

Transformation of and Prospects for Educational Anthropological Studies in Postwar Japan

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戦後日本における教育人間学の変遷と展望

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Abstract : This paper endeavours to examine the transformation of educational anthropology—which originated in the 1950s in the former West Germany—within the educational research of postwar Japan, and considers its evolution to the present. It examines the historical and social background of the educational-anthropological establishment in the former West Germany and Japan during the 1950s and 1960s, including Akira Mori's *Educational Anthropology* (1961), which some consider to be a monumental achievement in this field of study in Japan. Mori's and his follower Tsunemi Tanaka's development of the discipline is described, followed by a discussion of Satoji Yano's distinctive approach to the further development of Mori's style. Since another focus of this paper is on the current state of educational-anthropological studies, it notes that each of these three Japanese scholars' approaches is based theoretically on the concept of "the human being as a modern subject" and proposes the possibility that educational-anthropological studies will deconstruct this concept.

Key Words : educational anthropology, human being, a modern subject

抄録 : 本稿は、1950年代の旧西ドイツに端を発する教育人間学が、戦後日本の教育学研究のなかでいかなる変遷を遂げてきたか、また現在どのように展開しつつあるかを考察するものである。第2節では、1950～60年代に教育人間学という学問領域が成立した思想的・社会的背景を振り返る。この時期に、日本の教育人間学の金字塔とも称される森昭の著書『教育人間学』（1961）が刊行されるが、続く第3節では、この森の教育人間学が森自身と森の弟子である田中毎実によっていかに批判的・発展的に継承されたかについて論じる。第4節では、田中とはまた異なる視座から、森の教育人間学を批判的に継承し発展させようと試みる矢野智司の教育人間学に焦点を当てる。最後に、森、田中、矢野の教育人間学的研究が「近代的な主体としての人間」を理論の基盤に据えていることを指摘し、今後の展望として、近代的な主体としての人間観を脱構築するという課題を導出する。

索引語 : 教育人間学, 人間 (観), 近代的な主体

1. Introduction

L'homme est une invention dont l'archéologie de notre pensée montre aisément la date récente. Et peut-être la fin prochain (The human being is nothing but a recent invention, as is easily shown by the archaeology of our thinking. This invention might probably come to an end soon). (Foucault, 1966, p. 398)

Almost half a century has passed since Michel Foucault made this remark at the end of his work, *Les mots et les choses* [The Order of Things]. However, we continue to question what it means to be a human being because education is, simply defined, an activity that transforms a human baby—a 'creature' that belongs to the species known as *Homo Sapiens*—into a mature human being. Human beings become human beings through educational activities designed by human beings, and this has always been a self-evident premise of education and educational science. According to this premise, all studies of educational philosophy must have, explicitly or implicitly, been based on certain concepts or considerations about human beings.

What is education? What is a human being? How does a human being, as a simple creature, become a 'true' human being? How do other human beings become involved in this process? Educational anthropology is a study that has delved into these questions based on various concepts, theories and scientific research.

In Japan's postwar academic circle of educational studies, educational anthropology has developed in a unique manner, although it has been influenced by Pädagogische Anthropologie, which was established in the former West Germany's academic circle of educational studies in the 1950s. This paper examines the development of educational-anthropological studies within educational studies in Japan and the current state of this development.

Section 2 examines the historical and social background of the origins of educational-anthropological studies in the former West Germany and Japan during the 1950s and 1960s. During that time, Akira Mori published his *Educational Anthropology* (1961), which some consider to be a monumental achievement in this field of study in Japan. Section 3 addresses how Mori and his follower, Tsunemi Tanaka, developed that discipline. Section 4 focuses on Satoji Yano's distinctive approach to the development of Mori's style. The last section notes that each of these three Japanese scholars' approaches is based theoretically on the concept of 'the human being as a modern subject' and, as a future challenge, identifies the possibility that educational-anthropological study will deconstruct this concept.

2. The Dawn of Educational Anthropology

In the 1920s, scholarship was rapidly being divided into specialized fields, and new sciences were born. In Germany, sciences dealing with human beings as their main subject, such as psychology and ethnology, were generally called 'Anthropologie (anthropology)'. The accomplishments of these individual sciences were integrated to pursue an answer to the question, 'What is a human being as a whole?' In other words, a new academic field, Philosophische Anthropologie (philosophical anthropology), developed. Philosophische Anthropologie was initially based on Max Scheler's studies and on the accomplishments of the biological studies by Adolf Portmann and Jakob Johann Baron von Uexküll.

It was not until the 1950s that the philosophical anthropological way of thinking and its accomplishments were introduced into educational studies. In the former West Germany at that time, the holocaust and other atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II had completely destroyed people's trust in the innate goodness of human nature. Therefore, people were searching, in an existential way, for a new concept of the human being that could serve as a new foundation of education and educational studies. At the same time, during the decade after the end of World War II, all empirical sciences that focused on human beings were making rapid progress. It was necessary to arrange and integrate the accomplishments of these empirical sciences and relate them to education and educational studies. Under these circumstances, Pädagogische Anthropologie (educational anthropology in Germany) attracted growing interest, prompting a great deal of lively discussion in the 1960s. One of the methodologies discussed was that of Otto Friedrich Bollnow. He interpreted the educational meanings of the phenomena occurring in human beings' everyday lives from an anthropological viewpoint, and attempted to define the structure and the nature of 'the human being as a whole' in the historical, social and cultural contexts of the postwar period. Another methodology discussed was that of Heinrich Roth, who tried to integrate a tremendous amount of scientifically empirical science data from the perspective of education. The studies conducted by Bollnow and Roth helped to shape the major trends of educational anthropology in Germany at that time.

In Japan after World War II, 'the human being' was also one of the most important concepts supporting education and educational studies (Okabe, 2009, pp. 314-9). Contrary to the prewar concept of 'the people of the Great Japanese Empire' (Kou-koku-min), that is, a Japanese people who revered the emperor and supported the nation under the imperial system, the concept of the human being was considered at that time to be non-religious and non-political. Establishment of a democratic society and the practical improvements and reforms of a society based upon scientific knowledge were the purposes most highly prioritized in postwar Japanese education, neither of which had been achieved in prewar Japan as it developed 'the people of the Great Japanese Empire'. *Studies in the Philosophy of Education*, a periodic bulletin by the Japanese Society for the Philosophy of Education, published many articles that attempted to unravel the 'true' meaning of the human being through accurate interpretation of modern educational thoughts, especially those of the West. These articles were influenced by German educational anthropology, which included the theories of Bollnow and Roth.

During this period, Akira Mori (1915-76), a professor of Osaka University, published *Educational Anthropology* (1961). This book is considered to be 'the most monumental work among the Japanese studies of educational anthropology' (Satoji Yano). Mori is regarded as the first academic in Japan, or in the world, to describe educational anthropology systematically in terms of the scale and achievement of his visions (Tsunemi Tanaka).

The educational anthropology Mori described has different characteristics from those of contemporary Germany and other Japanese articles in the field. Immediately after World War II, Mori was involved in reconstructing the education and educational studies of Japan, which had been controlled by the mythical and political-ideological worldview based on the concept of 'the people of the Great Japanese Empire'. He described this reconstruction task as building of the education and educational studies that would foster 'the human being as a modern subject', one who would rationally improve and reform Japanese society through scientific knowledge and thus reinvent postwar Japan as a modern democratic nation (Mori, 1978a).

Mori pursued an ideal form of an education and educational study that could improve and reform Japanese society, relying not on mythical or political ideology (for example, ‘the people of the Great Japanese Empire’) nor on an *a priori* ideal of the ‘true’ human being, but instead, on observable facts in the real world.

Mori claims that the pedagogy of prewar Japan limited education to school education. In other words, education was limited to the intentional and planned practice of education being conducted by those who educate (adults) for those to be educated (children). Mori broadened this limited view, advocating that the complete process of human beings’ development, and everything related to this process, should become the objects of educational studies. By doing so, he attempted to focus attention on the rich activities, innate to education, that would occur throughout daily life, not to be restricted by any mythical or political ideologies or by educators’ *a priori* ideal image of the human being.

Mori referred to this new type of educational study as ‘educational anthropology’. The objective of his educational anthropology was to examine scientifically the entire process of a human being as a ‘creature’ becoming a mature human being, physically, psychologically, socially and in terms of personality (Mori, 1978b, p. 188). Therefore, he attempted to integrate the accomplishments of scientifically empirical research about human beings and human societies with the opinions and knowledge suggested by those studies conducted from the viewpoint to develop human beings.

One major characteristic of Mori’s study is that his considerations were of everything concerning human beings, based on the concept of ‘human becoming’; ‘human becoming’ being the process of a human being as a ‘creature’ becoming a mature human being, physically, psychologically, socially and in terms of personality. He was extremely critical of the ‘non-becoming’ view found in conventional philosophies and human sciences. According to Mori, conventional philosophies and human sciences tend to define ‘the human being’ as, for example, the animal that uses language. However, this definition is a perverted concept based on the misunderstanding of historical results of ‘human becoming’ as the innate, fundamental determinant and structure of a human being (Mori, 1978b, pp. 231-2). In other words, human beings are neither naturally nor essentially simply animals that use language; instead they have become animals that use language through their long history, and, as individuals, become animals that use language throughout their entire life process.

However, Mori later deemed his former studies of educational anthropology as ‘failures’ (Mori, 1985, pp. 132-3) because he had overemphasized the concept of ‘human becoming’. He claims he overemphasized the concept of a human being as a ‘creature’ becoming a mature human being and did not sufficiently emphasize the process of ‘human formation’, which is the concept that human beings can develop as mature human beings only when they are educated by other mature human beings. The next theoretical challenge Mori addressed in his studies of educational anthropology was to systematize the complete picture of ‘human becoming’ and ‘human formation’.

3. From Educational Anthropology to the Theory of Human Formation

This shift in Mori’s thinking resulted from a drastic change in Japanese society during the 1970s. When he published *Educational Anthropology* in 1961, he believed that if scientifically empirical discoveries about human beings and human societies and all the opinions and knowledge gained from these studies were integrated, and

both the natural and social systems were controlled by human reason and scientific knowledge, postwar Japan could become a modern democratic nation appropriate to ‘the human being as a modern subject’. However, during the high economic growth period from the 1960s to the 1970s, social systems for production became gigantic through unprecedentedly rapid growth. As a result, Japanese people could no longer grasp their society as a whole, nor consider improving and reforming their society under their own control. Furthermore, while scientific accomplishments brought convenience to their lives, it became evident that these accomplishments could also threaten nature and the lives of human beings, even their existence. In other words, 1970’s Japan brought on a situation in which modernization itself could hinder the lives of human beings.

Under those circumstances, Mori, who had been attempting to create education and educational studies to foster ‘the human being as a modern subject’, was forced to change the course of his educational-anthropological studies. Looking to the thoughts of Martin Heidegger, Mori attempted to reconstruct his concept of the existential aspects of human beings as follows: a human being does not always exist or act as ‘a subject’: she or he is thrown into relationships with other human beings and entities that she or he did not choose independently (thrown-ness and given-ness); she or he should always respond to unexpected and unpredictable events without having any goals and plans (contingency); and she or he should live her or his life, which will certainly come to an end some day (mortality) (Mori, 1985, p. 3).

Based on Heidegger’s model, how could human beings, as Mori now conceived them, lead fulfilling lives? And what could education do to help them lead fulfilling lives? These questions caused Mori to expand his speculations regarding educational anthropology to the realistic and existential areas of human beings’ lives, including illness, ageing and death. As part of this change, Mori considered education to be the activities between those who educate (adults) and those who are educated (children)— both wanting to lead fulfilling lives, searching for the meaning of their own lives and becoming and being formed into mature human beings throughout their lives.

A serious illness however, prevented Mori from establishing a new theory of educational anthropology based upon those new concepts of the human being and education. The challenge of establishing a new theory was entrusted to Tsunemi Tanaka (1947-), a scholar of educational studies at Kyoto University and one of Mori’s disciples.

Tanaka reconsiders Mori’s concept that education comprises all the activities between those who educate (adults) and those who are educated (children), with both wanting to become and be formed into mature human beings. He redefines education as the activities of human beings who belong to different generations (including several adult generations), who become and are formed into mature human beings, with both expanding and restricting each other. Tanaka discards the one-way model of adults educating children (for example, the one-way conveyance of knowledge from adults to children), and emphasizes the equality and mutuality of both generations. He systematically examines this equality and mutuality among different generations, citing events that characteristically occur at each stage of human life. He refers to the theory that results from this examination as the theory of human formation (Tanaka, 2003).

Tanaka’s theory of human formation deserves particular attention for its methodology. His methodology is that educators interpret the events and phenomena that they encounter in their fields (primary interpretation), theoreticians interpret these events and phenomena with the help of the outcomes of scientifically empirical

studies (secondary interpretation), and these two interpretations are compared with each other repeatedly to further develop education and establish a new educational theory (Tanaka, 2003, pp. 268-9). Here again, the relationship between educators and theoreticians is characterized not as the one-way guidance of the former by the latter, but by their mutual interaction. Therefore, Tanaka's theory of human formation contrasts with Mori's theory in his *Educational Anthropology*. Mori's work was established by Mori alone as a theoretician, while Tanaka emphasizes the mutual cooperation and openness between a group of educators and a group of theoreticians, with each group focusing on its specialty.

Another characteristic of Tanaka's methodology is that, of the events and phenomena that occur in the lifelong development of a human being, he intentionally focuses on marginal, unsuccessful ones (Tanaka, 2003, p. viii). By adopting this approach, he calls attention to the objects and activities that are otherwise considered to be too ordinary and self-explanatory to be examined in educational studies. Thus, Tanaka attempts to investigate and focus on complicated and rich educational (experiential) activities that ordinary people perform casually in their everyday lives.

Why focus on these types of activities? According to Tanaka, Japan's massive economic growth and modernization artificially systematized everything in the society. In this society, human life itself is hampered by the artificial systems that have been believed to bring convenience and welfare for human beings, as Mori once observed. We human beings earnestly hope to live fulfilling lives while enjoying the conveniences of artificial systems. If so, we need to improve and reform these artificial systems into that which does not restrict human life, but rather conforms to and enhances it. Modern education has become another such gigantic and artificial system. Therefore, to improve and reform education, we need to find and focus on mundane, natural and self-explanatory activities conducted by ordinary people casually in their everyday lives, and understand the structure and meaning of these activities.

However, we have to consider whether we can correctly assume that the mutuality among different generations never fails to occur? Can we use this assumption as a reliable premise or starting point in education and educational studies? Mori and Tanaka rely on the theory of Erik Homburger Erikson, an American psychologist. Erikson states that the 'social institutions and traditions' that both adults and children are required to share and pass on serve as media that convey their mutuality to each other (Erikson, 1964). In other words, it is these media that relate different generations to each other. However, the world today changes ever more rapidly, and a variety of cultures and sub-cultures interweave with each other in a very complex manner. It is no longer possible for us to assume a medium that can be shared by different generations as a reliable premise or starting point in education and educational studies¹.

4. Returning to the Educational Anthropology of Human Becoming

Satoji Yano (1954-), a professor of Kyoto University, attempts to study the aspects of educational anthropology not fully discussed by Mori. Yano focuses on these aspects from a viewpoint different from that of Mori or Tanaka, both of whom attempted to explore the origins and prototypes of education in the everyday-life relationships among different generations of a community. Yano, in contrast, argues that Mori did not consider all

the possibilities of educational anthropology in the concept of ‘human becoming’ (Wada, 1996, pp. 328-44). In contrast to the aspects Mori dealt with in his theory of educational anthropology that focused entirely on secular matters, Yano addresses play, interaction with nature, and artistic and aesthetic experience; in other words, aspects of the encounters with things sacred that happen somewhere beyond the secular and ordinary community. Through these types of encounters, the meaning(s) of human life, especially that of human existence are generated. This is what Yano thinks of as ‘human becoming’.

As discussed earlier, Mori excluded everything of a transcendent nature from educational studies; things such as Shintoism and its myths about the founding of Japan. This attitude was based on his deep soul-searching pertaining to prewar Japanese society. He pursued how education and educational studies should serve to foster ‘the human being as a modern subject’, based on the control of reason and scientific knowledge. Mori’s secular educational anthropology contributed to the Japanese economic recovery and social development, however, Yano points out that Mori failed to define an ‘individual’. He argues that Mori’s *Educational Anthropology* unintentionally assumes that the relationships of people and entities that form a community generate all the meanings and values of human life. Yano further observes that Mori’s theory, also unintentionally, helps to produce ordinary people who assimilate into a group or a society (Yano, 2008).

The ‘individuals’ to which Yano refers are those who have developed into existences that deserve dignity because of their experience of relationships with entities and events that go beyond the useful values and meanings in maintaining communities; experiencing for example, one’s being absorbed into play or into the sublime and aesthetic entities of nature. Yano explains this process with the help of Georges Albert Maurice Victor Bataille. According to Yano, human beings first need to escape the state of being animals subject to their surroundings. They are able to do so by acquiring secular knowledge and engaging in work in order to develop into entities that can, to some extent, control their environment and themselves. Yano refers to this type of human development as ‘humanization’, or ‘subjectification’. He then argues that there is another form of human development transcending this ‘humanization’, a process called ‘de-humanization’, or ‘de-subjectification’, which, because of the encroaching, but not disavowing, orders useful in maintaining a community, transforms human beings into ‘individuals’. Admittedly, however, ‘humanization’ or ‘subjectification’ and ‘de-humanization’ or ‘de-subjectification’ are not one-way or irreversible processes. Human beings always go back and forth between these two sides and circle around them as they strive to live fulfilling lives, while trying to discover why each is living ‘this’ particular (and singular) life (Yano, 2008).

To follow Yano’s reasoning, we have to question what entities or events transcend the pragmatic meanings and values in maintaining a community and relationships in the community. In other words, what are the ‘external’ entities that transcend a community? According to Yano, different cultures from one’s own, although they appear to be external, are only relatively external, and not absolutely external. To Yano, being external probably means something like Jacques Derrida’s reference to ‘différance’. *Différance* appears within a community as a ‘gap’, which is already and always present in our lives. This ‘gap’ has already and has always encroached upon our everyday lives somewhere. In fact, communities have identified entities that assume all the fears and all the dangerous and violent natures caused by such gaps. These entities, including gods, demons, spirits and ghosts, while having been worshipped, at the same time have been excluded as absolutely external beings in order to create and maintain a stable, systematic internal order in a community².

5. Conclusion

Mori advocates dealing with education based on the aspects of ‘human becoming’, for the purpose of reconstructing the education and educational studies in postwar Japan. He does not limit the area of his studies to the intentional and planned practice of education in which those who educate (adults) guide those who are educated (children). He greatly expands the area of his studies to include the entire process of a human being becoming a mature human being which occurs in ordinary people’s everyday lives, and all the entities and events that are related to this process. Tanaka expands on Mori’s theory, dealing not only with the process of ‘human becoming’, but also with the entire process of ‘human formation’. He believes that human beings become and are formed into mature human beings through the mutuality among different generations, where those belonging to different generations influence each other. In short, Tanaka’s theory emphasizes equality and mutuality between those who educate (adults) and those who are educated (children). Yano, in contrast, attempts to explore new possibilities in educational anthropology from a different perspective, expanding Mori’s concept of recognizing education based on aspects of ‘human becoming’. He focuses on human development brought about by human interaction with the entities and events that transcend secular communities.

As mentioned above, Mori, Tanaka and Yano have cast new light on educational anthropology in postwar Japan to expand its outlook on education, and explore new possibilities in educational studies by evaluating education from ‘rational(secular)’, ‘marginal’ or ‘external’ viewpoints, that is utterly new viewpoints rather than conventional ones.

The theories of Mori, Tanaka and Yano, which have greatly contributed to the dynamic development of educational anthropology in Japan, share one thing in common: each is based on the concept of ‘the human being as a modern subject’.

Mori’s theory explores how education and educational anthropology should foster ‘the human being as a modern subject’. As discussed at the end of Section 2 of this paper, Mori regretted in his later years the fact that he overemphasized the importance of the identity of those who are educated (children) and focused too much on the process of new-born babies becoming mature human beings. Tanaka expands upon Mori’s theory in light of his regrets. In establishing his own theory, he successfully discusses the equality and mutuality between those who educate and those who are educated. However, his theory brings attention to the natural and self-explanatory activities of the education casually performed by ordinary people in their everyday lives; recognizing structures and meanings, they then construct those activities artificially, intentionally and subjectively. Here, Tanaka assumes ‘the human being as a modern subject’ —one clearly aware of natural and self-explanatory educational activities occurring in everyday life, and who performs them consciously. On the other hand, Yano discusses his theory of human becoming with terms like ‘de-humanization’ or ‘de-subjectification’; he defines this type of development as transcending ‘humanization’ or ‘subjectification’, respectively. He argues that the transformation of human beings through ‘de-humanization’ or ‘de-subjectification’ occurs next to the primary process of human development through ‘humanization’ or ‘subjectification’. Therefore, he seems to assume the concept of ‘the human being as a modern subject’.

We have to ask, then, whether we should no longer assume the concept of ‘the human being as a modern subject’ as self-explanatory for our educational studies as these three scholars have done, because we have been

influenced by post-modern thoughts. Citing Heidegger, Mori states that the existential aspects of human being are thrown-ness, given-ness, contingency and mortality (in Section 3 of this paper). In other words, whenever human beings appear as a subject, they are always and already co-present with other human beings and entities and encroached upon by them. Jean-Luc Nancy, a philosopher in contemporary France, essentially follows Heidegger and defines human beings as always being co-present with others and thrown into relationships with others. Nancy defines the human being as ‘*l’être-avec/l’être-ensemble*’ (Nancy, 1986). Gianni Vattimo, a philosopher in contemporary Italy, also influenced by Heidegger, defines the human being as ‘Being, to which are attributed the traits of eventuality and alterity’ and regards the relationships with others into which human beings are thrown as incommensurable. Others are essentially characterized by the otherness that is incommensurable with other human beings. We can only touch the otherness of others as their traces (Vattimo, 1988). Others, characterized by their otherness, are the gaps (*différences*) that encroach upon our everyday lives, as discussed at the end of Section 4.

How can education be described if it is based on the viewpoint of the human being discussed by these post-modern thinkers? If we assume that education is a by-product of the modern period, as argued by Philippe Ariès and Foucault, it would be impossible to discuss education at all based on this viewpoint. If so, we have to ask whether educational studies should remain within the framework of the modern period and continue their speculation, or should seek alternative ways of thinking. The next challenge of educational anthropology is to examine the possibility, potential and limitation of educational theory based on both the viewpoint of ‘the human being who is always and already co-present with others and thrown into relationships with others’, and that of ‘the human being incommensurable with the various traces of others, who are characterized by their otherness that we cannot touch’.

1. Media, such as language and rituals, play an essential role in the relationship among different generations in promoting human development. They actually relate different generations to each other, and at the same time divide them. The future challenging is to study these functions and the politics of the media.
2. However, emphasizing the entities that are absolutely external (i.e. transcend a community and the importance of relationships with those entities) serves to fix attention upon the internal orders within a community and to strengthen the exclusion of those external entities. We need, instead, to regard this gap, not as external, but as something that encroaches our everyday lives ‘from within’.

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