to convert themselves voluntarily on their own initiative. Americanization does take place, as it always has, through the process of undergoing a series of common experiences, whose end result is the development of personalities which, even in the land of their origin, would never be mistaken for anything but American. The recent discussion of cultural pluralism has served the very useful purpose of increasing American tolerance for, or better, appreciation of differences. But its advocates sometimes ignore the fact that a society must rely for its security upon a foundation of common understandings.

One of the basic problems of a world at peace is the transformation of European and Asiatic peasants and members of simple societies in Africa and the Pacific into world citizens. Russia has a pattern for such transformation to suit her own interests. She has applied it on a national scale, and is hard at work making peoples of other nations adjust to it. To American observers it seems excessively costly in human lives and in human capacities. It has, however, proved to be extremely effective, especially when it is applied with ruthless determination by a police state. The United States has developed techniques for personality modification which have worked with reasonable satisfaction on our own soil. It might be well to re-examine our historical experience in the light of our position of dominance in world affairs.

HERO WORSHIP IN AMERICA*

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In America the "great man" appears frequently to be an athlete, an entertainer, or a person of relatively trivial accomplishment, whose pre-eminence in our scale of values causes unfavorable comment concerning the "materialism" or "vulgarity" of the American style of life. We have had in past years a number of such popular heroes, contrasting with the stainless integrity of our official national heroes and martyrs. In addition to this problem of values, the emergence of popular heroes has frequently constituted a disturbing political and social force. Mass hero worship leads naturally to excesses, to blind devotion to leaders. When it does not have these consequences, it leads often to the irrationality and triviality of fads and cults. In any case, a social force is loosed which acts in a disturbing way upon the status quo. The unpredictability of popular heroes and the apparent mystery of what makes them lead us to attempt to formulate some of the general characteristics of hero worship as a social process in America.

While hero worship in America ranges from the adulation of entertainers and other celebrities to such diverse things as the celebration of legendary heroes, the decoration of military heroes, and the cult of saints, we believe that it represents a generic process which expresses itself in many aspects of life as the tendency to select certain individuals as collective ideals, to accord them special status, and to surround them with behavior characterized as "hero worship." The hero worshipper in America has become characterized as the "fan." Yet there is no reason to believe that similar behavior is not to be found in all societies.2

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1 This mystery has been stated by Gerald Johnson in American Heroes and Hero Worship (New York, Harper & Bros., 1943).

2 It has been suggested that the Germans are pre-eminently a race of hero-worshippers and that this serves to explain the excesses associated with Hitler. See H. J. C. Grierson, Carlyle and Hitler (Cambridge, At the Univ. Press, 1933). The best survey of American hero worship is provided by Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America (New York, Chas. Scribner’s Sons, 1941). See the following
It is the description of hero worship with which the present paper is concerned, based largely upon data derived from a study of American hero worship. Our problem is twofold: to describe hero worship as it occurs in America and secondly to attempt to visualize the generic character of hero worship as a social process.

At the point of origin of hero worship, the emergence of a hero may be noted by certain signs. One of these is sudden or unusual fame. Another is a marked shift in status. A third is the beginning of behavior characteristic of hero worship. In the 


We have used the following criteria to define a popular hero: (1) a person of fame, as indicated by news-space devoted to him, rumor and legend concerning him, or the fact that everybody knows him; (2) a person who is commonly called a hero (or some equivalent or marginal term such as idol, champion, favorite son, patron saint, martyr); and (3) a person who is the object of hero worship. The criteria for hero worship are as follows: (a) the hero is admired, eulogized, acclaimed, or otherwise honored by his society; (b) he is formally recognized or canonized; (c) he is commemorated; or (d) he has a following of devotees, "fans," or hero-worshippers. "Fans" are distinguished from the general public by the intensity and self-consciousness of their enthusiasm, emulation, and devotion. Persons especially devoted to a hero frequently constitute a club or "cult" in his name, honoring or emulating him in various ways. According to these criteria, Charles Lindbergh, Babe Ruth, and Jack Dempsey would be outstanding among persons who became popular heroes in America during the nineteen-twenties. Other persons of this period having characteristics of popular heroes include: General J. J. Pershing, Sergeant York, Will Rogers, Rudolph Valentino, Sacco and Vanzetti, Huey Long, and Al Capone.

The career of a public figure, for instance, a point may be reached at which the public acquires a special sentimentality toward him. It may be noted that he has gained in "stature," that he has become apotheosized. The special sentimentality of the public toward a popular hero includes a certain endearment, a tremendous loyalty, a reluctance to admit critical reflection, and a faith and veneration which verge upon superstition. Once a public figure acquires the status of a popular hero, he is to be specially reckoned with as a social force. If an entertainer, he becomes "box office." If a political leader, he acquires generic appeal: he draws crowds, fills stadiums, makes money, gets votes, and gathers his following from all walks of life. His name and image act as an inspiration to organize large masses of people. Later in his career, particularly after death, he may be commemorated or canonised, his tomb becomes a place of pilgrimage, his fame becomes legendary, and a full-fledged hero cult may grow up as an institution.

We find hero worship to have a genetic sequence, going through a sort of cycle beginning with the emergence of a popular hero. The main phases of this process we shall designate as follows: (1) spontaneous or unorganized popular homage, (2) formal recognition and honor, (3) the building up of an idealized image or legend of the hero, (4) commemoration of the hero, and (5) established cult. While all heroes do not complete this cycle, there is a tendency for them to become legendary and to pass into the tradition of the group as cult symbols.

We shall consider in following sections the emergence of a typical popular hero, the
social behavior of hero worship, the idealized image of the hero, and the status of the hero.

EMERGENCE OF A TYPICAL POPULAR HERO

The emergence of Lindbergh during the nineteen-twenties provides one of the most complete case studies of a popular hero available. This case has a number of features which our study has shown to be typical of many popular heroes. First, the hero is often a person of relatively obscure social status prior to his elevation to the rank of a hero. Second, his fame was achieved by a spectacular demonstration which impressed the public and caused him to be recognized as a hero. Third, a spontaneous popular response of hero worship occurred before official recognition of his achievement, revealing many of the mechanisms of hero worship. Fourth, almost immediately a mythical interpretation began to grow up, in which various features were attributed to him in popular imagination through eulogy, art, story, song, and verse.

The case of Lindbergh illustrates what might be found to be true of many popular heroes, such as Jack Dempsey or Babe Ruth: how they are selected by colorful feats which draw attention to them and excite admiration, how hero worship elevates them in status, and how they are subject to a popular interpretation which constitutes the forming legend of the hero. We wish now to consider the nature of the popular reaction which defines the hero.

At the time of his flight in 1927, Lindbergh was an "unknown." On the day prior to his flight, he ate unrecognized in a restaurant. Almost overnight, by his exploit of flying the ocean alone in a small plane, he became the most eulogized hero in America, outranking in importance by far all other persons. This feat so struck the popular imagination that it provoked a flood of hysterical eulogy and mass adulation which lasted for several years. Lindbergh was literally jerked upward in status and in his vertical ascent became almost a demigod. From the moment of his landing in France a popular reaction began to grow which reached its height before, and must be considered apart from, his formal recognition as a national hero by Congress. Ten million medals were struck and a postage stamp was issued in his honor.

SOCIAl BEHAVIOR OF HERO WORSHIP

Contemporary America provides us with a multitude of examples of hero worship behavior, ranging from spontaneous popular homage to formal honor, commemoration, and cult. Much hero worship behavior is unorganized, naive, and spontaneous. It is extremely curious. The people themselves do not know why they do it. The unorganized behavior of hero worship includes certain distinctive forms which we shall here describe: popular homage, familiarity, possessiveness, curiosity, identification, and imitation.

Perhaps the most understandable form is the popular homage which greets heroes. Spontaneous acts, such as applause, cheers, raising upon shoulders, throwing of kisses, and the like, express the intense admiration of the people. The following example of the homage which greeted Lindbergh at his landing is a good one:9

The entire field. . . was covered with thousands of people all running towards my ship. . . . I started to climb out of the cockpit, but as soon as one foot appeared was dragged the rest of the way without assistance on my part. For nearly half an hour I was unable to touch the ground, during which time I was ardently carried around in what seemed to be a very small area and in every position it is possible to be in. Everyone had the best of intentions but no one seemed to know just what they were.

Along with physical gestures of homage goes spontaneous eulogy through songs, poems, anecdotes, popular drama, and other works of art.10 Mass homage also includes fan mail containing expressions of admira-

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9 Charles Lindbergh, We (New York, Grosset & Dunlap, 1927), pp. 224-7. Note also the homage which greeted Al Capone: "The curious fact about Scarface Al is that Americans. . . used to go out of their way to shake hands with him, and when he and his eighteen bodyguards appeared in public at the races or a football game, there was not only a thrilled murmur in the stands, there were sometimes cheers. What were they cheering about?" "Capone Era," Life, February 10, 1947, p. 22, p. 24.

10 Several thousand poems were dedicated to Lindbergh; also dances, sculpture, paintings, cantatas, and popular songs. A heroic size statue of Babe Ruth swatting a ball was exhibited at Rockefeller Center.
tion and appreciation. Numerous gifts and tributes are spontaneously given to the hero.\textsuperscript{11}

Somewhat embarrassing to many heroes is the familiarity and possessiveness which the public displays toward them. It feels it "owns" the hero and endeavors to appropriate the hero in every type of relationship. We shall enumerate some of the ways in which the public invades the hero's privacy. Persons tried to reach Valentiino's dressing room by every possible ruse. The hero is always being manhandled, pawed, and caressed, evidencing a desire to touch the hero and otherwise to become familiar with him.\textsuperscript{13} People boasted of having gotten "that close" to Lindbergh. A man offered one thousand dollars simply for the chance to shake his hand. People try to crowd into photographs with the hero. Attempts at close relationship also include offers of marriage, business proposals, and claims of kinship. So many strangers claimed relationship with Jack Dempsey that he was called the "cousin of all the Dempseys." Not the least of the public possessiveness is its sense of appropriation in souvenir-hunting.\textsuperscript{15} The sense of familiarity with the hero is expressed in popular affection: the public refers to him by nick-names and other terms of endearment.\textsuperscript{14} Men shake his hand; women embrace him;\textsuperscript{16}

When he (Lindbergh) entered the Times Building one girl was quite unable to restrain herself. She leaped from the stairway leading to the second floor and flung her arms around the flier's neck. The police dislodged her. Colonel Lindbergh blushed and shook his head as if to say, "No, no; you mustn't do that."

\textsuperscript{11} A museum in St. Louis contains the thousands of gifts and trophies given to Lindbergh.

\textsuperscript{12} Note the well-known joke about small boys who boast: "Shake the hand that shook the hand of Babe Ruth."

\textsuperscript{13} Lindbergh's plane was almost destroyed by souvenir-hunters. He rarely got a shirt back from the laundry; and dared not lay down a hat, coat, or even a piece of paper. For some reason this is considered as a right of hero-worshippers rather than as theft.

\textsuperscript{14} It calls him "our boy," "favorite son," and so forth.

\textsuperscript{15} New York Times, June 16, 1927.

The public is, moreover, extremely proud and loyal with regard to its heroes, rallying to their defense when criticized or attacked. Finally, unusual demands are made on the hero by persons having no relationship to him.\textsuperscript{16}

How are we to interpret this behavior? While homage represents the effort to raise the hero in status by honoring him, familiarity and possessiveness indicate a sense of identification with the hero, a collective effort to come into as close a relationship as possible with him, to apprehend him into a familiar category. This combination of distance with closeness represents a paradoxical element in hero worship: vertical distance is maintained through homage and admiration, and at the same time social closeness is expressed through familiarity and possessiveness. There is an effort to become familiar with the hero and at the same time to put him upon a pedestal.\textsuperscript{17}

The distance in hero worship is further seen in the curiosity with which the public regards its heroes. Despite its personal interest in the hero, it knows little of him. The public seems hungry for information concerning the life of the hero; his career is followed intently in news, magazines, and biography; crowds follow him wherever he goes.\textsuperscript{18} Jack Dempsey expresses his attitude toward fans who forced their way into his dressing room as follows:\textsuperscript{19}

They want to look at your eyes and your ears to see how badly you may have been injured. They want to pick up a word here or a gesture there which, later on, they can relay, magnified, to their own little public. I have always regarded these curious fans in a tolerant, even friendly way.

\textsuperscript{16} "My public" is no joke to a popular hero. Dempsey and Babe Ruth were constantly making donations to strangers.

\textsuperscript{17} The distance in hero worship is also expressed in the common phrases, "distance builds the great man," and "no man is a hero to his valet."

\textsuperscript{18} A respectable-looking woman of middle age came up to Lindbergh, at dinner in a New York hotel, and tried to look into his mouth to see whether he was eating "green beans or green peas."

\textsuperscript{19} C. F. Coe, "In This Corner," Saturday Evening Post, August 8, 1931, v. 204, p. 38.
Since curiosity is premised upon lack of information, we may say that the distance with which the public is separated from its hero and its general ignorance of him contribute to the character of hero worship as a relationship. The hero is subject to constant talk and gossip as the public tries to interpret him. This leads to the formation of legends. A further inference from the curiosity toward heroes is that the intensity of the interest attests to the psychological importance of the hero as a symbol in the personalities of hero-worshippers.

Two more aspects of mass behavior distinctive of hero worship will be mentioned. These are identification and imitation. The behavior previously discussed under familiarity and possessiveness indicates a popular sense of identification with heroes. Imitation is also expressive of this identification. Imitation of heroes is seen in two particular forms: fads and the behavior of fans. Valentino, for instance, was responsible for a fad of side-burns and vaselined hair. His love-making technique was copied. A similar observation might be made with regard to Sinatra bow-ties and vocal mannerisms. Boys emulate Jack Dempsey and Babe Ruth. This may amount to literal impersonation, as in the case of hero-worshippers who even take the name and character of their heroes. It is often possible to recognize a fan by his resemblance to some popular hero. Whether in the general diffusion of fashions or in the intense emulation of fans, we find imitation to be one of the characteristic types of behavior of hero worship. Identification with heroes helps to explain their extraordinary effectiveness in two fields: education and leadership. In the latter case, because of the admiration of heroes and the strong sense of identification with them, heroes have a tendency to become powerful leaders. It is impossible, for instance, to explain the success of a leader such as Huey Long entirely by his leadership talents and techniques, without recourse to the fact that he was symbolically a hero to his followers.

The more organized forms of hero worship in America include formal honor, commemoration, and cult. We see formal honor of heroes in the following familiar processes: ceremonies of recognition, special distinctions and privileges accorded to heroes, formal tributes and celebrations, and honorary adoption. All of these are methods of according status to heroes. Recognition of heroes in America is seen in the decoration of military heroes, the selection of athletic champions, and the canonization of saints. Special distinctions and privileges confer on the hero a unique status. The traffic rules of New York were reversed for Lindbergh's car. He was honored by innumerable formal tributes and celebr...
tions. Another type of formal honor extended to heroes is seen in honorary adoption. Funerals are a particular occasion for tributes and panegyrics to heroes. The magnitude of funeral honors reflects the hero's social value and status.

Commemoration includes, beyond honor of heroes, the effort to perpetuate the memory of heroes in tradition. While honor creates status, commemoration expresses the peculiar value of the hero as a symbol. Monuments, likenesses, relics, legends, and periodic celebrations may be taken as mnemonic devices to preserve the collective image of a hero. The spontaneous representation of heroes in art attests to an unconscious effort to preserve them in memory.

any man. Before this occasion, not even a Frenchman was permitted to hold the historic relics in his hands. Kings and Princes have been to the crypt . . . but they only viewed the sword and cross through the plate glass of the case in which they rest. The relics had not been touched since the time of Louis Philippe.” “General Pershing in France,” Current History, July 1917, v. 6, p. 8.

“The receptions . . . long ago have begun to be meaningless alike. First, the rush of people over the field . . . then the stepping out and shaking of hands, followed by the . . . flight to safety on the folded top of an official automobile; and at last the dinner where all the talk is of the air he has just come roaring through, and of the further air he will go roaring through.” “Loneliest Man,” Nation, February 29, 1928, v. 126, p. 230.

It is common for groups to claim heroes as members or patrons. After Lindbergh’s flight, various groups began to claim him. His “Irish” and “Norse” ancestry were discovered. His home town, Little Falls, Minnesota, proposed renaming itself after him. He was made an Honorary Boy Scout. Similarly, Babe Ruth while on a tour of the West was initiated into an Indian tribe and christened “Chief Big Bat.” The adoption of saints as patrons by local groups is a familiar form of this tendency. The honorary adoption of heroes may be considered as a transmission of honor both ways, since the group acquires prestige through its relation to the hero just as it feels that it is honoring him by membership.

The size of gangsters’ funerals in America during the nineteen-twenties has been noted. See John Landesco, Organized Crime in Chicago, Part III, Ill. Crime Survey (Chicago, Illinois, Assn. for Criminal Justice, 1926).

The essence of commemoration is expressed in the phrase, “Lest we forget.”

The monuments and memorials to a hero are usually larger and more magnificent than those to ordinary persons. Large edifices, funds, or institutions may be dedicated to a hero. A plaque was unveiled at the Gare Maritime commemorating the spot where Lindbergh first flew over France on his way to Le Bourget field. The relics and historic sites connected with the hero’s career become centers for legend. The legend may be said to be perhaps the most durable and important part of the fame of a hero. Finally, namesakes help to preserve the memory of the hero.

Hero cult grows out of these activities of hero worship. There is no definite line which demarcates the mass behavior of hero worship from cult, except in so far as it becomes periodic or regular. Hero cult may be said to exist when there is regular devotion to or celebration of a hero by a group. Hero worship behavior tends to become regularized as an institution usually on some anniversary of the hero. The death of the hero is often taken as the occasion to

Excepting, of course, the self-monuments of philanthropists and the pyramids.

A memorial fund, hotel, museum, library, and statute in the Capitol were dedicated to Will Rogers at his death. Note the Ruth Foundation. The Valentino Roof Garden of the Italian Hospital in London was contributed in memory of Rudolph Valentino.

As, for instance, the chairs in which George Washington sat or the bats used by Babe Ruth in his historic swats. Any part of his body, his clothes, or object which has been associated with the hero will serve to recall episodes connected with his career. The places he has lived become shrines. One gets a vivid sense of the reality of the hero by thus coming into contact with his relics. Note the preservation of the blood-stained clothes of Gandhi.

As, for instance, the christening of babies after saints. Scores of babies were christened after Lindbergh, as well as a St. Louis building, a Pullman car, a flying field, a street in Quimperle, Brittany, a dance, a sandwich, and a cocktail.

Thus, one of the criteria for the cult of saints has been popular devotion or pilgrimages at his tomb for some years. Canonization officially confirms regular cult by placing the saint upon the calendar of periodic celebrations.
institute a cult in his memory. For a hero cult to exist the fame of the hero must be a sufficient reality to the people to inspire continuous activity over a period of time. 47

Thus we come to a difficulty in the study of American popular heroes. Many of them are not of sufficient antiquity to determine fully the outlines of their potential cult. "Babe Ruth Day," for instance, was celebrated in baseball parks all over America even before his death. 48 Other popular heroes in America have shrines to which pilgrimages are made, including Will Rogers, Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill Hickock, and Jesse James. An interesting example of hero cult is provided by the late Rudolph Valentino. Valentino Clubs sprang up all over the world, composed largely of women. Periodic observances of these groups included memorial services, dedication of monuments, plays, poems, songs, and revivals of Valentino films. Pilgrimages to his tomb were made by men as well as women. Shrines were maintained containing his relics and images. 39 The martyrs Sacco and Vanzetti were the objects of a nascent hero cult following their deaths. Heroic funeral honors were accorded them, their ashes and death masks were preserved, and the anniversary of their death was celebrated by groups in various parts of the world for at least ten years. Periodic celebrations are also dedicated in America to entirely legendary heroes. 40

We distinguish two main forms of hero cult in America: (1) a general activity in honor of a hero participated in by the entire community or society; 41 and (2) a special group devoted to the hero, such as a fan club, honorary fraternity, or the like. 42

If we might describe the principal features of a fully developed hero cult, these would include the following: (1) an institution or group exists for the purpose of honoring and commemorating a hero; (2) the image, relics, and monuments of the hero are preserved as cult objects; (3) the tomb or shrines of the hero constitute centers for pilgrimages and honorific or commemorative observances; (4) the observances include recounting or re-enactment of the career of the hero through story, drama, impersonation, pageant, dance, panegyric, ritual, or other symbolic medium, the purpose of these being to make the hero "live again" in the memory of the group; and (5) there are devotion to and emulation of the hero by members of the group.

THE IDEALIZED IMAGE OF THE HERO

From the excessive adulation and eulogy characteristic of hero worship, it seems inevitable that an exaggerated popular conception of the hero should grow up. This has been designated by various students of

red-checkered shirts, and impersonate the hero in parades, carrying huge saws, axes, playing cards, and jugs of whiskey. There is, of course, also a commercial element in this. Compare the annual re-enactment of the death of Wild Bill at Deadwood, South Dakota, and "Jesse James Day" at Northfield, Minnesota.

Regular holidays, feasts, games, memorial services, pageants, dramas, rituals, and the like, on some anniversary of the hero, as in the case of our national heroes Washington and Lincoln.

The sodalities of saints are a good example. Also the boys' clubs devoted to Babe Ruth. An example of the fan club is provided by the Segovia Society of Washington, D.C. This group is composed of musical enthusiasts devoted to the renowned guitarist, Andres Segovia. Admirers of the virtuoso gather to listen to his phonograph recordings and emulate his technique. A "Segovia Room" is maintained as a shrine, containing his picture and a chair in which he once sat.
hero worship as legend-building.43 Our present concern is to show that in the case of many American popular heroes, despite an age of publicity and information, an exaggerated conception of the personalities, powers, or prowess of these heroes, that is to say a legend, was prevalent.

One of the features of the Lindbergh case which is of particular importance is the almost immediate formation of legend. Curiously, despite the regard of the public for him, Lindbergh remained personally an "unknown," aloof, and the reporters had difficulty penetrating to the "true" personality of this hero so admired by the people.44 The popular conception was, therefore, built upon superficial interpretation of his feat, his looks, and his gestures. All features which might be given a heroic interpretation were seized upon by the public. His slimness and youth were really a sign of superior talent; his reticence was modesty. Without having had to do much on his own part, a conception of him grew rapidly as a fair-haired boy, the perfect hero. Almost as soon as he had landed, legends began to accumulate about his boyhood, his ancestry, what he said when he got out of his plane, how he flew the air mail, and so forth. An incident was circulated in which he had supposedly rescued a little girl from the whirling propeller blades of a plane.45 Similar anecdotes might be itemized about any of the other heroes we have studied; for instance: how Pershing licked the bullies, his rise as a self-made man; the orphanage of Babe Ruth, his batting feats, his visits to sick boys; the power of Dempsey's fists, his "iron jaw," the time when he hit a fighter so hard on the jaw that he broke his leg; the sharp-shooting feats of Sergeant York in his home hills in Tennessee; the Santa-Claus-like benefactions of Al Capone, his invulnerability and power to evade any law.46 A further indication of the idealized conception of the hero is seen in the failure of heroes occasionally to live up to the expectations of the public.47 The tenacity of legends, however, is well known.

These exaggerations and interpretations as recounted in stories and supplied by art, literature, and eulogy, make up the myth of the hero. A picture is built up of an invincible, invulnerable, benevolent, superhuman personage: the ideal folk hero.48 Illusion and myth, we conclude, are inherent to hero worship and belief in such helps to explain it.

STATUS OF THE HERO

The hero is thus seen to be a personage of idealized virtues, intensely admired and honored by the people. The processes of honor, commemoration, and cult devotion show most clearly the status of the hero, homage being the collective effort to accord status and commemoration the effort to preserve the image of the hero in tradition, The cult of the hero is essentially the insti-


44 It seems characteristic of popular heroes that they are unknown by their followers. The hero is paradoxically both well-known and unknown.

45 Another story told how his plane at one landing field "easily outdistanced" an escort of military planes, although the latter had much higher speeds than his plane.

46 See Fred Pasley, Al Capone (Garden City, Publ. Co., 1930).

47 The famous "feud" of Lindbergh with reporters helped to dispel some of the illusions about him. He was found to be unfriendly, even discourteous. According to one report he splashed mud on the public when landing his plane. The Lindbergh legend took a further decline at the time of his apparent sympathy for Germany in 1940. Another failure of a hero to live up to expectations is seen in the incredulity of followers of Jack Dempsey at his defeat by Tunney. A myth had grown up of his invincibility.

48 We have tried in another article to indicate the nature of this folk ideal. Orrin E. Klapp, "The Folk Hero," Journal of American Folklore, January, 1949.
tution of devotion to this honored image. It seems clear from his legendary status that the hero is properly conceived as a symbol rather than as a real person. He tends to be preserved in tradition and to function in the group as an idealized image, almost as an icon. All things point to the conclusion that the hero is one of the most important symbols and occupies one of the highest statuses in social life.

Although the hero is set apart from ordinary men by deference, precedence, decorations, and the like, and is regarded as superhuman, we must note that though standing out from other men the hero is not essentially a leader. While the hero may be a leader, he is essentially a symbol, solitary and set apart. The existence of hero cults should not obscure this fact. Where the hero is disposed to leadership, however, as in the case of Huey Long, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, or Hitler, we find that popular appeal, that is to say the force of leadership, is enormously enhanced by virtue of heroic symbolism, for the hero-worshipper is the perfect follower. On the other hand, leaders who lack the status of popular heroes show the essential distinctness of the roles. Leaders who are not heroes are notably lacking in popular appeal and are vulnerable to rivals who happen to combine these roles.

We might characterize the status of the hero, then, by the following features: (1) distance from group members, both vertical and horizontal, in that he has no necessary personal relationship with his followers and hero worship tends to set him apart; (2) nevertheless, strong identification of members of the group with the hero; (3) symbolic status, as the hero tends to be an image or legend rather than a real person, and is typically not a living member of the group; and (4) sacred or ritual status, as the devotion of cult places the hero within the realm of social values commonly ascribed to religion.

Because heroes are preserved and occupy such high status, it may be presumed that their functions are extremely important. We may suppose that the hero represents social roles or traits of unusual value to the group: acts commonly considered heroic include extraordinary achievement, defense and deliverance in time of need, contributions to culture, self-sacrifice and martyrdom, and other roles important for group survival and welfare. Not the least of the functions of heroes, it may be supposed, is the inspiration they offer for rise in status. The hero thus functions as a symbol of enormous importance in personality development, education, and social control. Moreover, in addition to presenting desirable roles for group members, they no doubt organize

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49 Among the evidences of the exalted character of heroes we may note their rank in mythology as demigods, taking precedence over kings (the Greeks, thus, in the Iliad, honored Ajax by giving him first place at a feast, even before the king); and also the semi-divine status of saints in Christian hagiography.

50 Among the popular heroes we have studied, it may be noted that many were not leaders in the usual sense. While Huey Long, Pershing, and Capone were leaders of groups, Ruth, Dempsey, Lindbergh, Rogers, Sgt. York, and Sacco and Vanzetti were individualized heroes. That is to say, they lacked a number of characteristics of popular leaders, among these being the following: (1) they played no active role in appealing to the public through oratory, proselytism, etc., in the manner of popular leaders; (2) they lacked cults of personal disciples similar to those of charismatic leaders such as Father Divine or Mary Baker Eddy; (3) they occupied no formal positions of leadership in groups; and (4) their roles were solitary achievements, individualized performances, rather than group roles. For contrast with popular or charismatic leadership, see Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion (Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1914), pp. 133-8, 334ff, 370; and Hadley Cantril, Psychology of Social Movements (New York, J. Wiley & Sons, 1941), pp. 123-43, 180.

51 It may be noted that the hero is characteristically absent as a person from hero cult. Instead of exercising personal leadership or ascendancy, he is represented rather than present.

52 Note, for instance, many American Presidents.

53 Heroism is an extreme example of what Linton would call status by achievement. To the extent that a society emphasizes competition and status-climbing, heroes would have a most important function as models for group members.

groups by providing common symbols for identification, either as leaders or as personages with whom the group feels a special pride and unity.

CONCLUSION

We have endeavored to describe hero worship and find in it a collective process for selecting, honoring, and preserving certain persons as group symbols. Hero worship in America expresses our characteristic values. It reveals not only the traits we admire most but also our fields of interest. While one age may emphasize strenuous piety, another emphasizes war or athletics. Through the heroism of all societies, no doubt, run certain common threads: great achievement, heroism in war, martyrdom, and the like. The hero worship of American society reveals the run of our interests and consequently the fields in which heroes emerge.

An observation concerning American hero worship which seems pertinent is that in a secular era, when faith seems to be declining, the belief in heroes continues to thrive. The legend-making process and creation of folk heroes, in spite of modern communications, continues as a social and political force. Although hero worship is a democratic process in the sense that it selects heroes from all ranks of the social structure, it generates excessive veneration. It enthrones heroes in an irrational status which criticism is often powerless to qualify.

We have not examined a number of aspects of American hero worship, notably the relation of popular heroes to social movements and crises. Nor have we analyzed the impact of heroes on individual hero-worshippers. But enough has been said to suggest the importance of hero worship for further study.

THE EASTER FESTIVAL—A Study in Cultural Change*

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INTRODUCTORY

This paper discusses one of the important American holidays and follows an article on Christmas1 published in 1946. It is believed that some tentative generalizations which emerge from the discussion of the Easter festival will be relevant also to other holidays. The objective of this study is to describe the cultural character and social functions of the Easter festival as this holiday has developed in the United States, particularly from 1870 to the present. Like other celebrations, such as Christmas, Easter is both a holy day for the Christian church and a secular, folk holiday.

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Also, comparable to Christmas, the Easter festival covers a period of several days, and in some respects, several weeks. After Easter Sunday there ensues in certain Christian denominations the Easter-tide period of rejoicing which terminates on Pentecost, fifty days after this date. However, the secular aspect of Easter is usually limited to the several days prior to Easter Sunday, though in such instances as school vacations it extends several days beyond Easter Sunday.

Holiday periods are characterized by utilization of a complex pattern of special social attitudes, behavior, and cultural equipment by large numbers of people at a particular time. These unique beliefs and practices are latent within the general culture of a society and are "activated" only at appropriate times. The use of particular holiday attitudes and equipment at any other time than the conventional one is ordinarily felt to be inappropriate.