

## ● Adventures in Science

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the individual is humiliated, shamed, and rejected, Dr. Ruth Benedict, associate professor of anthropology at Columbia University told the symposium.

In attempting to find out what social conditions detract from mental health, the student of human psychology cannot do as the great physiologist Pavlov did with his dogs. Humans cannot be experimentally confronted with conditions that may cause mental breakdown.

The anthropologist can discover the information, however, by studying a variety of cultures to discover which customs and institutions are associated with a healthy people and which are accompanied by mental ill-health.

Cultural institutions have everything to do with whether an individual experiences a long series of humiliations even though he lives up to the demands of the mores, or whether he experiences humiliations only if he becomes a moral reprobate, Dr. Benedict said.

"In our own culture in certain cases and on certain income levels, as also in some primitive societies, an adolescent's economic dependence upon his parents is humiliating, while on the contrary in numberless cultures the child figures as the hope and future of the family and humiliation on this score is unthinkable."

When individuals are unnecessarily humiliated and for circumstances beyond their control, such as birth or poverty, they develop feelings of inadequacy that lead to mental breakdown.

*Science News Letter, January 7, 1939*

### ANTHROPOLOGY

## Patterns

● "The ancestry of Navajo silver ornament forms had its root in the silver trade jewelry distributed to the tribes east of the Mississippi River after 1750, and in the Mexican-Spanish costume ornaments and bridle trappings of the late 18th and early 19th centuries . . . Silver working by the Navajo themselves was learned from Mexican silversmiths, the first dated reference of such a smith in the Navajo country being November, 1853."—Arthur Woodward, in *NAVAJO SILVER* (*Northern Ariz. Soc. of Science and Art*).

*Science News Letter, January 7, 1939*

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