The Challenge of Anthropology as Humanitarian Science in the Eternal Search of Originality between the Cultural Difference and the Societal Otherness

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Abstract: For a long time anthropology was defined by the exoticism of its subject matter and also by the distance (mostly cultural than geographic) separating the researcher from the researched group. However, after the coming of the new Millennium many things have been changed radically and many anthropologists imply their old professional ethnographic techniques to study their own cultures using terms as otherness instead of exoticism and reflexivity instead of objectivity. The term of cosmopolitanism also has been too much applied instead of multiculturalism, charged with political connotations of what could be 'politically correct' under the western values. In the same time, anthropology is exercised now also by the representatives of these ' different cultures' who exercise by their original ways the inverse influence to the western values. Cultural difference has acquired its most complex meaning nowadays and the scope of this paper is to present through the example of tourism some cases of intercultural meetings under a paradigmatic assumption entailing not only anthropological self-criticism but also the consideration that this self-criticism anthropology prescribes is also morally and originally pointed. Social change has to be analysed objectively and in the same time from all points of view and this consists the challenge of anthropology in our era.

Keywords: Reflexive Anthropology, Cosmopolitanism, Otherness, Cultural Difference, Cultural Models, Hermeneutics.

Introduction

Imagination is declining, creativity too, information is governing in our postmodern life-worlds, but this kind of fragmented non credible raw information is not helping human actors to develop their cognitive capabilities towards the direction

of a meaning. The very comprehension of our everyday acts -the famous weberian verstehen- is not more characterizing our lives. Our intentions and motives of these actions remain obscure even to ourselves for the most of the times and some sociologists call still this phenomenon alienation even if they cannot find a way to "measure" it.

What are the real prerequisites of knowledge that can develop even to wisdom? For centuries, wise men have been those individuals who learned and knew much for the simplest thing. The sources of their knowledge could be found in their everyday social milieu that was not sophisticated in se, but rather practical and traditional. This wisdom was speaking from the most simple to the most complicated things with the simplest words. Today the amounts of information are enormous and 'wise' is somebody who knows infinite details for the most unimportant thing. He is the specialist, but his wisdom is really special and not general. At most, his knowledge is not perceivable to the laymen because of its technical language using terms with special signification. Raw information is of not use. Young people that have been accustomed not to put questions are not able to think upon the most rich data offered to them. We need to develop **Our Personal Axiological Criteria and to Shape Our Goals** in order to evaluate and use the increasing amounts of information offered**. We Need to Develop Our Proper Interests** in order not to be influenced by silly fashions and actualities. The only valuable means to overcome personal alienation e.g. distancing from our inner self, is to learn how to listen and talk to other people with opposite or different views. The goal is not the achievement of a deal of mutual profits, neither the pleasure of communicating just for the grace of communication or to overcome boredom or loneliness. The real aim is the development of the intellect that occurs only when we talk in a significant level. Discovering the "otherness" we help ourselves to discover -or rediscover- (whom else ?) but ... ourselves ![1]

The Meaning of Reflexive Anthropology

Cultural Anthropology with its many sub-sectors, is a humanitarian science by definition using theories and various practices to study societal forms of cultural development and evolution (including cultural decline too). Ethnography is fieldwork used by anthropologists to understand the culture they are studying. They employ many techniques to expand their understanding including direct observation, interviews and conversations with the group they're trying to learn more about. Ethnographers try to see a situation in its natural and raw state minimizing their

influence as much as possible. When this is compared to laboratory research, while these scientists, say a biochemist, may want to observe a process in it's natural state, it's not always possible.[2] With ethnography, there is no way for ethnographers to have identical experiences since many of their views and observations are limited by who they are as an individual as well.

The problem with ethnographic representation is it can be limited by the experience of the anthropologist doing the research. Since it is more of a qualitative research method, it would seem that the effectiveness of their representation would improve with experience in field research and extensive education. This type of research relies on the interpretive understanding of the researcher and their mental framework. It can be very hard to remain objective when doing this type of research and seems that only seasoned anthropologists with extensive research in ethnography can really provide solid and unbiased reports. Also, there is a possibility that the ethnographic representation that results from their research many not be a true representation of the culture they studied. Reflexivity essentially is the impact a researcher has on the very process they're investigating. When it comes to an anthropologist embedding them selves within a culture they are researching, no matter how much they try to be a fly on the wall, their presence will have some sort of effect on the community they're trying to conduct research about. It is important for an anthropologist that is conducting ethnographic research to be aware of this effect and how it may shape the outcome of their research. By addressing this effect in their ethnography, it will make their research more solid.

If we suppose that the reality of the anthropological thought is not found in the words but rather in the facts, then we can say that anthropology consists a theoretical science but with significant practical applications. For a long time anthropology was defined by the exoticism of its subject matter and by the distance, conceived as geographical but also cultural that separates the researcher from the researched group. However, this situation has been changed for various reasons in the last 20 years. If the main problem faced by anthropologists during their practical research is that of the "alterity" or "difference" of the group researched, the notion of cultural distance is the crucial parameter that created a series of misunderstandings and various meta-problems of comprehension and interpretation. Today, more and more anthropologists study the people of their own culture or at least people of the same linguistic heritage that enables them to comprehend better mentalities and values through all linguistic connotations and expressions that are more or less common. This home-anthropology as is said, opens new horizons unknown in the classical era of colonialist and post-colonialist period and the effect of exoticism as

an artefact created non deliberately by the readers of past studies is now denounced in full conscience since not collective impressions are necessary to fancy any more about the " unknown others". It is incontestable that today the rhythms of social and cultural change are much more rapid than in the previous eras of Humanity, hence the aspiration of this change for populations and ethnic or tribal groups combined with the desire of the anthropologists for the ideal of objective observation and interpretation, brings to the fore the notion of reflexivity in anthropology. Self-criticism especially in anthropology is (and must always be) morally pointed. We cannot impose to any human actor ways of personal or collective behaviour even if we have discovered the most sophisticated and effective instruments or systems of analysis. Wittgenstein who was mainly an analytical philosopher and epistemologist of knowledge, speaks in his 'philosophical investigations" (1953) on the 'talks of the rules' that correspond to major features of any anthropological discourse which should seek regularities in action and describe them in terms of rules. He insists that to say that someone is following a rule, is not to represent, in the spelling of a rule, a rule that could be in the person's head. The rule works thus as a Wegweiser (signpost). When describing someone else's action to talk the language of rules is not to neutrally represent it but it is to engage in a relation with the reader of the description. This relation can be an educative one that meaning that of teaching how to act like others, or how a human being could possibly come to act in a special way, has a very important ethical impact.

This ethical reflexivity does not concern the classical ethical question about respecting the person observed by the observer, but it concerns the ethical import of describing someone's action in terms of rules. This is not simple representative language but a talk about what the subject can become. Relations of power that constitute action as a play are repetitive, regular and reproduced but the language of rules allows for the reader to be liberated from such odd relations. This language of rules can open the reader to a multiplicity of possibilities of action, which in other terms escape from the attention and go besides and beyond hegemonic discourses and also practices of the everyday life. So, creation and critical moral thoughts are the impetus of such a reflexive approach in the anthropological discourse. The native anthropologist is much more reflexive and intimate under this sense with the culturally practice even if unsaid, than the interloper and this reflexivity is in correlation of the knowledge of linguistic common terms, expressions and connotations and nuances. This reflexivity is for sure based in practice and here are many tacit parameters of comprehension influenced or inspired by the feelings, a fact that the foreign anthropologists could never afford. The final result is the formation

of a common sense secret link between the subjects observed and the observer who share an analogue world of values. Comprehension is not an issue coming only from the good perception of the meanings expressed by the 'other". Comprehension and the following critical interpretation is an outcome of self-reflection (re-stochastic in ancient greek) a process that entails also contestation and finally new fruitful compositions of meanings.

Interdisciplinarity in Anthropology

Many authors used to study the case of junction of two fields such as Anthropology and Economy including marketing, to the construction of a new theory of the gift advancing the primordial and classical study of M.Mauss. The outcome of such collaboration was to conclude that economists of the post modern developed societies have to admit that techniques of exchanging gifts are the same valuable to adapt and use in their societies as they had been in primitive societies of he past and the present. This can be admitted as a discovery by specialists of a modern field, which discovery could not be possible if continuing the line of studies they were used to. We will examine now another paradigm of interdisciplinarity between Anthropology and Communication studies that try to put a bridge between them but don't find in the most of the cases the right way. . If we simplify down to a schematic level, it appears that the interests of anthropology in communication theory and the interests of communication scholars in anthropological theory are roughly opposite. Not only is it that each is looking in the other literature for something it lacks in its own, but that they are each looking for what the other is trying to overcome, to compensate, to leave behind. (one can hardly resist proposing that we are a structured pair of oppositions, analogous to Lévi-Strauss's explanation of how neighbouring communities with complementary inversions in their mythology can evolve to have related differences in their social structures). The tradition of anthropology provided theoretical and methodological tools for conceiving the world as a set of distinct societies and cultures. There was an elaborate conceptual vocabulary for the study of cultural order, for ideas about how cultures existed separately from individuals and shaped their lives. The professional sensitivities of classical anthropology were to the differences between cultures and to the serious domains of life within each: family, religion, politics, economics, and such. Because their chosen fields of study were non-industrial, they were not concerned with spheres of life differentiated by modern economies, such as leisure, commercial culture, media and entertainment. This heritage led anthropologists to resist the study of media and

commercially produced culture for many years after their importance should have been obvious.

The tradition of communication studies provided theoretical and methodological tools for conceiving communicative actors with wills, purposes, resources, constraints, creative intelligence, individual interpretations, and so on, tools for conceiving of communication as a cumulative flow of acts, utterances, messages, texts, artefacts, programs, advertisements, appeals, and so on. The dominant vocabulary was social psychological, for conceiving actors in situations. The professional sensitivities were to aggregate statistical patterns on the one hand and to the unpredictability of individual outcomes on the other. While there was also a traditional concern with media law and policy, industry, economics, and the history of media institutions, what the field of communication lacked was a workably sophisticated model for how non-material systems —of ideas, meanings, symbols, and such—could yield order at the level of individual experience. When anthropologists did turn their attention to the media, they found they needed concepts and tools for the study of communication and cultural industries, their international commerce, and their audiences. The most intriguing, new, different thing about the study of audiences from their point of view was the wilful, interpreting, individual actor. At home with theories of cultural order, anthropologists went looking for concepts and methods that emphasized individual choice, action, and variability. Communication scholars, on the other hand, at home in a world where the individual reigns supreme, went looking for theories of cultural order. Anthropologists found the more sophisticated examples of what they needed in the more recent decades of media and cultural studies work. Communication scholars found the more inspiring examples of what they needed in the older, more classical anthropological sources. If this hypothesis holds, even in part, then we see media anthropology as a territory that has been approached by different scholars who are not only coming from different directions but also going in different directions. We could presume that this field is a new inter-disciplinary enterprise and that it might evolve into a new disciplinary territory. If that is our goal, then we should be working to establish the new disciplinary standards that will mark the boundaries of that field and police the scholarly activities within it. Before we go that way it can be noticed that whatever has been accomplished so far in the name of media anthropology has been produced by inter-disciplinary contact more than by inter-disciplinary study. The good hope is that media anthropology will grow richer, more varied, and more productive to the extent we maintain that somewhat less organized, less disciplined approach.

Epistemological Problems of Anthropological Interpretation of the Otherness

Anthropologists had always problems of understanding and interpreting strange and 'different values' mentalities and world-views of populations studied. The proposed hermeneutical approach of the famous German social philosopher W. Dilhey is twofold, the one rather metaphysical putting the solution to the shared by both sides common humanity or in another formulation, since both are expressions of the human mind, and the second approach the particular characteristics of individuals are disregarded. Instead what this method proposes is human action in relation to some wider whole which gives it's meaning. This circular relationship between a whole and its parts is known as a hermeneutical circle. Similar are the arguments advanced by the father of the 'sociology of knowledge' in the thirties Karl Mannheim. Individual or collective cultural manifestations can be understood by seeing them as a part of a larger world-view. The analyst attaches documentary's meaning to human actions. This makes sense only in the context of the world-view. The problem for this method of approach is to find out why and under what circumstances (for example deliberately or by force) it happens that particular human groups hold a particular world-view. In order to establish a relation between the whole and its parts, one has to understand the function of the whole in the parts and also its dynamic role because the whole can be changeable under certain social conditions and usually anthropologists tend to isolate the 'whole' to facilitate their approach. Also, another important analytical problem is about what justification the anthropologist has for putting or accepting particular elements into a World View and not other, because it will never be the case that all members of a group (tribe, social class, generation, religious sect) believe all elements of the World View that is ascribed (by whom exactly) to them.

If Gadamer is using the general –and…traditional- term of tradition to explain the fusion of gap between the actors analyst, the problem is not resolved to the end by abstract expressions and all potential interpretations will stay as tentative and subject to revision in their hermeneutical circle. K. Mannheim as a sociologist of knowledge also tried to overcome this problem by assuming that it is possible an association between forms of knowledge and social structure, but later he accepted that **If All Beliefs Could Be Socially Located, Then There Was No Place for True Beliefs and for Socially Independent Criteria of Truth.** The argument that a number of social groups could be correlated with forms of knowledge does not resolve to its end the problem of interpreting the reasons of formation of this sort of knowledge

that can be socially grounded but also independent of it. This confusion of defining the limits of knowledge and beliefs is characteristic of the practical problem that an anthropologist is facing in the field. Belief is what an actor is thinking is truth and this can be interpreted by an analyst incorrectly as social knowledge (rooted in the social system) or as a World View but it is also possible to express only the inner psyche of the actor and his/her character's particularities. The meaning attributed to this belief or knowledge, is usually conceptual and not causal (P.Winch). The giving of meaning is a function of following rules that are essentially social since the appeal to others' following of rules is the only way of deciding whether an attribution of meaning is correct or not. Meanings are not easy to interpret at any case even if their causes are conceived. The weberian procedure of verstehen is a procedure by which an anthropologist could have access to the meanings of the actors i.e. to analyse ' from the interior'. Not to be able to investigate the meaning of the actions may be seriously misleading in that actions might all be put by mistake together in one category when they really belong to different ones.

Hermeneutics and Verstehen theory tried to criticize positivism (attempting to attribute causes of all social actions to social structures) but their most feeble point was to validate the various interpretations of comprehension. To understand **The Part In Terms of the Whole & the Whole In Terms of the Part** as proposed once by Gadamer in the scheme of his hermeneutical circle is not but a theoretical proposal that needs much imagination plus intuition to distinguish the limits of the Whole and its various parts. Meanings can be the same irrational as well as rational depending of what the interpreter validates. For example in the time of Malinowski, western model of logic was much more austere than nowadays and most of indigenous meaningful actions were classified by the analyst as irrational but today after some 80 years and three generations of anthropologists, values and concepts of the West have been greatly modified. The main reason for this cannot be but the influence that all tribal and not industrialised societies to the mentalities and also to the imageries of the West. All young anthropologists who start today their milieu study, the advices they get from their supervisors concerning various topics such as e.g. the tradition are radically different of the past everybody acknowledging that globalization of our times necessitate a recalibration of operative epistemological frameworks in the study of these traditional loci. If globalization is exercising influence on these studies, this depends rather of western academic centres than of the 'primitives' to be studied.

Another trend noticed in the last 5 years in the social sciences literature is the coming in the fore of a new term almost completely forgotten in the past that of

cosmopolitanism. This can be explained only as a consequence of the new political evaluation starting from the US about what is politically correct and what outdated. Nobody could imagine in the nineties that all anthropologists would turn to this term in order to describe homelessness, virtual loci, liminalities and to influence political scientists and historians like Martha Nissbaum to recall this term created by Stoics and lost in the hellenistic History. However, as an eminent anthropologist remarked recently 'cosmopolitanism is but a hoax, a false slogan used as an alibi for the migrants who never chose by pleasure their destiny" (Keith Hart) and in the reality not even the professionals of anthropology are not cosmopolitan in their everydayness but rather carrier makers who use the translocation as a professional prerequisite and not feel at all the same as the migrants and refugees they put in their studies. To clarify some concepts or to put some things in order, important is not more to understand and interpret some notions as e.g. tradition in their real essence, but rather to examine how traditional knowledge is formulated and displayed in the political sphere including the new use of this term by the state as a means of co-optation or governance or finally the manner in which fundamentalism is ' framed' and exploited by different interests and social groups. Also to examine how tradition is mobilised and deployed in revival and regeneration practices as well as the critical pedagogies on such practices.(3)

Preliminary Conclusion

What we try to do in this theoretical approach is to understand how we are able to integrate information presented to us by the global mass-media with the knowledge created on a local level. We see no reason in making any moral distinction between global and local meanings but rather an interest in understanding how the simulated culture becomes significant on a local level without any connection to the local praxis. The simulated culture affects the local praxis and changes it sometimes, like the e-mail communication which broadens our social network enormously. The simulated culture conditions the global interrelations and it is a part in the modern equalizing process, which threatens the cultural diversity on the planet Earth. Communication cannot be described by technical means or by comparing human with neuronic networks. Communication needs really some special skills if we intend to keep some significant level. What rests to be proposed is a collective spirit of collaboration, of commitment and last but not least the spirit of collective courage that has a pure moral value. Renowned anthropologist Erich Wolf once described his discipline as "the most scientific of the humanities and the most humanistic of

the sciences". In fact Anthropology is a humanitarian theoretical science with many practical applications and results that can provide good results to these aims.

The reflexive anthropologist has more chances to contribute to the improvement of a humanitarian communication among peoples of different mentalities, world views and cultures. If Anthropology is searching for the originality as a main value among ever changing societies and phenomenal cultural differences the fascinating of the deed is not in the rhetoric of theory but rather in the search of a humanitarian feeling that can enable the common man to believe that the anthropological knowledge creates for him a practical knowledge tradition not based in the sterile repetition of the same or in the memorization of past but rather in the creation of new meaningful and socially useful messages. In the following chapters we will examine six paradigms from tourism that consists a mass social phenomenon of cultural meetings under anthropological scope.[4]

Notes

1. Concerning alienation, it is absurd and not true to advocate that the new media technologies will not affect us all, since this is the consequence of modernity, but what is sure is that we integrate this culture differently depending on where we live, what kind of praxis we are involved in. Because ultimately what affects us the most is not the meanings brought on to us via the media but the meanings coming from our own physical experiences in everyday life including all our senses, feelings and thoughts. But what is sad is that while we share more and more meanings globally because of the media-technologies (ultimately because of capitalism, Marx was right on this part) we also destroy or forget the old traditional culture, developed during many thousands of years. These old traditional ways of life and thought once gone it will never be possible to wake again.

2. If you're trying research how a biological system reacts to the introduction of a drug in humans, you can't just start by injecting random substances in people. And you certainly can't ask the system you're investigating any questions to gain insight. You'd never hear a biochemist say, ' Hello enzyme. Why exactly aren't you binding to this receptor site?" In this type of research methodology, experiments that support a certain hypothesis must be repeatable by other scientists. Their reproduction of an experiment must have similar results as the original scientist.

3. All these interesting proposals done by Oxford University in vue of its Dec 12-15 2008 international congress on tradition, are well formulated in the complete absence of the real essence of tradition . Also in the past congresses of the same Oxford based organization IASTE all concern and interest was given to the so called 'end of tradition'. This 'agony' in the West the same as the end of ideologies, end of History and of Geography came to the 'end of tradition' because the emergence of the latin term post included also tradition (post-traditionalism the same as post-modernism) and this served as an indicator for the past congress of 1999 just before the new Millennium. How is it possible to speak today about post-traditionalism (with not entering in the pain to analyse, understand and interpret) the parameters of the real meaning

of tradition not only for the westerners but also to people so different in their conceptions about the sacred, in their overall beliefs and in what we use to call social knowledge.?

4.   Beck considers that the limits of classic sociology and it s methods have been exhausted. The cause of this development is that social, class and political categories of classic sociology were categories that were given birth in order to explain the nation - state, and these categories were suitable for the interpretation of developments of first modernity. Today these categories constitute living fossils because they are unable to answer to the problems of second modernity. The criticism of these significances constitutes the first step for the configuration of sociology that changes and at the same time changes the world. The classical sociology was supported in the model of methodological nationalism, after this sociology was developed inside the container of nation-state. Anyone who analyzes categories as the family, the household, the orders as if has nothing changed in their way of operation from the season of sovereignty to the national state, is condemned in failure

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