MONTEITH ALIVE

by Pauty Verdet

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In January 1991, almost twenty years after I left Monteith, I started teaching in the Boston University Prison Education Program, at two medium security state prisons. I am still at it, will probably keep doing it until I am unable to drive. This Summer I am on loan to the R.C. chaplaincy to teach Church Latin to a handful of prisoners. For the last two years, instead of teaching courses in Sociology and seminars in what the students wanted, I have been holding weekly office hours. I am there for them. I have formed with the prisoners the same kind of relationship that we Monteith faculty members had with you our students. This is why I can write of Monteith Alive, and also why I can begin to imagine what it is going to be like for us to meet again. I am sad that Sally will not be coming: she too easily gets tired. But she has helped me with this paper; the first thing I did to prepare to write it was to choose among her transcribed lectures the one which would best evoke the kind of lectures she used to give; and I am pleased with the excerpts I made of it. Let me know if you agree.

To tell the truth, I was saddened when I found the papers written by Martin Herman, then Cliff Maier, and then, in his second offering, Yates Hafner, to be primarily an account of how Monteith had been rejected by Wayne State University for being a frivolous financial burden on it, unneeded and unloved. Perhaps, having tried so hard, but failed, to show that Monteith was needed and loved, they were now calling on its alumni to come to its 50th anniversary and prove by their presence, and by the way they were going to use those three days, that Monteith had been truly needed and loved by them, and still is.

OK. I still feel it strange and a little unfair (to them) that I, who was gone when the battle for Monteith got fought, have been left by my colleagues the choice task of trying to evoke the marvel of what Monteith was meant to be, and of what it turned out to be. Our celebration can prove that Monteith has been not only surviving but prolific in the lives of all those who were blessed to have belonged to it. I would like this paper to be an invitation to all of us, its alumni, (for the faculty were there as students too, of each other and of you our students) to tell its whole life giving story as we have lived it and are still living it.

But before I leave off the painful topic of our rejection by Wayne, I want to remember also those early Monteith entrants who were baffled by what we were expecting of them. In one of the chapters that I contributed to the 1968 report of the Monteith Study, I worked particularly hard on the cases of 1959 entrants who

transferred from Monteith to full time status at Wayne during or after their first year. Arnie Reymer had taken excellent interviews from them.

Let me quote from a very articulate woman:

> "In social science I enjoyed that a great deal and I didn't do badly in either of them (i.e. social and natural science). But I felt very insecure in that program. I think that most people did. It's OK if you don't know what you're doing, but when you feel like the instructors don't know what they want either, then that really gives you insecurity. And when we asked questions, they weren't sure of what they wanted, or at least they didn't appear to be sure. I'm sure they were sure. They definitely had objectives in mind. You know, you can't work on nothing. And I felt purely too insecure in the program as a freshman...
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> "I think now I could read those Newton essays and those other essays and really like them. In fact, I have read them since then, in that same book that we had, and I enjoy them now but at the time, as a freshman, I just couldn't grasp it all, the meaning of it: I mean the meaning of the whole program."

If such were the echoes that our Liberal Arts colleagues were getting now and then about our program from a fraction of the students whom we had in common, and from those who dropped out of Monteith, it may explain why they kept their original doubts about that experiment which stubbornly proclaimed that it was not to be an honors program.

This long quote also helps understand what Sally was intending to do in the description she gives of the "bets" made by the Science of Society division about the way we proposed to "educate" our students. I have excerpted the following few pages from her April 1, 1963 lecture. By then, more than midway in the year, there still existed a real need in the students to understand "what we were up to".

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FROM A LECTURE IN SCIENCE OF SOCIETY
BY SALLY W. CASSIDY, April 1, 1963

"**My hope today is to try and give you some notion of what we're up to**, what on earth we think we're doing spending roughly a year and two thirds examining man; how we hope to do it, why we do it in the way we do it, what we hope you will do that we can't do without you; some of our hunches and best guesses, In other words I will attempt to clue you in on what we might think of as the strategy if not the tactic of what we're about. I've now tried perhaps four times already, but I am quite sure that it will become progressively clearer.

The study of man is a particular kind of study. And by "man" I also mean the plural, people: in their variety, in their groupings, in their development, in their problems, in their relationships, favorable and unfavorable, with each other. Now this is a mammoth claim, that we hope to look at this immense problem, this immensely interesting, fascinating issue...

Now our way is made up of three pedagogical bets. The first is that at this stage of the game, and perhaps at all stages of the game, several approaches are better than any one approach. The second is that, at this stage of the game, and probably at any stage of the game, the important thing is to raise questions. The third is a tactical bet of how to do it, that is in a particular setting, that of the discussion, plus calling on a particular factor which most people ignore, our own experience. That, I think, is a fairly decent zeroing in on what we're all about.

"**Now, why several approaches? Don't we know our business?** Are we afraid to choose one? Are we incapable of weighing one against the others? Aren't some more simple than others, more adapted to the adolescent of 1963? Aren't some more fruitful for the person who is going to become a scientist, or one who simply wishes to acquire a minimum to live his life competently?...

Of course we know that some things are more important than others. But fundamentally we want you to know that for any question we can think of, that concerns man, you are greatly benefited by saying"OK, this approach has taken me so far. Could there be something to the right or to the left of it, which might help me go an inch further, which might redirect my findings in a slightly more accurate direction?" Think of it as an attempt at probing out an enormously complex problem, a problem which becomes ever more complex as you penetrate it...

So we took the major three of the behavioral sciences, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and what we do is we teach to their overlap, where the sciences meet each other, because they have a common concern: they are all interested in the origin of man, how a small child turns out to be an adult; all interested in things like conflict and concord, all interested in continuities and discontinuities in human behavior and human groupings... So, for almost any issue that will be raised for you, you will get at least three approaches, these three or some other combination.

In anthropology, for instance, we will see how little boy Johnny becomes John X; what expectations did he have to meet which were general for people in his culture, how were those expectations made live for Johnny by the way in which his family and/or his clan disciplined him, rewarded him, loved him, excluded him from some activities, incorporated him in others. He became John thanks to his native endowment, tremendously, actively responding to every other human being around him – nothing is more responsive than a human being, he is shaped by every other person's gesture, whether it be in her voice or a closed door or a kiss; any gesture of this kind is perceived in a context of demands, of values, of expectations as to behavior. And while John still remains vastly unknowable, we can at least zero in a little on the unique hum

A great social scientist, Edward Sapir, has taught us to rely heavily on the language of a poorly known tribe in order to learn how they look at their world, how it is organized, what an individual has to do in order to fit in, namely to learn the language which is proper for a person of his rank... And not only language but gestures, manners, as well. For instance you and I know that when somebody gets too close to us we get uncomfortable. In Latin America if people are not a great deal closer than it would be comfortable for us, it is considered unfriendly. The same remark could apply to the tone of voice, the bodily stance. Sapir also shows us how to get interested in groupings. And then he gives us his reflections on what it is like to be a social scientist, the ethics involved in doing that kind of work...

"**Now for our second bet: the raising of questions on every reading,** every lecture. And on your own experiences. In other words, active, alert, non-inert, daring if you wish, but always responsive reading, listening, self-scrutiny and looking at others. Asking yourself: what's out there? Why is it there? Could it be somewhere else? Could I be seeing it wrong? How might I understand it better? How do I know what's out there? If somebody else sees something different, is that insight valuable? Could it mean that I've got to elaborate my perception more? Or could I put to the test what he sees, with the kind of evidence and experience I have?

In other words, from here on you should be saying to yourself," What on earth is she after? Why has she been using language as an example of behavior? Why is social science called behavioral? And why didn't she explain it? And what does she mean by questions? All these things...What does she mean by a strategy of pedagogy? Why talk about strategy and tactic, which is warfare language, in a classroom?" You see??

You will find that if you can face yourself (very often in the beginning it may take forcing yourself), you'll find that you'll do it more and more and that it will be to your tremendous advantage to have an army of important questions that you can turn on anything, not to destroy it but to measure it, trying to put it in its proper context. Like telling yourself: "I should really listen to this carefully", or "This thing here is perhaps not worth listening to, but I've got to be aware of it", or "This thing here, right now, I don't understand it, I have to prepare myself to learn about it", or "it sounds fascinating but it doesn't have any evidence to back it up", or "This person's assumptions about human beings are so distant from my own thinking that I probably am not even going to be able to keep listening to it, but at least I can unpack it enough to know why I'll not keep listening." These questions raised day in and day out will, we hope, be built into all of our minds, so that when a new book comes up, up will pop the questions: What problem is being discussed in this book? Are there several problems? What evidence does the author bring in? Hearsay? His own experience? Somebody else's statements? Someone else's autobiography? The census bureau?

It's important to us to broaden your capacity to listen, to be critical, to think about what you read, to incorporate or not incorporate a different kind of discourse to your own.

"**What I called our third bet is that we gave you a favorite locus** in which to practice all the above: the discussion section. Because only in discussion, we're convinced of it, can we begin to think. For it is not enough to read: you can read on your own, you can go sit in the library and read all day long. It is not enough to take exams: we could write exams for every day of the week; we wouldn't want to, but we could. And what would you learn from it? That you can pass exams; so who would be advanced one inch? It is not even enough to make you sensitive to experience, though it is a great and wonderful thing, and many people have it, and many don't. But it is not enough.

OK. We want tough and sensitive thinking. We want responsible and responsive thinking. Well, we are convinced that the only way we can get at it, at least for now, is in discussion. That is to say, where you put your ideas on the line and your peers, your colleagues, your fellow students can say, "This is crazy", or "I agree with him for the following eighteen reasons." This is the way you train yourself to risk your hunches. You will be wrong, particularly in the beginning: you will be wrong in the sense of either being too complicated or too simple. But it is very important to start. I think a discussion is lost in the first five minutes of the class if there is nobody there who is willing to say what he thinks a reading may mean; what a certain paragraph seems to say. We are not going to tell you what's there, we're not going to tell you what the reading means, that's for sure. **There has to be a common discovery**. Not that we could not tell you plainly what we have thought about that reading or that paragraph; but because we do know that things will be learned by us in discussion, in this atmosphere of, on the one hand intense, on the other hand discreet speculation, of debate back and forth. It is the most valuable experience for you. Here you will learn how an idea can progress from a relatively crude first statement. Why? Because as soon as you've said something somebody will get your idea developed in front of your own face or your own mind. You will realize what it does to have an idea tested: its logic, its assumptions, and the evidence. We think that this experience is so crucial that in a sense we bet everything on it.

The other reason why the discussion is valuable is because this is one of the few ways in which we can key-in experience; and for Social Science experience, that is to say your experience, is tremendously important. Whether you learn about ethics or children or relations of children with parents or the ways in which societies are run, one of the things which are most valuable is what you saw yesterday, what you thought yesterday, what you remembered about your behavior in fourth grade. But for instance if a statement, even of Plato, doesn't jibe with your experience, one of the best things you can do for that class, for that discussion meeting, is to say, "Well. Gee, I don't think that it works that way because just this morning I noticed an event which contradicted it..." Or considering the rapport of reciprocity and morality, you may be acquainted with a person who is tremendously moral and tremendously egotistic: she never breaks a law, always does what she's told, and yet is an egotist. This is very valuable because it allows us to explore morality at a different level, a different depth, with more complexity and, hopefully, distinctions.

In a discussion you have a hope of learning how to bring in your own evidence carefully, accurately, discreetly, to hear it discussed objectively, to in a sense see that human beings can be carefully thought about, not just crudely, not just catalogued. We hope that through discussion you will get to that beginning play of ideas and life, which can enliven your whole existence.

"**So that is roughly what we are about:** a science of human beings, a science played in a plurality of approaches, which is primarily concerned with equipping you with very important questions which you will raise better and better in a tougher and tougher way; a science which is developed in the context of public discussion and which is very close to the empirical, that is to say the out-there, the everyday world. And this we think you will never have to undo whether you go on in social science or not."

[End of excerpts from Cassidy lecture.]

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This was Sally's style in many of her lectures, to which she felt the students would be responding either right there, in their mind, or later in her discussion section. What many of us did not know was that Sally had gotten her job, originally, from how much one of her students at the College of the University of Chicago enjoyed the way she did run her discussion sections: she was Lenore Coral, Max's daughter. The rest of the University of Chicago was far from unanimously sold on the general education carried on in the College. But its students were, and Lenore who wanted her father's dream to succeed convinced him to come and see whether Cassidy was the colleague whom he and Woody still needed, to chair the Division of Science of Society. Sally was much surprised when she discovered why Max prolonged their conversation after her class. She might have mentioned to him the experiment in teaching an evening class in Sociological Method which she had written up in a 1958 article for the Journal of General Education. It featured the discussion of various aspects to be envisaged in the topic she had proposed: a comparative study of the experience in Chicago of Southern migrants, Black and white. In it she detailed the mutual help that students were brought to give each other as they made more precise the question each one of them wanted to investigate.

Sally was hired after a visit to Wayne where she was vetted by people who cared about the College which was scheduled to begin a few months later. She was given entire freedom to hire the members of her team, almost all of whom had done their doctoral work at the University of Chicago. They were Dick Pope, a cultural anthropologist and instructor in the College; his friend the economist Gundar Frank; Ken Feigenbaum, a psychologist of Human Development; her friend George Drury, a philosopher; Martin Orans, a social organization anthropologist; and I, a sociologist and instructor in the College. Bud Wright arrived from the Sociology department of the University of California at Berkeley for the beginning of the Fall. George Rawick, a

political historian, Leon Sirota, a psychologist, and Bob Thomas, an anthropologist, were added late, but early enough to be counted among the early members of the team.

There was an enormous amount of work to do, during the two Summer months. For we were not planning a set of courses for the first semester, but the whole unrolling of a main idea over the five semesters of our social science sequence. I think each of those present made a list of the readings that he/she found most likely to invite unevenly prepared students to think, i.e. formulate, examine, and discuss ideas about the content of each reading. It introduced us to each other's pedagogical style. We also agreed that we would start with the model of Socrates and his Socratic method. I seem to remember the joy of the 1959 entrants at recognizing each other on campus by their carrying a slim paperback, The Last Days of Socrates. Then would come a "Problem" to be looked at from our different perspectives. We selected the brain-washing inflicted by North Koreans on their American prisoners: how could it have been planned and have succeeded? It was fun to find articles that, while addressing other topics, managed to shed a lot of light on the brainwashing phenomenon (could we use that strange Greek word?) Sally remembers that George Drury found the picture for the cover of that first book of ours; he may well have also invented its title, "Men Without" and contributed several of the readings.

But what about the course itself? As it was impossible to achieve a consensus among all of us within the limited time we had, Sally, Gundar and George got the job of coming back after two or three days with an outline of the whole thing. Sally says that she and Gundar happened to agree on the crucial importance of the concept of Relation. George must have been pleased with that choice. From it emerged in succession a whole system of other concepts, arranged in space as a construct of double lozenges. For years this series of concepts, parallel in an ascending movement, appeared on the cover of our books, and the lozenges on the verso of the front cover. I won't give the rationale for the arrangement of the concepts in a double lozenge figure. I will only give their sequence: Relation came first, and then Small group, Socialization, Differentiation, Pattern, Complex organization, Social movement, Institution, and finally Civilization.

These concepts were to be useful to instructors in mentoring students on how to raise questions about reading after reading, all full of empirical details. For instance, as we read from Street Corner Society, one would ask: how did the leader relate differently to different members of his gang? How does it explain their performance when they went bowling together? etc. It was only in using the concept repeatedly to discover something new in the reading that the student slowly would acquire its meaning. Hence the complaint of the insecure entrant of 59 that instructors appeared unable to give a simple answer to a question about a word they repeatedly used. It was chosen as a means to get students to think; it had to be used first, and only later was its importance to be understood.

When classes started in September we were ready, I believe, for the whole first semester. We had come to agree that during the second semester our freshmen would

be expected to each do a piece of empirical research of their choice, which would give them a chance to use the concepts they had already studied as they now would have to analyze the data they had collected themselves. Meanwhile the study of more concepts would be pursued. (Social Movement, Institution, and Civilization were left for our third semester).

Our colleagues of Natural Science must have been equally busy, and that got the two divisions to start without getting a chance to figure out how to help the students understand to which extent our organizational principles resembled each other, and how they differed. Thus I am afraid that it was left for the students to figure out why the Soc Sci and the Nat Sci course could use the same word, relation, to refer to different kinds of things. My own serious contact with the sequence of courses in Natural Science had to wait for the day when Carleton Maley, several years later, gave me a copy of Thomas Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolution. I was delighted by that book: among other things it was an excellent piece of sociological research on the social world of natural scientists. And its criticism of the image given of the making of scientific knowledge by the usual introductory textbooks was much more penetrating than my own criticism of textbooks in social science, which I only could accuse of spoon feeding students with facts and theories filling unrelated chapters. I had however an additional insight into the "bets" of the Nat Sci division when I took the first semester of their course in a year when they were studying the development of astronomy. It was there, in my discussion group, that I discovered that in order to be able to even ask a question (in order to find the words to do it) one needed to have a beginning of understanding of the kind of goal the course pursued. This had been the problem of a good number of the 1959 entrants...

There was a serious flaw in the planning of Monteith as recorded in the grey document: it assumed that freshmen would need and demand much more attention from the instructors than sophomores, and that juniors would need and demand still less, having been trained to read, think, and write progressively better on their own; so that the seniors could practically be independent agents on a campus where other than Monteith faculty would be available to them. In fact, students became more and more capable each year to extract more attention from us with questions they had and with their work in progress. Humanities discussion sections were to enroll 20 sophomores and 25 juniors. Their staff was accordingly smaller than those of the other divisions. As far as I know, they did not appear until three semesters after we got started. Three years later, in May 1964, there was a "crisis" about which I have found 2 pages of my own reflections which I will quote freely:

"We have established relationships of colleagueship with the students: partly by inviting them to do the research project, partly by discussing with them the pros and cons of exams, lectures, reading, written work; listening to their views; readily recognizing mistakes, while maintaining our overall direction. We didn't do that in Chicago. Why here? This is an "experimental college." What does it mean to the students? It is clear that they feel both as guinea pigs and as co-builders of the college. If they were only guinea pigs we might be seen as mere observers and manipulators: a

role which is often enough ascribed to us, social scientists, and which we would have considered unethical.

"Thus a Monteith brand of "Personalism" developed very early, which consisted in our expecting much from each student; giving each one of them access to information and explanations of any given policy; expecting inventiveness from all of them, i.e. a willingness to contribute to the shaping of the college; and making it easy for students to publish their ideas as well as letting them pretty much run the Monteith yearly open house.

"Without quite meaning to, we have been laying the foundation for a new definition of the role of the student in the University: not modeled on the doctor-patient relationship but on that of master-apprentice in a pretty liberal version of a guild. At the end of our sequence they often tell us: "Now, I should start all over again, and how much more I would profit from it." Why wouldn't they engage their new teachers right away with ideas about how their course could or should proceed in order to be a success? Why haven't we invited the Humanities staff to participate in the teaching of our last quarter (on Civilization!) in order to get acquainted with the students? Didn't we know that many of them were expecting much from that new sequence, interested as they were in self-discovery and self-expression?" – Yes, but we knew little about the Humanities staff and their plans.

One of the things which explain why we did not get much of a chance to learn from members of the other divisions is the fact that we were spending so much time learning from each other in our own. We had taken for granted that we would all share in giving the lectures. A lecture was an important statement for each one of us: in it we spoke the language of our discipline, and it had to be instructive and challenging to our colleagues as well as intelligible to our students. We attended them all and took them into account as we prepared each our own. In my twelve years I never heard a lecture repeated by a colleague except once, toward the end, by a new colleague. We were learning too much not to have new things to say. Monteith thus became a marvelous college for advanced intellectual development along lines which happily contrasted with the trend toward specialization which was engulfing the study of human behavior and human nature.

I would like to linger a bit on the importance of the weekly staff meetings which were devoted almost entirely to lively exchanges between the most knowledgeable of us in the subject matter studied at that time and those of us who were more new to it. Sally was great at asking basic questions about a given concept or author, which one or more of us might not have raised out of sheer ignorance. She was taking the risk of being judged surprisingly ignorant for a division head, when she actually was well acquainted with all our fields. Fortunately, at Monteith we knew each other rather well. (It was to be quite different when we got to B.U.)

Perhaps the spectacle of the cross-fertilization of the minds of their instructors helped students look for opportunities to experience a similar enrichment not only in

their discussion sections but outside as well. I don't remember anything in the grey document planting the seed for the early development of the theme of "Cooperative Self-Education", and its incorporation in the Monteith program as testified by the 22 page Report on the First Year which was issued in November 1964, and a two page Current Guidelines (formulated June 1967, revised February 1971)

Students who had tasted of the hardships and joys of doing their own empirical research in their freshman year could envisage pursuing that work further and taking on the responsibility to invite and guide fellow students in, jointly, moving still further in the making of new knowledge. Was not this initiative, taken by students themselves, an early sign that the Monteith experiment was succeeding? That the time and effort invested in the freshman year were bearing fruit? That the trust placed in students, that they could and would learn to think on their own, had indeed brought a good number of them to take to themselves the goals and ideals of scholarship?

Cooperative Self-Education was the most striking of the features which were added to Monteith on the initiative of students. The senior colloquium got redefined and organized to best fulfill its function. Students also asked professors to offer seminars on topics which they felt the need to think about.

All of this brought some of us to think of a way to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Monteith. Why not invite to act as junior faculty a few of our most promising recent graduates? And so it was: Sheila Collins, Ken Kudek and Deborah Zimmerman Johnson were selected for Social Science, and Diane Voss in Natural Science (I was her student in the Fall of 1969). I collected quite a bit of data on that experiment: papers written by their discussion section students; interviews that I took from several of these students. Unfortunately I never found time to write up my evaluation of those data (I would gladly pass them on to someone interested in using them).

I had a hunch that the future of Monteith should be entrusted as rapidly as possible to a team of alumni whose task it would be to take the Monteith program to its logical next stage of transformation. Just as the 1959 entrants had co-created the real Monteith in response to and cooperation with the three teams of instructors, who better than newly minted PhD's among our graduates would be in a position to welcome the challenge of planning and running Monteith II. My idea did not seem popular among the rest of the faculty, as far as I could see, even though in that dream senior faculty would play an important role in support of the leadership of their juniors. I was probably too much inspired by a social movement kind of logic, which would feel too subversive of the institutional order of things

Anyway, another vision of Monteith's future had emerged in the Science of Society team, based on the mutual enrichment that we had experienced (remember the sense of enlightenment one felt when listening to Bob Thomas' detailed tales about American Indians; and how valuable it was to find Otto Feinstein deeply concerned about "two worlds of change"). The whole course as we had conceived it in the Summer of 1959 had been modified, its pedagogy improved. Still it remained hard for entering freshmen

to see how using our basic concepts to produce ideas about a great variety of readings satisfied their desire to acquire knowledge. Part of the staff was sure that they could offer students something more tangible, more cohesive: a theory of the transformation of the human experience from the tribal to the urban and even a global life style. This theory could rely on insights gathered from history, anthropology, psychology, sociology, economics and political science, The concepts could continue to be used, but within the framework of the construction of the Monteith theory of social change.

It was a very different "bet" than the ones announced in Sally's lecture of 1963. And during two years, three versions of the course in Science of Society coexisted. Students could move from one to the other without getting lost, I think, as some basic readings were used in all versions. Could it have been possible to integrate these versions? Probably, under the leadership of the new dean, Yates Hafner. A new start in our Division could have been announced by him and worked on under his sponsorship.. But some of us were already committed to B.U. when his appointment was officially announced.

In the Spring of 1971, I had met John Silber at a committee meeting held at the Danforth Foundation for the promotion of personalism in higher education. He had just accepted to become president of Boston University, and he told me how he planned to hire professors truly committed to teaching. So I told him, much to his surprise, that I was available, and that I would bring with me two colleagues equally dedicated to general education: Sally Cassidy and Leon Sirota. George Drury was on an extended sick leave at the time, and Ivan Kovacs had already felt the need to leave our staff at the end of the previous year.

Besides Silber's commitment to quality teaching, two features of the Boston University setting were attractive during our first visit. Each year in the Sociology Department a few competent and imaginative majors were selected to become teaching assistants in the large introductory course during their senior year, each being responsible for a discussion section. The three we met resembled our Monteith students. And since I had offered to be the senior faculty in charge of that course, I anticipated with pleasure having a chance to work with them. B.U. also had a Division of General Education (D.G.E.) in which I offered to take half of my appointment. They had three interdisciplinary staffs, just as we did, but all three focused simultaneously on the same overall topic or period; like Classical Greece: its social organization and culture, its science, its arts and literature. It was there that I prepared the one lecture in my whole career in which I gave students a rational account, as a scholar, of my Catholic faith. It was planned in the context of our staff undertaking a comparison of the orientation and flowering of two very different peoples: the Greeks and the Hebrews. Unfortunately D.G.E. was terminated a few years later. Sally had preferred to get her whole appointment in the Department of Sociology: her main professor at the University of Chicago had advised her to "stop being a missionary..."

My guiding principle had always been: in a new situation keep doing what has been of special value in my work up to then, under whichever form it is now doable. Thus I attempted to turn the huge Introductory Sociology course into an apprenticeship for freshmen to college level work. First I created a separate Intro course for juniors and seniors, which consisted in tutorial work with a professor to whom they would first explain their professional interests; on this basis a reading list in sociology and related disciplines would be agreed upon, and a semester long participant observation planned. Each one of them would meet with the professor every other week after turning in the log in which they had entered their reflections on the readings and their regular field notes. Sally was delighted to take responsibility for this innovation.

Second, in the regular Intro course I augmented the responsibility of the Teaching Fellows. Up to then the initiative for the content of the course was left to the professor who lectured twice a week and decided on topics for written assignments, exams, as well as on how grades would be computed. I reasoned that teaching fellows chosen among the best graduate students, were human beings who had recently chosen sociology as their life work, hence should be able to find ways of getting students genuinely interested in learning various ways of giving a second look to their world. The professor now would lecture only once a week, and the discussion sections meet for two hours. Readings would be chosen by each T.F. I encouraged them to consult with each other and the lecturer. I was hoping to get them to find and develop their own pedagogical style instead of experiencing teaching as quasi-enslavement to a prof, endured for the sake of a meager remuneration. I was happy to see them form into a lively team.

I also volunteered to teach Sociological Theory (required of the majors as also was Sociological Method) even though my own joy as a sociologist was in doing field work. I presented the fathers of our discipline as having given us many insights among which we had to choose just as a cook selects the most appropriate pot among all the utensils he/she has in order to fix a certain dish. Among our Monteith readings I selected relatively short excerpts which I had found particularly illuminating: especially from Cooley, Simmel, Weber, Marx, Durkheim. I printed their text on the upper half of a page, and filled the lower half with footnotes which invited the students to engage in a discussion with the author, based either on their experience or on what they had found most meaningful in other authors. I did not refrain from boldly challenging the great, especially those who seemed to expect unquestioning agreement from the reader. I hope you recognize that I was on the same wave length as Sally in her 1963 lecture.

After several years of this I came to think that we did not do enough to give our majors a true taste of the art of doing sociology when we taught them separately some great insights and some realistic ways of collecting and analyzing data. I looked for a way to work with a colleague who was teaching the Method course. Sally was one of them, so I attended her classes and tried to incorporate her perspective to my own approach. Then I did it with a younger colleague. I was collecting questions I wanted to raise about how my theorists had done their sociological research, as well as about the theoretical assumptions made by current researchers. Finally I teamed up with a

colleague who was interested enough in my search to attend my Theory classes just as I attended his Method classes. With him I at last experienced the wonderful collaboration I had so enjoyed at Monteith.

At Monteith, however, I had focused entirely on what was happening in the college. My only field work outside had been at the time of the presidential election of 1960, when the whole second entering class had been met in the Fall with the task of interviewing a whole sample of voters. During our first year at B.U. (1971-72) the campus exploded in student protests against the military recruitment that was taking place. Sally and I got involved in standing between students and the police. I wrote a report for the faculty. Other protests arose the following years in the city when a federal judge imposed court ordered integration in all the public schools of the city. In the Fall of 1973, in order to placate the population I suppose, schools held an open house for a whole week-end. Sally and I discovered a lively group of Haitians in a black high school not too far from our home; at their request I volunteered to spend my Fridays attending their math classes and interpreting in French what the teachers were saying. It was a great opportunity to penetrate the school setting which usually (at least in the Chicago Public Schools) had not welcomed sociologists at all. It lasted two years.

But in the Spring of 1975 a new occasion of practicing sociology opened up. Sally and I volunteered to sponsor a Vietnamese refugee; it was a pregnant woman whose fiancé had refused to desert his post as officer in the South Vietnamese army and whose parents refused to leave her behind, hence obliged her to come with them. When her baby was born her family got her to rejoin them in Florida. But by then a new wave of refugees was in need of sponsors. Our Vietnamese had spoken perfect French; the Hmong did not even have a written language. They were Hmong from the mountains of South East Asia, a fearless, independent people who had cooperated closely with the French and then the CIA in a secret air war in Laos against the common enemy, the North Vietnamese communist regime. Their extermination had recently started in the mountains, as a communist regime had taken over in their country and they were escaping to Thailand. The head of the family of four who had been sponsored by our parish showed me a long list of relatives who were expecting to be able to rejoin them. Well schooled in the importance of the extended family among tribal peoples, I promised to sponsor them all, one small family at a time (but a “small family” of Hmong could be raising eight children).

I had my work cut out for me. Only with a young woman who had worked as a nurse in an American field hospital could I exchange a few words. She and the rest of her generation would have to learn English as fast as possible. The federal government was extending to the Hmong, in recognition for their heroic help in the war, a generous program of financial assistance which included food stamps and Medicaid.

But they had to apply for it in offices, filling applications, using a single sheet of paper where the hand written names and approximate dates of birth of all the members of a family was all they had to prove that they existed and had been legally admitted to the U.S.A. And they needed advocates who could tell something of their stories and

problems when they went to hospitals, schools, courts. And they needed housing desperately as they arrived, a family at a time.

The second half of 1976 was spent finding out which agencies could help and how to locate them. 1977 was full of arrivals, whom I piled up in two houses as families preferred to occupy just one bedroom each. As a sociologist I knew that I had become a slum landlord. How I managed to keep fulfilling my teaching responsibilities for ten years while being involved in multiple emergencies, I cannot figure out. I remember very well, however, spicing my teaching with innumerable contrasts between our ways and "my refugees" ways. Did I reveal to my students that a hypothesis was growing in me that the USA was built on the shards of the broken hearts of immigrants and refugees? One bright adolescent had told me that he could not have a serious conversation with his mother as she did not know enough English and he did not know enough Hmong. Fortunately, in the Fall of 1979 I had asked to be able to spend the following Spring on a sabbatical when I could devote all my time to the establishment of the Hmong.

There was an important lesson I had learned. Up to then I had dutifully propounded Weber's theory about the rationality of bureaucracy, which he said had extracted what we now call social services from the domain of close family or clan connections and reciprocal obligations. The domain of bureaucracy is ruled by the division of labor between specialized offices to which one must apply, and then wait a number of weeks hoping to be found eligible, based on objective criteria used by the office worker and verified by a supervisor. It takes being an applicant or his advocate to realize that almost every concrete situation of a family does not fit exactly within the boundaries established by the criteria. Often one has to find another office with a slightly different set of criteria to be found eligible. But it is extremely rare to be guided in such a transfer. As a worker told me once, "We are not in the business of recruiting clients." Thus what appears rational seen from above turns into a maddening maze when approached from below. My students benefited from this repeated experience of mine, just as I had benefited from Lipsky's *Street Level Bureaucracy*.

But the most Monteith-like gift I made to B.U. students was my creation, in the Spring of 1976, of what I called course SO 233, Sociological Reflections on Work Experience. This is how I envisioned it at the time:

Why would someone design a sociology course especially for students who had a job? Did they have special needs, or special handicaps?

No, in my eyes what they had instead were special opportunities which it was wrong not to exploit. I saw sociology primarily as an eye-opener, a mind opener too. I saw it as a discipline, in the original sense of the word: a series of systematic efforts which transformed the person who undertook them and developed in him/her capacities which would otherwise have lain dormant.

My own best sociological training had been in the field. Once, having to go for months on end to a dental clinic, I studied from my patient's chair the role dilemmas of

the student about to become a professional. Another time, as a welder I observed and wrote about the relationships among women workers, and rediscovered the meaning of the concept of consensus.

But it is usually hard for students to take the very first step and gain access to the field. A JOB, however, provides first hand exposure to an endless series of events and situations which begged to be observed, understood, and analyzed. All that the working student needed was to be assigned the task as part of his academic duties, and to be helped in doing it well.

I was confident that I could take students who had no previous exposure to sociology and that, in one semester of "sociological reflection on work experience," I could turn them into practicing sociologists, or at least give them a good taste of what the art of sociology consisted of. Hence the course was billed as a kind of advanced introductory course. The only requisites were that a student held a job during that particular semester, and that he/she be willing to spend a good deal of time reporting and thinking about it.

I spoke about the course to the head of the placement office at B.U. She was interested, and promised to display an announcement on her bulletin board.

How was the course to be organized? Here are the few principles around which I structured it:

First, time spent in the classroom was kept at a minimum. I decided upon the 8:30 to 10 am period on Wednesday, in order not to interfere with afternoon employment (A few students came straight from their night shift).

Second, students were given a good elementary grounding in the variety of sociological perspectives. I picked the headings of chapters in Broom and Selznick (a textbook I respected) and gave myself the job of covering one of those topics each week in class.

But I wanted the students to come to that class with the material out of which the concepts and theories would be extracted and constructed. Thus, for each week, I put in my syllabus a series of questions which their field notes would endeavor to answer. For instance, on the day I was to lecture on Social Organization, they turned in observations and reflections elicited by the following questions:

- who makes which decisions at your place of work?
- who is your boss? Who is his/her boss? etc.
- are you anybody's boss? do you have any power? of what kind?
  (think twice about this one)
- what annoys you? Why? (3 to 4 pages)
- compare your role as worker to your role as student, in as great a depth, from as many different angles as you can imagine. (2 to 3 pages)

Third, students needed to have some models of sociological analysis. For each week I assigned one or two readings which appeared to me to be interesting, informative, and whose findings could readily be compared with a wide variety of work situations. In style they ranged from commented excerpts from the great theorists – Marx, Weber, Durkhein – to the insightful analyses of Hughes and William Foote Whyte, to sociological case studies of the railroader or the forest ranger, to the literary masterpiece of a Solzhenitsyn. The students were asked to turn in a page or two of comments on the readings for the week, together with their field notes.

Fourth, what I relied upon most, as always in my teaching, was the work I would do outside the classroom, slowly reading their notes, filling their margins with comments, questions, suggestions for further observations, references to some reading which should be compared with their own hunches, etc., etc.

What happened? My plan demanded an enormous amount of work on the part of both students and instructor. I am proud to say that we did it, and did it well. Only once did I cancel the assignments for the following week because I had fallen behind in my reading of their field notes. On the whole, I believe that I have never taught so much in so short a time. And almost all of them did superbly. I have never had better attendance, more punctuality in turning in assignments, or a more thorough response to the letter and the spirit of the course syllabus. The whole class was there, for instance, on the eve of Thanksgiving, which is usually considered the unofficial beginning of vacation. Students reproached me, at times, for making them spend their whole Sunday writing up their notes and doing the reading. But they did it, with remarkable good humor. And their evaluations, at the end of the course, confirmed my feeling that my dream of turning the drudgery of work into a first class intellectual and personal experience had been realized.

They had come to see their work setting as fascinating, rather than boring. Some of them could hardly keep up with all the questions that were arising in their mind as to how to interpret and explain certain cleavages, certain conflicts, differences in attitudes between different groups of people. They could not keep up with new ideas on how to go about observing and analyzing. Their notes kept increasing in volume, and their final papers showed them well on their way to becoming practicing sociologists, Others managed to find new angles from which to look at some rather limited settings – the TV repair shop with a total manpower of four, including the student – or, even worse, the photo-mate alone in her booth, relating to a rapid succession of clients driving to her window (she found that she had much in common with the forest ranger...)

What the students appreciated was the self-discovery that their thorough attention to their work place brought about for them. They saw themselves as a functioning part of that social system, and demonstrating skills and traits that they did not realize they had. What they deplored was that they knew so little about each other's observations. Some of it came up during my lectures: I myself quoted from various field reports; and many of them brought up in class some relevant experience they had had. But this was very partial. As is so often in the case in teaching I was doing most of the

learning because I had access to all the field notes, and also because I was committed to commenting on all of them.

From 1977 on, SO 233 students typed their notes on ditto stencil (single space). I cut the quantity of assigned readings in half. But after writing my comments on all the stencils that they had turned in, I ran enough copies to have each student read the whole work of about eight other members of the class (they formed a team for the whole semester). I asked them, in the set they were to turn in the following week, to comment (on a separate stencil) on the work of two of their fellow students, whichever one had inspired them. Thus they accumulated observations and reflections on both readings and field notes throughout the semester and had a great deal of material, from others as well as their own, to use in their final papers. That was a true triumph, a la Monteith.

But when I retired in 1987 I tried to keep teaching this course in the evening to students who generally had full time jobs. Much to my regret it did not get enough takers: full time workers did not want to reflect on their job... Meanwhile most of the refugees were moving to other Massachusetts towns, less expensive than Boston. I had to find another place in which to keep the Monteith spirit alive. In October 1990 I was invited by the founder of the Prison Education Program to attend one of her graduate seminars at a Medium security State prison. I was impressed by the way in which these men carried on an intelligent conversation with that bright woman who must have been close to her eighties. They listened carefully to each other, for three hours in a row. I had been struck when we entered the prison that she, whom I had seen busy during the student rebellion of the 70's giving support to the protesters, had meekly taken off her shoes and complied with all the guards' commands. Once my surprise had subsided I realized how important it was for her to have access to these prisoners.

I was poorly informed about the prison system. When I started teaching a graduate seminar myself in January 1991 I quickly realized that our program was gathering human beings in search not only of knowledge about the world but of the truth about themselves. Their readiness to share their ideas in class, to speak about their past and present experience, made it possible for us, their teachers, to get to know them as individuals and to relate to them accordingly. With us they felt relieved of being defined by the "nature of their crime" which stuck to them in nearly all of their interactions inside the walls, whether with personnel or fellow inmates. We were able to understand that their crime, whether we had been told of it in some detail or not, was an important factor which urged them on toward achieving their thorough transformation, their becoming new men[1]. I was especially struck with the urgency that remorse gave to those who had committed a "violent crime": they wanted to be of service to society and try to make up a little for the harm they had done.

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[1] All my references are to men because I have worked only in two men's Medium Security State prisons. Our B.U. program exists in two women's prisons.

Unfortunately, in recent years, society in its fear of crime, the media in their exploitation of awful crimes, the politicians in their avoidance of the charge of being soft on criminals, the families of the victims, and the people in power from top to bottom at the Department of Correction, all have come to agree that, while “non-violent criminals” might be retrievable, the violent ones have placed themselves outside the human race. It is not hard to figure out why those prisoners value our presence and our trust in the truth of their efforts to find their way to behaving as good human beings.

In our friendships with our Monteith students, we were not unconcerned with how they would be using their developed intelligence and know-how for. We had made them read how Piaget found out about the child’s becoming capable of a fully moral act; and how both Marx and Weber had criticized the results of Capitalism as it had developed in their days and promised to evolve in pursuit of profit. We had reflected together on authority and freedom. But as far as I know we had not concerned ourselves with the brewing sex revolution, or the probable impact of the civil rights revolution on society at large and our individual lives. In the prison one finds oneself obliged to give a great deal of thought to the concept of Freedom, knowing how much it is taken for granted and thoughtlessly enjoyed “on the street” as prisoners usually refer to the outside world.

To tell the truth, what I want to do in conclusion is to convince as many of you as I can, whether you are already retired or still fully at work in your professional life, to get involved in one way or another in the world of criminal justice. There is a tremendous amount of humane work to be done.

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I am including two appendices. One is a paper written by a prisoner with learning disabilities which contributed to getting him into prison at a young age (lots of children with learning disabilities must end in prison, to see the number we get in our college program!). Doug is one of our best students. He has helped me a great deal by writing papers which enabled me to put myself in a prisoner’s place. For instance, pointing out that for most prisoners each day goes by very slowly; yet when he looks over what he has accomplished during ten or twenty years, it feels like nothing happened. His paper was written as a testimonial of what prison education did for him. Don’t be surprised by his quoting the multiple sources of his becoming enlightened. He is making an inventory of all that he benefited from. He has given me permission to use his text whenever I feel that it could do some good. Enjoy it, though he couldn’t have made it as an entrant to Wayne, hence to Monteith, in 1959...

A second appendix bears witness to my continuing to be attentive to what had happened in Detroit, thanks to the remarkable book, *9226 Kercheval*, written by visiting nurse Nancy Milio about her work on the near East side. (Hugh Whipple, our Natural Science colleague had been among her friends). I kept assigning her book to all my students, whatever the topic of the course I was teaching, because it was such a model of loving service.

Indeed, let me say to you, to whom I have taught Freud's theory of the libido, that I have come to be deeply convinced that our remarkable ability to love is much better interpreted as God's gift to humankind to participate in the love He is, and has for us. I wish I had been more fully aware of it even as I lived it, for I believe that it has been the source of my strength ever since I chose at age 14 to stop competing with my peers and discovered the joy of helping them in their need. What I can do today, in addition to my service in prison, by rendering multiple little services to Sally who has lost part of her vision, her hearing, her mobility, and her ability to paint and to write, but not her faith nor her ability to read, to think, to speak and to care, is a constant blessing.