Book Reviews

Units of Social Organization

A Natural History of Associations. A Study in the Meaning of Community. RICHARD MAITLAND BRADFIELD. International Universities Press, New York, 1973. Two volumes. Vol. 1, xx, 428 pp., illus. Vol. 2, xii, 596 pp., illus. $35.

Bradfield's study is an ambitious attempt at providing a comprehensive theory of the origin of associations and of their role in kin-based societies, that is, in societies where first loyalties are assumed to be given to kin-groups and the community is "the sum of its constituent kin-groups" rather than the sum of its citizens. *A Natural History of Associations* is the first major anthropological study of the antecedent conditions and social correlates of associations since H. Schurtz published *Altersklassen und Männerbunde* in 1902. Since that time anthropologists and sociologists have added greatly to our knowledge of the functioning of associations, especially under urban conditions. Bradfield ignores much of the material on urban associations. His concern lies with why associations were first invented in the ancient past and with why their form should vary in different agricultural communities.

Bradfield's method is comparative and inductive. He proceeds by providing detailed ethnographic surveys of a number of societies. Eight are covered in great detail: Nuer, Yakö, Tallensi, Mande, Trobriand Islands, Banks Island, Hopi, and Great Basin Shoshoni. But we are also given long excursions into early Europe, Maya Central America, and nonhuman primate bands. This means that much of the 1000 pages in the two volumes of *A Natural History of Associations* is given over to summaries of ethnographic materials available in more extensive form in standard monographs. For his account of the Hopi, Bradfield both draws on his own fieldwork and synthesizes much information provided by many observers who have visited Hopi villages during the past hundred years. The book will therefore be an important source on the Hopi. The chapters on Banks Island are also a very extensive reworking of earlier material from Codrington's ethnography and dictionary, checked with various persons familiar with Banks Island and the Mota language. All societies are described in the ethnographic present. The lack of a time dimension is a serious flaw. Comparisons are made across the societies in the sample, but no real attempt is made to examine changes in the role of associations in any society for the period for which we have written records.

Bradfield begins with the premise that in societies dependent on subsistence economies "all significant variations in culture . . . rise out of differences in the relationship between the community and the environment which it exploits" (vol. 1, p. vii). His first conclusion, derived from an examination of the four African societies in his sample, is that human society is organized in units which he calls "communes." A commune consists of the inhabitants of a number of villages or bands occupying a common territory, speaking the same language, and held together by intermarriage and a body of common rituals. They are forced into association by the common rule against marriage within the domestic unit.

> On the one hand, the *commune* is the widest group which *must* hang together, and within which disputes must be resolved, if one of the prime conditions of human sociability—the rule of marrying outside one's own kin-residential nucleus—is to be observed; on the other, it represents the irreducible unit of social life, biologically the cell, out of which all larger groupings are formed, and back to which they break down in times of stress or crisis [vol. 1, p. 155].

Bradfield argues that the endogamy rate within the commune must be of an order of three women out of every four marrying locally if the commune is to be effectively organized through marriage alliances. This figure appears to be derived from the work on European marriage patterns rather than from endogamy rates available for his sample societies.

This formulation assumes that most subsistence societies are also organized into descent groups which have the first claim upon the loyalties of their members. The descent groups are the principal "asset-holding bodies" in settled communes of agricultural people, and their primary assets are livestock or farmland. Demands by kinship units upon their members are divisive to the larger unity of the commune. It becomes essential for the commune to have some kind of extra-kin organization to represent the interests of the wider community as over and against the particular interests of each descent group. In his scheme, therefore, associations emerge after the Neolithic revolution and can be regarded as secondary to either herding or agriculture. Bradfield is still faced with the problem of why associations vary in their form from one region to another. Here his answer depends upon ecology and his view of the nature of culture. The latter is phrased in somewhat Lévi-Straussian terms as the antithesis of nature. Each society is seen as having as one of its primary necessities the means of transforming its children into bearers of its cultural tradition and so of impressing them with the importance of what are seen as human attributes. Bradfield argues that just as associations represent the larger interest of the commune as over and against the descent groups, so the associations find their model in the commune itself and reflect its particular nature.

Where communes are clearly set off from their neighbors by belts of forest or desert or by sea, they are clearly demarcated in other ways, each having its own dialect and its own distinctive set of values. Under these circumstances, secret societies and exclusive ceremonial organizations make their appearance. In the tropical forests of West Africa and in the archipelagos of Melanesia, secret societies flourish, as ceremonial organizations flourish among the Pueblo peoples of the desert Southwest of the United States. The lack of associations among the Trobriand Islanders, a seeming exception to his rule, Bradfield attributes to the institution of a strong chieftainship as

a functional alternative for the maintenance of peace and the settlement of disputes. Where one commune merges into the next without clear geographical or linguistic boundaries, as in much of the African savanna, then associations, if they appear, take the form of age-sets, which cross-cut widely dispersed groups.

Bradfield has drawn upon a training in history, medicine, and anthropology in writing this book. He has spent nine years on what is very evidently a labor of love. His central argument is generally familiar to anthropologists, who have long noted the importance of cross-cutting ties in the maintenance of social order and discussed both age-sets and secret fraternities in these terms. His explanation of the distribution of secret societies as against age-sets is more novel and is worth further exploration. Throughout the two volumes he throws out a great many stimulating suggestions. Unfortunately the format of *A Natural History of Associations*, with its massive ethnographic apparatus and numerous digressions, is likely to limit the number of his readers. Anthropologists will have to plow through too much familiar territory in following his argument. Others are likely to be more interested in his conclusions than in the ethnographic evidence. A short article summarizing his findings, and substituting a referral to his sources for lengthy summaries, would have much to recommend it.

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Psychopharmacology

Lithium. Its Role in Psychiatric Research and Treatment. SAMUEL GERSHON and BARON SHOPSIN, Eds. Plenum, New York, 1973. xii, 358 pp., illus. $19.50.

Considerable information has accumulated about the clinical uses of lithium, but we are still far from understanding how the drug produces its effects. The state of affairs is clearly reflected in this book. The chapters dealing with clinical issues are fairly readable, and the reader can relate them to one another and develop themes. In contrast, in the chapters dealing with the basic chemistry, biochemistry, or pharmacology of lithium he will find himself, like the authors of each of these chapters, assimilating facts and struggling to make a synthesis but ultimately being frustrated in the attempt.

The chapters on the treatment of the manic patient, by Schou and by Goodwin and Ebert, are quite good. Relevant literature is cited, personal anecdotal material and idiosyncratic terminology are kept to a minimum. Dosage schedules are clearly outlined, and the question of whether or not to use a major tranquilizer in conjunction with lithium is clearly dealt with. Similarly, the chapter by Gershon and Shopsin dealing with toxicology is quite good, and taken in conjunction with the chapter on lithium teratology, by Weinstein and Goldfield, will give the practicing psychiatrist needed knowledge as to problems he may encounter when using the lithium ion in treatment.

These chapters along with references cited by many of the other authors, in particular Fieve, indicate that the majority, perhaps 80 percent, of manic patients can be effectively treated with lithium and that in cases of repeated episodes lithium has prophylactic value. Its value in other psychiatric disorders is less clear, and plainly more investigation is required. A number of the authors review research which has been done with the use of lithium in a whole spectrum of psychiatric disorders. One type of disorder (other than mania) in which it now appears that lithium may well be of benefit is severe depression, particularly in patients of the bipolar type. What is needed, as Mendels notes in his chapter, is a method by which the depressed patient who will respond to lithium may be identified either biochemically or clinically. Certainly further substance is given to this argument by findings which have emerged since the publication of this book indicating that unipolar depressed patients may be maintained equally well prophylactically on either lithium or one of the more commonly used tricyclic antidepressant drugs. The value of lithium for treating pathological aggressive states also appears to deserve more investigation.

When we move to chapters dealing with the modes of action of this agent it becomes very clear that we are on uncertain ground. The studies as reported are somewhat reminiscent of earlier studies with the major tranquilizers; that is, lithium seems to do many things, but seldom does the magnitude of the action compare with the magnitude of its effect upon a severe psychopathological state, mania. Furthermore, as is pointed out by several of the authors, particularly the Smalls, too often there is a discrepancy between results obtained in animal or test-tube studies and the results of clinical investigations. Frequently the basic investigator will use doses that surely must be toxic; hence the relevance of his results to the drug's effect in human patients remains uncertain. It is to be hoped that future studies will throw more light on the mode of action of lithium at the cellular level as it may specifically relate to the correction of whatever biological fault is involved in manic and perhaps depressive states.

For those who are interested in the history of science, it should be noted that the path from the introduction of lithium to its general acceptance as a treatment for manic states was stormy and was the subject of many controversies within those invisible colleges where such matters are often adjudicated. This background is not explicitly covered in the introductory chapter dealing with historical material, but as one reads various chapters, in particular the closing chapter by Fieve, one senses the struggles that went on.

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Depressive Disorders

Depression. Theory and Research. JOSEPH BECKER. Winston, Washington, D.C., 1974 (distributor, Halsted [Wiley], New York). xii, 240 pp. $12.50. Series in Clinical Psychology.

Traditionally a distinction has been made between disorders in which organic defect may be defined and those in which function is impaired without apparent structural change. Those in the latter category frequently have been labeled psychogenic.

While in many branches of medicine it has been possible for all practical purposes to ignore this split, any consideration of psychopathology necessarily brings it into sharp focus. Concepts of etiology have become muddled with pragmatic treatments and the need for accuracy in description of the behavioral dysfunction under consideration. Two camps, one addressing psychosocial factors and another concerned primarily with the