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Dmitri Shalin Interview with Donald Levine about Erving Goffman entitled "Remembering Erving Goffman"

Donald Levine

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Remembering Erving Goffman

Donald Levine

January 29, 2014

I'd say that a number of eminent sociologists of the previous generation were Jews trying to flee their old identity and achieve higher status thereby. Among many others, these included Edward Shils, David Riesman, and Robert Merton (who changed his name to accomplish that) – all 3 of them, incidentally, from Philadelphia. That stands in interesting contrast with the founding generation of American sociologists, who were you know often sons of Protestant ministers.

Shils was his usual snooty self vis-a-vis Erving. Once EG started to get famous, Shils would refer to him as a "little pup." And then at times he'd call him "the Simmel of the pickpockets."

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