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The Enigma of the Total Institution. Rethinking the Hughes-Goffman Intellectual Relationship

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Flashback

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1. Introduction

Everett Cherrington Hughes and his student Erving Goffman are two of the major figures in the history of American sociology. The nature of the relationship between them – Hughes the teacher, Goffman the student – is discussed in some detail by Jean-Michel Chapoulie [1984], Yves Winkin [1988], in his biography of Goffman, and by Gary Jaworski [2000]. Accounts of the relationship differ. According to Chapoulie and Winkin, the relationship was a difficult one; Hughes maintained a relatively cold and distant relationship with his pupil, while Goffman all but refused to acknowledge any indebtedness to his teacher until late in his life. For his part, Jaworski has radically questioned this account of their relationship. On the basis of a detailed review of archival materials, specifically an analysis of long-term correspondence between them, Jaworski has claimed that the relationship was far from cold and distant. Rather, he claims to have documented a previously unknown and hidden master-apprentice relationship from Goffman to Hughes, even if, for a number of reasons, Goffman was a "reluctant apprentice."

In his paper, Jaworski acknowledges that his interpretation is "open to revision" if new material about the Hughes-Goffman relationship were come to light. My paper is a modest attempt at just such a revision, based on an extended analysis of Hughes' papers in the University of Chicago Archives. I begin by following the path suggested by Jaworski, which suggests that the relationship between them was

more complex and ambiguous than existing accounts suggest. But if Jaworski chose primarily to explore the biographical track, I travel instead on a theoretical track; an analysis of their respective writings shows clear links between their approaches, in particular around the question of the "total institution." In the following section, I explore a second, more general theoretical link between them: Hughes' sociology of institutions, to which Goffman was exposed when he was Hughes' student at the University of Chicago. In a third section, I reconsider Goffman's work on the total institution, even before the publication of *Asylums* [Goffman 1961], in the light of Hughes' sociology. Then, in a fourth section, I consider the specific question of what I refer to as the "enigma" of the concept of the total institution which, at one point, Hughes claimed to have invented. My conclusion is that the intellectual-theoretical relationship between them was more nuanced and complex than we have heretofore appreciated, though it draws heavily on Jaworski's notion of Goffman as Hughes's "reluctant apprentice."

2.   Argument

In this paper, I will defend the argument that Everett C. Hughes had a major influence on the work of Erving Goffman on total institutions. That influence has been veiled because Goffman, very cleverly, had a tendency to (as Randall Collins would have it) "bury" his tracks.[1] The consequence of Goffman's subterfuge is that Goffman has been able to create the impression that he created a completely distinctive sociological approach[2]. But if we read and understand Goffman in this way we lose sight of two major "contributions" that Hughes gave to Goffman: the possibility of finding some "substance" in fieldwork and the general framework of Hughes's sociology of institutions and occupations which constituted a source from which Goffman developed his own approach.

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[1] "Goffman was certainly an original thinker, but he managed to appear even more original than he was because he was adept at burying his tracks" [Collins 1986].

[2] Marco Santoro suggests this to me: "As a student and researcher of impression management, Goffman was possibly very sensitive to, and able in, managing impressions... We can maybe suggest that this almost extreme concealment of his sources was a kind of intellectual experiment for him, in the sense that his efforts for passing more original than he really was (and surely he was) was a manner to put in practice, and possibly benefit from, his cognitive interest – and his competence – for impression management. This has to do with reflexivity also, of course..." (personal communication, September 2010).

3. The Ambiguities of the Hughes-Goffman Relationship

3.1. *The Theory of a Unilateral Relationship*

The thesis of a unilateral relationship between Hughes and Goffman has prevailed for a long time. It rests on the notion that Goffman showed, at the end of his life, his allegiance to Hughes, but the latter would not accept it. Several events and biographical anecdotes raised by Yves Winkin in his biographical work support this thesis [Winkin 1988b, 35-36], especially around the fieldwork conducted in the island of Unst (Shetland) before his Ph.D. in 1953. In the field, and later when he presented his dissertation, Goffman showed his theoretical detachment from Hughes and Lloyd Warner, both members of his Ph.D. committee. Goffman rejected all "recipes" [Winkin 1988a], thereby inventing his own sociology, which gave rise to tensions with his thesis committee [Winkin 1988b, 53, 62, 81-82]. But some of the main clues about that unilateral relationship in Winkin's biography rest upon Randall Collins's article in tribute to Goffman [1986]. Therein, Collins suggests that the late Hughes confided this to him about the young Goffman: "Everett Hughes mentioned to me, late in his life, that when Goffman first came to Chicago, Hughes felt he was a young know-it-all." At that time, it seems that it was Goffman's infatuation for psychoanalysis that Hughes mocked. Collins adds that in a more general way, Hughes tended to be rather hostile to the work of Goffman, and that he wrote a review of Goffman's book *Interaction Ritual* "in quite a hostile vein."[3] In contrast, the latter was deemed to warmly give public credit to Hughes. But Collins' "Parthian arrow" comes in answer to the last statement: "When I mentioned this to Hughes, he replied in a way that indicated that Hughes had always found this tribute from Goffman to be annoying and insincere" [Collins 1986]. Much of the argument of a one-way relationship is thus based on information from Collins and also his interpretation of it. The two interviews that Goffman gave to Yves Winkin and later to Jeff Verhoeven, in 1980, combine well with the theory of a unilateral relationship, because we can see Goffman, for his part, praising the teachings of Hughes and the influence that these teachings had on his own sociological work [Verhoeven 1993; Winkin 1988c].[4]

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[3] Regarding this review, like Jaworski [2000], I would support an interpretation that is radically different from that of Collins, with the exception of a sentence that may contain a whole ellipsis of all the Hughes-Goffman intellectual relationship, when the former says that if Goffman knows the "classical" sources on social interaction well, he is quoting them "adequately, not effusively" [Hughes 1969].

[4] "J'ai été formé par Hughes et *Presentation of Self* est réellement de la psychologie sociale structurale à la Hughes" [Winkin 1988c, 236]. Likewise: "If I had to be labeled at all, it would have been as a Hughesian urban ethnographer" [Verhoeven 1993]. Goffman also mentions in this last interview a "Hughesian tradition" in Chicago, coming from Park, stating notably that Hughes did

Howard S. Becker adds to this that Goffman only belatedly recognized that he had been influenced by Hughes [Becker 2003].

3.2. *The Theory of an Apprentice-Master Relationship*

However, we should ask ourselves to what extent Collins' interpretation, based on informal confidences, is not a kind of "Chinese screen" hiding nearly thirty years of sociological interplay between Goffman and Hughes.[5] In fact, Collins's version is seriously questioned in a recent article by Gary Jaworski. In his article, which is based on a review of materials in Hughes' papers in the University of Chicago Archives, Jaworski discloses some aspects of a much more bilateral relationship than expected, with epistolary moments of high density, both humanly and intellectually. According to Jaworski, the intensity of the exchanges between Hughes and Goffman suggests that for a good portion of his career, the latter may have sought to conceal the real influence that Hughes had on him and on some of his own research orientations. Indeed, in Jaworski's view, there is a master-apprentice relationship between Hughes and Goffman, namely "a form of work in which one learns a trade or practice from close association with a master" [2000, 300]. Jaworski states in particular that Goffman deleted some of his references to Hughes in the final versions of some article drafts. All this would make Goffman Hughes' "reluctant apprentice." The latter's influence on Goffman reappeared clearly only in the two (posthumously published) interviews mentioned above. Jaworski inferred from this material that Goffman invented himself as a *sui generis* sociologist by erasing from his work some "trademarks" associated with Chicago and Hughes. We can leave aside for the moment the question of why Goffman was so "reluctant" to acknowledge Hughes' influence. On the other side of this relationship, Jaworski's sources clearly demonstrate the interest that Hughes took in Goffman and his career. Jaworski concludes by describing Hughes

not get all the credit he deserved for this. Hughes is said to have had a major influence on Goffman and to have contributed by giving the latter the "substance" that was missing in Blumer's (too abstract) theory, as well as by having given him an "institutional" perspective in sociology: "Blumer doesn't provide me with substance. That was introduced by Social Anthropology and Hughes, that is the study of something." There are however some incongruities in the interview, such as Goffman saying that Park – who died in 1944 – was one of his teachers in Chicago (how could it be, unless metaphorically?)

[5] Another characteristic of Collins' article is his "political" analysis of Goffman, presenting the latter as more conservative than his public image – as the author of *Asylums* – tends to do, especially concerning this last mentioned book, because Collins describes Goffman as opposed to the antipsychiatry movement. For a "political" interpretation of Goffman's work in the opposite direction, see Schwalbe [1993].

as a "father-figure"[6] for Goffman, this version challenging Winkin's argument that Warner was Goffman's real mentor.[7] My own study of these archives has led me to similar conclusions to those of Jaworski concerning Hughes' role as a mentor to Goffman, particularly in comparison with many other colleagues and former students with whom Hughes corresponded. The Hughes-Goffman correspondence appears to be particularly intense. We can see Goffman spicing his letter with his peculiar humour – a sort of "joking relationship" – in an otherwise very reverent correspondence. For his part, Hughes willingly played the role of a mentor, not without humour himself. In his usual way, Hughes introduced personal biographical elements in his letters as illustrations of his sociological statements, following the Hughesian principle that "you treated your own life as data" [Strauss 1996].

3.3. *The Hughes-Goffman Correspondence*

In this regard, the correspondence between Hughes and Goffman in 1966 relating to *Stigma* [Goffman 1963] is a marvel. It starts with a letter from Hughes to Goffman dated May 9. Rediscovering in his bookcase an autographed copy of *Stigma* that Goffman had sent him three years previously, Hughes finds some handwritten notes that he had taken on a few yellow sheets while reading the book during a plane flight. Hughes' notes from the plane flight indicate that he felt there was a link between *Stigma* and two other references: Park's "marginal man" and a book on "peripheral men" by Ernst Grünfeld [Everett C. Hughes Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].[8] The discussion on stigma did not recommence until the beginning of 1969 [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1]. Hughes confessed that he was a "non-converted"

[6] The use of the term "father" which Goffman used when referring to Hughes, is not so unusual or inappropriate. Hughes himself, after the festivities held on the occasion of his 70th anniversary, having received solid proof of friendship from former students (including some "joking relationship" sentences inspired by Hughes' sociological world: fieldwork, reality shock, dirty work, contradiction of status), tried to answer in a short letter, notably asking the question of "academic fathers" and wondering: "Who was my academic father?" [ECH Papers, box 2, folder 7].

[7] Goffman completed his M.A. dissertation under the supervision of Lloyd Warner. Gregory Smith shows how Goffman freed himself from the influence of the psychological testing techniques used at that time by Warner's research team. Goffman, in so doing, may have been quintessentially Hughesian when he collected surreptitiously, during his visit to Hyde Park housewives (in the task of testing them with the TAT), additional observational material on the furniture and decoration of these houses [see Smith 2003].

[8] Hughes mentions Grünfeld's book, *Die Peripheren* (published 1939) again in a letter to Edward Sagarin dated January 31, 1969. In the latter letter, Hughes also said he could well understand, being himself left-handed, the social games on "difference" and the possibility of being marginalized as "different" [ECH Papers, box 56, folder Sagarin]. See also his review of Grünfeld's book [Hughes 1941a].

left-hander, and evoked a few other biographical recollections linked to the question of the "difference" that is attributed to some persons. The intensity of the exchange between the two men – perhaps a beautiful example of the "sociological imagination" at work – is remarkable, sometimes even astonishing and hard to explain. For example, in a letter dated February 12, 1969, Hughes says that Goffman has a "pixie-like mind" which allows him to understand sociological problems. In the same letter, which followed the publication of the *Festschrift* in tribute to Hughes (Becker *et al.* 1968) – and to which Goffman contributed – Hughes argues against the idea that he "created" something in the minds of his former students who contributed to the book. Vis-à-vis Goffman he notes that the latter came from Toronto with his sociological "attention" already focused in a particular direction [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1]. Goffman's response reverses the argument by referring clearly to the master-apprentice relationship between them. Goffman begins by claiming that Hughes gave his students the "sense," both by his works and by his courses, "that sociological inquiry is real. Underneath it all, I think that is the task teachers are really involved in: to demonstrate that what they do is substantial and real." The use of the term "substance" here is specifically important, as we will see later. Then comes the apprentice's tribute:

> "The point about yourself is that you did that job for so many of us – not because you had many students but because you had that effect on so many of the ones you had. And you do it still. And that is the lesson of the master. Thanks" [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].

Some letters even show the degree to which Goffman addressed Hughes in a way that sheds light on the sociological filiation. In a letter written by Goffman from the field, during his ethnography of Las Vegas (the letter is dated December 13 but no year is indicated), the latter mentions his participant observation position in the casinos in a very Hughesian way [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1]. The fieldwork methodology as well as the kind of "sociological eye" to study these "bastard" institutions (including the staff interactions with clients and internal relationships among the staff) is a clear tribute to the sociological training that Goffman received from Hughes.[9] At the end of his article, Jaworski "shuffles the cards" of the whole Hughes-Goffman relationship, and concludes as follows: Goffman was indeed a "reluctant" apprentice, but only in the sense that he refused both the "parricide" against Hughes and the position of "partner" filled in such an exemplary fashion by Howard S. Becker. In this way, Goffman presented himself as a radical innovator by

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[9] To compare the vision of the late Goffman on fieldwork with the "field work" that was taught during his studies at Chicago, see Cefaï [2002] and Goffman [1989].

keeping his distance from Hughes. And was the latter not some kind of "reluctant" mentor or master? It is only by the careful study of their private correspondence that the image that Collins has built of that relationship can be questioned. Writing to Goffman, Hughes makes marvels in his typical epistolary "sociological conversation" style, and deeply engages his own biographical memories – some rather intimate[10] – in the process. But still one may wonder if Hughes, in this way, was not trying to impose a strictly sociological "playground" between them, remaining rather stand-offish on a more personal ground.[11] That said, Hughes did not hesitate to show clearly, in his letters to people other than Goffman, that the latter was indeed a member of his sociological "family."[12] Note the following from a letter to Howard Becker and Alex Morin: "Had I stayed at McGill, I would not have had even my Montreal students such as Aileen Ross, and David Solomon; much less the Howard Becker, the Alex Morin, the Erving Goffman, and many another of ilk. A man is a creature of his students" [Hughes to Howard S. Becker & Alex Morin, ECH Papers, box 3, folder Aldine#3]. As we will see later, this last sentence may be the most important one in terms of allowing us to understand the logic of the sociological "transmission" between Hughes and his students in general (and with Goffman in particular). This

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[10] In a letter dated June 29, 1970, Hughes speaks with dignity about what he felt at the death of his brother, and shares this feeling with Goffman while (as always) pulling out of that sad event a sort of useful sociological lesson or sociological "moral" [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].

[11] Richard Helmes-Hayes suggests to me this: "Hughes had a 'fatherly' relationship with a number of students and yet managed to keep some scholarly distance from all of them so he could be an effective mentor. As a professor, you know this is always difficult, especially with graduate students who become 'friends' in the real, full sense of the term. Some professors can carry that off, some can't. Hughes obviously could. Re Goffman: the obverse also holds true." (personal communication)

[12] Howie Becker gives a complex overview of this "family": "I 'know' that ECH did think of Goffman as someone who joined his 'camp,' so to speak, after the 'real' first students did. His first students were, of course, the Canadians (Falardeau, Brazeau, Oswald Hall and also the English from Montréal like David Solomon and Dan Lortie, and others who worked with him in Quebec). And then at Chicago there were some, especially in industrial relations (Donald Roy, Orvis Collins, and others) who began working with him before or during the Second World War. But when I was a graduate student, when there was this huge influx of students, many students gravitated to Wirth, Blumer, Ogburn, etc. because they were 'important' and those students, Goffman among them, didn't think Hughes was 'important,' I'm not sure why. Some of that early group of Hughes students were like me, didn't know that he wasn't important or didn't care, others were the Canadians who had come there to work with him. But after our original group got started others began to hear that we were doing a lot of 'interesting research" and started to attend Hughes' seminars, etc. Goffman was one of those, and I think that Everett never forgot which people had been his students before, so to speak, he became 'important.' So I think he was always somewhat ambivalent about him for that reason. But I don't have letters or anything, it's just a feeling I had and still have." (personal communication, December 2009)

"transmission" may have been conceived by Hughes as the necessity to "step aside" regarding his students' findings and prospects.[13]

3.4. *"New Blood" at the University of Chicago Department of Sociology*

A fateful moment of the Hughes-Goffman relationship is little known. The context is Hughes's chairmanship of the department of sociology at Chicago, and later events leading up to his retirement from the university in 1961. Andrew Abbott gives a good picture of that troubled period: Hughes, allied with David Riesman, and supported by the university authorities (including, successively, deans Ralph Tyler and Morton Grodzins), but in a conflict-ridden context within the department, recruited some quantitative sociologists from outside the department, and notably from Columbia University [Abbott 1999]. These outside recruits have sometimes been considered to be a kind of "liquidation" of the old Chicago spirit [Chapoulie 1996, 43]. Hughes tried to recruit outside people to bring what he called some "new blood" into his department, while simultaneously facing open opposition from his colleagues in his attempt to recruit or to secure tenure for some local people (Anselm Strauss was not granted tenure by the department in 1957). To evoke these troubled times when he was chairman, Hughes refers to three persons in particular, Philip Hauser, Clyde Hart and Lloyd Warner. The last name is rather surprising according to what has usually been written about the question of cliques and alliances in the department during the period. Warner was formerly known as an ally for Hughes. In any case, the second local candidate put forward by Hughes was Goffman.[14] This was rejected with disdain by the department: "The department voted me down on continuing on Anselm Strauss (…). A mild mention of Erving Goffman was merely laughed at. (…) After four years of that chairmanship I was more than glad to be free of it" [ECH archives, box 1, folder 9]. An interview with Hughes by Bob Weiss completes the picture:

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[13] In another archival document, Hughes will say, addressing to all the former students that he trained: "I have learned much from you. When, in 1927, I was about to start teaching at McGill University (I had never taught before) Robert Park said to me: 'If ever you think you are learning less than your students in a course, stop. For they will be learning nothing.' I still enjoy teaching" (ECH Papers, box 2 folder 7). This kind of presentation is typical of him, as it was of Park, showing an intellectual exchange between the master and the apprentice that benefits both of them (on that topic, see MacGill-Hughes 1980-1981).

[14] In 1954, Hughes tried to recommend Goffman to undertake a revision of his syllabus for the SOC201 course. After being asked by Hughes to do the same kind of work, Howard S. Becker replied to Hughes in a letter dated February 17, 1954: "How about getting Erving to do it?" Hughes replied on the 22nd of February: "Thanks for the suggestion. I am asking Goffman" [ECH Papers, Box 9, folder Becker#1].

"I can tell you pretty much the truth of the matter was that Department in Chicago was a great department and it lived its life. About twenty-five years. And then do you think they would hear of any new outside people… that's why I left. I became Chairman of that Department not through Warner and all that crowd. They didn't want me in there. So I left at a certain point. That Department wasn't going to have any new blood. (…) And I couldn't get Anselm [Strauss] into the department. (…) And the Chicago group wouldn't take anybody. (…) Those people turned down every suggestion of mine. (…) Park would take new blood, but Herb Blumer and these people wouldn't. And Hauser was so intent on becoming boss himself… I figured the thing to do was leave. I didn't have to… leave. I had tenure there. And I had plenty of students… But Warner and Hart and Hauser just turned down everything I suggested. Including Anselm" [ECH Papers, box 1 folder 13].

Hughes also remembers these difficult times in a letter to Nicholas Mullins, in response to the publication of *Theories and Theory Groups in Contemporary American Sociology* [Mullins 1973]. Hughes agrees with Mullins that he was not a strong leader, but wants to clarify the whole story in a way that reveals the difficult relationship he had with Herbert Blumer and Louis Wirth: "That whole business is an interesting story. One might say that the Chicago department had practically destroyed itself." Hughes' policy, presented as jointly conducted with William Ogburn, was to enforce a "no-successor" rule for the staff in the department. It was essential to them to promote external recruits rather than internal succession in the department:

"I had no intention of making it a symbolic interaction department." Hughes continues: "Then I ran into severe trouble. The department refused to give tenure to Anselm Strauss. Through my connections with NIMH, I recommended him to the position which he now holds at the University of California in San Francisco. I recommended Goffman, but the department would not even listen to me. Goffman, however, at that time claimed he did not want to teach and besides you should look into the record a little more thoroughly and you would find that Goffman did his thesis with me and Warner, not with Blumer, although certainly he is in many senses a Blumer man" [ECH Papers, box 39, folder M#6].[15]

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[15] Hughes gets back on that struggle in a letter to Jesse F. Steiner, dated December 3, 1958. The "no-successor" rule is favoured: "Everyone of the people here has been an innovator, a man in his own right. There is no such thing as a successor for such people." The recruitment on the outside of young sociologists is justified as follows: "An interesting thing about these young men is that they come in from Columbia, Harvard or Yale with relatively little knowledge of the school of sociology in which you and I were bred. On the other hand, once they are here, it is amazing how the atmosphere grips them and how much they learn from the few who remain of the older tradition concerning our basic notion of things and our way of looking at life and society" [ECH Papers, box 56, folder S#4].

This atmosphere was clearly unfavourable for the plans of the Hughes-Riesman clan. Further details of the department's rejection of Anselm Strauss are reported in the Hughes-Riesman correspondence, in the Hughes collection. Hughes was absent from that meeting held 24 October 1957, so Riesman reports to him what was said. His report depicts the complexity of the alliance game and also the diversity of sociological styles that coexisted in the department at that time:

> "The Department has set itself on the 'industrial road' and it was typical that someone said against Ans that he didn't 'control the technology.' I made the point that precisely because the Department was moving in a streamlined direction it was all the more important for the sake of alternative models to have someone like Ans around who was particularly meaningful to certain kinds of gifted and imaginative students. This was taken, not unfairly, as critical of the existing group" [ECH Papers, box 48, folder Riesman 1955-1959].[16]

The biographical material suggests that some true, long-term and deep biographical links existed between Hughes and Goffman, notably around the efforts of Hughes to recruit the latter at the University of Chicago. We shall now shift from the biographical track to the theoretical track, and consider how Hughes's sociology of institutions after World War 2 constituted a major contribution to Goffman's education as a sociologist, including a prefiguration of Goffman's theoretical concerns in *Asylums*. As we shall see later, it is especially important to return to the structured framework that Hughes gave to the concept of institution from a macrosociological standpoint, because Goffman remains laconic on the very notion of the institution, which is quite paradoxical for a book based on the notion of "total" institution. According to Richard Helmes-Hayes, if Hughes ever had an outline of some sort of "grand theory" in general sociology, it would be centred on the notion of institution as the "primary" (not the only) as well as "the most productive unit of analysis for sociology." For Hughes, says Helmes-Hayes, sociology was the "science of institutions" and Hughes's sociology should be considered as an "interpretive institutional ecology" [Helmes-Hayes 1998, 623, 634, 639].

4.   Hughes' Sociological "Eye" on Secular Institutions

Hughes' sociological concern for institutions developed early and never wavered, as a self-description from 1973 illustrates. Hughes presents himself as "a

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[16] Riesman mentions Goffman in a letter to Hughes dated June 25, 1956, saying that in a seminar where Riesman invited Alvin Gouldner: "Gouldner referred to Goffman on making scenes but of course the references to Goffman passed most of the group by" [ECH Papers, box 48, folder Riesman 1955-1957].

general comparative sociologist, with special interest in the ecology of contemporary institutions and work systems" [ECH Papers, box 8, folder B#4]. It all probably started with Park's teaching at the University of Chicago, when Hughes was a student there, and developed further when he collaborated with the research program on urban life conducted by Park and Burgess. At the time, Hughes was completing his Ph.D. dissertation (defended in 1928) on the study of the Chicago Real Estate Board, a "secular institution". "Secular" means that every institution, even the most "holy" among them, as Hughes used to say later, is also an "ongoing affair"[17] and so has "secular" concerns [Hughes 1936]. After he began to teach at McGill University, Hughes continued his work on institutions, as his articles and reviews in the thirties show well, together with his correspondence with Park,[18] who read and commented in detail on one of Hughes's papers on institutions [ECH Papers, box 45, folder Park R.E.]. We must insist here on the specificity of Hughes' stress on institutions, one aspect of which is his view that it is important to understand but not be taken in by official institutional rhetoric, for in his view institutions often fill functions other than those that they like to present to the outside [Hughes 1942]. When Hughes was hired at the University of Chicago in 1938, he was assigned the "social organization" field of study, including the sociology of institutions.

In the analysis below, I examine Hughes' course (SOC350), the sociological study of institutions, drawing on archival material, which includes a set of more or less recent lectures notes, fragments and isolated pages that go from 1945 to 1957. The most famous of these documents is the draft of the paper on "Bastard institutions" that was used for the preparation of *The Sociological Eye* [Hughes 1971; ECH Papers, box 79, folder SOC350#"Bastard Institutions"]. A synthesizing outline of the course (dated 1945) describes Hughes' research program on institutions which covers methods of study, the investigation of "needs" and "functions" of institutions, and notably some attention paid to the "true" functions of the institutions. Along the way, Hughes mentions the study of quackery (one of the "bastard" institutions he addresses later) – see also Hughes [1941b] on this. He also shows concern for "Institutions and Social Control" as well for "Institutions and the person" (the latter title was later given to his *Festschrift*). Other themes also mentioned are the question of the life-cycle of an institution and the issue of the "meaning" and the influence of institutions, i.e. what they mean to the individuals within them; and what influence they have on individuals [ECH Papers, box 79, folder SOC350#1956-1957]. If Goff-

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[17] Later, Hughes would speak of "going concerns," an expression that appeared originally in his Ph.D. dissertation [see Helmes-Hayes 1998].

[18] In a letter dated October 22, 1934, Hughes wrote to Park to discuss his ongoing work on institutions (ECH Papers, box 45, folder Park R.E.).

man had such a course during his studies, it is difficult to believe that the course had no influence on the theoretical framework and the kind of questions that the book *Asylums* would later address. Some of the undated course fragments also refer to the problem of voluntary or forced "mobilization" of individuals by institutions that remove these people from the normal course of life. Hughes mentions the mental hospital in particular [ECH Papers, box 79, folder SOC350#1956-1957]. An isolated page dated 1957 refers to "Going concerns", a paper that Hughes had prepared that year for a conference but which was published later in *The Sociological Eye*:

> "Study of going concerns, either of individual concerns or of groups of them which have some relations to each other. This means in effect study of what Chapin calls 'nucleated institutions.' It might mean such a thing as Theresienstadt, of other concentration camps. – totally organized communities. Not to show how evil they may be, but to show how they are conceived and how they work. Get material on Theresienstadt. Abel, on Concentration Camps. Relate to material on hospitals, prisons, boarding schools, etc." [ECH Papers, box 79, folder SOC350#Going Concerns Lectures 51-57].[19]

We can see that the range of institutions covered by Hughes here intersects with the concerns that Goffman had at the same time, notably in the idea of a "totally" organized community. It is also striking to discover that around the same time Hughes was preparing an exercise for the students (again in an undated document): "Assign the whole of Cooley, Social Organization in 350 next time, and require students to write papers in which they take some major part of it and relate it to research which has been done, or which could by present methods, be done on propositions and hypotheses in Cooley" [ECH Papers, box 79, folder SOC350#Notes1956-1957]. However, the rest of the lecture notes enclosed in these SOC350 archives do not bring any further links with the "total institutions" matters, except for an isolated reference to the fact that a sick person could be "segregated" from the rest of the community [ECH Papers, box 79, folder SOC350#1951-1957].

5.   The Total Institution Before *Asylums*

Howard S. Becker has dedicated an article to the study of the "total institution" theory which shows clearly that Hughes' sociology influenced the preparation of *Asylums*; Hughes' sociology of occupations was directly mobilized by Goffman to study the staff's work in the total institution [Becker 2003]. But by revealing that link, Becker may have overlooked another important link, which is Hughes' sociology of

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[19] On Theresienstadt, see also his review [Hughes 1961].

institutions. For the specific case of "field work" in *Asylums*, Becker shows how the idiosyncrasies of Goffman in this issue tend to "veil" the fieldwork material, which is not presented in the usual Hughesian way. Becker argues that Goffman's decision not to use the Hughesian style of presentation was a "principled refusal". Indeed, Goffman justified himself by reference to a highly "Blumerian" principle that said that you could not establish a codified body of rules of procedure to do fieldwork [Becker 2003]. For these reasons, we can assume that by hiding his "fieldwork" behind the theoretical framework of the book, Goffman masks one of "Ariadne's clews" that clearly bound him to Hughes, which is the construction of his theory on a "substantial" fieldwork base.[20]

5.1. *The "Attic" of the Total Institution*

I will use the metaphor of the house for the total institution project, and of the attic of the house especially. In a family house, the attic is generally a place where you can store all the things that are not of immediate use any more: oldies, memories, old-fashioned furniture; a place where visitors can not access. There is an "attic" of *Asylums*, full of material rejected by Goffman, but useful for studying the genesis of the book. Yves Winkin is probably the first to have rescued from oblivion a paper named "Interpersonal persuasion" that he partly translated in 1988 for the book *Les moments et leurs hommes*. This document was transcribed from a lecture given by Goffman in 1956, for the Josiah Macy Foundation (for conferences on group processes). Goffman presents his ongoing work on mental hospitals at length to an audience composed of sociologists, anthropologists and psychiatrists. A good deal of this material (related to fieldwork or to theoretical questions) was not used later in *Asylums*. Above all, Goffman later abandoned in his book the trenchant tone and the direct attacks against the psychiatric institution that marked his lecture of 1956 [Winkin 1988b, 84-86]. By moderating his attacks, Goffman may have contributed the impression that a coeval, friend, and good judge of his works, Howard S. Becker, would later have regarding the whole *Asylums* "politics", presenting the book less as an attack against the psychiatric institution than as a means of improving the institutional conditions of mental patients. In fact, in 1956, the attack was clear and direct, and was perceived that way by the audience [see Winkin 1988b: 85]. The

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[20] A fieldwork in St-Elizabeths where Becker thinks for a while about joining Goffman and working in partnership: "That I have in mind is to look at the patients' view of the hospital", says Becker in a letter to Hughes dated April 11, 1955. And he adds: "It seems fairly certain that Goffman will be there next year and I would be able to work with him, which could be instructive as well as fun" [ECH Papers, box 9, folder Becker#1].

result was an incredible "sparring match" between Goffman and Margaret Mead, above all, but between Goffman and some of the psychiatrists as well. Goffman's quizzical or caustic tone, as well as his more vitriolic attacks against what psychiatric institutions were doing to mental patients, were considered very "aggressive" by some of the audience. But we can say that Goffman was once again exemplarily Hughesian in this case. That he cast a deeply irreverent "sociological eye" on an institution and its official rhetoric (here psychiatric), is a clear mark of Hughes' sociological impact [see Chapoulie 1996; Winkin 1988b, 38]. It is even proof of continuity with Park as Hughes' mentor.

In introducing the two concepts of "institution" and "social establishment" as being the same, Goffman begins with an uncertain statement that shows that he has not sufficiently benefited from the efforts made by Hughes to clarify the term "institution" [Goffman 1957a, 117]. But when he then says that to study a specific institution, you can learn a lot by looking at other institutions comparatively [*ibidem*, 117], he is operating much more in a Hughesian framework. Goffman then presents a definition of the "total" institution, suggesting clearly that this is his own concept (see below the unsolved question of the authorship of that concept).

For convenience, we could cut the content of Goffman's paper into two parts. Two Hughesian theoretical frameworks emerge from this, which helps us to understand how Goffman theorizes. The first part focuses on institutions. Goffman here defines the total institution and wonders about its function (including distinguishing what the institution likes to tell about its purpose and what is instead really going on in the institution). The second part is clearly the theme of the "career" which allows Goffman to discuss the moral career of the inmates in the total institution (i.e. what the individuals in the institution are and also what they do). Using these two sets of concepts, Goffman is clearly starting to establish a (typical) Hughesian theoretical preparation for his fieldwork. However, in the case of the career, Goffman makes no explicit reference to Hughes, except saying that he himself previously studied the career movements of the local priest in the Shetlands [*ibidem*, 133]. Secondly, as regards the "institutional" framework, Hughes is completely left out of that part of Goffman's study, despite an explicit reference to a "natural history" of institutions, which is another trademark of Chicago's sociology since Park [*ibidem*, 138]. However, when he discusses the informal institutional practices of the mental hospital, Goffman appears to be an excellent student of Hughes because he exposes the "backdoor world" of that institution [*ibidem*, 136], and because this view clearly helps develop a general understanding of what happens in that institution.

5.2. *The Total Institution in Asylums (1961)*

This reappropriation of Hughesian theoretical frameworks is also present in *Asylums* [Goffman 1961]. The book gathers four different papers, some previously unpublished, some published in 1957. Each of the texts is based on a different source in sociology, as Goffman stated. But as in the 1956 paper, the links between Goffman and Hughes remain explicitly absent while they remain implicitly present. Indeed, how is it possible to talk about a "total" institution without evoking Hughes' classic sociological formulation of what an institution is? How could you speak of a "moral" career without locating that kind of career in the more general study of careers conducted by Hughes? How could you formalize what the "underlife" of an institution means without referring to the underside of institutions or to the backstage of occupations that Hughes so well revealed? Finally, how can one speak of the "medical model" without recalling what Hughes revealed about the staff relationships with clients? In the case of this "total" institution, we can say that Goffman's study is as weak on the specific notion of the institution but rich on the description of its "total" nature. The problem here is exactly the same as in the 1956 paper, even in the vague correspondence between "institution" and "social establishment" [*ibidem*, 3].[21] By comparison, Hughes spent much more time dissecting the basic concept of the "institution", and it seems that Goffman misses a large part of the Chicago heritage concerning institutions by doing this.

One of the deep mysteries of this essay concerns the concept of the "total institution" itself. Hughes is completely expelled from list of those who had done preparatory work on this concept. Goffman lists them in a footnote, mentioning some specialists like Amitai Etzioni as having prefigured the concept in their work [*ibidem*, 4], but does not mention Hughes. This is especially significant because, as I point out below, Hughes once claimed that he was the "father" of that concept. In Goffman's work, the name of Hughes lays mostly in footnotes on rather limited questions. Even stranger, the only one of Hughes' texts that Goffman mentions [*ibidem*, 87] is a review written in 1955, for the American Journal of Sociology. There is also a clear paradox between the scarcity of the references to "total" institutions in Goffman's book and a sentence that seems to suggest the existence of a whole literature on the subject: "The category of total institutions has been pointed out from time to time in

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[21] In his interview with P. David, Goffman blames himself for not having done enough work on the historical question concerning an institution like the mental hospital, and also for failing to put this institution into the whole system of institutions. It is even a weakness or failure, says Goffman [David 1988]. Should this "soul-searching" statement not be connected to the whole Hughes-Goffman problematic regarding the sociology of institutions?

the sociological literature under a variety of names, and some of the characteristics of the class have been suggested [...]" [*ibidem*, 4]. This presentation of the literature cannot be more elusive (especially in the event that Hughes might once have lectured on that notion during Goffman's studies).[22] It is not until page 94 that a first substantial reference to Hughes appears, and only indirectly through an unpublished paper by Joseph Gusfield. Such a circumvolution around mentioning Hughes seems decidedly strange. By contrast, when he speaks of "moral division of labor", Goffman clearly mentions Hughes, but without reference to the latter's article on the subject in 1956. Goffman seems elusive again in his second chapter when discussing the "career" matters. Stating that "traditionally" the concept of career has been defined in a certain way [*ibidem*, 127], Goffman spares the necessity of an explicit reference to Hughes's work, including when he presents his own "actualized" version of the concept. A single footnote, which does not even mention Hughes' name, but refers instead to Lloyd Warner's work on the notion of status, sufficed to evoke the whole literature on careers [*ibidem*, 128]. We can barely see Hughes when the sociology of "work careers" is evoked. However, in the last chapter, in the section on the study of occupations, Goffman clearly cites Hughes, as well as the work of the students that he generated: Oswald Hall and Howard S. Becker [*ibidem*, 324]. It becomes then quite clear that Goffman has almost entirely "scotomized" Hughes' sociological work. In "metabolizing" the Hughesian theory, Goffman has certainly created a splendid universe, but the treatment seems quite unfair to the one who prefigured this realization. These many moments of Goffman's "reluctance" to quote Hughes are also quite paradoxical when you consider that Goffman had sent Hughes several versions of his "*Asylums*" project, from the beginning of the project and until the final publication of the book.[23]

5.3. *Hughes's Memo on Total Institution (1957)*

The Hughes-Goffman correspondence during that period is also a mine of information in helping to understand the genesis of *Asylums*. It starts with a crucial

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[22] Regarding the "august" paternities to which Goffman refers, the footnotes of *Asylums* show well that Goffman took notice of Bateson's remarks during the 1956 conference, during the exchanges he had with the audience.

[23] Like the "Notes on Deference and Decorum in a Hospital Setting" paper, dated June 1955. In a letter sent by Goffman to Hughes, dated October 29, 1955 [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1], Goffman refers to another of these papers (described succinctly as "Ceremony"), of which Goffman sent the second version to Hughes, the latter being due to the fact that the first version "was not quite publishing". Hughes and Goffman also share their personal bibliography, as evidenced by a letter from Hughes to Goffman dated November 28, 1960 [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].

eight-page memo written by Hughes on total institutions, sent to Goffman in a letter dated August 8, 1957, in response to the "monograph" written by Goffman on the characteristics of total institutions.[24] This valuable memo deserves to be published today as a postscript to *Asylums* or would constitute a brilliant addition to *The Sociological Eye*. So it is an unpleasant task to summarize it here in a simplistic way for demonstration purposes.

I begin by noting that as elsewhere Hughes praises Goffman:

"I have just read your little monograph on the characteristics of total institutions. It is great stuff. I would like to make a few running comments. This is a subject in which I have been interested for a long time and in the last few years I have several times given a lecture to my institutions class on institutions which have an element of restraint. This is not the same as your total institutions."

It should be noted that when the question of authorship of the concept is mentioned here, Hughes makes no claim that he developed the concept; this indicates clearly that in his mind the term belongs to Goffman. Hughes then evokes some types of institutions already mentioned in his SOC350 course: monasteries, convents, boarding schools, and also two special cases – the "turpentine camp" that exploits Black workers in the South and, in a distinct change of pace, the case of the boy who gets bored in the classroom and looks through the window. Hughes makes clear that the question of restraint is essentially a matter of degree in such institutions. And then he sets the two concepts apart. First, the notion of "institution"; insofar as the institution may exercise varying degrees of constraint that restricts the freedom of the individuals within it. Then the notion of "totality", though he wrote in the latter case, for example in the concentration camp or the totalitarian state, "totality and restraint tend to go together." In the conclusion, Hughes discusses the notion of "agency" in these institutions: "What are they there for, who are they there for, who are the parties involved, who is acting on whose behalf." He even mentions the relationship between Goffman's monograph and the article he is himself finishing on "license and mandate" (this article was published as a chapter in Hughes 1958).

The theoretical references that Hughes introduced into the debate include a reference to Adler's book on Theresienstadt describing the "model camp" of the S.S. in Nazi Germany[25] which reappears from time to time throughout his correspondence because Hughes saw it as particularly important. As always, when he discusses the

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[24] In a personal CV sent to Hughes, Goffman mentions an article on "Characteristics of Total Institutions" [Goffman 1957b; ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].

[25] There are two long memos dated 1955 in which Hughes synthesizes Adler's book on Theresienstadt [ECH Papers, box 3, folder Adler H.].

problem of National Socialist Germany, its regime and institutions, we can feel how this issue is a sensitive question for him. He tells Goffman that the book on Theresienstadt provides the opportunity to address the specific issue of "conversion" of inmates to the institution: a "phantastic bastard or perverse identification of inmates with their masters." Then, he continues his presentation by intermingling suggestions regarding bastard and total institutions with the description of some "model" communities or sectarian communities, specifying that kangaroo courts (an example of bastard institutions) can exist in total institutions. Hughes wonders in the course of outlining his views if underground courts exist in mental hospitals. Then he continues to discuss this institution, beginning by asking what the function of such an institution could be. Hughes recommends to Goffman Julius Roth's work on the tuberculosis hospital, and asks if Goffman had the chance to read Roth's field notes on this institution. Hughes also mentions a former student named Willoughby that had done some fieldwork in mental hospitals. Hughes' view on the function of the institution is even more skeptical than ever when he tells Goffman that mental hospitals do not really care about "therapy" with the patients. Hughes evokes a kind of sociological rule on this:

> "There has long been the notion that an activity once it is institutionalized is thwarted by the institution itself. It is almost as if one were to say that achievement of a purpose and establishment of an institution are mutually exclusive. That is to say, in the strongest sense, that schools are inimical to education; prisons inimical to reform; and hospitals inimical to cure" [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].

The reader will judge for himself how this remark resonates with the fourth chapter of *Asylums*. In Goffman's words, Hughes' memo is actually a good example of what "the lesson of the master" could be.

5.4. *The Correspondence after Asylums*

The epistolary discussion between the two sociologists did not stop after the publication of *Asylums*. In a letter from Hughes to Goffman, dated November 14, 1961, the former says he is busy reading the published book: "I am on page 85, where you say (…)." Hughes notes with delight a statement in the book that says: "The staff problem here is to find a crime that will fill the punishment." And adds: "This may very well be the most important statement in your whole treatment of total institutions." Hughes takes the example of those in Africa who punish a Black man and then look for the crime they are going to accuse him of having done. In this statement, Hughes argues Goffman has created a whole "theory of punishment." Hughes

concludes: "When I shall finish *Asylums*, I will write you at length. I have made a lot of notes, including at one point a reference to Montesquieu and *The Spirits of the Laws*. I may even review the book and try to foist the review on some publication. Congratulations and best wishes" [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1]. As we can see, Hughes' esteem for his former student's work runs from the preparatory papers and drafts of *Asylums* until the publication of the book.[26] Not content with the promise to send his comments in the form of notes, Hughes even offers the favour that he could review the book. In what is probably the direct response to the last letter (the only date mentioned is the 26th of November), Goffman expresses himself on the theory of punishment and asks Hughes if he could send these above-mentioned notes, and then regrets that some of the preparatory papers were published before they were read critically by Hughes.[27] But above all, Goffman raises this: "To have as one's teacher someone better than oneself, who reads what one writes and likes it, is rather a special experience, in fact, I'm afraid, a family feeling" [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1]. There is no clearer blend of intellectual exchange and marks of affection. If Goffman is possibly a "reluctant apprentice," he is nevertheless a deeply grateful former student.

6. The Missing Paper: the Enigma of a Hughesian Total Institution

Now that we have recovered some of the Ariadne's clews linking Goffman to Hughes and showed the theoretical and methodological filiation from the former to the latter, there still remains the enigma of Hughes' "missing paper" on total institutions. In this paper Hughes could have summarized some views on a "total" institution before Goffman's writings. Early on in their interaction regarding this essay Hughes claimed repeatedly that he was the inventor, if not of the exact denomination, at least of the concept of total institution, and that he had lectured on this subject to his students (in SOC350) at the University of Chicago. In this regard, a crucial episode is the preparation during 1969 of his volume of collected papers, *The Sociological Eye* (published in 1971). Hughes worked on this project with Howard S. Becker and Alex Morin, the latter being the publisher at Aldine Press. In the course of their many exchanges, Hughes makes reference to two previously unpublished pa-

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[26] Once again, we find here an affectionate intellectual exchange between master and apprentice similar to that Hughes had experienced with Park.

[27] In a letter dated March 19, 1970, Hughes asks Goffman if he has sent the latter his memo on total institutions. In his response, dated March 24, Goffman confirms he has received it but notes that he has misplaced it. Hughes sends him the memo again on the 31st of March [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].

pers from his lectures notes in the SOC350 course. The first text deals with "bastard institutions", the second with "total institutions." Initially, Hughes claims both were recorded in order to be transcribed. The mystery is that only the first of these papers was prepared for the published book, becoming its chapter ten.[28] Despite repeated efforts, Hughes was never able to find the second text. The enigma of this "missing paper" remains unsolved.

6.1. *The Preparation of The Sociological Eye (1969)*

All this started with Hughes writing to Becker and Morin on the 9th of July 1969 to mention that he wanted two previously unpublished papers to be included in the book project:

> "There are two basic concepts, however, which are missing. One of them is my concept 'bastard' institution, and the other is what Goffman is now calling 'total' institution. Although I don't remember whether I used the phrase or not. I have in my office recorded lectures – that is to say, recorded on tape and then transcribed – one on each of these ideas."

Hughes begins by describing the paper on bastard institutions. Then, he comes to the content of the paper on total institution:

> "The other one on total institutions is also fairly easy to find. I started from Cooley's statement 'that institutions are made up of people, but only of specialized parts of them; thus law used the legal part of the lawyer. My proposition on this is of the same order as my statements that while the customer is always right, some are righter than others. Institutions may, indeed, make use of only a very specialized part of a man and pay no attention to the rest of him. On the other hand, some want all of him. The convent is, of course, the extreme of both internal and external demand. The prison and the mental hospital are perhaps the extreme on external demand and control, all of the persons talk, dress, time and so on. I have short lecture on this point which I would like to dig out and include here. With that done I would consider these two volumes quite complete" [ECH Papers, box 3 folder Aldine#3].[29]

As we can see, Hughes claims to have lectured on that notion, even if the case of the exact terminology remains ambiguous.[30] In any event, the content that Hughes describes and the samples of institutions presented correspond to the sociological

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[28] The possible confusion of that "missing paper" with the chapter 9 of *The Sociological Eye* [Hughes 1971], "Good People and Dirty Work" (that deals with concentration camps) is not possible because the latter article was originally published in the review *Social Problems* in 1962.

[29] There is a quotation mark missing in Cooley's quotation.

[30] Gary Jaworski, quoting from Tom Burns, upholds that the denomination itself was borrowed by Goffman from a course he had with Hughes [Jaworski 2000].

area chosen by Goffman in *Asylums*. The fact that Hughes wishes to recover both texts for *The Sociological Eye* also indicates that they are really important in his eyes.

On the same subject, Hughes writes to Becker and Morin on the 16th of July 1969:

> "I have this morning (…) Alex's letter concerning the publication of my papers. He asked specifically about the concept 'total institution' and 'bastard institution'. The total institution lecture was build on a text from Cooley which says that institutions are made up of people but not of whole people; they use the specialized parts of people such as the legal part of the lawyer. Starting from this I said this proposition is only relatively true as institutions vary in the extent to which they demand more or less of a person objectively and subjectively. The nun and the prisoner are under control at all times; the nun however has agreed to it and presumably has internalized the control. (…) The prisoner and the soldier on the other hand, while they are controlled objectively, are not necessarily controlled in their inward parts. You can work this theme out in every dimension, including how much of one's life, measured by years, is controlled by any particular institution. The bastard institution idea, I think, I developed in the same phase of lectures back in those years when I first discovered the tape recorder and taped my lectures and took some care about them."

Hughes then continues by describing the bastard institution, and concludes his letter this way:

> "I still think this is a very good idea to get into our study of social institutions, or at least the study of the going concerns and processes of society. I have asked Mary Felton in my office to see whether she can find these lectures, but I think the odds are rather poor. I hardly know how to tell her to start" [ECH Papers, box 8, folder B#2].

That letter is an important piece: first, it shows that Hughes, without the text at hand, can nonetheless accurately describe its content. A part of that theoretical presentation corresponds exactly to Goffman's notion that there is a continuum in the intensity of control among the institutions, some of them being more "total" than others. The examples of institutions gathered to be studied on their "total" nature also correspond in the description of the two sociologists. But the exact date Hughes taught the course is hard to discern. Hughes could have taught this course at any time during his career in Chicago (i.e. during Goffman's studies or only later).

However, a later letter from Becker to Hughes shows that Hughes was able to find one of these papers, the lecture on "bastard institutions". Becker acknowledges receipt of the paper on the 21st of August 1969: "I did get the lecture on bastard institutions, though I'm not sure what I'm to do with it. It's a remarkably good thing" [ECH Papers, box 3 folder Aldine#3]. In a letter dated June 22, 1972 to Becker, Hughes reaffirms his paternity of the concept of total institution. Commenting on a

paper that two colleagues published about utopias and the total institution, Hughes explains:

> "What I want to tell them is that utopias are all total institutions in their very concept. That's what they're meant to be. Every utopia is a plan to control people completely in all aspects of their lives, dress, speech, sex, work, what have you. There are always changes from the first to the second generation of a utopia; changes in control, and in, no doubt, other aspects. It may be a change from internalized policing to external policing. The trouble is that Erving Goffman took only half of that concept of total institution. He took the side of external policing; whereas, as I originally presented that in my lectures based on Cooley's *Individual and Institution*, we included also those institutions like nunneries and sects where there is also internalized control – where the person enters into it with all of himself inwardly and outwardly" [ECH Papers, box 9, folder Becker#1].

Hughes clearly adheres to the same version of the story, namely that one of his lectures on institutions, starting from a sentence from Cooley, was adopted and adapted by Goffman (with the same ambiguity enduring regarding the coining of the phrase "total institution"). A letter from Hughes to Goffman, dated December 14, 1978, does not help to solve this mystery, but it proves at least that Hughes never found his "missing paper:"

> "I have been looking this morning for a copy of a lecture which I gave in a course on institutions, noting from Cooley the chapter on 'Social Institutions' where he said, 'Institutions are made up of people, but of only parts of people; thus, the legal part of a lawyer.' I went on to say some institutions use only one part of a person, but others such as nunneries and prisons remain in control of the whole person and of all their mind and effort, and even dictate what clothes they must wear. I think you were in that class. I can't find that copy now, but I did have it typed up. Maybe it was taken down at the time by a dictating machine. I don't find it now, but still hope I may find it somewhere" [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].

There is no indication in his correspondence that Hughes found this "missing paper" before he died. The enigma is reinforced further by the fact that when, in his beautiful article on total institutions, Becker commented on Goffman's work, revealing some of the Hughesian "bedrocks" of the book, he didn't mention the famous second definition of the total institution as Hughesian [Goffman 1961, 4], even though Hughes claimed in correspondence that the idea was his, and that he was the theoretical "ferryman" between Cooley and Goffman on this question.[31]

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[31] The metaphor of the "ferryman" is derived from the "bridging role" evoked by Helmes-Hayes, concerning what was transmitted from Park to Hughes [Helmes-Hayes 1998].

6.2. *"Nosing Around"*

Leaving aside the question of the existence of the "missing paper", it is undeniable that Hughes was clearly "nosing around" the notion of the total institution during the same period that Goffman did his fieldwork for the preparation of *Asylums*. A letter Hughes sent to Ralph Tyler on the 8th of April 1955 shows it. Therein, Hughes describes a possible research program for Howard S. Becker at Palo Alto, a program that would focus on conformity and deviance. Hughes illustrates his theoretical construction by portraying a society that would be so much based on consensus that it would bring a total conformity of all the members of that society to the rules, both in thought and in act. And he adds:

> "One living model would be the monastery, with a combination of complete devotion (…) and of obedience and of absolute authority. The deviant is expelled. Another is the totalitarian state (…). The early Mormons, the Nazis, the Inquisition, the Communist States, all are living approximations" [ECH Papers, box 9, folder Becker#1].

The "typical" institutions of total control, according to Hughes, when he later described his "missing paper", are listed again in a form that probably predates any paper of Goffman on the same issue. But Hughes' thoughts on the subject of institutions are themselves in motion, as is clear in this letter to Becker dated December 14, 1960:

> "As I look back over some of my early lecture notes, I am more and more convinced that what I should now do is take them and not revise them but really rewrite them with some of our new material and insights in mind. I have found the lecture on bastard institutions and hope to work it over during the Christmas holiday to show to you" [ECH Papers, box 9, folder Becker#2].

In this changing context, the changing elements of Hughes's theory may have merged with new material coming from the work of his students and former students – and why not Goffman's material on the mental hospital? – in this field of the "total institution" that Hughes later claimed as his own.[32]

That second scenario is consistent with some letters Hughes wrote before the publication of *Asylums*. For example, in a letter to Jacques Brazeau (a former student) dated May 16, 1960, he advises the latter concerning his study of the military. Hughes

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[32] Howie Becker suggests the same thing: Hughes "understood his own way of working as being dependent on students, that it was kind of a symbiotic relationship in which he had these ideas that he would never do any research about himself, but he knew that some student might well do it, and that that was a kind of collaboration" (personal communication, December 2009).

does not refer to his "missing paper" here but rather the above-mentioned "little monograph" of Goffman:

> "In discussing it, if you do, I think you should look at the little monograph done by Erving Goffman called 'Total Institutions'. Total institutions are those which, at least for a period, have practically complete control over a person's fate – he is, as it were, locked up. To be sure, the army is not locked up, but anyone who leaves it without permission will be locked up. It is certainly a total institution in that respect. I think you should read his monograph and see what ideas it brings to your mind. I do not have the Goffman reference at hand; it may be that you know the article. If you do not, write me and I will try to find it for you" [ECH Papers, box 15, folder Brazeau].

Here, any reference to any possible lecture notes has completely disappeared. Hughes seems to attribute to Goffman the entire concept, both in content and name. It is also possible, of course, that Hughes considered that a published article by Goffman was easier to recommend than his own unpublished lecture notes (perhaps difficult to find).[33]

The total institution reappears later in a memo dated 22nd of March 1965 sent by Hughes to John Freedman. Starting with the case of an urban community studied by Freedman, Hughes evokes several theoretical frameworks that can be useful to Freedman (including his usual examples of "controlled communities", convents and sectarian communities). Hughes also evokes the idea of "model communities" as a way to control the lifestyles and social relations of people who live in them, even if the attempt is not always marked by full success. Hughes then pursues his thoughts on model communities:

"After all these are not really total institutions unless somehow or other one can control entry and keep people from leaving. The whole pattern of coming into and leaving such a community should be looked into." Some urban communities, says Hughes, are raising social control to such a level that one can make the following assumption: "This is the kind of general community control which turns the suburbs

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[33] Howie Becker is suggesting this idea: "What I can do is not help to establish the 'truth' of the question of who had the idea of 'total institution' first but rather just think aloud a little bit about what I do remember. For instance, that Everett couldn't find the manuscript of the second lecture, the one on total institutions, seems quite natural to me. I wish I had a photograph of his office. You have never seen such a mess! Papers piled everywhere, books, folders with papers in them, papers just lying loose, sometime stapled together, sometimes coming apart. It was a joke, during the period when we had the grants to do the research that led to Boys In White and Making the Grade, that we always had to budget for a secretary for Hughes, though he wasn't doing anything for the project that required a secretary. But he insisted on this, saying that he needed help 'getting his papers in order.' He never did get them in order, and we paid year after year for this to be done, but in the end it didn't happen and his inability to find this document is the proof that it was never done successfully" (personal communication, December 2009).

into a quasi-total institution for anyone who accepts it." Finally, Hughes contrasts the total institution to institutions which are their exact opposite in terms of function:

> "There are many other such contingencies which I need not follow up for I am sure you would think of them, but it really belongs all in a sort of continuum starting at the total institutions and leaving toward the other end of the scale. There are several ways of being non-total, I suppose – one is the strictly Bohemian way, a sort of Greenwich Village non-totalism, but it has some town image in it at that. Another way of conceiving a non total community would be that in which all individuals were completely impervious to everyone else about them with almost a little bit of mutual contempt so that no community collective behavior grew up at all" [ECH Papers, box 26, folder Freedman].

7. The Discrete Master and the Worried Apprentice

It is time to try to answer the following question: why was Goffman such a reluctant apprentice? Or, rather, why was he like that for so long before the two late (and posthumously published) interviews where he clearly expressed his intellectual debt to Hughes and Chicago? We could, of course, follow Jaworski's theory according to which Goffman's genius effectively reduced the share of other theorists and theories in his writings [Jaworski 2000, 305]. But perhaps should we see this question from Hughes' perspective. We could argue that Hughes was a "ferryman" who acted as a "bridge" between his students and the classics of American and international sociology, prepared and adapted by himself. And he did so with a particularly personal style; Hughes was a discrete master whose students learned his perspective through a kind of "osmosis" (the expression is from Becker, cited by Helmes-Hayes 1998). This led them to sometimes forget the role played by the ferryman as they invented their own sociology. According to Chapoulie [1996, 45], all of Hughes' students "borrowed" materials to create their own sociology. Or, to quote Howie Becker's apt phrase, everyone invented "his own private Chicago" [Becker 1999]. Hughes was a discrete master who sometimes wished deliberately to step aside, as in his letter to Goffman dated February 12, 1969, where he thanked him like all the other contributors to the *Festschrift*:

> "The interesting thing about that is that most of the people who wrote in it did really catch some facet of me. It must have been a matter of resonance. I certainly did not create anything in any of those people" [ECH Papers, box 28, folder Goffman#1].

Or in this letter dated February 7, 1977, to Tom Burns:

> "That peculiar lot of students which were attracted to me at Chicago had one great virtue, that they were willing to go and look at something that hadn't been looked at

before. I was not a very conspicuous member of that department, and I was rather new there. The famous names were Blumer, Wirth and others. But these young men came to me, and they went and really looked. And, thus, put together these ideas. I think it was really a sort of breakthrough, and I'm glad that you have appreciated it" [ECH Papers, box 16, folder Burns T.].

There is another way of interpreting the relationship – this time from Goffman's perspective – drawing on Winkin's biography and some elements that emerge from the two late interviews. Goffman cultivated an image of himself as an outsider in American sociology. This might possibly be related to his biography, for he is revealed as an occasionally shy, unquiet, and insecure person.[34] He who defined himself as the "token black" in some departments [see Winkin 2006] had indeed suffered from career misfortunes when he was turned down for certain key appointments,[35] the case of Chicago being one of the most important. Is it possible that Goffman had hoped, by avoiding reference to Hughes and Chicago, to adopt more "mainstream" sources (Durkheim or Parsons, for example) in order to "soften up" the mainstream wave of "professional" sociology, which favoured at that period Harvard and Columbia?[36] Indeed, these are the two universities that Goffman evoked as the "power base" of American sociology [Winkin 1988c, 236-237]. The concealment of Hughes as master or mentor, except in the private correspondence,[37] could be explained by a quest for legitimacy on Goffman's part. The Chicago department was seen to be in decline through the fifties and the clan wars inside the Chicago department (the combination of the refusal to grant tenure to Strauss and to hire Goffman) clearly show that Hughes was isolated. Abbott [1999] portrays Hughes as "peripheral" in the department, and Strauss said that Hughes was a "happy marginal" in it [Strauss 1996]. Hughes is therefore clearly not the man of power in the department, as Goffman

[34] Numerous facts can be related to that "outsider" image, and to the attachment to other figures considered by Goffman to be "outsiders" in American social science. For example, in his interview with Yves Winkin, Goffman mentions Birdwhistell, Bateson and Margaret Mead as: "des chiens errants qui ont des problèmes de légitimité dans leur propre discipline"; he also speaks of them as: "des déviants, des cow-boys, des freaks" [Winkin 1988c].

[35] Winkin mentions a recollection of Pierre Bourdieu. The latter recommended Goffman to Princeton University, but the application was rejected with disdain [Winkin 2006].

[36] Marco Santoro drew my attention to an article by Charles Camic where the latter has described in the work of Talcott Parsons a similar method of a deliberate selection of sources considered "important" and of veiled influences and significant omissions [see Camic 1992]. Indeed, we find in the analysis of Camic on Parsons the same kind of quest of legitimacy in the field of sociology, but in a quite different period regarding the balance of power inside the field.

[37] Richard Helmes-Hayes suggests a different interpretation: "Goffman's personality was such that he saw himself and seemed to want to be an outsider or rebel of some sort. Certainly, he wanted to be and was an independent thinker. It would then make sense that both personally and intellectually he would have a hard time figuring out and negotiating a relationship with Hughes" (personal communication).

put it bluntly in his interview with Winkin, citing the fact that Hughes remained an assistant professor during ten years.

Maybe was it also because Hughes's sociology, discretely, but no less "theoretical" than Blumer's sociology, was considered less suitable for careers in the field at that period. Goffman expresses that point explicitly by saying that the "fieldwork" sociologists were grouped around Hughes, but they were thus excluded from an academic market centred around survey studies, which concretely meant, for the "Hughesians", no money, no colloquiums, and no key positions [Winkin 1988c, 237]. Because of the complexity of the relationship, it is possible that all interpretations, from the one of Collins to the one of Jaworski, are partly true, and can coexist with my own interpretation. Whatever the case in this regard, it is clear that despite Goffman's failure or refusal to acknowledge his debt to Hughes in his early works, Hughes' influence on Goffman was deep, even if discrete, and should contribute to once again highlight Hughes' position in American sociology. Hughes was Park's "star student" [Strauss 1996] and also considered to be "the true Chicagoan, the real descendant of Park" [Becker 1999], and as unfairly and unwisely forgotten as he is today [Helmes-Hayes 1998], he could reappear as having been the best sociological "fuel" of the Second Chicago School.

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The Enigma of the Total Institution

Rethinking the Hughes-Goffman Intellectual Relationship

Abstract: The intellectual relationship between Everett C. Hughes and his student Erving Goffman has attracted the attention of historians of American sociology since the death of these two sociologists. The thesis of a unilateral relationship, Goffman publicly praising Hughes (but only at the end of his life), and Hughes being resistant to this mark of allegiance, has long prevailed from the existing sources. A stimulating article by Gary D. Jaworski has challenged this version, claiming from study of the archival material that this relationship was much more complex. Jaworski's thesis suggests there was even a master-apprentice relationship between Hughes and Goffman. Based on an extended work on archival material, this paper is an attempt to supplement or revise some of this last argument regarding the first part of Goffman's career since the Ph.D., namely his work on total institutions. Regarding total institutions, a major influence from Hughes on Goffman, veiled by the latter, can be revealed by careful study of various published and unpublished sources, Hughes even claiming the authorship to the concept of total institution. The heart of Hughes' argument on the authorship, however, rests upon a mysterious lecture note, often mentioned by him but that he was never able to found in his archives. This is the enigma of the total institution.

Keywords: Everett C. Hughes, Erving Goffman, institutions, total institutions, Chicago school.

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