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Tariq Rafeeq Khan
Maharani Laxmi Bai Govt
College of Excellence Gwalior
India.

Mudasir Ahmad Tantray
Department of Post Graduate
Studies and Research in
philosophy RDVV Jablapur,
India.

Philosophy and Anthropology: A Critical Relation

Tariq Rafeeq Khan, Mudasir Ahmad Tantray

Abstract

This paper determines the relation between philosophy and anthropology. It further shows the intimate correspondence on the basis of metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, language, culture and environment. This paper examines the evolution of anthropology with respect to history of philosophy which includes; Ancient Greek, Medieval and Modern philosophy. In this write up I assume to show that how philosophers have interpreted the subject matter anthropology. Since anthropology is the study of humans and what this science acquires has been explained and clarified in the science of philosophy, whether it is a metaphysical study of human person, his ethical, aesthetic, rational, environmental, physical and psychological investigations. This paper exhibits the role and dimensions of humans within the scope of time, space, environment, existence and language.

Keywords: Philosophy, anthropology, metaphysics, epistemology, humans, axiology, environment.

Introduction

Anthropology has its root in Greek word *Anthropos* which means human being. It means that Greeks were well verse about the predicates and nature of this human science. But at the time of Greek Philosophy humanity sciences were not been classified. So, what Greeks described and defined humans, they defined it under the domain of philosophy. I will quote some examples from which we can assume and infer that anthropology has its root in Philosophy. Here I have mentioned some statements through which we can predict that the idea of anthropology was present in the minds and works of Greek Philosophers implicitly or explicitly.

Thales: 'All is water which implies man is made of water'

Anaximander: 'All is Apeiron which implies man is made of Apeiron'

Anaximenes: 'All is Air which implies humans are made up of air'

Heraclitus: 'Humans are changing' (one can't step into the same River twice which implies that humans are in flux; man is changing both mentally and physically) (Tantray, Role of Philosophy to examine values of Traditional Societies and Modern Societies: An ethical study, 2017, pp. 28-29).

Anaxagoras: 'Humans are constituents of four elements of earth, water, fire and air'

Democritus: 'Humans are aggregates of atoms'

Plato: 'Humans are made up of body and soul'

Aristotle: 'Man is a rational animal'

Sigmund Freud: 'Man is made up of three personality traits Id, Ego and Super Ego'

Philosophy is known as the science of all sciences as well as the mother of all sciences. So, from these definitions we can trace out that anthropological problems are as well philosophical problems. It is role of Philosophy to trace out and classify problems and their description as well their solutions rather than to analyze those problems. Philosophy is the clear understand of the mankind. If anthropology is the study of different types of the people and their nature then philosophy is the core subject to study anthropology because the problems which we are facing today have their description in the wisdom of philosophy. It seems to me that anthropology is the branch of philosophy because human beings were studied uniquely with different names in the Philosophical science. It was explored on the multiple names and analysis like *Purusa, Atma, Sharirr, Bhutas*, in the field of Indian Philosophy, *Nafs* or self, *Rouh, Spirit*, as well as soul in Muslim philosophy. Man as a matter And form, spirit, idea and *Dasein* in Western philosophy.

Correspondence:

Tariq Rafeeq Khan
Maharani Laxmi Bai Govt
College of Excellence Gwalior
India

Relation between Philosophy and Anthropology

Philosophy and anthropology are intimately related to each other while the former provides the foundation and rational approach to study human beings their culture and environment and the latter is the study of human beings within the schema of time and space. Anthropological study is derived from the concepts of Philosophy. Because hardly any subject except philosophy has discussed human being in its multiple facets which includes the Metaphysical study of humans (Self, soul and substances), ethical study (moral development visa a visa character, customs, behavior), social transformation and cultural transformation) linguistic development (communication, expression and vocal) religious study which explores the belief system and religion of different generations in the present and past. So these studies results in diversified branches of anthropology like social anthropology, cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, biological anthropology, political anthropology, linguistic Anthropology, religious anthropology and environmental anthropology. It means that anthropology has its history in philosophy. If anthropology is the study of man with his present and past as well as with his culture, language, customs, religion, environment, then these issues are already discussed and investigated in the doctrines of philosophical wisdom. What makes human beings human? What is their role in the world? How cultures transformed? How soul and body are the component constituents of man? What is the role of language in the development of man? How humans evolved with due time and space? What the different theories of evolution are of man i.e. religious theories, spiritual theories and biological theories as well psychology theories. These questions have answer in Philosophy rather philosophy has given already answer to these questions. Following are descriptions and argumentation on the science of humans and their predicate nature.

Descartes: Man is thinking being

Kant: Humans use understanding and sense perception in making judgments

Kierkegaard: Humans are existential beings

Socrates: Humans should know their self

Wittgenstein: Humans should make their language easy and clear in order to transform and communicate their thoughts and technology.

We can explore the nature of humans though philosophical reflections of ancient philosophy, medieval and modern and also with different Philosophical theories. It seems to me that both the philosophy and anthropology has same functions to discover. Philosophy studies the fundamental problems like existence, knowledge, consciousness, understanding, causation, mind, body, time, space, world, self and reality. In the same parallel approach, anthropology studies the nature of mankind with his relation to those Philosophical problems. Anthropologists derived all their theories and concepts from Philosophy because every aspect of human nature is elaborated in the chapter of philosopher whether spiritual development of man, economical, existential, environmental, metaphysical, epistemological, axiological, mental, biological, moral and cultural. Philosophy always describes man as a being who is the crown of the creation, philosophy called it by many names. Remember Dr Sir Mohd Iqbal who calls human being mard-e-mumin, mard-e-kamil (vicegerent of God on

Earth) and Koran says about humans that they are above all creations as they are responsible beings.

Characteristics and limitations

1. Anthropology studies human nature but this study can be evaluated on the basis of philosophical theories.
2. Knowledge of the anthropology is limited whereas the knowledge of philosophy is vast
3. Anthropology science gives us the limited criteria for study whereas Philosophy gives us all domains to study human nature.
4. Through anthropology and Philosophy we can analyze and develop our culture society political system economy and self.
5. Philosophy and anthropology are so related that we can evaluate and examine different set of theories and philosophies for progress and change.
6. Philosophy and anthropology are evolving and changing. By these fields we can see the development and nature of past and present history of humans.
7. Excluding Philosophy, anthropology cannot work and would not produce utilitarian results.
8. If there is no philosophy in anthropology, there is no scope and understanding for it.
9. Anthropology studies only human nature with respect to time and space but Philosophy studies all its allied fields with which human is concerned.

Metaphysics and Anthropology

Metaphysics is the study of those entities or statements which lies beyond our understanding, experience and logic, i.e. beyond time and space. It is known as first philosophy because it studies the first principles. So, in its close connection with anthropology we can assume that anthropology has its metaphysical part which studies human science in relation with man, God and world. Whenever we study humanity and human being implicitly or explicitly in terms of its interrelation with God and world as well as time and space, in this manner we are dealing with metaphysics. The metaphysics of anthropology explores the spiritual, mental and theoretical part of humanity. The great metaphysicians of the world like Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Berkeley, Bradley, have described humanity as unique metaphysical component in relation to matter. Traditional Greek philosophy regards the concept of mind (human) as something spiritual or mysterious vital part which is either opposite of physical or a life force, they are of the vision that mind is a spiritual part of the reality of which matter is a physical part. Metaphysics and anthropology are linked and developed hand to hand. Their relation has established a tremendous knowledge in the world of anthropogenic sciences. Although humans are physical but their humanity is metaphysical, and how this humanity could be developed, transmitted to cultures, and evolved with due time can be investigated only through philosophical and rational exploration. Though metaphysics is the study of being and in anthropology this being is 'human'. It is the study of ultimate reality and in anthropology we are also studying the ultimate reality of human beings, their attributes, cultures and evolution. Once Hegel said that "whatever is real is rational and whatever is rational is real". It meant that whatever is metaphysical has its opponent physical and whatever is physical has its metaphysical part". Thus anthropology is intimately related

with metaphysics and ontology. According to Kierkegaard 'Existence precedes Essence' which connotes that study of human beings are first principles and their essence could be determined only through their essence. Following are the ontological claims of philosophers

Descartes: I think, therefore I am.

Kant: I ought, therefore I can.

Kierkegaard: I am, therefore I think.

Thomas Jefferson: I feel, therefore I exist.

Albert Camus: I rebel, therefore I am.

Leo Tolstoy: I want, therefore I am.

Paul Valery: Sometimes I think: and sometimes I am.

Max Stirner: I labor, therefore I am a man.

Epistemology and anthropology

As epistemology is the study of knowledge and understanding. So, anthropology needs epistemology to understand human beings and their morality and cultures as well language. How we could know human beings, how we could know their language, customs and cultures, is there any limit in knowing them. Epistemology provides a valid scope to know humanity. Today world is called a global village only because people could easily know each other, their psychology, environment, culture, language, biology, and philosophy. We assume with the help of modern researches and inquires that humanity is a capacity (modular) in human beings just like flying in birds. Humans can learn and acquire norms and morality only if they could get a suitable and good environment while birds and animals could not. Birds and animals could not develop morality even if we could provide suitable environment to them.

Axiology and anthropology

Axiology and anthropology are closely interdependent. While axiology is the science of worth (values) and humanity and human being has a significant worth. As axiology is the study of values. So, is with the anthropology which studies human person? When we pay attention to anthropology, its main theme is; what makes human beings, human and it is only the value which enlightens the attribute of humanity. All the three cluster values; goodness, truth and beauty of ethics, logic as well as aesthetics determines the moral, rational and archetypical nature of humans and their humanity (Tantray, 2016).

Branches of anthropology with their relation with philosophy

Environmental anthropology

Environmental anthropology is a sub-specialty within the field of anthropology that takes an active role in examining the relationships between humans and their environment across space and time. This field of anthropology describes the exchanges of cultural values and also the development of the humans in learning from others. Environment anthropology determines the adaptation, survival, struggle, atmosphere and evolution of humans. Not only this environment provides the significant data to anthropologist to study the past history and philosophy of humans. How they got developed, what was their weather (cool, dry or moderate). How they lived their life. What were their culture, education system, tools and transport? We can know easily the life of ancestors in the world from their environment to which they belongs.

Social anthropology

The term social anthropology emerged in Britain in the early years of the 20th century and was used to describe a distinctive style of anthropology, comparative, fieldwork-based, and with strong intellectual links to the sociological ideas of Émile Durkheim and the group of French scholars associated with the journal *L'Année sociologique*. Although it was at first defined in opposition to then fashionable evolutionary and diffusion schools of anthropology, by the mid of 20th century social anthropology was increasingly contrasted with the more humanistic tradition of American cultural anthropology. At this point, the discipline spread to various parts of what was then the British Empire and also was established as a distinctive strand of teaching and research in a handful of American universities. The years after World War II, though, brought a partial breakdown of the British opposition to American cultural anthropology, as younger scholars abandoned the tenets of comparative sociology set out by one of the discipline's founders, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. During the same period, however, the term was increasingly used in Continental Europe: the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss accepted a chair in social anthropology in the Collège de France in 1959, and, when European anthropologists established a joint professional association in the late 1980s, it took the title European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) and called its journal Social anthropology.

Cultural anthropology

Cultural anthropology is that major division of anthropology that explains culture in its many aspects. It is anchored in the collection, analysis, and explanation (or interpretation) of the primary data of extended ethnographic field research. This discipline, both in America and in Europe, has long cast a wide net and includes various approaches. It has produced such collateral approaches as culture and personality studies, culture history, cultural ecology, cultural materialism, ethno-history, and historical anthropology. These sub disciplines variously exploit methods from the sciences and the humanities. Cultural anthropology has become a family of approaches oriented by the culture concept. The central tendencies and recurrent debates since the mid-19th century have engaged Universalist versus particularistic perspectives, scientific versus humanistic perspectives, and the explanatory power of biology (nature) versus that of culture (nurture). Two persistent themes have been the dynamics of culture change and the symbolic meanings at the core of culture. The definition of culture has long provoked debate. The earliest and most quoted definition is the one formulated in 1871 by Edward Burnett Tylor:

Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Three things of enduring relevance are to be remarked in this definition. First, it treats culture and civilization as interchangeable terms. Second, it emphasizes ethnography. And third, it singles out that which is learned by means of living in society rather than what is inherited biologically.

Biological anthropology (physical anthropology)

Physical anthropology also known as biological anthropology is concerned with the origin, evolution, and

diversity of people. Physical anthropologists work broadly on three major sets of problems: human and nonhuman primate evolution, human variation and its significance, and the biological bases of human behavior. The course that human evolution has taken and the processes that have brought it about are of equal concern. In order to explain the diversity within and between human populations, physical anthropologists must study past populations of fossil hominines as well as the nonhuman primates. Much light has been thrown upon the relation to other primates and upon the nature of the transformation to human anatomy and behavior in the course of evolution from early hominines to modern people—a span of at least four million years.

The processes responsible for the differentiation of people into geographic populations and for the overall unity of *Homo sapiens* include natural selection, mutation, genetic drift, migration, and genetic recombination. Objective methods of isolating various kinds of traits and dealing mathematically with their frequencies, as well as their functional or phylogenetic significance, make it possible to understand the composition of human populations and to formulate hypotheses concerning their future. The genetic and anthropometric information that physical anthropologists collect provides facts about not only the groups who inhabit the globe but also the individuals who compose those groups. Estimates of the probabilities that children will inherit certain genes can help to counsel families about some medical conditions.

Linguistic anthropology

Linguistic anthropologists argue that human production of talk and text, made possible by the unique human capacity for language, is a fundamental mechanism through which people create culture and social life. Contemporary scholars in the discipline explore how this creation is accomplished by using many methods, but they emphasize the analysis of audio or video recordings of “socially occurring” discourse, that is, talk and text that would appear in a community whether or not the anthropologist was present. This method is preferred because differences in how different communities understand the meaning of speech acts, such as “questioning,” may shape in unpredictable ways the results derived from investigator-imposed elicitation, such as “interviewing.” A central question for linguistic anthropology is whether differences in cultural and structural usage among diverse languages promote differences among human communities in how the world is understood. Local cultures of language may prefer certain forms of expression and avoid others. For instance, while the vocabulary of English includes an elaborate set of so-called absolute directional’s (words such as north and southwest), most speakers seldom use these terms for orientation, preferring vocabulary that is relative to a local context (such as downhill or left). “Cultures of language” may cross linguistic boundaries.

An important line of research explores how “cultural models”—local understandings of the world are encoded in talk and text. Students of “language ideologies” look at local ideas about how language functions. A significant language ideology associated with the formation of modern nation-states constructs certain ways of speaking as “standard languages”; once a standard is defined, it is treated as prestigious and appropriate, while others languages or dialects are marginalized and stigmatized.

Psychological anthropology

Psychological anthropology focuses on the mind, body, and subjectivity of the individual in whose life and experience culture and society are actualized. Within this broad scope there is no unified theoretical or methodological consensus, but rather there are lively debates about the relative importance of culture versus individual psychology in shaping human action and about the universality versus the inherent variability of human existence. The field unites a number of disparate research traditions with different intellectual programs, but it also provides an arena for principled argumentation about the existence of a common human nature. Because of its focus on the individual who lives and embodies culture, psychological anthropological writing is often the study of one or a few actual people. Such “person-centered” ethnography augments a schematic view of cultural and social systems with a description and evocation of the experience of participating in such a system. Researchers in the classical “culture-and-personality” school of psychological anthropology look for typical child-rearing customs, situations, patterns, or traumas that might result in characteristic responses (fantasies, anxieties, or conflicts) that in turn would find expression or resolution in the rituals, myths, and other features of the culture under study. Many employ a cross-cultural comparative methodology, seeking significant correlation between a childhood experience and adult institutions; for example, they look for a correlation between father absence and the harsh male initiation rites thought necessary to counteract strong maternal identification.

Conclusion

Thus it appears from this paper that philosophy and anthropology are intimately related. Humans need philosophy to interpret their multidimensional properties within time, space, place, existence, environment and cognition. On the one side philosophy is the clarification and investigation to anthropology and on the other anthropology examines the existential and humanistic approach to study philosophy. From this paper it is evident that philosophers have discussed rather simplified the issue related to anthropology, sometimes they are knowing that the science which we are discussing is anthropology and sometimes they are unaware of the fact that what we are doing with humanity is anthropology. Philosophers analyzed the facets of human beings complemented with philosophical issue. Anthropology as a science was present in Greek and Medieval philosophy but they had not named and classified as anthropology. In case of modern philosophy, the anthropological issues pre-requisites philosophical theories in order to solve fundamental and ontological problems in the field of anthropology. Philosophy provides arguments in favor of metaphysical issues of human beings, epistemological issues, axiological issues, environmental issues and linguistic issues of humans and their humanity.

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