For a sociology of India: uncertain transplants: anthropology and sociology in India

Satish Saberwal
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

I

To pass from considering the course of anthropology in Canada or Sweden to that in India, one needs to shift one's scale of relevance, one needs to recast one's sense of the problem.[1] In the scale requisite, issues like the strength of American influence or the size of the demand for Ph. D's seem relatively minor. The central question here is this: how does an intellectual tradition, arising out of a civilisation with particular kinds of intellectual and social habits and resources become domesticated in another civilisation whose intellectual habits and resources have been very different? This difference may not be evaded: both Max Weber and Louis Dumont have deployed the Indian case as a foil for their own tradition. To choose to do anthropology in India is to choose to function in a milieu whose social and intellectual grain runs in ways vastly different from those the West now takes for granted.[2] How has this difference affected the shape of our discipline in this setting?

In mounting our search for an answer, we face a preliminary, strategic choice. Anthropology in India is one among many disciplines—some

[2]Need I say that these habits of mind and society need to be restated and defended continually even where these are relatively entrenched. Thus, recently, the historian Oscar Handlin (1979).

social sciences, some not. It is one member of a class, and as we examine the particular case, we face a question familiar to anthropologists: how far stay with the specifics of the case, how far take it as an example of the class? Given the terms in which the problem is posed, the rest of this article inevitably tilts towards the class; the reader will find here a concern as much with the larger puzzle of Indian academia as with the particular case of anthropology.

The discussion will open with an account of the discipline's institutional growth in the country and then locate it in its colonial and post-colonial historical contexts. I shall examine the sociologists' 'role' in terms of their institutional locations in Section III and of their common experiences of training and enquiry in Section IV. Much of our situation will be traced next to the varied influences emanating from our social heritage. The concluding section sets forth a possible strategy for coping with our admittedly difficult circumstances.

II

Between the rise of sociology and anthropology in Europe and its implantation in India there is a vital historical difference. The growth in Europe was rooted in the Europeans' contemporary experience and anxiety, as well as in the resources brought down in their intellectual traditions— Greek, Roman, Judaic, Christian, and others—gathered in Ancient Rome, blended in the Catholic Church, and renewed in a more or less secular vein over the Renaissance and the Reformation (for example, see Nisbet 1969). These disciplines have not been able to find much nourishment in the indigenous Indian intellectual traditions; nor have we been able to harness our own concerns and anxieties for giving these fields direction and form. As our enquiry proceeds, we shall begin to see the reasons why.

It was as part of the 'external encounter' of the British, with people over whom they established dominion, that systematic social enquiry, as an overture routine to the framing and conduct of social policy, made its debut in India. Orientalists, missionaries, administrators—all contributed to the effort. On one side this enquiry reached into the ancient texts, believed to govern contemporary social practice. This knowledge was seen to be important for India's new rulers, and thus the field of Indology was born, a development which contributed to a manifold stirring of ideas about society among different groups of Indians too (a superb account appears in Kopf 1969). It included some interest in the social sciences.[3] On the other side it reached into contemporary social

[3]Thus the beginning, during this period, of thought and empirical enquiry, said to be sociological (B. Dutta Gupta, 1972, cited in R. Mukherjee 1977: 27), and also the appropriation of Comte's ideas for defending the established social order in Bengal (Bhattacharya 1974).

conditions, part of the information base for administration. Bernard Cohn (1968) and Ramkrishna Mukherjee (1977) have reviewed the successive phases of this enquiry: Cohn's focus is more on the modern Western understanding of Indian society and Mukherjee's on the concerns of Indian scholars.

University teaching in sociology and anthropology was introduced late in the first quarter of this century in Calcutta, Bombay and Lucknow.[4] In the colonial universities, research funds for the social sciences were scant. Characteristic of the period were small-scale enquiries into the more curious aspects of social life among tribal peoples, polyandrous groups and the like; expositions of the classical Hindu social institutions; and rather freewheeling social analyses, drawing upon diverse intellectual traditions, without attention either to a controlled data base or to cummulative analytic rigour. University teachers wrote books too, were sometimes acknowledged by peers abroad, and were accorded something of the traditional respect due to a man of learning within India (thus Ghurye 1973).

The 1950s became a watershed for anthropology and sociology in India, rather more so than was the case for other social sciences, say history and political science, for these had much larger bases during the colonial period from which to grow. This happened because universities in India tended to take their cues from those in Britain, and the latter had had very little sociology before World War II. Social anthropology in Britain had been a rather esoteric field, concerned with Africa, the Pacific, and the like. India too had tribal people, and they attracted enquiry from Indian anthropologists trained in Calcutta and abroad, and expatriates such as Verrier Elwin and Furer-Haimendorf.

The third quarter of this century has seen a spectacular institutional growth in these fields. In 1947, universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Lucknow taught anthropology or sociology or both, and there were smaller departments at Poona, Mysore and Hyderabad as well. By 1977, over fifty universities and scores of colleges were engaged in awarding M.A. and higher degrees in these fields. In 1976–77, the student enrolments numbered:

Anthropology: Ph.D. 42, M.A. 415
Sociology: Ph.D. 443,[5] M.A. 6,548

The quarterly, *Eastern anthropologist,* began appearing from Lucknow in 1948; the Indian Sociological Society, and its biannual, *Sociological bulletin,* started in Bombay in 1952. After a decade in Paris, *Contributions to Indian sociology* was reborn in Delhi in 1967 as an annual,

[4]Institutional growth in both fields is considered at length by M.S.A. Rao (1974). Professor Rao has organised a more detailed review recently (UGC 1979).
[5]These statements are based on Rao 1974 and UGC 1979, 1981.

becoming biannual in 1975. Several other journals have also been launched off and on, and sociologists have routinely published their professional work in the *Economic weekly* (1949–65) and its successor *Economic and political weekly*, independent journals from Bombay; in *Social scientist*, a marxist monthly, and in *Social action*, a quarterly from the (Catholic) Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

Research funding in the social sciences expanded greatly with the establishment of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, an 'autonomous' agency of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, with a budget, according to ICSSR Annual Reports, rising from Rs 1 million in 1969–70 to about Rs 17 million in 1979–80. A part of this growth went as partial support for a series of fifteen institutes for research in the social sciences, located in centres all over the country. In the establishment of these institutes, the ICSSR has played a major supportive, and sometimes promotional role. In this growth in universities and research institutes, sociology (including much of social anthropology) has done at least as well as several of the other social sciences—like political science or history—which had already established much larger bases in India by the 1940s. How are we to account for this spurt in these new fields?

The decisive long-term influence came from American anthropology whose interest in South Asia—expressed in fieldwork and other ways— grew dramatically in the 1950s.[6] This growth reflected the sharp rise in funds becoming available in the United States for social science research abroad, led by cultural anthropology. This was the cognitive edge to post-war American political expansion in the wake of Europe's colonial withdrawals. Robert Redfield at Chicago led the intellectual effort to adapt the anthropological tradition to the study of peasant society, as an entry into the study of complex societies and civilisations. Such work found political support in India, with its promise of being a resource for the village-centred Community Development Programme (Mayer *et al.* 1958; S.C. Dube 1958; Oscar Lewis 1958).

This outside interest in South Asia meant a minor boom in India by way of opportunities for travel overseas for predoctoral study, postdoctoral fellowships, and teaching appointments, not to mention the briefer visits. Accredited as anthropologists abroad, the scholars sought recognition as sociologists within India. The centre of anthropology in the West has rested in the study of 'other culture'; and though several Indians tried to follow suit,[7] the funds for everyone (with one partial exception) came from outside India and, given our levels of poverty, this kind of interest could not be sustained from Indian bases. Working on society in India, we

tended then to move over to the banner marked 'sociology'.

The prototype here was the move by M.N. Srinivas from the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford to a Chair in Sociology at Baroda in 1951 and, in 1959, to the first Chair in Sociology at the prestigious Delhi School of Economics at the University of Delhi (Srinivas 1973). Under his leadership during the 1960s, this department expanded vastly, to become India's premier centre for sociology—now with four Professors, and a fifth Chair vacant. The intellecltual flavour of the department has remained distinctly social anthropological. Delhi's presence in India's sociological map is the greater for the numerous sociologists and anthropologists who work elsewhere on the University of Delhi campus, in the many institutes and government departments in the city and, across town, in Jawaharlal Nehru University. These numbers are large enough for them to sustain an active Delhi Sociological Association.

From a very small base, then, the 1950s and the 1960s were a period of headlong growth for sociology in India. Leadership in this virtually new discipline was captured by men whose key credentials came not from Calcutta, Bombay or Lucknow, but from Oxford, London, Chicago or Canberra. These were relatively young men who had had unusual spells abroad for study and sometimes teaching. They needed resources to build departments over which they came to preside, and this brought them into the intricacies of institutional politics, international philanthropy, and several levels of public relations. Such distractions naturally affected the concentration of men who, in more tranquil moods, might have attended to the intrinsically difficult blending of perspectives, of methods and of alliances with other disciplines, which needed to be picked, through trial and error, for their cutting edge in relation to the extraordinary Indian social reality.

In the event, we have now an unusual situation. There is a very small number of scholars who have been able to combine research and active publication with teaching in conditions which enable their students to mature into creative sociologists in their own right. Others work in research institutes, with little or no teaching; or are acknowledged to be good teachers, but have done little research; or are lone sociologists, with few research students, in environments where core interests lie elsewhere. Besides these, there is a very large number of departments of sociology, wherein appointments have sometimes been made on criteria other than those of academic achievement or promise and wherein the overall quality of research and teaching may leave something to be desired. How are we to account for this situation?

III

The quantal jump in sociology during the 1950s was part of a larger boom

in the number of colleges and universities and of enrolments therein.[*] During the colonial period, a new intelligentsia had come to be formed slowly, principally through thé university education of students from older urban groups, and it had taken administrative and political reins over from the colonial power. Hence the common belief in higher education as the key to opportunity, transmuted into a politically effective demand for larger public facilities for higher education. The poor, industrious child who studies under the street lamp and goes on to make good in life—this image lies behind expectations of mobility through higher education; it would cost the student and his family very little.

If the ideal university is an institution that seeks to set its young minds on the road to autonomous enquiry, only a few colleges or universities in India have been able to apply themselves to the task seriously. During the colonial period, most of these institutions had been located in metropolitan and other large urban centres. The young mind received some stimulus not only from formal instruction but also from the city's unusual social diversity and from the hubbub of the national movement and so on. The more recent mushrooming of 'higher' education brings it closer to the student's home in the village or the smaller town. The student and the teacher may both remain in its parochial grip, and the institution's endowment as well as sights are set lower. A university degree in the social sciences may here be equated with rote learning from a few dull text-books.

The enormous growth in the ranks of sociologists employed as such displays another logic too. Hundreds of sociologists and social anthropologists in India have found jobs in government agencies—tribal research, public health, public administration, planning commission, mass communications, space applications, and so forth. These are situations calling in principle for the micro-management of certain social processes. What kinds of general conceptions (and professional standards) are needed for such involvement, and what kinds of politico-administrative cultures are needed behind such professional work—these prior questions have seldom been asked, or seriously answered, let alone translated into operational arrangements. How did this come to be?

The answer is simple. Somewhere along the line—during the 1950s—the idea gained currency that, in order to achieve certain purposes in the modern world, one had to establish institutions specially oriented to those purposes. The idea may have come both from foreign advisers and from the Indians' own experience of institutions abroad. The pervasive, delicate dependence of such 'autonomous' institutions upon the social

*Here are some figures—Number of universities in India, twenty in 1947, eighty-seven in 1972, with eighteen more institutions awarding comparable degrees. Enrolment of university students, less than 0.4 million in 1950–51, over 3.1 million in 1970–71 (Kaul 1974:2,6).

universe around them is not always obvious even after years on a Western campus. Whether one thought of economic development, mass communications, or child welfare, the first thing to do (and sometimes the last as well) was to establish an institution—a building, a director, sundry specialists including sociologists, cars, telephones, stenographers. An institution meant precious permanent jobs. Taken for granted was the incumbents' commitment to the institution's purposes—and subsequently their virtually automatic attainment, untouched by human hands or minds.

How an institution's functioning connected with the structures of power and what human needs it actually met—such questions have been posed only vaguely. If optimal performance by the human group in an institution depends on gradually evolved individual routines and supportive, shared norms, and on continuous monitoring of institutional ends as well as means, few of us have found the leisure to determine and to learn such habits; the avalanche of institutions has been much too swift for such deliberation. That is, the critical judgements in the public domain have not been seasoned enough, and effective enough, to make such deliberation routine. Consequently, the enormous growth in the ranks of sociologists in numerous institutions does not necessarily ensure that keen sociological insight would inform the social process in India at various levels.

IV

To discuss the role of sociologists in a society one has to attend not only to their institutional locations but also to their modes of enquiry and their dominant paradigm. It was the social anthropologist who tended to win out as against, say, those trained in sociology in the United States, or those who took a Marxist view of society.[9] The advantage of numbers may have rested with the anthropologist initially, but they may also have had a certain advantage of method.

Participant observation is a wonderfully flexible procedure. It does not burden its practitioner (at least it did not burden many of us in the 1950s and 1960s) with an overdeveloped theory or methodology such as might constrain someone who takes Talcott Parsons seriously or feels compelled to support every statement with a table and a statistical test. Nor is one committed to an explicit analytic framework with a particular class perspective. The method of participant observation may, further, be deployed anywhere: in fieldwork, at a family wedding, in university politics, and in the working of official committees. The writings of the men who rose to power in the 1950s—M.N. Srinivas and S.C. Dube—show a

[9]For further details see Saberwal 1979.

remarkable thematic versatility, though it is clear that, to their advantage of method, they brought considerable personal insight and eloquence too.

This approach was so rewarding in the short-run that its hazards did not become immediately obvious. Fieldwork in an alien country and linguistic community had, for the Westerners, been a taxing experience; this immersion in another culture often made a deep imprint on the individual. The identification with 'my village' may have been intellectually restrictive too, but the structure of their home academia forced upon them an awareness both of other regions and of the growing complexity of their intellectual tradition; if the Americans tended to trade more across disciplinary boundaries, the Europeans did so rather more across their national boundaries. These passages of the mind are perhaps made a little easier for a Levi-Strauss, a Victor Turner, or a Robert Nisbet by the shared ancestry—and therefore the interlacing codes—of the several intellectual traditions. Cross-cultural fieldwork and a demanding intellectual milieu at home—while writing the Ph.D. thesis and in the years immediately after—set the individual's rhythm and direction for later life.

Becoming a sociologist in an Indian university has—with notable exceptions—tended to become a 'soft' experience. Research for a Ph.D. rarely stretches one very much. Commonly, one works in one's home area, often with already familiar people. Library budgets are small, and though one may find better libraries in the metropolitan centres, one is not always required to meet very stringent expectations. This is part of a general phenomenon: the university system has expanded more by way of new buildings than of setting and enforcing the norms of scholarly performance at various levels.

Sociologists in India have been expected, implicity if not explicitly, to interpret the dynamics of contemporary society at large, and core issues for the discipline might have been defined with reference to this expectation. Quite early, Professor Srinivas (1966: 2) argued that 'Micro-studies provide insights while macro-studies yield perspectives, and movement from one to the other is essential'. Yet, to attempt 'macro-studies' principally by generalising the findings from local communities—studied 'upon the knife-edge of an isolated present' (Gouldner 1970: 107)—is to run the risk that the social units, social relationships, and social purpose noticed would be mere homologues of those already familiar from the milieu of the small community, oblivious of the thick shadow of such vast mechanisms as colonialism and capitalism upon that social reality (an extended critique appears in Saberwal 1979).

The tactic of following Western sociologists ad hoc—Deutsch on the importance of communications, Festinger on cognitive dissonance, or Parsons on pattern variables—was no more productive since our histori-

cal experience and contemporary societal crisis have had textures very different from what the West has come through. For analysing this complexity adequately a paradigm has to arise sui generis, its elements justified in terms not of provenance but of explanatory power.

V

In the shaping of the Indian academic style one may notice its colonial beginnings, which centred it on the learning of primarily Western knowledge, tested at examinations leading to the degrees (thus, Rudolph and Rudolph 1972: 16). Rather remote from creative enquiry, this apparatus of higher education tended to reify knowledge, marked by its externality. It will not do, however, to reify this externality either: the question of why these processes of knowledge have not been internalised in much greater measure remains. It concerns not one individual or one discipline but a whole society; to explain this social fact a sociologist may be forgiven for turning to another major social fact of Indian society—the caste system.

If the caste system is sometimes thought to be the sociologists' private obsession, rather than an institution which has exercised a decisive influence in shaping our past and our present, the reason lies in the particular cast of sociological enquiries hitherto in India. These have concerned the framework of groups constituting local communities and, following Louis Dumont, the structure of the traditional ideology of the caste system; but we have not tried very hard to trace the implications of this ideology and this social frame for larger historical issues. Establishing these wider connections will have to await another occasion; here I can go only into the implications of the caste system for academia in general and sociology in particular. In doing this I take for granted the reader's familiarity with the principles of hierarchy, segmentation, and the autonomy of the segments in the caste system.[10]

To be sure, in recent generations the ideology of and the social boundaries within the caste system have both been undergoing some erosion, the more so in the urban, large-scale social universe of modern institutions with their seemingly open-ended social relations, competitive recruitment, and so forth. This has sometimes been seen as the 'caste-free' sector of Indian society. The designation is rather optimistic, for a great many in this sector also often continue to be deeply embedded in active, far-reaching ties of kinship and therefore of caste (e.g., Gould 1971). Further, as universities have expanded away from the metropolitan centres, a growing number of students with such embeddedness have passed through institutions whose subcultures have seldom been

---

[10] See Dumont (1970), and his critics in *Contributions to Indian sociology* (1971).

different or strong enough to undo effectively the embedding from the long years of one's earlier life. In time, some of the students become teachers.

Consequently, one's caste affiliation may come to bear more or less explicitly on one's academic fortunes. The criterion of individual achievement or promise may be surrendered informally to an academic's loyalties to kin, castemates and so on; this happens in academic relations with both students and colleagues more than occasionally, cleaving into the impersonality of intellectual discourse and judgement. In order to neutralise the implied tendency towards informal closure in favour of groups which have had a head start, some Indian states have reserved statutorily a large fraction of academic appointments for one or another caste group. In the South Indian state of Karnataka, 68 per cent of academic appointments are thus reserved for sex-specified caste groups. A lecturership in anthropology may require membership in, say, a 'Scheduled Caste' or 'Backward Community' as a necessary qualification in addition to the academic degrees. Only 32 per cent of the positions in the state are open to 'general merit'.[11] How the gain in distributive justice should be determined, and how it should be set against the loss in academic autonomy—to these questions there is no easy answer.

The habits of mind and society arising in the caste system seem to influence the academic process in several less obvious, though not less powerful, ways as well. First, it will be remembered that the segmentation in the caste system organises the social diversity so as to confine a person to very limited segments of that social reality; and this social constriction acts too on the human impulses to explore the universe both physically and ideationally. In Basil Bernstein's terms (cited in Douglas 1970: Ch. 2), persons growing up in such a milieu tend to function with a restricted, rather than an elaborated linguistic code; it predisposes individuals to make do with a limited range of ideas too. The same restrictedness follows from poverty; insofar as the universe of new economic opportunity and of the modern institutions has tended to be concentrated in the metropolitan centres and some other exceptionally endowed areas, the older socially constrictive tedency may be reinforced by poverty and by the generally sparse access to both new economic opportunities and to the modern institutional sectors. One may well clamber through college and university, perhaps becoming an accredited sociologist, yet continue with a serious sense of inadequacy in the open realm of ideas—and in the relatively expensive processes associated with social enquiry.

Secondly, the combination of separation between, and autonomy of,

---

[11]N. Jayaram of Bangalore University very kindly supplied me with the data, along with a newspaper clipping from the *Deccan Herald*, 20 April 1981, which carried a job advertisement from Mangalore University in these terms.

caste groups has meant that diverse sets of values, each carried in one or another caste group, have coexisted traditionally within the frame of the caste system; and one may notice the contrast with the process in Europe, where both the Christian and the legal traditions pressed towards uniformity at law (Weber 1968).[12] Live and let live—this attitude lies behind an acknowledgement of there being many routes to academic salvation, which sometimes verges on suspending critical judgement altogether. Given a lack of prior sensitivity to the importance of shared normative orders, it has been difficult to sustain any efforts at recognising, and enforcing, the innumerable codes of uniform applicability which must underlie the working of a community of scholarship.

One need not belabour the need for devising and enacting such codes in academia. These alone can regulate the sovereign scholarly rights— which are inescapable obligations too—to direct one's own work to come to one's own judgements, and to offer informed, critical judgement on one's colleagues' work. It is the common adherence to such codes that guarantees mutual good faith between colleagues even while they may be sharply critical of each other's scholarly work. The more extensive and effective these shared codes, the more intense (and more productive) can scholarly disputation in an academic community be. Where such codes are weak or lacking, scholarly argument can quickly descend from cooperative enquiry to personal bickering and gossip.[13]

Reluctant to determine and unable to enforce the codes that ought to govern scholarly discourse, including the question of autonomous judgement, many Indian sociologists (as well as other academics) have tended to withdraw over time from such tasks as reviewing, or otherwise applying critical judgement to, the work of influential colleagues; for such acts have led to personal estrangements of varying intensity. Departmental seminars, where colleagues might discuss each other's work, are far from routine. And yet, without such mutual appraisal in good faith, how can colleagues constitute a scholarly community, establish a shared tradition,

[12]This lack of individual distinction in much of the Western tradition was seen by Srinivas (1966) as egalitarianism (see critique in Saberwal 1979). Its real importance may have been in facilitating normative orders marked less with breaks than with continuities between groups.

[13]Our difficulties in formulating and accepting shared codes, suited to the activities at hand, are not limited to academic transactions. Increasingly, discordant operational codes have become manifest in public settings generally: one should act impersonally, but there are many forcefully pressing, personal obligations to meet; one should act fairly, accomodating many different kinds of real or imagined handicaps; contentious defiance, sometimes based on mobilised strength, may jostle with individual offers to be your eyes and ears; everyone's integrity should be taken for granted, yet the straight lie may cause only minor embarrassment; and when all else fails, one may invoke 'humanitarian grounds'. The strain from such multiple codes is not less when these act from within oneself.

and chart courses for the future?

Finally, there is the puzzle concerning the long tradition of Brahmini-
cal thought in India. Even though recognising its formative influence on
the structure of society, why has the effort at social enquiry among us
found so little nourishment in this tradition?[14] The question has not
received much attention, but I would like to make a provisional sugges-
tion. This tradition, it seems to me, has had very little interest in the
particular human person as a distinctive being in the variety of human
possibilities. Concerning society, its concern has been rather with
generating a structure of relationships which would function to plan. To
this end it offered an elaborate logic of the caste system, with remarkable
internal logical consistency (e.g., Orenstein 1970); and a logically consis-
tent ideology tends to legitimise both itself and the system of social rela-
tions required in it. That is to say the dominant concepts of the Brahmini-
cal adition do not direct us to the range of human possibilities and
variations. These serve rather to direct human aspirations and efforts
along channels already specified in considerable detail. How effective
this has been is evident in the structure of nearly every village in the land.

VI

The earlier analysis of the shaping of sociology in India illustrates the
impasse among us today. With due variations, the situation is similar in
other fields. Implicit in my discussion has been the premise that modern
academic life constitutes something of a climax in Western civilisation,
characterised by complex sets of attitudes and activities, individual and
collective rhythms and voluntarily evolved and highly influential codes.
Transplanting such complex institutions—resting on collegial, not
authoritative, controls—in another tradition is necessarily problematic:
even after the initial incompatibilities with codes in the host tradition
have been overcome, when the transplant encounters one or another sort
of internal crisis, the host tradition may not have, and therefore may not
be able to provide, the varied ideational and material resources needed
for its renewal. This is neither inevitable nor impossible; and the dif-
ference turns partly on how the actors in the play are able to define their
situation and respond to it.

In concluding this article I would like to suggest briefly that the optimal
direction might be one which may possibly contribute to the resolution of
issues at the level of the society, one's field of enquiry, and one's own self
in an interrelated manner. The Weberian question of why the processes

[14] In the thought and work of J.C. Bose (1858–1937) the physicist turned plant
physiologist, and S. Ramanujan (1887–1920) the mathematician, Ashis Nandy (1980) sees a
considerable, though ambivalent, influence of symbols from within the Hindu tradition.
Comparable influence in the social sciences has been less fruitful.

of rationality had so much greater difficulty in India, in contrast to Europe, may now be posed afresh. One may examine the terms on which certain institutions arising in the European tradition (say bureaucracy and capitalism) were planted in colonial India, and how these have fared with the segmentation in the host society. If the latter spells normative discontinuities, what are its implications for the new institutional sector and for providing the social supports requisite for institutionalising this rationality?

Such historic clashes of codes and meanings—as well as those of interests—are not confined to the external institutional reality; these are necessarily played out in individual experience. It is because such historical currents have to flow through individual action and experience that there is force in C. Wright Mills' advice (1959) that the sociologist searches for connections between one's 'personal troubles' and what are or can be 'public issues'. For as the connexions are made, the effort put into resolving one's personal troubles may help simultaneously with insight into the wider social processes which do or ought to engage us as sociologists.

For the resources needed to analyse this enormously complex social reality one has to be able to draw upon the long historical tradition of sociology—and, beyond that, of the life of the mind—recognising always that there are costs to be paid whether or not one commits one's style of enquiry, say, to fieldwork, survey research, analysis of the traditional texts, or the findings in other disciplines. The long sociological tradition is especially important in offering us a window upon that Western wave of vast sweep whose inner logic we have so much difficulty in mastering—collectively, if not individually. The sociologist in India has to approach that Western tradition seriously—not with apprehension, for it is more than merely a source of our historic difficulties, but as a foil, a particular historical experience, which we may hold to ourselves as a mirror much as Max Weber, Louis Dumont, and others have tried to recognise the West for themselves in the Indian mirror.

POSTSCRIPT

With such an exercise the reader will inevitably find much to disagree with and this could lead to welcome discussion; there will also be errors of fact which will be readily acknowledged. Thus, T.N. Madan had noticed that I have omitted S.C. Roy and *Man in India*,

understressed the work of sociologists at Lucknow, and overestimated the Australian interest in India in the 1950s.

My principal concern here is to see the discipline as an arena wherein an intellectual tradition born in one civilisation has interacted with the habits of mind and society shaped in another. The same point of view informs my end-piece in this journal for 1982 as well as other work currently in progress.

REFERENCES

BHATTACHARYA, S. 1974. Positivism in 19th century Bengal: diffusion of European intellectual influence in India. In R.S. Sharma, ed., Indian society: historical probings. New Delhi: People's Publishing House.

COHN, BERNARD S. 1968. Notes on the history of the study of Indian society and culture. In M. Singer and Bernard S. Cohn, eds., Structure and change in Indian society. Viking Fund Publications in anthropology, No. 47. Pp. 3–28.

DOUGLAS, MARY. 1970. Natural symbols (1973). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

DUBE, S.C. 1958. India's changing villages. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

DUMONT, L. 1970. Homo hierarchicus. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

GHURYE, G.S. 1973. I and other explorations. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

GOULD, HAROLD A. 1971. Some aspects of kinship among business and professional elite in Lucknow, India. Contributions to Indian sociology (n.s.) 5: 116–30.

GOULDNER, ALVIN. 1970. The coming crisis of western sociology (1971). New Delhi: Heinemann.

HANDLIN, OSCAR. 1979. Truth in history. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

KAUL, J.N. 1974. Higher education in India, 1951/71: two decades of planned drift. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

KOPF, DAVID. 1969. British orientalism and the Bengal renaissance. Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay.

LEWIS, OSCAR. 1958. Village life in northern India (1965). New York: Vintage Books.

MAYER, ALBERT et al. 1958. Pilot project, India: the story of rural development at Etawah, U.P. Berkeley: University of California Press.

MILLS, C. WRIGHT. 1959. The sociological imagination. New York: Oxford University Press.

MUKHERJEE, R. 1977. Trends in Indian sociology. Current sociology 25, 3.

NANDY, ASHIS. 1980. Alternative sciences: creativity and authenticity in two Indian scientists. New Delhi: Allied.

NISBET, ROBERT A. 1969. Social change and history: aspects of the western theory of development. London: Oxford University Press.

ORENSTEIN, HENRY. 1970. Logical congruence in Hindu sacred law: another interpretation. Contributions to Indian sociology (n.s.) 4: 22–35.

RUDOLPH, S.H. and L.I. RUDOLPH, eds. 1972. Education and politics in India. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

RAO, M.S.A. 1974. Introduction. In A survey of research in sociology and social anthropology. Sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research. Bombay: Popular Prakashan (pp. xxi–lxxvii in each of 3 vols.).

SABERWAL, SATISH. 1929. Sociologists and inequality in India: the historical context.

Economic and political weekly 14: 243–54 (Annual Number).

——— . 1980. (Studying our society.) For renewal, *Seminar* no. 254: 12–18.

——— . 1981. The sociological attitude. *Emerging sociology* 3: 9–32.

SRINIVAS, M.N. 1966. *Social change in modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

——— . 1973. Itineraries of an Indian social anthropologist. *International social science journal* 25: 129–48.

U.G.C. 1979. *Report on the status of teaching of sociology and social anthropology, part II regional reports*. New Delhi: University Grants Commission.

WEBER, MAX. 1968. *Economy and society*. (Ed . G. Roth and C. Wittich.) Berkeley: University of California Press.

The Indian Economic and Social History Review