of emotions and political psychology. Contemporary scholars are increasing understanding that emotions are central to social movements, to consumer behaviour, to workplace relations and to education (Jasper 1997). Riesman provides us with a way to use Freudian insights about emotions without the overly biological and non-sociological theoretical foundation held to by

orthodox Freudians and the highly speculative philosophical/literary Freud promoted by contemporary Lacanians.

In addition, Riesman's insistence that character matters is an important counterweight to the contemporary fascination with rational choice models of individual behaviour, a theoretical tradition that underestimates the importance of irrational impulses, habit, emotions and psychological ambivalence. Riesman's concern with integrating sociology and psychology predates Dennis Wrong's critique of over-socialized sociology and fits well into Nancy Chodorow and Neil Smelser's efforts to integrate a sociologically sophisticated psychoanalytic analysis into sociology (Wrong 1961; Chodorow 1978; Chodorow 1989; Smelser 1998).

Riesman argues that the Freudian theory of character, shorn of its overly biological and ahistorical tendencies, can offer us insight into the "more or less permanent socially and historically conditioned organization of an individual's drives and satisfactions—the kind of "set" with which he approaches the world and people" (Riesman 1950: 4).¹⁰ Fromm and Riesman's analysis of social character is remarkably similar to Bourdieu's highly influential concept of habitus, something that is seldom remarked upon in the sociology of culture literature. And like Bourdieu, Riesman distinguishes himself from most thinkers influenced by European critical theory or psychoanalysis by having given serious thought to issues of sociological research, methods and evidence, even if Riesman's efforts are outdated by contemporary standards. The rich research tradition in the sociology of emotions which looks at what Hochschild has called "the commercialization of feelings" owes much to Riesman's pioneering sociology of culture.

Research and Theory: Faces in the Crowd (1952)

When Fromm's critical theory met America and David Riesman, the great tradition of German sociological theory confronted the American pragmatist sensibility and the empirical demands of American social research. This European engagement with American intellectual traditions is part of a larger story of European social critics moving to America and, as Alan Wolfe puts it, dropping "dialectics in favour of interview schedules" (Wolfe 1996:4). Wolfe had in mind Theodor Adorno, Fromm's former colleague in the Frankfurt school. Adorno's philosophical critical theory and social criticism, it will be remembered, were transformed into the quantitative *The Authoritarian Personality* research tradition when Adorno worked with a group of empirically oriented Berkeley social psychologists in the late 1940s.

Yet the case of Riesman is an even more interesting example of the transformation of European theory into a research agenda. While both Fromm and Adorno adapted their theories to American empirical methods, the research agenda for both thinkers was grafted onto an intellectual orientation largely shaped by European realities and ways of thinking about the world. Riesman, on the other hand, was uniquely positioned to absorb European critical theory from Fromm and other immigrant intellectuals and draw on American research methods and sensibilities. Riesman's book *Faces in the Crowd* (1952), in particular, was an often ignored companion volume to *The Lonely Crowd* and a creative

attempt to explore the empirical aspects of the ideas of “inner” and “other” directed characters.

Riesman started the research that led to both *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) and *Faces in the Crowd* (1952) with Nathan Glazer at Yale in 1948. They did not have a clear agenda at the time, but undertook interviews in “an exploratory fashion” for a research project supported by the Yale University Committee on National Policy and the Carnegie Corporation. Riesman put together what he calls “a grab bag of questions,” some from *The Authoritarian Personality* study, from National Opinion Research Center and research produced by C. Wright Mills for his *White Collar* (1951). As Riesman puts it, they had originally “mulled over these interviews in terms of political orientation” and “the concepts of social character set forth in *The Lonely Crowd* were developed almost accidentally in working with these vignettes of a few individuals” (Riesman 1952:v). The 180 interviews and 21 portraits that made up *Faces in the Crowd* largely deal with the dynamics of “other directedness” in modern America. The interviews were based partly on what Riesman calls a “more or less random sample” (Riesman 1952:xiii). The study also involved interviews in rural Vermont and in East Harlem to explore tradition directed characters, interviews in a small town in Vermont designed to help explore “inner directedness” under siege as well as extensive research on a California progressive school group undertaken by Rose Laub Coser. Part of the rich social science tradition looking at the linkages between politics and personality pioneered by Harold Lasswell, *Faces in the Crowd* is an attempt to “move from society and history, so to speak, inward toward individual character” (Riesman 1952:ix).

Faces in the Crowd is tough reading and it is clearly part of sociological research’s prehistory. The portraits are long and involved, and one is not left with many insights into American social character that one can not get from the shorter and more readable *The Lonely Crowd*. In retrospect, Riesman’s principled anti-Stalinism shaped too much of what he read into the interviews with young people who had relatively unformed political views. Riesman’s own cultural values clearly shape his psychological assessments and political judgments more than one would like for a piece of social research. And Riesman’s methodological skills are crude by today’s standards. *Faces in the Crowd* remains largely unread today, perhaps justifiably so.

Faces in the Crowd, however, remains a remarkable piece of work. Riesman was trying to combine the critical theory of Fromm and European social theory with the style of American social criticism represented by Veblen and Mills while retaining a commitment to academic research and evidence. Riesman’s politics are no less biased than were Fromm or Adorno’s, but he improved on the social criticism of the Frankfurt school by flushing out the overgeneralizations that many European theorists engaged in when writing about America. One of the most striking things about reading Riesman’s *Faces in the Crowd* is the modesty apparent in the analysis, especially when one compares its tone to the writings of the Frankfurt school critical theorists. Viewing the interviews in *Faces in the Crowd* as “illustrations not demonstrations” of the theory outlined in *The Lonely Crowd*, there is a tentativeness in the interpretations that is foreign to the style of Fromm and especially Adorno, Marcuse or Horkheimer. It would be hard to imagine a similar companion volume to *The Dialectics of Enlighten-*

ment (1947) where Horkheimer and Adorno report on in-depth interviews with the American middle class that suggest that their account of Western culture was excessively gloomy.¹¹

Riesman understood that their research project could be described as the work of “handicraft workers” in a social science that is increasingly “complex and specialized” (Riesman 1952:xi) Riesman resisted over-specialization but he respected research expertise far more than the Frankfurt school scholars who were quick to dismiss American “positivism.” Paradoxically, it was the American sociologist Riesman who better avoided the dangers of excessive quantification than either Fromm and Adorno. Riesman, raised in positivist America, produced empirical research in *Faces in the Crowd* that fits much better into a model of interpretive sociology than the research produced by Adorno’s *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) and Fromm in *Social Character in a Mexican Village* (1970).¹² Even though Fromm and Adorno are often criticized for not being empirical and quantitative enough, both German scholars went overboard in their attempts to legitimize their research to American social scientists. Adorno and Fromm both produced research that could have been improved with the integration of more qualitative and historical modes of inquiry (Alford 1998).¹³

Riesman, unlike Fromm and Adorno, had the confidence and skill to produce a sociology enriched by ethnographic research. While Riesman’s *The Lonely Crowd* could not have been written without a serious engagement with European social theory, it also displays an admirable modesty and skepticism about theory that we could learn from in the context of contemporary sociology. Post-modern thought and the reemergence of grand theories in the form of Habermas, Giddens and the like, threaten to sever the linkages between theory and research, abstractions and concrete social investigations. Contemporary ethnographers and cultural sociologists will go well beyond Riesman in methodological sophistication, but they could still profit from his earlier attempts to combine European sociological theory with close observation, cultural analysis and a light, modest touch.

Conclusion: Riesman’s Decline and Sociology as Social Criticism

Riesman has never received the recognition he deserves in American sociology. Riesman has been read and remembered as an American answer to Tocqueville, a popular writer/intellectual or an ambassador for sociology. Like Daniel Bell and C. Wright Mills, Riesman largely taught undergraduates and was not intensely involved in the training of young research oriented sociologists. Riesman had an enormous influence, of course, on scholars he once taught at the University of Chicago and Harvard as well as through his remarkably energetic mentoring activities and letter writing.¹⁴ Riesman, however, tends to be forgotten even among contemporary scholars who are rediscovering a passion for sociology as a public discipline. Sociological reputations are made in mainstream journals, conferences and through the links between graduate training and tenure track jobs. Insightful essays, inspired undergraduate teaching and public visibility as a sociologist count for only so much in the context of modern professionalized academic disci-

plines. Sociology needs intellectuals like Riesman, but it has a difficult time reproducing them for good sociological reasons.

Sociology, however, will only produce quality public intellectuals if the discipline remembers that good social criticism must balance society's need for what Jeffrey Goldfarb has called "civility and subversion" (Goldfarb 1998). Lemert's and Seidman's visions for a public sociology are exclusively subversive, one side only of what the discipline needs to do to connect credibly with debate outside our journals and lecture halls. In our case study on critical theory meeting America, Fromm and the Frankfurt School represent the need for subversive intellectuals who challenge the core assumptions and legitimating myths of modern society and culture. Riesman's moderate temperament, grounded analysis and respect for expertise and evidence, in contrast, provides a needed counter-weight to a radical or post-modern sociology that can become shrill, unreasonable and excessively romantic if it loses connections to mainstream culture and sociology (Brint 1994). The post-colonial, queer, feminist and critical theorists whom Lemert and Seidman valorize can bring much into sociology as a discipline (Lemert 1995; Seidman 1994). Such contemporary thinkers who follow in the Riesman tradition such as Robert Bellah and Alan Wolfe, however, can help ensure that critical theories meet America in a productive way.

The genius of *The Lonely Crowd* was to raise larger critical questions about modern culture while allowing the analysis to be moderated by what Wolfe calls "sociological realism" (Wolfe 1993). The collaboration between Fromm and Riesman was so powerful precisely because Fromm provided subversive insights which Riesman's civility moderated. Riesman was not simply a proponent of "sociological realism" marginalized in the middle, however, as Wolfe suggests, but was also a utopian thinker who seriously engaged the speculations and theoretical insights of great European thinkers such as Freud and Weber. Wolfe is right to insist that we must always ask whether our theoretical ideas have some relation to social reality, but we must also guard against theoretical complacency and loss of imagination (Wolfe 1996).

There is a sociological dynamic to all this. The reputations of both Fromm and Riesman declined in American sociology from the late 1960s till today partly because they were never centrally engaged in academic sociological research and their work ran against the political grain of the radical sociology that emerged in the 1970s. But Riesman, more than Fromm, was able to place himself in a unique sociological position that holds lessons for those of us today who would like to see a renewal of a public sociology. While Fromm largely reached his audiences through books and increasingly withdrew from the academic peer-review process, Riesman collaborated with younger sociologists and historians engaged in cutting edge academic research as well as writing his own books and essays of social criticism. Fromm maintained his closest relationships with other similar social critics who wrote about society from the margins, such thinkers as Paulo Friere, Ivan Illich and Lewis Mumford. Riesman, in contrast, was close to numerous such social critics with very different politics as Eric Erickson, Lionel Trilling, Margaret Mead and Fromm himself as well as being linked to more traditional academic historians and social scientists. The result was that Riesman's thought maintained an engagement with research findings while still addressing larger social issues with a remarkable balance.

Fromm's work, in contrast, sometimes veered off into an excessively prophetic mode with the one-sided tone we see again in many works of contemporary critical theory and post-modernism as well as in Allan Bloom's conservative rant against modern society (Maccoby 1995). Finding the right balance between civility and subversion and realism and utopian vision involves organizational and network dimensions, as well as good judgement.

It was Riesman, more than Fromm, Bloom or various post-modern social critics and social theorists, who best combined the role of public intellectual, social critic and theorist, while maintaining the proper respect for evidence and the craft of empirical sociological research. When Riesman met Fromm, American social criticism and pragmatism met the grand tradition of European critical theory and America came out pretty well. We certainly do not need a mythical Riesman, so there is much historical work to be done to gain a better picture of his relationship to 20th century American sociology.¹⁵ But we could do worse than starting with Riesman's work as sociologists envision what a theoretically informed public sociology might look like in the 21st century.

Notes

1. Thanks to Robert Alford, Linda Boos, Steven Brint, Scott Davies, Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, Louis Greenspan, Rhoda Howard-Hassmann, Lisa Kowalchuk, Bonnie Oglensky, Rolf Meyersohn, Stephen Steinberg, Alan Wolfe and Dennis Wrong for comments on earlier versions of this paper. A McMaster University ARB grant provided funds for a trip to German where I read the extensive correspondence between Riesman and Fromm housed in the Erich Fromm archives maintained by Rainer Funk. The paper was first presented at the American Sociological Association annual meetings in Chicago in 1999.
2. Part of the reason that the link between Riesman and critical theory has not been followed up in the literature, is that Fromm himself was largely written out of the history of the Frankfurt school by Horkheimer and Adorno. This "origin myth" was accepted by numerous scholars of critical theory (McLaughlin 1999).
3. Bloom underestimates Riesman's originality, suggesting he simply popularized Fromm's ideas. Fromm, in turn, is said to have simply absorbed these destructive ideas "from a really serious thinker, Nietzsche's heir, Martin Heidegger" (Bloom 1987:144). Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*, was an important book in the development of Riesman's ideas but for Bloom it is,

just Dale Carnegie with a little bit of middle-European cultural whipped cream on top. Get rid of capitalist alienation and Puritan repression, and all will be well as each man chooses for himself. But Woody Allen really has nothing to tell us about inner-directedness. Nor does Riesman nor, going further back, does Fromm. One has to get to Heidegger to learn something of all the grim facts of what inner-directedness might really mean (Bloom 1987:146).

The political philosopher John Schaar takes Fromm more seriously in his book length critique *Escape from Authority: The Perspectives of Erich Fromm* (1961) but he also dismisses Riesman and decries a culture that could mistake Riesman's "masked and pedantic complacencies" for "serious moral discourse" (Schaar 1961:9). Alan Wolfe takes Riesman very seriously indeed in *Marginalized in the Middle* (1996) while repeating the cliché that Fromm was simplistic. Fromm was often sociologically unsophisticated, but he was also profoundly insightful in social psychological matters.

4. Lamont's analysis of Derrida provides us, in my view, with a very useful model for how to theoretically and sociologically frame studies of the boundary crossing represented by ideas and thinkers that move across disciplinary divisions, national traditions and intellectual genres (Lamont 1987). For my own attempt to get at these issues, see (McLaughlin 1998b).

5. While I am arguing that Fromm's *Man for Himself* provides the most direct template for *The Lonely Crowd*, at a deeper level much of Riesman's work is a dialogue with *Escape from Freedom*. Wilfred McClay's excellent essay on *The Lonely Crowd* makes the case that the book is more centrally concerned with the moral philosophy of freedom in modern America than it is a piece of empirical social science (McClay 1998). Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* was also really about the freedom in the modern world as much as it was about Nazism, a point Fromm made clear in a private letter he wrote to Robert Lynd as the book was being written (McLaughlin 1996). Reading both Riesman and Fromm this way helps illuminate their intellectual relationship, and the strengths and limitations of their contributions.
6. Horney was an unorthodox German emigree psychoanalyst based in New York City, a popular writer associated with the culture and personality work of the 1930s, and a proto-feminist critic of Freud's theories. Horney collaborated with and was close personally to Fromm and together with Harry Stack Sullivan and Fromm she was instrumental in forming what sometimes has been called the cultural or Neo-Freudian school of psychoanalysis (McLaughlin 1998a).
7. Friedrich was a cultivated European scholar and later theorist of totalitarianism and foreign policy.
8. There is no way of knowing, of course, what went on in Riesman's therapy with Fromm. It is certainly a private matter although Riesman has been quite candid about discussing it in writing. There is a strange way that Fromm's renegade career and radical political views were perfectly suited to helping Riesman carve out his own very unusual career. Riesman himself suggests that he lacked confidence in his intellectual abilities partly due to the demanding standards of his parents, particularly his highly cultured mother. Riesman's insecurities must have been reinforced by the fact that he went on to a sociologically complicated career as a social science professor without a PhD at the University of Chicago in 1946 and then at Harvard. Fromm was an old fashioned European intellectual who was disdainful of the mainstream sociologists who often rejected Riesman. Fromm was thus positioned to strengthen Riesman's resolve to ignore many sociologists's low opinion of his work. The combination of Riesman's own inclinations and elite background and Fromm's excessively harsh criticisms of mainstream work probably played an important role in creating the David Riesman who creatively wrote from the margins of American mainstream sociology while being based at elite institutions such as Chicago and Harvard. The history of 20th century American sociology would have been very different if Riesman had a therapist who defined his interests in being an intellectual and his insecurities relative to mainstream sociology as partly being due to Riesman's rebellion against growing up and fitting into the professional world. As a therapist, Fromm tended to take the side of the artist, the intellectual and the political radical against the mainstream society and the demands of business, professions and middle class culture and politics. Whether Fromm's approach was always good for his clients is a question worth exploring in another context (Maccoby 1995). There is little doubt, in my mind at least, that all this was extremely good for American sociology.
9. Riesman and Fromm continued a close intellectual and personal friendship and correspondence until Fromm's death in 1980. Riesman had done a book jacket blurb for Fromm's *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961) but would not do one for Fromm's *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973) although he reviewed it favourably for *The New Republic*. The correspondence between Fromm and Riesman is extensive, and deals with numerous intellectual, personal, professional and political issues. A very significant percentage of the letters deals with their mutual interest in American foreign policy, world peace and the nuclear arms race. They worked closely together on a newsletter called The Committee of Correspondence devoted to peace issues. Riesman and Fromm shared similar values, but Riesman was consistently more sympathetic to the American foreign policy establishment. This makes sense given Charles Kadushin's finding that Riesman was the intellectual with the most credibility among the political elite in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Kadushin 1974).
10. In developing his analysis of character, Riesman quotes Fromm from a piece in *The American Sociological Review*, "In order that any society may function well, its members must acquire the kind of character which makes them want to act in the way that they have to act as members of the society or of a special class within it. They have to desire what objectively

is necessary for them to do. Outer force is replaced by inner compulsion, and by the particular kind of human energy which is channelled into character traits.”(Riesman, [1950] (1950):5.) The Fromm reference is from “Individual and Social Origins of Neurosis,” *American Sociological Review*, IX (1944): 380.

11. For Riesman’s thoughts on how his work has stood up, see the new introduction to *Abundance for What?* [1964] 1993, his essay “The Innocence of *The Lonely Crowd*” in *Society* (1990) and his biographical reflections in the Berger collection (Riesman 1990).
12. Fromm’s *Social Character in a Mexican Village* is an attempt to test his theory of character based on extensive psychological testing and factor analysis. Responding to criticisms of his science, Fromm overreacted to produce a book that lacks the in-depth interviews and ethnographic accounts that might have made for a more compelling analysis of Mexican peasant culture. And *The Authoritarian Personality* also would have been a better book if the portraits of the authoritarians would have been enriched. The full story of Fromm’s relationship to *The Authoritarian Personality* tradition has not been told. Adorno’s “F” scale was based on work that Fromm had developed in the early 1930s as part of critical theory’s attempt to understand why German workers and the middle class were attracted to Nazism (Burston 1991; Fromm 1984; Christie and Jahoda 1954; Funk 1984; Bronner 1994; Jay 1973). Adorno gained much of the credit for this earlier pioneering social psychology, and Fromm’s *Social Character in a Mexican Village* was partly an attempt to address the theoretical limitations of Fromm’s working class in Weimar study and Adorno’s “F” scale project as well as providing an analysis that would have more scientific credibility than Fromm’s earlier work. Riesman ironically played an important role in this process, for it Riesman’s connections to a young Harvard man Michael Maccoby that provided Fromm with his research assistant and eventual collaborator on what turned out to be a very intensive social-psychological study of the development process in a local setting. See Maccoby’s introduction to the Transaction edition of *Social Character in a Mexican Village* (1996). Maccoby has been a very helpful source of insight regarding the Fromm/Riesman connection after I interviewed him in Washington in 1992. A further irony is that Fromm’s research assistant when he was attempting to do a statistical analysis on the Weimar study in preparation for publication in the United States was a young Paul Lazarsfeld. There is a story to be told here.
13. Alford argues that sociologist should attempt, where possible, to use multivariate logic and statistical analysis, interpretative theory and ethnographic research and a historical approach when designing research projects (Alford 1996).
14. Riesman’s letter writing is famous among sociologists and intellectuals. I interviewed Riesman in Boston in 1992, and after that he responded to my numerous inquiries and questions over several years with long and thoughtful letters. The interview and follow-up letters were instrumental in helping me understand Riesman’s relationship to the critical theory tradition as well as giving me insight into the role Riesman has played as a mentor to young sociologists and intellectuals over decades of activity in American intellectual life.
15. Andrew Abbott’s discussion of Riesman in *Department and Discipline: Chicago Sociology at One Hundred* (1999), in particular, raises questions that deserve examination. While Abbott shares the professional vision that underlies the Turner and Turner critique of Riesman as a popular not sociological thinker (Turner and Turner 1990), Abbot’s critique is more substantial for he presents evidence that Riesman was far more involved in department politics, hiring battles and the like than a view of Riesman as public intellectual ambassador for sociology would suggest. Ultimately, of course, one’s view of what is productive and what is destructive in department politics has a lot to do with one’s vision for the discipline. There is more historical work to be done, but we should see the Abbot book as a cautionary reminder not to construct a “St. Riesman” for intellectuals as John Rodden has shown was done with George Orwell earlier in the century (Rodden 1989).

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