The Study of Race and Ethnic Relations in Southern Africa

*An Inaugural Lecture
Given in the
University of Rhodesia*

by

Professor M. W. Murphree

UNIVERSITY OF RHODESIA

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on Thursday, 4th November, 1971
on the Occasion of the Inauguration of
The Maurice Webb Chair of Race Relations

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Head of the Centre for Inter-Racial Studies

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As I suppose any prudent academic could be expected to do, I have carefully scrutinized the productions of others who have been subjected to the ordeal of an inaugural such as this. Among those who have been anthropologists I note that almost without fail they remark on the fact that such an occasion is a rite of passage, a term first elaborated by van Gennep to describe the ritual marking the transition of an individual from one status to another. In our academic culture, the transition to which the inaugural is attached is sometimes, in a rather quaint way, referred to as "elevation to a chair." I sincerely hope that this elevation will not provide yet another corroborative piece of evidence for the thesis recently advanced by Dr. Lawrence Peter, and called after him "The Peter Principle". This proposition, which threatens to establish itself in a position as invulnerable as that enjoyed by Parkinson's Law, states that in a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to the level of his own incompetence. This University is certainly ordered hierarchically, and two corollaries of this Principle will immediately present themselves to those of my colleagues with any experience in deductive logic, both with equally disquieting implications. One states that, given time, in such a hierarchy every post tends to be occupied by an employee who is incompetent to carry out its duties, and, finally, that in such an organization work is only accomplished by those employees who have not, as yet, reached their level of incompetence.

But turning now, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, from what I

hope are only matters of levity, I have noted that inaugural lectures tend to be of two types. One type tends to focus narrowly upon an area of the incumbent's special competence, attempting analysis which represents some theoretical advance. The other type is an outline approach, which strives to give a review of the salient theoretical considerations informing the discipline concerned, suggesting guidelines for effective teaching, research and other programme. For tonight's occasion I have chosen the second course of action. Tonight we mark the inauguration, not only of an incumbent, but of a chair itself. Tonight we mark the first formal commitment of a university in Africa to a programme of ethnic and race relations studies on this scale. Time does not permit me to describe the events that have led to the establishment of this chair, but I must remark at this point that I am honoured tonight by the presence of a number of people who have significantly contributed to its establishment. I refer in particular to Professor A. S. Mathews, Dean of the School of Law in the University of Natal and Dr. Eric Gargett of the Bulawayo Municipality, both Trustees of the Maurice Webb Estate. I refer also to Mr. Bob Stumbles and Mr. Richard van Niekerk, past and present presidents of Round Table Central Africa, and Mr. Ken Wilson, the driving force behind Round Table's interest in race relations research for many years. I only regret that Mrs. Webb, widow of the late Maurice Webb, and Dr. Edgar Brookes, his close friend and associate, are not able to share in this occasion for reasons of health.

Because therefore of the special inaugural characteristics of this occasion. I have chose a broad embracing perspective concerning race relations rather than one which focuses on some particular aspect of the field. But beyond this, we must also recognize that the designation of ethnic and racial studies as a discrete and separate field of academic endeavour is comparatively recent. The field has yet to establish a disciplinary independence of its own, and is best seen at present, I believe, as an interdisciplinary focus on a related series of problems of great practical and theoretic importance. At this stage in the development of racial and ethnic studies

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we are, therefore, still very much tied to the task of identifying and formulating the right questions. This task is, of course, one of the most exacting and creative parts of scientific enquiry. Darwin, in recalling the course of his inquiries into the origin of the species wrote, " . . .you would be surprised at the number of years it took me to see clearly what were some of the problems which had to be solved . . . Looking back I think it was more difficult to see what the problems were than to solve them as far as I have succeeded in doing, and this seems to me rather curious."[1] What Darwin considered curious is accepted by most scientists today as being a given element in their task. As Banton put it, "The obstacle to greater understanding is often not that of finding new answers but of discovering new questions, which, by reformulating the old ones, make possible their solution."[2] This is perhaps a clue concerning the potential of race relations studies to contribute to theoretical advance within its constituent disciplines — in reformulating, by virtue of its interdisciplinary approach, questions which have been asked before in such a way as to produce new insights.

This lecture does not attempt such a reformulation as such. It does not attempt to produce a list of the right questions, nor does it attempt a comprehensive "propositional inventory" for race relations research. What it **does** attempt is a designation of the contexts in which these questions — and their answers — can most fruitfully be sought, particularly in Southern Africa — a kind of epistemological and methodological overview of our subject. I proceed, therefore, by setting before you five basic postulates which I believe should inform our approach to racial and ethnic studies in this University. They are, if you will, premises for which I believe there is reasonable justification and which should form the basis for our programme.

1. Postulate No. 1.

My first postulate is that, in the evaluation of the ability, value and potential of any specific human being, membership in any racial population, defined genetically, is *per se* irrele-

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vant. This is **not** to suggest that research into such questions as, for instance, whether the intelligence quotient of say the Irish is statistically lower than that of the Japanese, is not under certain circumstances worthwhile. "Race" in such an exercise is an independent variable which may, or may not, be found to be significant. But when applied to individuals, it is a dependent variable mediated by so many intervening variables, such as culture, individual heredity and social status, that it cannot be regarded as significant. The implication of this is that, in terms of the most effective utilization of human resources, the stereotypic tendency of so many cultures to arbitrarily assign roles to individuals on the basis of racial or ethnic membership is dysfunctional, wasteful and *prima facie* undesirable.

From this point of view, it has been said that there is no such thing as "good race relations". Race as a socially significant category is based on false assumptions, and is best dispensed with. The task of the race relations analyst, according to this position, thus becomes an exercise in the study of some form of social or economic pathology, and racial factors are reduced to some other kind of socially differentiated structure, such as class.

Nevertheless, the social category of race **does** exist, and as John Rex has recently pointed out it is an open question as to whether class really does have some kind of superior ontological status to race.[3] One of the questions which we have to pose, therefore, is what the characteristics are of those situations in which men define as racial.

This is another way of saying that the matter of race relations is primarily a problem for social science rather than biology, although as I have already suggested, I do not discount the inputs of biology. The biologists have been asked to pronounce on the matter of race, and have done so. Among their most important findings are:

(1) That "race" as a taxonomic concept is of limited usefulness as a means of classifying human beings, less useful than the more general concept of populations.

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(2) These populations are Mendelian populations situated as a continuum, and human biological variation is to be thought of in statistical terms as a series of differences of degree in different measures.

(3) These biological populations by no means coincide with "races" in the popular use of the term.

(4) It is, in the light of this lack of coincidence, and on the basis of present data, not justifiable to attribute cultural characteristics to the effect of genetic inheritance.[4]

As Dobzhansky points out, this relativity, this lack of hard-and-fast dichotomies in race relations, is disappointing to the adherents of old-fashioned typological race concepts.[5] But it does not thereby banish them. The concept of race is declared trivial in science, but continues to be seen by laymen as decisive in everyday life. And this is the reality which is our central concern, for it structures institutions, determines relationships and shapes attitudes. Thomas' incisive observation, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" remains as a central axiom for race relations research. I began discussion on this postulate with the assertion that in the evaluation of any **individual** human being's **intrinsic** potential, membership in an ethnic or racial category was irrelevant. But **actual** potential is determined by the addition of cultural and social factors. What we know biologically is therefore qualified sociologically by Thomas' caveat.

Thus it is the category of "social race" with which we are concerned. But the phrase is misleading if we think of social characteristics as being independent of physical ones. Race becomes socially significant when biologically inherited characteristics, either real or imputed, are correlated with social characteristics which confer distinctive roles and rights. A further cognate category is provided by ethnicity, where distinctions in ascriptive role allocations are made on the basis of culture, again either real or imputed. This category, since it shares with race a situation in which roles and prerogatives are assigned on the basis of characteristics thought to be unchanging, must come within the scope of race rela-

tions studies and is to be inferred in this lecture when the phrase "race relations" is used.

Race relations studies deal. therefore. with situations of differentation arising not from any biologically determined base *per se*, but from social distinctions related to physical and cultural criteria of an ascriptive kind and rationalized in terms of deterministic ideology.

2. Postulate No. 2.

My second postulate is a negative one. and put in this form since it is at variance with what has been a basic assumption in race relations research elsewhere. This is that, internationally, prevailing trends in societal organizations are not necessarily in a non-racial. integrationist direction. It has been an assumption in race relations research in the United States. in Britain and elsewhere that. regardless of peripheral counter-currents, the main stream of human events has been moving towards the disestablishment of race as a central determinant in human society. Schermerhorn calls this the centripetal view of social history, seeing a long-term tendency towards increased acceptance of common values and increased participation in a common set of groups. associations and institutions.[6]

Unfortunately, this is an assumption not borne out by the events of the last decade. The tide of ethnic, regional and racial separation runs high. In the United States, where it was long assumed that the blacks would accept as much integration as was offered them an increasing number of their leaders are swinging towards a black nationalism that calls for an autonomy reminiscent of apartheid. A similar trend in the re-direction of cultural and political goals on the part of Africans is now to be seen in South Africa, and is likely here. As one American newspaper put it recently, "This crowded world is cracking asunder. Togetherness is out. It is now a dirty twelve-letter word. The 'in' thing is to split, separate, get sore and quit."[7] These are centrifugal tendencies, encouraging the retention of distinctive traditions and the maintenance of structural segregation.

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When the scene is examined internationally and cross-culturally, the reality is of course that both centripetal and centrifugal factors can be identified. The implication of this for race relations research is, I believe, that we cannot assume · as many in the field have done to date — that we are in effect examining the detail of a unidirectional and inevitable trend towards non-racialism. Direction may be the other way, and we have therefore to consider centrifugal as well as centripetal possibilities. I am not of course suggesting that a non-racial ordering of society is an inappropriate goal. What I am pointing out is the epistemological danger of mistaking the wish for fact, or of assuming some kind of teleological determinism concerning this aspect of human development.

3 Postulate No. 3.

My third postulate suggests that race relations studies must proceed simultaneously along two lines, that they must incorporate both theoretic and utilitarian objectives. The demand that academic enterprises be relevant and utilitarian is not confined to the area of race, but in no area is it more pressing and in my opinion correctly so.

In both the United States and Great Britain financial support for race relations research has been motivated by a melioristic interest in the improvement of relations between different racial groups and Blumer comments regarding the U.S., "It is safe to say that if the various racial groups in American society had had harmonious and democratic relationships, no field of race relations study would ever have emerged."[8] My own Chair is a case in point, and was established to study "the relations between the various ethnic and language groups which make up . . . the population, with a view to discovering causes of tensions that may exist between them and to suggesting ways by which the causes of such tensions may be removed."[9]

Others have phrased the question more bluntly. In a recent article discussing the establishment of a Race Relations

Research Unit at the University of Bristol, A. H. Halsey of Nuffield College, Oxford, sees the basic question about the Black British as being, "Will they revolt?" Will there be, can there be, peace or feud in Britain at the racial level? To gain the answer to this question the Social Research Council is putting up £40,000 per annum to Bristol, and a convincing answer, says Halsey, "would be fabulously cheap at such a price to both social theorists of order and conflict and those directly engaged in race relations practice."[10]

The important question for Rhodesia is not dissimilar. Perhaps the greatest difference is that, for Rhodesia, the question is of even more critical centrality for the future of the country than it is for Britain. And yet no public agency has come forward with anything like £40.000 per year for research into it. To date we have had to depend on the generosity of people like Maurice Webb and the men of Round Table.

Why this apparent lack of concern for research into such a critical issue? It may be, of course, that there is plenty of will to support this kind of enterprise, and that the public has only been waiting for the University to take an initiative in this matter. But beyond this, there are other cogent reasons, I believe. Some in this country, either out of mental myopia or for convenience, see the arrangements of Rhodesian society as essentially static and unchanging, its future a repeated replication of the present. For these the suggestion that race relations need to be examined is vaguely disturbing, implying some defect in the *status quo*. I have quoted Blumer's statement that if America had enjoyed harmonious and democratic relationships the field of race relations study would never have merged there. According to this mentality the obverse seem to be implied: "If you have no race relations studies, harmonious and democratic relationships therefore exist." This attitude approximates what Myrdal called "moral cynicism," the permanent and growing acceptance of inconsistencies in the system of values, and reminds one of what *Time* said recently concerning the United States: " . . . the true racism of America is based not on hate. but on indifference."

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There are others — and I consider these more important — who recognize the dynamic nature of our society, who are concerned about the central problems of race, and yet are sceptical that academic research can reveal anything really significant about these problems. For them the answers are to be found in direct "common-sense" action — legislation, political activism and the like. For them, the academic approach represents an over-abstraction of the subject which is equivalent to the avoidance of real human issues. In their view scientific detachment only leads to a postponement of action to resolve urgent crises, the significance of race is self-evident and can be handled without needless theorizing.

My response to this is that in many cases, where the incongruities between practice and the moral standards of a society are self-evident, they are right. In such cases scientific insights are ancilliary to, not necessary for, moral decision and action. For example, Morroe Burger, in a brilliant article on the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision on de-segregation, has pointed out that although certain psychological and sociological findings were cited, they were not really necessary. All that was really required for the decision was the combination of moral precept and legal precedent that the decision in certain sections exemplified.[11]

Does this then mean that social science is totally irrelevant to the making of moral-political decisions? Of course not. Speaking of Burger's analysis, Nisbet comments that it implies "that we have no more right to expect social science to be the immediate platform of social policy or social action than we have to expect physiology to be sole and immediate platform for measures public health. But (he goes on to say) I would be unhappy under any public health officer who has never studied physiology."[12]

Nisbet's concluding rider indicates my point. Just as there are underlying physiological principles which provide the foundation for therapy and prophylaxis, so there are underlying social and psychological principles which must provide the foundation for intelligent moral and political behaviour. It is here that, with regard to race relations, the

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social scientist must focus his attention and where he can work most fruitfully. And it is in this indirect and mediated application of his knowledge that he must have the indulgence and understanding of his sponsors. Concern with direct application alone would encourage the scholar to rely exclusively on what is already known, to employ the techniques, the methods and the data already at hand in order to produce quick solutions. As Kaplan and Manners have observed, it would have "a tendency to deflect the scientist from the free and imaginative speculation which forms the lifeblood of his discipline in its growth as a scientific enterprise." They go on to comment, "if practice and an overwhelming emphasis on the applied inevitably produced theoretical wisdom, then the field of social work would be the most theoretically sophisticated of the social sciences, and all automobile mechanics would be physicists."[13]

I conclude therefore that in our race relations studies we must identify and direct our attention to critical problems that seek practical solutions and to arrange our findings for utilitarian objectives. As Myrdal has said, "Science becomes no better protected against biases by the entirely negative device of refusing to arrange its results for practical and political utilization."[14] But at the same time these efforts must be shaped by theoretical considerations, and recognition given to the ordered progress this implies. To quote Merton, "The urgency or immensity of a practical social problem does not insure its immediate solution . . . It must be remembered that necessity is only the **mother** of invention: socially accumulated knowledge is its father. Unless the two are brought together, necessity remains infertile. She may of course conceive at some future time when she is properly mated. But the mate requires time (and sustenance) if he is to attain the size and vigour needed to meet the demands that will be made upon him."[15] Thus race relations should be studied in ways which are at once relevant to **both** policy and theory. Indeed it is unlikely that a significant academic contribution to the subject could be made in any other way.

Having stated my premise that race relations research

must proceed simultaneously along both theoretical and utilitarian lines, I now wish to indicate some of the more useful analytic constructs within which this development can take place, and to indicate some ways in which these constructs can be given practical application.

I have already indicated my view of the derived character of race relations studies -- derived that is from the more general theories of other social science disciplines, and from law, history and biology.

The history of race relations studies has been one of shifting affinities with one after another of these disciplines, and it is instructive to review the sequence, particularly when it is accepted that developments in any discipline represent a response both to its intellectual traditions and the contexts of the wider cultural and political currents of the times.

Putting aside for the purposes of this lecture pre-Darwinian thought on race, it can be observed that most of the academic work on this subject between 1860 and 1930 was the concern of anthropologists. Concerned, as most of these men were, with human heterography the emphasis of these scholars was largely on the origins and typology of the human race. This, coupled with their interest in the varieties of culture, led some of them to correlate hereditary endowment with group behavioural patterns. Equipped with rather sketchy ethnological information, these scholars embarked on a course of supra-organic analogy which sought to estimate the relative value of races, delineate social categories and justify the dynamics of racism. Time does not allow for the development of this theme; it must suffice here to mention the names of Dr. James Hunt, founder of the Anthropological Society of London (1863), John Powell, director of the American Bureau of Ethnology, William McGee, first president of the American Anthropological Association and the famous Lewis Henry Morgan. The racist implications of these men's works have long since been abandoned in academic circles, but they are still cited occasionally by segregationist protagonists, an example of the uses made of scientific myths to give authority to

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politically convenient belief. As Banton has remarked, "Much of today's social folklore is in fact the science of a century ago."[16]

The racist tendency in anthropological tradition was definitively laid to rest by Franz Boas. Boas shifted the emphasis in anthropology away from haphazard data collection and deductive speculation to one of rigorous and detailed research methods and critical objectivity. With this new emphasis came an abandonment of speculative attempts to correlate cultural with physical types and a shift to an emphasis on culture itself. This did not mean an abandonment of all interest in race on the part of anthropologists; contact and conflict between different racial groups with its attendant stereotypy continued to be of concern to the discipline. Indeed, some of the best books on race relations in what one might call the "early modern period" were written by anthropologists. I have in mind here Ruth Benedict's *Race: Science and Politics,* published in 1945, Kenneth Little's *Negroes in Britain,* published in 1948 and Hilda Kuper's *Uniform of Colour,* published in 1947.

But the real emphasis in race relations study shifted in the early 1930's to sociology, this being largely due to the efforts of the Chicago school under Robert E. Park, Louis Wirth, Robert Redfield and others. To my knowledge, the first course taught in race relations at any university was that conducted by Park at the University of Chicago during this period, and was entitled "Racial and Cultural Contacts". Attention was directed to the so-called "minority" groups in American society, and the emphasis shifted from the description of social structure to the study of social processes. Park developed a sequential typology with regard to ethnic contact and assimulation, which stimulated new research into the stresses experienced by groups undergoing adaptation to new situations. Among these were studies on the "marginal man" conducted by Everett Stonequist and those of "social distance" by Emory S. Bogardus.

Stonequist and Bogardus represented two new directions in race relations research. One was sociological; the other

social-psychological. The former followed the trend of emphasizing the behaviour of **groups** in social situations; the latter stressed the attitudes and behaviour of individuals. The emphasis on social psychology became increasingly important, and its leadership in the field of race relations studies during the 1940's and 50's is demonstrated by the prominence given it in Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* and by the influence of the monumental work by Thomas Adorno and his associates published under the title. *The Authoritarian Personality*.

Thus the central matrix for race relations studies had shifted from anthropology to sociology to a combination of sociology and social psychology. Here it stayed during the 1960's, with considerable work being done in the measurement of racial attitudes. The one major work on race relations done in this country to date. Roger's and Franz's *Racial Themes in Southern Rhodesia*, is an example of this approach. In sociology considerable work was done on the functionality of prejudice, discrimination and racial ideologies for system-maintenance. This set of emphases has aptly been termed by Blumer the "prejudice-discrimination axis"[17] and can be fairly said to be the central concern of race relations research during the decade 1958-1967.

The general character of this approach can be outlined as follows:

1. Firstly, the nature of the relations between racial groups results from the feeling and attitudes which these groups have toward each other.

2. Secondly, therefore, these feelings and attitudes are the chief objects to be studied in endeavouring to understand race relations.

3. Thirdly, among these feelings and attitudes, prejudice and its supporting ideologies are of the greatest importance since it is responsible for discriminatory behaviour and racial discord.

4. Fourthly, since prejudice is not innate it is mutable,

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and therefore the greatest promise for the melioration of racial conflict lies in its study and transformation.

Increasingly, this position has come under heavy criticism. In the last decade students of race relations have, by-and-large, been led to the position that the social setting of action instead of the racial attitudes of the participants is the prime determinant of behaviour. Their position is well illustrated by Kohn and Williams, who after examining forty-three situations say " . . . allegedly prejudiced persons act in a thoroughly egalitarian manner when this is the socially prescribed manner of behaviour . . . allegedly unprejudiced persons discriminate in situations where they feel it is socially appropriate to do so."[18] The current trend seems to be for scholars to accept this position. As Blumer puts it, "Personality components of racial prejudice are coming increasingly to be regarded as mere individual variations inside a collectively defined orientation."[19] a point cogently put by Professor Reader in his inaugural lecture.[20] As Schermerhorn puts it, "If research has confirmed anything, it is that prejudice is the product of situations, historical situations, economic situations, political situations; it is not a little demon that emerges in people simply because they are depraved[21]

If it is not prejudice but situations which are important, what is it that causes societies to engender them and thus threaten their own existence? The contexts of sociological theory which lie behind this question will be apparent to some of my colleagues, and are perhaps best not discussed in a lecture of this nature. I shall only note here that the contradictions between system and conflict theories are more apparent than real. The writings of Max Gluckman are seminal, I believe, on this point, and what comes through clearly from his analysis is that conflict between groups of unequal power creates integrative bonds that have system characteristics. Neither the conflict or the systems perspective can therefore exclude the other without unwarranted dogmatism. Certain types of race relations studies draw on sets of assumptions from **both** theories as heuristic guidelines for interpretive purposes. Integration is not inevitably har-

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monious, nor conflict necessarily disruptive. There would appear to be times when integration results from conflict, and conversely, other times when conflict produces a new order of integregation.

Thus both the system and the conflict frameworks will continue to be of central theoretical significance for race relations studies. Conflict or coercion theory will, however, gain more central attention, and rightly so I believe. One important concomitant of this is that the inputs of the disciplines of economics and political science to race relations studies will increase. Analysis will move along the line of isolating the structures of interests and the structures of control in given situations. Such a study must necessarily deal with such matters as vested interests, entrenched power, the inertia of institutions, the use of social codes, the established opportunity structure and the responsiveness of office-holders and decision-makers. It must trace out, amid the structure of sustaining forces, the interlockings, conflicts, accommodations, and centres of dominant influence. In particular, attention should be given to the efficacy of institutional decree and of organized action in bringing about deliberate changes in racial relationships.[22]

Schermerhorn has produced a useful listing of variables which can be analysed in comparative context, five of which I consider particularly important:

1. The historic sequences of interaction between sub-ordinate and dominant ethnic and racial groups, such as annexation, migration and colonization.

2. The degree of enclosure (institutional separation or segmentation) of the subordinate group or groups from the society-wide network of institutions and associations.

3. The degree of control exercised by dominant groups over access to scarce resources by subordinate groups in a given society.

4. Agreement or disagreement between dominant and

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subordinate groups on collective goals for the latter, such as assimilation, pluralism or segregation.

5. Differential participation rates or subordinates in institutional and associational life on the basis of changing access to resources (such as education, and wealth) and changing susceptibility to needs (such as population growth and ecological mutations).[23]

It may be useful to note that these five variables have to do with sequential, structural, ideological and ecological factors.

In all of this can be seen the shift from the earlier emphasis on attitude and ideology to one underscoring structural factors. This does not mean, however, that earlier perspectives are completely abandoned. To do so would be to fall into a position of procrustean theoretical dogmatism, stretching models beyond their clearly relevant application regardless of their suitability to the data under consideration. Belief and value systems do acquire an independent causal significance, and must continue to be a concern for racial and ethnic studies.

The variables that we have been discussing have a general and comparative significance, and must form the subject matter of the development of the discipline on an international, cross-national basis. Data that we produce here relevant to any of them will be a contribution to international scholarship. But this Chair is located in Southern Africa, our resources are limited and we obviously cannot pursue them all in requisite depth. It is therefore important that, within the general and comparative theoretical framework I have been discussing, we identify those special conditions which pertain to our situation here, in which we can make our best contribution to international scholarship and which furnish the best potential for "pay-off" in the applied field.

What, then, are these specific conditions in our situation which must shape our research? There are four which bear special attention:

1. First of all it should be noted that Rhodesia is one of the few polities left in the world where the politically superordinate group constitutes a small — perhaps I should say very small — racial minority.

2. Secondly, Rhodesia is virtually unique in being perhaps the only country in the world in which the trend of current legislation is overtly, ostensibly moving towards a more segregationist position. Regardless of whether one considers this to be a reasoned response to the exigencies of the historical moment or an incredibly naive reactionism, this fact alone makes Rhodesia an important case study for race relations research. This leads me to make a methodological aside that the dynamic, fluid nature of our situation makes it imperative that our research be carried out with built-in time depth. Diachronic studies incorporating reciprocal design should be our objective whenever possible.

3. Thirdly, the Rhodesian population represents a high degree of racial and ethnic heterogeneity. We have, not two, but a number of sub-groups in the population defined racially. Added to this are a number of ethnically defined sub-groups including the so-called tribal categories. All of these sub-groups must be considered in any comprehensive programme of racial and ethnic studies, and their close juxtaposition in a country of this size must be considered a special circumstance.

4. Fourthly, Rhodesia, a small country, is uniquely located in a geographically contiguous position to four other countries, all of them marked by racial pluralism and at least three of which have markedly different official policies on race. If we add to the list Malawi and Malagasy, the number of variants is even further augmented. This richness in variation, essential for comparative study, means that this University is ideally located for study of this kind. Furthermore, the size of these countries means that the data they evoke can be studied with a thoroughness not possible where national units are far larger. We are, for instance, currently involved in an aspirations study of the entire African school-leaver population at the Form Four level. None of the other race relations study centres in the world, even with their vastly greater

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resources, could even begin to contemplate such a comprehensive exercise in their own countries.

These then are the special circumstances which pertain for us here, and of which we must take the fullest advantage. They are among the reasons which make me assert that, properly planned and supported, a programme of racial and ethnic studies could be developed here which would be of international significance and put this University in the forefront of academic enterprises of this type.

Time does not permit me to detail the specific research prospects which I see as furthering this kind of programme. But with regard to their design, let me summarize what I have been suggesting. They must be constructed and carried out with regard to the theoretical implications of the sequential, structural, ideological and ecologic variables that I have mentioned. They must be constructed with the specific conditions pertaining to race in Southern Africa as a special consideration. And finally, they must be constructed so that their findings are useable by those wishing to intelligently shape the future of Rhodesian society. This final objective, as I have already suggested, can best be achieved by making explicit the dynamics of present structures, the trends that they evince, the probable future consequences of the various alternative policies that may be available to the body politic, and by giving an indication of those that are clearly more feasible, practicable or possible than others.

4 Postulate No. 4.

This brings me to my fourth postulate, which is that race relations study in the university context should attempt an approximation of the standards of objectivity and detachment which have been the tradition of the social sciences. The attainability or advisability of such a stance has been increasingly called into question recently. On the one hand it is argued that such detachment is impossible in the social sciences, that the social scientist is inevitably part of the data he is studying and that he cannot free himself from dependence on the dominant preconceptions and biases of his

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intellectual environment. Myrdal's outburst is illustrative: "A disinterested social science is pure nonsense. It never existed and it will never exist."[24] On the other hand it is suggested that such detachment, were it possible, could only result in the social scientist becoming the unwitting tool of the dominant social and political forces of the times.

My rejection of this argument is in part negative — is the alternative of valuation and commitment any better basis for a valid social science? Speaking of anthropology, Kaplan and Manners comment that if such a lead were followed, "what passes for anthropological knowledge would be nothing more than a pack of ideologies from which one might pick and choose according to one's aesthetic tastes, political beliefs or other value biases. To anyone interested in a science of culture (or indeed in the creation and dissemination of any reliable knowledge) this kind of epistemological relativism is unthinkable."[25]

My own opinion is that relative objectivity can be achieved if, on the one hand the scientist recognizes his own valuations and admits them as such, and if on the other he constantly maintains guard over the independence of his position. Notice the adjective "relative". No scientist can claim complete objectivity, let alone one dealing with society.

Such relative detachment and objectivity as is possible in no way implies irrelevance, a truth recognized by some who have for long been involved in social activism. Earlier this year I spent a delightful day on the campus of Stanford University as the guest of Professor St. Clair Drake, Professor of Black Studies. Drake, a student of Robert E. Park, a close associate of W. Lloyd Warner and a product of the Chicago School mentioned earlier, was for many years centrally involved in Negro activism in the United States and elsewhere. The mantle of W. E. du Bois fell on his shoulders and he became something of an academic *éminance gris* behind some of the West African nationalist leaders of the late 50's and early 60's. I elaborate on this, Mr. Chairman, to demonstrate that his opinion can hardly be considered that of an equivocating, insulated Uncle Tom-like academic.

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During the course of our conversations I put to him the question as to which social scientists in America he considered to be doing the most significant work on race relations in terms of long-range impact. Without hestitation he named two Harvard sociologists, Thomas Pettigrew and Lee Rainwater. Listen now to a statement by Rainwater on this matter, an opinion which in the light of the endorsement by Drake must be given special weight. Speaking of the poplar appeal being made to sociology in the United States for various action programmes, Rainwater says, "The autonomy of the sociologist to pursue knowledge and develop theory will be seriously threatened by this popularity — not only by the threat of co-optation by the powers that be, but also by the threat of ideological co-optation in the service of the powers against the powers that be . . . Sociology is in a position today to make critical contributions to changing society, but it is in that position only by virtue of several decades of empirical and theoretical work which was relatively insulated from **direct** political interference by the society at large or on the campus."[26]

The value of this independence was recognized by Maurice Webb when he left his money for race relations research in an academic context. It is a value I subscribe to and will seek to maintain. As Anatol Rapaport has commented, "Science, with its attitude of detachment, is the only mode of cognition we know which can make showdowns between incompatible views productive and which can reveal the degree of incompatibility between views. Hence logical analysis, extension of concepts, tests of hypotheses, and all the rest cannot be avoided if we wish the clashes between serious thinkers to generate light as well as heat."[27] In our ideologically and culturally polarized society, the academic forum is one of the few places left which may be able to generate serious thinking on race between incompatible positions. Handled wisely, it may be a source of light as well.

5. Postulate No. 5.

I come now to my fifth and final postulate. This is that

reason is the continuing central context of the academic enterprise, and that intellectual clarity and enlightened citizenship its continuing long-range objectives.

Up to this point my treatment of racial and ethnic studies has treated almost exclusively with research. I regard my Chair as primarily a research post, but it has a teaching function as well, and it is of this that I now wish to speak briefly. In a sense, this may be its most important function.

With regard to its potential to effect desirable change, the university tradition has always been essentially futuristic. By-and-large, we do not seek short-term, dramatic results. We may hope that our research will influence policy, but our most significant, enduring contribution to change is vested in the training that we give our students — in the development of their intellectual potential, in the sharpening of their critical judgment, in the impartation of the enriching possibilities of human reason. This is a faith and a tradition which the academic community draws from its roots in the Enlightenment. Aligning himself with this position, one sociologist, Reinhard Bendix, has put it very well: " . . . in a world torn by wars of nerves, arms and words, the universities are institutions of detachment whose academic personnel have an important service to render in the community, one for which they may properly claim recognition from the powers that be. Social scientists, to reiterate, should place their abiding faith in reason rather than on exclusive concern with improving the techniques of social manipulations. This is the only position worthy of the great intellectual traditions of which they are heirs. It is also the only position consistent with the intellectual defense against totalitarianism, from without and within."[28]

This is the tradition that we seek to impart to our students. This is our most important function. When we look carefully at this country of ours, we see accomplishments of which we can be proud. But we also see, as Bendix puts it, "wars of nerves, arms and words," and we can only hope that the coming generation of leaders in this land, who now pass through our halls, will deal with the problems of our

society with more rationality than we have. In the area of race relations study, this rationality should impart the wisdom once stated aphoristically by Kluckhohn when he observed that "Every man is in certain respects: (a) like no other man, (b) like some other men, and (c) like all other men."[29] Beyond the very real divisions created by structure and culture, our students should perceive the essential unity of mankind. The fact that at this University students of different racial and ethnic groups can gain this insight together is an earnest of this intent. This is why I am anxious that the greater part of our studies be conducted by those who are themselves *vanhu ve'ivu*, the sons of this land and all its races. This is why I derive so much satisfaction from the fact that the larger proportion of our support comes from within Southern Africa. For the study of race relations in this land cannot, must not, be an alien, imposed device. It must rise from our own initiative, speak to our own problems, and evoke the strengths of our own common humanity.

Maurice Webb, after whom this Chair is named, had this kind of insight. Sixteen years ago he wrote, "I believe that no true society can exist unless there is at the heart of it love of man for man and love of man for God. You cannot love a man and hide him behind a green belt or a ghetto wall. You must know him as a person and see God in his face."[30] Sometimes this Image of Man comes only through bitter experience. Sometimes it comes through religious insight. And sometimes it comes through training in the critical use of the intellect. From this perspective, the academic study of racial and ethnic relations can be regarded as an exercise in the analysis, qualification and mitigation of the stereotypic tendency which is such a ubiquitous, and often disastrous, characteristic of human culture.

FOOTNOTES

1. Quoted by R. K. Merton, "Notes on Problem-Finding in Sociology" in *Sociology Today.* R. K. Merton, L. Broom, L. S. Cottrell, Jr., eds., New York: Basic Books, 1959, p. ix.

2. M. Banton, *Race Relations.* London: Tavistock, 1967, p. 7.

3. J. Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970, p. 1.

4. From J. Hiernaux, Introduction, "The Moscow Expert Meeting", International Social Science Journal, Vol. XVII, No. 1, 1965.

5. T. Dobzhansky, "On Diversity and Equality", *Forum*, Vol. X, No. 1, Spring 1967, pp. 5-6.

6. R. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations*, New York: Random House, 1970, p. 51.

7. *Ibid*, p. xi.

8. H. Blumer, "United States of America", in *Research on Race Relations*, Paris: UNESCO, 1966, p. 89.

9. Will, Maurice Webb Estate.

10. A. H. Halsey, "Race Relations: The Lines to Think On". *New Society*, 19th March, 1970, p. 472.

11. Cited in D. Kaplan and R. A. Manners, "Anthropology: Some Old Themes and New Directions", *South-western Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 27, 1971, p. 37.

12. R. A. Nisbet, "Sociology as an Idea System", in *Sociological Self-Images: A Collective Portrait*, I. L. Horwitz, ed. California: Sage Publications, 1969, p. 199.

13. Kaplan and Manners, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

14. G. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma.* New York: Harper, 1944, p. 1041.

15. R. K. Merton, *On Theoretical Sociology.* New York: Free Press, 1967, pp. 49-50.

16. Banton, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

17. Blumer, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

18. M. Z. Kohn and R. Williams, "Situational Patterning in Intergroup Relations", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 21, Apr. 1956, p. 115.

19. Blumer, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

20. D. H. Reader, *Social Distortion: An Approach to Race Relations.* Inaugural lecture, University College of Rhodesia, 1969.

21. Schermerhorn, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

22. These and other points are developed by Blumer in a methodological inventory, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-125.

23. Schermerhorn, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

24. Quoted by J. Madge, *The Origins of Scientific Sociology.* London: Tavistock, 1963, p. 284.

25. Kaplan and Manners, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

26. L. Rainwater, "The Sociologist as Naturalist", in *Sociological Self-Images: A Collective Portrait.* I. Horowitz, ed. California: Sage Publications, 1969, p. 100.

27. A Rapaport, cited in E. J. Meehan, *Contemporary Political Thought: A Critical Study.* Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1967, p. 93.

28. R. Bendix, *Embattled Reason: Essays on Social Knowledge.* New York: O.U.P., 1970, p. 65.

29. C. Kluckholm and H. A. Murray, *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture.* New York: Knopf, 1953, p. 53.

30. Unpublished manuscript.

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