

point is quite another matter. He sees the early 1950's as a period in which the nation is turning more and more to voluntary ingroupings, based in part on ethnic backgrounds. The trend, he believes, is essentially healthy. In an era of nagging insecurities, the groups bring to the individual a steadying sense of belonging. In a period of overwhelming state powers, of demands for total loyalty and absolute conformity, such associations give men a way to "check the state's power without directly opposing it."

No one could question that the ingrouping is an important fact of the present day or that it has its beneficial aspects. But by writing warmly of the partially ethnic quality of these groups Mr. Handlin certainly moves on to debatable ground. In America of the Fifties psychiatrists' couches are kept warm by the sons and daughters of minorities who have been encouraged to seek a sense of personal security in an ethnic background which they really want to escape. American public affairs of the last decade are splashed with instances of groups who remembered their an-

cestors and forgot the general welfare.

The years have seen a faction of Jews ready to wreck aid to Britain, a bastion of the free world, because of Britain's attitude toward Palestine; great cities reduced to the point where a prime qualification of a mayoralty candidate was the proper Old Country birthplace for his parents; and Hazel Scott testifying that she supported the Communist candidate, Benjamin Davis because, after all, he was the only Negro running. Emphasis on ethnic antecedents easily slips over into chauvinism, and a good deal of history suggests that minority chauvinisms are not one whit less dangerous, to the individual or to the nation, than the clan-consciousness of a majority.

Perhaps the relaxing prosperity of America today, the community of feelings which comes with the threat of annihilation from abroad, is leading to still another era, when groupings will cut more and more across the lines of ethnic origins. If so, the people of the United States are discovering the most valuable kind of ancestors—ancestors who stay dead.

Light on Dark Corners

"Individualism Reconsidered," by David Riesman (Free Press, 529 pp. \$6), is a volume of catalytic essays about contemporary American society, by the author of "The Lonely Crowd" and "Faces in the Crowd." Robert Bierstedt, who reviews it here, is chairman of the department of sociology and anthropology at the City College of New York.

By Robert Bierstedt

AMERICAN sociologists sometimes come from curious places. In an earlier period they frequently came from the ministry and in both earlier and more recent times they have come from philosophy, philology, economics, political science, and journalism. In David Riesman we have a migrant from the law.

Riesman first came to public attention in 1950 with the publication (with Nathan Glazer and Reul Denney) of "The Lonely Crowd" and again two years later with "Faces in the Crowd." In "The Lonely Crowd" Riesman attempted to establish three different character types in American culture: the tradition-directed, the inner-directed, and the other-directed. "Tradition-directed," a concept which, for example, characterizes the usual primitive society, is almost self-explanatory. The question whether a person is inner-directed or other-directed, on the other hand, depends upon whether he assimilates his principles from his parents or from his peers. In the first case he meets with consistency and determination the changing social situations of his experience; in the second he tacks back and forth, unsteadily, in response to the various and often vagrant opinions of the groups to which he happens to belong.

It was the thesis of "The Lonely Crowd" that contemporary Americans are becoming increasingly other-directed, and it appeared that Riesman viewed this development with disapproval. He went further. He tried, with little enthusiasm and with less success, to relate these changes to population trends. The insights in the book, however, were so superior that they won a certain autonomy over its central thesis, and they properly received a favorable judgment on their own account.

"Faces in the Crowd," a book of over 700 pages written in collaboration with Nathan Glazer, presented twenty-one detailed case studies of people interviewed in various places,

Your Literary I.Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

WHAT WAS THAT ADDRESS, PLEASE?

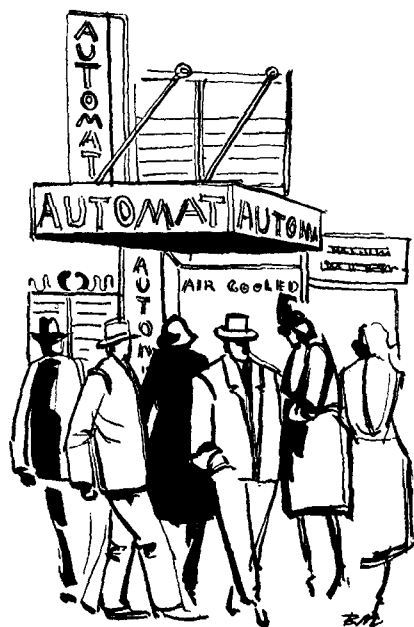
O. B. and A. W. Chilton of Mesilla Park, New Mexico, present the names of sundry fictional characters together with their home addresses (which, unfortunately, have become rather badly scrambled). You are asked to assign the proper parties to the proper estates and also to identify the books in which the characters appear and the authors of those books (a chore in which you will be aided by the fact that several of the place names are themselves book titles). If of the sixty scraps of information sought you get as many as forty regard yourself as a qualified hedge-trimmer; forty-one to fifty, a certified floor-waxer; fifty-one or better, accredited guardian of the wine-cellar. Answers on page 36.

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|---|---|
| 1. Mr. John Jarndyce | () Cypress Hill |
| 2. Sir Pitt and Lady Crawley | () Plumfield |
| 3. Miss Emma Woodhouse | () Windswept |
| 4. Citizen (Gunner) Peyrol | () Java Head |
| 5. Lady Leicester (née Robsart) | () Twelve Oaks |
| 6. Mr. and Mrs. Jolyon Forsyte | () Silver Ho |
| 7. Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Pomfret | () Mallards House |
| 8. Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, and Masters Emil, Ernest, and Jack Robinson | () The Shaws |
| 9. Christopher Glowry, Esq. | () The Slopes |
| 10. Sir Roger and Lady Scatcherd | () Les Sapins |
| 11. "Good Old Julia" Packett (while abroad) | () Box Hill |
| 12. Mr. Alec d'Urberville | () Nightmare Abbey |
| 13. Mr. Ebenezer Balfour | () Tree House, Tent House, or Rock House |
| 14. Mrs. Emmeline Lucas of Tilling | () White Ladies |
| 15. Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Adverse | () Robin Hill |
| 16. Mr. and Mrs. Ashley Wilkes | () Cumnor Place |
| 17. Captain Jeremy Ammidon | () Escampobar Farm |
| 18. Mr. and Mrs. Philip Marston | () Hartfield |
| 19. Mr. and Mrs. Friedrich Bhaer | () Bleak House |
| 20. Mrs. Julia Shane | () Queen's Crawley |

studies designed, presumably, to supply at least some of the data from which the generalizations in the first book were derived. This enterprise encountered the severe criticism of some sociologists, notably Richard T. LaPiere of Stanford University, who maintained that by no stretch of the imagination could the data support the conclusions. One answer to this criticism is that the author is an artist, not a statistician, but in that case of course the interviews became irrelevant. In any event the originality of these books, combined with their thoughtful and suggestive quality, made Riesman, in no derogatory sense, the darling of the intellectuals.

HIS latest publication, "Individualism Reconsidered," is a book of a different kind. It consists of thirty of Riesman's essays covering a substantial range of subjects in which he discourses on everything. He divides them into seven groups, each preceded by introductory remarks, as follows: individualism, minorities, culture (popular and unpopular), Veblen, Freud, totalitarianism, and problems of method in the social sciences. For sheer brilliance, in a book to which that word can generally be applied, none of them exceeds "The Nylon War." In this delightful satire Riesman imagines that we raid the Russians and drop upon them not bombs but rather the surplus products of our free-enterprise system—lipsticks, cigarettes, cigarette-lighters, permanent-wave kits, wrist watches, electric shavers, toasters, radios, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, pogo-sticks, and tricycles—and in this way completely confound their culture and their economy.

A collection of essays written at dif-



ferent times can obviously present no systematic treatment of any unified theme, not even the one suggested by the title. The genius of Riesman resides in his insights, many of which are profound and some of which are startling. He probes beneath the surface of things and discovers, for example, that it is the domestic Communists themselves who are the dupes, rather than the people who have been duped by them. He notices that "the morally indignant person is often a sadist whose own impulses were his first victims." He remarks—on Utopian thinking—that even little plans are impossible without large visions and that it is the "common-sense" goals which are often unattainable. He wonders why automobile windows should operate by push-buttons when the job of cranking them up and down is not unpleasant. He reminds the members of minority groups that powerlessness is not necessarily synonymous with ethical superiority. He observes that to be a minority within a minority may be more oppressive than to be a minority within a majority. He suggests that the day-to-day "adjustment" of children to their surroundings may not be conducive to their long-run happiness. He reminds us that nothing resembles a welfare state quite so much as a modern corporation. And he declares that personality "integration" may be a dubious ideal. These are only a few, chosen pretty much at random, which, if they do not always make the reader stand up and cheer, at least stir him to thought. It is the "shock-technique" in teaching, and Riesman uses it with the finesse of a master.

Riesman's technique, however, sometimes does him a disservice and encourages him to entertain questionable views. He is insufficiently impressed, for example, by the atrocities committed by reactionaries in our midst, on the ground that there are limits, even in Russia, to totalitarian power. He tells us to stop worrying so much about Senator McCarthy. And he says that if professors have recently come under attack this may be regarded as a tribute to their new and increasing importance in American society. In these and in similar instances not even Orwell can disturb his calm, although a later postscript to one of the essays indicates that he might not now say quite the same things in quite the same way, and that he is well aware of more recent "erosions of intellectual freedom."

There remains a certain imprecision in some of Riesman's distinctions. He writes, for example, a long review of Helen Howe's novel of a few years ago, "We Happy Few," in which he

(Continued on page 39)



—Robert McCullough.

THE AUTHOR: David Riesman, one of sociology's most challenging salesmen, is a splendid, if uncommon, illustration of a social scientist—or, for that matter, any kind of scientist—who can derive pain from the knowledge that his tome is selling beautifully, which Riesman's is. Back in 1950 Riesman innocently wrote "The Lonely Crowd," and Anchor Books just as innocently reissued it last fall. Well, it promptly turned out to be the sort of book bookshops run out of; a few weeks ago, a shop near Columbia University hurriedly put up a sign proclaiming: "THE LONELY CROWD IS IN." Calm returned to 116th Street. In all, the book has sold 41,000 Anchor copies, making it at once the best seller of the series and probably the biggest intrusion in Riesman's sociological life. "I had no idea it would sell so widely and am not entirely happy this has occurred," he says. "The kind of research which went into the book can be pursued only if one has fairly ample amounts of time and privacy, and the unexpected popular reception of my work, of which your own call is one example, is not an unmixed blessing. Thus, while I cannot help but be gratified at the interest of many thoughtful Americans in themselves and in our culture, I must also bear the pains and penalties of so stimulating them." All these ambivalent feelings were aired the other day at Harvard, where Riesman, a University of Chicago professor, is conducting a summer seminar. His career as a bestselling sociologist is the end-product of a succession of Riesman careers—biochemist (Harvard, '31), lawyer (Harvard, '34), law clerk (to Mr. Justice Brandeis, '35), law professor (Buffalo, Columbia), and deputy assistant D.A. (a New York county). Riesman, a rapt cross-examiner of the changing American character, has a knack for finding an essay's worth of material anywhere. Man, say, goes to a football game; next thing you know, Riesman has happily dashed off: "Football in America: A Study in Culture Diffusion." He is always up to things like that.

—BERNARD KALB.