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**Metaanthropology:
constructive criteria for anthropology**

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0. Constructive criteria and problem frames in metaanthropology

0.1 Use of constructive criteria

0.2 Field of interest and problem frames

0.3 Relativity and problem orientation

1. Metaanthropology: research methodology and norms of human conduct

2. Metaanthropology deals with the scope of anthropological sciences

2.1 Context of scientific world view

2.2 Image of Man, anthropology and its task in general

3. The empirical dimensions and parameters dealt with in metaanthropology

3.1 System dimensions and parameters

3.2 Some goals of anthropology

3.3 Stages of anthropological work

3.4 Criteria for comparison and inclusion

3.5 Commonalities, differences, prejudice and deprivation

4. Teaching, information and education:

4.1 Teaching of anthropology

4.2 Educating the public

5. Metaanthropology: scientific worldview, human rights, mankind

5.1 Epistemology

5.2 Cultural relativism

5.3 Metaanthropology shapes and stipulates the following details of the role of anthropology

5.3.1 Reconciliation

5.3.2 Consciousness raising .

5.3.3 Human Rights

5.3.4 Survival of mankind

5.3.5 Self-criticism

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**METAANTHROPOLOGY:
CONSTRUCTIVE CRITERIA FOR ANTHROPOLOGY**

0. Constructive criteria and problem frames in metaanthropology

<0.1 Use of constructive criteria>

Constructive criteria serve *improvement, development* and the *creation of anthropology as a science and as an academic program*.

<0.2 Field of interest and problem frames>

Metaanthropology establishes the constructive criteria for anthropology, and considers and clarifies the *empirical categories, dimensions* or simply *fields of interest* in terms of (causal or systemic) variables, functions and meanings. The facts, systems or contexts considered constitute *descriptions, explanatory theories* or *models*, and may form part of *intervention plans*, together with *norms or values*. They conform to standards of the philosophy of science or ethics. Metaanthropology *reviews* the anthropological research and intervention paradigms, programs or simply projects critically. It focuses on *central examples* of anthropological research which can serve *as points of reference* and from which *constructive criteria* (e.g. *centrality, or consequential bearing*) can be inferred both of which might stimulate or organize further research (or intervention) in anthropology. Thus, metaanthropology is providing *problem frames* which characterize its *field of interest*.

<0.3 Relativity and problem orientation>

These problem frames and the corresponding field of interest considered by metaanthropology *are relative*. Decisions about what to include depend upon *heuristics*. This means there is a feedback relation between metaanthropology, anthropology and other neighboring empirical sciences controlled by the *criterion of problem orientation* and the *planning and execution of concrete research projects*. Thus we might *borrow* constructive criteria from neighboring sciences, e.g. from medicine, and include them in human biology or physical anthropology. *Success* in terms of comprehension, systematics, explanation or prediction, *validation* or verifiability or falsifiability, and *fruitfulness* or the stimulation of further research highlight the formal aspect of the constructive criteria of anthropology.

1. Metaanthropology: research methodology and norms of human conduct

Metaanthropology establishes a research methodology and the norms of human conduct for doing research in favor of the people studied, together with the people concerned and in support of their capacity and enhanced autonomy and self-determination. In terms of cultural policy, Anthropology contributes to consciousness, identity formation and to the sentiment of self-respect of the people concerned. In this vein, a New Social Science Methodology demands full participation of the local people, comprehensive information of the local people, and determination by the local people (Johan Galtung, "Ideology and Methodology"). The goals include their existential welfare and mental wellbeing.

2. Metaanthropology deals with the scope of anthropological sciences

<2.1 Context of scientific world view>

Metaanthropology defines anthropology within the context of scientific world view, i.e. as the *scientific image of Man*. It aims at establishing facts, systemic insights and parameters as a *basis of validated and informed knowledge, discussion, planification and human action*, a basis which is removed from the fight of mere opinions and which could guide our conduct of life (Adolf Portmann, "Biology and Mind", German ed.).

<2.2 Image of Man, anthropology and its task in general>

Anthropology contributes to, *establishes and revises the image of Man within the scientific worldview*, as an endeavor of **empirical research, education, orientation and policy-making**. Anthropology contributes to the clarification of social and cultural **evolution** and of **controlled** ortho-evolution and / or **culture change** in terms of developmental anthropology.

3. The empirical dimensions and parameters dealt with in metaanthropology include inter alia:

<3.1 System dimensions and parameters>

(a) Aspects and the structure of the human bio-system, social system and cultural system; (b) cognition, affect, motivation and action as aspects of the neural, behavioral, cognitive, social and cultural system; (c) aspects of cultural and societal coherence, in terms of individual identity as personality, and social identity as affiliation, as well as innovation, deviation, variation; this includes the consideration of learning or socializing processes, traditions and organizations or institutions in terms of functions and

forces influencing Man (e.g. power); (d) ecology and environment, subsistence, economy and technology, as components of culture, society and conditions of evolutionary, especially human, adaptation and survival; (e) work, economic conditions, social and intimate relations as individual and social issues, especially of health and mental health; (f) the species of Man in comparison to other primates.

<3.2 Some goals of anthropology>

The goals of anthropology include the *comprehension* of Man, culture and society, and of Man in nature, e.g. in ecospace and in bio-evolution. It focuses on the *scientific clarification* of existence and identity as sociocultural and biocultural frameworks. It provides **systematic descriptions and theoretical explanations, incl. models**, which can be validated.

<3.3 Stages of anthropological work>

Anthropology contributes to the *documentation, analysis, and critical evaluation* of cultures and societies, e.g., customs (or action habits), beliefs and belief systems, and parameters of the human being as a bio-system, as agents and targets of socialization and as beings within the space of nature. This includes the study of ideational culture and social behavior within the historical-developmental, socio-organizational and territorial context of particular cultures.

<3.4 Criteria for comparison and inclusion>

Metaanthropology tries to establish *criteria for the comparison and inclusion* of very different *research and theory paradigms* and programs.

<3.5 Commonalities, differences, prejudice and deprivation>

Comparative research into the *commonalities* (i.e., shared features, potentials, structures, etc.) *and* (real or believed) *differences in Man* or human beings, society or societies and culture or cultures are part of the meta-anthropological scope. This includes the *critical assessment of pseudo-scientific* and ideologically biased *belief systems* (e.g., racism, class-societal, especially oligarchic, ideologies, human rights ignoring economic dogmatics, mythological outlines of social and cultural evolution, e.g. so-called 'creation science'). Anthropology tries to investigate the conditions of deprivation (structural violence), e.g., of poverty, unstable health, intolerance, sexist, ethnic and religious prejudice and social **and** individualized injustice.

4. Teaching, information and education:

<4.1 Teaching of anthropology>

Metaanthropology implies the *teaching* of anthropology in the universities. It *guides* the *elaboration of curricula*, in conjunction with didactic

criteria of how to learn and practice the active and productive role of an anthropologist, e.g., in ethnographic, or rather anthropological, research as a documentarian, discoverer, analyst, systematizer and synthesizer or theoretician, in application and policy-making as a concerned scientist, in public education as a philosophizing and worldview-shaping personality.

<4.2 Educating the public>

Metaanthropology defines the anthropological contributions to the scientific world view as an *educational task* of informing and educating the public. It supports the learning objectives of tolerance, explanation, conduct and social action.

5. Metaanthropology: scientific worldview, human rights, mankind

<5.1 Epistemology>

Metaanthropology tries to establish an *epistemology* which allows for the assimilation to and the incorporation into scientific worldview, of empirical, philosophical and legal facts, consequences, etc., with regard to the image of Man and society. Cf. § 0.

<5.2 Cultural relativism>

Metaanthropology acknowledges *cultural relativism as a heuristics of tolerance* in research and praxis, *and its limits*. This means, each culture or society is considered to be an existential order of equal or equivalent value. It has to be studied objectively, thus suspending (premature) value judgments. On the other hand, metaanthropology acknowledges the *provisional aspect of every culture* in the face of the empirical search for truth and for better practical alternatives, at least as a field of problems. Metaanthropology thus directs our view towards the future of Man, culture and society as well as their aspect of plurality or, rather, difference in living together. It strives for greater human freedom from “unjust and recognized” cultural (!) constraints or shortcomings, with regard to behaviors, beliefs, attitudes and organizations. It emphasizes the perspective of the people concerned, especially of their self-determination.

<5.3 Metaanthropology shapes and stipulates the following details of the role of anthropology>

<5.3.1 Reconciliation> Anthropology contributes to *reconciliation* and *peace-making*. Anthropology is the *science of trust* and of establishing trust.

<5.3.2 Consciousness raising> Anthropology *raises the consciousness* of the people involved and, thus, contributes to *self-understanding* and to personal as well as social or *societal development*, in the host and in one’s own society. This, again, refers to the image of Man, of society and culture

as a means to orient oneself in, to cope with, and to organize daily life, i.e. to *promote self-organization*.

<**5.3.3 Human Rights**> Anthropology *establishes and supports the claims of human rights* and of humanitarian ideas, i.e., of equality, justice, critical solidarity, tolerance, development and support or help, personal and cultural autonomy and enjoyment of life or developing a zest for life. In general, human rights have to protect the individual (in contrast to ideology, authoritarianism, violence and its glorification, i.e. in contrast to a culture of violence, etc.)

<**5.3.4 Survival of mankind**> Anthropology contributes, empirically and philosophically, to the *survival of mankind*, of Man within the parameters of human, social and biodiversity values (and, for instance, the basic needs approach) which make life worthwhile to live. Metaanthropology supports the development of '*planetary consciousness*', e.g. with regard to 'global problems' (and 'global needs' and mutual respect in interaction and in co-existence in cultural and social 'diversity'), and human development in congruence with universal human rights. Metaanthropology supports the strife for greater individual, social and co-existential freedoms, including the formation of a 'sense of freedom' and the 'experience of new freedoms'. It supports peace, especially as development, tolerance and quality of life.

<**5.3.5 Self-criticism**> Anthropology tries to become conscious of its own *history*. Anthropology – as an *institutionalized professional organization* and field of *activity* in the universities and *in government policy* – tries to become conscious of its *historical failures* and acknowledges its sometimes disastrous historical role in colonialism, exploitation, drug-promotion, missionary and other mind-interfering programs in Third World countries. Anthropology is conscious of its critical role that these patronizing and anti-enlightenment tendencies are to be replaced by a spirit of cooperation between the researcher and his society and the people investigated, of participation of the people investigated, and by constructive, sincere and informed efforts of the researcher's society (e.g., controlled by health criteria).