ONE

Introduction

Reaching for the Global

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How can ethnography be global? How can ethnography be anything but micro and ahistorical? How can the study of everyday life grasp lofty processes that transcend national boundaries? After all, participant observation, as sociologists have crafted it, aims for the subjective interpretation of social situations or the foundations of human interaction. It was designed to elucidate social processes in bounded communities or negotiated orders in institutions. It was incontrovertibly intended for the small scale. It was certainly not meant for the global! Classical anthropology, likewise, made a fetish out of the confinement of fieldwork, the enclosure of the village, the isolation of the tribe. Studies of ritual and routine, custom and law, or lineage patterns were irredeemably local. By convention global ethnography can only be an oxymoron. This book, therefore, departs from convention.

A THEORETICAL IMPOSSIBILITY?

If the prospects for global ethnography are bleak from a methodological standpoint, they are no less dismal from a theoretical standpoint. Take Fredric Jameson's theory of the global postmodern.[1] It begins with early capitalism, where the global is directly accessible from the local, from the spinning jenny, the county manor, or even the stock exchange. Ethnography fits well here. This double transparency of the near and the far did not last long. As capitalism spread across the world the truth of the local moved outside itself, embedded in obscure and distant circuits of capital. It was impossible to appreciate the fate of Manchester textiles without knowing about America's slave South or the progress of colonization in India. With the help of science, however, it was still possible to discern the terrain of this new imperial order, the operation of cartels, the rise of finance capital, forcible incorporation of peripheries. With the help of theory, ethnography could, at least in principle, link up the local to the global. But today, under late capitalism, science is helpless to comprehend a fragmented, dispersed, volatile, lived experience, let alone connect it to what Jameson considers to be an impenetrable totality. The local dissolves into ephemeral imagery while the global becomes invisible. With no place to root itself, to develop a coherent point of view, there can be no ethnography, let alone global ethnography. The best we can do is to dwell on fleeting experiences, telltale anecdotes, or aesthetic works that offer glimpses into a fractured, fragmented, all-encompassing "globality."

If Jameson's enigmatic postmodern pronounces ethnography's death sentence, theories of the information society condemn it to life imprisonment. In Manuel Castells's three-volume treatise, information technology promotes a network society of global reach in which the space of flows—flows of information, technology, and finance—replaces the space of places, the rootedness of industrial work, the fixity of urban and rural life.[2] The information society divides powerless places from placeless power—the decaying shipyard from commodity markets, the welfare client from universal discourses of legitimate need. The instantaneous transmission of electronic media introduces timeless time and the dissolution of history.' The world is polarized between those within the flows of critical resources and those excluded, between the network society and the marginalized populations. If ethnography has any place, it is irrevocably local, buried in black holes or locked in real virtuality. In either case there is no exit, no way of climbing out to the other world.

In David Harvey's theory of global capitalism, ethnography is allowed out of prison but only to wander around homeless and irrelevant.[3] In his account the postmodern condition is propelled by the dynamics and contradictions of capital accumulation. In the Fordist period, crises were solved by exporting them to other territories or postponing them into the future, what he calls "time-space displacement." Capitalists could extend markets to the noncapitalist world abroad or create new demands through warfare or the welfare state at home. They could increase profits by drawing on cheap labor or by infrastructural innovation. Having exhausted themselves, these solutions are now replaced by "flexible accumulation," accelerating the processes of production, exchange, and consumption. Capitalism seeks to overcome its crises by producing more things more rapidly and by turning consumers into digestive automatons. All realms of life become volatile and ephemeral, subject to "time-space compression." If ethnography manages to withstand the hurricanes that sweep through everyday life, it can do no better than record the devastation.

Working from the top down, John Meyer and his associates have argued that the modern world society causes the diffusion of common institutional models and patterns of legitimacy among nation states.[4] These are, of course, Western models—democracy, markets, educational systems, legal orders, and so on. Meyer and his colleagues have little to say about the power that lies behind this diffusion nor, what is more important for us, about the link between models or norms on the one side and concrete practices on the other. Instead of theorizing the link between models and practices, they talk of their "decoupling," making it difficult to understand concrete variation within the same formal structures. On the ground, liberal democracy, for example, is very different in South Africa, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. The neo-institutionalists do not deny this diversity, but they leave ethnographers, who work from the ground upward, without theoretical tools to delve into the connections between micro-practices and macro-structures. Once more ethnographers have no theoretical hoist out of the local.

Anthony Giddens creates a chink in the global armor by recognizing the new opportunities opened up by what he calls time-space "distanciation."[5] In Giddens's premodern world, time and space were inseparable, congealed in locale, that is in "place." Then time separates itself out. It becomes the abstract time of the calendar and the clock. Next, space separates itself from place. The compass, the map, and the planetary system point to a world beyond place, a world with its own logic. In this time-space distanciation, locales still exist but they are connected to each other through symbolic tokens (money), experts (doctors, lawyers, accountants), as well as by new technologies (language, radio, television, and the Internet). Through them everyday life is disembedded, lifted out of the local and attached directly to the global. For Giddens, however, these connections across space and time afford new possibilities as well as new anxieties.

But if the global is enabling as well as constraining, whom does it enable? In Robert Reich's new world economy, the beneficiaries are the labor aristocracy of "symbolic analysts" who spiral through the weblike structure of the elevated corporation, through workplaces connected across national boundaries, removed from local contexts.[6] These sky workers—"symbolic analysts" or Rosabeth Moss Kanter's "world class"—are detached from those stranded on the ground, production workers and the growing sector of in-person services.[7] Saskia Sassen drops a ladder down from the sky, tethering the "global city" of corporate executive, accountant, and banker to the armies of service workers, often immigrants, who scamper around like Lilliputians at the feet of Gulliver.[8] Ethnography can now be grounded but in a place from which the global is still largely invisible.

Is the prognosis for global ethnography, and indeed for the world, as hopeless as it looks? In this book we argue that it is not. Surprising though it may seem, even the bleakest of these theories extends a special invitation to the ethnographer. However they differ in substance, all these accounts share a common theme: globalization as the recomposition of time and space—displacement, compression, distanciation, and even dissolution. Here lies the connection to the ethnographer, whose occupation is, after all, to study others in "their space and time." In entering the lives of those they study, ethnographers attune themselves to the horizons and rhythms of their subjects' existence. The ethnographer has, therefore, a privileged insight into the lived experience of globalization. On that basis alone, if ethnography can establish a terra firma and deploy new cognitive maps, it can shed light on the fateful processes of our age—processes that leave no one, least of all ethnographers, untouched.

Indeed, global ethnographers cannot be outside the global processes they study. They do not descend tabula rasa into villages, workplaces, churches, streets, agencies, or movements. They are also embedded in the time-space rhythms, not only of intimate relations, academic routines, TV sitcoms, café life, household, and so forth, but also of distinctively global processes. This was especially true of us as we developed our collective project. Precisely because we were scattered all over the globe, embedded in sites in countries as far apart as Russia, Hungary, Brazil, Ireland, India, and the United States, we became the living embodiment of the processes we were studying. For three intense years, no matter where we were, there were only rare moments when any one of us was out of touch with the rest. Strung out over the earth, continually moving between places, we were virtually always connected by a global net, the Internet. We surveilled one another even as we surveilled others. The very structure of our labor process brought global and local together, hauled us out of sites and into a global connection.[9]

To be a global ethnographer is one thing; to do global ethnography is another. We had to rethink the meaning of fieldwork, releasing it from solitary confinement, from being bound to a single place and time. We had to endow fieldwork with the flexibility to adjust to the space-time coordinates of the subject population. We had to self-consciously combine dwelling with traveling.[10] We had to pursue Indian nurses working in the United States back to Kerala, follow the careers of Irish software engineers as they spiraled through transnational corporate webs, and hitch ourselves to the feminist discourses circulating between Brazil and the United States.

Even when our fields did not themselves stretch across the globe, and it was only the participants' imaginations that connected them to the global, our ethnography was no less multi-sited.[11] We sought to understand the incessant movement of our subjects, the mosaic of their proliferating imaginations, by ourselves continually switching places, moving among sites within the field. It was not possible to confine ourselves to a single breast cancer movement: we had to study them in relation to one another—their internal diversity, their interweaving, the dialogues through which they achieve their own trajectories. Union organizing campaigns that contest the global city cannot be understood in isolation but only in their multiple connectedness. The clash of global imaginations around toxic dumping in rural Hungary cannot be understood except through its connection to the source of waste—the Budapest Chemical Works. Within any field, whether it had global reach or was bounded by community or nation, our fieldwork had to assemble a picture of the whole by recognizing diverse perspectives from the parts, from singular but connected sites.

Even as we consciously elevated movement, we did not lose sight of dwelling. We were determined that our studies not dissolve into a welter of postmodern fracturing and fragmentation, that they did not become a pastiche of vignettes, and we did not become tourists tripping from resort to resort. We were determined to ground our ethnographies in local histories. It was never easy to recover pasts and we used any means available—oral histories, archives, official documents, newspapers, community memories. In this way our ethnographies also became ethnohistories. We used this grounding in the past to spiral outward and explore changes in globalization. The clamor of Hungarian welfare clients to be treated like "mothers" was traced to the penetration of new global discourses that demanded means-testing to replace universal policies of socialist welfare. The changing experiences of work in the San Francisco shipyards were traced to demilitarization and the restructuring of global shipbuilding and repair. In pushing their carts with energy and determination, homeless recyclers tried to reenact a world of blue collar jobs, of Pax Americana, a world that they had lost.

In short, welding ethnohistory to ethnography, combining dwelling with movement, all our studies accomplished three things: first, they delved into external forces; second, they explored connections between sites; and third, they uncovered and distilled imaginations from daily life. Forces, connections, and imaginations became the three essential components, the three axes of our studies. However, determining which of these three would become the focus in each case of specifically global analysis varied according to the particular experience of globalization—whether people experienced globalization as an external force to be resisted or accommodated, whether people participated in the creation and reproduction of connections that stretched across the world, or whether people mobilized and/or contested imaginations that were of global dimensions.

In order to explicate the methodology we practice, I have adopted two interconnected approaches. In the first approach I stake out the terrain of global ethnography by reference to what it is not. Much of what follows, in the first approach, discusses the limitations of sedentary and perspectival anthropology on the one side and of urban and institutional sociology on the other. The second approach to unpacking global ethnography is genealogical, tracing how we got to where we are. Here arrival, if not accidental, is also not inevitable. There were many twists in the road; we entered many blind alleys as we battled to uncover the global. Such paths, entered but not ultimately taken, will not appear here. Instead, my narrative dwells on my own critical engagement with two major traditions of ethnography—the sociology of the Chicago School and the anthropology of the Manchester School—leading to the extended case method and from there to global ethnography.

From today's vantage point it is easy to forget that earlier in this century, in the 1920s and 1930s, the science of sociology was almost coterminous with ethnography. In the period of Chicago School preeminence, social surveys were associated with muckraking reform and the crusading women around Jane Addams and Hull House, while participant observation was science—objective, hard, and male. Thus, I begin with Chicago's foundational classic, Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,* which was published just after World War I. From the standpoint of global ethnography this was indeed a very promising beginning, but Thomas and Znaniecki's successors in the Chicago School narrowed the field's scope to local ethnography of the metropolis, and from there it disappeared into the interiors of organizations and institutions. Connection with history and the outside world was lost. As the object of ethnography became more limited, so its method became progressively more marginal within sociology.

The trajectory of ethnography within anthropology, however, was the reverse. In the early decades of this century, professional anthropologists sought to separate themselves from amateurs—missionaries, travelers, colonial administrators—by emphasizing the rigorous scientific practice of careful observation in situ. The mythical figure of the lone, secluded anthropologist surrounded by "curious natives" became paradigmatic. Malinowski, encamped in his tent on the Trobriand Islands, signified the new discipline. Not far from the anthropologist's tent a storm was brewing, however. The anthropologist's confinement was soon to be unsettled by the distant and sometimes not-too-distant drums of anticolonialism. Here I take up the history of the Manchester School of social anthropology as the vanguard of this anthropological awakening to a wider imperial order. Its perspective on ethnography, refracted through the class and race struggles of Southern Africa, was still limited by the imperial order upon which it depended. Standing, as we do, within a postcolonial world, it is easy to diagnose the limitations of the Manchester method—the extended case method—but we nonetheless take it, or at least its revision, as our point of departure for our global ethnography. Finally, we show how our sociological sensibilities differ from what is now a flourishing global anthropology,[12] or from that tendency within it that marginalizes history and overlooks the continuing importance of the nation state.[13] In the conclusion we juxtapose our own grounded globalizations to their perspectival global "scapes."

THE POLISH PEASANT IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

The scientific move in *anthropology* during the second decade of the century turned fieldwork into a professional rite of passage, and with it came the closing of "tribal" societies, stripping them of their history, severing them from their colonial and capitalist determinations.[14] By contrast, the scientific turn in *empirical sociology*, at least in the United States, began with a global vision, pioneered by W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's idiosyncratic, eclectic, and unwieldy classic, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. Originally published in five volumes between 1918 and 1920, it became the foundation tome of the early Chicago School.

It begins with a vision of the Polish peasant (prior to 1850), living within an array of rural primary groups of which the extended family was the most important. It ends with the institutions and mores of Polish American society in Chicago. Extraordinary for its time, *The Polish Peasant* describes communities in flux, with histories at both terminals of the immigration stream. Its depiction of social change is reminiscent of Emile Durkheim's account of transition from mechanical to organic solidarity, but here the transition is more obviously precarious and is spatial (traversing the Atlantic) as well as temporal.[15] Thomas and Znaniecki saw the decay of the old order as taking two roads—either *disorganization*, in which group values no longer regulate individual behavior, or *reorganization*, in which new institutions emerge to foster the reintegration of the individual. The path to a modern, "rational," self-regulating order is racked by the contending forces of disorganization and reorganization. In Poland the balance favors reorganization and nation-building, while in Chicago disorganization assumes the upper hand as adaptive institutions are slower to develop.

While global in scope, *The Polish Peasant* is at the same time ethnographic in method, inasmuch as it relies on "human documents" to describe the experiences of seasonal migrants at home and immigrants abroad. Its more than two thousand pages intersperse sociological analysis and historical commentary with lengthy extracts from letters exchanged between family members, and with newspaper articles, court records, and autobiography. Interestingly, Thomas regarded documentary evidence as more reliable than the interview, which he thought distorted as much as it revealed life experiences. As authors, Thomas and Znaniecki are erased from the text, so that even the division of labor between them is a matter of dispute. We do know, however, that the project was Thomas's brainchild. He spent much time wandering around Chicago's neighborhoods, learned Polish, and between 1908 and 1913 spent eight months every year in Europe, where he collected materials, visited important towns, immersed himself in local history, and mingled with peasants. He had initially a more ambitious plan, eventually shelved, of comparing peasants from different parts of Europe. It was on his last trip to Warsaw that he met Florian Znaniecki, a social philosopher deeply acquainted with Polish peasant society. Forced into exile in 1914, Znaniecki landed on Thomas's doorstep and was thereupon invited to join the collaborative venture that was to become *The Polish Peasant.* It was Znaniecki who then collected the documentary materials on Chicago's Polish community.[16]

If this was ethnography, it was certainly very different from the form being pioneered by another Polish émigré, Bronislaw Malinowski, who was pitching his tent in New Guinea at the time that Thomas and Znaniecki were assembling *The Polish Peasant.* Where Thomas and Znaniecki sought to locate the subjective, lived experience of the Polish peasant in its widest historical and geographical context, Malinowski, reacting against evolutionary theory, was militantly opposed to history and consideration of the extralocal context. Thomas and Znaniecki's rich tapestry of traveling and dwelling is in sharp contrast to Malinowski's solitary confinement. Yet they do share one feature. Like Malinowski's isolation of the Trobriand community, Thomas and Znaniecki searched for an original, self-contained "peasant community." But the purpose of isolation was different: Malinowski wanted to diagnose the internal functioning and stability of the existing Trobriand community, whereas Thomas and Znaniecki sought a historical baseline from which to understand the changes wrought upon Poland since the middle of the nineteenth century. Their first volume, therefore, is devoted to the erosion of the peasant community brought about by the occupying powers, by the advance of industrialization and rural impoverishment, and by the changing class structure and social mobility.[17] Thomas and Znaniecki are very aware of how decay could lead in many directions—to disorganization, reaction, and even revolution. They describe all of these tendencies as well as the possibilities for a new type of cooperative society based on "rational" norms rather than unreflective custom.

Thomas and Znaniecki observe that the same forces that led to the weakening hold of the primary group and the rise of individualism could, under the right conditions, lead to the reorganization of rural society. The rise of what we would now call a national civil society depended upon new forms of intellectual leadership, education, secondary associations, and above all the press. Thomas and Znaniecki were especially interested in the formation of civil society under what was effectively colonial rule. Long before Benedict Anderson, they well understood the importance of print capitalism for constituting the nation as an imagined community.[18] Through newspapers as well as through letters exchanged across the Atlantic, the world of the peasant ascended to a global scale.

Such *global imaginations* extended to the actual creation of utopian communities in far-off lands, such as the proposed state of Paraná in Brazil, to which thousands of Poles flooded in the 1890s. Thomas and Znaniecki describe the "super-territorial organization of Polish American society," or what today we call the "deterritorialization" of the nation state.[19] Religious, cultural, and political associations linked communities in the United States to Poland. Indeed, Polish America became the "fourth province of Poland." More generally, global imaginations fed upon the *global connections* of immigrants and those left behind. Letters exchanged between Polish emigrants and their families back home are dominated by the latter's economic needs. Women stranded with their children in Poland describe a life of destitution as they beg for remittances, while emigrants are concerned about the fate of their relatives, the burial of their parents, the employment of a brother, the marriage of a sister. It is difficult to know what proportion of emigrants wrote letters, but the evidence of continuing contact is impressive. Besides an exchange of money, there was a continual movement of people, with emigrants sponsoring friends and relatives, who would bring the latest news and gossip from the village. Today, as we shall see in Part 2, the telephone, the video, and the computer make living in two worlds easier, but there is little evidence that the dilemmas of duality are much different now than they were a century ago.

What *global forces* propelled emigration? Here Thomas and Znaniecki lack any compelling theoretical framework. They were concerned with individual responses to social circumstances, rather than with explaining the circumstances themselves. In their methodological introduction, following Thomas's earlier work, they propose four underlying "wishes" that govern human adaptation—desire for new experience, desire for recognition, desire for mastery, and desire for security. They move from the social situation inward to the individual and psychological rather than outward to the macro and economic. Nonetheless, despite their general hostility to materialist explanations, in the chapter "Emigration from Poland," Thomas and Znaniecki do argue that the difference between seasonal migration to Germany and the more dramatic emigration to America was related to levels of rural impoverishment. Seasonal migrants were often small farmers seeking supplementary income, while emigrants were more likely to come from a poorer, landless rural proletariat. They do not, however, have a corresponding analysis of the labor demand—the steel mills, the meat packers, the new manufacturers, and the garment industry—that made Chicago a magnet of immigrant labor in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth.

When they turn to the immigrants' experience in Chicago, they do describe the devastating effects of what they call "economic dependency," which are nothing other than the vagaries of wage labor under the unregulated capitalism of the early twentieth century. Thomas and Znaniecki focus not on wage labor, however, but on the shock to the immigrant accustomed to the stability of rural life; on the weakness of new institutions of social control (church, parish, mutual benefit society, shops, and press); and on the corrosive effects of the individualizing welfare agencies. Just as anthropology was silent about imperialism, so Thomas and Znaniecki were silent about capitalism. It was the unexamined backdrop to immigrant (mal)adaptation; by overlooking it they missed the very class forces that would later usher in the New Deal. As I shall have cause to repeat and as others have said before me, without an analysis either of capitalism or of the state, it is impossible to understand first the transformation of America and then of the world in the twentieth century.[20]

The Polish Peasant was, therefore, *global ethnography without a theory of globalization.* Such theories were, of course, available in the writings of Lenin, Luxemburg, Hilferding, and other socialists, but nothing could have been further from the liberal pragmatism of the early Chicago sociology. Without theory, global ethnography was bound to wither on the local vine. The possibility of taking *The Polish Peasant* in the direction of more global ethnography was firmly buried by Herbert Blumer's celebrated indictment of its methodology that appeared in 1939. Invited by the Social Science Research Council to pronounce judgment on *The Polish Peasant,* he chided the authors for not living up to their scientific pretensions.[21] Theory and data were, according to Blumer, at best loosely coupled. Thomas and Znaniecki's distinction between values and attitudes, their typification of personality, their concepts of disorganization and reorganization, were obtained independently of the human documents they were supposed to analyze. For Blumer this was a cardinal sin, rather than the defining feature of good theoretical work. The social-psychological program announced at the beginning of *The Polish Peasant,* where among other things Thomas and Znaniecki propose a situational analysis based on subjective interpretations and emergent microprocesses, became the basis of Blumer's subsequent work, but for now he was using it to pass a negative judgment on their empirical enterprise. Rather than using their rich historical data to develop a new macro theory, Blumer chose to bolster the scientific basis of Thomas and Znaniecki's social psychology. The time was not ripe, the interest was not there, and the training was absent for locating these so well documented transnational processes within their global context.

Blumer's critique of *The Polish Peasant* enunciated a conception of science as inductive, as rooted in and emergent from the data. It would become the foundation of "grounded theory," which took ethnography into ever more restricted waters.[22] Blumer became an early switchman who led Chicago sociology down the road to symbolic interactionism, to the study of negotiated orders within bounded spaces. As we shall see, there were many factors predisposing Chicagoans to forsake the bigger historical picture for *institutional ethnography,* but Herbert Blumer was a major architect and propagandist, and his critique of *The Polish Peasant* one of its founding documents.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Between Thomas and Znaniecki and the post–World War II Chicago institutional ethnographies of Howard Becker, Erving Goffman, Fred Davis, Anselm Strauss, Donald Roy, and other students of Everett Hughes is the classical period of the Chicago School under the leadership of Robert Park and, to a lesser extent, Ernest Burgess—the period of *local ethnography,* whose major studies appeared in the 1920s and 1930s.

THE INTROVERSION OF THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

After the University of Chicago dismissed William I. Thomas in 1918, Robert Park became the leading figure of the department and, with Ernest Burgess at his side, pioneered what came to be known as the Chicago School of urban sociology.[23] Where Thomas and Znaniecki had explored the national integration of the peasant community, both as a process within Poland and between rural Poland and urban America, Park and his followers confined their attention to the uncertain transition taking place on their doorsteps. Once again Durkheim, although largely unacknowledged, hovered in the background—not just his theory of anomie or disorganization but also his theory of social change.[24] According to Durkheim, urbanization brought increases in moral density, impelling competition and then differentiation on the basis of adaptation to the environment.[25] In adopting these ideas as their own, the Chicago School founded the field of human ecology—the study of the division of the city into natural areas, each performing distinctive functions for the whole.[26]

Archetypal in this regard was Burgess's famous depiction of the city as consisting of concentric zones—the central business district, surrounded by an area of transition invaded by business and light manufacture, leading into a zone inhabited by the working class.[27] Further out are the residential areas of higher classes, and at the city limits is the commuter zone of suburbia. Park and Burgess sent their students out to study these areas in detail—who lived there, where they came from, what they did, and the emerging forms of association and disorganization. The best came back with what became the classic local ethnographies of the hobo[28] and the slum of "Little Hell," at the back door of Chicago's greatest concentration of wealth along "The Gold Coast."[29] Louis Wirth studied the Jewish ghetto, tracing its two millennia of history from Eastern Europe, Spain, and Germany to America.[30] Most of Wirth's monograph details the settlement patterns in Chicago of two successive waves of immigration. Even more than in Thomas and Znaniecki, Wirth's gestures to a global ethnography were eclipsed by a concern with problems of adaptation and mobility within the city.

There were also studies of specific urban institutions. The most famous of these is Paul Cressey's study of the taxi-dance hall, where single men paid to dance with young women, hired by proprietors of the hall.[31] Cressey and his collaborators observed the "sex game" on the dance floor and interviewed both taxi dancers and patrons, showing how this novel institution was an adaptation to the anomic life of the metropolis, teeming with immigrants and displaced persons. In all these studies, beneath the chaos of urban life, its incessant movement and vibrancy, the Chicago ethnographers revealed an ordered segmentation. As Park was fond of repeating, Chicago was the ideal laboratory for the study of social processes, the discovery of universal laws of human interaction. In the end these laws were few and far between, often adding up to no more than loose generalities, such as Park's optimistic cycle of group interaction, from competition to conflict, to accommodation and finally assimilation.

Even as the early Chicago School confined itself to local ethnography, it studiously avoided the study of work and industry. Later, after the Second World War, such subjects would become a central focus of institutional ethnography. In the1920s and 1930s the study of industrial relations was dominated by the Harvard-based team led by Elton Mayo. In their exhaustive investigations of Chicago's Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company, Mayo and his team, like the Chicagoans, tried to blot out what was happening on their doorsteps—the mounting class struggle of the depression. In the case of the Chicago School, the silence seems all the more deafening in view of Park's prodigious comparative experience: beginning as a journalist, he proceeded to postgraduate studies at Harvard and in Germany and then for seven years worked closely with Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee before coming to Chicago in 1913 at the age of 49. The Chicago School, even as it practiced a sociology of "the common man," was always hostile to anything that smacked of revolution or socialism. In focusing on urban settlement from the perspective of social control, they were oblivious to the very forces that were transforming the city.

The methodological lesson, however, is what concerns me here. The search for transhistorical laws obscured real history, namely, the seismic shifts in the political and social landscape of the 1920s and 1930s.[32] As Lizabeth Cohen has documented, under the shock of the depression, ethnic associations and paternalistic employers could no longer protect their communities.[33] Chicago's working classes, therefore, switched their allegiance from neighborhood, mutual benefit society, and church to trade union, political party, and state. The popular impetus behind class associations bridged ethnic and even racial divides, reconfiguring the very meaning of particularistic identities. Park's conceptual templates of invasion and succession, cycles of group interaction, the functions of "natural" areas, and so on, drained local ethnography of its local context and so missed dramatic transformations wrought by the rise of mass culture, political machines, trade unions, and a rudimentary welfare state.

The Chicago School had remarkably little to say about class relations, but there was one notable, usually overlooked, exception, which speaks volumes for the Parkian tradition. Ernest Hiller's *The Strike* is a conceptually rich and empirically concrete study of class consciousness, class mobilization, class struggle, and class compromise. It examines strikes from the "social situation" of workers, giving credence to their imagination and rationality as well as to the structural impediments to their success. It is ethnographic inasmuch as Hiller bases his analysis on all manner of human documents from all over Europe and the United States—socialist speeches, tactical pamphlets, newspapers, autobiographies, government documents, and conciliation reports. His range of reading was extraordinary for a sociologist of his time.

Yet, paradoxically, Hiller pays little attention to Chicago's own remarkable history of labor wars. As if to underline the irrelevance of place and time, he begins his book with a "typical" strike at a South Wales colliery! Strikes in diverse sectors—coal, steel, garment, railroads, docks, agriculture—are all lumped together irrespective of historical or national context with the single purpose of discovering (or illustrating?) *the* "natural history" of *the* strike—mobilizing for concerted action, maintaining morale, controlling strikebreakers, involving the public, and finally demobilizing and reorganizing. Natural history becomes history out of context.[34] As we shall see, the substitution of natural process for historical specificity is a consistent thread running through Chicago ethnography, from Park to Janowitz.

After World War Two the Chicago department found itself in disarray, as its various factions struggled for the Parkian mantle. The Chicago sociologists were only too aware that sociology was taking very different turns elsewhere and that they were losing their prewar preeminence. They faced competition from the East Coast, from Harvard where Talcott Parsons was pioneering the deductive theorizing of structural functionalism, and from Columbia where the Merton-Lazarsfeld team pursued quantitative research and middle-range theory. In searching for their own niche, Chicago sociologists—Everett Hughes, Louis Wirth, and Herbert Blumer—battled with one another to define a subjective and situational approach to behavior and an empirically grounded notion of theory.[35] Blumer became the propagandist against Parsonsian grand theory and abstracted empiricism, while Hughes and Anselm Strauss quietly trained cohorts of graduate students in fieldwork. Wirth died in 1952, and in the same year Blumer left to create the Berkeley department, leaving Hughes, now chair, to contend with an increasingly divided department. Before he left for Brandeis in 1961, however, he had nurtured an exceptional group of graduate students, the Second Chicago School, which included such luminaries as Erving Goffman, Herbert Gans, Joseph Gusfield, Howard Becker, Fred Davis, Eliot Freidson, and Donald Roy.[36]

The classic ethnographies of this immediate postwar period shifted from the study of locality to the study of institutions, specifically to the enclosed spaces of prisons, asylums, hospitals, and factories. Their analyses focused on the creative impulse in human behavior that was already central to Thomas and Znaniecki.[37] The Chicagoans exposed the subterranean world of institutions (prisons, asylums, hospitals, concentration camps), how inmates of such institutions created an informal world of their own, and how they contended with formal organizational structures and managerial attempts to control behavior. Ironically, the Chicago studies revealed that institutions created the problems they were supposed to solve: inmates learned to behave like the insane, workers learned to restrict output. These institutional ethnographies presented a world as it appeared from below, from the standpoint of the worker, the inmate, the patient. There was little attempt, however, to study the external pressures that led managers to impose specific forms of control, how these may change over time, or how inmates might draw on outside resources to challenge institutional powers. They studied a closed and delimited world, a world taken out of history and out of its American context.

Closing ethnography off from its context had the advantage that its claims could be generalized across diverse settings. Decontextualization made Chicago theory preeminently portable and in that sense global. Thus, Goffman's remarkable insights—now commonplace—into how asylums produce rather than correct mental illness inspired and justified deinstitutionalization the world over.[38] In a parallel argument, Howard Becker pioneered new approaches to "deviance," or what Thomas and Znaniecki had called "disorganization." Taking the standpoint of the underdog, Becker argued that there was nothing intrinsically deviant about the marihuana smoker or the dance musician.[39] He showed that by labeling as outsiders those it regarded as disreputable, society exacerbated their "deviance." This was, of course, an old Durkheimian point, but it also demonstrated an oft-quoted maxim of Thomas's, that if a social situation is defined as real then it is real in its consequences. For Becker, as for institutional ethnography in general, it was sufficient to take the side of the underdogs and to show that they were being labeled deviants and punished accordingly. But he did not explore the broader context of labeling—who labels whom and why or how "deviants" contest their labeling.

In a famous clash of perspectives, Alvin Gouldner launched a holy war on what he perceived as Becker's moral complacency, his romantic fascination with the "exotic other," and subjected "labeling" theory to withering attack.[40] Becker might be critical of the immediate caretaker agencies for the way they treated delinquents, drug addicts, or alcoholics, but at the same time he was feeding the oppressive machinery of the welfare state. In documenting the lives of marginalized groups, he was providing material for their regulation. No wonder the welfare state was happy to fund such research. Becker, Gouldner averred, was therefore on his own side too, pursuing his own interests as a career sociologist, and unwilling to adopt a radical critique of the world that sponsored him. Rather than present deviants as social problems to be solved, Gouldner called for their representation as challenging the regime that regulated them. He focused on sociologists' implication in the world they analyze, on the symbiotic relation of participant and observer, deviant and sociologist, institution and ethnographer, locating them both in their wider historical and political context.[41] In so doing, Gouldner underlined the importance of power and reflexivity, so effectively obscured by the Chicago School's focus on social control. His critique of institutional ethnography laid the groundwork for more radical visions of ethnography that would be critical of the welfare state. Today his critique sounds anachronistic, since the welfare state has retreated and the global has encroached onto the national terrain. Writing in the 1960s, he did not imagine that the sociologist-ethnographer, studying urban occupations and institutions, was implicated in a world beyond the nation state. He could not imagine a global ethnography. For that we need to turn to the anthropologists.

THE EXTROVERSION OF THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL

As the postwar Chicago School turned in on itself, retreating from local ethnography to the even more confined institutional ethnography, so the workplace, the prison, the hospital ward, the classroom, became like the anthropologist's sequestered village. At the same time anthropology itself was awakening to the challenges of decolonization. Not surprisingly, therefore, it was from the periphery that new visions emerged, washing back against metropolitan shores. In Southern Africa, the rapid expansion of industry based on cheap African labor had brought whites and blacks together under the banner of communism. Here colonial anthropologists could not ignore the wider contexts of their fieldwork. Race and class conflagrations burst the mythology of the museum "native."

If *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* was the founding classic for the Chicago School, then Godfrey Wilson's *The Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia,* also published in two parts in 1941 and 1942, is the forerunner of the Manchester School of Social Anthropology.[42] Both studies set out from small-scale peasant or tribal societies in a state of natural equilibrium that is disturbed from the outside. While Thomas and Znaniecki take off in the direction of *global connections and imaginations*—the transatlantic flow of people, letters, money, and ideas—Wilson explores *global forces* that were wreaking havoc with tribal society. Wilson begins with the disequilibrium of the depression-era world economy in which capital accumulation outpaces consumption, propelling the search for raw materials and new markets. The global crisis has its local manifestation in Broken Hill, where international capital had begun to excavate zinc in 1906. Broken Hill, like the much larger center of Northern Rhodesian—today Zambian—industry known as the Copperbelt, became a racially charged and class-divided community of Indian traders, skilled whites, and cheap African labor. The tribal economy sank into distress as its young men were drawn off to the mines, where they were paid less than was needed for family subsistence, housed in single quarters, and expected to return "home" once they were no longer fit for work. Where Thomas and Znaniecki focus on the contrary forces of social disorganization and transnational civic associations in the Polish American community of Chicago, Wilson hones in on the raw class relations of Broken Hill, on the African adoption of Western consumption in clothes, drink, and food, on the breakdown of the family ties, and on the proliferation of divorce and prostitution. Rapid incorporation into a world economy multiplies tensions that reverberate into the furthest corners of this British colony. This was a far cry from the conventional village anthropology.

At the time Wilson was writing his *Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia,* Max Gluckman was penning his paradigmatic *Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand.* If Wilson's panorama broke from anthropological confinement into a global context, Gluckman's contribution was more methodological. His monograph begins with an account of a bridge-opening ceremony in 1938 in Zululand, describing the relations among different personae of South African society—African chief, Zulu king, the Chief Native Commissioner, the local magistrate, missionaries, Zulu police, and the lone anthropologist. Gluckman saw in the "ceremony" interdependence but also conflict, equilibria but also instability—tensions endemic to the everyday worlds of Zulu society, enmeshed in the rapidly industrializing multiracial South Africa. There never was any isolated tribe here! The Zulus were a proud nation that had fought valiantly and often successfully against their Afrikaner and British conquerors. World capitalism and colonial history were the warp and weft of Zulu society.

Gluckman's archetypal "extended case method" laid the foundation of the Manchester School of social anthropology. He himself moved to Northern Rhodesia in 1939 to succeed Godfrey Wilson as director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, which had been established to study the impact of "European civilization" on "native African society." Although no revolutionary by any stretch of the imagination, Gluckman's communist sympathies made him the object of suspicion in the eyes of the trustees of the Institute, and so his appointment was delayed.[43] Once in office, however, he laid out