The Academic Teaching of Anthropology in the United States

After I had managed somehow to get through 40 years of anthropological teaching, for the most part without the benefit of textbooks, or other aids now available, and perhaps without giving sufficient thought to teaching per se, I was confronted by these volumes—**The Teaching of Anthropology** and **Resources for the Teaching of Anthropology**, edited by David G. Mandelbaum, Gabriel W. Lasker, and Ethel M. Albert [*The Teaching of Anthropology* (637 pp. $8.50); *Resources for the Teaching of Anthropology* (322 pp. $5.50), University of California Press, Berkeley, 1963]. And I enjoyed a new educational experience, for the books represent a new era in what the senior editor, David Mandelbaum, calls "The transmission of anthropological culture." At the same time, he says, "These essays deal with anthropology as well as the teaching of it; they provide one kind of conspectus of the current state of the discipline" (*Teaching*, p. 4).

Although in the United States the academic teaching of anthropology actually began in the 19th century, it is essentially a phenomenon of the present one. Since the great leaders of the past were men deeply committed to research and, so far as teaching was concerned, to the training of students who aspired to pursue and develop the discipline itself, many of the problems discussed in these volumes did not arise in any acute form for a long time. The question, for example, of whether teachers of undergraduate anthropology can be fully effective without a background of field experience was hardly pertinent. Furthermore, the profession was, at first, so small in numbers that for many years a room of moderate size could easily accommodate all those who attended the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association. It is not strange, then, that the intimacy and ease of social interaction did not lead to formal papers, or to publications dealing with the teaching of anthropology. Everyone knew pretty well what everyone else was doing, and there were more exciting subjects to discuss.

Although *The Teaching of Anthropology* is not historically oriented, attention is called in passing to two publications on this subject, which appeared as early as 1892, but the author is not mentioned in the text. He was Daniel G. Brinton (1837–1899) who was not only the pioneer in teaching anthropology in the United States, but also an active promoter in his time of anthropology as an autonomous academic discipline, including a program of graduate work leading to the doctorate. It is worth noting here, too, that Brinton served as president of the AAAS in 1894. It is the academic descendants of the pioneer teachers of anthropology in the U.S. (particularly Franz Boas), who are now faced with hordes of undergraduate students, as well as with the training of professional anthropologists at the graduate level. While part 8 deals with graduate training (with papers contributed by Eggan and two British anthropologists, Fortes and Beattie), the rest of the papers in both volumes are primarily concerned with undergraduate education. Consequently, the discussions raise many perennial problems, familiar to all teachers, but with particular application here to the aims of anthropological teaching (for example, the effectiveness of lectures, types of examination, technical aids, course content and organization, and term papers).

Several surveys conducted during the past few years indicate the new order of magnitude of student enrollment and teaching personnel that now faces the profession. A survey of the colleges and universities in California, for example, showed 27,969 course-enrollments in 1960, 68 percent of this total being in introductory courses. And, at the University of Minnesota, it was estimated that 18 percent of all students enrolled in 1957–58 were taking a course in anthropology. The number of courses offered in institutions throughout the country, and teachers of the subject, likewise have jumped. Catalog listings of 1950, compared with those of 1960 in a sample of 60 institutions, showed 82 percent more courses given in the latter year. And, in these same institutions, the anthropology faculties increased 77 percent in the same decade. These figures show the timeliness of these volumes. While the absolute numbers of students involved may not appear significant to those affiliated with other professions, the contrast with a not too distant past has had a memorable impact upon anthropologists themselves, and the rate of expansion has seemed phenomenal.

Resources for the Teaching of Anthropology contains the detailed information on these surveys and related material (Lasker *et al.*). Other papers are "Personnel resources" (Beals), "The use of audio-visual teaching aids" (Birdwhistell), "Teaching aids in physical anthropology" (Lasker), and "Library problems" (Rowe). More than half of this volume is taken up with a basic list of 1700 books and periodicals for an undergraduate library, compiled by Rexford S. Beckham (formerly the anthropology librarian at the University of California). This list, which emphasizes English titles, was compiled with the aid of consultants in special fields and includes important items now out of print. Perhaps some of these can be brought back into current circulation. This excellent list can be conveniently used by librarians as a check on current holdings in the field of anthropology.

Anyone outside the profession who reads *The Teaching of Anthropology* will gain reliable knowledge, not readily available elsewhere, about the actual content of what is being taught today. Although well recognized within the profession, two general facts, less obvious to others perhaps, may be stressed here: (i) the broad ranging, inclusive, or holistic approach to the study of man that is stoutly maintained, and (ii) the increasingly high level of specialization that has been reached in subdivisions of the discipline.

With respect to the first point, it is highly impressive how continuous this tradition has been maintained in the United States. Brinton looked upon himself as an anthropologist in the inclusive sense, his writings ranged over the entire field, and he embodied the holistic concept in his attempt

to promote anthropology as an integral part of higher education. Margaret Meade, in her chapter, "Anthropology and an education for the future," touches upon the same point. "In the United States," she writes (p. 598), "anthropology has remained an inclusive and integrating discipline by successfully resisting the fragmentation which has occurred in most disciplines, which, as they become more specialized, with more workers, in more countries of the world, have progressively shattered into mutually noncommunicating parts. Anthropology has kept its own media of intradisciplinary communication. . . . [Anthropologists] work not only with generalizations about culture, but also with the descriptions of particular cultures; not only with generalizations about language, but also with the auditory records of the speech of particular Indians or particular South Sea Island tribes; not only with tables of prehistoric time, but also with the actual artifacts and skeletal bits from which these tables are constructed."

So far as subspecialization is concerned, those interested can find a great deal of concrete matter in the sections of the book that deal with the teaching of physical anthropology, cultural and social anthropology, archeology, anthropological linguistics, regions and civilizations, and applied anthropology. There are three or more contributions to each of the sections. Evidence reflected here shows that, in specialized areas, anthropology today is probing its material in greater depth and with increasing analytic refinement. It is particularly important that the full implication of this kind of research be adequately transmitted during the educational process. At the same time, interdisciplinary contacts have been augmented. There are six papers in the section that deals with this topic. Included are relations with the social sciences (Casagrande), the biological sciences (Spuhler and Livingstone), the humanities (Leslie), education (Kimball), public health (Paul) and law and government (Hoebel and Rossow). It seems curious that relations with psychology and psychiatry are not dealt with. The final section (11), Perspectives on Anthropological Teaching, contains papers entitled "Value aspects of teaching anthropology" (Ethel M. Albert), "Anthropology as an integrative factor" (Ehrich), "Objectives for a liberal education" (Ray), and the previously mentioned chapter by Margaret Mead. Those outside the profession should find this section of particular interest.

The editors are to be congratulated on the immense task they have brought to such a successful conclusion. The project had the full support of the American Anthropological Association and was financed by the Course Content Improvement Section of the National Science Foundation. A preliminary step in the project was a series of ten symposia, held during 1960 and 1961, one of them in Europe under the sponsorship of the Wenner-Gren Foundation. The papers included in these volumes were presented and discussed at the symposia and later revised for publication. The 51 contributors, with biographical information, are listed in *The Teaching of Anthropology*. Although most of the participants were Americans, four British (Beattie, Firth, Fortes, and Little) and one Norwegian (Gjessing) anthropologist are numbered among them.

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Sukhumi Primate Studies

Comparative Pathology in Monkeys. B. A. Lapin and L. A. Yakovleva. Translated from the Russian by the U.S. Joint Publications Research Service. Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1963. xvi + 272 pp. Illus. $10.

This monograph summarizes observations made at the Institute of Experimental Pathology and Therapy, Academy of Medical Sciences, U.S.S.R., which is located at Sukhumi in the Russian state of Georgia. For many years a large primate colony has been maintained at Sukhumi, which has a warm, humid, semitropical climate. The colony consists of about 1000 animals, primarily rhesus monkeys (*M. mulatta*) and hamadryas baboons (*C. hamadryas*); it is regularly replenished by the introduction of wild animals. There are indoor cage facilities for use in acute experiments and open-air cages for the year-round housing of breeding animals.

This book presents a study of naturally occurring diseases as they have been observed in the colony. Included are clinical studies made during the years from 1927 to 1959 and pathological studies (1274 autopsies) made between 1952 and 1959. The data are presented by disease entities, with particular emphasis on those conditions which have been most commonly recognized, including dysentery, tuberculosis, parasitic infestations, and atherosclerosis and hypertension.

It is clear that this monograph represents a valuable and unique contribution to our knowledge of spontaneously occurring illnesses in captive primates. However, judging by those sections that I can assess critically, the quality of the Sukhumi studies is somewhat variable. Thus, the photomicrographs used throughout the book to illustrate histopathology indicate that many of the pathological preparations were of poor quality, and the descriptions of pathology tend to be wandering and discursive at times. In the chapter on dysentery, the bacteriological studies of causative organisms are not described very clearly or systematically.

Despite such limitations, this monograph reports a number of important contributions. The chapter on tuberculosis documents the important observation that, contrary to common impressions, captive monkeys living under favorable circumstances are not necessarily much more susceptible to tuberculosis than humans and that they may experience chronic as well as acutely fatal infections. The studies of cardiovascular disease show that spontaneous hypertension and coronary insufficiency are quite frequent in monkeys that are kept in small cages and used repeatedly for acute experiments, while those that are kept in large outdoor cages rarely develop such disease.

In summary, this book will be of interest to all workers concerned with the study of primates, or with their use as experimental animals.

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Metallurgy

Columbium and Tantalum. Frank T. Sisco and Edward Epremian, Eds. Wiley, New York, 1963. xviii + 635 pp. Illus. $27.50.

One of the best ways to document the growing importance of the technology of columbium and tantalum is to list the symposia, the monographs, and the reference works on these metals, which have appeared during the last 5 years. They include the proceedings of two symposia, *Technology*