

THE STUDY OF CULTURES

5 November 1959

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION--Dr. Harold J. Clem, Member of the Faculty, ICAF.....	1
SPEAKER--Dr. Margaret Mead, Anthropologist, American Museum of Natural History, New York.....	1
GENERAL DISCUSSION.....	13

NOTICE

This is a transcript of material presented to the resident students at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Members of the College may quote it only in student reports or publications for use within the College. Other persons may not quote or extract for publication, reproduce, or otherwise copy this material without specific permission from the author and from the Commandant, ICAF, in each case.

Publication No. L60-65

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

Dr. Margaret Mead, Anthropologist, American Museum of Natural History, was born on 16 December 1901 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received her A. B. degree from Barnard College, and the M. A. and Ph. D. degrees from Columbia University. In 1926 she was appointed Assistant Curator of Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, thereafter advancing to the rank of Associate Curator. Between 1948 and 1953 Dr. Mead directed the Museum's program of studies in Soviet culture. In addition to her work at the Museum, she has served as visiting lecturer, Vassar College (1939-1941) and Teachers College, Columbia University (1947-1954); director, research in contemporary cultures, Columbia University (1948-1952); and adjunct professor of anthropology, Columbia University (1954-present). During the course of her career Dr. Mead has pursued anthropological research in Samoa, Admiralty Islands, Bali, New Guinea, and among an American Indian tribe. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, American Anthropological Society, American Ethnological Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science, World Federation for Mental Health, and the National Association for Mental Health. Among the published books of which Dr. Mead is author or coauthor are: "And Keep Your Powder Dry" (1942), "Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority" (1951), "The Study of Culture at a Distance" (1953), "Childhood in Contemporary Cultures" (1955), and "New Lives for Old" (1956). This is her first lecture at the Industrial College.

THE STUDY OF CULTURES

5 November 1959

DR. CLEM: Gentlemen, our program for this period is somewhat unique. The subject of our lecture, "The Study of Cultures," is itself perhaps a little different from the usual and traditional theme treated in a college of this nature. But the fact that makes this morning's program something quite special for us is our speaker. It is not often that we have the privilege and pleasure of having a lady speak to us in this auditorium. But I can tell you that the Resources Branch has determined to make this a more frequent occurrence.

The name Margaret Mead is well known to the American public. It is a name which enjoys international renown in the field of anthropology. And most of us have become acquainted with her through her books or radio and television appearances.

So, Dr. Mead, it is a real pleasure to welcome you here this morning and a privilege to introduce you to the students and faculty of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

DR. MEAD: Gentlemen, I suppose that what I am supposed to do is to give you some sort of brief living examples of how the anthropologist goes at the kinds of problems that he tackles and some idea of his methods. In the course of a period like this I can't give you detailed information on when the Burmese are going to repudiate something, or exactly what is going to happen in Indonesia, what the difference is between the Algerian and the Moroccan responses to General DeGaulle, or any number of particular problems that anthropologists are prepared to tackle when they become relevant to something they are working on. On the other hand, I suppose what you are interested in is to get some notion of how we work with all sorts of problems of basic behavior, how we tackle them. I do want to give you a brief statement of that, because I think it will make my talk perhaps more profitable and enable you to ask questions that are useful later.

An anthropologist gets his training by studying primitive people. We define primitive people as people without a written language. This is the only single characteristic that they have in common. Otherwise they may be ferocious and cruel savages or as peaceful as lambs. They

may be fishing people or agricultural people. They may be people with a terrible complicated spoken language, or they may have a very simple language. The only thing they have in common as people is that they are sufficiently outside the main stream of history and live in sufficiently inaccessible spots so that they had not acquired writing.

Therefore the culture, the learned social behavior of primitive people is different from ours for the one reason that somebody has to carry it in his head. They can't have a complication of behavior which is too great for someone to carry in his head. The amount that can be carried in one old head or 10 or 20 old heads is sometimes amazing, and, of course, it would be pretty difficult to say just what that amount is. But, even so, the amount of information that can be carried in the human memory is limited.

These are usually small groups of people. Although sometimes they may have developed a kingship, they are without a written language. One of the complications that we sometimes forget is that people who may have a king but are without a written language may not respond properly when given a written language. They don't behave the way the rest of the world expects them to, and that introduces a very difficult situation.

But more of these people do live in small groups. Some live in tribes of as few as 600 people, in villages as small as 100 or 200 people each. We like to and generally do work with these small groups, because in that way it is possible to get control of our work, to get a controlled knowledge of the total culture of the people, such as would never be possible in a complicated society like ours. The anthropologist takes pencil and paper--or he used to; now he takes pencil and paper and a tape recorder and moving picture camera and/or a Leica--and he can get down in a very short period the information that they have spent a lifetime in learning by rote or very slowly.

In this way we find out how such a society is put together in a way that gives us an opportunity to compare it with other societies. This makes it possible for us to figure out what is the relationship between the way we feed our babies and the way they do. We begin to understand the kind of advertising we have, how we elected President Truman at a time when it went against the expectation of everyone in the country, and, well, for instance, the way we responded to the defection of a very few of the less well-adjusted people during the Korean war. We tackle

questions like that and we put them down and compare our behavior with the behavior of these primitive peoples. Then things that are hard for us to understand now may not be so hard to understand.

So from our experiences of working here in the laboratory of small primitive peoples we learn about their habits, their notions of other human beings, and about some aspects of human behavior. All that is useful, because these people are members of the same species as we are. They are not any brighter than we are. In a very small group, of course, of about 600 people, the chances of their being a genius is less than the chances in a group of 6 million people. But I have worked with such a small group in the Admiralty Islands--Manus--in the Pacific in 1928 and again in 1952--probably some of you were there during the war--and found some interesting things in that regard.

On a little island of a few square miles called Baluan, we found that they had produced one leader who in general intellectual stature compares very favorably with the leaders of some countries with populations in the millions. He knows his own language, which is spoken by some 700 people. He speaks another language that is spoken by about 2,500 people, and a language which we now call Neo-Melanesian--once called New Guinea pidgin English spoken by perhaps a little over 100,000 people. In terms of intelligence he is as outstanding a sort of person as one sees leading a great modern nation in a national crisis, even though his culture is extraordinarily limited. So that we do occasionally find someone who is a genius relative to the rest of the tribe. We don't find as many living defectives as we do in our society. We don't find any extremely feeble-minded. I have never seen anyone who was congenitally blind, although perhaps some may have been born but not permitted to live.

These societies were built by groups of people with the same intrinsic capacities as our own. Therefore they provide us with a real operational approach to the possibilities of human behavior. We can use them as small control situations in learning to understand our own behavior.

Now, occasionally today social scientists attempt to set up controlled experimental situations of some sort in which small groups of people are subjected to hunger and other stresses which produce visible behavior. A group of individuals may be left under such conditions for several days or months, and the outcome observed. These are artificial

284
controlled situations to find out what people will do under specified conditions of stress. But that is not comparable to what we can get from anthropological work, where our controlled situations are provided by history.

We don't speak of the forms of learned behavior of a society as a culture unless it has survived more than one generation. We wait at least a whole second generation until we see signs of this behavior still going on before we will call it a culture. So we do not call Nazism a culture. We call it a special temporal event within German culture, but not a culture. However, the existing culture in the Soviet Union we do call Soviet culture, because it has survived long enough so that children have been born into it and grown to adulthood and had children without introducing any radical changes into the system. So we say that it is a viable culture within the meaning of the word.

When we try to think about our concept of society, how we discuss such matters as the relationship between allies or the relationship between enemies, we need the experience that we gain from either field work or reading about them as a model to which to refer our material. You undoubtedly hear a lot about models of different kinds. Some are called mechanical models and some are called mathematical models. The kind of model that we use is a living model.

I like to cite one amazing illustration of how you can use a small group of people as a model to predict the behavior of large groups, Phyllis McGingly is one of the best predictors of what the American people are going to do in a given predicament of anyone I know. She was born in a very small town, where she knew everybody. She says that when she starts thinking about what is going to happen somewhere, what somebody in the news is going to do, she thinks back to this small town and asks herself: "What would old so and so have done?" or "What would Uncle so and so have said?" Then she extends that to the present situation, and she has been proved to be exceedingly right in predicting behavior.

There is also the professional use of living models in one's own community. So in attempting to understand behavior better, an anthropologist does need to use models of one kind or another. We get a problem in a given situation. We try to ascertain how a given primitive people have met a situation. Then we attempt to abstract the principles involved and apply them to the United States and our own type of society.

Before coming here this morning, I considered whether it would be better to give you some illustrations of the application of material of this sort, or whether it would be better to talk about the human problem. This is a problem which we are beginning to recognize in its true importance. Therefore I will talk about that, because I think you are likely to have to deal with it right through your course here. I will come back to some particular illustrations later. But I want to tackle the human problem this morning and give you some illustrations of how anthropological material is used.

Let me say first that in the end we are always up against concrete situations. We don't ask, What can the anthropologists say about how people will behave? We say, What can the anthropologists say about how the Koreans will behave, or the Burmese right now? Or what can the anthropologists say about what is going on in Indonesia in the relationship between the Javanese and the Sumatrans? What can the anthropologists say about the relationship between the Moroccans and the Algerians? We deal with concrete, actual situations, involving specific groups of people about whom we know something.

You can ask a psychologist for a particular generalization about human beings, such as how much stress they can stand. There are a great many studies of that kind going on in the armed services. But as anthropologists we cannot say how much stress a human being or even a North American can stand. We have to narrow it down to how much stress an American of specified age, sex, intelligence, class, etc., can stand. We have to be asked for specific information.

For instance, in World War II we were asked for information where you had to know how reliable certain groups of people were, or how much could be expected of a small group of people on a certain island, such as in parts of New Guinea, where isolated agents might be attempting to radio information to the Allied forces. Or you might need to know whether a given group of people will make reliable informants, reliable agents, or how they will respond to the behavior of other people. You might ask, for instance, Is it safe to send out a mixed group of Poles and Americans to the Philippines, or are complications likely to arise? Here we are dealing with predictable patterns of behavior of people, because we know they feel that they belong to one specific group and not to another group, and it is this difference between them with which we work.

Now, we have many sorts of problems. One large problem that is becoming increasingly important in the world and that is going to have to be thought about and dealt with is the problem of how a people defines its enemies. A lot of people think this is quite simple, but it isn't quite as simple as you might think. I remember an instance when one Government department wanted to use Chinese marching songs against the Japanese during World War II. But another division of one of our great Government departments, which shall be unnamed, thought that after the war the Japanese might well be our friends and so we couldn't use these songs that would irritate them. This is an illustration where recognition of the concept that enemies might turn into friends influenced our strategy even in the midst of a conflict.

Anthropologists tackle this kind of problem by looking over what they know of primitive people and considering what you can learn from the way they handle their enemies under similar conditions. Primitive societies give us a model for thinking about how we should define the enemy under our modern complex conditions.

The Eskimos are a case in point. Eskimos are a people with no real political barriers and no boundaries. They have been very thoroughly studied. Each little group feels that its own language is a little different from the next group. So they tended to characterize themselves in a slightly different way. But, actually an Eskimo could go from Greenland to Alaska and be understood right straight across the country. The Eskimos have no way of saying: "This is my group. You are all outside of it. We are inside it."

If a stranger from one small collection of Eskimos moved to another group, he was compelled to try his strength against the strongest man of the group, to find out who was the stronger. There was always a struggle going on to be the strongest. If he lost the contest he could be killed but usually the people took him in. They gave him dogs and they gave him hunting tools and gave him a wife. He might go off travelling several hundred miles and his whole family would join with him. But even in this situation there was no enemy. There was only a stranger.

Murder itself was very hard to define. Although we think of the distinction of whom we may kill and whom we may not kill as being a very important one, among the Eskimos it is ambiguous. The small groups couldn't tolerate two strong men; so sometimes one of them would kill another and take the other man's wife and rear his children.

He brought the children up, knowing that when they grew up, one of them would probably kill him.

Now, this is a situation which in a society like ours would be intolerable. How would you like it if you had to kill another man and then marry the widow of the man you have killed and bring up his children and wait until they got big enough to kill you? Not only that, but this man would have to risk his life to feed these children. He had to go out under terrific weather conditions to get food for the children, knowing that they will probably murder him later. This seems like exceedingly odd behavior to us. But it isn't quite as odd as it looks. There are some rather close international parallels to it.

One that comes to mind, though it isn't a straight parallel, is the German children who were given sanctuary during World War I by a neighboring country and then returned with Nazis forces, as enemies, in World War II. Other people, not Germans, who had helped bring up these children were thereafter "murdered" by them.

In the larger international forum, of course, our helping Germany to rearm or helping Germany to reindustrialize and recover after World War I and then having her fight against us in World War II is possibly another analogy that might be considered.

Other examples may be found in our own country in American Indian tribes. Here members of each tribe were able to say: "Those people are our enemies. We fight them. When we meet them, we kill them, or we take them captive." Or sometimes if they were a very small tribe, when a member of Tribe A killed a member of Tribe B or was captured, he became a member of Tribe B. He was adopted by the widow or parents of the man he may himself have killed.

This is again a very striking identification of self with the enemy, in which he either boasted of his own tribe at death, as warriors used to win great distinction by singing their war songs while they burned to death; or they were adopted by the tribe to replace a son that he had helped to kill, and then he became a member of the group. So the ambiguity of who the enemy is and how he is to be interpreted extended to people without a written language.

Of course, another form of identification with the enemy is to eat him. There were a good many tribes who ate their brave enemies and thought they gained bravery by eating them.

So that these situations in which people are free to eat or adopt their enemies has been going on for quite a long while. All these devices are found at very primitive levels, with the corollary that while he is an enemy, he has no rights. Until he is adopted as somebody's child or as somebody's husband, he has no rights. He is just a prisoner. In other words, he has no rights at all. He is outside the range of human behavior. He can be lied to, kicked, killed, or treated as if he were not a human being. And one very curious device is that he can also be accepted into the bosom of the family.

Let us look for a minute at primitive devices for bringing people together and forming nations. In this matter of defining the enemy, we find that throughout the course of history, human beings have been developing or expanding the definition of the other by bringing in ideas of kinship. The most primitive societies use indecisive ideas of kinship for the organization of society, so that you don't know who is your half brother and who is your whole brother. We find a marriage seen as occurring between two villages, which brings up its problems. We find changing behavior as we approach the idea of kinship with one's ally.

In modern societies we find elaborate devices for extending kinship to people who are not like ourselves, who don't talk the same language, who don't look like us, who practice forms of government that we abhor. We find ways to classify them as allies, as somehow different from enemies. We include them in a wider frame of reference, which we do by just expanding our definitions and saying: "These are our brothers; so they are inherently members of the tribe."

We now have such a brotherhood system called the free world. It includes all governments of neutral countries that are friendly to the free world, regardless of any other attributes that these governments may have--differences of race or religion, politics, regardless of any history of corruption, or their attitude toward any of the institutions that General MacArthur introduced into Japan. Under the temporary blanket of the phrase "free world" we extend a sort of brotherhood to all people who are our allies.

This illustrates the very great change that has occurred, where we can use this free world definition of a friend as "an enemy of an enemy." It is the recognition of the same enemy that is the basis of the assumed likenesses between ourselves and our temporary brother at a given moment in history. We do not need to include the history of this ally over a period of time.

We find throughout history this unique device, even when it is only strong enough to get 200 people here and 200 people there together for a few weeks, before the alliance breaks down. We are now elaborating our definition to this sort of thing so that we gain the ability to hold half a billion people together in an alliance where we use the fiction that because we have common enemies, we are therefore united in a common cause. This makes strange bedfellows from a social standpoint. Nevertheless, once we extend this fiction to them, we can thereafter define them as if they were part of our own group--an enlarged group--in this case, the "free world."

There is one more problem which creeps in, that is very complicated. If we continue to refuse to differentiate among our friends, and attempt to work with all of them and to call them all our allies, we are going to have trouble such as we had in wartime, when we put our people back of the lines--working with a country with many different ethnic groups, in a satellite country, for instance, or in a potentially neutralist group that we are working with or trying to get to work with us. We are going to have a problem there of conducting ourselves consistently with this principle of brotherhood, to which we have made such a very firm commitment. From Chiefs of Staff down to simple reconnaissance agents, we have to cooperate with these diverse groups. I know that you here know of many better illustrations than I have, of what it was like in World War II to get on with the British, to get on with the French, or to get on with the Burmese, or some other group that we had to work with.

During World War II, I taught in a special school preparing Americans for activities in Asia. I used to teach ways of understanding the British. It was perfectly clear that in dealing with the British or the French or any other group, it was very necessary for some form of definition of their difference from us to be introduced. Otherwise once members of another culture were defined as friends, then differences that would have been very apparent before suddenly disappeared as a blanket of alliance was thrown over them.

But all these inventions for making temporary allies are still tremendously inferior to our invention of nations. This is an old invention which is still working with great efficiency. Once a people say they are a nation and an individual recognizes himself as belonging to a nation which has a name, it is possible to very quickly and rapidly extend a high-level national identity to people who are extremely different.

I don't know whether you are most interested at present in India or Indonesia, but you will probably be interested in the problem the Indonesians are having in attempting to form a nation out of groups of people whose only tie is that they dislike a common conqueror. When we look at Indonesia, we find some 80 million people, living on 3,000 islands. There is water between everybody and everybody else in Indonesia. The attempt of these 80 million people to form a common bond of nationhood--I don't like to use the word "nationality" because "nationality" tends to emphasize hostilities and whereas when you talk about "nationhood" you also emphasize responsibilities--the attempt to draw all the "Indonesians" into a national government is a fantastic undertaking. But they are struggling with it.

For instance, the issue of Dutch New Guinea, or Irian as the Indonesians call it now, is tremendously significant. Part of the problem is that we ourselves didn't understand what the point was. Here is a piece of the island of New Guinea, with nothing in it that is worth very much. Of course the mineral resources may someday be found to exceed present estimates, but at the moment it doesn't have anything to amount to anything. It is just a lump of reasonably extensive undeveloped and essentially unvaluable territory.

Dutch New Guinea is inhabited by people who are physically very different from the rest of Indonesia. They have fuzzy hair, darker skins, different features. They are "savages." So it has been very easy to present the demand of the Indonesians for Dutch New Guinea to Americans as a case of "brown imperialism," as Americans can easily be brought to see imperialism of all kinds everywhere. So it was easy to arouse the feeling in Americans of: "Why should all these Javanese, who after all have light straight hair, who are a brown skinned, Mongoloid people, lord it over these other people who live on another island?" (The essential characteristic of imperialism as seen by Americans is that the imperialistic nation must cross the sea and be careful to leave the natives alive. If you go in with covered wagons and kill all the natives, this is colonization!)

The people in many of these islands of Indonesia don't have a clear idea of what being members of a nation is. They don't even know where the nation is. They don't know what the people look like who live on the next island. But they do know one thing with absolute conviction--that the only thing that holds them together is that they used to live in a territory that was ruled by the Dutch. That is the only definition of Indonesia that they know, and it is a feasible definition. They are not claiming parts of islands that are under the British or under the Portuguese. All they want is what was Dutch, because that is all they know.

It was the same situation with our original 13 colonies. All they needed to build a common tradition and share common tasks was to be an independent group of the various people who were overtaxed and abused by the British. That was enough to tie them together. They recognized that one fact.

In Bali, in a mountain village which I studied in 1936 and returned to in 1957, there are people who until recent years hardly knew where the Netherlands was. But now they all talk about President Sukarno and they all know they are Indonesians. But when it comes to the question of cooperating with any given group of other Indonesians, the Balinese are likely to say: "Why should we? We don't like the Javanese. We are Hindus and they are Moslems." The only thing that holds the so diverse groups together is that they once belonged to the Dutch.

The British at present are exceedingly proud of liquidating their colonies. But the Dutch have decided that they would like to keep this bit of New Guinea; it provides a very good way of dealing with these several hundred Dutch officials who were ousted from Indonesia, and who now are working very hard in this new territory. It also gives them a place to put those Indonesians who were permitted to keep their Dutch citizenship. There is no other place where these people can go to live, short of outer space.

So that you have sets of the national cultural attitudes, in conflict with each other in this struggle to put together this fantastic country, in the attempt to create a nation in the way that other nations have been created. Most new nations today have been created out of a piece of some nation's colonial empire. That has become one of the definitions of nationhood. So it is possible for any group of people, within this definition of a right to nationhood that is permitted in the world today, to say: "We would like to be a nation instead of belonging to some other people."

So through our invention of nationality or nationhood or nation-state we are continually wrestling with these problems--with the definitions that other countries have of their culture and of their nationhood, with the definitions that the local people have of how in the world they are going to make a nation and what a nation consists of. And in the case of traditional definitions, where are we going to draw the line between what we can and what we cannot rely on in local policy? Can we take basic behavior and extrapolate it into the future and use our knowledge of how a people feel about particular situations and problems to predict how they are going to define national boundaries, or how they are going to define their enemies, how they are going to define their dependency on other people, how far they are willing to be little brothers or children in their relations to other peoples, what they use as models in their own local situation and attempt to apply to the rest of the world?

I want to sketch very briefly for just one minute what happens in this kind of picture in relation to allies. The United States' concept of children is that they are admirable and that parents are not, are in fact very likely to abuse their children. The British concept is that parents are admirable and children are little horrors until they are grown up. In the relationships that are still going on since World War II between the United States and Britain we have tended still to think of Britain as a parent, and we don't think much of parents. They think of us as children, and they don't think much of children. Examples of that sort of thing are continuously cropping up in our international discussions. We have the problem of the extending of these two attitudes in which the models of small groups are carried up to the international level in the relationship between nations.

These are examples of what we encounter in the course of comparative study of living culture at the moment. There appears to be developing in the international field a feeling that we should learn to live with each other and maybe recognize that as persons we are all members of a single group of people. But this involves a large number of rather irrational factors. Our model of dealing with the enemy, when we invite him in and let him marry the widow and bring up her children, or when we move in and marry the widow and bring up the children, produces an exceedingly ambiguous situation and one that is likely to be tremendously expensive, to the tune of many, many billions of dollars.

DR. CLEM: Dr. Mead is ready for questions.

QUESTION: Would you care to discuss the Russian behavior a little bit, and possibly the difference between the Russian Communists and the Chinese?

DR. MEAD: Well, one of the points that we have worked on in Russian behavior has been--and here I'm afraid I'm going to have to go back over something I said in the intermission because somebody brought this up, and I can't think of something different to say about the Russians, because they're just the way they are--one of the things that we have been interested in in Russian behavior is the extent to which Russian behavior tends to be what we technically call symmetrical.

The Russians recognized infancy but there was a very short period where children were really treated as children. They were treated vis-a-vis the adult. And if you go back to the Russian ballet or where they stay on the stage, the Czar was portrayed to the Czar. Or if you look at the Stalin period, you find that Stalin stood on the podium, being Stalin, and everybody walked by Stalin with a picture of Stalin on them, and Stalin made a speech and Stalin clapped after Stalin spoke.

This tremendous symmetrical identification with other people, with a tendency to treat the other person as a mirror image, is also extraordinarily important. You see this in the old Greek Orthodox handling of iconography, for instance, where in Russia the Trinity was sometimes represented as three identical young men. If you stop and think of all the representations of the Holy Trinity that you have ever seen, we very seldom attempt to represent the Trinity at all; but you can find in western churches, of course, representations of the dove, God the Father, and the Christchild. But in Russia you find it represented as three identical young men around the table, as you might see one person with two mirror images.

With this tendency toward symmetry, of course they picked us as the people whom they are going to show off to. This requires two points: One, they must surpass us in the things that we think we are good at, or that they think we are good at; and two, they must present us to themselves in their own image. Otherwise it's no fun to show off to us. This gets reasonably complicated at times.

For instance, you can read Ehrenberg's description of "Wall Street," which was published in about 1948--I should think late 1948--which is a pure description of the Kremlin. He assumed that the fact that we have

634
Democrats and Republicans over here, is our particular kind of foolish game; we have divided people up into Democrats and Republicans, but neither of them matter in the least. The only thing that matters is "Wall Street." And "Wall Street" is treated as another Kremlin, symmetrically seen. They tend to attempt to transform their image of us into something that is intelligible to them, and one of the purposes of doing this is to show off to us and show that they are better, that they can overtake and surpass us.

This, of course, has its advantages, because if we weren't here, they couldn't show off to us. And, furthermore, they can hardly tell us from themselves in many ways in this sort of situation.

It has its disadvantages, because we respond to it with such enthusiasm and do our best to imitate them. And you get in this country quite astonishing repeats and images picked up. We have been exposed to their images of us and then we have picked them up.

One of the very amusing ones is the poster against forest fires, which shows a bear, "Smokey" with the terrible burning flames behind him. Anybody who is working on Russian material and looks up suddenly and sees that bear feels very nervous. But that's not their bear. That's our bear.

We had a tremendous lot of trouble in this country a couple of years ago because we were attempting to pass a mental health bill for Alaska, which in a way in which we handled land for education in territories, was to give a million acres to support this mental hospital. And all through this country there were echoes and worryings and radio broadcasts and little broadsides saying that this was a plot to move a million Americans to Alaska; that we were building a hospital with a million beds in Alaska, to which everybody's political enemies were going to be moved. Here are Siberia and Alaska equated, you see. We've got the two bears and we've got Siberia and Alaska, and we've got concentration camps with the image that our handling of the mentally ill is equivalent to the Russian handling of subversives. And, it's sometimes hard to tell the difference, extremely hard to tell the difference, with people working to make things appear similar as hard as they do work.

So that in the kind of terms that I've been talking about here at the very end of the lecture, this tendency to identify and to copy because you can only show off to somebody just like yourself by being like them in

some way or other or making them like you, you get continued distortion in the picture.

And, we cooperate to a degree that you just wouldn't believe. One of the characteristic points in Russia, which has been going on long before communism, is what we call rituals of materialization. For instance, a United States plane might be coming down in a small town somewhere in the Soviet Union. They would put a lot of goods in the windows of the shops, and for the hours that the plane was there it looked as if everybody could go in and buy them. The minute that the plane left, they would close the shops up again and take everything away.

Now, in the time of Catherine the Great her ministries used to have a village, a model village, that they could set up wherever she went. She wanted villages improved and improved fast. So they made models which could be put up wherever she was traveling. These were called Potempkin villages. We get the same thing today when the Russians claim to have found some pieces of an airplane floating around somewhere within their territory and they say it's a piece of one of our planes. We say, with great self-righteousness, "It's not a piece of one of our planes. It was found on Tuesday and we had no plane near there on Tuesday." That lets us out completely, because we think that facts and not interpretations are important. The Russians don't care whether it was there on Tuesday, and they don't care whether it was our plane. They'd just as soon manufacture the piece of wreckage they claim to find. What they are talking about at that moment is something they think we might do, and they need a little material to illustrate.

We used to say this is what they did, not what we did. But when the United States was getting ready for the American exposition in Russia this summer, somebody thought: "Now, the Russians think that we don't have good race relations. We'll have to fix this" and they planned an integrated wedding. I don't know how many people saw this in the newspapers, but we were going to go to Russia with a fashion show in which you had the bride and groom of one race and the entire wedding party of another, which as far as I know, does not occur in the United States. And we got it all set up to send over, on the assumption that "because they believe in good race relations, we'll show them what good race relations we have." But there was still a difference between the United States and the Soviet Union, it was that the fashion designers were able to protest and it got changed; and the integration was reduced down to a few guests in the audience, which would be possible, even though it doesn't often happen.

This Russian tendency to deal continually with symmetry, and to construct others in their image, not a parent-child image of any sort, but a symmetrical relationship, is going to get them into difficulty with China in all probability, because they can only deal with China as part of themselves or as another piece that is just like them. This is their difficulty.

But the Chinese don't have this difficulty. The Chinese treat Russians as big brothers. And the Chinese know what you do with a big brother. You exploit him. The big brother in the Chinese society, the oldest brother, has all the responsibility; and the younger ones just come along and say, "This is what I need." And if you are young enough you can need a great many things.

So that the Chinese in the handling of their kinship role have simply put Russia in their ideological Chinese, one might say, as ideological Mongolians. They don't treat them as Europeans. They don't treat them as white yet. But they treat them as Asians who are their big brothers and from whom they can ask anything and expect to get it.

Now, it will be on this sort of level that I would try to apply this kind of analysis. We did this with China. We worked out fairly carefully what the images that the Chinese Communists were using about the Soviet Union were.

QUESTION: Some people from the Nationalist Chinese Embassy have been going around Washington saying that the communes are not here to stay, that the Chinese family role is going to compel them to be dissolved. What's your opinion on that?

DR. MEAD: Oh, I'm sure they're not here to stay. To begin with, they may have had something like them 3,000 years ago. They have them from time to time.

Furthermore, this is an extreme form of behavior that characterizes a regime that is attempting to make a very rapid change. The Soviets did almost the same kinds of things, although they were a little bit different, and it's fascinating to see how shocked they are today. They eliminated the importance of the marriage tie. They attempted to eliminate the family. They set up their collective farms in a way that the mother worked and the children were taken care of in a residential

nursery. They did all of these things at a period when they were attempting to destroy the older existing situation.

Now, the Chinese are faced with a situation that is hard to judge, but which is many times as difficult as the Russian, in terms of food and in terms of the kind of population they have to deal with. They are aiming at something very simple--one suit of clothes and one square meal a day. That's all. That doesn't sound like much. And these communes are a temporary way of dealing with their problems. And the Chinese have always preferred to live in a big family, where many other people share the responsibility for cooking and child care. We had comparable governmental interference in family life in ancient Peru, long before the time of Columbus. Periodically you will get a government that wants to transform a people very rapidly and break the old ties.

What's happening in the Soviet Union today is, of course, that they are one of the most familistic countries in the world. Divorce is more frowned on in the Soviet Union for those individuals who really want success than it is in this country. Thirty years ago the way you got up the ladder was to marry the divorced wife of a Communist leader who was a little higher up on the ladder than you were. That was a then-recognized form of political-social climbing.

But today the most rigorous family life is demanded. The family is made responsible for everything that goes wrong with the children. The state takes credit for everything that goes right. And the return to individual family responsibility is extreme, and was made, as nearly as we can tell, primarily because they found they couldn't train a responsible citizens, with any degree of initiative and spontaneity--and the Russians want both today, within certain kinds of limits--in their kind of communal system. A first generation communal system produces people who will work hard at the beginning of a struggle--and we have had experiments with this with the Kibbutz in Israel. The Kibbutz, or collective-settlement, has been a wonderful way of dealing with a desert country under military conditions; but the only thing that is produced in the next generation is Kibbutznikim, who don't want to go anywhere, who simply want to stay in the Kibbutz. So the system is gradually losing its power in Israel.

I don't think there's the slightest doubt that this Chinese commune system will be modified in probably several different directions before it disappears.

QUESTION: It seems to me that the old white man's burden is fast becoming the white man's problem today. Would you comment on the effect that the rise of this tremendous nationalism in the world may have on our position in the world in the future?

DR. MEAD: Well, if we could sympathize with it, you see, if we could develop a more self-conscious definition of a nation, as a group of people who take total responsibility within certain limits for all their own citizens and have a responsible relation to other nations, then we wouldn't be so terrified when other people want to be nations too. But we at present are having a great deal of difficulty in sympathizing with the national aspirations of other people, although we ought to be able to identify with them quite well, especially since so many of them originated in anticolonialism as did the United States.

This isn't made any simpler for us by the fact that most of the new nations belong to other races, and that we are now getting back from other races what we gave, when we had 200 or 300 years of thinking that a "white" skin was better than any other color. We have now a history of arrogant racism all around the world. It is coming home to roost. And, of course, the people who are really dangerously convinced that skin color is important don't live anywhere in a white country today. They live in Africa and they live in Asia. They are exploiting their old wounds and their old insults as a way of building up their sense of nationhood.

If we don't genuinely sympathize with anything they do, if we aren't able to speak directly to their aspirations, then this aggravates the situation, especially since the Soviet Union is just delighted with other people's nationhood and goes around very often supporting it so heavily, supporting the thing that matters to these people most.

What matters to these people at the moment is dignity, moving from being members of a dependent group controlled by somebody else, gatherers of raw materials, looked down on because of their skin color, their education, their clothes, and suddenly to be able to say, "I am something. I am an Indonesian and there are 80 million others of us." And Sukarno says that soon there will be 100 million. This gives a kind of

dignity that people need very badly. And we don't recognize it. We have not begun to give recognition to national aspirations as a way of making friends and cementing federations of people, none of whom want to make war.

QUESTION: This week the declarations of shock at the Van Doren compromise seem to have taken the place of declarations for or against sin. Would you care to evaluate the degree to which this shock is genuine?

DR. MEAD: Well, you remember, Mr. Van Doren was very shocked himself last year. He said it shocked him to the core that anybody should ever suggest anything like that.

Corruption, in the gentler sense of the word--for example, graft over building construction in municipal governments--is on the whole, as nearly as we can tell at present, a necessary concomitant of peace. Whether it would be a necessary concomitant of a world that was organized without a threat of war we don't know. But there is a tendency in between wars for people to relax the morality that was often very overstrained during the war in the sense that people had to make sacrifices they normally wouldn't make. They had to live at a level of nobility of which they ordinarily wouldn't live. And they just waited around saying: "Wait till the war is over and I'm going to get mine."

So that this Van Doren episode is only a part of the general involvement of most Americans today in continuous illegality. This is partly due to the fact that we have too many laws, so that nobody could possibly keep them, and the laws don't catch up with the changing times. It's partly due to our attitude toward the income tax, for instance--that the income tax was passed in a period when Roosevelt thought it was necessary to pacify Huey Long. And it upsets a great many Americans that the more you make, the less you get. This is not an American ethic. So that they take it out by spending their time figuring out ways so that nobody will get it.

In England one is finding very much the same sort of thing. It grew up after the war, when rationing was continued long beyond the point when people believed it was really necessary. And the minute it was continued beyond where they thought it was necessary, they began doing what they call "fiddling." The standard of ordinary everyday honesty has gone way down in England too.

And it's also a sample, I think, of some of our low-level imitation of the Soviet Union. I mean, you just look at the words that were used in the Van Doren case. We have a public trial, with a public confession. Under the Russian system a man who sinned and confessed was better than a man who hadn't. And a lot of people are now treating Mr. Van Doren that way. He's now the prodigal son. They can go back to Scripture and rejoice for the one that has been saved, far above the 99 that never did anything wrong. And then he is purged. He purged his soul. We have made a public spectacle of this. Students of the Soviet Union have called these rituals.^{1/}

When the Soviets are having a trial, they are having it about the man who betrayed Bulgaria or something large-scale, or tried to turn the Russians over to the Japanese. They don't care what it's about particularly, but the topics they pick are large scale. What do we pick? Somebody the eggheads have been boasting about that could answer some questions on television.

This is, I think, one of the very serious things we have to watch in this country--that we are giving a rather low-level imitation of a great many things that are happening in the rest of the world. And this was really a very low level.

It may, of course, take another turn. We may suggest that the President of the United States should write his own speeches. Now, if that should ever happen--and it's on this edge that we're worried. People are worried about MacMillan's victory in England, which is regarded as a television victory even by many conservatives. This is not a Labor view; this is a conservative view. MacMillan was a very aloof, reserved person, people say. He was taught, they say, how to smile on television. There were, of course, a great many people in this country who were very much upset at the first famous broadcast, that had a dog in it, in which there was a suggestion that there had been a little coaching done by one of our larger public relations firms. But there are a great many people who feel that this victory in England was just a personal charm victory on television.

This is worrying people. We are moving into a new kind of political system. There are people who worried that Mr. K was going to take the entire American public by storm, because he got on television.

^{1/} Leites, N. and Bernaut, E., Ritual of Liquidation. Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1954.

So that I think we're talking about two things at once. I mean, the corruption, if you want to call it that, is just a very degenerated set of general values, filled with vicuna coats and mink coats and phony contracts and people fixing parking tickets after parking where they're not allowed to park. This is just a bit of it. But I think it has this deeper implication that we are on the edge of trying to learn how to use a new instrument politically.

You know, there are people in these big public relations firms in New York whom the Democrats hire--the firm itself will be Republican, and the account manager a Republican and he takes the contract to work for a Democrat. Then, where are we? You see, we're not quite sure.

QUESTION: Dr. Mead, would you care to comment upon the violent outbursts of anti-Americanism that recently appeared in our Latin American neighbors, particularly Cuba and Panama?

DR. MEAD: I don't know a great deal about Cuba. I haven't been there. I have read about it but not very extensively.

I think that one of the difficulties has been that for a very long time we ignored those parts of the population that wanted reform, which is the position which we are in everywhere, because anybody who wants anything that isn't popular that week in any country in the free world now is regarded as a Communist. And we shift sides so rapidly in what we believe in that it would be very difficult for any reformers to carry their aim through. This is one problem.

And I think we were, as nearly as I can tell--but, as I say, I haven't done a detailed study of this--we were pretty uninformed in many ways about what was happening in Cuba and what position we should take, which means that the reformist groups, if the other side wins in any one of these situations, are not particularly fond of us afterward.

The second point is, of course, that Latin American countries have always solved their problems this way through most of the time they have existed, and it didn't matter. We didn't care who shot whom or who went over the border. We wanted our sugar contracts or our oil contracts or something to go through, and it was very awkward if they interfered with it. We used to send archeologists to South America to do archeology, and they spend 50 percent of their time doing archeology and the rest of the time bribing the current government, and they were very unlucky if the government changed in the middle of the dig.

We didn't expect much of Latin America, and we didn't give them much help. We regarded their governments as low-level comic outfits that we didn't have to be worried about. Now, suddenly, as the world gets knit so closely together, this becomes important. Of course, it was somewhat important with German penetration in South America both in World War I and World War II, but not terribly. But now every tiny spark in Cuba may ignite a continent, or the world. Every single little community that thinks of itself as a nation has the potential power to disturb the whole peace of the world. These violent measures we thought of as characteristic of Latin Americans--not doing much to stop them (our good neighbor policy wasn't very extensive)--have now suddenly become serious in a way that they never were before.

A third thing, I think, is these three-men-in-a-boat wars that got invented lately in the Caribbean. In a sense they are a new invention, under the shadow of atomic war. You see, we've got the idea now that a little war doesn't matter if you can only keep it little. And these are the littlest wars, the littlest invading parties, that we've had since Andaman pygmies went to war. They're somehow symbolically rewarding. Everybody heaves a sigh of relief, because there are only 20 people in the army. And this is a third factor that complicates things. We haven't had quite this sort of people going back and forth in boats from one spot to another for a very long time.

QUESTION: Dr. Mead, you spoke of the American Indian. I have worked with the southwest American Indians. These were reservation Indians. One of the things that we were supposed to do was to teach the Indians the advantages of the cultural ways of American life. We were supposed to instill into them how much better off they would be if they left the reservation and assumed their position along with the other white citizens. After a little while we began to look a little askance at this thing too, because we could see we weren't being very successful. Many of them preferred their own culture, or what was left of their own culture, to ours. And many of those who left the reservation, even going so far as to go and get a college education, returned to the reservation after it was over with. And sometimes we thought that our United States cultural civilization didn't have much to offer to their ideas. Now, what I am getting at is, How does the United States culture attract other semiprimitive countries?

DR. MEAD: If the United States culture is presented to them whole, so that they see all of it, have a general idea of men and women and children and rich and poor and people in and out of uniform and the rest of it, it's extremely attractive, provided we treat them as full equals.

Would you want to be an Indian in an American city trying to get a job? No. It isn't the attraction of their culture but the rejection they experience in our society that pulls them back. It's the isolation of individuals who are still stigmatized as belonging to another group.

We have a great many examples of a primitive people meeting Europeans or our own American people. Americans are particularly attractive to them, because we've got so many wonderful gadgets. Also because, for instance, the New Guinea people enormously like the way one American treats another. They consider that we are a model of friendliness of a sort that they want, and of getting rid of anger, which is one of the things that frightens them. They are very anxious to get rid of anger and they think we're wonderful.

I have one instance that I have studied in great detail,^{2/} of the Manus people of the Admiralties, who in 1928 were savages, with no writing, hardly any political organization, a religion that consisted of ghosts in their house rafters. This was a little group of 2,200 people, who had a chance during the war, had "box seats," to look at American culture. (You know, we even had a Coca Cola bottling factory in Manus.) They saw over a million Americans. They hung from the rafters during operations. They were up on the bridge and they were down in the engine room. There weren't too many of them. They were a lively, curious people. It irritated the Australians that we treated them like people. This was one of our local sports at the moment and it was bound to irritate the Australians. We were very nice to them. Americans are pretty nice to other people's natives anyway. And the Manus were intelligent, lively people.

Under these conditions the Manus got the idea that they were full human beings; that they could do what Americans could do, as far as their intelligence was concerned, but they had to work at it. They not only got this idea very clearly, but they also worked out the specifications. They said: "America's technology is due"--and they can handle ideas like technology; I mean, that isn't the word they use for it, but they understand it--"America's technology is due to a social, ethical system of human relations. We have therefore to have the type of social, ethical, political system first if we want to have a technology like the Americans."

^{2/} Mead, Margaret, *New Lives for Old; Cultural Transformation--Manus, 1928-1953*. N. Y., William Morrow, 1956.

They set to work and they revised their own culture. They got rid of taking a brother's side every time anybody was rude to him and having a brawl. They emancipated women; gave them the right to consent to their own ruin. They set up a town meeting in which men and women both voted. They set up a majority-minority government. When people got quarrelsome, they recited little pieces of Roberts "Rules of Order." They set up courts, and all sorts of things--passports, customs--a complete small-sized paradigm of the modern world as they saw it.

But this was the result of having a whole pattern, not one missionary and one government doctor who comes once a year and one government officer who collects taxes; but actually seeing what our life was like. We cannot, of course, move a million Americans around from island to island giving the natives box seats. But we can, I think, draw some conclusions from this.

If it were more possible for the people whom we are working among and trying to make friends with and to cooperate with, to see our whole life, and see it as people whom we treat with dignity, as capable of achieving it themselves, it would be much easier for them to use American culture as a model.

You all know our armed services and you know that, of course, they are a fine body of men, but they do contain all kinds of people, not illiterate and not physically weak, but otherwise there's a pretty wide range in any million of them. But what the Manus got out of the everyday behavior of our American mixed troops--you know, there was practically every kind of person on Manus at some point or another--were our ideals not our actual behavior. This I think is one of the rather astonishing things. They said: "We learn from Americans that nothing is as important as an individual human life. We learn from Americans that material things don't matter." And they added, "The reason they don't matter to you is because you've got so many of them. You have learned how to make the world straight, and we want to learn how to do it too." And I pointed out that we hadn't exactly learned how not to have major wars yet. They said: "Oh, we know that. But that's in the future. We want to get things organized so that our local life makes some kind of sense."

But we have never given the American Indian any chance at this kind of model. We put them off on reservations. We stopped their desires to learn from us. And then they do go back--and this is happening all over the world, where you get a kind of retrogressive nationalism,

which gets mixed up with bits of old religion and bits of old ritual and "Hate the Americans" or "Hate the white man" and "Let's have a little ancestor worship for dinner," which is a response to the fact that we don't give them a full image and we don't treat them as if they were human beings.

DR. CLEM: Dr. Mead, it's evident that this has been a real treat for us this morning. You have already made our resources course live for us. It's been good of you to come down and talk to us.

(15 June 1960--4,600)B/de:pc