An analysis of the Race Relations Theory of Robert E. Park

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SOCIAL THEORY AND RACE RELATIONS, I

An Analysis of the Race Relations Theory of Robert E. Park

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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BY
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INTRODUCTION

The real value of a study of race relations as sociological investigation inheres in the knowledge it provides of human relations. A study of race relations is important only when it offers insight into the nature of the interaction which takes place between groups, and as it contributes to an understanding of the social processes which operate in the development of civilization.

Social scientists who study race relations and problems of race are frequently accused of attaching undue significance to race as an end in itself. Such reproof is justified if those scientists lose sight of the greater meanings involved, and choose to become propagandistic or apologetic when interpreting their findings. Studies of this nature make no real or lasting contribution to the existing body of knowledge, although they may enjoy a fleeting, specious, popular appeal. Invariably, however, such efforts are discredited and their scientific pretensions unmasked. Racist literature, as such, has no place in sociological thinking, since its lack of objectivity robs it of all scientific validity.

In as much as the thinking on race of Robert E. Park is defined by his interest in social process and social interaction, an analysis of his theory should prove valuable. A prolific writer interested in all social problems, a dynamic personality with a keen knowledge of human nature, and a teacher of great merit, Park has exerted a tremendous influence in the development of a scientific theory of race
relations. Many of his students, and others who recognized the import of his conceptions, have developed frames of reference as extensions of his ideas, and have produced volumes of lasting value. Park was probably responsible for more studies of races and ethnic groups than any other theorist in the history of American sociology. For this reason, if for no other, an analysis of his thinking is warranted.

The concepts which he introduced - the race relations cycle, the marginal man, social distance, the racial frontier, his hypotheses with reference to the bases of racial prejudices, distinctions and antagonisms - are theories which sociologists have found useful and acceptable. The techniques which he considered most essential in making analyses of race relations systems have been tested and used with effectiveness. They are frequently cited in essays on methods of research as useful tools in other types of social investigation.

Through an analysis of his published writings and speeches, this study purports to examine the theory of race relations which Park formulated, in terms of its validity, its significance, and its tenability when applied to present day situations. In addition to these methods and materials, and in order to detect the traces of Park's influence, the study also utilizes theses whose research Park directed during his years at Fisk, and articles written by students who accepted his premises as valid hypotheses for sociological analysis. Particular attention was given to a thesis whose central theme is developed around a concept in which Park was interested, but which does not appear in his published works, except as a mere suggestion. This is his theory
of "the main street of the world," which one of his students developed at Park's direction.¹

Excursions were made to Fisk University, the site of Park's last productive years in the quest of such information and materials as could be gained at a primary source. Interviews with some of his intimates and associates there, including Dr. Jitsuichi Masuoka, professor of sociology, and an adherent of Park's theory; and Mrs. Sol. P. Harris, secretary to Park during his period of residence at Fisk, were utilized in developing a point of view about the man and his theory. Other valuable suggestions were the result of conversations with Dr. Cedric Dover and Dr. Reginald Barrett of Fisk. At Atlanta University, interviews with Dr. Herbert Blumer of the University of Chicago, were the source of additional information. Dr. M. C. Hill and Mr. Robert Armstrong have been generous with suggestions.

In an analysis of a man and his work, no adequate understanding can be gained unless the period in which he lived is taken into consideration. The nature of existing social conditions during a given time and place sequence, develops a bias which influences the character of thinking about a particular problem. Hence attention is given to the social setting of Park's social and academic career. The study seeks to ascertain the extent to which the development of Park's thinking was conditioned by the elements with which he came in contact during his

¹Herman D. Burrell, "Race Contacts in Three Cities Along the Main Street of the World" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Social Sciences, Fisk University, 1958), pp. 1-5.
lifetime. Since Park was interested in everything about him, an arresting feature of his writings is that they reflect the influence of whatever issues were of particular concern to him at the moment.

All of this, however, is but a prologue to the basic issue of this study, which is to determine whether or not Park's theory of race relations represents a consistent and organized theory of racial adjustment. The analysis has only one ideological control - the awareness that Park's interest in race relations grew out of his concern not with the problems of race, per se, but with these problems as they index and illustrate the wider problems of association and the social processes they involve.

The bibliography used is that compiled by Edna Cooper.\(^1\) Certain items not appearing therein have been added and duly noted. Acknowledgement is made to Phylon for permission to reproduce the article in its entirety.

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\(^1\) Edna M. Cooper, "Bibliography of Robert E. Park," Phylon, VI (Fourth Quarter, 1945), 372-83.
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE THEORY

The nineteen-twenties were the greatest years of urban sociological study in the United States. They were characterized by a vivid, energetic curiosity about the rich and mysterious texture of metropolitan life. Not the least of those sociologists who pioneered in this field was Robert E. Park. No aspect of life was alien to Park's interest and despite the incoherence of the subject matter of his published writings, a unified and coherent vision of the main processes of social life is found in the specific researches to which he set his students. For Park, the loosening and disruption of communal bonds and the increase in personal freedom were the main facts of modern urban society.¹ Though the outsider would never have suspected it, he embarked upon his career with a reformer's passion to improve the human lot and ended it with the same goal. However, his interest in the solution of the problems of human interrelationships was tempered by a recognition of the facts of life and the nature of social change. In his drive to understand and eventually to help solve the problems of human relations, he was esteemed as one who was as nearly impersonal and selfless as a man can be.

Park envisaged and set going most of the important American sociological studies of races and ethnic groups in the nineteen-twenties. His writings contain numerous hypotheses on the processes of group and individual conflict, competition, assimilation and accommodation in relationship to the contact of ethnic groups. Although he provided few definitive answers to the problems he posed, few, if any, sociologists excelled him in pointing out relevant subject-matters for investigation. The chief vehicles for his ideas were really the investigations carried out by his students.

Shils maintains that Park himself did not contribute greatly to the technique of investigation. He describes Park's function, in addition to focusing the attention of his students on these main processes and their concrete manifestations in residential and occupational segregation and in particular forms of superordination and subordination, as that of inspiring these students to make direct contact with the material in the field. The procedures which they used were those current at the time, namely interviews and the gathering of life histories and other human documents.

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1 Ibid., p. 3.

2 Ibid., p. 9.

3 These works include: Louis Wirth, The Ghetto (Chicago, 1928); E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States (Chicago, 1939); Edgar T. Thompson, The Plantation (Chicago, 1935); Andrew W. Lind, An Island Community: Ecological Succession in Hawaii (Chicago, 1938); Bertram W. Doyle, The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South (Chicago, 1937); Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man (New York, 1937); Pauline V. Young, The Pilgrims of Russian Town (Chicago, 1932); and Romanzo C. Adams, Interracial Marriage in Hawaii (New York, 1937).
One of Park's students, however, takes the opposite view and says that Park did contribute to the technique of investigation. Citing his work in the Pacific Relations Survey, Pauline Young writes that the very nature of the data Park sought involved the use of new techniques of social exploration and analysis, the methods he outlined marking a new innovation in social surveys and research. Young states further that these methods had been used before by different students of human behavior, but not in relation to such extensive enterprises as Park set in motion. A contemporary of Park, E. S. Bogardus, one of the regional directors of the survey, tested and later used the methods and techniques proposed by Park, and found them to be of considerable value not only in the analysis of race relations, but also in the study of other social problems.

In addition to lifting the study of race relations from the sentimental level on which he found it to the realm of science, Park virtually founded the discipline of human ecology. In the study of the human community, of collective behavior and of public opinion, he broke new paths and charted the course that students of these disciplines were to follow for years to come. His published works reflect these

2Ibid.
3Emory S. Bogardus, The New Social Research (Los Angeles, 1926), and "A Social Distance Scale," Sociology and Social Research, XVII (January-February, 1933), 265-71.
interests: Introduction to the Science of Sociology (with E. W. Burgess), 1921; Old World Traits Transplanted (with Herbert A. Miller), 1921; The Immigrant Press and Its Control, 1922; The City - Suggestions for the Study of Human Nature in the Urban Environment (with E. W. Burgess, R. D. McKenzie and Louis Wirth), 1925; and An Outline of the Principles of Sociology (editor), 1939. These volumes represent only a fraction of his total published works, which were largely in the form of papers for the sociological journals.

Within the last quarter of a century the problems of assimilation and the internal and external resistance to immigration have largely receded from the foreground of sociological attention, but from 1907 through the nineteen-twenties they formed one of the crucial issues in this nation's problem of immigration and Americanization. In 1907, the Congress of the United States created the Immigration Commission for the purpose of investigating immigration in this country. The plan and scope of the work as outlined by the Commission included a study of the sources of recent immigration in Europe, the general character of incoming immigrants, the methods employed here and abroad to prevent the immigration of persons classed as undesirable in the United States immigration law, a thorough investigation into the general status of the more recent immigrants as residents of the United States, and, the effect of such immigration upon the institutions, industries and people of this country.1 In 1910 the Commission made a report of its findings and investigations together with its conclusions.

and recommendations which were published in forty-one volumes.\(^1\)

Because constant applications were made to it for contributions during the aforementioned period, by numerous agencies which sought to extend among immigrants in the United States the knowledge of their government and their obligations to it, the Carnegie Corporation made a grant in 1918,\(^2\) for studies in methods of Americanization. It was believed that studies which would not set forth theories of social betterment, but which would provide a description of the methods of agencies engaged in work with immigrants would be of distinct value to those who were interested in, or were working in contact with immigrants. Such studies would enable these agencies to understand the problems of the alien and help him modify his old world customs and replace with the best in American ways and traditions, anything that might be detrimental to his development in America. Such a study was that made by Park in collaboration with Herbert A. Miller.\(^3\) The study explained carefully the widely different heritages the immigrant brings with him from his old life, and the necessity of finding points of contact between his cultural background and the American customs and institutions to which it is desirable that he conform.

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\(^2\) Park and Burgess, op. cit., p. 753.

\(^3\) Robert E. Park, and Herbert A. Miller, Old World Traits Transplanted (New York, 1921).
Park and Miller argued that assimilation was as inevitable as it was desirable, and that the process of assimilation can be hastened more by giving the immigrants freedom to make their own connections between old and new experiences in their own way, than by a policy which orders and forbids their movements. They used the human document as a technique in getting at the attitudes of the immigrant, and concluded that these attitudes arise out of the cultural complex which the immigrant brings from his home to this country.

Edward Ames, who knew Park intimately and followed his career with interest, writes that Park knew his way around and through the human world as do few men, having studied race relations in America, in the Orient, in Africa, in Brazil and in Europe. In the course of his lifetime as he sought to make a genuine sociological study of race relations, Park developed the hypothesis that race relations are, on the whole, like any other human relations. Racial conflicts and distances, he believed, may be a little wider and sometimes more aggravating, but they are not different. Johnson writes that just as Park found race and culture in America an index to human relations, so race and culture problems throughout the world gave him a key to

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1Edward S. Ames, in Robert E. Park, ed. Clara C. Park, (privately printed, n. p., n. d.), p. 4. All essays appearing in this book are untitled, and represent articles by different authors. Hereafter, when this reference is cited, only the author of the article, the editor's name and the page will be given.

understanding the process of civilization.¹ The concept of "One World" was constantly on Park's mind, and his coming to the study of sociology was the outcome of a passionate curiosity about men and their relationships to each other and to the changing patterns of society.

Robert E. Park was born in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, on February 14, 1864, and grew up in Minnesota. Residence in a Scandinavian community gave him his first glimpse of immigrant settlers and proved to be an experience which inspired a life-long interest in immigrant groups and marginal cultures.

As Park grew up, he witnessed at first hand the conflicts and adjustments between the immigrants and the native settlers in his community. He saw the contrasts between the customs and modes of life in both groups. Modern technological innovations brought sweeping changes in industry and transportation, affecting communities such as that in which Park lived. As a result, the small prairie towns were being slowly sapped of their inhabitants by the cities with their bright lights, rapid pace of expansion and new opportunities.

Alihan believes that Park must have been influenced by these conditions noted during his boyhood, as well as by the non-conformist puritanism of the small town, with its insistence upon industry, its suspicion of gaiety, its consciousness of moral superiority, and its regard of the city as the 'sink-hole' of all iniquity. She says this bias is evident in all of Park's writings and explains his preoccupation.

with social problems and social reform.\(^1\)

As a student Park became active at the University of Michigan in the social, political and philosophical activities of the campus, and came in contact there with philosophers John Dewey and George H. Mead. Upon graduation in 1887, he worked for newspapers in Minneapolis, Detroit and Chicago, first as a reporter, then as a writer of special articles of human interest and of social import, and later as a city editor.\(^2\)

Park believed that knowledge consisted of and was gained by the actual experience of association with men and women, and not the abstract formulation of theoretical principles. It was this conviction that attracted him to newspaper work, a career which afforded him unrivaled opportunity for observing the active world. It was probably responsible for the investigations which he undertook as a newspaperman in Detroit, of the modes of life and the problems of rural counties in Michigan. Again, it was this attitude that prompted him when at the University of Chicago, to send his students to various areas of the city to observe whatever might occur of human interest. For he was convinced that the inductive methods of newspaper reporting had a significant contribution to make to sociology. Alihan says it was his insatiable curiosity about human actions and motives that, in addition to fashioning the methods of human ecology, made Park a teacher of

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pervasive influence during his later years as an academician.¹

Finding that journalism did not provide the answers to the puzzling questions of human behavior which it often dramatically posed, Park returned to his studies, first at Harvard University where he received his Master's degree in philosophy in 1899, under the tutelage of William James and Josiah Royce. He then went abroad for further study.² Park, writing of his activities during this period says, "I spent a year at Harvard and then went abroad. I intended to stay abroad for a year, but I remained four years."³ There, listening to the lectures of Georg Simmel at Berlin, he received his only formal instruction in sociology. (Park was not the only person to come to sociology with little formal training in the discipline, as Franklin Giddings, Ellsworth Fair, and William I. Thomas also did this.) He also studied under Wilhelm Windelband at the University of Heidelberg and received his doctorate in philosophy there, in 1904. Park states that by this time he was "sick and tired" of the academic world, and wanted to get back into the world of men, having never given up the ambition to know human nature widely and intimately.⁴

¹Alihan, op. cit., pp. 1-5.
²Burgess, op. cit., p. 478.
⁴Ibid.
Returning to the United States, Park sought a more active participation in the observation and study of human behavior than was provided at that time in the academic environment. Selecting race relations as a pressing problem of great theoretical and practical importance, he spent the years from 1905 to 1914 in the South, serving most of that time in an informal capacity as secretary and associate of Booker T. Washington, principal of Tuskegee Institute and the foremost spokesman for reform in Negro-white relations of that time. Together they made a tour of Europe studying the conditions of the peasants in each country. Their findings were published in a book on which they collaborated.1

Park says that his interest in the study of the Negro and the race problem grew out of his association with Booker T. Washington. He had been invited to become secretary of the Congo Reform Association, an adjunct of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, and was to assist in the publicizing of conditions in the Belgian Congo.2 The scandal created throughout the world when the nefarious methods used by the colonial administrators of King Leopold II of Belgium, became a matter of public concern, had only recently gained momentum. Reform societies in Europe and America were created to evoke world condemnation of the maladroit administration, and to force Belgium to alter its colonial policies through international pressures. In conjunction with his work


Park wrote two magazine articles in which he told of conditions in the Congo. It is probable that his theories of the colonial frontier stem from this early contact with colonial policies. In discussing his work with the Association, he says:

I was not at that time strong for missions, but I undertook the job. Eventually, however, I became genuinely interested. I discovered what I might have known in advance - that conditions in the Congo were about what one might expect, what they have since become, in Kenya, though not by any means so bad. They were, in short, what they were certain to be whenever a sophisticated people invades the territories of a more primitive people in order to exploit their lands and, incidentally, to uplift and civilize them.

By this time Park had become so interested in the problem that he decided to go to Africa to study the situation at first hand. Washington, who heard of the project, invited him to visit Tuskegee for the purpose of investigating Negro-white relations in the South as a sort of preparatory phase before starting his studies in Africa. He admits that he probably learned more about human nature and society in the South with Booker Washington, than he had learned elsewhere in his previous studies. He says:


3Ibid., p. 13.
I believe in firsthand knowledge not as a substitute but as a basis for more formal and systematic investigation. But the reason I profited as much as I did from this experience was due, I am sure, to the fact that I had a long preparation.¹

Park went to Tuskegee in 1905, intending to spend seven days, and remained seven years. Apparently chronological reckoning of time was of no importance to Park, since, throughout his life, when he became interested in a particular problem, he lost himself in it, ignoring completely the passing of time. He says that during his years at Tuskegee he discovered that he was not interested in the Negro problem as that problem is ordinarily conceived, but was interested in the Negro in the South and in the curious and intricate system which had grown up to define his relations with white folk.

I was interested most of all, in studying the details of the process by which the Negro was making and has made his slow but steady advance. I became convinced, finally, that I was observing the historical process by which civilization, not merely here but elsewhere, has evolved, drawing into the circle of its influence an ever widening circle of races and peoples.²

While at Tuskegee, W. I. Thomas, then a member of the department of sociology at the University of Chicago, heard of Park and brought him to the attention of Albion W. Small, head of the department and founder of the American Journal of Sociology. At the invitation of Small, Park joined the staff of the department of sociology at the University of Chicago in 1914, where he remained until his retirement.

¹Ibid., p. 13.
²Ibid.
in 1936.¹ Although race was by no means his only interest, he can justly be credited with establishing at the University of Chicago a point of view and a research interest that have influenced the entire literature of race in America.² His students have continued to cultivate and develop the germs of his thinking.³

Beginning his teaching career at fifty, he developed his own methods of instruction with an emphasis on research and frequent consultations with each student. His keen sense of the significant in human behavior, his penetrating insight, his stimulating suggestions, his provocative statements of theoretical points, his capacity for stating problems in the framework of a conceptual system, his unswerving devotion to research as central in sociological training, and the impact of his vigorous and vivid personality left a lasting impression upon successive groups of graduate students, many of whom are now well known for contributions to research undertaken under his guidance.⁴

The years, 1914 to 1936, represent Park's greatest period of productivity. At various times he was on leaves of absence from his

¹ Burgess, op. cit., p. 478.
² Nef, Wirth, and Johnson, op. cit., p. 238.
³ Ibid., p. 239.
⁴ Burgess, op. cit., p. 478.
post at the University, for the purpose of making studies in race relations. He served as a staff member of the Americanization Study of the Carnegie Corporation during 1918 and 1919. From 1924 to 1944 he was on the editorial staff of the American Journal of Sociology. He served as president of the American Sociological Society during the 1925-26 term. During the years, 1923-25, he was the general director of the Race Relations Survey of the Pacific Coast; and was a research professor at the University of Hawaii during 1931 and 1932.¹ In 1932, he went as lecturer to Yenching University, China, where the influence of that University on the life of the Chinese people can be traced back to this visit. Similarly, his visits to India, Africa, and Brazil, in 1933, became starting points of a new scholarship and understanding of the process of race relations in those countries.²

One of the most significant of Park's research projects was his Race Relations Survey of the Pacific Coast which he was chosen to direct by the Institute of Social and Religious Research. This study which engaged the collaboration of university men in the leading colleges of the Pacific was one of the major pieces of social introspection of the 1920's. The survey interpreted for the first time in an inclusive way, problems of immigration in terms of Oriental migration and settlement, on the land and in industry, singly and in communities; the persistence of ancient institutions, and the rise of

¹Ibid., p. 478.

²Nef, Wirth, and Johnson, op. cit., p. 239.
the native born of Oriental parentage.¹ Park wrote that the facts which were discovered indicating the nature and extent of the changes taking place in the manners and character of the younger generation of Orientals were probably the most significant that the survey disclosed.²

Growing out of mounting racial tensions on the Pacific Coast and the agitation resulting from the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924, the survey was initiated in an effort to gain knowledge which would not so much change attitudes as opinions of American whites toward the problems of Oriental immigrants.³ Park wrote of the purposes of the project:

It was not the purpose of the survey to crystallize opinion on either side of an issue, but rather to provide a context in which issues could be discussed in a friendlier spirit; create a situation in which the common, as over against sectarian, party, and racial interests, might receive a more deliberate and intelligent consideration...

...Our survey sought to go behind the opinions and the programs of parties and sects, to the sources of public opinion - the concrete experiences, the personal sentiments and private feelings of individual men, compared with which the forensic display of arguments and propaganda is, after all, a kind of masquerade. From

¹ "East by West," Survey, LVI (May, 1926), 133.

² Robert E. Park, "Behind Our Masks," Survey, LVI (May, 1926), 139.

³ Ibid., p. 139.
the point of view of the Race Relations Survey, the situation on the Pacific Coast is not so much a problem of politics, in the ordinary sense of that word, as a problem of behavior - collective behavior.¹

From his observations during the course of the survey, Park formulated his concept of the race relations cycle. In his article appearing in 1926,² in which he interpreted the findings of the study, he makes his first detailed analysis of this concept of the natural history of race relations.

After his retirement in 1936, from the University of Chicago, Park became visiting professor of sociology at Fisk University, at which post he remained until his death in 1944. Much of his significant writing on race relations was done during this period. In the introductions to the published works of some of his students, in book reviews and articles, he expressed his philosophy of race relations. Wirth writes that the eleven years between 1933 and his death were among the most productive years of his scholarship.³ Perhaps his most important work with reference to race relations, written during this period, is the article which summarizes his position on the nature of race relations.⁴ This essay in which he traces the natural history of race relations as a process in the development of Western civilization, represents the culmination of his thinking on the

¹Ibid., p. 139.
³Louis Wirth, in Clara C. Park, op. cit., p. 21.
problem of race relations. Tracing the history of modern race relations from the expansion of European nations to colonial frontiers by migration, invasion, and conquest, he concludes that race relationships are determined by the cultural differences of a dominant and subordinate people struggling for a vantage position in the ecological, political, economic and social orders. It is within the logical and conceptual limits of this conclusion that this analysis is undertaken.

Johnson writes of Park's years at Fisk, that although he had the nominal title of visiting professor, he was infinitely more than this. He was a great teacher working with students out of a critically marginal population who were unaware of the process of which they were a part. The richness of his ideas, the wealth of his learning, his time and energy, all were freely devoted to the development of these students. Johnson believes that the years will continue to yield the effects of the ideas which he gave to those who had the benefit of his teaching.

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CHAPTER II

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE THEORY

The subject matter of social theory is the action of men in association. It involves a consideration of the nature of human beings developing through interaction and communication with other human personalities. To know how such interaction takes place and to understand how it creates and defines what is called personality, it becomes necessary to understand the nature of the relationships of humans in association with others. This problem can be investigated from several different points of view.

One method of approach to the study of social theory is through the analysis and comparison of actual social institutions. The major effect of institutions is to structuralize behavior in given areas of human endeavor. This approach provides insight into the manner in which men are accommodated to a single mode of procedure and develop the sentiments and beliefs that harmonize with the behavior forms. Primarily an historical frame of reference, as the direct material is to be found in history, it is a method utilized mainly by anthropologists or sociologists intent on studying the institutions of primitive man, or institutional growth and development. Through use of this method, generalizations can be drawn and scientific principles of human organization can be derived. A "positive science" of institutions is the object of such inquiry.

Another system of analysis lies in the study not of institutions
in themselves, but of the motives and impulses by which men are moved in their social actions through institutional and associative patterns. This method involves two theoretical extremes, one of which is the study of the psychology of the crowd, in order to interpret the impulses and ways of action of a barely organized human group. At the opposite extreme it studies from the same point of view, the psychological aspects of community life or of a culture group as forms of complicated and highly developed types of association. It seeks, as does the psychology of individual conduct to formulate the general rules which guide the actions of men in association, studying the diseases of association as individual psychology studies the ills of personality.

A third approach to social theory is to seek to discover the universal principles of social association; the values rather than the facts of society. This method seeks to analyze society in terms of what 'ought' to be rather than what 'is.' ¹

Park's approach to the study of society is eclectic in nature. He selects and uses from each of these methods of interpreting society what is most useful. Bringing to the study of sociology little in the way of formal training, he could have no well defined frame of reference for studying society, and would of necessity have to depend to some extent upon the thinking of his predecessors in developing his own point of view.

Park sought to cultivate sociology as if it were a natural science. He believed that sociology should collect facts and answer the theoretical questions afterward. Its success in analyzing and amassing data which throw light upon human problems would justify its scientific pretensions.¹ Emphasizing the value of the empirical method in sociological research, he believed there was a place for formal and systematic investigation in sociology, but not as a substitute for a first-hand encounter with the world of men. It was his opinion that theoretical concepts are tools which serve as means of identification, description, classification, and measurement of social phenomena.

In the sphere of human relations as influenced by the factors of race, Park saw mankind as the possessors of a cultural heritage which furnished the perspective through which they viewed the world, and which shaped the facts they recognized. He saw this social heritage as a complex mixture of reason and irrationality. His philosophy of race relations can be fully comprehended only when viewed as an aspect of the process of civilization itself. Consequently, the theory of this natural history of the human career should be the essential task of social science; and its understanding, the fundamental objective of the sociologist.²

He believed that sociology, like natural science, should aim at prediction and control based on an investigation of those aspects of


life that are determined and predictable in the nature of man and society. As a scholarly discipline sociology is the ethically neutral study of group life and human behavior. Its purpose is to establish a body of valid principles, a fund of objective knowledge, that will make possible the direction and control of social and human reality.

It is most immediately concerned with the social problems and practical treatment procedures; it is rather a systematic effort to provide a bias for a more adequate understanding of such problems, and consequently, for a more effective mode of dealing with the problems that exist or may arise.

The sociologist is particularly interested in describing the process by which social life goes on. Like other scientists, he seeks a body of principles that will enable him to predict, not in the sense of historical prophecy or of foretelling the course of future events, but in the scientific sense that given certain facts and relations, other events may be foretold. The ability to predict is the basis of control.1

Sociology, according to Park, so far as it can be regarded as a fundamental science, may be described as the science of collective behavior.2 He says no matter how great the social distances between individuals, the fact that they are aware of one another's presence sets up an exchange of mutual influences, and the ensuing behavior is

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2Park and Burgess, op. cit., p. 42.
social and collective. It is social in the sense that the train of thought and action in each individual influences, and is in turn influenced by, the action of every other. It is collective insofar as each individual acts under the influence of a mood in which each shares, and in accordance with conventions, which all unconsciously accept, and which the presence of each enforces upon the others.¹

In Park's scheme, collective behavior is defined as the conduct of individuals acting under the influence of a common and collective impulse resulting from social interaction. People do not behave in the presence of others as if they were living in an isolated condition. The fact of their consciousness of each other tends to maintain and enforce a great body of convention and usage which otherwise falls into disuse and is forgotten. Collective behavior in this frame of reference is the interaction which occurs between two or more socialized human beings for the duration of the particular situation in which that interaction occurs.² It is concerned with the study of the elementary and spontaneous forms of behavior arising directly from the interaction of persons and expressive of common impulses.³

Park views interaction in terms of the behavior of each individual which affects and is in turn affected by the actions of all other individuals. He says society exists wherever several individuals are

¹Ibid., p. 865.
³Reuter, op. cit., p. 205.
in reciprocal relationship with each other. Men are conditioned by
associative impulses which cause them to enter into group relationships
in which they act for, with and against, one another. In this process
they tend to exercise an influence upon these conditions of association
and are in turn influenced by them. Such reactions indicate that
society comes into being through the unity which is developed among
individual bearers of these impulses. This unity is the outgrowth of
the process of socialization. Socialization is the process by which
the individual finds at his various levels of social organization,
ecological, economic, political, and moral or cultural, his place and
function in society through competition and co-operation.¹

Society exists for Park through a process of transmission of a
given social heritage. Transmission in society takes place through
communication from the older to the younger members, of ways of acting,
thinking and feeling. Without communication of ideals, hopes, expecta-
tions, standards and opinions, from those members of society who are
passing out of the group life to those who are coming into it, social
life could not survive.² Men live in a community because of the
things which they have in common, and communication is the way in which
they come to possess the so-called "group mind" which makes collective

¹ Robert E. Park, "Symbiosis and Socialization: A Frame of Reference
for the Study of Society," American Journal of Sociology, XLV (July,
1939), 20. After this, the article will be referred to only as
"Symbiosis and Socialization."

² Park and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 185-86.
action possible. In order to form a community or society, it is essential that they possess mutual understanding in terms of similar aims, beliefs, aspirations and knowledge.¹

Park subscribes to Simmel's theory that if sociology is to be a study of the science of society, it can only investigate those reciprocal influences which represent forms of socialization.² In his article on symbiosis and socialization as a frame of reference for studying society,³ Park says the process of socialization, as it takes place in the formation of any social group reflects the processes by which existing types of association, or societies, and of institutions have come into existence in the course of the historic process. He says further:

Looked at in a historical perspective, we observe that the progressive socialization of the world, that is, the incorporation of all the peoples of the earth in a world-wide economy, which has laid the foundation for the rising world-wide political and moral order - the great society - is but a repetition of the processes that take place wherever and whenever individuals come together to carry on a common life, and to form the institutions - economic, political, or cultural - to make that common life effective.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 185-86.

²Ibid., pp. 348-49. See also Nicholas J. Spykman, The Social Theory of Georg Simmel (Chicago, 1925).


⁴Ibid., p. 23.
The theory of the movement toward "one world" as the universe becomes progressively socialized in terms of the economic interdependence of nations, is no new idea. Park's thinking at this point, closely parallels that of the philosopher, Graham Wallas. In 1915, Wallas wrote in his psychological study of society, that the increasing industrialization of the world, and the resulting world market for goods, produced and improved methods of communication. This tends to lessen distances between nations, and in the process the development of a universal political and moral order based on trade is effected, which Wallas terms, "the great society." Park's views on the socialization of the world stem from this work of Wallas' which had a profound influence upon the thinking of his contemporaries.

Describing man's socialization, or the process by which the individual learns to conform to group standards, Park says, one begins life as an individual organism involved in a struggle with other organisms for mere existence. One becomes involved later in personal, and moral, eventually in economic and occupational, and ultimately in political associations; in short, with all the forms of association which are called social. In this manner society and the socialized individual come into existence as a result of the same social processes and as a result of the same cycle or succession of events.2


The process of socialization terminates in assimilation, which involves the relatively complete incorporation of the individual into the existing social order and the more or less complete inhibition of competition, which, when it exists, takes the form of a tolerant rivalry.¹

The competitive struggle of an individual organism with other organisms for existence, introduces another point of view which Park held with reference to the organization of society. Relating the interdependence of organisms competing for existence in plant and animal society to human relationships, Park introduces the concept of society as being symbiotically structured, although in human society the typical struggle is for livelihood rather than for the means of existence. Human beings struggle for economic security, for position, power and status.

Symbiosis is the living together of distinct and dissimilar species who, because of physical differences which prevent assimilation, become accommodated to each other in superficial ways, but remain distinct entities, never becoming members of a common life. In most instances the association is mutually beneficial, and any association of individuals who unconsciously compete and co-operate, or who by any exchange of goods and services constitute themselves an economic unit, may be described as an entity that is symbiotic. Individuals living together symbiotically are in a non-social relationship. Park says:

¹Ibid., p. 25.

²Ibid., pp. 24-25.
It seems that every possible form of association is, or should be, capable under certain circumstances, of collective action. But there are types of communities, the individual members of which live in a condition of interdependence that is sometimes described as social, which are, nevertheless, quite incapable of collective action. With the extension of commercial intercourse to every natural region of the earth, one may perhaps say that the whole world is living in a kind of symbiosis; but the world community is at present, at least, quite incapable of collective action.\(^1\)

Since they fit into this pattern, race contacts can be viewed as forms of racial symbiosis. In its inception, the contact of races is fundamentally non-social, since it is around the axis of exploitative economy that the relation of races gets its first definition and orientation.\(^2\) On the non-social level of race contacts, the relations of individuals are impersonal and symbiotic. In colonial areas, races come together, struggle for a vantage position, and eventually establish a more or less permanent symbiotic relationship.\(^3\)

Racial symbiosis is the first relationship which exists between races when they come together, and is superseded in time, by other forms of race relations. In this initial phase, each race regards and treats the other as of different species. They are held together and interlaced in a nexus of competitive-cooperation because each

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 3.

\(^2\)Jitsuichi Masucka, "Racial Symbiosis and Cultural Frontiers: A Frame of Reference," Social Forces, XXIV (March, 1946), 348-53. After this, the article will be referred to as "Racial Symbiosis and Cultural Frontiers."

\(^3\)Ibid.
is a necessary component in the economic organization of the region. The characteristic form of association between races is utilitarian. No mutual understanding, consensus, or interpenetration of personali-
ties exists and the form of adjustment between different races is
merely an expression of the necessary adjustment of the local economy
to the world economy.¹

A customary reciprocation of services among more or less independ-
dent individualities is the characteristic feature of social life. Indi-
viduals grouped together in a single mass, may live not only in
contact with each other, but even in a state of mutual penetration and
still not necessarily constitute a society. If their functions, instead
of co-operating, diverge; if the good of one is the evil of the other,
whatever the intimacy of their contact may be, no social bond unites
them. In some instances, however, individuals of the same or different
species may be useful to each other at a single point. A habitual
relation may be established between their activities, but only on this
one point, and in the time limits in which the usefulness exists.
Such an instance gives the occasion, if not for a society, at least
for an association. In other words, in addition to the normal societies
formed of elements specifically alike, which cannot exist without each
other, there will be room for more accidental groupings, formed of
elements more or less specifically unlike, which convenience unites
and not necessity.²

¹Ibid., pp. 348-55.
²Park and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 167-68.
Man, as he competes for his sustenance, learns to rely more fully upon his technical skills; he learns to organize racial and cultural dissimilarities to promote further his own well-being. Where two or more divergent racial groups occupy a common territory and participate in a common economy, the division of labor under certain circumstances may follow closely the color line. This color line is a caste relationship based on color which arises as a superordinate group strives to maintain a social order based on exploitation. It is not necessarily based on color prejudices, but comes into being as a justification for the subordination of a racial group in the interests of an established economy. In a given area, whether or not the division of labor becomes identified with the color line seems to depend, first, upon the nature of the local economy, and second, upon the complexity of the racial composition of the area. All these factors depend upon the regional interdependence with the emporium, which in turn depends upon the state of the world economy. In the early stages of contact between the technologically advanced and culturally backward groups, there is a tendency for the dominant group to exploit the backward people. But sooner or later the parasitism is superseded by a form of interdependence. What is characteristic of symbiotic relations among divergent races in urban areas is that mutual dependence is more pronounced than parasitism.¹

Park writes that in a society, the most alien relations of two living beings which can be produced are those of the predator and his prey. In general, the predator is the stronger and overcomes and subdues his prey. Yet smaller ones sometimes attack larger creatures, subduing them and letting them live that they themselves may live on them as long as possible. In such a case they are forced to remain for a longer or a shorter time in a relationship with their victim, carried about by it wherever its life leads them. This is a parasitical relationship; an association which does not offer the essential element of all society, co-operation. Co-operation exists only when the two individuals are living in a reciprocal relation and are developing their mutual activities in corresponding ways toward a single and an identical goal.¹

Park has indicated that a realistic analysis of the relations of races must be made against its broader context - ecological, political and moral orders.² It is within this wider range of contacts and associations that the individual members of the divergent races first compete for their sustenance, satisfy their biological needs, and struggle for a vantage point within ecological and economic orders. But the struggle for spatial position produces the struggle for social status and personal and moral integrity. As contacts become more numerous, personal and lasting, the members of the subordinate group

¹Park and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 167-68.

become progressively acculturated and they become wiser in the ways of
the dominant group. They begin to exert themselves; they struggle for
higher economic, political and social status, and finally they fight
for greater personal mobility and self-expression. At this stage
race problems, as distinct from administrative, colonial problems
arise.¹

Incident to the contacts and communication of divergent races and
cultures, the old order based upon more or less homogeneous races and
cultures invariably changes. To describe systematically in temporal
sequence just what these processes consist of constitutes the essence
of the natural history of race relations. Stated in human terms, the
study of race relations deals with the contacts and meetings of two
societies and the consequent processes of mutual adjustment of
organized social groups whose customary behavior, beliefs, and values
are different. Wherever the mode of life of one racial group is
separated by a broad gulf from that of another, a satisfactory mutual
adjustment between races is difficult to achieve, and the outcome,
quite often, problematic. However, in every instance, it is the
politically subordinated element of the dual society which must bear
the greater burden of social adjustment and change.²

¹Masuoka, "Racial Symbiosis and Cultural Frontiers," op. cit.,
XXIV, 349-50.

²Ibid.
CHAPTER III

THE CONTENT OF THE THEORY

I

Race relations emerge in the social process, in social interaction, in contacts and in communication. Park has studied them within that framework. Believing that the interactional approach is the most useful for studying the nature of relations between races, he interprets these relations as a continuous process, cyclical in nature, which terminates in some predestined racial configuration. This configuration may be explored within the framework of racial and ethnic contacts.

Park, seeing race relations as inextricably interwoven with economic processes, has developed a theory of race and culture contacts in the emporium to show that race problems are a direct result of European expansion into colonial areas. A period of exploration followed by industrial and population expansion in Europe, resulted in the widespread overseas migration of Europeans to many parts of the world. Backed by their superior technology, institutional organization and rational knowledge, Europeans invaded the culturally "backward" regions, established their colonies and divided their spheres of influence among themselves. The cities which developed became trading centers, drawing men of many races and cultures into contacts for commercial purposes.

Park says that it is in the market place where men from distant places come together to bargain and trade that men first learn the
subtleties of commerce and exchange; the necessity for cool calculation, and the freedom to act as individuals, in accordance with interests rather than sentiments. It is with the expansion of the market that intellectual life has prospered and local tribal cultures have been progressively integrated into that wider and more rational social order called "civilization."\(^1\)

It becomes necessary to present a brief analysis of the colonial world in order to provide a basis for the ensuing discussion, because Park believed that the great cities of the colonial empire represented an ideal area for the study of racial contacts and cultural fusion. Here, where new racial types constantly emerge as a result of the interbreeding of divergent races, it is possible to observe racial development as an aspect of the development of civilization. He found the great colonial cities of the East—Honolulu, Manila, Yokohama, Batavia, and others—a convenient laboratory in which to study the contact of races and its effect upon race relationships. He believed that by focusing attention upon great cities and their spheres of dominance, insight could be gained not only into the present status of race and culture contacts,\(^2\) but also into the dynamics of the race relations cycle.

Before the outbreak of the second World War, approximately one-third of the land area of the earth was colonial territory, primarily

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in the possession of European nations. Great Britain held the major proprietary interest, with The Netherlands and France ranking next as owners. Belgium, Portugal, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States of America have also been the administrators of lesser colonial holdings.

Colonialism as a way of life has had a long history. It came into existence as a part of the modern world nearly four centuries ago. As European nations began expanding into neighboring territories searching for raw materials and engaging in small trade, the ever widening circle of influence of Europe began in the fifteenth century, and continued without serious interruption throughout the nineteenth century.\(^1\)

Numerous colonies were settled in which European powers were represented by soldiers, settlers, missionaries and traders. Gradually, each power gained control over areas containing one or more of Europe's most needed raw materials. Since the control of these products was in the hands of a few nations, and in view of Europe's great need of these goods, it became necessary that trading centers be established for the purpose of facilitating distribution of these goods. A net-work of trade routes developed, which shortened the distances around the world, and linked every continent to the world's commercial thoroughfare, speeding the flow of the desired commodities. Today, the world's greatest volume of trade continues to flow along this highway which

\(^{1}\)Park, in Stonequist, \textit{op. cit.}, p. xiv.
is referred to as the "Main Street of the World," and is composed of the principal coastal cities of the Eastern and Western hemispheres.

The world's main street is comparable to the major thoroughfare of an urban community; for example, Wall Street in New York City, the avenue along which the principal financial dealings of that metropolis are transacted. Similarly, the business establishments on the city's principal boulevards correspond to the great cosmopolitan centers along the "Main Street of the World." Just as most of the financial activity occurs within and among these business houses, so the world's transactions are effected within and among the great colonial cities along its principal commercial route.

The cities which have risen and grown in direct response to the world market have a common feature. In these areas the population is multiplying, new ideas are growing and spreading, industry and commerce are expanding, and the sphere of political and cultural influence is extending to an ever expanding frontier. The commercial and manufacturing cities that have grown most rapidly since 1900, Park believed, are on the whole, those located on the ocean's main highways. However, not all the racial frontiers are seaport cities. Johannesburg, the

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1 Herman D. Burrell, "Race Contacts in Three Cities Along the Main Street of the World" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Social Sciences, Fisk University, 1938), pp. 1-5.

2 Ibid.

capital of the gold region of South Africa; Elizabethville, the center of the Katanga copper mining region in the Belgian Congo; and Nairobi, capital of Kenya, in Central Africa, to which European immigration has turned since World War I, are younger and less important, but in other respects, characteristic frontier cities in which the typical cycle of race relations has just begun.  

The great cities of the colonial empire have always been the melting pot of races and cultures. These cities which developed through migration and conquest by European nations represent areas which were once colonial frontiers. Park refers to the area in which invasion by an expanding people and the initial contact of races takes place, as the "frontier." In this sense, the frontier of European expansion has been of two types, a frontier of settlement and a frontier of exploitation. In either case the frontier has invariably advanced by stages, distinguished less by the increasing numbers of the invading population than by the character of the technological innovations which each successive advance of population introduced. Thus, he says, the introduction of an innovation which is sufficiently disturbing to the existing social order may mark the rise of a new frontier, not in every instance a frontier of settlement, but in any case a cultural frontier.  

The colonies representing the frontier of exploitation are located for the most part in tropical territory considered unsuited to European settlement, or in territory already densely populated where the native

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1 Park, in Reuter, op. cit., p. 77.
2 Ibid., p. 59.
populations cannot be displaced. The colonies which represent the frontier of settlement are those areas where the invading people in their efforts to accommodate themselves to the conditions of life in a new country invariably discard or lose their inherited and traditional ways of life. As a result new peoples and new cultures arise. Thus, the frontier is not merely an area where peoples meet, but a zone of transition where they intermingle.

Generally, race contacts resulting from exploration, immigration, and eventual settlement have customarily included an excess of males among the invading group. Park says that one evidence and consequence of racial expansion is the existence in both the colonies of settlement and the colonies of exploitation, wherever Europeans have gone to live, in fact, of a population of half castes and mixed bloods who are a direct result of this situation. This indicates that miscegenation takes place most readily and rapidly upon the frontier. It takes place among primitive peoples when their tribal organizations have been undermined by slavery, or by sudden incorporation into the industrial systems of more highly civilized peoples. It occurs in the early period of any invasion of an alien population before stable conditions and a normal distribution of the sexes has been achieved. It is in the earlier years of migration to the frontier, that interbreeding takes place rapidly; later, as the disproportionate ratio in the sexes among

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1 Ibid., p. 58.
2 Ibid., p. 61.
3 Ibid., p. 79.
the invading population is changed, the rate at which intermarriage and race mixture proceeds will ordinarily decline.¹

This interpenetration of peoples and fusion of cultures has produced the racial hybrid, a new personality type, which Park calls "the marginal man."² The marginal man is one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different, but antagonistic cultures. He lives in intimate association with the world about him, but is never so completely identified with it that he is unable to look at it with a certain critical detachment. The marginal man is an incidental product of a process of acculturation such as inevitably ensues when peoples of different cultures and different races come together to carry on a common life.³

The study of hybrid, marginal peoples is significant for several reasons. The racial hybrid offers the most obvious, tangible evidence of the extent and character of European cultural contact on the frontier. In terms of their numbers and the particular role assigned them in the communities in which they live, the character of existing race relations and the extent to which racial and cultural assimilation between the parent races has taken place, can be determined.⁴


³Ibid., p. xviii.

⁴Park, in Reuter, op. cit., p. 76.
It has been the disposition of the mixed bloods, wherever they have been denied the status of the dominant race, to compensate themselves by withdrawing from association with the racially subordinate parent group and establishing a separate caste. When the Eurasian, or the Euroafrican, or the mulatto of the United States have sought to identify themselves with the dominant group they have been rebuffed, and have vacillated on the margins of both parent groups. In some instances they have succeeded in completely segregating themselves. This has been the case in South Africa, Asia, and the United States. When this has occurred they have either deteriorated physically or culturally, and have not shared in the general economic and cultural progress as a whole.

As an illustrative example, Park cites the Rehoboother Bastaards, an isolated community of mixed Boer and South African natives, who have succeeded in maintaining their racial identity by refusing to intermarry or identify themselves with the natives, and who are prohibited from intermarriage with the white population.\(^1\) Another, Macao, an isolated colony thirty miles west of Hong Kong, was settled by one thousand Portuguese families, whose descendants have intermarried with the Chinese to such an extent that they are now predominantly Chinese in blood, if not in culture. They have succeeded in preserving their Portuguese heritage by remaining devout Christians in a Confucian world.\(^2\) Bond cites two racial islands in Alabama as examples of mulattoes who

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 70.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 65.
have preserved their racial identity by isolating themselves from both groups, but who are disintegrating culturally in the process.\footnote{Horace Mann Bond, "Two Racial Islands in Alabama," \textit{American Journal of Sociology}, XXXVI (January, 1931), 552-67.}

It is evident that the processes of acculturation and assimilation do not proceed with the same ease and speed in all cases. Particularly where peoples who come together are of divergent cultures and widely different racial stocks, assimilation takes place more slowly than in other instances. All racial problems grow out of situations in which assimilation does not take place at all, or occurs very slowly. The chief obstacle to the cultural assimilation of races is the reaction to, acceptance or rejection of, certain divergent physical traits by groups conscious of these differences.\footnote{Robert E. Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," \textit{American Journal of Sociology}, XXXIII (May, 1928), 881-93.} Eventually, however, peoples and races who live together, sharing in the same economy, inevitably become assimilated through the processes inherent in the race relations cycle, the dynamics of which will be discussed in the succeeding section.

\textbf{II}

Park's interactional approach to the study of race relations is an attempt to develop a systematic theory in that field. He recognized in the operation of race relations the four major processes of social interaction - contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation.
In 1926, when reporting the findings of his Pacific Relations Survey, he introduced the concept of the "race relations cycle" as a systematic abstraction of the interactional process. He wrote:

In the relations of races there is a cycle of events which tends everywhere to repeat itself. Exploration invariably opens new regions for commercial exploitation; the missionary becomes the advance agent of the traders. The exchange of commodities involves in the long run the competition of goods and of persons. The result is a new distribution of population and a new and wider division of labor.

The new economic organization, however, inevitably becomes the basis for a new political order. The relations of races and peoples are never for very long merely economic and utilitarian...We have imported labor as if it were a commodity, and...we have been disappointed to find that laborers were human like ourselves. In this way it comes about that race relations which were economic became later political and cultural...

The race relations cycle which takes the form, to state it abstractly, of contacts, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation, is apparently progressive and irreversible.

Race relationships tend to take certain forms, of which competition is the most universal and fundamental. Social contact initiates interaction, but competition is interaction without social contact. In human society, competition is always interrelated with other processes of conflict, accommodation and assimilation. While social

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2 Ibid.

contact inevitably initiates these processes, it creates also sympathies, prejudices, and personal and moral relations which modify, complicate, and control competition.\(^1\) On the other hand, within the limits which the cultural process creates, and custom and tradition impose, competition invariably tends to create an impersonal social order in which each individual, being free to pursue his own profit, makes every other individual a means to that end. In doing so, however, he invariably contributes, through the mutual exchange of services, to the common welfare.

Competition, the process through which the ecological organization of society is created, determines the territorial and vocational distribution of the racial elements of a population. The division of labor and the economic interdependence of racial groups characteristic of modern life, are products of competition. The social and political order which imposes itself upon this competitive organization, is a product of accommodation and assimilation, later stages in the race relations cycle.\(^2\)

Competition is universal among living things. Ordinarily, it goes on unobserved even by the individuals who are most concerned. It is only in periods of crisis, when men are making new and conscious efforts to control the conditions of their common life, that the forces with which they are competing gets identified with persons, and competition is converted into conflict.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 507.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 508.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 512.
In colonial areas where relatively simple conditions of life exist, races come together, struggle for a vantage position, eventually establishing a more or less permanent symbiotic relationship. Park believed that the process through which racial symbiosis first comes into being and is later replaced by other forms of race relations, could be more easily comprehended by observing the origin and growth of racial symbiosis in the less complex situations of colonial life.

Every community, which is spatially isolated, culturally autonomous and economically self-sufficient, has a unique ecological organization peculiar to and dependent upon its local resources and the number of its inhabitants. In the beginning of the contact and association of races on the frontier, the ecological organization of the indigenous population is only slightly affected. The pioneer traders who desire materials that lie outside the realm of the native economy and social order have a relationship with the inhabitants which is largely transitory. Relations between the traders and the community remain generally friendly and peaceful. Through contact with the traders, the natives are introduced to the ways of the outside world and are prepared thereby for the eventual penetration of their communities by larger enterprises with substantial capital and organization. It is only after the appearance of these well organized commercial enterprises that the alien economic penetration is said to effect any notable infringement on native economic life.1

The introduction of new technological devices for swift exploitation of resources upsets the biotic balance of the region and modifies the man-sustenance relationship peculiar to the native mode of life. Generally, in the wake of the invaders come new diseases which tend to upset the conventional balance between births and deaths. Where the depopulation of the natives is associated with an influx of alien peoples, a drastic change in the local economic and social organization occurs. The native lands fall into the hands of the invaders, the money economy displaces the native economy, and with this transition the natives become increasingly dependent for their daily existence on the outer world.\(^1\)

As racially and culturally divergent groups come to occupy a common territory and participate in a common economy, there develops a racial division of labor which gives the area a measure of stability. Individuals competing for livelihood and status distribute themselves in the ecological order. Traditionally, individuals with technical skills and capital occupy the top of the occupational ladder, control the center of dominance and direct the activities of their subordinates. They exploit the natives as another natural resource of the colonial area.

The symbiotic association of peoples and races is in constant flux, because the racial division of labor results from and is based upon cultural and geographical dissimilarities of groups in association.

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 551-52.
As the ecological position of the region is modified and acculturation of the natives takes place, the pattern changes. With the increase of culture contacts between the dominant and subordinate groups the social distances separating the two narrow. Race prejudice then becomes the instinctive and spontaneous reaction of the superordinate race as it seeks to maintain these social distances.

In this context, the concept of social distance becomes a convenient tool for measuring racial attitudes. Closeness or distance is not so much a matter of familiarity and sharing of experience as a matter of attitudes. The likes, preferences, tastes, hatreds, disgusts, and dreads of an individual, in so far as they are focused on another person, will attract or repel, draw them together, or separate and erect barriers between them.\(^1\)

Park's concept of "distance" as applied to human beings has come into use among sociologists in an attempt to reduce to measurable terms the degrees of understanding and intimacy which characterize social relations. The degree of intimacy or reserve which enters into social relationships, describes, and to some extent measures social distance. Under certain circumstances reserves may be broken down, and with this breakdown, social distances dissolve, and the most intimate understandings are frequently established.

In southern sections of the United States of America, social distances are defined and maintained through a pattern of racial etiquette, which functions to define and maintain the pattern which race relations

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take. In such a system, when all the social distances are observed and every individual is in his proscribed place, the society or community has attained a stable balance between races. In such a society, every individual is "all right" and quite acceptable in his place, and at his proper distance, even when that distance is only symbolically expressed. Thus, it was quite possible on the plantation in the ante-bellum South, particularly in the case of house servants and the master's family, to maintain the most intimate relationships between master and slave, provided the social ritual defining and maintaining the caste relationships was strictly observed.1

Etiquette and ceremonial are convenient and necessary in facilitating human intercourse, but they maintain even more effectively social distances, and preserve the rank and order of classes and individuals essential to social organization and adequate collective action. When viewed in this light, the ceremonial and ritual so rigidly enforced in the South becomes significant. Such methods of maintaining social distances tend to preserve racial distinctions amid all the inevitable changes of an expanding industrial and democratic society.2

The inability of administrators and vested interest groups to modify their old institutional patterns and to cope with new conditions gives rise to collective unrest among the individuals of the subordinate


group who focus their attention on race differences and develop race consciousness. As they become more aware of themselves as a racial entity and grow wiser in the ways of the dominant group, they begin to exert themselves and struggle for greater economic, political, and social status. Conflict is the inevitable result, as the forces in power invariably seek to preserve the social distances separating the races.

Nowhere do social contacts so readily provoke conflicts as in the relations between races, particularly when racial differences are re-enforced not only by differences of culture, but of color. Visibility makes it easy to observe and maintain racial distinctions. It puts between the races the invisible, but no less real, barrier of self-consciousness. Park says that because of the distinctive racial features which Orientals and Negroes possess, they are condemned to remain in the white world symbols not only of their respective races, but of a vague, ill-defined menace, which in the case of the Japanese is referred to as, "the yellow peril." This not only determines to a great extent, the attitude of white toward darker races, but the attitude of the suppressed races to the white as well.

Conflict is always a conscious process, evoking the deepest emotions, and enlists the greatest concentration of attention and effort on the part of contending racial groups. Both competition and conflict are forms of struggle, but competition is continuous and impersonal.

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while conflict is intermittent and personal. In race contacts, conflict arises as the racially subordinate group seeks to gain greater personal and economic status.

Every change in status of a race involves a change in social organization. Race prejudice is a manifestation of the manner in which the social order resists change. Park cites the Negro as the most striking example, stating that every effort on the part of the Negro to improve his status has invariably met with opposition, aroused prejudice and stimulated racial animosities.\(^1\)

As an elementary form of conservatism, racial prejudices play an important part in the organization of society. They are spontaneous, instinctive, defense-reactions, whose effect is to restrict heretofore unrestrained competition between races.\(^2\)

In the casual contacts of races, it is the offensive rather than the pleasing traits of races that are noticed. The impressions accumulate and reinforce natural prejudices. Races distinguished by certain external marks furnish a permanent physical substratum around which the irritations and animosities incidental to all human intercourse tend to accumulate, and so gain strength and volume.\(^3\) Park believes that racial prejudice is ordinarily confused with these racial antagonisms. There is probably less racial prejudice in America than elsewhere, he says, but there is more racial antagonism and conflict.


\(^2\)Park and Burgess, op. cit., p. 623.

\(^3\)Park, "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups," op. cit., XIX, 611.
They exist because there is more change and progress in America. For example, the Negro is rising in America, and the measure of the racial antagonism he encounters is, in a very real sense, the measure of his progress.  

Racial distinctions, where they exist, will always be supported by racial prejudices. But where distinctions based on race are part of the established order, as they invariably are in a static society, such as the South in the United States, each race lives within the limitations of its own world and accepts the definition imposed upon it as if it were a natural process. Under such circumstances each race, having its own internal organization, maintains its own norms of conduct, and each expects and demands that every individual will comply with the group standards. So far as this normal expectancy is maintained, good-will exists, and each race will tolerate the other; but when efforts are made by the subordinate race to rise, conflict inevitably develops.

Conflicts which result when a submerged race seeks to rise and make for itself a place in the world occupied by superior and privileged races, are no less vital and less important because they are often bloodless. They serve to stimulate ambitions and inspire ideals which years of subjection and subordination have suppressed. Park believes that through conflicts, minor peoples are destined to gain the moral


2 Ibid.
concentration and discipline that will fit them to share in the conscious life of the civilized world on equal terms.\(^1\)

Conflict among races, then, appears to emerge from the unwillingness of one race to enter into personal competition with a race of a different and "inferior" culture. As the racial minority becomes articulate and seeks to lessen the social distances between the superordinate and subordinate races, racial prejudices are intensified. They lead to conflict situations which arise when the dominant race employs measures to maintain an established order which the subordinate race refuses to respect.

Accommodation arises naturally out of conflict situations. In an accommodated relationship the antagonism of the hostile elements is temporarily regulated, and conflict as overt action disappears, although it remains a potential threat. With a change in the new situation, the adjustments that had successfully held the antagonistic forces in control fails. The resulting confusion and unrest may develop into new types of conflict. This conflict, whether a war, a strike, an exchange of polite innuendoes, a lynching, or a race riot, produces a new accommodated situation, which generally involves a changed status in the relations among the participants. However, it is only with complete assimilation that the antagonism latent in the organization of dissimilar groups is likely to be wholly dissolved.\(^2\)


\(^2\)Park and Burgess, op. cit., p. 665.
Slavery and caste represent forms which accommodation may take in the relationships of races. Slavery has been historically the usual method by which people have become accommodated to alien groups. In America, the social order which emerged with the abolition of slavery was a system of caste based on race and color. The plantation had been organized on the pattern of a feudal, rather than a civil and political society. Caste was the accommodated form which race relations took under conditions which the plantation system imposed. Although caste still persists and serves to regulate race relations—many factors—education, the rise within the Negro community of a professional class, and of an intelligentsia, seeking to organize and direct the Negro's rising race consciousness—have conspired not merely to undermine the traditional caste system, but to render it obsolete. Hence, new forms of accommodation must develop. The slow, but steady advance of the Negro, as a result of competition within and without the group, and the gradual rise of a Negro society within the limits of the white man's world have changed the whole structure of race relations in the United States. Park believes that the caste system as a form of accommodation, so far as it has served anywhere to organize race relations, has been a solution of the race problem. It was after the abolition of slavery, and with the disintegration of the caste system that the disorders and racial animosities ordinarily identified with

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2 Park, in Doyle, op. cit., p. xvi.

3 Park, in Adams, op. cit., p. xxii.
the race problem began.¹

Conflict and accommodation bring about modifications in race relations as the attitudes and values of the racial groups concerned change. In the course of time, the relations between the races become personal, and in this process racial differences lose their significance. People now begin to attribute to others the qualities of human nature which they value and the attitudes which they possess. The intercommunication among members of the society becomes more extensive and the participation in common activities becomes more effective and numerous. When this process of assimilation is reached, the race relations cycle has reached its logical conclusion through natural processes.²

Park views assimilation as the process by which people of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages living in a common habitat, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient for sustaining a national existence. He says an alien may, as in the case of the Chinese in America, or the European in China, accommodate himself to the conditions of life in a foreign country without learning the native language and without adopting, except to a very slight degree, the native customs. In such instances the relation of the alien to the native may be described as symbiotic rather than social. When a racial group no longer exhibits the marks which identify him as a member of an alien group,

¹Park, in Doyle, op. cit., p. xxi.

he acquires by that fact, the actual, if not the legal, status of a native. The alien is assimilated when he has internalized the language, customs, and institutions of his adopted country. Mere learning of these factors does not imply assimilation. 1 It is ordinarily in the second or third generation of the alien population that assimilation is accomplished.

Assimilation must be distinguished from accommodation with which it is somewhat related. Accommodation is a process of temporary adjustment in which social relations are organized to prevent or reduce conflict, to control competition, and to maintain a basis of security in the social order for persons and groups of divergent interests and races to carry on together their varied life activities. Assimilation, on the other hand, is a process of interpenetration and fusion of races and cultures in which persons and groups acquire the sentiments of others, and by sharing their experiences and history are incorporated with the other group into a common cultural life. An accommodation of a conflict situation usually occurs with rapidity. The intimate and subtle changes involved in assimilation are more gradual. The changes that occur in accommodation represent a conscious process. In assimilation, the process is unconscious, and the individual is incorporated into the common life of the group before he is aware of it, with little conception of the course of events which brought this

Nevertheless, in the case of the racial hybrid whose lack of visibility permits it, submersion into the dominant group may take place through the conscious process of "passing."

As social contact initiates interaction, assimilation is its final, perfect product. It takes place most rapidly where contacts are primary and most intimate. Secondary contacts facilitate accommodation, but do not greatly promote assimilation, since the contacts are external and too remote.2

Assimilation must be distinguished from amalgamation, with which it is also related. Amalgamation is a biological process through which the fusion of races is effected by interbreeding and intermarriage. Assimilation, on the other hand, is limited to the fusion of cultures. Amalgamation, while it is limited to the crossing of racial traits through intermarriage naturally promotes assimilation through the cross-fertilization of social heritages. The offspring of a "mixed" marriage not only biologically inherits physical and temperamental traits from both parents, but also acquires in the nurture of family life, the attitudes, sentiments, and memories of both father and mother. Thus, amalgamation of races insures the conditions of primary social contacts most favorable for assimilation.3

The rapidity and completeness of assimilation depends directly upon the intimacy of social contact. Slavery, and especially household

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1Park and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 734-36.
2Ibid.
3Ibid., pp. 737-38.
slavery, has probably been, aside from inter-marriage, the most efficient means of promoting assimilation. Park says that when a member of an alien race is adopted into a family as a servant or as a slave, particularly when that status is made hereditary, as it was in the case of the Negro after his importation to America, assimilation followed rapidly, and as a matter of course.\(^1\) He says it is difficult to conceive two races farther removed from each other in temperament and tradition than the Anglo-Saxon and the Negro, yet the Negro in the South who served as a family servant, learned in a comparatively short time the manners and customs of the dominant class. He soon possessed himself of so much of the language, religion, and the technique of civilization of his master, as in his station he was fitted or allowed to acquire.\(^2\)

The significance of race relations in Park is reflected in an essay in which he synthesizes the theory of race relations which he has heretofore espoused.\(^3\) In this essay Park sees race relations as the forms of interaction existing between peoples distinguished by marks of racial descent. When the individuals and groups so distinguished become conscious of these differences, and by so doing, determine in each case the individual's conception of himself as well as

\(^1\) Park, "Racial Assimilation in Secondary Groups," *op. cit.*, XIX, 611-12.

\(^2\) Ibid.

his status in the community, a race problem exists. Thus, anything that intensifies race consciousness, particularly, a permanent physical trait, increasing an individual's visibility and making more obvious his identity with a particular ethnic group, tends to create and maintain the conditions under which race relations exist. The resulting race consciousness is, therefore, to be regarded as a phenomenon that enforces social distances. Race relations are not so much the relations that exist between individuals of different races as between individuals conscious of these differences. They do not exist in areas where there is a minimum of race consciousness. One speaks of race relations when there is a race problem.

Race relations include all the associations that exist between different ethnic and racial groups which are capable of provoking race conflict and race consciousness, or of determining the status of the racial elements comprising a community. Race relations exist in all those situations in which some balance between competing races has been achieved and in which the resulting social order has become fixed in custom and tradition.
CHAPTER IV

THE EVALUATION OF THE THEORY

The theory of human relations which inheres in Park's writing on race is but a small portion of his total sociological thinking. One cannot achieve a thorough knowledge of Park without becoming familiar with his studies in ecology, human nature and collective behavior. To attempt a criticism of the soundness of his hypotheses on race relations without having a definite knowledge of his entire social thinking would be artless. Withal, an evaluation in terms of one's own viewpoint is justified. An analysis of Park's theory of race relations is at once a fitting introduction to the man and his work, and a stimulus to the further investigation and understanding of the fundamental sociological opinions which he held. Park produced no systematic theory of sociology, nor did he develop an organized scheme of race relations. Yet, it is possible to construct a systematic theory of race relations by culling from his writings on race those ideas which appear most often, formulating them into a sequential order. The present study represents such a conflation.

While Park sought to approach the study of race relations in contemporary society with a scientific point of view, it has been demonstrated that he was never to lose the zeal of the reformer. Witness the origin of his interest in the problem of race relations - his desire to expose the conditions in the Belgian Congo, which he labeled Leopold's "private estate." Note, also, his laissez-faire attitude
toward Oriental and European immigrants in the United States. His argument with reference to the problem of immigration was that the alien be allowed to make his own adjustments to new culture contacts without the interference of external forces of governmental and institutional restrictions.

Park often spoke of what one must do to "improve" race relations, and in so speaking, perhaps moved outside the province of pure sociological thought. However, it would not be altogether fair to appraise Park in terms of his interest in human improvement. He rejected early the coldly intellectual approach to the study of human interaction, stating emphatically that his primary interest was in people, not in the formulation of theoretical abstractions. As one interested in providing a basis for the common understanding among men living in "the great society," Park sought always to establish principles which were universal.

Despite this humaneness, his studies in race relations were undertaken in a scientific spirit, and his predictions as to the future course of race relations in terms of the race relations cycle are valid. A recent study of race and culture contacts in Hawaii by Edwin Burrows,¹ demonstrates the tenability of Park's theory when applied to a definite locale. While it was not made within the conceptual framework of Park's cyclical theory of race relations, Burrows' study presents an ideal setting for a practical application of the theory.

He found that relations between the indigenous population of Hawaii and the invading peoples were at first symbiotic, later becoming competitive. Conflict was resolved in accommodated situations, and eventual assimilation took place through a fusion of all the races and cultures which met on the islands. Burrows also supports Park's theory that assimilation takes place most easily through amalgamation, and that succeeding generations are more easily incorporated into the culture than was the founding immigrant family.

Among the criticisms which have been leveled against Park, the most recent is that of Oliver Cox. In a study which has itself aroused considerable controversy, Cox sees Park's theory as "weak, vacillating, and misleading." He goes so far as to label it "insidious" to the extent that it lends scientific confirmation to the rationalizations of racial exploitation in the United States.

The position which Cox takes is that the existing character of race relations in America, with particular emphasis on Negro-white relationships in the South, stems from the attempts of the capitalistic interests to keep all labor exploitable. With this Marxist interpretation, Cox proceeds to explain race prejudices and antagonisms as developing from a conscious effort on the part of vested interest groups to serve their own ends, by "keeping black labor and white labor in the South glaring at each other." He states further, that it becomes necessary to rationalize the exploitative purposes of capitalist

\[1\] Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race* (Garden City, N. Y., 1948).
faction, as the rationalizations produce a collective feeling of antagonism and contempt for the exploited races. Through these rationalizations, the white working class develops the belief that it is the natural right of a superior people to suppress and exploit an "inferior" race. The rationalization is the defense of the system and race prejudice is the defensive attitude which develops when the system is threatened. Since certain social ideas developed under capitalism which threaten to overcome and destroy it if left unchecked, Cox says the rationalizations of racial exploitation became necessary. This is essentially Cox's point of view, and it is within this pattern that he attacks Park's analysis of race relations.

Cox rejects Park's definition of race prejudice, saying that the latter's interpretation of that phenomenon as a spontaneous, instinctive reaction, restricting free competition between the races, implies the existence of feelings of inferiority on the part of the prejudiced race. But Cox loses sight of the fact that in Park's scheme, all races are capable of race prejudice since it is an instinctive reaction. Furthermore, he fails to note that Park saw race prejudice as developing from the efforts of a race to preserve existing barriers between races which show signs of disintegrating. In Park's interpretation, race prejudice results from the fear that the intimate contact of races in unrestrained competition will result in the assimilation of the subordinate race through intermarriage. Cox would say that this is but another manifestation of the manner in which Southern agricultural capitalists control their labor supply. They
marshal the emotional power of the masses of poor whites in a campaign of race hatred, with sexual passion as the emotional core. He says, too, that the "place" of the Negro which Park speaks of in terms of social distance, is that of the freely exploitable worker - a place he could not possibly keep if intermarriage were permitted.

The major failing of Park's race relations theory as Cox sees it, is in Park's interpretation of caste. He says that his theory of caste is too broad, that it encompasses all of human society, since Park saw almost all human associations - even religious - as essentially caste relationships. Also, Cox attacks Park's idea that etiquette is the basis of caste as it operates in race relations in the South. Cox's criticism is that it would be the basis for any "superior-inferior" relationship.

Cox mentions one aspect of Park's theory which was especially confusing in the present analysis. Park is not at all clear on the origin of the caste system in Southern race relations. He states that slavery was a caste relationship, but also makes mention of the fact that a caste system based on race and color developed with the abolition of slavery. This would indicate that the caste system in slavery was composed of the master class and the slave class, with the poor whites as a casteless group, this system being superseded by the racial caste system after the fall of slavery. It is an example of the conflicting and contradictory thinking of which Park was capable in his writing. However, caste was significant
to Park as an accommodation of race conflict and not as a system of race relations.

The Cox analysis of Park is made almost entirely within the racial framework which exists in the southern sections of the United States. But Park's theory of race relations is one designed to apply to any racial situation where race problems exist which have been influenced by European expansion. In this context, Negro-white adjustments in the South, or the lack of them, are important only in terms of the universal aspects of race relations which they display.

Everett C. Hughes of the University of Chicago, an ardent defender of Park, has written a review of the Cox book. He maintains that much of Park's work was written to show just what were the results of the capitalistic exploitation of culturally "inferior" peoples. Park has said, too, that all race problems which exist in the modern world are the direct result of European expansion as the nations of Europe sought greater world markets for their goods, or areas whose resources they could exploit. The Southern racial situation in the United States is but an extension of European influence. This would seem to refute the statement which Cox makes to the effect that Park fails to see racial antagonism as a recent European development. It is somewhat astonishing to find this in Cox, since Park has stated this fact clearly in his discussions of "the marginal man."

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1Everett C. Hughes, Review of Caste, Class and Race, by Oliver C. Cox, Phylon, IX (No. 1, 1948), 66-67.
Extensions of this theory are to be found also in the writings of students of Park. Furthermore, Park never sought to defend exploitation or suppression in any form, but sought always to expose it. As a sociologist, he was unique in his humanitarianism, being perhaps the only modern social theorist to take such an active interest in the problems of men in association. His is not a Marxian viewpoint, but he can hardly be called an apologist for capitalism.

Hughes attacks the position Cox maintains on the use of the concept of caste in race relations. He asserts that caste in the Cox sense is too limited, and that to consider it only in terms of the social structure which exists in India is to lose sight of the universality of caste relationships. He feels that Park was justified in defining race relations in the South as a caste relationship, because the races are stratified along rigid lines based on race and color, across which neither may move. The existence of caste is the factor which produces the awareness of racial differences which lead to race problems.

The only valid criticism which can be proposed with reference to the caste hypothesis predicated by Park is in terms of its limited scope. Park sees caste in the South as a system rigidly defining the positions of the races - a superordinate white race, a hybrid racial group which acts as a buffer between the controlling faction and the controlled, and a subordinate Negro group which occupies the lowest level in the caste structure. The caste-class hypothesis
developed by W. Lloyd Warner and his school, has, of course, outmoded the Park analysis. However, an evaluation of Warner's point of view is beyond the scope of the present study.1

One of the weaknesses in a theory such as that formulated by Park is that it is replete with conflicting and contradictory postulations. Examination of his writings in chronological order indicates that his thinking at certain points changed with the onset of time, although his basic ideas remained constant. Nevertheless, it becomes possible for anyone making an analysis of such a theory to develop arguments either for or against the theory, using all the while, Park's own statements as documentary evidence. The outcome of the analysis will depend to a very great extent upon the bias of the writer.

No such negative summation, however, could adequately explain Park's theory. His works contain no duplicity, though the arguments he used were frequently contradictory. All of this to the contrary, the record of Park's efforts to study man and his behavior in a rapidly changing sequence of human relationships provided a sound basis for social investigation. It yielded a body of social thought, of constructive postulates for an understanding of human nature, that enables this analyst to see in the work of Park's disciples and their students, sufficient logic, reason, and comprehension to warrant his being known as the precursor of the American school of race relations theory.

APPENDIX A

THE PUBLISHED WORKS OF ROBERT E. PARK

(This bibliography is based upon the "Bibliography of Robert E. Park," compiled by Edna Cooper, Phylon, VI (Fourth Quarter, 1945), 372-83. Additions, indicated by asterisks, have been made by the writer.)

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