Conversing in time with overlooked, historical female proto-management theorists: A ficto-feminist polemic

by
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A thesis submitted to
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration (Management)

April 2020, Halifax, Canada

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Dedication

For all the rebels, rulebreakers and changemakers.

Acknowledgement Statement

I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship," which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources, but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

We are all treaty people.

Personal Acknowledgements

There are so many people which make the process of earning a PhD possible. It is not a solitary task. These collaborators consist of family, friends, peers, mentors and for me, various figures from the past and present who have inspired me along the way.

I have had the privilege of working with some very dynamic and talented women over my professional career and at many points you have inspired me with your tenacity, grace, and leadership. It is in this spirit that I raise the voices of other women, from history, with whom I think we can relate to and for whom history has not taken appropriate account.

Such is the work of the non-profit sector where for the last 12 years of a 24-year career I have enjoyed the many trials and tribulations of community activism and the challenges of providing ongoing security and support for those who are vulnerable and in need of a social safety net. It is here that I first drew my inspiration for research as I was incensed by the lack of so-called legitimate power that we as predominantly female leaders wielded in our communities. As time passed, I realized quite profoundly that the power we wield is perhaps more remarkable. It is that of persuasion, compassion, resistance and incredible social change. I devote this thesis to our sector and to the women who work so hard for our communities. You are brilliant, unsung heroes, but I see you. I know you. I am proudly one of you.

To my amazing intellectual mentors, including (but not limited to) the writings of Jo Brewis, Joan Scott, bell hooks, Ann Cunliffe, Chris Weedon, Anna Gibbs, Sonya Rose, Tillie Olsen, Judith Butler, Jane Addams, Nancy Harding, Allison Pullen, Carol Hanisch, Linda Smircich and Marta Calás. I hope that I have contributed in some small way to the grand work you have undertaken. One of the first things we learn in writing scholarship is to assess where we enter the ongoing conversation. What small part can we play? Simply put, I want to play with you. I want to join your conversations. I hope that I have earned a humble space in the sandbox of our collective creativity.

To Margaret Atwood and Charlotte Gray: thank you for the inspiration and for helping me figure out that I could write differently and bring these women to life in the here and now.

To my colleagues at JA Nova Scotia: thank you for supporting me through this journey with both time and encouragement. I could not have asked for a more supportive staff and board team.

To the PhD-8: our virtual support community and our friendship has sustained me more than you know. Thank you.

To my dearest of friends, Shakara Joseph, Liela Jamjoom, Tianyuan Yu and Nina Winham: you have always been there for me and our relationship transcends this journey. I cannot express how much I appreciate the nature of our friendship; one in which we have created remarkable trust, feel free to share, talk about the tough stuff and engage in stimulating, brilliant conversations.

To my committee members Jean Helms Mills and Gabie Durepos: you are both such accomplished and inspiring women and I feel so honoured to have you both involved in this journey with me. Throughout, you have offered attentive and generous support to me and my writing. You have helped to create a perfect bubble of sustained motivation and creativity. And your support has always been so gentle and considerate.

To my incredible supervisor, Albert J. Mills: you have been so kind and supportive through this entire process. You let me find my own way and never pushed for an alternative agenda. I always felt safe in my musings and discoveries. You genuinely delight in my journey (and continue to do so). You are ever my champion, offering joy-filled and thoughtful ideas. You opened many doors, but you let me walk through them. You introduced me to Frances and Hallie, for whom I have incredible respect and admiration. I believe that you saw something of them in me and you saw me as somewhat qualified to share their stories. As I reflect on this, I am so honoured by it. When we got Frances published, it felt like we had significantly changed the conversation. Followed closely by Hallie, you helped me define my niche in scholarship.

To my mother in law, who treats me like her very own daughter, so full of compassion and love, thank you for your love and support. To my dear father in law, who is always up for a debate or discussion and never ducked from the challenge of reading some of my chewier work, thank you. And to the broader VanVeldhuisen clan: you have been such an inspiration! You are such an intellectually accomplished group! I appreciate our connection despite the fact we are located all over North America.

To my sister: you have always been my number one cheerleader and never doubted my abilities even when I was not so sure. There was no question for you that I would do this! For that I am and will always be grateful. Your confidence has given me strength. In your mind, there was no doubt; there would be another Dr. Williams.

To my parents, who are not here to see this but for whom I still wish to honour with this thoughtful work: you both instilled in me from a very young age that I could do anything. I never doubted in my capacity. You raised two strong and feisty feminists who were never afraid to speak our truth or offer an educated opinion. You promoted a strong education as fundamental and I always knew that my path would one day include a PhD. I wanted to be a Dr. Williams just like my dad. I am sad that you will not get to read this thesis. I do think it would make you both proud.

To my two sons, Michael and Graham: you have known your mother as an ongoing student and a lover of learning. You never complained about my copious hours of writing and reading and though at this tender age, you might not completely understand what I have written, you always understood my intent. The women in my study have become living and breathing people in our home and I feel I have accomplished something marvelous in that. You also understand that learning is a life-long endeavour and for that I am grateful because learning is a great gift in this life and one not to shortchange yourself of. I am also proud that you identify as feminists and understand your privilege (at least you are starting to). And though I am sure we do not always get it right, I do feel that your dad and I are raising two intelligent, sensitive, and empathetic human beings. As your education continues, I will continue to champion a critical lens to your learning, drawing out of you questions which must be asked about the nature of knowledge and the advantage of the few over the many.

My dear husband and the love of my life, David: how could I have done this without you? It simply would not have been possible. You have not only supported me by picking up the parental and household slack, you have genuinely been my partner in all things. You jokingly accept an unlikely end to this learning journey and whenever I have needed anything, you have been there – attentive and patient. When I have been down, you have picked me up, and when I have been thrilled, you have celebrated with me. How many books did you find in the annals of obscure bookstores, little known private collections, or retired library collections? You are a wizard! I love you with all my heart. Thank you for supporting me.

And finally, to Frances, Hallie, Madeleine, and Viola: I do hope that I have served up some righteous justice. I know that I really cannot speak for you, but I do want to speak with you. I believe that your stories are important, educative, and inspiring. I recognize that I have benefited by your hard work and that in turn, I have the same responsibility to pass it on to others. As Mary Church Terrell first said (and as many have mimicked and repeated):

> *And so, lifting as we climb, onward and upward we go, struggling and striving, and hoping that the buds and blossoms of our desires will burst into glorious fruition ere long. With courage, born of success achieved in the past, with a keen sense of the responsibility which we shall continue to assume, we look forward to a future large with promise and hope.*

Abstract

Conversing in time with overlooked, historical female proto-management theorists:
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Feminist discourse exists at the margins of management and organizational studies and management history. Many figures and ideas have been overlooked by the largely gendered and limited scope of the development of field. This thesis introduces a new method, which fuses aspects of *collective biography* with the emic potential of *auto-ethnography* and rhizomatic capacity of *fictocriticism* to advance not only a new account of history in subject, but also in style of writing. Emerging from this feminist experiment is a method for feminist historical inquiry, called *ficto-feminism*.

Ficto-feminism offers scholars the means to study lost female figures of significance, surface their lost lessons and contributions, uncover the discourses, which hide them from view, and rhetorically challenge the limited domain of current study with a defiantly feminist lens. The method is marked by several unique facets, including: (1) its potential to unlock agency for subject and writer; (2) reflexive and embodied/emic insights; (3) emotionality and resonance, (4) the opportunity to surface discourses at work over time; and (5) an alternative feminist strategy for studying the past. The power of ficto-feminism is that it has the capacity to reveal a more plausible and persuasive sense of an overlooked, understudied, and underappreciated female figure and reveal (or restore) her broader importance.

This thesis endeavours to make a number of important contributions, including: (1) building on current research, which interrogates the role of management history in the neglect of women leaders and their accomplishments; (2) contributing to the development of a bridge between feminist theory and critical historiography; (3) exploring mechanisms to enact personal agency in subject and writer; (4) drawing the discipline's attention to four proto-management theorists; and (5) introducing a new style of writing, which is narrative in style and inspired by fictional writing.

The thesis features four literary non-fiction, fictitious conversations with historic female proto-management theorists from Canada and the United States: Frances Perkins (1880-1965), Hallie Flanagan (1890-1969), Madeleine Parent (1918-2012), and Viola Desmond (1914-1965). A variety of archival, biographical and media sources are combined with the author's own sense-making and learnings to stitch together a believable, but fictional encounter. Guiding the study are five research questions: (1) why has she been excluded from management and organizational studies and management history? (2) Who was she as a proto-management theorist? (3) What are her lost lessons and contributions? What are the repercussions for leaving her out of account? (5) How can we study lost figures of significance?

April 20, 2020

Preface

Privation is no condition for creativity. It took some time, but I realized that one cannot divorce oneself from the pleasures of life to undertake a PhD. The activities are harmoniously if you let them be. As a result, the journey has been so much richer and rewarding and full of deep learning, surprises, "a-ha" moments, joy and catharsis.

One of the many pleasures that I retained through this process was non-academic reading. I have been surprised more than once with the inspiration I have found there. I love fiction, and particularly historical fiction! My assertion through this thesis is that historians operating in the positivist tradition cling to the idea that their work is interpretation based on fact and true accounts. I believe the work of engaging history and history-making is and should be, much humbler. We simply cannot know, what we cannot know. I argue that historians are not much more than writers of fiction. The difference is that authors of fiction are perhaps more honest and reflexive about their craft. Historians are deceptive in their attempts to offer a privileged account as *real* and *true*. Writers of fiction conversely privilege the story and the lessons within and use the facts as steppingstones to define a narrative path.

An unintended but exciting consequence of this study and my approach is the suggestion that a bridge between these seemingly unreconciled and perhaps even incommensurable practices is possible. Though I am not the first to suggest this bridge has value, I believe I have made an important contribution to the scholarly discussion, which is not only theoretical and methodological in value, but also introduces a new style of writing which serves feminism.

The historian and the fiction writer do not see themselves as doing the same thing, but there are occasions where figures like Margaret Atwood and her work could be confused for history. And there are moments in this thesis where I feel like I am the author of fiction. And other moments where I reveal where fiction exists and has been taken as fact.

To be candid, there are times where I need not necessarily know where the facts end, and the supposition begins; I just want to know the story.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.01 Outlining the Research

It began with Frances, and her passion for fair labour practices. Then I met Hallie and was inspired by her incredible leadership in work relief after the Great Depression. I have spent significant time with the ghosts of great women; learning about them and from them, through various texts and traces. I became inspired to bring them further into the light…out of the past and into the present. From there, the purpose for my dissertation emerged.

This dissertation is an exploration of the lost contributions of historical women leaders in Canada and the United States. It is also a feminist experiment and a subversive rhetorical strategy, which challenges the sociology of knowledge-making process. My work contributes to the emerging narrative, which calls into question the gendered and limited scope of the field of management and organizational studies and management history. Moreover, I challenge not only the patriarchal limitations of the field by introducing overlooked female leaders, but I will also challenge the taken-for-granted style of academic writing, which has dominated the field.

I offer in this dissertation, an unapologetic, feminist polemic. Polemics are a form of prowoman writing (Ferguson, 1986). Ferguson (1986) presents three kinds of feminist polemic: (1) *reactive* (to counter misogynous diatribes), (2) *reasoned* (significant and sustained arguments) and (3) *personal*. I draw on the third, which fuses *autobiography as polemic* (opposing the convention of silence) and *polemic of the heart* (emotional journals) (Ferguson, 1986). I see feminist polemics as passionate, strong and engaging

ideas and arguments, which can be both controversial and challenging to dominant notions and ideas (Flannery, 2001). I use polemics to re-politicize feminism and to "question the notion of boundaries or limits" (Flannery, 2001, p. 117).

Using feminist polemic as a starting point, I will explore in this thesis the methodological facets and promise of a new method: *ficto-feminism.* Ficto-feminism combines elements of (1) *collective biography* (multi-voiced narratives), (2) *auto-ethnography* (self-reflection, emic insights and embodied knowledge) and (3) *fictocriticism* (blurring the boundaries of fictional, factual and theoretical) to advance not only a new account of history in subject, but a unique mode of inquiry and a new style of writing.

This method is marked by several unique facets, including (1) its potential to unlock agency for subject and writer, (2) its potential to offer reflexive and embodied/emic insights, (3) an emotional orientation and resulting resonance (4) the opportunity to surface discourses at work over time, and (5) its capacity as an alternative strategy for studying the past. The outcome is a persuasive and plausible non-fiction, fictitious conversation with four historical female figures, which plays out at a specific moment in her lifetime. As my reader, it is fair to say that you will learn as much about my disposition to the field, and my relationships with these women as the women themselves. This is because my thoughts and ideas have been written into this work, written into my study of the women, and my understanding of their lives.

This dissertation presents the *true, untrue stories*[1] of four incredible women: **Frances Perkins** (1880-1965) social worker, US Secretary of Labour and first female cabinet minister, **Hallie Flanagan** (1890-1969) playwright and Director of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Theater, **Madeleine Parent** (1918-2012) feminist icon, advocate and labour organizer, and **Viola Desmond** (1914-1965) Civil Rights libertarian and pioneering entrepreneur. Though my selection was highly subjective they do have commonalities, which I will elaborate on (see section 1.04). Of significance here is that they and their potential contributions have been overlooked. These women have been ignored by both management and organizational studies (MOS) and management history (MH).

1.02 Research Questions

This is an exercise in a rethinking of the management discipline by uncovering contestations in narratives and active discourses, which preempt the voices of these female leaders (their agency, agendas and contributions) from being recognized. In this study, I attempt to answer a series of questions about these women, including:

1. Why has she been excluded from MOS and MH?
2. Who was she as a proto-management theorist?
3. What are her lost lessons and contributions?
4. What are the repercussions of leaving her out of account?
5. How can we study lost female figures of significance?

[1] The sources I draw on are 'verifiable' traces, but I then engage with these traces and the women in a fictitious encounter.

I use this term *proto-management theorist* to broadly describe the women of this study. However, it is useful also to think of the women as entrepreneurs, organizational leaders, community and welfare advocates, feminists, labour organizers, policy architects etc. I believe that the repercussions for their exclusion are numerous and widespread and include a loss of consideration in theory, pedagogy, praxis and conceptualizing the management field, the players involved and the very scope of the discipline itself. My objective is generative; to both recover and create a more tangible historical figure and an appreciation for what each woman has achieved.

In this thesis, I explore and defend the benefits of my approach (*ficto-feminism*), explain its facets and its potential for MOS/MH scholars and feminist scholars. Through this exploration of a new method, I hope to inspire further study and adoption. I sincerely believe this is a compelling approach to study and write about lost female figures, surface their contributions, uncover the discourses which hide them from view, and rhetorically challenge the limited domain of current study (in subject and style) with a boldly feminist lens.

1.03 Research Objectives and Contributions

This dissertation has one key objective, with five supporting contributions. My aim is to introduce and then demonstrate *ficto-feminism* as a new method for feminist historiographers with the aim of inspiring others to also experiment and explore its potential. In the development of this method, I have bridged my disposition as a feminist polemicist, with an inclination towards poststructural inquiry and postmodern writing in the study of historical figures. By drawing on collective biography, auto-ethnography and

fictocriticism, I will present a conversational narrative, neither fiction, nor history, but in service to scholars as a linguistic and stylistic strategy. In developing ficto-feminism I hope to also:

- Build on current research which interrogates the role of management history in the neglect of women leaders and their accomplishments;
- Contribute to the development of a bridge between feminist theory and critical historiography;
- Explore how personal agency can be enacted in subject and writer;
- Draw attention to Frances Perkins, Hallie Flanagan, Madeleine Parent and Viola Desmond and their lost contributions to management and organizational studies; and
- Introduce a new approach to writing, which is narrative in style and inspired by fictional writing.

My intention here is not to attempt to insert any of the women into their 'rightful place' in MOS/MH (Calás and Smircich, 1996a). Rather, my goal is to reveal how the current practices of these disciplines leave out key contributions. Argued here is the completeness and inclusiveness of management theory and scholarship, its biased and limited philosophy of knowledge production and the practices they inspire (Williams and Mills, 2017).

In this work, I also hope to draw the readers' attention to some of the pitfalls of MOS/MH. In so doing, I believe my work can help:

- "Reveal some of the absurdity of our current practices" (Williams, 2020, p. 247);
- Reveal some of the ways that the *idea of history* influences the production of knowledge (Durepos and Mills, 2012; Hartt, Mills and Helms Mills, 2014);
- Argue for the consideration of those overlooked (Williams and Mills, 2017; 2018);
- Inform and inspire a better/broader future practice for MOS (and history); and
- Contribute to theorizing a bridge between feminist theory and critical historiography (Williams, 2020).

To distinguish myself and this work from other work, I am not only interested in the lost contributions alone, but the very practices that resulted in the erasure and invisibility of these women. This is an exercise in making key figures more visible and to do so, I must also explore how they are made invisible. I am as concerned with *what* has been lost (the women and their contributions), as I am with *how* they have been lost (the structures, which result in their marginalization and the knowledge making process, which obstructs recognition). Moreover, I wish to see the women and their contributions made more tangible in the present, for the purposes of theory development and inspiration (academics and practitioners alike). Additionally, I am also interested in the relationship between history and storytelling and presenting an entirely radical approach to surfacing lost voices, while exercising personal agency (for myself and the women).

It is important to recognize that I build on the work of many others, who have questioned both the gendered and limited nature of MOS and MH (Hartt, Helms Mills

and Mills, 2012) and its propensity to ignore clear demonstrations of remarkable leadership (Calás and Smircich, 1996b; Berman and Van Buren, 2015) and programs, which sit outside of the conventional, capitalist models so very prevalent and privileged in literature and practice (Williams and Mills, 2017). I also draw on those scholars who value writing differently and in so doing, adopt novel lenses to broaden who is included in MOS/MH, and question why we value certain contributions and certain ways of *knowing* and *telling* over others (Pullen and Rhodes, 2008; Rhodes, 2015; Weatherall, 2018). I also hope to offer something new, by providing key insights into leaders unrecognized, and stories untold in the context of MOS and MH, while simultaneously continuing to advance the reshaping and maturing of the disciplines. I will speak further to my theory and approach in the next chapter.

1.04 The Women – Selection and Criteria

In this section, I explain my choice of historical female figures to study and my rationale. The selection of the women for this research was not easy and arguably highly subjective. Many women present as remarkable. When there are so few women featured in MOS and MH, the task of choosing is daunting. However, this task is also managed by how much or how little is currently available in public records, which unsurprisingly favour male leaders and theorists.

I picked these four women first and foremost because they intrigued me. I was immediately fascinated by each one and was compelled to dig deeper and to understand them. Ulrich (1976) offered some inspiration with her well-known quote: “well-behaved women seldom make history” (p. 20). None of these women took the easy path. Each in

her own way was a rebel, a rulebreaker and a changemaker. They were brave, resolute and inspiring.

It is not uncommon in a thesis to take considerable time to argue in favour of the choices we make. I think this is a positivist exercise, because it relies on so-called scientific rules that are simply social agreements. I am not here to make you more comfortable with convention. I will not avoid the appropriate due diligence and rationale, but I will also confess to you, dear reader, that I selected each of them because I could sense the potential for inspiration. I could see (even in small traces) the significance of their accomplishments. This is not the first time that scholars from other fields have been coopted into MOS and MH, so I am doing anything new by examining key figures and their potential. Afterall, Frederick Taylor was a mechanical engineer and Elton Mayo was a psychologist. Management theory considers Taylor and Mayo 'forefathers' in management and organizational studies. Why not then consider social workers, labour union activists and the like?

1.04.1 – The List[2]

How did I choose? Well, two were suggested to me: Frances Perkins (Secretary of Labour) and Hallie Flanagan (Federal Theatre Director). Both were part of the New Deal (a series of public works projects and financial reforms enacted in the 1930s in the US). The New Deal has been studied in terms of its exclusion from MOS (Foster, Mills, Weatherbee, 2014). As a result, the contributions of these two women leaders were also lost. I became interested in the New Deal, while completing course work for my PhD. I

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[2] Frances had a "list" too, more on that later.

was so interested, that I published a paper on both Frances and Hallie (Williams and Mills, 2017; 2018) and two book chapters on Frances (2019a; 2020). During my studies of these two women, I amassed a considerable set of resources and knowledge, which I wanted to incorporate into this thesis.

The two Canadians were shortlisted from a longer list of remarkable Canadian women. Each of whom I would be delighted to focus on in future research. After studying two Americans, I was keen to find Canadian women to learn from and quite frankly, I thought that other Canadian scholars might be interested as well. Madeleine Parent (Labour Organizer/Feminist) and Viola Desmond (Entrepreneur/Civil Rights Activist) came out on top of a list that originally included: (1) Mary Shadd Cary (1823-1893, the first black woman newspaper editor and advocate for universal education and women's rights); (2) Jane Constance Cook aka Ga'axstal's (1870-1951, an advocate for indigenous rights, women and children and the executive of the Allied Indian Tribes of BC in 1922); Hanna (Annie) Gale (1876-1970, the first alderwoman in the British empire, who established the local consumers' league and advocated for workers and women); Justice Bertha Wilson (1923-2007, the first woman supreme court justice and advocate for understanding and revising laws, which disadvantage women and minorities); and Eileen Tallman-Suffrin (1913-1999, labour organizer, trainer of union leaders and advocate for fair working conditions for women). Since starting this research even more women have been suggested to me. Apparently, I have set myself up with a research niche; to be the keeper of women's stories and historical reprisals of history. I am honoured by that, and excited that I might continue to contribute with this work. But

in designing parameters for a thesis, some scope must be set. I became interested in Viola as her story unfolded in the media in Nova Scotia (my home province). Whereas, Madeleine's death sparked my interest in her life. Like Frances (but in Canada versus the US), Madeleine was involved in the early days of Canadian labour work, while Viola has been more recently recognized for her role in the Canadian Civil Rights movement.

1.04.2 – A Name

This thesis (in part) challenges this notion of being distant from the subjects we study. I will try to avoid using the term "subject" as much as possible as it has been argued by feminists that "subject" is a colonial term, which degrades, dehumanizes and denotes a type of hierarchy (Phillips, 2018). It has also been argued that subject is an "unconscious dimension of subjectivity" (Frost, and Hoggett, 2008, p. 440). I find it particularly challenging to argue in favour of agency, but then represent each woman as a subject under study, and I fully appreciate that I cannot know their "inner worlds" (Jefferson, 2000, as cited in Frost and Hogget, 2008, p. 440).

My approach necessitates a level of intimacy, which spans a variety of relationships: mine and yours, and mine and yours with each of the women. One of the ways that I will mark this intimacy is in how I will reference each of the women. I will remove the formality of last name (Perkins, Flanagan, Parent and Desmond) in favour of addressing each woman by her first name: Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola.

I have been reading and talking about each of them for such a long time. I feel close to them, and I want you to feel that familiarity and closeness as well. You might feel uncomfortable with this – this tension is important acknowledgement of our

deference to certain conventions that I wish to thwart. Please do not interpret this as a lack of respect for these women. It is rather how I have chosen to illustrate my affection and challenge the notion that we should be distant from the subjects of our research. Such distance creates a false sense of objectivity and an ‘othering’. For example, see the work of Patel (2017), who investigates how names are attached to different types of identities and influence knowledge production, the research process, access to subjects/subject matter, false claims of validity etc. As a result, avoiding such convention draws attention to our own positionality, reveals culturally coded expectations, and therefore should inspire reflexivity and awareness of our own positionality (Koyabashi, 1994; Patel, 2007).

This is a personal portrait and a personal experiment with new rules. In addition to setting a more comfortable stage for my explorations, the use of a first name also addresses an issue I have within patriarchal rules, specifically that in many instances, a woman’s last name is a marital name (a label of belonging). I am not making a judgement about an individual’s right to choose their own name, or take a name of a partner or spouse, but rather to not distract you from *her* with irrelevant focus. This tension about names plays out significantly for Frances and Hallie. Frances had to fight to use her maiden name professionally, and Hallie was married twice, but chose to use her first husband’s name professionally. It also plays out for Madeleine who was often described as a twosome with her husband. Take this as an indication of some of the subtle ways I will rebel against convention and exercise my feminism.

Where my approach of using first names becomes an ironic exercise is in the actual conversations with each woman. The formal conversations must be framed up with the typical formality that each of the women would have been comfortable with at the time selected for the conversation (as demonstrated in literature and media). Therefore, my sentiments will be challenged by tradition and etiquette. You as reader will also experience this tension of being close to someone – her as an idea – and then negotiating a thoughtful way to engage with her as a person – present and with you. But I digress. More on this later.

1.04.3 – The Scope, Depth and Rationale

At first, the women might appear to be an arbitrary foursome and though my intention was not to draw comparisons, they are easy to make. For instance, both Viola and Frances were “first women”; Frances was the first female cabinet minister in the US and Viola is the first woman to be featured on a Canadian bank note. Madeleine and Viola were both arrested and charged in the criminal court for their advocacy work, whereas Hallie and Frances both appeared before the House of Un-American Activities Committee; the targets of partisan inquiry. Hallie, Frances and Madeleine’s work was closely tied to unions, whereas, Viola, Frances and Hallie were all teachers. Madeleine, Frances and Hallie were all concerned with working conditions; Madeleine, Viola and Frances were all activists; and Viola, Madeleine and Hallie were all tied to labour attachment strategies.

Though we must be cautious not to ascribe these women with attributes or slot them into categories, which make it easy to compare them, this dissertation will make the

case that all four women are overlooked historical figures -- their leadership, ideas, theories and contributions never forming part of the development of MOS. There are similar themes and discourses, which span all women and contribute to their marginalization and status as an “overlooked” figure of significance.

When I refer to the term “overlooked” I am not suggesting each woman does not have a history, but rather that her history and her ideas were overlooked by the early developers and scholars involved in management and organizational studies and the development of management history. I am also arguing that being an overlooked figure means that we have also lost her potential contribution of ideas as theories, methods and practices. There may be other contributions to other fields, which have not been considered either. However, as a management and organizational scholar, I am perhaps only qualified to speak to my own small slice of scholarship.

Regrettably, many remarkable women are simply *a footnote* in so-called *history books,* and I needed enough data to support a thesis. My study is one which values depth, not scope, which immediately put an upper limit on my selection. There also needed to be enough information available to draw from, be they primary or secondary sources, evidence of discourse or historical context, first voice or proxies. My consideration of sources is also an exercise in unraveling a gendered discourse. What is deemed primary versus secondary, evidence versus opinion? These evaluations are influenced by the trappings of scholarly judgements, wrapped up in a narrative of patriarchy (who gets to have a voice), academic rules (the levels of evidence) and even capitalism (the motive behind the evidence). By replicating a value judgement, I am at risk of operating within

that discourse. Thus, my approach to all 'evidences' is skepticism. My motivation transcends these judgements: I want to generate a feminist polemic and make a persuasive narrative in favour of the women individually. In my next chapter, I will explain how I addressed the deficiencies in various records.

The inspiration behind selection was not at first highly theoretical. I suspected (and was correct) that with enough information to review, lessons missed by MOS would be revealed. The revelations do not stop at just the recognition that each of these women were significant pioneers. The lessons span models of leadership, of approach to policy and practice, of entrepreneurial behaviour and the important bridges between the market economy and achieving social good.

I ultimately selected four women from North America (two from the US and two from Canada) as from my vantage point it was easier to relate to them and their experiences. I also wanted to see myself in these women. As an organizational leader myself, I am not interested in abstracted figures plucked out of history. I am interested in "real" women, working in dynamic organizational settings and achieving success against enormous odds.

All research is limited in some way, and my scope was set by reasonable constraints. In the process of selection, sensible conditions emerged, and my prior work with Hallie (Williams and Mills, 2018), Frances (Williams and Mills 2017, 2019a; Williams, 2020), and Viola (Williams, 2019) helped inform some basic criteria. Each candidate (in my view) has:

1. a valuable, but overlooked contribution to MOS/MH;

2. a substantial public profile, which has resulted in the attention of some past research (academic) or historical recordings (e.g. media clips); and
3. has contributed to their own story-telling and history-making (own writings and reflections[3])

When I use the term "valuable" I recognize that I am making a statement about what I think has been ignored by the field of MOS. This may be a gendered perspective, a figure, or a practice. It might also be a counterpoint to a dominant perspective in the current field. It is a personal evaluation of worthiness informed ontologically and epistemologically from a feminist perspective. Feminine and feminist knowledge is not lesser knowledge, it is just *lesser known*.

Additionally, I wanted information from *their* time and *our* time to appreciate context and compare how authors and historians variously conceptualize these figures *over* time. I play openly with temporality in this thesis and this is to accomplish an appreciation for the role of context in both enabling and limiting gendered subject positions. I also wanted insight into how these women wrote about themselves: how did they view their roles, accomplishments, and challenges over time?

All are notable women, but none have been embraced by management theory or organizational studies. Each woman has profile and recognition; however, this profile serves to ensure a certain kind of limited history is constructed and lauded, while also hiding the potential for her contribution to MOS/MH. In some cases, her history has been reduced to anecdotal statements, such as *Frances Perkins was the first female cabinet*

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[3] Viola's sister Wanda Robson serves as a proxy for first person accounts which regrettably are not broadly available. However, Robson's writing is germane to the arguments levied here.

minister in the United States, or *Viola Desmond was Canada's Rosa Parks*. She has become a single dimensional figure, an exception and someone *ahead of her time.* Their current valourization discourse has hidden their potential for MOS.

In part, this lack of visibility is because each is recognized or operated in a field, which sat outside of capitalist modes of production. Modes of production are economic structures, which are social formations (Economakis, 2005). Capitalist dominance speaks to the dominance of monetary power over labour and exploitation of such labour for capital gain (Marx, 1990; 1991). Such dominance also extends to the priorities of scholarship and education in management and organization studies. The relationship between gender oppression and capitalism has been the focus of study for Marxist feminists, who argue that capitalism ignores socially necessary work, which is essential to the maintenance of life (Brenner, Laslett, 1991; Arruzza, 2016). This schema of capitalism underlies and reproduces what is considered necessary labour both within the family, or within the market economy (Arruzza, 2016).

Each woman comes from a field that is generally marginalized or ignored by MOS/MH (e.g. social work, government, the arts, labour relations, and activism/civil rights), which serves to emphasize not just the gendered scope of MOS/MH, but the narrow conception of where management theory applies and where it operates (Mills, Weatherbee, Foster, Helms, Mills 2015). In most respects, this connection of her work and ideas and that of management theory has never been made. My hope is that efforts like this one, serve to further develop the field.

Below is how we often find these women narrowly framed in historical accounts:

1. **Frances Perkins:** a social worker and the first female appointed to the US Cabinet, serving as Labour Secretary from 1933 to 1945.
2. **Hallie Flanagan:** a theatrical producer and playwright who led the US National Federal Theatre Project, from 1935 to 1939.
3. **Madeleine Parent:** an organizer in the textile strikes in the 1940s in Quebec; responsible for establishing the Confederation of Canadian Unions (1969).
4. **Viola Desmond:** a civil rights leader who challenged racial segregation in Nova Scotia in 1946 when she sat in a 'whites-only' area of a local movie theatre.

When I delve even a little deeper, the argument for their inclusion in MOS and MH becomes clearer. With more to come in the chapters ahead, I submit that even in brief each woman could be recognized more broadly in consideration of her accomplishments:

1. **Frances Perkins:** the first female cabinet minister and one of the longest serving in the US, as well as the author of ground-breaking labour policy, which continues to govern all modern American workplaces, including the 40-hour work week and minimum wage.
2. **Hallie Flanagan:** a celebrated playwriter and director of experimental theatre, and the architect of one of the most ambitious US labour relief programs involving over 12,000 workers in 40 cities and across 32 states, and audiences of over 30 million.

3. **Madeleine Parent:** a top labour organizer, advocate and feminist who took union leadership from 30% American to 70% Canadian and reshaped the Canadian labour agenda by establishing the Confederation of Canadian Unions.
4. **Viola Desmond:** a civil rights leader and a pioneering female, African Nova Scotian entrepreneur operating in a time of segregation who defined a new business and model and expanded her reach and success across eastern Canada, while mentoring and teaching young black women in the field.

Intrigued? I hope so. I have dedicated a chapter of this dissertation to each of them; to give them individual attention, recognizing their unique achievements in context.

1.05 A Feminist Polemic on the State of MOS on Feminism

An important part of any starting point is understanding the state of the field. In this, I consider the intersection of feminism and management and organizational studies and what various research has investigated or ignored.

Morgan (1997) argues that *modern management* is not actually modern at all, but rather artfully disguised *classical management*. As such, it promotes rational and efficient systems and largely ignores the human aspects of organizations. *Scientific Management*, arguably pioneered by Taylor, is concerned with increasing human productivity and securing and maintaining management control and remains the “cornerstone of work design” (Morgan, 1997, p. 22). This is relevant because notions which sit outside these approaches are often disassociated with *real* management theory and relevant insight into *organizations*, *the organized* and *forms of organizing*.

Burrell and Morgan (1979), despite offering little insight to feminist approaches, none-the-less argue in their 'seminal' work on sociological paradigms that theorists need to adopt methods which are true to the nature of the phenomena. In management, we have been skimming the surface and taking significant inspiration from natural sciences. Only in the last 30 years, have we begun to embrace the value of a broader spectrum of methods, epistemologies, theories and theorists, but even these attempts remain largely on the fringe of lauded theory and practice (Mills, 2002; 2004).

Since Acker and van Houten's 1974 feminist critique of organizational analysis, Kanter's 1977 study of the relationship between gender and organizational structures, and more recently, Calás and Smircich's (e.g. 2005; 2015) collaborative work on leadership, culture and gender, we have seen an increase in a feminist research presence in the mainstream, but we still have not caught up. The discourse on management remains fundamentally masculine (Alvesson and Billing, 2009).

The four women who will be presented and discussed in this thesis could be considered proto-management theorists and feminist icons of a new field of inquiry that supersedes current MOS (Williams and Mills, 2018). The current structures of MOS create discursive constraints and define what is considered worthy. This often results in theory and method, which reproduces narrow views and ideas (Smircich and Calás 1987).

Feminist work has largely been concerned with critiquing the *modern promise of progress*, which spans both theory and practice in management by offering up better theories and methods (Brewis, 2005b). There have been studies on the gendered nature of the management textbook (Mills, 2004; Williams and Mills, 2019a), the gendering of

organizational culture (Mills, 2002), the lack of historical influence on management education (Genoe, McLaren and Helms Mills, 2013); the idea that patriarchy seems inevitable (Vachhani, 2012); explorations of embodied feminine writing (Pullen, 2018), dominant antifeminist influences on management (Kelley, Mills and Cooke, 2006), gendered modes of production (Arruzza, 2016); the lack of critical thinking resulting from management education (Errington, Bubna-Litic, 2015), overlooked theorists (Williams and Mills, 2017; 2018; Williams, 2019); overlooked gendered perspectives (Burnier, 2003) and more. Despite these efforts, masculine approaches and quantitative methods remain privileged and powerful.

I passionately believe that we must work harder to broaden the scope of MOS/MH and ensure that current practices are held to account (or change the rules entirely). We must offer alternative and compelling approaches and perspectives. We must be persuasive. We must continuously find ways to liberate ourselves and all women from limited subject positions. It is my hope that this thesis is a contribution to the unstructuring of the arbitrary discursive limits within which MOS orthodoxy operates (Brewis, 2005b; Pullen and Rhodes, 2008, Weatherall, 2018).

1.06 Entering the Feminist Discourse on Feminism

Feminist discourse exists at the margins. We have had a few breakthrough moments, but most feminist voices have difficulty cutting through the powerful entanglements of patriarchy. Therefore, I am exploring if the way we write, in addition to who we write about, might make a more powerful contribution. There have been efforts to explore new ways of writing (Pullen and Rhodes, 2008, Weatherall, 2018; Vachhani,

2019) in addition to the lost contributions of historical women figures (Williams and Mills 2017; 2018; 2019a), but this is an exploration which bridges those efforts, and one which considers the theoretical, the methodological and the rhetorical implications for feminism and women's history.

The analysis will uncover something about the process of knowledge-making that results in certain knowledge being overlooked in addition to what was overlooked. In other words, *how is history written and what/who is written out*? (Scott, 1987, Rose; 2010). Additionally, a new narrative, both compelling and powerful will be offered up. Quoting from Vachhani (2019), who offers insights from Höpfl (2000): "we write our 'selves' into the margin, an ever-present body who looks in through the window" (p. 12). In other words, feminist writing and feminist voices and the forms that they take challenge ontologically the function of masculine language and knowledge production (Vachhani, 2019; Pullen, 2006). I do not plan to write myself or these women into obscurity. We will be centre stage.

It is my intent to advance the argument that feminist contributions not only challenge the limits of the discipline (who and what has been left out of the account), but enable feminist story tellers who have the opportunity to speak and write disruptively and explore new writing strategies, which befit her and allow her to express her own agency. But how does one free oneself to write differently? By examining the philosophical challenges and opportunities around writing differently, I will explore how embodied writing and writing myself into my work produces the opportunity for power and change (Vachhani, 2019).

Through an examination of various sources, I will surface *her* voice (Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola), which will draw from first person accounts and others who have chosen to speak for her and with her. I will also attempt to speak for her and with her and give myself the same privilege as the sources I draw from. I will not make myself subservient to data. I acknowledge that all 'data' and 'evidence' are subjective. Thus, I am also levying a critique against the practice of upholding the pretence that 'evidence is objective and reliable'.

I will investigate the active discourses and personal narratives, which serve to limit the voices of these women and cast out their contributions. I will also assert my voice to link and connect the traces of text and ideas. In so doing, I will produce a conversation between myself and each of the women. Essentially, *I intend to talk to dead people*[4]. Therefore, the way I interact in conversation is one essential way I will tie the thesis together. The empirical chapters are not uniform cases, where I attempt to compare each woman. I will disrupt what I see as the traditional inclination to compare and I will offer myself up in the foreground as the point of continuity, which links the stories together. The conversations have the *sound* and *rhythm* of real conversation.

As I have said, there is a chapter dedicated to each proto-management theorist. I start each chapter with an introduction of her biographical history. You can think of these as my "field notes", prepared in advance of a conversation with a prominent figure. I highlight to you (as reader) the types of sources which were the most useful for this experiment. My conversation then unfolds and includes an exploration of who she was,

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[4] Not to be confused with "I can see dead people" from the movie the Sixth Sense by M. Night Shyamalan.

and what of her experiences and lessons are relevant to MOS. I select a specific moment in time to meet with each woman and a fictional environment (based on a real place) in which to converse with her. These conversations are made more plausible because I adopt the same literary strategies of fiction writers, who give us the sense of being elsewhere and transport us imaginatively to experience new things. I conclude each chapter with a reflection on what I have learned and what I think is important for us to consider. I will also summarize the *lost contributions* of Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola, at the end of each dedicated chapter. I will consider the relevance of describing these contributions in the context of a capitalistic and patriarchal frame.

1.07 The Bridge Between Feminism and Historiography

There was recently a special issue call for papers for *Business History*, entitled *Gender, Feminism and Business History*, edited by Hannah Dean, Linda Perriton, Scott Taylor and Mary Yeager (2019). In answer to that call, Albert J. Mills and I have been trying to ascertain the state of the field at the intersection of feminism, gender work and history. A previous project he completed with Milorad Novicevic looking at select business, management and organizational history journals, gave us a starting point. In their book *Management and Organizational History*: *A Research Overview*, they reviewed 1,600 articles published between 2006-2018 and found that less than 2% engaged with feminism, gender or women (Mills and Novicevic, 2020). What papers do straddle feminism, gender work and business history? There are a mere 29 papers (two of which I co-authored), which constitute critical inquiry (Mills and Williams, in press).

Though this is not an explicitly historical thesis, my research interests and these findings speak to a considerable level of neglect or "blue ocean" (positively framed) to address within scholarship. I had a sense of this early in my PhD work. It has been my experience at academic conferences to feel that I must make a choice between history tracks and gender tracks – always missing out, never finding a perfect fit. And quite honestly, the history tracks can be bereft of women. I am not the only one to say this as both Mary Phillips and Ann Rippin cite this same experience as inspiration for a special issue in 2010 in *Management and Organizational History.* That special issue features brilliant gender history work, and by no means does it position this crossroads of two fields as having limited things to say. Rather it should have inspired several potential entry points for future inquiry. Why did it not?

These artificial silos of scholarship restrict so much potential for feminism and history. So, I am ever so appreciative of a special call like this one in *Business History*. However, I would be naïve if I thought much could change in the short term. Perhaps my work here and the work it inspires will help to make the opportunity more appealing or visible.

1.08 A Discussion Primer – Revealing the Facets of Ficto-Feminism

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the method of ficto-feminism is marked by several unique facets, including: (1) its potential to unlock agency for subject and writer; (2) its potential to offer reflexive and embodied/emic insights; (3) emotional engagement (writer) and resonance (reader); (4) the opportunity to surface discourses at work over time; and (5) its capacity as an alternative strategy for studying the past. The

power of ficto-feminism is that it can reveal a more plausible and persuasive sense of an overlooked, understudied, and underappreciated female figure and reveal (or restore) her broader importance.

I begin the discussion by talking about agency and reflexivity and the associated implications and insights offer through ficto-feminism. I continue with a significant section devoted to discourse. Briefly, there are *discourses* at work, which fundamentally hide women and their contributions from view: the structures of academic writing, of historical writing, the actors in history and the women's own complicity. The significant discourses, which I will use to start my exploration include *the role of gender*, the *nature of historical records*, the *socio-political context.* These are some of the common starting places in feminist work, which examines history, and they were my starting points for previously published work (Williams and Mills, 2017; 2018).

An *additional discourse,* which is not as obvious is the way the women have been *valourized* in the past and present. One form of valourization can blind us to another. Each of the women in this study is known for something and this has tied her to a simplistic identity (Bettin and Mills, 2018). It has also limited access to the general utility of her other qualities and experiences. For example, why keep information on Viola's entrepreneurial accomplishments or experiences, if she is a civil rights icon and her lessons are thus tied to this role? She is known for something, but this something is not her potential role to MOS. Who made that decision? Who was complicit? How have the history-makers decided what was relevant to that narrative and what was not?

The women and their work also expose us to other notions of organizational spaces and *alternative ways of organizing*. These span types of leadership, to forms of organizing in other fields like labour, social work and the arts. Importantly, I will draw the reader's attention to the modes of female leadership, and profile an image of what female leadership looks like. So, do not be surprised if it does not fit with other models we typically see in the literature.

I am also fascinated by how these women have been variously socially constructed. Often by admirers, they are positioned as both *villains and heroines*. These contestations serve to distract focus from making a case for their respective inclusion and overlooked contributions.

Being considered as *ahead of her time* is another curious descriptor, which emerged in my research of all the women and suggests the need to adjust the approach to studying historical women. Each of the women are positioned by others as being *ahead of their time*. It is a persistent trope, which tends to label women (and men) who are exceptional. I submit that it also is a concept, that where women are concerned, contributes to a kind of inertia i.e. she has done something remarkable and that is quite enough. It is a seemingly innocuous, even positive, and is frequently used to explain or justify barriers experienced. I will try to demonstrate my view that it is a patriarchal language trope attempting to limit these women to structured subject positions. These subject positions are often contradictory. She is *exceptional* but also *unrelatable* and the result is that she is written out of certain accounts. The phrase is both an explanation and a signpost, meaning this is *the end of the road* and *you may go no further*. As Calás and

Smirchich (1996a) contend, revived interest in historical figures can result in another active form of forgetting, and potentially hide from view or erase other worthy contributions, which advance knowledge production.

I round out the discussion with observations about ficto-feminism's capacity as a strategy for studying the past. I will offer insight into both challenges and advantages.

1.09 Authorial Voice

It is also fair to say that as I studied each woman, I connected with her and developed a strong affection and a desire to undertake some social justice of my own through this study. I want to give them the attention and spotlight that they so righteously deserve! At times, I was frustrated in my research and angry. I was angry that such brilliance was often constrained unfairly. As a result, my writing has taken on a tone of familiarity and passion for the women. You will gain a sense of this through auto-ethnographic reflections (like the one below), which emerged from my sensemaking and learning:

> As a business and community leader, I cannot help but notice many persistent barriers, which existed for these women and which continue to exist today. It is hard to learn about them without experiencing significant empathy. I am overjoyed by their accomplishments, saddened and angered by the discrimination they experienced, and I commiserate with their desire to undertake social justice. They see the obvious connection between healthy organizational environments and a vibrant market economy, and community health and wellbeing and an

individual and collective sense of purpose and usefulness (personal reflection, 2018).

These auto-ethnographic reflections serve an additional purpose beyond orienting you as the reader to my thoughts and opinions. In offering my thoughts and ideas, I am also advocating for my views to be accepted as part of the knowledge making process. I am suggesting (rather boldly perhaps) that me as a figure in this thesis is to be accepted as valuable; just as valuable as the texts I have studied. I attempt to give myself equal footing with other chroniclers. I stay in the foreground with my protagonists. In academia, we tend to give the thoughts of others greater worth, but I am suggesting that those of us who research and write thoughtfully should not be relegated to just describing and quoting the works of others, but rather seen as active contributors to new knowledge formation and theorizing. I am not the first to muse about such opportunities and to recognize the site of knowledge formation as an ethnographic process. See for instance, Stanley (1990), who argues that all ethnography relies on the awareness that the ethnographer plays a vital role as the "comprehending analysing mind from which derives an ethnographic text" (p. 620). She further argues that for ethnographers (and auto-ethnographers) theorizing is often misunderstood as description. This considers ethnography as tied not only to method or a way to write, but to an epistemic based theory of knowledge (Stanley, 1990).

Some academic writing is rather tentative. We hide behind the 'evidence'. We do not make claims, which we cannot defend by stitching the thoughts and ideas of others who have come before us. As a teacher I struggle to get my students to avoid a passive

voice in their writing, even when I know they have something worthy to say. And I have had teachers who have encouraged my active voice as well. However, using an active voice can sometimes be misconstrued for misplaced confidence. As women, we are conditioned to take more care in the way we write and speak. We simply do not have the same freedoms from repercussions as men do in all environments. As someone who straddles many subject positions: mother, wife, CEO, scholar, teacher, it can be difficult to know how to engage because the rules constantly change. And even in circumstances where the role is the same, the rules for women still differ.

There will be times in this thesis when I expect that you might bristle. Perhaps you already have![5] You might think: “oh she should back off a wee bit”, or she should “be more cautious”. This is intentional. I am experimenting with the idea of placing new knowledge into the universe; of being unique and generative. This is not to suggest that I do not meet the appropriate scholarly requirements, nor am I trying to suggest I have ‘it all figured out’. But I am trying to adopt a level of confidence and assertiveness in my own writing. I am modeling belief in myself as a writer and researcher.

Of some of the remarkable embodied writing I have read, I am still surprised to see how timidly it is delivered. I get it and I am grateful the door is open, but it breaks my heart to see brilliant women being made to test the waters so cautiously. No here. Not me! I write in service to other women scholars and to myself. The exercise in writing is a form of advocacy and expression of personal agency.

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[5] I might be wrong. Perhaps you are thinking: “you go, girl!” That is okay too!

Recently, I read this beautiful feminist manifesto by Adichie (2018), which warns about the trappings of *Feminism Lite*, which is the idea that we *are allowed to* use our power. Instead of full equality, our wellbeing, our treatment is still contingent on our acceptance and maintenance of a fragile male ego. We are complicit in this practice, because we are satisfied with something, anything! In academia, this speaks to the rules of the game; the allowable subject positions for women to participate in small ways, in certain spaces, at the margins, under supervision and controlled. We are always asked to prove our worth and often only given credit behind the scenes. I know this is true and I have felt it before: "we judge powerful women more harshly than we judge powerful men. And Feminism Lite enables this" (Adichie, 2018, p. 11).

By making this personal I am also signalling that I wish to challenge the dominate scholarship practice and conflation of the masculine with the professional and the feminine with the private. Rabinowitz (2001) refers to this idea of mimicking the masculine as akin to putting on a costume to fit in. I would rather normalize the personal: to "break out of masculinist modes of communication, and in breaking free, to explore the deepest parts of ourselves as we relate to the texts which have shaped our lives" (Nelson, 1995, p. xvii)

As a feminist, I think this makes sense and I hope that you will agree, but I fully appreciate that you might be expecting a different orientation from a junior (yet no so young) academic trying to advance a novel argument to a brilliant scholarly community. Both reader and writer have been conditioned in this way in academia to follow certain rules (see for example, Wilkinson, 2015; Willmott, 2011). However, I could not call

myself a feminist polemicist if I were not prepared to get on my soapbox and wax poetic. So, please expect some pejorative rhetoric. Expect some passionate arguments. This will get personal. This exercise is not just one of bringing visibility to Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola, it is also about bringing visibility and agency to the work of a feminist who deserves to be seen and heard. I am trying to shake off the rules of patriarchy and of my own confined subject positions. So, please bear with me and support me in this.

1.10 Who the heck is "dear reader?"

I have incorporated a literary device often used in first person narrative literature; the active voice of a narrator. Many fiction and non-fiction stories use a narrator to talk to an ambiguous "someone". However, in scholarship, this is unusual, so let me explain my purpose.

By talking directly to my reader(s), I can blend literary and academic approaches. In adopting this strategy, I will identify you (the reader) at some points as "dear reader". You might feel (at times) that this is fair. However, at other times, you might find that you disagree with occupying the role of "dear reader". This is because in talking to a reader, I am potentially talking to individuals occupying different subject positions. The advantage of this approach is that you and I feel closer, which serves the development of a persuasive account. But it also risks you feeling critiqued and isolated, because I have assigned a potential opinion to you that you do not feel is yours.

This conflict has been explored as a rhetorical strategy in literature. Booth (1968) initially described the dissonance as the concept of the *reliable* versus *unreliable* narrator.

This characterization speaks to the quality or implied underlying relationship between author and reader (Murphy, 2012). The reliable narrator is one that feels secure to the reader and speaks and acts in a way which conforms to the reader's expectation (Booth, 1968). The unreliable narrator is one that creates apprehension in the reader (Booth, 1968). Within literary practice, there can be no single implied narrative author or reader, and writers often adopt various permutations of norms to accomplish different things (Murphy, 2012). At times the narrator can intrude to put a story back on track (Booth, 1952). In other instances, the narrator plays a significant role as a protagonist (Booth, 1952). A final role, which is perhaps the most accurate for my attempt here, is that of the rhetorical commentator, who attempts to induce various attitudes in the reader (Booth, 1952). Herein, this strategy is adopted as an aspect of the application of fictocriticism, in combination with the reflexivity of auto-ethnography.

So, my instruction is this: feel free to occupy the position of "dear reader" or not. Perhaps take note of what might be playing out in my mind, or in yours as I write, and you read. Where do I incorporate a counter or supportive view? What could this mean? Where do you depart from my views? Why?

1.11 Outline of Thesis – Chapter Summary

The chapters of my thesis are arranged as follows: In this chapter (Chapter 1), I began with a short introduction and then reviewed my research objectives and questions and potential contributions. I talked briefly about the facets of ficto-feminism and I have set up where my thesis enters the scholarly conversation. I continued with the selection criteria and provided an overview of the women featured in this study. I concluded with

the general direction of my study, my approach and insight into areas of interest. In Chapter 2, I will outline my metaphysical lens, the applicable literature and data, and theory and approach. In Chapter 3, I will outline the aspects of ficto-feminism as a new method. In Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7, I will present my conversations with Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola and associated reflections. In Chapter 8, I will offer a discussion which examines the performance of ficto-feminism by revisiting its facets and considering the general utility of this new method. In Chapter 9, I will conclude by reviewing the critical learnings.

Chapter 2: Theory and Approach

2.01 Metaphysical Primer

Before talking about theory, I first need to briefly explain my philosophical approach, which is comprised of interlocking concepts: *ontology*, *epistemology*, *axiology, logic* and finally, *methodology*. In other words, the paradigmatic tradition and basic beliefs that form my worldview and my understanding of the nature of the world and my place in it (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Calás and Smircich, 1996b, 2006; Prasad, 2005). I will elaborate on these important concepts throughout this chapter, but I want to summarize them here as a starting point.

Ontology asks what is the nature of being, of knowledge, of reality (Cunliffe, 2001). I subscribe to a nominalist perspective, which rejects *universalism* (abstraction). I prefer to describe the nature of society and organizations as *relational*, constituted, descriptive and *socially constructed* (Prasad, 2005). I believe that "affective feminist politics arise from the processes of silencing and [the] disappearance of the feminine that questions the production of legitimate knowledge" (Coleman and Rippin, 2000, as cited in Vachhina, 2019, p. 13). I therefore take the view that legitimate knowledge can be feminine and feminist in origin.

Epistemology refers to the acquisition of knowledge and knowledge formation. In other words, what is my conceptual lens and way of seeing? I subscribe to a *postpositivist* perspective (Prasad, 2005) and specifically selectively drawing on mainly a *poststructural* approach but also a postmodern way of writing. Here my perspective is ideographic and symbolic (rooted in language and signs) (Weedon, 1997). But I am also a

feminist polemicist (Ferguson, 1986) and believe in personal agency, voice, social change and social justice. Therefore, my writing is not just concerned with examining text, uncovering and seeing what is there and not there, surfacing taken-for-granted discourses and displacing power, but also challenging and destabilizing our patriarchal conceptions of knowledge production and generating feminist epistemic authority with the reflexive knowledge that all understandings are generated from various cultural and social locations (Lewis, 2007; Cunliffe, 2004; 2011) .

Axiology refers to the role of values as either value-free or value-laden. Axiology considers principles and values, which include both ethics and aesthetics. I believe that the world we study is value-laden, and that *subjectivity* is inevitable (Cunliffe, 2011). In my view, there is no objective *truth*. On the ethical side, I believe that the feminine has been undervalued, vilified, abused and I want to reveal how that has occurred and change it. On the aesthetics side, I believe that the feminine is powerful, embodied, indivisible from the sensory experience, and most importantly, worthy.

Logic refers to approaches to reasoning and stems from our philosophical orientation, influencing “our research methods and our knowledge claims” (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 648). I take an inductive approach which is organized by examining a specific case and considering the general rules, which constitute them. In this study, my approach is the selection of four women and an examination of the structures which bounded, excluded and limited them. I do not believe in uncovering ‘truth’; I believe in the power of plausibility and persuasion.

Methodology refers to the approaches of inquiry and interpretation. I investigate *women's history* (Rose, 2010) using *critical historiography* (which extends from critical management studies, e.g. Mills, Weatherbee and Durepos, 2014). Specifically, I draw on *collective biography* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983;1987; Davies and Gannon, 2006) fused with *auto-ethnography* (Doloriert and Sambrook, 2012; Ellis and Bochner, 1992; 2000; 2003; Anderson, 2006) and *fictocriticism* (Gibbs, 2003). I borrow literary influences to produce narrative polemics, which evoke emotions and stimulate imagination and controversy (Gibbs, 2003). I advocate for highly reflexive writing, which is *defiantly gendered, emotive, embodied; promoting change and social justice*. Writing is resistance. Writing is change. Writing within the patriarchy, is to write oppressed.

I will return to and expand on these philosophical anchors throughout this chapter.

2.02 Literature and Data

"I was sand, I was snow – written on, rewritten, smoothed over." (Margaret Atwood in The Blind Assassin, 2000, p. 371).

As a qualitative study, which is archival, textual and linguistic in nature, I will draw on literature throughout the study, both to support theory and method, and to understand and interpret the experiences of the women and their various remarkable accomplishments. In addition to a variety of published sources (academic and peer reviewed, as well as popular press), I will also refer to biographies, housed and online archives, media sources, and various collections, including oral/visual histories.

In the case of Frances Perkins, and in addition to her own writings and other published work (media, biographical and academic), my search included the Franklin D.

Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, the Frances Perkins Centre and the Columbia University Oral History Collection. The most useful sources for Frances were her own writings: *People at Work* (1934) and *The Roosevelt I Knew* (1946).

For Hallie Flanagan, the search included her published work and chiefly, her book *Arena*, which is a first person accounting of the Federal Theater from beginning to end. Additionally, the Library of Congress Archives houses reports, a manual and other materials for the Federal Theater Project and the Work Progress Administration (see The New Deal Stage, Music Division). I also investigated the US Congressional records and session hearings of the House Special Committee on Un-American Activities; a fascinating read!

For Madeleine Parent, there is some information in Library and Archives Canada, various union records at the Confederation of Canadian Unions, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Digital Archives, reports at McGill University, and collected papers presented at a conference dedicated to Madeleine, which also resulted in a book called *Madeleine Parent: Activist*. This book, as well as many touching media reports, which followed her death in 2012, as well as some historic interviews with Madeleine, were extremely helpful (e.g. Sulutin, 2012; Hustak, 2012; Rebick, 2012; CBC, 2012)

For Viola Desmond, there are three books, all of which incorporate Viola's sister (Wanda Robson's) first-person accountings, plus copies of provincial records (e.g. the formal account of the Nova Scotia Apology and Royal Prerogative of Mercy Free Pardon, and notes from The Promised Land Project Symposium Roundtable Discussion of 2011).

Additionally, some information is housed in the Wanda Robson and Viola Desmond Collection at the Beaton Institute. The Nova Scotia Archives focus largely on historic newspaper coverage and legal documents from her case. Viola's story is still actively being told and there are somewhat regular news accounts of the various ways she is now being recognized, remembered and celebrated for her civil leadership (for example, see Borden Colley, 2016; Smith, 2016; Annett, 2016; Kohut, 2016; Proudfoot, 2016; Borden Colley, 2017; Corfu, 2018). I have also been fortunate to speak directly with and to exchange letters with Wanda.

Undeniably, part of this research requires a critique of the mainly limited and narrow accountings we have of female leadership. What I have been able to find does not always speak directly and instrumentally about her potential contributions to MOS. However, just because such information may be hard to find – indeed *she* may be hard to find, does not mean we should not look, and it does not mean *her* leadership is not remarkable.

2.03 Theoretical Framework and Entry Points

In this section I review the areas of theoretical importance to help you understand the various theoretical entry points I have used. Namely, feminism, gender history and critical historiography.

2.03.1 Feminism(s), Power and Politics

> *"To have power, yet be able not to use it, was for her the most admirable strength" (Anne Perry in Murder on the Serpentine, 2017, p. 58.)*

As a feminist polemicist, I am interested in disrupting current and past patriarchal narratives in the pursuit of social change and social justice. In speaking of social justice in this context, I am speaking of voice and agency and my desire to see these four women more broadly appreciated and known. I first engaged with the idea of polemics through Joan Scott (2014). Upon further investigation, I found Moira Ferguson's 1986 taxonomy of feminist polemics and was drawn to her definition of *personal polemics*. Though she sees *polemic autobiography* and *polemics of the heart* as distinct subsets of personal polemics, I see them as related and intertwined; as both in service to the story of another and a story and a reflection of the self.

By adopting this frame, I am also signaling that I intend to offer a contentious rhetoric in support of female agency (mine and the women) above all else and thus undermine the existing position, its limitations and the resulting suppositions and claims. I therefore offer what might be described as a combination of activist writing and scholarship. Consequently, power is central to my feminism; however, talking about power is complicated. As feminists, we want power, but power has largely been defined and theorized in masculinist terms (Hearn, 2012). Women are often positioned deferential relative to men, and roles are defined by malestream ideas (political, cultural, social and ideological). As a result, women remain somewhat invisible, or visibility is restricted to stereotypical gendered roles (Williams and Mills, 2019b).

Feminism is both a movement and an ideology, which gives rise to theory (Pierson and Prentice, 1982). Allen (1999) has argued that feminists need theory, which addresses *power-over*, *power-to* and *power-with* conceptions as well as *foreground*

(relations) and *background* perspectives (social conditions). Therefore, analysis needs to consider "the constitutive role that power relations play in the formation of subject positions" (p. 131). These relationships inform social practices and are responsible for meanings to be culturally encoded into institutions, which then sustains such meanings (Allen, 1999). Therefore, "an explanatory framework must have the ability to view power in terms of deep and durable structures that support certain ways of being and modes of femininity" (Williams, 2020 p. 243).

Alcoff and Potter (1993) argue that feminist epistemological examination requires "a critical analysis of [the] very politics of 'we-saying' that objectivist epistemologies conceal from view" (p. 25). As feminist theorists, we then need to be constantly attuned to hidden subjectivities, which are operating to produce and sustain normative (male and patriarchal) relations and structures (Weeden, 1997).

According to Grant (1993), "there is no one feminist theory" (p. 1). The feminist agenda must be met with different approaches. And despite the early more politically driven feminisms, later feminisms have become less political, while undertaking the process of theorization (see Hoff's critique of the apolitical nature of poststructuralism, 1994). In my view, a number of enduring challenges remain before the work of feminist theorists. I have summarized these concerns elsewhere (see Williams, 2020), but it bears repeating them here. The first is this romantic gravitation toward the idea that there is one standard for all; what Witt (1995) refers to as a *gender logic system* (*universalism/essentialism*). The second is the challenge of navigating an enduring argument, which was spurred by liberal and radical feminism, namely that there are

benefits and risk with the *differences* versus *same* argument (see Williams and Mills, 2019b). The third follows a similar refrain as *same* versus *difference*, in that we must find both an opportunity within feminism for both *unity* (common oppression) and *diversity* (unique lived experience, materiality and embodiment) to exist together. However, this must be achieved while also transcending binaries and categorical approaches, which dominate theory building and methods (see Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016). The fourth is one that I hope to grapple with meaningfully in this thesis. How do we locate and sustain female agency in theory development and through the application of methods and writing (see Corrigan and Mills, 2012; Vachhani, 2019)? These issues within feminism are durable and not likely to be solved easily, but they remain an important context to which feminist work should engage.

In adopting a poststructural lens, I also reject *realism* and *positivism* (Bettin and Mills, 2018). Drawing on Weedon (1997) and Collinson (2005), I acknowledge that poststructural perspectives reveal how language and meaning are culturally and historically contingent and subordinate to discourse. I accept that language is ideological and thus carries political, economic and social implications. As Weeden (1997) contends, feminist poststructuralism must pay attention to power relations, which reveal themselves in social, historical and institutional contexts. When we make sense of the past and of lived experience, this sensemaking of our subjective realities is relational in orientation (Weeden, 1997). Discourses (when revealed) help us understand how our place in this world is controlled by powerful ideas and logic systems, which constitute the *rational*. My interest in uncovering and investigating discourse is to not only see how we are

placed and organized into various subject positions, but to also see how we can advocate for destabilizing these ideas of *truth,* and in so doing, surface alternative voices which have been suppressed by discourse.

The work of Calás and Smircich (see e.g. Calás and Smircich, 1996a, 1996b, 2006; Smircich and Calás, 1987), has aided feminism in several ways. Brewis (2005) offers a useful summary of these advancements, which includes:

1. revealing how assumptive bias and discursive limits operate within organizations and upon organizational actors;
2. disrupting universalistic claims and so-called enduring truths;
3. advocating for, and respecting non-traditional voices in theory, and valuing subjective accounts.

This thesis attempts to build upon the above, but also offers further theorization on a bridge between feminist theory and critical historiography.

According to poststructuralism, politics construct gender and the historical discourse has created an enduring normative male/female opposition (Scott, 2008). It was feminist politics which brought women into consideration as an object of historical investigation (Scott, 2008). This consideration did not emerge until the second wave of feminism in the 1960s (Rose, 2010). Thus, according to Rose (2010), women have not been hidden, they have been oppressed. “Woman have been neglected as historical subjects because historians viewed history to be almost singularly about the exercise and transmission of power in the realms of politics and economics, arenas in which the actors were men” (Rose, 2010, p. 4). Even with growing narratives of difference (as early work

ignored difference and assumed universal women's experience (Rose, 2010), the prevailing, constant and persistent description of 'real' women remains (Scott, 2008). Scott (2008) argues that accepted histories of women have kept women out of history. In the mid 1980s, it was Scott who further primed the field of feminist inquiry into the past and encouraged the adoption of a theoretical approach rather than just a descriptive one (Rose, 2010). However, even women historians remain relatively marginalized by a variety of structural barriers (see Jacoway, 2019).

Yet, poststructuralism has its limitations. The most obvious one is the dismantling of any collective self-concept of women needed to organize and sustain a feminist movement (Hoff, 1994). Hoff (1994) argues the limitations of both poststructuralism and postmodernism for the feminist historian. On one hand, she notes that poststructuralism can only go so far; dismantling the discourses at work, appreciating context, and identifying the role of power (Hoff, 1994). Essentially, there is no generative opportunities and no individual agency. Whereas postmodernism eschews temporality and cannot be reconciled to the idea of history and seeks to depoliticize gender,[6] which is an afront to the basic principles of feminism (Hoff, 1994). Essentially, poststructuralism offers no growth, agency or potential for collective advocacy, and postmodernism offers no political clout (also a necessary ingredient for advocacy) (Hoff, 1994). Hoff (1994) was concerned with the possible motivations and the practical implications for the linguistic turn for feminists. She felt that that poststructuralism might negatively affect scholars working in the field of women's history. In hindsight, she raised some very

[6] The concern with depoliticizing gender was also noted by Calás and Smircich in 1989; 1992.

critical points early in the debate about poststructuralism, which continue today. Not the least of which is that poststructuralism has failed to remedy some enduring challenges within feminism, and that the study of discourses, though vital, has also led to a reification of the notion of gender and the trappings of universal experience within certain subject positions. This loss of agency is something I will return to in chapter 8.

2.03.2 Gender, Gendering and Gender History

> *"Those who expect moments of change to be comfortable and free of conflict have not learned their history" (Scott, 1989, p. 692).*

Whilst talking about the historical role of women in organizations, you cannot ignore the discourse of gender. Like many, I do have concern with the term gender. Gender is often used as scientific terminology, in opposition to sex, but gender is also disassociated with the political, namely power and feminisms (see Scott, 1983; 1986). Even today, "gender is an inescapable dimension of interpersonal relationships at the workplace" (Mastracci and Bowman, 2015, p. 858).

The process of gendering involves rules governing behaviour based on stereotypes, which are then repeated through interaction – no organization is a "gender-free blank slate" (Mastracci and Bowman, 2015, p. 858). Organizations are formed and maintained within certain patriarchal, white, male constructs (Mastracci and Bowman, 2015).

Gender as a point of analysis in MOS is a way for feminists to engage seriously into the ideas of social organization and the relationship between sexes and the rules which follow and govern the masculine and the feminine (Scott, 1986). As a process,

gender analysis is driven to ask historical questions and think "critically about how the meaning of sexed bodies are produced, deployed and changed" (Scott, 2008, p. 1423). A gender history offers feminists the opportunity to study women, not only as new subject matter, but "also force a critical examination of the premises and standards of existing scholarly work" (Scott, 1986. p. 1056). Gender has invited engagement with historical study on the necessity for theory (history beyond method, beyond the practice of collection) (Scott, 1986). This is crucial for two reasons: (1) women's stories about women are marginalized if in isolation, and (2) if synthesized, they are subject to the persistent inequalities, which frame the dominant (Scott, 1986).

Gender has a history, which emerged in response to debates about women's history (Rose, 2010). Scott (1989) argues that history for feminism must be concerned with the "rules and conventions which govern the production and acceptance of the knowledge we designate as history" (Scott, 1989, p. 681). These accepted knowledges represent a social consensus of what it means to be *true* (Foucault, 1972; Scott, 1989). Scott was one of the first to argue on behalf of feminists that history was a reflection and construction of historians, who have in their work also created standards for inclusion, exclusion, measures for importance and evaluation (Scott, 1989). It is more appropriate to view history as a package of past politics – largely, white, male, Christian politics (Scott, 1998). The concern for feminists here, is identifying the statements, lessons, and players that have been concealed from view, or reduced to *others* by the rhetorical and ideological strategies advanced as history by historians. Similarly, we must also get away from a monolithic, homogenic approach, which creates the sense of a grand

narrative, where the focus is on the elites and these elites are not only the subjects, they are also who is deemed as the ideal historian (Scott, 1989). Thus, challenging history, is challenging a powerful set of interacting ideas and players who have not only controlled who gets to write and interpret history, but selects the events, the subjects and the players as well (Scott, 1989).

Scott (1986) presents three basic theoretical approaches to feminist historians:

1. Attempts to explain the origins and functions of patriarchy (sexual objectification and subordination of women);
2. The offer of feminist critiques in a Marxist tradition (material explanations for the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy and sexual division of labour); and
3. A poststructural or psychoanalytical approach, which explains gendered identities (language and gender identity is in a constant process of social construction; rejection of the binary; difference) (p. 1057-1058)

My work attempts to: (1) identify the discourses, which serve to reinforce patriarchy; (2) offer a feminist critique in the form of the performance of a new method and mode of postmodern writing; (3) adopt a poststructural lens to identify a variety of subject positions, which obscure the complex under the simplified; and (4) and challenge our understanding of what is worthy knowledge and where it can be found.

Scott argues that those defenders of the traditional history (i.e. positivist history) may have no objections[7] to others participating in the ranks of historians, but they do still

[7] Jacoway (2019) presents several objectivist tactics and structures, which restrict the woman historian.

seek to “enforce the orthodoxy of a single standpoint, a single vision of what counts as historical knowledge” (Scott, 1989, p. 686). Scott (1986) cautions that the idea that women have a history separate from men may also have the power to relegate women to a lesser position and bifurcate their experiences from political and economic considerations.

Scott (1989) calls for a democratized historical practice with plural, conflicting, fragmented, reflexively engaged stories and subjects with agency, which challenge the hegemony and undermine its so-called legitimacy of dominant objective practice. What is the risk? We will likely have an unreconciled and incoherent sense of the past. What will we gain? We will gain voices and ideas and new knowledge, and a fundamental change of the discipline, which uses new philosophical, methodological and techniques to engage with History.

What I believe is of value here is a feminist experiment: a potentially contentious, but plausible and persuasive narrative with the capacity to inspire. Inspiration is an important outcome for me. I want these women to be posthumous mentors to scholars and practitioners alike. For my whole life, I have admired the women that fiction could offer. Brave women. Intelligent women. Complex women. I want to bring this level of emotionality to figures from our past. I believe the intersection of fiction and fact is where such inspiration can be found. We must use our imagination to access it.

But how do you create such a story, enliven historical figures and compel social change? In this thesis, I have taken on Scott’s (1986) challenge that “historians need instead to examine the way in which gendered identities are substantively constructed and

relate their findings to a range of activities, social organizations and historically specific cultural representations" (p. 1068). I see this as a challenge to bequeath historical women with their rightful broad list of accomplishments and to show you how ficto-feminism can delivery more than a story, more than inspiration. I want this method to inspire you to engage with history differently. I want to inspire you to talk about women's history[8] differently. I want to write and practise history differently. To want to blur the existing boundaries which limit practice, application, lessons, activities and more.

I have also addressed a limitation within poststructuralism. A critical critique of poststructuralism is that it does not go beyond describing women as social constructions (subsuming 'woman' under gender), essentially erasing personal identities and agency to understand the discourses at work (Rose, 2010; Hoff, 1994). In the mid 1980s, women (formerly a unit of analysis) were subsumed under gender as a social construct in poststructuralism. Since poststructuralism offers no experience outside of the ways that language describes it, distinct experience was challenged (Rose, 1993). Gender history has been placed over women's history and woman is now a form of discrete analysis in gender work. In this case, the stories of four women are part of this analysis.

I further selectively adopt the postmodern theory, which challenges temporality as a linear concept; I have constructed historic narratives from the past, in the present. I disagree with Hoff (1994) and others who argue that postmodernism is not history-friendly because history has 'no reality'. Postmodern ideas, which eschew temporality,

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[8] I appreciate that the term women's history has connotations of being lessor, especially given the 'ghettoization' of women historians in the nineteenth century when the field was professionalized and its continued marginalization of women in academia (see Smith, 2010; Jacoway, 2019).

offer recognition that all such constructions are in the here and now anyway. However, I do concede that postmodernism depoliticises gender, which is a challenge as feminism is necessarily political (Hoff, 1994; Calás and Smirchich, 1989; 1992).

In my 'conversations' with Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola, I will avoid the grand narrative, monolithic approach, while also making room for contestations with the larger history. In this writing, an exploration of discourses and narratives remains. I will still attend to the importance of context and the role of power, which blind history to the remarkable contributions of feminist proto-management theorists and their non-traditional voices. However, I will ensure that these contestations and fragments do not interfere with seeing these women as real figures worthy of recognition. I endeavour to retain the ethos of their time and the constraints which governed their station. I absorb the value of a poststructural approach, but with the addition of fictocriticism, I move away from deconstruction or even reconstruction. What I will do is generative. I will do so in a way which preserves the *artifacts*, gives them no evidentiary power, imbues myself and Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola with voice and agency, while challenging the conventions of academic writing. My goal is to push the boundaries of what is known, but also how the knowing is constituted. I will explore how language operates powerfully as a device to both valourize and hide contributions and women in *plain sight*.

2.03.3 Critical Historiography

> *"As management scholars and theorists, we all have a role to play in the seeing, surfacing and telling of untold and overlooked stories" (Williams and Mills, 2018, p. 282).*

I bring to this study a focus on feminine history and feminist telling. My main influences in developing a history start with Scott (1994) who argued that gender history is concerned with discourses of individualism, of temporality, self-evident contradictions, irreconcilable opposites of feminisms and feminist action, women dealing with paradoxes and ambiguity of experience identity. This supports an entirely radical kind of inquiry and resulting narrative. Secondly, I am influenced by Rowbotham, (1974), Rose (2010), Munslow (2012) who argue that women have not only been hidden from history, they have been deliberately oppressed; therefore, history must be subject to revision, because history has a *history*. This supports the notion that history happens in the present and is fluid. Pierson and Prentice (1982) argue that feminist perspectives alter the historian's task. Therefore, I believe that the work must be equally comprised of theoretical development as well as methodological development.

Many propose that *the past* remains under-theorized and that MOS has been "historically ahistorical" (see Srinivas, 2012, p. 238, whose work engages Walter Benjamin's critical theses on the philosophy of history). My view is that engagement with history has been limited and overly concerned with finding so-called facts (Srinivas, 2012; Kieser, 1994). I also agree with Foster et al. (2014) that history has been underdeveloped theoretically. And, I concur with Munslow (2010) who argues that the history is not the past, but rather a set of ideas, which are attached to an agenda and ontology held by the historian. As a result, history is subject to ongoing scrutiny, reimagining and interpretation. I appreciate Munslow's (2010) framing, which defines history as a "constructed cultural creation" (p.37). Therefore, I take the view that

historiography is a process that understands that history is a narrative approach, which selects *traces of the past*, thus rejecting the existing as factual knowledge of *the past* (Foster et al, 2014; Rowlinson, 2004; White, 1984)

I believe that *making history* actually happens in the present and it is a practice, which should not only chase *so-called facts*, but examine their context, examine what has been collected, who collected it, and why it was collected and held as important or significant. I recognize and analyze my own subjectivity and my role in the practice of making history. Here, "I also contest the *fixity* and *scientificity* of history as a single reconciled and perfect narrative that holds value and power over present day theory and practice" (Williams, 2020, p. 245). I think of history as messy and containing many voices, with various actors getting to decide what is worthy enough to keep and to share.

There are three main perspectives on the historian's task: history as a repository of facts that come to be known through historians (Kieser, 1994); the crafting of history as a plausible narrative of historical events (White 1984; 1987); focusing on the discursive relationships between subject and writer, and the social forces[9] shaping and constituting the historian and the history (Foucault, 1972), see Mills and Novicevic, 2019; Rowlinson, 2004.

In my approach, I draw on Munslow (2010), in so far as he critiques the positivist historian who endeavours to create objective realism. Such realism does not reveal that history can contain various ideas, which are influenced by politics and ideology. By taking an additive approach to build out a linear and 'logical' account of the past, the

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[9] Including both public and private social forces (see Jorma, 2012) and context (see Durepos, Mills and Genoe McLaren, 2019)

positivist historian hides from view the conflicts and contestations, which are inherent in historical traces. Essentially this approach has the air of scientific method, seeking to offer some objective recanting. It uses method in place of critical theorizing and is seldom reflexive of the positionality of the author or that of players who have provided the historical traces. All authors of history, all methods, and all subjects, are discursive.

Accounts, which are not intertwined with positivism (confined by the data of experience and excludes *a priori*), accept that in studying the past, we are also studying the present (Durepos and Mills, 2018). Additionally, Hoff (1994) argues that historians (by definition) organize facts in a chronological narrative vs. a theoretical framework. Here I appreciate Munslow's (2010) characterization of history as *reflexive linguistic representation*. The positivist historian maintains a quest for resolution in both form and content and he/she/they will not acknowledge their work as cultural translators (Munslow, 2010). I would argue that the very purpose of the critical historiographer is to offer an alternatively plausible accounting, which contrasts with the existing account enough to reveal and hopefully reject the epistemic assumptions and methods of the historian (see Durepos, Shaffner and Scott, 2019). In my reading of Munslow (2010) the modernist positivist historian believes that the past is knowable, and the postpositivist critical historiographer understands that it is not. These assumptions are epistemologically rooted and exercised through method.

To offer an analogy, I draw upon my early education in art history and cultural studies and say this: history is to realist painting as critical historiography is to impressionistic painting. The historian is like the realist painter. His work is objective and

about capturing the idealized version of an event or subject. The distance between the painter and the work is part of the purpose. He is divorced from the representation created. He is merely a neutral medium in the representation. The critical historiographer is like the impressionist painter. Her approach has an obvious political undertone. The work is a simultaneously commenting on the subject, while also revealing it. The approach subverts the method in practice. The painter's subjectivity and relationship to the subject is captured in the result. Her hand is seen in the very brushstrokes, which reveals the inner workings of the craft and the connection between painter and subject. The approach and the painter are as much a part of the story as the subject itself and the result reveals the intentions behind the work.

As a feminist polemicist, engaged in critical historiography, I find and select various traces of the past, but remain skeptical about their evidentiary strength or truthfulness. I selectively choose -- as all historians and historiographers do -- we all evaluate, curate and thereby judge, which traces might be relevant. However, I will show that instead of one perfectly reconciled and linear history, many fragmented, conflicting and incomplete *histories* exist, which reveal the potential for alternative histories by and about women (Williams, 2020).

I recognize that the work I produce is also contestable (White, 1987; Rowlinson, 2004), and the danger remains in potentially valourizing one gendered account over another. Herein lies a kind of postmodern irony. In offering an explicitly gendered approach, I believe that such an account can also reveal the gendered nature of other approaches. It is a subversive rhetorical strategy. My accounts are meant to challenge the

current *sociology of knowledge,* which is already *gendered knowledge-making* (Rose, 2010).

Chapter 3: Method

3.01 Developing Ficto-Feminism

I will use various sources to present a persuasive, but fictitious conversation between each of the women (as protagonists) and myself (as writer). My hope is that you might come to see these women as valuable but overlooked figures of significance to MOS/MH. This is not to suggest that other interviews do not exist, but these various records do not explicitly illustrate a connection and relevance to MOS/MH, nor do they take on a feminist experiment. In this section, I will review the inputs to the development of ficto-feminism, namely collective biography, auto-ethnography and ficto-criticism. I then continue with my approach to writing differently, limitations expected, an explanation of the temporal manipulation this writing evokes and finally how such an approach shapes both protagonist and writer.

3.01.1 – Collective Biography

Methodologically, I draw on collective biography, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1983;1987), and developed by Davies and Gannon (2006). It is a practice of talking and writing until the writer and traces generate a collective text (Page and Speedy, 2012). It is also described as an "ambling conversational [style] and writing inquiry" (Page and Speedy, 2012, p. 241). Collective biography is a feminist method, which draws together narratives, memories, fragments along with expressed and embodied engagement with the research process and in the reading of a variety of texts (Page and Speedy, 2012).

This technique has been used before across time and can weave back and forth between what is considered real and imagined tales "in order to deconstruct and re-construe new meanings and possibilities" to form a collective writing practice (Page and Speedy, 2012, p. 236). However, this method has not been used in MOS or MH, nor has it been used in quite the way I am proposing.

In this study, my collaborators are not with me (active and alive), but rather consist of historical writings from the women in the study, their various chroniclers, media who have written about them, and texts pulled from various times, which help contextualize and historically place the narratives. The product is a complex, at times fragmented collective narrative. In my case, I endeavour to maintain the visibility of the sources, so that you can navigate various traces and their origins, while still following the fictitious conversation. Unlike collective biography, I do not present a biographical record as such, but a conversation. I attempt to address the liminal spaces (the in between) by offering possibility and challenge (Gayã Wicks and Reason, 2009).

Page and Speedy (2012), while making sense of an experiment, which weaved together texts and films of Pierre Rivière with their own writings and thoughts, along with notes by Michel Foucault to form a memoir, talk about this process as "an intense emotional engagement with intellectual curiosity" (Page and Speedy, 2012, p. 241). I concede my approach has the same goal of intensity. I want to create a synthesis, which goes "deeper than the emotional or intellectual alone" (Page and Speedy, 2012, p. 241).

I draw on this method, because along with some feminists, I wish to challenge conventional research methods, epistemologies, pedagogical practices and writing style:

> Feminists, among other researchers, have grappled with how to produce research that recognizes the materiality of living gendered lives at the same time as it acknowledges postmodern notions of identities and relationships between identities as multiple, fluid and layered (Gonick, Walsh and Brown, 2011, p. 741).

I want to explore the possibilities when I juxtapose the voices of the women, with her chroniclers, critics and my voice. I believe that the implication for feminist research is not only a contribution to both theory development, method and writing style, but also to pedagogy – how can we engage with the material, how can we learn, and what can we learn from these women?

My approach hopes to deliver on the objects of collective biography, in so far as the goal is to use stories as a way to make "visible the discursive processes in which we each have been collectively caught up" (Davis and Gannon, 2006, p. 11). Gonick, Walsh and Brown (2011) identify a limitation in this approach, which I am very sensitive to and to which I believe I have created a potential remedy. They argue that collective biography can have the tendency to support a "we-ness" because texts that are produced are relatively seamless. By keeping the fragments visible and attributable, my hope is that the various contributors are held to account, while also maintaining their somewhat contradictory relationships, multiplicity and contestations. I want the reader to be aware of the discursivity at work, while still being able to be vividly transported to a time and place.

There are several tenets, which I adopt in my process from Davis and Gannon (2006), including: (1) a commitment to revise history, (2), making it intensely

imaginable, (3) using the writing strategy to access the past (where the past can be reexperienced), (4) developing documentary style materials (essentially curating source material), and (5) revealing the changeability of the past and the multiplicity of 'truths'.

I want to create a space of transformation and learning for me as writer, and you as reader (Davis and Gannon, 2009). In reading these conversations, I hope that you will be transported. You will meet Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola as I engage with them in a fictitious conversation. You will have a unique vantage point; being able to see and hear everything, including my thoughts, which will endeavour to expand your understanding and at times offer counterpoint.

This strategy also helps resolve a key dilemma: How do you address the gaps in what is 'presumably' known through existing text and what is not? More on this later in this chapter.

3.01.2 Auto-Ethnography, Reflexivity and Advocacy

I have already covered my authorial voice in the introductory chapter and my desire to be present in my writing. These are critical elements of auto-ethnography. However, to further ground my approach to auto-ethnography from a theoretical perspective, I draw your attention to three aspects of auto-ethnography, which inform my method: (1) critical use of reflexivity (often seen in feminist work); (2) an examination of one's own position; and (3) reflection on practices ,which shape the research endeavour (Styhre and Tienari, 2013). I am drawn to an approach, which is emotionally evocative (see Ellis and Bochner, 1992; 2000; 2003) and where me as the researcher is visible (see Anderson, 2006). Auto-ethnographers also recognize that we are constantly constructing

meaning and social realities (Cunliffe, 2003). The reflexivity element in auto-ethnography is about taking a critical perspective on our own process of writing, knowledge production and on our own position with respect to the subject of inquiry (Styhre and Tienari, 2013).

Auto-ethnography is also understood as a blend of personal experience, values and the research process. It is personal, political, disruptive and complicated. The lines between researcher and subject are blurred authentically (if not haphazardly) through the recognition of the self as a part of the story to be told. (Ellis and Bochner, 2000; McParland, 2012; Adams and Holman Jones, 2011).

I am giving myself permission to say what I feel and show how I am changed by this writing. I am giving myself permission to share my expertise, my passion, my anger, my joy (and humour) in this writing. I am also revealing myself and exposing my limits. In constructing an alternative narrative, I am also making choices about which voices to subjugate and which voices to empower. I am attempting to do so critically and with awareness. This is what reflexivity offers. It rejects the idea of objectivity completely. It trespasses on the assumed boundaries between the professional and the personal (Hamilton, 2015). In my offering, I am being defiantly personal; in my interaction with you and with each woman, and in revealing myself.

Getting to know these women changed me. Writing in a way, which potentially offends the usual academic aesthetics (at least in management and organizational studies) is a way to acknowledge this change and to experiment with new ways of doing research in this field. It also allows me as a researcher and advocate to be “distinctively present in

my writing" and to be an ally and even a posthumous collaborator in the telling of her story (Weatherall, 2018, p. 10). Here is an example:

> I feel that I know her [Viola]. And I know that I love her – at least the idea of her. I know that this is supposed to feel like a breach of the sacred researcher pledge to be distant and objective, but in challenging this research convention, I realize it is a false assumption that distance improves the knowing. Knowing passionately, intimately, is what drives me to be the advocate I am. And we must make room for more of this in academic writing (personal journal reflection, 2017).

I also feel that writing provides space for women to exercise agency for themselves. As such, writing must have a degree of advocacy – for subject and writer. It is not a measure of compounding ignorance through method. We have enough so-called history which has done that. It is the knowledgeable and reflexive writing of *a* history, which has the power and potential for something profound in the present. Is that not the role of history – to teach us something? Is that not the role of scholars – to be teachers?

My aim in this thesis is to develop the stories of these women to include their broader potential overlooked by MOS. I have and will continue to allow my passion to be present in this writing, because I sincerely believe each of these women is worthy of our attention as scholars, practitioners, and writers of history. And, I want to inspire an emotive response in you, dear reader. I have selected a radical kind of approach because I believe it is effective and because it is also symbolic of how necessary it is to think and write differently in order for new knowledge to emerge. All knowledge is discursive, and all approaches are limited in some way, but just as it is important to have many different

figures contribute to our understanding of management and organizations, it is also important to draw on different ways of knowing and producing knowledge.

3.01.3 Fictocriticism

> *"For facts to become memorable, an element of fiction [is] essential" (Modris Eksteins, as cited by Charlotte Gray, Preface of the Massey Murder, 2013, p. xvi)*

In this study, I draw on the generative capacity of fictocriticism, which offers "opportunities for the expressions of new knowledge and interventionist tactics in ways that the more closed and traditional systems of criticism and analysis do not" (Hancox and Muller, 2011, p. 148). The result is a richer story, a more tangible historical figure and an appreciation for what she achieved. Also revealed are the intentional and unintentional ways we hide these women's contributions from management and organizational studies and management history.

I recognize that I have my own agenda: to disrupt the current practices, to develop feminist knowledge, and to tell other feminine histories, which have been overlooked. Sources that I draw from may be incomplete and involve players that at the time of fact collecting were not viewed as significant (because of gender, politics, race or class or the propensities of the chronicler). Therefore, my approach is much more intentional, context dependent and openly, if not radically, gendered (Williams and Mills, 2018).

White (2005) and others have struggled with the idea of history being a mix of fiction with fact and concluded that such practices of advancing fiction as fact is a disservice. According to Munslow (2010) to pass off invention as fact breaks an implicit contract between reader and historian. White (2005) acknowledges that fiction is an

oppressed counterpoint to historical discourse. Michel de Certeau called fiction the "repressed other" (as cited in White, 2005, p. 147). This idea safely places the work of history and the work of fiction on opposite sides in an otherwise messy accounting of fact, data, meaning, expression and philosophy.

I do not think we have adequately theorized the value of fiction to history and quite frankly, the idea that fiction is not an important part of history is missing the point entirely. History is "a tenuous notion, perhaps especially for those historically disenfranchised" (Steinberg, 2003, p. 385), like women proto-management theorists. My view is that *history is fiction*. History is unknowable, but for mere traces, which are left behind. And "experience is unknowable outside of language and thus it is itself discursively produced" (Rose, 2010, p. 13).

Blending an approach to history to include fiction is not new. However, fiction writers have "shown an awareness of the fluidity of the boundary between the two, whereas historians, whose attitudes are still influenced by Victorian concepts of history as an objective science, have failed to keep up" (Parker, 2009, p. 81). Barnard (2012) calls this notion of blended approaches "cross-writing", to denote a scholarly strategy that plays across different genres and disrupts our ideas that certain modes of writing are for 'facts' and other modes of writing are for the 'imagination'.

Some fiction is no less factual, no less relevant in its power to provoke social change, or describe a time, people or place. And when I look at historical fiction, I see women (and I am not alone, see Ranft, 2013, who investigated black female identities and histories of oppression through fictional literary productions). In fiction, I see women

as I imagine they must have been. Full figures of significance, of power and life. Is this a gendering or 'romancing' of discipline or something deeper? For me, the debate is not yet complete, particularly for feminists engaged in critical historiography who are looking for more than feminine knowledge, namely social change and social justice. But what provokes change? Emotion. What produces emotion? Stories. By adopting fiction as a strategy for MOS/MH, I hope to contribute to a changed narrative, which de-centres the dominant players and practices (Curtis, 2013).

History is symbolic and not an objective representation of the past. What I derive from Munslow (2010), Scott (1988) and Rose (2010) is that we must never lose our skepticism of what is considered history, particularly a gender(ed) history. From Munslow, I understand that the objective is to use the most effective of these traces of evidence and fill it in responsibly. That is fine and good, but as a feminist, I am still left wanting. This approach still gives power to the evidence itself as though there is such a thing as evidentiary truth! Such traces of the past and such evidence are not unprejudiced. Evidence is rather like an onion, which has layers and layers of ideological rhetoric, agenda, privilege, masculinity… Yet, when you get down to the last layer, it can be argued that even that which remains is not *real*.

When histories of women are not available, what can data or traces teach us? When the holes are larger, and the so-called facts unclear or even contradictory, shall we not see fit, as Margaret Atwood (1996) suggests, to *invent*?

> I have of course fictionalized historical events (as did many commentators on this case who claimed to be writing history). I have not changed any known facts,

> although the written accounts are so contradictory that few facts emerge as unequivocally "known" […] When in doubt, I have tried to choose the most likely possibility, while accommodating all possibilities wherever feasible. Where mere hints and outright gaps exist in the records, I have felt free to invent (as cited in Alias Grace, p. 564).

If I can do no more, I should be very pleased.

If we know our purpose, which I argue does have a broader agenda (particularly for feminists) than fact-telling: to *raise awareness*, *rouse social change*, *challenge thought*, *inspire morality*, then a well-researched, well-conceived, (and *birthed*) persuasive work of historical fiction or literary non-fiction is a compelling approach. I think it is the next stage of the application of skepticism, because it locates the author in a trusted but highly visible position of accountability. No more attempts to be morally superior in our fact-telling. Let us be advocates and rebels and feminists for change. If we only rely on what is available in so called traces, there will never be enough information to cast a superiorly acceptable gendered (or gender) history, because the very methods, partial traces and attitudes are as exclusionary as the practices of keeping traces themselves.

Understanding these women and telling their story also becomes a platform for a deeper discussion about the rhetorical, political and ideological strategies, which persist in the study of organizations, and the narrow and linear way the past has been reported. *Fictocriticism* (sometimes referred to as *postcriticism*) provides a theoretical frame and rhizomatic method to resist convention and a resulting writing practice, which is

distinctly feminine and feminist: “Fictocriticism is self-reflexive writing that breaks down the boundaries between fiction and criticism, reader and writer, by using aesthetic techniques” (Jiwa, 2013, p. 104).

Fictocriticism challenges the divisions, which traditionally exist between the practice of creating a narrative (essay, history or fiction) and theory and criticism. Savage, Cornelissen and Franck (2018) offer insight into how organizations can be seen as products of fictions and that as such, the theory of fiction can be applied to analyze and interpret the ‘reality’ of organizations. Proponents of fictocriticism have argued that such approaches challenge the limitations of traditional academic writing and offer a power to the writer, which yields the effect of change in the interaction of text and reader (see Rhodes, 2015). But I must caution that “when we begin to define or declare what fictocriticism is or is not, fictocriticism loses its purpose, which is first and foremost a space of possibility” (Schlunke and Brewster, 2005).

Regrettably, fictocritical strategies have seen limited use in MOS (see Rhodes, 2015; Weatherall, 2018). Fictocritical approaches are well established in creative writing, literary studies and cultural studies. Fictocriticism was established in the 1990s as a feminist postmodern approach capable of challenging established conventions of academically acceptable writing (Hancox and Muller, 2011). It is a feminist call meant to inspire alignment between politics and personal practice – namely how we think and how we write (Linden, 2012). It is also meant to be an expression of the feminine and a confrontation to representations of the masculine in space, which hold back women’s achievements and progress (Linden, 2012). Feminist practices have long promoted

passionate intertextuality to develop an understanding of the writings of women (Gibbs, 2003). Such practices also have value in writing *for* women, affording agency and to make them feel alive and embodied, capable of being remembered, loved and admired (Gibbs, 2003). Fictocriticism intervenes in the "dispassionate, distancing, putatively objective forms of critical and theoretical writings which [tend] to define traditional academic writing" (Gibbs, 2003, p. 309).

In practice, my approach to fictocriticism consists of the use of first person writing, punctuating narratives with emotive auto-ethnographic reflections, combining a creative narrative with academic strategies and filling in gaps (traces) with my own ideas to produce a fuller and more persuasive story. Each woman's voice will be a mix of record, historical contextual information, sources close to her and my own subjective, but hopefully plausible, inferences. The result is a conversation with each of the women. I fully give myself over to the fantasy of an in-person conversation. This conversation draws on what is known, but also fills in what is unknown with plausibility and possibility.

But, let me be clear. I am not just writing to undo a history and retell a new story. Nor do I wish to create a disturbing binary between the feminine as fiction and the masculine as history (or truth). Fictocriticism is a practice of writing, which authentically appreciates the limitations which are imposed when we claim something is *real*, versus a *representation* or *cultural creation* (Linden, 2012; Munslow, 2010). It distinctly gets away from an additive approach to history and allows for writing to bring about change: in me, in scholarship and in our understanding of important contributions to history and

the knowledge-making process itself. *Writing differently* displaces the roots of power (Rhodes, 2015, Pullen and Rhodes 2008):

> What then are the possibilities for writing in and from the academy in a manner that might somehow allow the heart's instincts to be followed and the vast possibilities of expression to be explored and enjoyed? (Rhodes, 2015, p. 289).

I want to offer a more intimate and emotional account, which genuinely attends to these remarkable women and the way I feel about them. I do not want to write for Frances, Hallie, Madeleine or Viola, but *with* her. I want to combine her voice, her way, and her lost knowledge with my voice, my way and my knowledge.

Some have described this kind of writing as more *truthful* (Schlunke and Brewster, 2005), though I appreciate the paradoxality of that description. Fictocriticism is rather a way to "write and think [of] an embodied, textuated past or as individual intrusions into particular debates" (Schlunke and Brewster, 2005, p. 393). I see this method as an opportunity to visit the site of a complex history provocatively and bring together numerous voices to work in unison or in counterpoint (Gibbs, 2003).

In this age of post truth[10], there are times when fact is taken as fiction and fiction is taken as fact. And there are times when both prove to be exceptional in their ability to foster new thinking – both helpful and harmful. If we are going to write history, I would rather do so as an author who admits that the work is a combination of fact and fiction, enacted for a noble purpose.

[10] The best scholarly definition that I have read for "post truth" is by Sismondo (2017) who argues that the post truth era "is one in which bullshit is highly valued" (p. 3).

3.02 Writing Differently

"Is that all there is, is that all there is. If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing" (Leiber and Stoller, 1696, track 1)

It is my hope that this thesis offers an important contribution, which moves beyond theoretical consideration and into a new mode of writing for feminists engaging in history work. I believe that this method will reconcile the disadvantages posited by Hoff (1994) and Scott (1986) by highlighting how language and contestations act on the construction of women, while still rejecting temporality (through technique), and also presenting a narrative which can be followed from one point to the next.

Writing is performance. To write differently and integrate certain literary devices is to break with the conventions of academia as well as patriarchy and thus create an opportunity to think differently (Vachhani, 2019). Writing is a form of resistance and writing can be political and foster strength or fracture binaries.

3.02.1 Writing a Literary Non-Fiction, Fictitious Conversation

Creating a non-fiction, fictitious conversation is not new to academia (see Ue, 2012), but it has not been an approach adopted in MOS/MH by feminists. However, the general utility of non-fiction writing for female historical figures is clear: "non-fiction writing is also about unearthing a hidden or unacknowledged or unnoticed life" (Brown and Krog, 2011, p. 58). My rhizomatic approach is informed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (see Sørensen, 2005). Rhizomatic approaches offer multiplicity, connection, no beginning and no end; resisting organization and structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983;1987).

For the purpose of defining my approach to writing, there are two main rubrics to consider: non-fiction and literary non-fiction. The latter means that there is more skill, craft and literary devices used (Brown and Krog, 2011). The key components include: (1) a literary form (conversation), (2) basic story telling technique (beginning, build up, climax and conclusion), and (3) the personal pronoun of "I" to give personal access to the non-fiction 'reality' (Brown and Krog, 2011).

What is the difference between fiction and non-fiction approaches? Brown and Krog (2011) offer this analogy: "the fiction writer takes the photograph, what and how she wants and then develops it. The non-fiction writer uses a found photograph" (p. 60). Offering further, creative literary non-fiction will find the contradictions, fluidities and possibilities of the genre and renegotiate or remake identities to make sense of the society we live in by revealing our beliefs, assumptions, imaginings and realities (Brown and Krog, 2011). Clifford (1988) calls this approach a *dialogic ethnography* and a means to move from *studying something* to *understanding something*. I had two influences for my style of writing: Charlotte Gray and Margaret Atwood. I would not go so far as to suggest that I write in the style of either of these two literary giants, but they were influencers and inspirers to this work.

3.02.2 Fictional Techniques

I have adopted several strategies that are typically used by fiction writers. "Writing perceived as fictional is especially effective at evoking readers' empathy" (Keen, 2016, p. 10). Here I add a different element to my method: use of fiction to evoke empathy, interest and inspiration. My strategies included: (1) building an imaginative

space, or describing a real space in an imaginary time, (2) writing directly to the reader and in the first person, (3) writing in the present tense even when in the apparent past, (4) creating and reflecting emotion, and (5) writing visually, attending to all five senses (immersion) (Farr, 2019).

As you will read in the future chapters, I set up each conversation in an imaginary space and time. We (you and me) time travel to a selected date to meet up with our protagonist. I do not go so far as to invent or explain time travel[11], but I did have to research a great many details to ensure that these descriptions were plausible and believable. This expanded the scope of my research into several interesting and different areas. For instance, I had to investigate the campuses of Smith College and Cornell University, as this is where I meet up with Hallie and Frances respectively. I had to research the modes of dress and hair because I wanted to (rather ironically) describe each woman in the flesh. Given the rather disproportionate interest many chroniclers had of Frances's mode of dress, it gave me an opportunity to address this focus by chroniclers as a critique, while still giving you a sense of her. I also had to research different furniture, be it Viola's kitchen table in Montreal in 1954, or two wingback chairs in Madeleine's nursing home in 2009. This was part of the effort, though when reading, you might take it for granted and that is okay. Such is the intention when making something more plausible. It must be neither a distraction nor a focus.

Why did I do this? I did not want to create a dry, 'factual', yet boring text. I wanted to do something that was fun and affectively-charged (Keen, 2016). Mar, Oatley,

[11] Other smart folks can take this on.

Hirsh, Dela Paz and Peterson (2006) examined empathy scores in reading text with expository, immersive qualities and found that such text allows readers to become more absorbed. I am looking to create this effect so that you , dear reader, see her as *real*, someone to respect, honour, learn from and maybe even, love.

3.02.3 Limitations

The fictitious conversations will be presented as verbatim transcriptions of interviews with auto-ethnographical reflections throughout, which offer sensemaking and/or counterpoints. I intend to give you the feeling that you are travelling with me and listening in on a believable conversation. I weave their voices (Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola's) with mine and others to present a plausible and persuasive account of an intimate conversation.

Despite this being a generative project, I still expect to encounter limitations. The questions are necessarily fluid and open ended from the vantage point of the reader. As a writer, I am restricted by the following parameters: (1) information available (which is both a limitation and an opportunity), and (2) what I think will be in greatest service to MOS/MH. Therefore, there is not a set of fixed questions for each woman. Instead, I considered what I had available and structured it as a conversation, which flowed naturally. I have one fixed question at the conclusion of each conversation.

The interviews are also constrained by what I consider to be a reasonable level of inquiry when meeting in an interview setting. I use the time limit of 60 minutes. It is a practical reality for most interviews, but to be honest, I also feel compelled to leave, the reader, wanting. It is a device often wielded by non-fiction and fiction writers alike. This

is the magic of literary writing; we have an emotional reaction and develop attachment to characters and understandingly want more.

3.02.4 Temporality and Time Travel

> *"But the best evidence we have that time travel is not possible, and never will be, is that we have not been invaded by hordes of tourists from the future" (Hawking, 1993, page 154)*

Fiction often requires a leap of faith. You must want to go along for the ride. I have to provide just enough information to make it believable, but not so much that we get lost in the process instead of the result. You should know that I have not actually invented time travel. A close friend, with a great sense of humour, suggested I should tell you that you will have to wait until *yesterday* to find out how I did it.

We will *pretend* to go back in time for this experiment. In so doing, I can ground the fictitious conversation in a 'real' time and space (or the sense of it) and thus help you get comfortably situated.

As my reader, you will see that some of the sources I draw on are dated later than the fictitious conversation. I select various sources because they contain important remarks (often in the first person). If such remarks concern events in time *after* our conversation but details that I would like you to know, you will see these explained in reflections. Unspoken thoughts of mine (reflections) during the fictitious conversation will appear in *italics* to distinguish them from the spoken conversation. All this to say, that I will follow some of the rules of temporality in terms of events, but in terms of her voice, ideas and thoughts, I will be more fluid and opportunistic. However, you will

always know the date and time of any given source to give you context. When these appear in enunciated text, I suggest that you just acknowledge them when reading and imagine they are not said out loud.

You should also imagine (along with me) that there has been some prior formal correspondence in which I have reached out to each woman to request a meeting. I would have given them some idea about what I wish to talk to about. As with time travel, I cannot explain how I accomplished this marvel! I am just glad they were willing to participate.

An interesting consideration in this writing, was also a pragmatic question: when to travel back to? It needed it to be a time period with which she could reflect on her past, including any socio-political elements of the time. As authors of fiction often do, I considered how the time period shaped the environment, the setting, the style of dress and etiquette (general formality or lack thereof). This might seem trivial, but my motive is to make this imaginary journey play out in your mind's eye as a novel might. I want you to be able to picture each woman vividly. This will help her become more tangible to you and my arguments more persuasive overall.

Additionally, I needed to be sensitive to the date of each woman's death and her perceived health at the time to make the fictitious encounter plausible.

- For Frances, I picked 1964, a year before she died, but when she was still lecturing at Cornell University. She is 84 when we meet.
- For Hallie, I picked her last day with Smith College in 1955 and before Parkinson's started to greatly affect her. She is 65 when we meet.

- For Madeleine, I picked 2009, three years prior to her death. Madeleine remained active in her career for eight decades and I wanted to capture as much of that as possible, but also appreciate that she is 90 when we meet.
- For Viola, the choice was much more challenging. I wanted to pick a point after the events of 1946, for which she is known for in the present, but long before the end of her tragically short life in 1965 at the age of 50. I picked 1954 when she was in Montreal studying business, before moving to New York. She is 39 when we meet.

3.02.5 Shaping the Subjective Self and the Subjective Subject

I see this proposed way to write as a cathartic process, unconstrained from the traditional approaches to academic writing. Reflexive writing is the process of turning in on oneself. Writing reflects our inner self; it is an expressed description of our experience and personhood (Gadamer, 1998). Thus, I do not write only for, with and about Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola; I write for, with and about me.

You will also note that each woman has been shaped by others and herself and I am now complicit in a new reshaping. There are choices to be made in this effort and I take full responsibility for any mistakes I have made. Where I have used my voice for her, I have done my best to sound like her. Where I use another as a proxy, I select the traces which most adhere to my sense of her own voice and inclinations. Where such artifacts do not exist, I use research from the time and associated events to inform the conversation.

It is also interesting to note how I am with each woman. If you pay close attention, you will see that I am deferential to Frances, collegial with Hallie, careful with Madeleine and reflexive with Viola. This was an observation I made after spending considerable time with each of the women. It is a true reflection of how I feel in relation to them. I cannot explain this, other than to say, it is similar to other relationships that I have with other women. I will share more about my thoughts on this later in the thesis.

3.03 The Facets – The Performativity of Ficto-Feminism

The aim of this new method is to create a plausible and persuasive account. I am trying to get you excited about Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola and to see their potential value for MOS/MH. I am also trying to inspire you to try this method out for yourself. In so doing, you need to understand what it can deliver and how it performs.

There are several key facets, which I mentioned in the introductory chapter which I will review in greater detail here and again in chapter 8.

3.03.1 Unlocking Agency in Subject and Writer

The promise of agency for writer and subject is of importance for feminists engaged in advocacy work. As I have said, even the term “subject” is bound up in the idea of a hierarchy, in patriarchy and in colonialism (Phillips, 2018). The idea of subject illustrates a “separate sphere” (Mill, 1869, as cited in Phillips, 2018, p. 845). One of my aims for this research is to attempt to shift agency back into theory and practice within feminism, which has been a quest for feminists since the 1980s (see Scott, 2011).

Identity and agency are closely related concepts within feminist work (Maitra, 2013). In this study, I am directly involved in both the construction of the women’s

identities, but also in the construction of my own as both an advocate and researcher/writer. For some, this motive might expand to include achieving political or social power.

Through feminist agency work, we are looking to elevate the voices of women, achieve influence, author our own self-concept and create opportunity for individual action (Morabito, Shelley, Rabe-Hemp and Miller, 2018). Through this method, I am looking for an innovative way to express feminist agency. I want to: (1) make each woman more visible to the discipline; (2) reveal the women's lessons as important but overlooked contributions to MOS/MH; and (3) exercise certain freedom in writing and advocacy work.

By taking on this work, I am pleased to have already seen tangible results for Frances, Hallie and Viola: Frances and Hallie have been published in management journals and Viola will be inducted to the Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame in 2020. These early "wins" were a great inspiration to take this experiment further.

3.03.2 Reflexivity, Embodied/Emic Insights

My approach is marked by a heightened reflexivity and I suggest that those who undertake this method ready themselves for both the benefits and challenges that this kind of reflexivity requires. Embodied writing is very personal, and you will need to be prepared to share deeply, because you become a vessel for greater understanding.

Therefore, reflexivity challenges our ideas about what constitutes knowledge. We become a source of worthy knowledge as researchers/writers in addition to being cultural translators. Our bodies become the way to understand and navigate a variety of inputs

and our minds are merged with the thoughts, ideas and insights of our subjects. Feminism is an embodied practice and this kind of reflexivity moves beyond the intellectual constraints of other approaches (Sinclair, 2019).

My hope for this method is that figures of the past can be given new life; that embodied engagement helps us to see that history is temporally unconstrained. We can visit various moments in time and space, and we can engage with figures in ways which make them more tangible and go beyond intellectual stimulation to a didactic practice. Ideas and lessons can be revealed and examined anew.

I believe that embodied writing also challenges ontological security, because we destabilize the idea of the history as only existing in the past (or at a distance). Our collective experience (in writing and reading) of Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola, is in this moment, in the present.

3.03.3 Emotionality and Resonance

Literatures spanning sociology, anthropology, psychology, feminist studies and more recently MOS, argue convincingly for the benefits of using emotion in the research endeavour (Whiteman, Müller and Johnson, 2009). My emotions play out openly in this thesis and are meant to (1) help me understand each of the women better; (2) develop a persuasive and moving narrative; and (3) elicit an emotional response in you, as reader. Weick (1999) argues that emotions have concealed value, while undertaking qualitative research, and Ellis (1991) and Van Maanen, Manning and Miller (1993) acknowledge that emotions are an important part of doing research. So, I was drawn to the idea of bringing it to the fore here and examining if my emotional engagement in the research

process enhanced the value of ficto-feminism. Typically, researcher emotion is a "back-stage activity" (Whiteman et al., 2009, p. 47). It may also be hard to admit to experiencing emotion in the research process because of positivist academic discourse, which favours detachment (Campbell, 2001, Blakely, 2007). However, I agree with Whiteman et al, (2009) that active emotional engagement can be a tool for knowledge creation. Whiteman, et al., (2009) and Blakely (2007) conclude that emotion at the level of method helps to orient the researcher to social context and increases our ability to analyze and interpret, while also revealing new questions and ideas.

3.03.4 Surfacing Discourses

To study discourse, we need to first understand the nature of discursive space which shape various subject positions (Szücs, 2015). I will spend a considerable part of chapter 8 to review the variety of discourses which shape the subject positions of the women in this study. Some of these are familiar discourses for feminists, such as (1) gender, (2) history and (3) socio political context.

However, there will be other discourses, which may surprise you, as they did me in my prior work with Frances, Hallie and Viola. This is the promise of this ficto-feminism; an opportunity to find new discourses, which are harder to detect but nonetheless, powerfully at work to subjugate women. These include: (1) alternative ways of organizing, (2) valourization, (3) being simultaneously a villain and a heroine, and (4) being ahead of her time. Foucault would call these "epistemes" or "knowledge systems" which inform certain thinking in various periods of history (Foucault, 1979; Weedon, 1997). In utilizing ficto-feminism, I hope to introduce you to some of these less visible,

perhaps more insidious discourses, which operate in such a way that they help historians and MOS scholars neglect women. It is through this conversational approach, that they become more visible and detectable.

3.03.5 A Feminist Strategy for Studying the Past

I want us to think differently about the past and historical figures. Ficto-feminism is a postmodern ironic exercise in the writing of a history. It is my hope that it directly addresses a key concern in writing about women, namely that there can be so little to work with. How then do we see the potential for other disciplines? How do we create the necessary excitement around female figures so that we dare to dig deeper, theorize and philosophize? I do not want to stiffly deliver a cold resume of four brilliant women. In so doing, the liminal spaces are ignored, and they can offer so much potential (see Turner, 1964). Making these liminal spaces come alive with my imagination, through the connections between the thoughts of many writers, or in offering both point and counter point, has a way of enriching the data and transforming our understanding and experience.

I became interested in liminal spaces when I studied art history in my undergrad and first came in contact with the theories and cultural representations of postmodernism. I revisit this in chapter 8, because I believe it holds the promise of new rules and new knowledge.

With these foundational ideas set, I believe it is time to tell you a story of four brilliant women that I have come to know and love.

Now, shall we meet Frances?

Chapter 4: Frances Perkins

4.01 Biographical Introduction

Frances (christened *Fannie*) was born in Boston on April 10, 1880. Frances' date of birth did shift in the public record from 1880 to 1882[12]. There are various, conflicting explanations for this change (for example, see Martin, 1976; Downey, 2009, and Pasachoff, 1999). Frances considered home her family's homestead in Maine, dating back to the early 1700s. Her parents, Susan Bean and Frederick Perkins, were educated and entrepreneurial, first venturing in dairy farming and later in office supply and stationery (Downey, 2009). Frances had an older brother named Augustus and a younger sister, named Ethel. Her ancestors were Scotch and English Protestants (Downey, 2009). In 1913, she married Paul Wilson and they had a daughter, named Susanna. Wilson was very ill through most of his adult life and frequently institutionalized. Later in life, Frances served as sole caregiver (Martin, 1976).

According to numerous accounts (Colman, 1993; Downey, 2009; Keller, 2006; Lawson, 1966; Martin, 1976; Mohr, 1979; Pasachoff, 1999; Severn, 1976) Perkins began lobbying for women's rights and improved working conditions early in her career. Her interests and passions developed her first as a social worker and then later as an effective lobbyist and policy maker. Perkins was educated at Mount Holyoke University and graduated with a degree in chemistry and physics in 1902. She followed up later with a master's degree in political science from Columbia University in 1910. She also studied

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[12] Dear reader, it does not ultimately matter, but I would make the point that it serves as a kind of distraction; a tactic I have noted several times in my research. "This" or "that" is highlighted and focused on with some preoccupation and usually at the expense of other important details.

economics and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School (business school) starting in 1918. It was during her undergraduate years that her interests in labour are reported to have first developed (Martin, 1976. She took a course in *economic history* and visited factories and interviewed workers to understand industrial life.

Encouraged to teach, she eventually instead pursued social work, a ground-breaking new field at the time. Frances was inspired by Florence Kelley, the executive secretary of the National Consumers League. Kelley was a Marxist, turned socialist and had the personal motto: "investigate, record, agitate" (Downey, 2009, p. 13). Frances initially volunteered at Hull House in Chicago. Hull House, founded by Jane Adams in 1889, was the first and most influential settlement house in the United States and helped to spawn the settlement house movement that attracted Mary Parker Follett – who did similar work in Boston. The movement also attracted Mary van Kleeck through initial involvement with the College Settlements Association; Harry Hopkins, who worked at New York's Christodora Settlement House in the New York slums in 1912; and Harold Ickes who became involved with Adams and other progressives in pre-WWI Chicago. Perkins, Hopkins, Ickes and van Kleeck all went on to join Roosevelt's New Deal administration – while van Kleeck resigned early from the administration, the other three played long and crucial roles in the development of New Deal policies. Though it took time to gain experience initially, her career soon blossomed:

> She was elected to and promoted through a series of positions between 1907 and 1933: executive secretary of the Philadelphia Research and Protective Agency, Executive Secretary of the New York Consumers' League, New York State

> Investigating Commission, Executive Secretary of the Committee on Safety of the City of New York, Executive Director of the New York Council of Women for War Work, Industrial Commission of the New York State Department of Labour, Executive Secretary of the Council of Immigrant Education (Pasachoff, 1999). She was ultimately appointed as Chairman (sic) and then Industrial Commissioner of the New York State Department of Labor and in 1933, she joined Franklin D. Roosevelt's (FDR's) cabinet and remained until after his death in 1945. (as cited in Williams and Mills, 2017, p. 35).

During her tenure, under the mandate of the New Deal, she was responsible for authoring and implementing widespread socio-economic programs, which stabilized the economy and improved working conditions (Martin, 1976). Perkins became the advocate and architect for many social welfare, and labour policies, including: social security, unemployment benefits, welfare, workplace safety, the abolishment of child labour, the introduction of minimum wage, overtime laws, and the standard 40-hour work week (Martin, 1976). These policies are now taken-for-granted practices in everyday working life in the United States. After her career in government, she later taught at Cornell University until she died in 1965 at the age of 85.

4.02 Pre-Conversation

The most useful sources in developing this conversation with Frances were her two books: *People at Work* (1934) and *The Roosevelt I Knew* (1946). It took considerable time to get my hands on a copy of *People at Work* (1934), which my husband found in a private collection and had to have sent to my sister in law in New Jersey, as it could not

be delivered to me in Canada. I read it ferociously in the span of a day, highlighting passages of its weathered pages. My favourite quote is:

> Our idea of what constitutes social good has advanced with the procession of the ages, from those desperate times when just to keep body and soul together was an achievement, to the great present when "good" includes an agreeable, stable civilization accessible to all, the opportunity of each to develop his [and her] particular genius and the privilege of mutual usefulness (Perkins, 1934, p. 11).

Between the two books, I not only learned about her background, I was also able to get a sense of her leadership style, her values and her broad accomplishments. A great find, through Cornell University, was an audio file of one of her final lectures in 1964. This lecture sets the imaginary stage for our conversation.

4.03 In Conversation with Frances Perkins

I travel back in time to meet with Frances Perkins after class at Cornell University in 1964. Frances is 84 when we meet, and still lecturing on the New Deal and the early days of social work at Cornell University in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR). She is just finishing a lecture to nearly 300 undergraduates[13] on the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in the Asch Building, New York in 1911. This tragedy led to the death of 147 people, the majority of whom were women and children. The fact that Frances is still lecturing about this event more than 60 years later reminds me just how much of a pivotal moment it was not only for her, but for labour. The efforts of Frances

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[13] 300 was the average enrolment in ILR in the 1960 (Cornell University, n/d).

and Al Smith, and later, FDR and others led to improved safety standards and working conditions in New York.

I am nervous and excited to meet Frances. She is terribly private and has boasted her New England roots as the reason, saying in various media interviews: “We New Englanders keep ourselves to ourselves” (Perkins as cited in Colman, 1993, p. 62). I know that I am lucky to have the opportunity. I poke my head into to the lecture hall and take note of the paired Prouvé school desk styles of the late 1940s, looking well-worn in this 1960s classroom. Frances is at the head of the class behind a lectern. I grab an inconspicuous seat in the back; I am excited to catch the end of her lecture:

> […] Although their commission was to devise ways and means to prevent accidents by fire in the State of New York, we went on and kept expanding the function of the commission 'till it came to be the report on sanitary conditions and to provide for their removal and to report all kinds of unsafe conditions and then to report all kinds of human conditions that were unfavorable to the employees, including long hours, including low wages, including the labor of children, including the overwork of women, including homework put out by the factories to be taken home by the women. It included almost everything you could think of that had been in agitation for years. We were authorized to investigate and report and recommend action on all these subjects. I may say we did.
>
> So that beginning with that report coming in as it did in 1915, it was laid on the table before the legislature, and by this time, Al Smith was the speaker of the House and well on the way to be governor. We had a very favorable audience and

> much of the legislation was enacted into law, oh, within a couple of years, I mean, you know, hearings and so forth, and bringing up the supporters, and modifying the bill.
>
> So that we really got a big draw out of that one episode, which, as I have thought of it afterwards, seems in some way to have paid the debt society owed to those children, those young people who lost their lives in the Triangle Fire. It's their contribution to the people of New York that we have this really magnificent series of legislative acts to protect and improve the administration of the law regarding the protection of work people in the City of - in the State of New York (Perkins, September 30, 1964).

After the students file out, with only one or two hangers on, I wait patiently as she speaks to one young man, but I am too far away to make out what they are saying. I note that the class is full of young men, all well-dressed. It is quite different to a classroom in my time. Once free, I come closer and she immediately reaches out her hand and says: “You must be Miss Williams”.

> *Unspoken thoughts of mine will now appear in italics to help the reader follow our interview and distinguish between what is said and unsaid. My comments will appear under KW, whereas Frances’ will be under FP in the following transcribed interview.*

KW: Miss Perkins, I am so delighted to meet you and to have the opportunity to spend some time with you.

It might sound silly, but I have agonized over what to call her. You see, she has expressed great concern about being variously called "Perk" by her classmates, "Fannie", or "Ma Perkins" or even "Madame Queen" by her critics including fellow Minister Herold Ickes (Neman 2004). She also did not like Madame Secretary, nor Mrs. Wilson and preferred Miss Perkins (her maiden name) in work settings (Lawson, 1996). She addresses me in this same formal way, and I am not surprised. It is how I signed off on our earlier correspondence when arranging the meeting time – I thought it the right thing to do. She never invited me to call her Frances. I presumed and was right that she would be expecting to keep things formal but friendly.

FP: I was delighted to get your invitation and I am happy that this was a convenient time. Shall we get started? We will not be disturbed here.

Getting right down to business, we each take a seat at the wooden teak mid-century teacher desk beside the lectern at the front of the lecture hall. There are two study metal and wooden chairs on one side of the desk, and I take the far one. She surprisingly takes the seat behind the desk, creating a sense of formality between us. I note my posture and straighten up. I collect my notes and motion if it is okay to turn on the vintage, weathered-white, Mayfair reel-to-reel portable recorder that I found at an estate sale for $45. She nods. It has a separate wired microphone, which I place in front of her. Unfortunately, the far more convenient cassette and micro cassette recorders will not come out until the later 1960s and 1970s. We begin. I decide to start with where my thoughts are.

KW: When you joined President Roosevelt's cabinet, the media and your colleagues made quite a big deal about how to address you. Various accounts have tried to explain this, and I was quite surprised by how much attention it was given in the press. What do you make of this?

Her critics and colleagues also made fun of her style of dress, suggesting that she dressed more like a "a sedate middle-aged mother" (Downey, 2009. P. 45), or as though her clothes had been "designed by the Bureau of Standards" (Stolberg, 1940, cited in Burnier, 2008a, p. 410). I find her signature tricorn hat and her modest dark coloured dress, accented with a white bow, quite lovely. I had read that she used it as a kind of uniform as it often made those around her comfortable and inspired professionalism (Perkins, cited in Colman 1993). She has said in her memoirs: "so behave, so dress, and so comport yourself that you remind them subconsciously of their mothers" (Perkins, cited in Colman 1993, p. 38; Martin 1976, p. 146). With my wandering thoughts back on track, Frances continues.

FP: I do find it a very strange thing. "I use my maiden name as a matter of expediency . . . but I don't regard it as a matter of life or death" (Perkins as cited in Severn, 1976, p. 55). When I married Paul Wilson, then governor Al Smith, had to help me challenge my right to use my name, because the Attorney General wouldn't have it! (Martin, 1976). I also did not appreciate the suggestion I was insistent or even stubborn, but I would concede that "I had been somewhat touched by feminist ideas and that was one of the reasons I kept my maiden name" (Perkins

as cited in Pasachoff, 1999, p. 36). I also believe we were a modern couple (Martin, 1976).

I confess I feel the same. I kept my Welsh maiden name too and have always dislike being called Mrs. VanVeldhuisen. I am Ms. Williams (though Miss. will do fine here) and hopefully someday, I will be Dr. Williams, like my dad.

KW: Do you think the confusion was purposeful?

FP: I believe it was at times purposeful, but also likely just a reflection of the times. People had difficulty seeing me in Roosevelt's cabinet. To them, I was out of place. My feminist ideas, my role as a mother and a wife, was often a distraction for the press from the work we were trying to accomplish through the New Deal.

I noted in her book from 1946, she refers to FDR as Roosevelt, unless she is quoting a conversation, in which she uses the more formal, Mr. President.

KW: Another point of controversy for your chroniclers was a list that you made.

Interrupting before I can ask my question, she asks:

FP: Which one?

I get it. There were two, but all of her biographers are concerned with the one she gave to FDR when she joined his cabinet as Secretary of Labor.

I smile encouragingly and continue.

KW: Why don't you tell me about both?

FP: Very well. When I was enlisted as Industrial Commissioner in New York in 1929, I had specific things that I wanted to accomplish, which I presented in advance to Roosevelt and his reception was very good. He said: "I want all these things done.

Make all your plans – go as far as you can. When you need help, come to me and I will do everything I can. I am for the program – all of it" (Perkins as cited in Perkins, 1946, p. 58; Pasachoff, 1999, p. 58; Colman, 1993, p. 50). When Roosevelt offered me a position in his cabinet when he took on the presidency, I at first refused, but then when he pressed, I said: "I should want to do a great deal" (Perkins as cited in Colman, 1993, p. 60). I offered that I had "written out a few notes […] [but that I would not] hold you to this. But I don't want to say yes to you unless you know what I'd like to do and are willing to have me go ahead and try" (Perkins as cited in Martin, 1967, p. 239-240).

KW: Just to be clear, is it safe to say that it was never an ultimatum (Kaye and Gibbon, 2011), nor a list of causes (Cohen as cited in Perkins, 1946), nor a list of proposals (Severn, 1976)? Nor was it out of character for you and FDR to negotiate this way?

FP: Certainly not.

I do not dare to share that one of her future chroniclers has suggested her proposals were a feminization of the department (Newman, 2004). I think it too insulting. It was however bizarre that such a focus was paid to this exchange and then repeated and reproduced in several ways. It feels like a distraction. No one ever spoke about what was on the list, just the exchange. Is this not another excuse to ignore her accomplishments through political invective?

KW: And on this list were your plans for fair labour practices and protections?

FP: Precisely.

Taking her cue and not wanting the replicate and reproduce irrelevant information, I turn our conversation to what I think might interest management and organizational scholars most, namely what I think we have missed in the development of the field, beyond the credit she deserves for labour policy, now taken for granted. There is debate among scholars as to when management and organizational studies arouse as a field and this temporal confusion has led to speculation as to why certain theories and figures were included or not. For instance, Maslow who worked in clinical psychology in the early 1940s had his work on motivation adopted by management theorists in the late 1950s (Cooke and Mills, 2008). Blame has targeted the trappings of communist association in which Maslow and others found themselves. Thus associations (real or otherwise) and their consequences might be of consideration in Frances' case as well. However, as a trick of history, MOS now claims Maslow as a major contributor to the field (Cooke and Mills, 2008). Frances and others are not considered. But I will return to this a bit later.

KW: As I mentioned in my letter, I think that a lot of what you accomplished and how you did it has relevance to our field in management and organizational studies. For instance, in the early days of social work and labour, you developed something called "conference style engagement" (Newman, 2004). Can you explain how that worked?

FP: "In America, public opinion is the leader. It is our American habit to arrive at what we think by talking things out together […] talking, talking, talking of what

ought to be done, and creating by their debates a mechanism for doing it" (Perkins, 1934, p. 37). I used it as a method to reach consensus over debates and difficult issues and as a result, individuals concerned with various issues could come together to resolve them; it was my favourite style of problem solving (Martin, 1976; Perkins, 1934).

As I have argued elsewhere, I think this strategy was "highly diplomatic, potentially risky and devoid of executive power (requiring individuals to opt in), this method [relied] on people considering their public and social welfare responsibilities and acknowledge[ing] that certain problems cannot be solved in isolation" (Williams and Mills, 2017, p. 37).

KW: What was so effective about this consensus based method?

FP: It democratized the process of decision-making and policy development and shared power across statuses, gender and class. I always had great faith that when faced with adversity, people would use their common sense and compassion and that "if presented with the facts […] they would want to correct what was wrong, to act morally" (Martin, 1976, p. 211-212).

KW: It must have been very difficult as a woman, to gain respect and credibility. I read in both the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Washington Evening Star* the following unflattering characterization:

> Call it a day boys; call it a day. The lady is better than you are and we should not be a bit surprised if higher compliments could be paid her. What's more, she is not afraid of you. And that makes an awful

> combination. A woman smarter than a man is something to get on guard about. But a woman smarter than a man and also not afraid of a man, well, good night! (Martin 1976, p. 301).

Her eyebrows raise and I wonder if such questions are a good idea, but I am deeply interested in how she has been socially constructed and how she feels about it. So, I press with another example.

There is another example from Minister Garner captured after your first cabinet meeting, which I found interesting:

> I guess she's all right . . . she didn't interrupt. She didn't butt in. She didn't ask any questions. She kept still until the President asked her what she had to say. Then she said it. She said it loud enough so I could hear. She said it plain and distinct. She said it short. When she was through, she stopped. I guess she's all right (as cited in Martin, 1976, p. 34).

How did this make you feel?

FP: I have heard worse! Including the ridiculous idea that I was coddling 'aliens' because of my "soft woman's heart" (Martin 1976, p. 324)! Paul W. Ward suggested that I "lacked imagination and courage" (as cited in Keller, 2006, p. 108). Many thought I would not accomplish much beyond being appointed (Newman 2004; Hamill, cited in Thompson 1975). But my image improved over time.

Interjecting as I do not wish for her to believe that I did not locate favourable praise.

KW: I know that John L. Lewis, past union president of the United Mine Workers of America said that you "performed [your] work within the confines of the limitations imposed upon [you] mighty well" (as cited in Mohr, 1979, p. 278).

FP: Yes, Mr. Lewis did change his tune as he first suggested that I was quite "woozy in the head"! (as cited in Mohr, 1979, p. 278).

I giggle, because she clearly thinks it is funny too. I am a bit relieved. I did not want to bring up US President Kennedy's kind remarks, since in this time, he tragically was murdered less than a year ago. However, he praised her for developing new and revolutionary programs (Mohr, 1979). Upon her death came one of the most fitting tributes from the Secretary of Labor, W. Willard Wirtz:

> *Every man and woman in America who works at a living wage, under safe conditions, for reasonable hours or who is protected by unemployment insurance or social security is Frances Perkins' debtor (cited in Lawson 1966, p. 153).*

I circle back to one of my prepared questions.

KW: In your work, you also valued investigation, research and experimentation. What benefit did this offer you?

FP: In settlement houses, as a social worker, I learned the merits of making a survey and then devising and starting a program, which met the needs identified (Martin, 1976). "We began during those years to gather facts on which to base an intelligent public opinion" and then to establish funding priorities for stakeholders (Perkins, 1934, p. 46). I spent a great deal of time learning first-hand the

conditions of workers and then used this knowledge to lobby and inform policy (Martin, 1976). Investigation and research then developed into “experimentation based on common sense” (Perkins, 1934, p. 281).

KW: What were some of the improvements enacted in the management of organizations and people, which developed out of your policies?

FP: Regulation was exchanged with self-regulation, which promoted cooperation between management and workers. The superordinate goal was being attentive to “human needs and a good way of life” (Perkins, 1934, p. 240). It became the cornerstone device of the New Deal (Perkins, 1947).

This sounds like the beginnings of evidence-based management (EBM), though I know Frances has not been credited as part of that body of work, which first originated in medicine in 1992 as a scientific method and is now lauded by theorists operating in a positivist tradition as one of the most effective ways to link theory and practice in management[14]).

KW: You were part of a fascinating era in industrial development.

This is not unlike today, where the precarity of work and future proofing of skills is of paramount interest with the advent of things like artificial intelligence, the internet of things, and the digital transformation of industry.

You saw the loss of pride and craft and the displacement of workers. What past lessons are important for our present and future?

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[14] The rise of EBM seems at a high point of popularity. This has been spurred by the work of Denise Rousseau and others at the Centre for Evidence-Based Management (www.cebma.org).

Braverman (1974) would later refer to the displacement of skills and workers as a result of technology, which led to the "deskilling" of workers.

FP: I saw the rise of technology, which displaced workers or made them obsolete. It meant that people who had "formally held a respected and successful job […] in making an important thing [were] transferred to this dreary and relatively unimportant kind of work" by new labour saving machines (Perkins, 1934, p. 206). All workers are artists and "no artist ever handles material without feeling that this or that is right, and that he [or she] is making an ethical and emotional contribution which not only makes him [or her] happy, but which makes him [or her] also a better and more noble person" (Perkins, 1934, p. 204). This is when I became not only concerned with improved productivity, but also with personal development. I feel that an "educative life is possible in industrial work" (Perkins, 1934, p. 242). Industry is fundamentally creative and therefore must also provide for human needs and must continually "rediscover the interest and significance of work" for everyone (Perkins, 1934, 243).

While Frances was promoting the importance of human need, Elton Mayo was investigating and experimenting with changes in working conditions as a measure of productivity at Hawthorne in Chicago. He becomes a noted theorist on human problems in an industrial civilization. This work largely informed management and organizational studies on the ideas of job satisfaction and fatigue as a measure of economic potential (Mayo, 1934). However, not unlike Maslow, such adoptions came much later in the 1950s (Foster, Mills, Weatherbee, 2014). If

MOS adopted Maslow as a clinical psychologist, Taylor as a mechanical engineer and Mayo as a psychologist, then why not Frances as a social worker, labour organizer and policy architect? Particularly if such adoptions came later, then why were they still so selectively gendered?

KW: Your work directly informed management strategies and leadership practice in the field. What was at the core of these successfully enacted theories?

FP: It is always about partnership. Nothing is accomplished alone. Partnership needs to be built on trust, mutual accountability and reciprocity. In my work, I helped "industry and government […] [to] enter into a kind of partnership within which a measure of self-government for industries would be established, the government supervising, safeguarding the interests of the total populations" (Perkins, 1934, p. 146-147).

The implication with this question is that though theorists do not acknowledge the adoption of Frances's policies and ideas, they were nonetheless enacted in practice. My prior work examines why Frances was overlooked and what was overlooked, this question interrogates what has been left in the liminal space; the space where we must acknowledge some level of activity and action, even if the theorizing of the field itself has chosen to ignore it.

KW: I find it amazing that you were able to sway powerful trade unions and industry leaders to consider new practice (Martin, 1976). How did you do it?

FP: I did encounter criticism, but I could not have adopted a top-down approach as a woman in the 1930s (Perkins, 1947; Martin, 1976). I had to use persuasion,

supported by research and experimentation to convince leaders it was the right thing to do (Perkins, 1934). I had to be prepared for and often did, allow others to take the credit for the work (Martin, 1976).

In other words, Frances used what we now generally refer to as "soft power", popularized by Nye who coined it in 1980. Many were credited later with the work that Frances did in the 1930s and 1940s. Her tendency to allow others to take credit for achievements is a likely factor contributing to her invisibility in MOS/MH (Martin, 1976).

KW: The women taking part in my study have all embraced social good as an important principle in the work they did. Your work in social work and through the Great Depression was also concerned with stabilization, which I think emphasizes the important linkages between economics and welfare initiatives. Can you tell me about that?

FP: "A plan of cooperation between natural economic laws and social needs" is necessary (Perkins, 1934, p. 127). Stabilization efforts required all citizens to be engaged in the practice of general welfare (Martin, 1976). These ideas came easy to me, because I started as a social worker and I believed from the beginning that the work of labour, industry and government must protect business and men, minorities, women and children (Martin, 1976).

It is disquieting to think that equality and fairness are an ongoing contemporary concern in organizations. Frances was clearly forward thinking, but this also highlights the lack of consideration by MOS earlier as negligent.

KW: You also adopted different economic principles from the ones being touted by capitalism, namely Patten's theory of abundance (1907). Can you tell me a bit about that?

FP: I adopted Patten's theories when I was a social worker. It was a corner stone framework in our emerging field. It revolved around the idea that by greatly increasing per capital production, a surplus economy would emerge and everyone would have enough food, clothing and shelter, and by extension, good health (Martin, 1976).

KW: How was this expressed in your negotiations and policies?

FP: I believed that we should "push up the standard of living – [and] hold gains at any cost" (Perkins, 1934, p. 243). I felt and still do, that the "welfare of one [is] linked with the welfare of all" (Perkins, 1934, p. 127).

I can see the thread of mutual accountability return and the bridging of economic priorities with social welfare. I also see that we might consider the emersion of the field of social work as happening prior to MOS, whereby economic principles of abundance were being theorized and enacted, but not by MOS. This speaks to some lost link between MOS and industrial relations, which we will examine further with Madeleine as well.

KW: This must have been difficult to achieve. How did you promote it?

FP: To promote this I had to pitch the idea that a worker with security, a safe work environment, appropriate hours of work and a fair income would have the

opportunity to have a “cultural life to which he [and she] is entitled and [to] which [he and she] will make and build that better America” (Perkins, 1934, p. 224)

And there was the superordinate goal again. Powerful. Time to take our conversation in a bit of a different direction and I am a bit nervous to bring this up, but I must as I think it speaks to the socio-political environment of the day.

KW: Despite your great success, there was a resolution moved against you for impeachment hearings by Representative J. Parnell Thomas, for failing to uphold the immigration laws, which formed part of your labour portfolio. The impeachment charge was dropped for lack of evidence. Did you see this as an attack on your policies or on you?

FP: Roosevelt made light of these proceedings. He said: “it’s all nonsense […] [but] I didn’t like the idea of being impeached and was considerably disturbed by the episode” (Perkins 1946, p. 305). It was a political attack (Wandersee, 1993). It was an attack on the New Deal, but more specifically representative of a growing idea within society which linked New Dealers and others with Communism. Many of us were branded communists and I was considered a Russian ally in the advent of the McCarthy era (Martin, 1976). Red-baiting was common. As feminism grew throughout the New Deal, feminists were also linked to Communism (Rupp and Taylor, 1987; Nyland and Heenan, 2005; Nyland and Rix, 2000; Horowitz, 1996).

As my research shows a similar thing occurred in Canada, I make a note to bring this up in my conversation with Madeleine. In the US, after FDR’s presidency,

there emerged a large backlash to the policies of the New Deal, which Frances' negotiated. Businesses felt that the New Deal had promoted too much worker participation in the role of management (Nyland and Heenan, 2005). It was later determined that such views were shaped by Taylorism and the influence of scientific management (Nyland and Heenan, 2005).

KW: Do you feel you were vindicated when the charges were dropped?

I am doubtful as I know that many have suggested that after this, FDR lost faith in her and began to marginalize her (see Burnier, 2008a).

FP: There was a whisper campaign, which continuously attempted to show me in an unfavourable light, but I became used to addressing accusations, however fanciful "truthfully and good-humouredly and politely" (Perkins, Reminiscences, Part 6, Session 1, p. 485).

Moreover, Roosevelt never lost faith in me. At the beginning of each new term, I would think it was time to move on, but he refused to let me go (Perkins, 1946). During wartime, I was given more authority and responsibility (Perkins, 1946).

She is amazingly strong. I cannot imagine the constant level of critique she must have endured and to have always met it with good humour and politeness. I am in awe. I know that I could not have done so.

KW: You and the President enjoyed a special bond. Some have suggested that you were not critical enough of him. Is that true?

Burnier (2008a) went so far as to suggest that she was "a docile body for Roosevelt in that she was never critical of him" (p. 415).

FP: Well that is nonsense. I was quite critical of him! I was deeply loyal, but also critical. “He was many things—not clear, not simple, with drives and compulsions in a dozen different directions, with curiosity sending him from one field and experience to another, with imagination making it possible for him to identify himself, at least partly and temporarily, with wildly different phenomena and people” (Perkins, 1946, p. 4).

I was also weary of his involvement in labour disputes. “He was not a good negotiator in a labor dispute. He was too imaginative. He had too many ideas, and they sometimes where not in harmony with ancient policies, prejudices, and habits of the union or industry he was dealing with” (Perkins 1946, p. 290). And he “rarely knew more about the situation when he made a proposal to the two sides in this formal way than what could be put down on half a sheet of paper” (p. 313).

She offers these insights with humour in her eyes and I can see that she enjoys talking about FDR. I inch towards a point that I hope she will speak to.

KW: How did he feel about your accomplishments? Did he recognize the difficulties you experienced in developing and implementing the New Deal?

FP: He did. He was particularly grateful when I had two bills drawn up to preserve the measures under the New Deal when the National Industrial Recovery Act failed to pass (Perkins, 1946).

She was always thinking ahead.

Before he died, he said something that I will never forget. He said: “Frances, you have done awfully well. I know what you have gone through. I know what you have accomplished” (as cited in Perkins, 1946, p. 377). “It was all the reward I could have asked—to know that he had recognized the storms and trials I had faced in developing our program, to know that he appreciated the program and thought well of it, and that he was grateful” (Perkins, 1946, p. 377)

Despite the praise, I know that FDR did not make a more public attempt to defend and praise her work (Perkins, 1946). However, she seems not to mind. Clearly, she was happy to have remained in the shadows.

KW: All of the women in this study are said to be “ahead of her time”. There are several such references applied to you. One reads: “she was a pioneer, a master negotiator, and a woman ahead of her time” (WinSummit, 2019[15]). Similar things have been said about your contemporary, Mary Parker Follett, the American social worker, (Shilling, 2000). What do think about that?

Understanding her modesty, I reference Mary Parker Follett to give her a way to deflect attention. I use Mary like a heuristic.

FP: Mary was a great inspiration to me. She promoted the idea of business as an important but inseparable thing from society (Shilling, 2000). I think the answer may be that when people do things that challenge political thought, it is hard to understand. When it turns out to be reasonable after a time, people can give credit in hindsight. This is perhaps more noticeable in women. I think that Mary’s ideas

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[15] I do think that these more contemporary references work (WinSummit, 2019; Shilling, 2000) and track with the 1964 timeline.

of cooperation over competition were a great revelation to me and others (Shilling, 2000) and I carried those ideas forward in my work. My critique of the moniker is that it ironically perhaps came too late; Mary died in 1933. When she was writing, such ideas were so new. I remember reading *Creative Experience* and seeing her frustration for developments in thought not considering modern methods of study and the importance of difference (Follett, 1924).

I appreciate that she is still trying to answer my non-question. I can certainly see that Frances considers that Mary was appreciated in the past by her and others operating is a certain intellectual tradition. Calás and Smircich (1996) argue that Follett's work was lost under the constraints and advent of positivism. They have further critiqued a revival interest as erasing an important context and "intellectual location" (p. 151). Such a characterization contributes to a myth that all lost figures were just overlooked (or considered and put aside) in a grand history, which favours positivism. Another concern I have with this temporal arrangement, is that some might see modern positivism as having benefited from figures like Follett, when we know that is not the case. In Creative Experience she appears to levy a firm critique on the limitations of scientific management and what she refers to as the "trend toward objectivity" (p 3). My time with Frances has come to an end and I am sad to leave.

KW: Miss Perkins, it has been a great honour to meet and talk with you. Thank you. I find you and your work truly inspiring. Is there anything else you would like to say?

FP: I think back to when I took office. I knew it would be difficult. “The overwhelming argument and thought which made me do it in the end in spite of personal difficulties was the realization that the door might not be opened to a woman again for a long, long time, and that I had a kind of duty to other women to walk in and sit down on the chair that was offered, and so establish the right of others long hence and far distant to sit in the high seat (Perkins as cited in Keller, 2006, p. 78).

I am sure it would shock her that representation has only slightly improved. I thank her again, and she shakes my hand and wishes me well in my studies. I am truly overwhelmed. I return to my own time and visit Glidden Cemetery in Newcastle, Maine before heading back to Nova Scotia. Here, only one year after I met her in 1964, Frances died and was buried beside her husband Paul Wilson. I cannot help but be tearful. Her grave is adorned with an American flag and a final record of her own voice on her tombstone simply (and insufficiently) reads:

Frances Perkins Wilson

1880-1965

Secretary of Labor of USA

1933-1944

4.04 Post Interview Reflection

What got in her way? I realize from my prior work that the main reasons for Frances being overlooked spanned three interlocking but powerful factors: (1) Frances’ own tendency to ascribe her achievements to others (and complicity in her own

marginalization); (2) post-war memoirs, which served to promote her negatively or distract from her accomplishments; and (3) her supposed communist (and feminist) sympathies, which took on more meaning in the Cold War era of the 1940s and 1950s (Williams and Mills, 2017).

Furthermore, I can see that her attraction to the settlement ethos, while management was embracing science was also a factor in her neglect by MOS/MH. To clarify, Burnier (2008a; 2008b) called it the settlement ethos, whereas Prieto et al., (2016) called it the feminist ethic of care. Either phrase refers to a focus on the overall care for the worker's health and security; both safety and economic stability (Perkins, 1934). Frances continued to see an important role for social workers and a social point of view (Perkins, 1934), but management theory developed without such inputs because it was occupied with the development of scientific management and the emerging human relations school. Where Frances was concerned with the wellbeing of workers to create a surplus economy, scientific management was concerned with creating the necessary conditions for productivity and efficiency and thus profit. She did not eschew capitalism, but she wanted it to serve all people (Perkins 1939). Another figure of significance at that time was Mary Van Kleeck who was one of the first female members of the emerging Taylor Society[16]. Though her embrace of women's issues predated scientific management, she became increasingly interested in it from the vantage point of a social researcher. She briefly served in FDRs administration, but it is clear that her approach to

[16] Van Kleeck's work paralleled the research undertaken by the Taylor Society but emphasized the role of gender (Nyland, 2004).

labour issues and conditions was different from Frances, who retained her lens of social work and social welfare.

What were her overlooked contributions? Frances' accomplishments are numerous. Not only did she author and implement ground-breaking, now taken-for-granted labour policy, but such policies were negotiated with leaders in industry with differing priorities of productivity and profit. Her ability to understand the needs of the worker, alongside the needs of management as a negotiator is remarkable, particularly for a woman in the 1930s operating from a low power position. I wish we understood more nuanced information about her skills and tactics. We can only extrapolate from her clear success, that such approaches, built on her skills as a social worker and labour advocate concerned with welfare, were vital to her success. Regrettably, they are also important missing developmental inputs in the development of MOS.

What was I like with her? I have been studying and writing about Frances for the longest (nearly five years). I felt very deferential in conversation with her, but also confident because I feel like I know her. My perception of her from her own writings is that she is shrewd, practical, and no fool. It is evident within the traces that I could find that she clearly tolerated a lot in her long life, but that she also managed to achieve a strong sense of self.

I have much respect for her ground-breaking labour policies, as well as her brilliant strategies for how to do the work. As a female leader operating in a marginalized sector, which often struggles to find the necessary resources, I find her approaches inspiring and relatable. I brought this appreciation into my conversation with her and as

the conversation unfolded, I realized that I see her as a mentor. I realize that as a woman leader, I crave this kind of support.

What did the interview achieve? The interview achieved two important things. On one hand, the technique of writing this way allowed me to raise certain questions and points, while alerting the reader to other questions and counterpoints, without disrupting the flow of conversation (nor offending my interviewee!). Secondly, I was able to weave her voice, my voice and the voice of others into our conversation in a way that allowed for a kind of curation of thought around a particular subject or topic. I have not been able to achieve this kind of fluidity and complexity in other writings, nor have other writings allowed me to generate a figure so believable and so alive.

I felt quite unconstrained in the process of writing, particularly because my knowledge of Frances and the various sources, allowed me to freely connect with traces with confidence. This also might be a limitation to consider, in that, a deep level of knowledge is required to get to the point where one could feel that they could play two roles in a conversation, as both subject and author. This may be more depth and confidence than what is required to simply interview someone.

My final thoughts turn to the genuine emotion I feel for Frances. This existed before I attempted to converse with her, but the opportunity to do so was more than cathartic, it was raw and overwhelming at times. It might seem like a silly admission, but for the benefit of you, dear reader, it will perhaps make a point very clear: every time I have written about Frances, I relive her life. Every time I stop writing about Frances, I am struck by a kind of grief at the loss. Every time I read various stories about her that end in

her death, I am moved to tears. In this conversation, I was somewhat rescued from that sad fate, in that I now see that I can revisit her alive, present, tangible, whenever I wish. If I can bring that believability to you, if you too can feel her, see her and know her, then I have accomplished more than I thought I could.

Chapter 5: Hallie Flanagan

5.01 Biographical Introduction

Hallie was born in South Dakota on August 27, 1890 and moved around the Midwest as she grew up. There is some dispute as to whether Hallie was born in 1889 (according to Bentley, 1988) or 1890 (according to Mathews, 1967); however, 1890 is the most consistent date referenced. She was of German-Scotch ancestry. Hallie was the eldest of three children born to Frederic Ferguson and Louisa Fischer. Frederic had difficulty finding work but in 1900 settled in Grinnell, Iowa to sell telephone switchboards. As a teenager, Hallie found interest in organizing talent shows, writing scripts and directing (Bentley, 1988).

Hallie was married twice and widowed twice. She first married Murray Flanagan in 1912 and had two sons: John in 1915 and Frederic in 1917. Later, she married Philip H. Davis in 1930 who had three children of his own. To support her family, she returned to Grinnell College to teach (having graduated there in 1911, majoring in Philosophy and German) (Bentley, 1988). Tragically, her son Jack died of spinal meningitis in 1922.

Not long after her son's death, she enrolled in George Baker's famous *47 Workshop* dramatic production studio (Vassar Encyclopedia). She then earned a master's degree from Radcliffe in 1924 and began teaching at Vassar College in 1925 (Vassar Encyclopedia).

Hallie was the first woman awarded the *Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship* (Hiltzik, 2011), which she used to visit and study the theatres of Europe, resulting in her book *Shifting Scenes* (1928).

By 1933, Secretary Harry Hopkins had taken on the most elaborate relief program ever conceived (Taylor, 2008). He called upon Hallie, his school colleague, from Grinnell College, whom he knew to be uniquely qualified, to become National Director of the Federal Theater Project in 1935, and where she remained until it ended in 1939 (Mathews, 1967; Bentley, 1988). Her success at the Federal Theater Project was in large measure due to her inventive approach to theatre (an approach later coined as the *Living Newspapers*) and her ability to combine art with relief work (Flanagan, 1940; Mathews, 1967). The Federal Theater Project ran from May 1936 to June 1939, and at its peak, 12,372 workers were engaged (Flanagan, 1940). The project produced 63,928 performances, to which 30,398,726 people attended from 32 states (Flanagan, 1940).

After the FTP, she returned to Vassar and wrote *Arena* in 1940 with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation (Flanagan, 1940). Between 1942 and 1946 she served as Dean at Smith College and then remained as a professor in the Theater Department until she retired in 1955 (Bentley, 1988). Hallie died of Parkinson's disease in 1969 (Bentley, 1988).

5.02 Pre-Conversation

Hallie's book *Arena* (1940) was of great assistance to me in preparation for this conversation. Though it shares little of her personal life, it provides significant information about the Federal Theater. In *Shifting Scenes* (1928) I get an even stronger sense of her personality and her passion for theatre.

I travel back in time to meet Hallie on her last day at Smith College in 1955. I have just finished re-reading *Shifting Scenes* and I have dog-eared the book to highlight some of my favourite passages, including the following quote:

> Romance in England does not reside in the streets but passes through them, coming from nowhere and departing into mysterious obscurity. The people swarming through the streets do not reveal themselves to you as in Prague, or Naples, or Paris, by stopping in their thoroughfares to fight, make love, laugh, sing, drink, eat, quarrel, or philosophize. They are marks scrawled on a blackboard to be instantly erased. What part of this civilization at once inchoate and crystallized, shall I find upon the stage? (Flanagan, 1928, p. 4).

This passage reminds me that Hallie is first and foremost an artist and creative soul. Straddling the demands of a challenging labour attachment program, while still serving a creative heart is awe-inspiring. I cannot wait to learn more.

5.03 In Conversation with Hallie Flanagan

Hallie is 65 when we meet. I selected this time, because she was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1945 (Longren, 2019). She has likely been feeling the early symptoms for some time and it might even be the reason she is retiring; however, this is unconfirmed. According to www.parkinsons.org (Parkinson's Foundation), stage one includes mild but noticeable symptoms that may or may not interfere with daily activities, including tremors and other symptoms on one side of the body. Changes in posture, walking and facial expressions are common. In 1953 some big developments were observed in the disease; however, the staging system will not be introduced until 1967. As cited in Goetz

(2011), Greenfield and Bosanquet developed the most complete pathologic analysis of Parkinson's disease to date, but it was not until 1967 that Hoehn and Yahr developed the now widely accepted 1-5 stages of the disease for clinical analysis. Unfortunately, Hallie's health is further compromised by a car accident in 1963 (Longren, 2019).

I want to meet her where I believe she feels most like herself; teaching theatre at Smith College. She has spent much of her life as a teacher, but what I have come here to learn about is her brief but incredible time as the architect of one of the most creative, innovative and successful labour attachment programs under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the era of the New Deal, namely the Federal Theater Project (FTP).

Some thought Hallie was an unlikely choice to head up the project, but she had her defenders:

> Mrs. Flanagan was widely known not only for her writings on the theater, but for the originality of her methods and the vitality of her productions as director of the Experimental Theater at Vassar College. Her work as a producer was so favorably regarded that some of the world's most celebrated dramatists, including T.S. Eliot and Luigi Pirandello, were glad to entrust the premieres of their newest plays to her hands (Woodward, as cited by US Congress, 1938, p. 2736).

> By good fortune the Federal Theater was put in the hands of Hallie Flanagan, a remarkable woman who understood the human emergency of the moment and also had a plan for a countrywide people's theater [. . .] she has never been criticized by anyone who understood the problems as thoroughly as she has, or

who is her equal for hard work, intellect, honesty, and vision (New York Times, 1937, as cited by US Congress, 1938, p. 2736).

I meet her in her office at the college, a room full of boxes, waiting to move home. She has a large picture window behind her, open to a beautiful spring day overlooking the broad courtyard and enveloped by ivy-adorned red brick. It is a comfortable temperature and I can hear the birds singing. I think that this is the end of an era for her and a tough day to perhaps review memories, but she seems happy to share and excited to sit down with me. We are seated in solid oak wood chairs across from one another. She, behind her kneehole desk, now clean; though I picture it once cluttered with various plays, posters, lecture notes and student projects.

She is dressed in a dark print blouse, coordinated with a smart beige cardigan; a lovely silk scarf tied at the nape of her neck. Classic wide beige linen flood pants are paired with sharp brown and white saddle shoes. Her classic short hair belies her age. I immediately like her. She seems cool and stylish and I suspect she is a favourite teacher to many. Seeing her in a moment when she is at the cusp of big change, is fascinating.

She says I can call her Hallie. However, I must confess to you, dear reader, that for some time, I thought Hallie was pronounced like Haley. So, I am having to remind myself repeatedly, it is pronounced like “alley” with an H in front. I bring this up, just in case you fall into the same trap. Professionally, she goes by Mrs. Flanagan. Flanagan was her first husband’s name. Davis was her second. Ferguson was her given name.

I ask if I can start the recorder, and she nods. I have brought a vintage 1950's Ferguson reel-to-reel audio tape recorder (model 441-TR), which I found on eBay for $118. It snugly fits into its own mini cherry coloured vinyl suitcase.

Unspoken thoughts of mine will now appear in italics to help the reader follow our interview and distinguish between what is said and unsaid. My comments will appear under KW, whereas Hallie's will appear under HF in the following transcribed interview.

KW: The WPA was a very elaborate state relief program, which aimed to provide more than just shelter, clothing, medical care, and food, though I appreciate that was even an improvement at the time (Taylor, 2008; Mathews, 1967). It had a budget of $5 billion and an objective to address 15 million workers out of work. Can you tell me about how the Federal Theater Project fit into that?

HF: We had a fraction of that budget; less than one half of one percent! The objective of the WPA and the wisdom of the broader program was that it recognized that individuals ought to be valued for their skills and put to work in a way that tapped into those same skills (Flanagan, 1940). We (including Harry Hopkins and others) did not think that artists should be turned into second-rate laborers (Taylor, 2008). Mine and the other arts-based programs sought to put those artists back to work doing what they did best; creative labour (Flanagan, 1940). In addition to actors, we also employed directors, teachers, stagehands, artists, musicians, dancers, box office staff, ushers, maintenance workers, accounting and secretarial staff, writers,

designers (Flanagan, 1940). We employed all personnel that one might consider vital to theater and to enterprise (Flanagan, 1940).

And it is an enterprise. Part of the reason I wanted to talk to her is that the arts is often neglected in MOS/MH and I believe many lessons can be learned from this sector. For those not familiar with Harry Hopkins, you will find that he dominates the literature, which addresses the New Deal. He is broadly credited for developing the notion of Federal One, which was a series of social welfare programs (Flanagan, 1940). There were five arts-based programs under WPA. In addition to the FTP, there was the art project, the music project, the writer's project and the historical records survey. The FTP was the most outspoken politically (Taylor, 2008).

KW: I am writing for readers who study, teach and work in management and organizations. What are some of the challenges that your business model had?

Coming from the charitable sector myself, I can appreciate the constraints she must have had to manage and the various if not irreconcilable pressures.

HF: We had social objectives bridged with economic ones. We operated under the Relief Act of 1935, which mandated us to provide 90% of our funding go to wages. Further, 80% of workers had to come from accredited theater[17] unions, and there were ten (Flanagan, 1940).

I think I relate most to Hallie out of all the women. It is like talking to a colleague in the sector. We even share an arts background. Though my undergraduate

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[17] If Hallie is talking or if it is a direct quote or proper name, I use the US spelling of theater and center. However, if I am speaking, I use the Canadian way of spelling theatre and centre etc.

degree was in cultural studies, I took a minor in art history. It has been years since I painted though. Writing is my current creative endeavour. She continues and I try to get my thoughts back on track.

I was very proud that we were responsible for returning over 2,600 workers back to permanent work in private industry. Additionally, we took the opportunity to focus on the deskilling that was taking place and offer training to vulnerable workers (Flanagan, 1936). We also offered learning through art in educational programs for 350,000 youth across the country. Our far-reaching purpose was to establish theaters so vital to community life that they would continue to function long afterwards (Works Progress Administration, 1935).

And I know from her writings that returning 2,660 workers to permanent work was an anomaly and a testament to the model she built (Flanagan, 1940). The complexity of the model is astounding. The use of the word purpose is significant too; it is synonymous with mission. The FTP is not just a government program, but something closer to a non-profit or social enterprise. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is only recently that MOS has begun to respect this blurring of sectoral paradigms in organizational space and the lessons offered (Knutsen, 2016).

KW: Your program made money; how was this accomplished?

HF: We were the only program to make money (Flanagan, 1940)! Our model was borrowed from sponsored programs in Europe. However, we hoped that local patronage would eventually take over for federal subsidies and make the project sustainable long term (Matthews, 1967). In addition to federal moneys and some

modest ticket sales (where possible – because access was a priority), we raised sponsorship dollars from schools, colleges, universities, churches, foundations, clubs and associations (Flanagan, 1936; Farran, 1973).

I recognize (and myself and others have argued), that the discipline of management and its fundamental relationship with capitalism was a factor for the neglect of the New Deal and by extension these wondrous, enterprising programs (Foster et al., 2014). The FTP did not fit any familiar mold:

> *The Federal Theater embodied all of the aspirations, ambiguities, handicaps, and frustrations of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. Spawned by the misery of the great depression and the hopes of humanitarian reformers, the Theater Project [. . .] was based on the novel proposal that the unemployed deserved socially useful jobs rather than the humiliation of handouts and breadlines (Matthews, 1967, p. 7).*

KW: There were some interesting things happening at that time in Broadway. How did this challenge your work?

HF: Broadway was attached to large city centers, where we were focused both on cities and country towns. However, "almost overnight, theaters across the country closed and reopened as movie houses making both the Great Depression and the advent of new entertainment technology the adversary of the theater worker […]. This made the FTP a very risky prospect, as it would never have the same resources nor potential talent" (Williams and Mills, 2018, p. 284).

KW: What did Broadway think of the Federal Theater?

HF: Well, they did not take to me very kindly! We were art and relief combined, and we were trying to figure out “how to best meet the needs of both people on relief and people in the audience over a vast geographic area” (Mathews, 1967, p. 29).

KW: What do you mean that they were not kind?

HF: “The old-line Broadway manager wise in the devious ways of the commercial theatre, [was who Broadway thought] was needed for the job, not some college professor from a girls’ school” (Mathews, 1976, p. 35).

I know that with the passage of time, some (in theatre, not management) will come to view Hallie as a visionary “who was apt to embrace experimental approaches and to rethink theatre in terms of contemporary arts and economics” (Mathews, 1967, p. 42). But we were here in 1955 and talking about the late 1930s.

KW: So, your leadership and the model were offensive? What else agitated the norms of the day?

HF: The Federal Theater became a way to reflect on and educate audiences about the economy, social priorities, and the ups and downs of modernity (Mathews, 1967).

I interject.

KW: You mean the Living Newspapers?

HF: Yes, exactly. We were asked to keep all performances free of political bias, but still offer “free, adult, uncensored theater” (Hopkins, 1935, as cited in Mathews, 1976, p. 33).

KW: Okay, I want to hear more about that, but let me first clarify: you were asked to engage worker and audiences “in common belief”, keep all performances “free of

political bias" and discrimination, engage and cooperate with unions, keep costs low, compete with Broadway, and this was a project for which there was no script, excuse the pun, but – "it had never been done before" – and concerned an unimaginable scope, was subject to a "hypercritical political climate" and you held "the lives of desperate workers and their families in the balance" (Williams and Mills, 2018, p. 286)?

HF: Well, [*she pauses*] yes!

Hallie has my heart. If I was asked to reference a biography that was inspirational for a female leader today, I would recommend and want to read Hallie's story. By the way, Fortune's list for influential and successful leader biographies is a disappointing list. There are only two women on it: Katherine Graham (Washington Post) and Cecile Richards (Planned Parenthood). Included on the 2018 list is John Rockefeller, Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Carnegie, JP Morgan, Joseph P Kennedy, Sam Walton, Jack Welch, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Travis Kalanick, Edwin Land, Michael Bloomberg and Jamie Dimon. The list is an anemic look at the potential definition of success and what leadership can look like. She continues.

And success was evaluated against three not necessarily complementary markers: a successful theater, a successful relief plan, and a successful government arts program (Mathews, 1967). Though we had to play it safe, we really couldn't (Matthews, 1967). The Federal Theater was "a combination of chaos and emerging form" (Mathews, 1967, p. 57).

KW: That is an extraordinary level of pressure! Please tell me about the Living Newspapers.

HF: The defining success of the Federal Theater was the Living Newspapers. This concept came out of my work at Vassar's Experimental Theater and could be described as newsreels on stage (Mathews, 1967). The format was the most forgiving in that it helped us accommodate relatively large casts and avoided the expense of elaborate and costly scenery (Mathews, 1967). A particular benefit was the opportunity to train in a hands-on manner, every aspect of theater (Flanagan, 1940).

KW: It is my understanding that this also meant that you could attend to social and economic concerns originating geographically?

HF: Yes, it was "a living theater, flourishing in a particular soil of a particular region and acting as an artistic and social force on the people of that region" (Flanagan, as cited in Mathews, 1967, 28-29).

She is passionate about this. And her pace quickens in excitement. She continues.

A production in Iowa was called *Dirt* and it debated the controversial loss of rich farmland, the players and the consequences. *Spirochet* in Seattle intervened on the debate of public health about sexually transmitted disease. *Power* in New York was inspired by the new electric utility and the struggle to control a new technology (Flanagan, 1940).

KW: My understanding is that this vital style of theater worked against the dominate discourse of theater at the time and it was too radical for government. Is it your

view that it was just not seen serving political interests, despite meeting objectives with respect to audience engagement and work relief (Flanagan, 1940)?

HF: This is so ironic, because "in the Living Newspaper everything is factual. The records from which any living newspaper is taken are always open to all […]. And I think it is rather a remarkable fact [. . .] that, not one allegation [was] made that the news [reports] were untrue. Nobody has ever proved that we have ever misquoted a person or misquoted a quotation" (Flanagan, as cited by US Congress, 1938, p. 2860-2861).

This is where I expect her story to intersect with Frances' and potentially even Madeleine's. They were all affected by the growing disdain for communism and subjects of red baiting.

KW: Can I read to you a part of the transcript from the HUAC?

The HUAC (Special House Committee on Un-American Activities and Propaganda) was also referred to as the Dies Committee because it was led by conservative Democrat Texan Martin Dies. He and the committee led partisan inquires into communist activities and conspiracies. I look to my notes.

HF: Of course!

KW: "The Chairman. Now, will you just tell us briefly the duties of your position?

Mrs. Flanagan. Yes, Congressman Dies. Since August 29, 1935, I have been concerned with combating **un-American inactivity** [*emphasis added*].

The Chairman. No. We will get to that in a minute.

Mrs. Flanagan. Please listen. I said I am combating un-American inactivity.

The Chairman. Inactivity?

Mrs. Flanagan. I refer to the inactivity of professional men and women; people who, at that time when I took office, were on the relief rolls; and it was my job to expend the appropriation laid aside by congressional vote for the relief of the unemployed as it related to the field of the theater" (Dies, Flanagan, as cited by US Congress, 1938, p. 2839).

I know that this was the beginning of the end for the Federal Theater and I want to hear what she thought was the reasoning. Apparently, I need not ask a question, because she eagerly breaks in.

HF: I was so eager to testify and defend our program, but I was given very little time (Flanagan, 1940). I wanted and did express my thoughts about American democracy. I believed that the WPA was "one great bulwark of that democracy" (Flanagan, as cited by US Congress, 1938, p. 2867). I still believe that the Federal Theater was a part of a larger pattern of a democratic life, but I would not have it used politically by any party (US Congress, 1938; Flanagan, 1940).

From reviewing the scripts, the committee marginalized Hallie's opportunity to participate and reluctantly finally called her as a witness. Then when the committee was recessed during her testimony, she was not invited to return (US Congress, 1938). Hallie recalls that Congressman Thomas said: we don't want you back [...] you're a tough witness and we're all worn out" (Flanagan, 1940, p. 345), but this does not appear in the official records of the US Congress.

KW: The disagreement of its value then, was largely political and partisan?

HF: By extension, it was an attack on what constituted the proper use of government funds and the subjective views of the content of the plays, which was fundamentally democratic and drawn from the headlines of the day (Flanagan, 1940). In other words, we did little more than what the newspapers did and share what was part of the public record. (Flanagan, 1940). The Dies Committee also did not agree with supporting actors as a disenfranchised group in a product of amusement; they did not appreciate the Federal Theater as an intellectual effort and a vehicle to train people (Flanagan, 1940).

KW: And this was the end of Federal Theater?

HF: Yes, funding was dropped, and we had to wrap up the project quite quickly in 1939.

And here I am going to take my chance to link Frances with Hallie.

KW: I was speaking to Miss Frances Perkins for this study, and I know that you know the former Secretary through the labour efforts. In our conversation, it was made clear to me that gender was also used as an excuse to marginalize her accomplishments. Do you feel that the same effects were at work here?

In my studies, I have come to learn that the 1930s were a time of great contradiction for women in the USA (see Williams and Mills, 2017; 2018; 2019a). The 1920s had been a period of advancement, whereas the 1930s represented a period devoid of any significant gains (Rowbotham, 1974). At that time, the labour market was divided into jobs for men and jobs for women (Williams and Mills, 2019b).

HF: It was a pleasure to work under the Secretary's mandate and I recognize that I was an anomaly and that I had many enemies, but I also had many supporters, including Harry Hopkins and Frances Perkins. Despite these strong ties to the larger portfolio and the endorsement of leadership, I was accused by James J. Davis of the HUAC as not having "a good word to say about the United States, [our] government, American institutions, or the economic system, which makes possible relief money for the WPA" (Davis as cited in Mathews, 1967, p. 78). *Hallie in her own writing never fully brings this discourse of gender to the foreground, but it is clear that it pervaded over the FTP and her leadership. Frances could concede to holding feminist values, but Hallie appears not to want to. Unfortunately, her silence on this was filled with well-meaning chroniclers who cast her into a subjugated position to the various male figures in her life. For instance, Bentley (1988) argued that Hallie wrote to her husband Philip every night and could not do anything without him: "I can only do it with you and through you" and then further suggested that she "depended on him completely" (p. 195-196). This dated biography seems to craft Hallie in the context of the 1980s vs. the 1930s. She is encapsulated by the romanticized notions of the 1980s feminist: a successful, but relatable working woman. Bentley also emphasizes the critiques of others who suggest Hallie was naïve, susceptible to flattery and not politically astute (Bentley, 1988). An alternatively (but more contemporary) view reprises Hallie as a heroine and as the target of an intensely gendered attack from the Dies Committee (Dossett, 2013). As we know from Frances' experience,*

female leaders were synonymous with feminism and thus linked to communism. Feminist critiques of the New Deal also suggest that the New Deal emphasized the hegemonic roles of men and women with few exceptions (Dossett, 2013). These varied views of Hallie make a reconciled view impossible. I have but a couple questions left.

KW: You took it upon yourself to tell the story of the Federal Theater in your book, *Arena* (1940). Why did you think this record an important effort?

HF: I must admit, it was written with some urgency (Mathews, 1967). The original files were collected in a bit of a haphazard way and only with very short notice. These files consisted of "749 bound production books, 222 books of press clippings, 21 filing cabinets of source material for the living newspapers, publications, pictures, posters, 8,860 printed volumes comprising a library of plays and other dramatic material" (Flanagan, 1940, p. 369). These materials were put on loan to Vassar for one year with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation (Mathews, 1967). I felt it important to document what we built and the trials and triumphs we experienced. The president deeply regretted being forced to close the program. He wrote me to express his great disappointment. He called it "a pioneering job" (Flanagan, 1940, p. 373).

She pulls a copy of Arena from the top of a nearby box and opens it to a marked page. She begins to read with both fluency and emotion:

> "[…] It was, gusty, lusty, bad and good, sad and funny, superbly worth more wit, wisdom and imagination than we could give it. Its significance

> lies in its pointing to the future. The ten thousand anonymous men and women – the et ceteras and the and-so-forths who did the work, the nobodies who were everybody, the somebodies who believed it – their dreams and deeds were not the end. They were the beginning of a people's theatre in a country whose greatest plays are still to come" (Flanagan, 1940, p. 373).

The limited nature of what was kept and the tenuous nature of what to collect and what not to, ultimately led not only to the program being lost to MOS, but to theatre. The collection contains materials from 1932 to 1943, but the administrative records are the most limited. The George Mason University had been attempting to locate the files in 1974 only to find them in Baltimore Maryland. They were then put on loan to the university but after some dispute, they were returned to the Library of Congress in 1994. This means that the archive was not publicly available for approximately 50 years. Thus, the collection was not only lost to MOS/MH, but to theatre as well (George Mason University, A History, 1972-1978). Indeed, Hallie's book Arena and the book written by Mathews in 1967 are the only significant references to the program. The Library of Congress, the FTP Collection and the House reports from the HUAC are the only primary sources. This neglect on two fronts seems more than coincidental and I wonder if faculty at George Mason had not attempted to locate the files, if Hallie and the FTP would have been lost entirely. We both pause. She is an exceptional orator. I could listen to her read more. I have a sense of what

her theatre classes might be like. How raw and revealed you would feel in tackling such artistic endeavours.

KW: Could I ask that you read to me one of my favourite passages from your book? I feel that it really encapsulates what you achieved.

She passes me the book and I open it to page 367 and point. She nods

HF: Ah yes [*she pauses and then begins*]:

> Thus the Federal Theater ended as it had begun, with fearless presentation of problems touching American life. If this first government theater in our country had been less alive it might have lived longer. But I do not believe anyone who worked on it regrets that it stood from the last to the first against reaction, against prejudice, against racial, religious, and political intolerance. It strove for a more dramatic statement and a better understanding of the great forces of our life today; it fought for a free theater as one of the many expressions of a civilized, informed and vigorous life (Flanagan, 1940, p. 367).

It feels like the right moment to draw our interview to a close and I ask the final question to which I will pose to all of the women.

KW: Do you feel that you were ahead of your time?

She smiles and closes her eyes and then opens them and engages me directly.

HF: I think we were exactly where we were supposed to be; Roosevelt, Hopkins, Perkins, the workers, the audiences… We were not out of place, nor time. We were in the moment. “We live in a changing world: man is whispering through

space, soaring to the stars, flinging miles of steel and glass into the air. Shall the theater continue to huddle in the confines of a painted box set? […] The stage too must experiment with ideas, with psychological relationship[s] of men and women, with speech and rhythmic forms, with dance and music, with color and light – or it must and should become a museum product […] The theater must become conscious of the implications of the changing social order, or the changing social order will ignore and rightly, the implications of theater" (Flanagan, 1940, p. 45-46.

I consider her words and their significance. I derive from this that temporally she felt the FTP was at the exact right moment in time, as was she. It was just that some of the forces around her at the FTP were not ready and could not share in the contemporary vision of the program, nor link the potential for social good through humane enterprise.

KW: Are there any final thoughts that you would like to share?

She smiles. How I have enjoyed this time with her! I don't want to leave.

HF: I feel lucky to have been given the opportunity to contemplate the complexity of human emergency alongside the development of a country-wide peoples theater (New York Times, 1937; US Congress, 1938). It took honesty, vision and hard work. I would suggest that if anyone is given that opportunity; to bridge social need with economic priorities, it can do no less than serve the development of a better and more compassionate society.

Indeed, this was my motive for moving into the charitable sector: the lure of meaningful work on several different fronts.

KW: Hallie, I am so grateful for your time today. I cannot thank you enough. It was such a pleasure to meet and chat with you. I wish you the best for your retirement. *We both rise and I note a wee wobble as she stands and grips her desk. She shakes my hand and smiles in the most genuine way. I reluctantly take my leave.*

5.04 Post Interview Reflections

What got in her way? Harry Hopkins must have known that Hallie would have opposition and perhaps saw it plainly when he offered Hallie this measure of support in taking on her appointment:

> You can't care very much what people are going to say because when you are handling other people's money whatever you do is always wrong. If you try to hold down wages, you'll be accused of union busting and of grinding down the poor; if you pay a decent wage, you'll be competing with private industry and pampering to a lot of no-accounts; if you scrimp on production costs, they'll say your shows are lousy and if you spend enough to get a good show on, they'll say you are wasting the taxpayers' money. *Don't forget that whatever happens you'll be wrong* (Harry Hopkins to Hallie Flanagan on her appointment to run the FTP, cited in Hiltzik, 2011, p. 285, italics in the original).

It is perhaps easier to see why Hallie's brilliant contribution as a leader and innovator have been overlooked, but I am no less comforted by the thought. It was a

complex interweaving of discourses and events that hid Hallie and the FTP from view. Including, but not limited to:

1. The undercurrent of feminist ideas and its connection to communism and the targeted attack by the Dies Committee;
2. The general neglect of arts and creative labour in MOS/MH;
3. The innovative organizational model, which sat outside capitalist ideas;
4. The misunderstanding of the value of creative labour;
5. The controversial theater design and content, namely those of the Living Newspapers; and finally,
6. The negation of the history itself through the loss of and mismanagement of an archive).

These related and unrelated discourses, rhetorical, political and ideological strategies have contributed to the FTP and Hallie's erasure. The bridging of arts, education, vocational training and social enterprise is perhaps too unwieldy for capitalism to have embraced in the 1930s.

This is also yet another field (social work, now the arts) with equally interesting players and practices and yet neglected. If engineering principles and psychological theory could be adopted by management in the 1950s, why not these two disciplines? This may be attributable to the politics at the time but also the politics of the time the field emerged as an academic discipline (late 1950s/1960s) (Cooke and Mills, 2008).

What were her overlooked contributions? Hallie's accomplishments can be summarized as offering (1) a female model of leadership, (2) an innovative

organizational structure; and (3) the authentic bridging of enterprise with social purpose. Hallie's story and her brief but tremendous time with the FTP have significant value not only for practitioners operating in a variety of sectors, but for scholars and theorists tacking a new spectrum of capitalist behaviours and organizational structures. Overlooking Hallie and the FTP is an unforgivable level of neglect in the development of our field.

What was I like with her? I felt so comfortable with Hallie. It was like talking to a friend. I think as a result, I took more risks. I know that being different in each interview breaks with some conventions (even imaginary ones that I have set in my mind), but it is also a human reaction. I promised to be present in my writing and honest. I feel differently about each of these women and I should not be surprised when that comes across. When we sit down in conversation with someone, we make several adjustments, which befit the circumstances, the personality of others, our feelings towards them and in the moment, and the context in which we converse. I found myself considering those same adjustments even in a fictitious space and time. What that suggests to me, is that there is some additional reflexivity, which is necessary in the interview process. A future opportunity for exploration. We already know from research that rapport draws out better data and so does and emic perspectives, but have we considered how much such conversations reflect the self? Cunliffe (2003) asserts that radically reflexive approaches must consider the researcher's role in the constitution of meaning. In essence, I was talking to myself and still generating new knowledge. What

does that say of the data we gather in conversation with other people? How much do we bring to such conversations and how much do we take?

What did the interview achieve? This interview produced an opportunity for us to understand Hallie and the FTP from a management perspective. The challenge with the FTP is that when it has been valued, it has been primarily valued for its contributions to the arts and the theatre. The arts are also a largely ignored sector within MOS, coupled with the malaise towards the New Deal, the FTP was bound to be left out of account, along with Hallie. So, we have an overlooked sector, overlooked management practices and an overlooked female leader. Through this conversation, I believe that I achieved a better sense of her and the project and what can be learned from both.

When I first read *Arena*, I could feel the energy and rush of the program Hallie built. Its haphazard way of coming together, the beautiful unexpected opportunities, and achievements for workers and for the arts and the unintended consequences. I could see in my mind Hallie's job description and I laughed at the idea of applying for that job. Would I do that? Would I take on that gigantic experiment? Not likely! It seemed almost unachievable, yet she did it and she did it well. I joke about the job description, because in my sector, the charitable sector, the work is so broad, so all-encompassing and so under resourced, that it can be exhausting and overwhelming, as well as fabulous, rewarding and a bit magical. Your job description is about a greater purpose, not a set of tasks. That is how I feel about Hallie's experience. This is the emic perspective I brought to our conversation. There are not enough examples like Hallie and the FTP available to leaders in my sector, nor is there enough appreciation by the for-profit sector for the work

organizations like mine, like the FTP take on. It is never a shortage of passion, or possibility, or creativity and or motivation. It is always a shortage of understanding, of appreciation, of time and of resources.

Chapter 6: Madeleine Parent

6.01: Biographical Introduction

Madeleine Parent spent decades as a brilliant advocate for labour; lobbying successfully for legislative change, new government programs and policy. Her leadership has been driven by a commitment to ensure a better way of life for workers, particularly women (Kay and MacDonald, 2005). However, she is celebrated as *a trade union activist* and *a feminist*, not a *management theorist* or *thought leader* in management and organizational studies (CBC news, 2012).

Madeleine was born in Montréal, Quebec in 1918. In the CBC Digital Archives (1980), I discovered that she benefited from an affluent lifestyle; her father was an accountant and the general manager of a grocery chain. She studied first at Villa-Maria Convent and then Trafalgar School. She attended McGill University in 1936 to earn a Bachelor of Sociology (Sabourin, 2017). Her education at the convent and exposure to the difference experienced by social classes is said to be what inspired her work in social justice (CBC Digital Archives, 1980; Library and Archives Canada, 2010; McGill University, 2014).

Madeleine’s first official foray into activism began at McGill through the Canadian Students Assembly (the student union). A key initiative was affordable tuition for low-income students (CBC Digital Archives, 1980). She also argued in favour of French Canadians as French Department Heads at the university and was nearly expelled for her efforts (CBC Digital Archives, 1980). Her passion for collective action led to union activism and resulted in her heading up a unionization effort for Dominion Textile

plants in 1942 in Valleyfield and Montreal. By 1946 she had succeeded in creating a cotton worker union, 6,000 members strong. This guided her to other union initiatives including the Ayers Woolen Mills Strike, which led to her first arrest. Eventually she was convicted in 1948 and sentenced to 2 years in prison for "seditious conspiracy" (Hustak, 2012). Though the conviction was overturned on a technically, she was branded a communist and a Russian spy. She did serve 5 jail terms for arrests during her career (CBC Digital Archives, 1980).

Later, she turned her attention to repatriating unions to Canada after Quebec workers were deceived by their international union who signed a deal with Dominion Textiles in 1952 reflecting conditions only stipulated by Quebec Premier, Maurice Duplessis (Library and Archives Canada, 2010). The Premier took a hard line against unions and the two became political rivals. Duplessis ordered her 5 arrests (McGill University, 2014).

She and her husband, Kent Rowley, founded the Canadian Confederation of Unions (CCU) in 1969, which had profound results over the ensuing 20 years. Union membership and contributions shifted from 70% American unions to 30% by 1988 (McGill University, 2014). Though Madeleine retired from the movement in 1983, CCU remains dedicated to its original goals of improving working conditions for Canadians (Library and Archives Canada, 2010; McGill University, 2014). The CCU was the first labour federation in Canada to lobby for equal pay for equal work value (Cameron, 2012).

After 1983, Madeleine focused on the rights of women, including indigenous women and new immigrants. She was a founding member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and she represented the province of Quebec for 8 years. She worked actively through committees and organized marches to defend the rights of indigenous women and impoverished women. She died in 2012.

6.02 Pre-Conversation

In preparation for my conversation with Madeleine, I had a few taped interviews that I was able to access via the CBC Digital Archives. This gave me a clearer sense of Madeleine's soft voice, concise and well thought out manner of speaking. She never stumbles and she is so well informed. The set of essays that her friend, Andrée Lévesque (2005) edited together, were also a significant resource to understand her accomplishments from a variety of different perspectives.

I am inspired by her dedication to feminist causes, particularly at a time when such devotion came at a considerable cost and was not only unpopular, but in some cases, seen as synonymous with *communism* or even criminality. She is a proud Francophone, but I am relieved our conversation will be in English, since my French is nowhere near up to snuff even after living in Quebec myself for three years.

6.03: In Conversation with Madeleine Parent

It is 2009 and Madeleine has just received her honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Concordia University. I have selected this time, when she is 90 years old, because she has had such a long and active career. I want her to be able to reflect on as much of her experiences as possible. I know that her health is currently stable. I do not have a

reliable source for the nature of her illness, but there are some vague references to Parkinson's. A friend, Denis Lemelin, the National President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers also visited her in 2009 and remarked that she was in a wheelchair, but lucid and coherent. She was active in advocacy as late as 2002, when she condemned military intervention in Afghanistan (Sabourin, 2017). Her friend Laurell Ritchie remarked in 2012 that she marched in Quebec during the 2001 Summit of the Americas in her eighties

Madeleine is smartly dressed in a long sleeve silk green blouse and matching cardigan, a classic A-line, calf-length tweed skirt and sensible brown leather Oxford style shoes. With pleasantries exchanged, she invites me to call her Madeleine. This intimacy does not surprise me as I have read other interviews with her where she has done the same, including a conversation with Nilambri Ghai in 2006. He concludes the interview by saying "thank you very much Madam Parent for your time and your thoughts", to which she replies: "thank you Nialmbri. And please call me Madeleine" (Ghai, 2006).

We are nestled comfortably in matching blue wingback chairs in the solarium of her Montréal nursing home, Lux Gouverneaur[18], which looks more like a luxury hotel than anything I had in my imagination. Her wheelchair is just off to the side. Denis Lemelin the National President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers saw recently and commented on her appearance and health[19]. The effects of her illness evident, and though she speaks softly, her voice is clear, and her eyes are sharp. She sits back deeply

[18] In news reports, including one by Rick Salutin from The Star, in 2012, Madeleine dies in a Montreal nursing home. I have picked Lux Gouverneur, which is a higher-end residence. I was not able to locate where she lived.
[19] In a tribute published in 2012 by CUPW.

in her chair and appears to shrink. Though I have been nervous to meet her, she now seems so affable. Her expression is kind and patient. She seems neither intimidating, nor frail despite her age. She is comfortable with herself. She feels like an elderly friend settling in to tell me stories. And I am ready to hear her stories.

The fall afternoon sun is warm but not too bright. Her hands clasped comfortably on the arms of her chair, and her ankles are crossed. She sits across from me patiently with a mild smile hinting at the corner of her mouth and bright hazel eyes. I almost forget my purpose, but with my notes in front of me, I get back on track. So, I flick on my Philips DVT2000, *VoiceTracer* handheld mini audio recorder and we get started.

Unspoken thoughts of mine will now appear in italics to help the reader follow our interview and distinguish between what is said and unsaid. My comments will appear under KW, whereas Madeline's will be under MP in the following transcribed interview.

KW: I am so grateful for your time. Perhaps we can start with when you entered the labour scene here in Canada?

She smiles encouragingly, so I continue.

I had the opportunity to speak with Canadian Historian, Denyse Baillargeon, who teaches in the History Department at Université de Montréal and has researched the textile strikes of 1946, 1947 and 1952.

She nods to acknowledge that she is following me.

She said you started organizing during a wartime state of emergency, which was combined with labour radicalization. These circumstances forced the federal and

provincial government to adopt legislation on accreditation and collective bargaining and compelled employers for the first time in labour history, to negotiate “in good faith” with duly accredited unions (Baillargeon, 2005). In a restrictive legislative framework, unions had to prove that they had the support of the majority of workers by showing signed and paid membership cards to the government authorities, or by organizing a vote of accreditation by the workers (Baillargeon, 2005). What inspired you to enter the union movement at a time when success was so hard fought and the work so constrained?

MP: “I decided when I was on the McGill campus that I wanted to work with working people, especially with factory, blue collar workers. I realized that if I did not organize, I would be limited to a secretarial job or a technical job where I would not be with the rank and file” (Parent, as cited in Connelly and Keddy, 1989).

It is clear that Madeleine was keenly aware of the limitations in entering the workforce as a woman in the late 30s and early 40s, but she was not content with a job, which would not allow her to lead and apply herself fully. I admire her ability to thwart convention. She continues.

Once I became an observer of the labour scene, I saw the need to be involved in protesting unjust laws, particularly for indigenous peoples, women, immigrants and differently abled persons.

Unlike Frances who also began in the labour scene, Madeleine stayed on the front lines of organizing. She was keen to support those she saw as marginalized in the Canadian workforce.

KW: It must have been very difficult. How did you stay motivated?

MP: I was not discouraged by hard work and we always gained something from our efforts. “Every labour battle teaches a worker how to fight. Nothing is ever completely lost” (Parent as cited in Baillargeon, 2005, p. 70). Maria Iori, the president of Local 560 of Canadian Textile and Chemical Union and I learned that when we won, others took courage and that gave me motivation that we could be effective in achieving change, so I kept going (Parent and Iori, 1979, as cited in Lévesque, 2005, p. 19).

KW: Why was your approach to unionizing so effective? Did you begin with a plan?

MP: Some say that I had a textbook, but it was more of a system and method to create change, which I developed over time. You see it is always a question of power and “changing the relations between those who have it and those who don’t” (Salutini, 2005, p.124-125). Step one[20] is to build a strike by solidifying members on a picket line. You recruit individuals to a collective vision of better and more fair working conditions. Step two is defining the political importance of the struggle. In this step you are identifying the issues and the resulting goals collectively with members. Step three is building support in the labour movement and beyond. In this step, you are consulting with stakeholders and building a broader network of support and influence. The key to success is spreading knowledge broadly and I often gave crash courses on “civic responsibility and the

[20] These steps are outlined by John Lang when speaking about Madeleine’s methods (2005, p. 81).

importance of participating in the political process" to democratize the effort and share the responsibility and ability to enact change (Mulay, 2005, p. 115).

I cannot help but notice that her steps follow a process advanced by organizational behaviour scholars as "socialization" in the context of building a strong organizational culture (Johns and Saks, 2017). I expected these connections to surface and I have seen them before with Frances (see Williams and Mills, 2017).

KW: What do you remember most about those early days when investigating the conditions in textile plants?

She is clearly recalling a painful memory and I almost regret asking the question because the pain in her eyes is vivid. I wish that I started with softer questions.

MP: "I remember finding children at night, coming off the night shift, 10 years of age.

She takes a lengthy pause and I am tempted to interject on the silence and move us forward, but I wait, uncomfortably until she continues.

"The conditions were really very bad […] there were no vacations, no holidays. A large number of the women and children would get between 18 and 25 cents an hour." (CBC Digital Archives, 1980). This was inexcusable to me and I was greatly inspired to do what I could to end child labour and improve working conditions and wages for women and men.

I recall reading that in 1946 at the time of this union effort, the average hourly wage for women was 50 cents and 81 cents for men. I can't help myself. I press.

KW: What kinds of things would you see in workplaces?

MP: It was not that long ago that women and men were segregated at work (Yanz and Smith, 1983). In many workplaces, such as the Puretex knitting factory, women workers were subjected to surveillance (in conversation with Barbara Frum, CBC Digital Archives, 1978). This surveillance included washrooms and workspaces. This did not apply to the men's washroom! All of these workers were honest workers, "who had to earn a living the hard way […] keeping their nose to the grindstone" (CBC Digital Archives, 1978).

I can't imagine such conditions. I am painfully aware of barriers in today's workplace and at times it is hard to chart if we have made progress. I am reminded in this conversation how far we have come; how much work was required; and how much work there still is to do. Madeleine has seen so much over the course of her lifetime and has enormous perspective to offer.

KW: Your efforts ushered in a new phase of labour management and you were at the centre of a new order in Canada. Andrée Lévesque (2005), a specialist in women's history and labour and working-class history and director of the Archives Passe-Mémoire, thinks you have "mastery [over] the issues under discussion" (p. 27).

Keen to share, she chimes in before I ask anything.

MP: I am an astute reader of the news.

She pauses, smooths her skirt and clasps her slightly shaking hands neatly on her lap. I have the impression that she is just as up on the news today as when she was organizing.

I learned early on that real change comes from a studious position. Not all change can be generated from the vantage point of profit. My interest was in understanding the *a priori* of unfavourable situations for workers and collaboratively bringing about change (Lang, 2005).

She talks about collaboration for change in the same way I think of it in my own non-profit organization. It is purpose led and complex. You have so many stakeholders and you do not hold power in the same way as in a corporate hierarchy. In non-profits, you must chart alignment with persuasive, informed rhetorical strategies.

KW: What were the issues and barriers to change?

MP: Well, it is perhaps a surprise that they were not things like 'job flexibility' or the 'rise of technology'. It was about the fear of change (Kaye and MacDonald, 2005). If you addressed the principle of the matter, not just the surface issues you could produce tangible improvements. I focused on deliberate change that could be supported by legislation and the formation of programs and policy and a broad range of measures to ensure quality of life (Kaye and MacDonald, 2005).

This is curious as reports have said that she focused on those very issues e.g. influence of technology on workers, job flexibility etc. (see Remiorz, 2012); however, those closer to her seem to have different ideas (Kaye and MacDonald, 2005). I wonder if this is an attempt by one chronicler to link her to what we now understand as human relations. Though she was not the author of policy, like

Frances, she clearly was a key influencer in labour management practices and in enacting policy.

KW: Françoise David, is a former spokesperson of Québec Solidaire and former president of Fédération des femmes du Québec. She shares in your passion for women's issues, including poverty, violence against women. In an essay about you from 2005, she jokes that you have a "velvet voice" (p. 119). What does she mean by that?

I note that she smiles as she looks down, regaining a more serious tone to our discussion. She clearly eschews the attention that has been paid to her by peers. Her answers take on additional precision.

MP: I used what I had, my voice and knowledge of the issues, to inspire radical changes sorely needed. My comfort with speaking in public started as early as university at student protests (Lévesque, 2005) and continued through to conventions at CCU affiliates (Lang, 2005). I honed my skills over time. However, a voice is not enough. Success came when I did my research and backed organizational advocacy with international legal precedents (Kaye and McDonald, 2005). Policy had to follow the lobbying effort, otherwise there would be no accountability. No repercussions.

KW: You were arrested several times, for assault in 1946, for seditious conspiracy in 1948 and named a communist and a spy. Was this just part of being an organizer at the time?

I think of Frances and Hallie, both were considered communists and Frances was also accused of being Russian in a red-baiting campaign. A smirk comes over her face. She is clearly amused.

MP: Oh yes, that is certainly part of organizing strikes especially in the Cold War era. We also experienced violence from police and workers were violent, but fortunately no one was hurt (CBC Digital Archives, 1980). In the instance where I was arrested for assault, "the policeman was at least six foot tall and over 250 pounds. I had just gone onto the lines to reform picket lines and he ran over to me with a disgusting lascivious look in his eye, so that I turned my back to him and punched him with my elbow so that he couldn't take me and this was called assault" (CBC Digital Archives, 1980).

She has a diminutive frame and I cannot imagine the difference in profile. I can see why she finds it amusing. How could she have truly assaulted someone more than twice her weight and size? She has spunk and I can't hide my surprise. I look to my notes to for a reference that I have on Canadian law

KW: Under Canada law, the charge of sedition is an "offense of words [that] advocate the use, without the authority of law, of force and violence with a view to overthrowing the institutions in Canada" (CBC Digital Archives). Were these legitimate charges?

MP: The Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis accused me of sedition. I was never a member of the Communist Party and though I did serve 5 jail terms, I was acquitted on the conspiracy charge in 1954. I believe that we were targeted

because we were interfering with management and demanding better conditions, such as a 45-hour work week with a maximum of five hours in over time, vs. 60 hour weeks, 12 hours per night without vacation or holiday. In the end, at least for most of our efforts, management signed. So, I take that as a victory. (Digital Archives, 1980).

KW: *I flip through my notes again so that I can read from a passage that I have found.* John Lang, a longtime colleague of yours in the union movement, says the following in a 2005 essay, which explores your work in Ontario from 1952 to 1973:

> Thousands of workers were sometimes quick to resort to verbal if not physical violence to settle their differences. Madeleine arrived to an arena whose atmosphere was filled with tension. The Steelworkers had just distributed a poster showing a witch descending on Sudbury on her red broomstick accompanied with tasteless, sexist insults. When she arrived, she apologized to the union delegates who failed to find her at the railway station, and explained: "I flew up to Sudbury on my broom" […] The audience laughed, the tension disappeared and, having fenced off personal attacks, Madeleine could then deliver her message of solidarity (p. 73).

She raises her eyebrows as if to question the direction of our conversation, but offers no other signals, so I continue.

Similarly, Dr. Shree Mulay (2005), an accomplished gender empowerment advocate, noted indigenous health researcher, and Professor of Community Health

and Humanities at Memorial University, says that you navigate sensitive environments like "a nun disguised in civilian clothing" (p. 112). What are John and Shree getting at and how do you feel about those characterizations?

I have been dying to ask this question. It has such similarities to how Hallie and Frances were regarded. According to late US President, JF Kennedy: "Madam Perkins, who looked so quiet and peaceful and sweet was also one of the most controversial, dangerous figures that roamed the United States in the 1930s" (cited in Mohr, 1979, p. 294). Whereas, British-American actor John Houseman regarded Hallie as "a wild little woman" (as cited in Taylor, 2008, p. 248). I will circle back to these so-called compliments in my discussion later.

MP: What John and Shree are describing, with far too much imagination I might add, is that we often fought issues on a number of fronts with a myriad of stakeholders enlisted in the effort. As a result, you have to be a *convener*, a *negotiator* and a *campaigner*; a social chameleon of sorts. I believe that you have to pair an "unflinching energy", tenacity and fearlessness with a quick wit and affable nature to sometimes diffuse difficult situations (Baillargeon, 2005, p. 62).

Even though she tries to downplay the obvious praise, her eyes flicker with humour and I can see that she is enjoying the memory. I can appreciate that she used every skill she had to lead effectively. Feeling more comfortable, I take the conversation in a different direction.

KW: Many see you as a mentor. I am one. As both a researcher and a practitioner, I feel we need more female mentors and thought leaders. You have left your mark on

three spheres: trade union movements, feminism and the rights of cultural communities (Lévesque (2005). What do you think organizations can learn from your experiences?

MP: It has been my life's work to improve places of work (Open Letter, 2013). Workers face complex challenges in the workplace. People need to be valued for their differences and we need to remove obstacles and defend the rights "of all men and women to [have] a decent job in a non-discriminatory, healthy and safe environment" (Open Letter, 2013). In some instances, there are layers of discrimination, particularly for women, indigenous women, immigrants, and people of colour.

I believe that this a key reason why Madeleine has remained invisible as a theorist. This contradiction of being high profile, but ignored is nothing new to feminists, but it remains confusing. I believe her focus on women and marginalized communities and her commitment to the labour movement, created the perfect conditions for neglect. And there was never a sincere effort by MOS to examine the human condition beyond considerations, which enhanced profit.

We must remember that only in the last 100 years or so, have these workers become wage earners. These workers have been excluded from active participation in unions or have been late to be represented in unions, which were developed to protect white male skilled workers (Cumsille, Egan, Klestorny and Larrain, 1983). And despite efforts by many they have yet to catch up! Organizing is the first step in a longer process to overcome conditions of oppression

(Cumsille, Egan, Klestorny and Larrain, 1983). However, the effort needs to be embraced by all, including managers and leaders. Sexism, racism and classism continue to interfere with the achievement of competitive, fair wages and improved working conditions for all persons, across industry and across this country.

I cannot help but wonder what Madeleine would say about the current #MeToo movement, which some have argued remains devoid of consideration of the potential utility of unionism and collective labour activism as a powerful tool for working people to challenge power and inequality in work and society (Sangster and Smith, 2018). So instead I ask:

KW: Why is organizing and the study of labour action an important aspect of management and organizational studies? Right now, it is not a central concern of the research discipline or in business schools, like leadership or organizational behaviour.

MP: Well, I suppose it has a lot to do with who has contributed to our understanding of organizations and I have seen marginalized voices in organizational settings, hurt by capitalist priorities, so it stands to reason that such voices and their need would be ignored in scholarship too. The labour movement and organizing is about acknowledging a marketable skill, equal pay for equal value and recognition in wages for our skills, education, responsibilities and experience (Yanz and Smith, 1983). Such things need to be of paramount concern to building sustainable and healthy organizational environments and by extension, communities. “What one

should look for is a society in which human rights are properly defended, in which racism, sexism and all other kinds of discrimination are eliminated. To build such a society, it is necessary not to pursue the objective of greater wealth for a few" (Parent, as cited by Ghai, 2006).

Madeleine was rising up as a star in the labour movement. Her ideas, like Frances, were never connected to the theoretical goals of human relations and yet her objects would have been an important counterpoint. Genoe McLaren and Mills (2015) argue that Canada was ignored in the development of the field, which is largely constructed "as an American project, dominated by American theorists" (p. 320). This is despite recommendations made in The Symons Report of 1975, which called for a proliferation of fundamentally supported academic archival activity, linking directly the importance of Canadian archives to the foundation of Canadian studies and insisting that the "widest possible range of documentary materials be preserved for future research" (p. 7).

KW: I understand that you first became exposed to inequity at boarding school where you witnessed it for the first time. Was this the moment when you began to see your role emerging?

MP: "I was really struck by the fact that there were two classes of little girls and that was the girls such as myself who were being taught, we were the young ladies […] and then there were the girls that were just the young maids. They came from impoverished families in the countryside. They had a horrible life. They got up at five in the morning, served us after mass, served all day long, scrubbed the floors,

waxed the floors, polished the floors and stairs; they were on their knees a good part of the time. And we were not supposed to fraternize with them in any way. There were non-persons in the convent." (CBC Digital Archives, 1980). It greatly affected me, but it wasn't until I started at McGill that I actually began organizing and saw a way to begin to make change.

KW: You identify as a feminist. When did this identity develop and how did this influence you?

MP: "I, like most women, learned by my experience in life to become a feminist. I can be sure I was a feminist during my years at college in Montreal, when it was quite clear that on the campus at McGill University, men were the predominant force and of predominant significance and women took second place. […] There was a concept then that boys would have to be the providers for their families. Lawyers, doctors, and politicians were men and therefore, wasn't it a waste to educate women who were going to grow up to marry, stay home and bear children? Within the student movement a growing number of feminists amongst us were very clear that bright girls must have the same opportunity […] as bright boys did." (Parent, as cited in Connelly and Keddy, 1989).

I am taken again by the fact that Frances could admit to feminist leanings, whereas Hallie was reluctant. Madeleine is clearly the most outspoken feminist in my group. I would love to spend some more time on her early days of organizing at McGill, but I must stay focused on what I think is the most useful information for my field.

KW: What were some of the barriers that you faced in representing women in labour? I am interested in the historical conditions for women in the workplace. The perspectives we have are largely drawn from the vantage point of but a few male scholars.

MP: "It was my experience that women recognized the need to organize in the 1940's" (Parent, as cited in Ghai, 2006). Canadian women faced enormous barriers, which hindered their participation in unions and strike activity (Frager, 1983). Our lack of participation was explained away with sexist rhetoric about 'natural timidity', but the realities were that we faced special constraints, and particularly the demands of domesticity and motherhood, and those that were young and single had little skill and experience, which made it harder for them to engage in collective protests (Frager, 1983). There was this idea that a woman out of her home was somehow out of her place (Frager, 1983).

This came up for Frances and Hallie too. Women appearing to be 'out of place'. She continues.

Even when women could overcome these barriers they often failed to achieve solidarity with their male fellow workers, especially because they were often seen as either replacing their male counterparts as scabs against male craft unionists, or because the male unionists directly were working against women and leading strikes to force employers to fire women (Frager, 1983). They were a lot more vulnerable due to occupying unskilled positions, even during the war (Frager, 1983). "The overwhelming majority of striking workers were women [in the war]

and francophone women, and their interests were being betrayed by the union leadership" (Parent as cited by Sacca, 1984). And the sad reality was, that when male unionists did get to the table to bargain, they would often leave women workers out of policy deliberations. "[…] Even [in] progressive-led unions, a woman's chances are less than a man's" (Wedro as cited in Frager, 1983, p. 55).

KW: You worked with both men and women, correct?

MP: "I worked with both women and men but a special effort was required to ensure the presence and the indispensable participation of women in the unions and to have them appreciated by their fellow workers. Women needed to be encouraged to join, to feel at home within the union and to feel that they did not have to take a back seat to anyone. It took particular efforts for women to recognize that their experiences at work, in the factory and even in their daily lives, were just as important as those of men and that they should be equal in the work place and in their union." (Parent, as cited in Connelly and Keddy, 1989).

KW: Did women face other issues when they occupied more skilled roles?

MP: They did. Well into the 1980s, many public sector workers were denied the right to strike and women occupied a disproportionate number of positions as teachers, hospital workers and other public employees (Darcy and Lauzon, 1983). In PEI and Manitoba, matters not resolved through negotiation are required to be solved by arbitration, therefore denying workers the right to strike (Darcy and Lauzon, 1983). The only power many workers hold is their right to withhold their labour (Darcy and Lauzon, 1983). Well into the 1990s there were often other restrictions

applied, which affected women workers more, such as freezes on working conditions, which takes away the employees' rights to negotiate for things like maternity leave (Darcy and Lauzon, 1983). "Then there was the battle against sexual harassment. You know how rampant this was and still is. At the time [in the 1940's], it was not talked about. Women felt a need therefore to join a union, one strong motivation being to free themselves from sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. This struggle [was] fought more successfully in the Quiet Revolution, [and] blossomed into the Pro-Choice movement […]" (Parent, as cited in Ghai, 2006).

The Quiet Revolution was a period of rapid socio-political change in Quebec beginning in the 1960's. The efforts resulted in secularization of government, the creation of a welfare system and the promotion of a pro-sovereignty government. During this time, the government took considerable control over public infrastructure and health and educational systems. Unionization and civil service boomed (Durocher, 2013). I know Quebec was unique politically back then and still is, but Madeleine is offering significant insight into the realities of the socio-political influences on the rights of women and its undeniable effect on organizational environments. She has invaluable insights into historical working conditions in Canada.

KW: Can you tell me what you think the issues were when you started organizing in Quebec? What were some of the socio-political pressures that you faced?

MP: "There have been periods of social reform where there was a more humane and realistic approach. During these periods, the push came from the bottom, After the Quiet Revolution, for instance, at the end of the Duplessis era. People had been living under an autocratic regime where the employers, the government and the church hierarchy worked together to keep people down. Behind the scenes, the Quebec government at the time was working with the federal government, while pretending to be in disagreement with it. We don't always recognize that the same thing is happening now as well. People's resistance to the oppressive Duplessis regime in the 1940's and 1950's blossomed into an urgent demand for improvement and social change in the 1960's, when considerable reforms were made in health services, education social services etc. With it came the laicization of people working in these fields. Two thirds of the people working in these fields were, and still are, women. As working people, women gained a measure of independence and empowerment. They organized into unions and they contributed to the building of the women's movement. I attribute much of our social gains to the power of the women's movement in Quebec" (Parent, as cited in Ghai, 2006).

KW: I am curious if you think your approach to your work in labour would assist other organizations. John describes your approach as hands-on. He says you "worked in the trenches organizing support […] [and] met with [workers] in their kitchens, speaking their language" (Lang, 2005, p. 72).

MP: Well that's true!

Clearly enthusiastic, she continues with a faster and more animated pace.

The best place to accomplish change is face to face and through real conversation. Not only do you begin to understand individual struggles, but you also begin to understand the profound needs for labour health and wellbeing in organizational settings as not just a matter of good governance, but as a measure of a good society.

I think that Frances would agree.

KW: I feel that your lessons for those of us in management and organizational studies concern the bridging of profitable interests with responsibilities to workers. Is that a fair assessment?

MP: I really did not think of it in that way. I was deeply offended by what I saw as a *cast system,* which compromised the dignity of the worker, be they immigrants or women (Lang, 2005). I felt that the responsible thing to do was to raise up these struggles to be recognized as an important part of capitalist negligence and for management to see "beyond narrow economic concerns [and] to [address] the important political and social issues of the day" (Lang, 2005, p 83).

The parallels with Frances are unquestionable and I know that this observation has not been made before. How is that possible?

KW: As a pioneer in the feminist movement, what would you say to young women today?

MP: John said that I sometimes had a "ferocious presence". I am not sure about that, but I do hope that in my actions I am an "inspiration for women, particularly

younger women" (Lang, 2005, p. 79). Young women need to "envision themselves as taking their rightful place as leaders" (Lang, 2005, g 79). To do so, they must bring a "working woman's perspective to whatever policy or issue [is] being debated. . . [and be] intelligent, principled" and persistent (Lang, 2005, p. 79).

She could be talking to the young women I work with every day. I have the same motivation: for them to realize their infinite potential. And as a senior leader, I too need to hear such encouragements on occasion, and I find that Madeleine has a positive effect on me.

KW: A great focus of the latter part of your career was devoted to supporting the voices of indigenous women and their battle to eliminate discrimination against women in the Indian Act of 1876, which saw women lose their indigenous status if they did not marry an indigenous person, compromising their ability to support their family.

Her work in this area is particularly inspiring to me and I wonder what she would think of the of the report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, published in 2015. The commission was convened the year she passed away (2012). I see that her work fit into a larger and longer effort, which is now reflected in our growing recognition that we are all treaty people.

MP: I feel that we are all responsible for standing with (side-by-side), not necessarily for, those of us that do not have the same rights (Rouleau, 2005). I believe in the power unity and solidarity offer remedies to discrimination. I believe in being a

great friend to indigenous women and I was able to support them through the Native Women's Association and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. I worked closely with Mary Two-Axe Early, a Mohawk elder and advocate from Kahnawake and the founder of the Indian Rights for Indian Woman group, and Mary Pitawanakwat, an Ojibway, formerly employed in the Office Secretary of State in Saskatchewan, to advance her discrimination case with her employer (the Government of Canada) before the Human Rights Commission. I leveraged my connections throughout Canada and a judicious approach to fight for "women for justice and dignity" (Rouleau, 2005, p. 122). Most of the time, it was "David versus Goliath" (Rouleau, 2005, p. 122). But as a team, we could support Mary's battle for justice and expose what Mary called a "second-rate" status, which indigenous peoples have endured for too long (Pitawanakwat, as cited in Nelson, 1991). There is so much work to be done to educate today's Canadian people about our treaty promises to the indigenous people of Canada. We need awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm we have caused and continue to cause, and atonement and action (Treaty Education Nova Scotia). Part of that work is indigenizing workplaces.

I recently attended a conference where the concept of indigenization was discussed in the context of business education. Indigenization requires authentic inclusion (more indigenous representation) and decolonization (the creation of structures of clear control for indigenous peoples) (Treaty Education Nova Scotia). Madeleine's efforts to support indigenous women is something that

resonates strongly with me. I have been trying to understand my role in Truth and Reconciliation and I am learning from her through this interview about the kinds of ways I can support indigenous persons, particularly in work environments and business education. Also, in this conversation, I recognize another kind of leadership, which Madeleine is demonstrating and that is community leadership (bridging organizational and social needs). There are so few visible role models for women and particularly for women working in advocacy and service sectors.

KW: Your career has spanned decades and you have seen much change and perhaps not enough. What do you think the role of history has played in your efforts in labour and by extension, organizations?

MP: History is a set of ideas, which govern the way we think in the present. History is stubborn. “When I look here at the discrimination against people who come here from other countries with all the prejudice springing from the idea that they are stealing our jobs, I feel it is all a great lie – as great a lie as saying that Columbus discovered America. He did not discover America, he initiated an assault.” (Parent, as cited in Ghai, 2006).” These are the conditions to which we must bring remedies. Where I chose to make my contribution was through fair recognition, as wage earners, as equal persons under the law.

KW: You were just honoured at Concordia with a Doctor of Laws degree. Former Prime Minister Jean Chretien referred to you as a hero (McGill University, 2014). Tell me what such recognition means to you?

MP: I think it is all very nice. But I think the change we accomplished is much more important. "I fought for peace and for a decent life for all men, women and children" (Parent, 2002).

I would describe her voice as soft and gentle, but she is so confident that I cannot deny her power. Her petite comportment belies the boldness within. We have been talking for over an hour and I am sensitive to not taking advantage of her generosity. I begin to conclude our conversation.

KW: All of the women I am speaking with have been described as ahead of her time. In your case, it was current CCU President, Joanie Cameron Pritchett[21] who made this observation.

MP: It is a funny sort of thing to say and I believe it is applied to situations where vast amounts of change occur in a very short amount of time or people cannot make sense of the accomplishments of women. That is what we were able to achieve in labour in Canada.

I note she uses "we" again instead of "I". I believe it is out of respect for her lifelong partner in organizing and late husband, Kent Rowley. Perhaps, dear reader, you would like me to press more about the role of Ken Rowley? I am sorry, but I will not. During my research, I was simply annoyed reading over and over again, that it was Kent and Madeleine, Madeleine and Kent. I can tell it became a common refrain for those close to the couple. Kent dies in 1978, Madeleine continues her career. She was an organizer before she met him and

[21] Pritchett makes this observation in 2012, but I think it also fits the prevailing opinion 3 years earlier.

one long after he died. In this interview, I want you to just see her. I recognized that some of their accomplishments are shared, but she deserves an identity of her own and I as researcher and author (and writer) in this forum, have the right to make such creative choices. Unlike Frances or Hallie, there was not the same gendering effect in various texts, which are worth noting. No one puts Madeleine in Kent's shadow. It is clear they shared a fair and equal partnership. They were described affectionately as "colleagues in arms" (Sabourin, 2017, para 5). John Lang (2005) apologizes for the constant coupling of names, but insists they complemented each other well: "Madeleine was very precise, rigorous in her preparation and very proper, even ladylike, in her demeanor; Kent on the other hand, had a more flamboyant style, less interested in the immediate details, concentrating more on the longer view and always looking for that big breakthrough […] Kent admired Madeleine's intelligence, her dedication and her toughness" (p. 84). I leave it alone. She continues.

Maida Herman Solomon was also said to be 'ahead of her time" because she was the inventor of the field of psychiatric social work (Sugarman Evans, 2003). I am honoured to be in such fine company, but I think it is just a thing people say.

I know that our time together has come to an end and so I offer these final thoughts and acknowledgments.

KW: Madeleine, you worked for equality, justice and peace and led the way as a woman in the labour movement to support the rights of women. I want to thank you for your incredible legacy of inspiring activism. Canadian workplaces are all

the better for it. It was such an honour to speak with you and to share your story so that others might better understand the role of women and women leaders in organizations beyond the capitalist and patriarchal frames we are accustomed to. Do you have any final thoughts?

MP: I would like for women to know that we need to raise the specific concerns of the disenfranchised to all levels of government and to leaders in organizations. This is all of our work. And, there will always be those who work against these efforts, be it the anti-organizing efforts I experienced in the early years of the Cold War, or the outsourcing and erosion of workers' rights both for Canadian citizens and migrant workers, or for the continuing struggle of unions against privatization (May Day tribute to Madeleine Parent: Activist, 2012). We must continue to campaign for fair representation and justice in our civil society (May Day tribute to Madeleine Parent: Activist, 2012). "We should be witness to the hard reality of women's lives in all its aspects. We must be witness to their struggle to survive; to learn; to equip themselves to earn a decent living; to be able to nurture the children they chose [sic] to bear; to live and be respected as equal human beings in the community. We must agree to translate these desires into issues and demands and we must, with a united and strong voice, pressure politicians [and leaders, and organizations] to fulfill their promises on these demands and we should work in social solidarity […]. We need a clear head and persistence in pursuit of our goals" (Parent, as cited in Connelly and Keddy, 1989). "I believe young women of all origins and circumstances will, in their own way, continue

> the struggle against long-standing injustices, building coalitions with their sisters around the world and with men who care. They will overcome" (Parent, as cited in Hustak, 2012).
>
> *I thank her again, rise and take her hand, which is offered. It is warm and soft. I don't want leave. I am so inspired. What a remarkable leader.*

6.04 Post Interview Reflection

What got in her way? It seems so strange to me that such a brilliant and vital figure would be overlooked in terms of potential contributions to MOS. Though I need not look too far for confirmation that she became marginalized over time and her contributions reduced to a single dimension:

> "Madeleine was a bit forgotten," said Monique Simard, a former vice president of the Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux. "But she is best defined through the brand of unionism with which she was identified for more than 50 years: struggling, committed, never opportunistic, determined, stubborn and courageous. ... she always pushed the limits at her own risk and was prepared to take the consequences of her actions" (as cited in Hustak, 2012).

What I see is a remarkable, fully vibrant and complex individual with broad concerns, which span organizational interests, government policy and civil society. Is it management's propensity to ignore labour programs or women or both?

In investigating the development of various fields within management, which we may now think of as more integrated, it is interesting to learn that fields of industrial relations (aka labour programs), economics and human resource management have

largely developed separately (Kaufman, 2002). Evidence of this is the adoption of certain theories and theorists into the business schools: “both economics and industrial relations are perceived to be part of the social sciences, while sometimes administratively located in business schools, are more often considered to have their intellectual and organizational roots in the liberal arts and sciences” (Kaufman, 2002, p. 962). More than 100 years later, Taylor continues to loom large and influence what management writ large considers worthy and fitting (Wren, 2011). According to research in the United States completed by two of the leading industrial relations’ scholars, Wren (2005) and Kaufman (2000; 2002), they believe it is not unusual for those studying human relations to not be required to take courses beyond basic economics. This explains to some extent why Madeleine’s accomplishments were not translated over or even compared with the work that Taylor and Mayo undertook in the early days of human relations, but less as to why she was ignored by industrial relations. In a historical text on the history of management thought by Wren (2005), he attributes the emergence of the field of personnel management to Taylor and scientific management and others, including Mayo, but does not mention the discipline of economics, of industrial relations, nor does he cite contributions to the early development of the field (Kaufman, 2002). Later, Wren (2011) offers a rationale as to why Taylor’s “grip on the management literature and our current thinking” remains so strong, and cites Taylor as (1) offering several starting points of additional inquiry; (2) the desire to see his ideas for “task management” (his preferred name for scientific management) further studied and adopted, and (3) the broad distribution of his translated work of 1911 (p. 12 and p. 18).

What were her overlooked contributions? For Madeleine, she is primarily remembered for her advocacy work as a feminist and particularly for her work to ensure safety and equality for women in the workplace. I think that because she was a woman, focused on issues for women and marginalized communities, it was easy to overlook her as a potential early theorist. Also, she did not have a title, like Frances (minister) and Hallie (director), and this lack of official status may have played a role. And it still might today. It can be hard to recognize differing legitimate leadership roles, which might present in a volunteer capacity or outside of typical organizational spaces, particularly if they are gendered. I have experienced this myself as a non-profit CEO. There is an understanding, which my colleagues and I tolerate that we are "not real CEOs" and that our sector is "not a real sector", or that it is the 'third' sector.

It is also fair to say that Canadians were genuinely excluded from consideration when the field emerged, though several others outside of the US and outside of the discipline were selectively coopted by the field as early theorists (Urwick and Brech, 1944; 1951; Urwick, 1987). I think it would be entirely reasonable to see why the thought leadership and experience of someone like Madeleine was overlooked. Roper (2001) also argues that the field and the players involved strove to construct a separation between the personal and the organizational. Indeed, Madeleine was entirely concerned with the personal in organizational environments and the experience of the worker. She would have been seen as being on the other side of management interests.

If I were in Urwick's 1987 position today and looking to write a history, which contained pioneers in management (and consider overlooked figures, which would offer

rich debate within the field) it would be hard to ignore Madeleine. Her accomplishments span eight decades and consider new labour policy, the protections of women and children, fair wages and working conditions, and Canadian control of negotiation and union ownership. It would appear that we have been unreasonably selective in constructing a history of management. The gendering is perhaps not a surprise and I always expect to see more men in a history, but let me return to a point I first made with Frances: why engineers like Taylor and psychologists like Mayo, and not social workers like Frances and labour leaders like Madeleine? Even Frances' and Madeleine's male counterparts operating in the same fields were overlooked.

What I most admire about Madeleine, is that she was a fighter and she was not afraid to be in the line of fire, or even get arrested. The similarities between Frances and Madeleine are quite amazing, but Madeleine stayed in the trenches and never entered the formal policy world of government as Frances did. However, both in terms of the areas of work, and contributions to policy, accomplished many similar things. Unfortunately, they also bore the same fate: both were branded communists and Russian collaborators and feminists. These distractions were politically motivated and often drew attention away from what they achieved and how they did it.

What was I like with her? I felt the most careful with Madeleine. Perhaps it is her age or perhaps I just did not want to feel silly. She is so incredibly knowledgeable and reading various interviews of her, I admit that I was quite overwhelmed with the depth of knowledge she has over a variety of subjects, which span the political and the social. Her long career in labour also means more potential contributions to MOS and I did not want

to miss anything that might be relevant. Madeleine required me to dig deeper than the others and to understand conditions in Canadian history that I was unaware of. I also had to explore areas of the literature, which were unfamiliar to me in order to prepare for our conversation. I attribute that to Madeleine's broad knowledge of the organizational spaces and all its intersections with the personal and the political.

What did the interview achieve? The biggest achievement with Madeleine's interview is that she can now be seen as a figure whose work shaped organizational life in Canada. That natural dissonance you might feel, dear reader, concerning her worthiness is an outcome I was hoping to achieve. We need to start to think differently about what models of female leadership looks like and where it shows up historically and today. The feminist critique is not only one about lost contributions, it is also about remarkable female figures operating in sectors outside of capitalist modes of production, which can provide inspiration and practical lessons for women leaders. Madeleine is one of those remarkable figures.

As I have argued, Canada draws largely on the US for our sense of organizational identity and the sad truth is that we had "thought leaders" on the ground here in Canada doing remarkable things (Genoe McLaren and Mills, 2015). Madeleine helped to forge a Canadian worker identity. Significant social policy followed the Quiet Revolution and Madeleine was a key player in that movement. The enormous shift of unions to Canadian ownership also meant that workers interests were less vulnerable to political corruption and American interests. With this interview, I have the bones of what I need to mobilize awareness for Madeleine, which is something I have already achieved to some degree

through my published works featuring Frances and Hallie. The connection between Madeleine and her accomplishments and MOS has never been made, and I believe now it can be.

Chapter 7: Viola Desmond

7.01 Biographical Introduction

Viola was one of 15 children born to Gwendolyn Irene (née Johnson) and James Albert Davis in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Robson and Caplan, 2010). She was born on July 6, 1914 (Nyarko, 2016). Viola was one of 11 siblings to survive childhood and the youngest of the elder sisters (9 sisters in all) (Robson and Caplan, 2010). Viola's grandfather, on her maternal side, was a Baptist minister and the family was very religious (Robson and Caplan, 2010). Viola's mother was an active advocate, who often wrote letters to newspapers when she thought something was "politically, educationally or racially wrong" (Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 22). Her father had intermittent work and while some siblings helped with income, others went to school. It was particularly tough during the depression and Wanda Robson (Viola's sister) remarks openly about the family's talent for making "food stretch" and working closely as a family to support the full duties of a busy household (Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 34).

Viola was a "topnotch" student and studied at Sir Joseph Howe Elementary School and Bloomfield High School (Wanda Robson and Viola Desmond Collection 2008-2014; Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 35). Her sister describes her as very particular and needing everything "to be correct" (Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 35). In her time, Halifax did not hire black teachers, but as an African Nova Scotian, one could obtain a special certificate, which permitted you to teach in the black-only schools of Hammonds Plains, Preston and Africville (Robson and Caplan, 2010). Viola obtained her certificate

and was teaching by the of age 16 in Preston (Robson and Caplan, 2010; Canada's Walk of Fame, 2017).

As a student, Viola was greatly inspired by Madam C.J. Walker, the first self-made African American entrepreneur, who was also a noted philanthropist, political and social activist (Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 36-38). She started the *C.J. Walker School of Beauty Culture* (Walker died in 1919). Walker's success, by Wanda's account, is what encouraged Viola on her path to entrepreneurship (Robson and Caplan, 2010). In the 1930s, vocational training facilities were not open to black women and there were no black women working professionally in the field of cosmetology in Halifax. To pursue her dreams, Viola saved her money from teaching and went on to study the trade in Montreal, New York and New Jersey (Robson and Caplan, 2010; Bank of Canada, 2016). In 1936, she married Jack Desmond (Wanda Robson and Viola Desmond Collection 2008-2014).

After training she returned to Halifax where she started her business in 1937, called *Vi's Studio of Beauty Culture* (Bank of Canada, 2016). The beauty parlour, specifically devoted to serving black women "became a gathering place for women in the community" (Bank of Canada, 2016). The store was first established in her family home but then grew to be a standalone store on Halifax's Gottingen Street (Robson and Caplan, 2010). Her self-made products expanded: face powder, perfumes, lipsticks, hair dye, hair pomade, hair-pieces, falls, chignons and wigs (Bingham and Yarhi, 2013; Robson and Caplan, 2010). Within a few years, she established the *Desmond School of Beauty Culture,* which drew students from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec (Bank of

Canada, 2016). She also created another enterprise to manufacture, market and sell her products (*Vi's Beauty Products*) and generated orders from across Nova Scotia (Bank of Canada, 2016). She was regarded as a role model and community leader and inspired those around her (Bank of Canada, 2016). Eventually, Viola left Nova Scotia to study business in Montreal and then moved to New York to start a business as an actor's business agent. Viola died suddenly and tragically in 1965 at the age of 50, in her New York apartment from a gastrointestinal hemorrhage (Canada's Walk of Fame, 2017).

Her success as an entrepreneur (particularly as a young black business woman in segregated society) is largely overshadowed by her role as a reluctant defender[22] of social justice and human rights in Canada after the events at the Roseland Theatre in 1946 where she was assaulted by police and arrested for sitting in a 'whites-only' section. She is now regarded as a significant figure in the rise of the Civil Rights Movement in Canada (Wanda Robson and Viola Desmond Collection 2008-2014). Due in large part to her sister's dedication, Viola received a posthumous Royal Prerogative of Free Mercy Pardon from the Nova Scotia government in April of 2010 (Sadlier, n/d; McGraw-Hill Education Canada, 2017). She was portrayed on a commemorative stamp by Canada Post in 2012, featured in a government television feature *Heritage Minute* in 2016; inducted to Canada's Walk of Fame in 2017; and in 2018, she became the first Canadian woman to appear on a Canadian banknote (Canada's Walk of Fame, 2017).

For your benefit, dear reader, her affidavit regarding events in 1946 reads (in part):

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[22] Viola was asked to become a spokesperson with the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, but declined (Canada's Walk of Fame, 2017).

I, Viola Irene Desmond of Halifax, in the County of Halifax, Married Woman, make oath and say as follows:

1. That I am a Beautician by occupation and doing business in the City of Halifax.
2. That I arrived in New Glasgow in the County of Pictou on Friday the 8th day of November, A.D., 1946, on business and at 7 p.pm. went to the Roseland Theatre in the Town alone to attend the performance.
3. That I asked the ticket seller for "one down please" meaning a ticket for the downstairs and thinking I had such a ticket I went to the ticket taker and tendered her the ticket. She accepted it, handed me the stub and I walked towards the downstairs, she called me back and said, "this is an upstairs ticket, you will have to go upstairs". I then tried to get the ticket exchanged but the ticket seller refused saying, "I am not permitted to sell upstairs tickets to you". I then proceeded to the downstairs part of the theatre and took a seat there.
4. That after I occupied, quietly, the seat in the downstairs part of the theatre for a few minutes the ticket taker came and said, "I told you to go upstairs". I refused to go and then the Manager Henry MacNeil came and said that I had been told to go upstairs and had I not read the back of the ticket and that the theatre could refuse admission to anybody. […] He became very angry and said that he would have me thrown out […] and a little while later a Policeman came [and] took me by the shoulders and dragged me as far as the

lobby […]. Mr. MacNeil and the Policeman carried me out to the street […] and I was driven to the Town lock-up where I was locked up overnight […].

5. […] I was not told by the Magistrate that I had the right to have Counsel nor that I had the right to have an adjournment and be bailed. […] After I had given evidence myself on the witness stand the Magistrate immediately convicted me and sentenced me without asking me if I had any submissions to make to the Court […]. I then paid the fine and was allowed to go […] (Desmond 1947).

Viola's posthumous pardon from 2010 reads (in part):

[…] On April 15, 2010, the province of Nova Scotia granted an official apology and free pardon to the late Mrs. Viola Desmond who was wrongfully fined and jailed for sitting in the white peoples' section of a New Glasgow movie theatre in 1946. On the advice of the Executive Council, the lieutenant governor exercised the Royal Prerogative of Mercy to grant a free pardon[23]. A free pardon is based on innocence and recognizes that a conviction was in error. A free pardon is an extraordinary remedy and is considered only in the rarest of circumstances. A Royal Prerogative of Mercy Free Pardon is meant to right a wrong. In this case, the free pardon is meant to right the wrong done to Mrs. Desmond (as cited Reynolds, Robson and Clarke, 2016, p. 84).

[23] I think it important that you know that Honourable Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Mayan Francis, emphasizes at every opportunity that Viola received a Royal Prerogative of Mercy free pardon, which absolves all guilt, versus a royal pardon which does not overturn a conviction (M. Francis, personal communication, January 21, 2020).

I recognize that bringing up this great injustice is not my purpose here, but how much or how little to reference is hard to know. Context is important to Viola's story and to all of the women in my study. And Viola faced the most unique barriers of any of the women I have studied. Viola's case is considered by some to the be most publicized incident of racial discrimination in Canadian history ("Viola Desmond," n/d).

7.02 Pre-Conversation

In 2019, Viola was also shortlisted, and in 2020 she will be inducted into the Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame. This has been an advocacy project that I have led for more than two years with the support of my colleague and friend, Shakara Joseph. I have also been fortunate to have the support of Wanda Robson (Viola's sister), the Honourable Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Dr. Mayann Francis, and Rustum Southwell, Community Leader and CEO of Black Business Initiative, in this effort. A testament to enacting change in the here and now would be to have her recognized not just as a civil rights heroine, but also as a pioneer female African Nova Scotian entrepreneur who built a new business industry in Canada, trained and empowered other young black women, innovated her business model, and expanded her enterprise across Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

I want the world to know her as more than a one-dimensional figure. Her lessons are lost to history; lost by the way we privilege certain voices at the cost of others, historically and presently. Lost to certain well-intentioned efforts to socially construct her as a heroine of civil rights. It has taken a herculean effort by her sister Wanda to have her recognized at all. Will it take an equally significant effort to have her seen as more? Can

her story help us to understand some of what management and organizational studies is missing? What potential practices and contributions to theory might she have contributed?

This advocacy work has prepared me well for my conversation with Viola, but it has not removed any of my tentativeness. Before I begin my conversation with Viola, it is appropriate to discuss language choice. The term "black" is used herein to refer to the community within Nova Scotia, Canada, which self-identifies as "black". This overarching self declaration includes immigrants and African Nova Scotians. I am continuing to develop an appreciation for the sensitivity associated with colour names, notions and labels. I drew on Wilder (2010) to develop an understanding of the scope of inquiry into language, colourism, and associated beliefs, attitudes and prejudice. According to African Nova Scotian Affairs, Nova Scotia Canada, African Nova Scotians have a history in Canada, which dates back 400 years. African Nova Scotians are not to be confused with Caribbean immigrants, who came to Canada starting in the early 1900s and therefore do not self-identify as African Nova Scotian. African Nova Scotians include Black Loyalists, who came as refugees, freemen/women, or from the Colonial United States or West Africa as slaves as early as 1604; often with the promise (but not the reality) of a better life[24].

In writing about Viola, I find that I am also writing about her sister, Wanda. Wanda has written three books about her sister. I found *Sister to Courage* (2010)

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[24] For additional insight into the lived experience of African Nova Scotians, I recommend Matthew McRae's piece on *the story of Africville*, which builds on the research of Mallory Richard. The piece is posted on the website for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights: https://humanrights.ca/story/the-story-of-africville

particularly helpful in gaining an understanding of Viola as a person. The irony in that is that when I recently spoke to Wanda and asked her if she would sign this book for me, she confessed it is her least favourite (W. Robson, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Even so, this is the only one where I get a sense of who Viola's personality. Viola's voice comes across sparingly in legal records and a few media articles, so I have had to rely on Wanda's lens of Viola, which is understandably subjective. Wanda's writing is in service to Viola's recognition as a Civil Rights leader. She confessed to me that understanding her sister as an entrepreneur is something she is only beginning to appreciate (W. Robson, personal communication, September 27, 2018). In conversation with the Honourable Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Dr. Mayann Francis, concerning Viola's entrepreneurial career, I found a shared advocate, who also believes strongly in the value of Viola's overlooked business contributions (M. Francis, personal communication, January 21, 2020).

7.03 In Conversation with Viola Desmond

It took some time to locate Viola and her Montreal apartment in 1954. I picked this time because it was long past the events of 1946, which made her famous, and before her death in 1965. It appears that she left Nova Scotia shortly after the events of 1946, though the reasons are unclear. Her sister has reflected that the spotlight on the of the high profile court case, the resulting strain on her marriage and ultimate breakup led her to close her business and start fresh (Reynolds and Robson, 2018). Nova Scotia is a small province and I cannot imagine what that kind of notoriety would feel like. She is familiar

with Montreal, because she studied there before when she was training for her first entrepreneurial venture. She has returned to study again.

The period of her life that I am most concerned with is between 1937 and 1946, from when she started her business, to the events which led to the development of her as a civil rights icon. At this time, we must recognize that she likely does not see herself as a civil rights leader. Much of that work we owe to her sister Wanda, who strongly advocated for her sister. Wanda's advocacy led to the province of Nova Scotia offering an official apology and posthumous pardon in 2010 (Reynolds and Robson, 2018).

In 1960, just a few years from "now" (1954), Montreal will be transformed under the Quiet Revolution, which is something we have already looked at through Madeleine's story. For Viola and other black women and men (immigrants or Canadians) living in Quebec, this also meant a growing awareness of racism and the associated struggles. Until the 1960s, most black men were segregated, working for the railroad companies as porters and dining hall employees and though there was not the same level of segregated[25] signage as you would have seen in the Jim Crow era of the US, blacks often did not know if they would be served when attending a restaurant, or store, or cinema (High, 2017a). Much of the change in working conditions to come is attributed to unionization in the 1960s (High, 2017).

I meet up with Viola in Little Burgundy[26], a black Montreal neighbourhood with hundreds of families. In 1950, most working black men and their families lived in this

[25] The last segregated school in Canada was in Nova Scotia and it did not close until 1983 (Segregation in Nova Scotia, 2010). Segregation was policy not law (Segregation in Nova Scotia, 2010).
[26] It is a likely location for Viola to have settled though no one appears sure of where she went in Montreal.

largely black community, which was close to various train stations (High, 2017b). Most black men in the city were employed by Canadian Pacific Railway and the Grand Trunk (High, 2017b). Despite transformation to the area, it remains colloquially known as black Montreal (High, 2017b).

Her apartment is above a store on St. Jacques. She kindly invites me in, and we sit down at her Formica and chrome kitchen table with vinyl turquoise chairs. She serves us Lipton Orange Pekoe tea in cute yellow cups and saucers and offers sugar, milk and honey. She is wearing a cream colour blouse, with a light blue knit button down vest. She has paired it with a form fitting calf length brown pencil skirt and modest brown teardrop, t-strap pumps.

Her sister is right, she does have a "tiny voice" (Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 46). She also has a measured cadence. She is elegant and beautiful, and her diminutive frame, features and voice contradict the obvious strength within. I have been most nervous to meet Viola. I feel the hope and the scrutiny of her family and the African Nova Scotia community back home to "get it right", though I am not sure how to do that. But I am prepared to try. I have brought the same Ferguson reel-to-reel audio tape recorder (model 441-TR) I used for Hallie's interview since we are again in the 1950s.

Unspoken thoughts of mine will now appear in italics to help the reader follow our interview and distinguish between what is said and unsaid. My comments will appear under KW, whereas Viola's will appear under VD in the following transcribed interview.

KW: How do you feel about leaving Nova Scotia and the recent court case?

VD: I had to leave. Nova Scotia is a small place and it is hard to take yourself out of the spotlight. I also struggled with the pressure it put on my family who were drawn into things.

KW: How do you mean?

VD: News reports included the names of my family members: my mother and father, and my uncle, John Davis (The Clarion, 1946). “I was born in Halifax and have lived [t]here] most of my life and I’ve found relations between negroes and whites very pleasant. I didn’t realize a thing like [that] could happen in Nova Scotia—or in any other part of Canada” (Desmond, as cited in Halifax Chronicle, November 29, 1946, p. 2). “Because of the alleged racial discrimination angles the case attracted wide interest—both in the United States and Canada” (Halifax Chronicle, December 28, 1946, p. 14).

I reject the use of racial slurs. However, this is Viola’s time and it is Viola speaking directly. The temporal context is important, though I still feel uncomfortable.

KW: Your writ of certiorari to quash the conviction was dismissed, is that right?

VD: Yes, on a technicality. Justice Hall believed that had the case come to the court by some other method, there might have been an opportunity to right the wrong. He did not fully believe that my case was one where I attempted to defraud the province the sum of one cent, but rather “a surreptitious endeavour to enforce a Jim Crow rule by misuse of a public statute” (Hall, as cited in Halifax Chronicle, May 19, 1947, p. 14).

Wanda claims that it was not until the Chronicle Herald said she "was tried for being a negress" that race was ever mentioned (Robson and Caplan, 2010). However, the Halifax Chronicle uses many such references to race throughout their coverage of the case and attributes this quote to Viola: "Mrs. Desmond told the magistrate she was being tried for being a negress and not for any felony" (Halifax Chronicle, 1946, p. 2). The headline that I believe Wanda is referring to is actually this one: "Negress Alleges She Was Ejected From Theatre" (Chronicle Herald, November 29, 1946, p. 2). These are just some of the subtle ways the construction of Viola as a Civil Rights leader was achieved. Based on Viola's affidavit, she was clearly racially targeted and quite genuinely stood up against the abuse and mistreatment she received

I return to my questions.

KW: What happened to your reputation after the case?

Viola's story is interesting because it has become a potent flashpoint for both Canadian pride and shame. Wanda's efforts to honour Viola are inspiring and impressive. However, so frequently do we now hear the story of Viola's remarkable bravery, that she has been reduced to a symbol and known only in association with others, be it Rosa Parks[27] *or C.J. Walker, or with certain social phenomena, like Civil Rights (not management or entrepreneurship).*

VD: I was described as a convicted criminal who defrauded the government (The Clarion), and as an embarrassment to my family on one hand, and then on the

[27] American activist who refused to surrender her seat on a segregated bus in 1955 (Rosa Parks, 2014).

other, a victim of false arrest, false imprisonment, assault and malicious persecution. I felt I had no choice but to leave, so I closed my salon and came to Montreal to study business (Viola Desmond, n/d).

Wanda discloses some of the bullying her family faced: "I heard one say, 'who did she think she was, that she couldn't go upstairs'" (Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 109).

KW: That must have been so very difficult. How did these events affect your business?

VD: My mother and father were looking to have things cool down; they were aware of the injustice, but my sister became concerned that my father might do something he would regret (Robson and Caplan, 2010). My family didn't want trouble (Robson and Caplan, 2010). The NSAACP[28] was behind me 100% but my lawyer failed me (Robson and Caplan, 2010). My marriage became strained (Robson and Caplan, 2010). I looked for other things to do and I invested in real estate and fixed up buildings, but I gave up on my franchise plans (Robson and Caplan, 2010).

KW: Is the case why you left Nova Scotia?

VD: I felt that I had no choice. I needed a fresh start and I wanted my family to be able to move on.

Wanda makes it clear that Viola still took care of her family and offered financial support as she had been doing all along (Robson and Caplan, 2010). Her Honour, Dr. Francis and I have talked about what might have been, had Viola

[28] The Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People.

stayed and been able to continue to build her business (M. Francis, personal communication, January 30, 2020). We think that Canada would be home to a substantial enterprise and a celebrated legacy.

I ask a question that I think I already know the answer to.

KW: Do you consider yourself an activist?

VD: I was no activist. I was, and still am, a businesswoman.

Wanda describes her sister as a reluctant social activist. Buried at the end of her book, Sister to Courage, she offers a small reference to something more: "she was a brave and determined businesswoman" (p. 111). Indeed, Wanda offers few descriptions of Viola's business efforts save some small remarks here and there. When I spoke to Wanda on the phone in 2018, she admitted that she was only beginning to realize the significance of Viola's business ventures and thus it was not a focus of her work to bring her achievements to light. She wrote a letter in follow up when I sent her what I had written, which said: "I find it quite remarkable that you have given me the privilege to read your submission for your doctorate. I learned so much and I guess one is never too old to learn. Your manuscript is brilliant –well researched, well written" (Robson, 2018). It was a great comfort to have her support in this way. I collect my thoughts and continue with my questions.

KW: I am writing to share models of female leadership and business, which are not currently recognized in scholarship and I believe that you were a pioneer in a new

industry in Canada. Are you acknowledged as a businesswoman in your community?

VD: I think so, yes. I am known as a businesswoman, but also a teacher, a wife, a hairdresser, a beautician, a beauty salon owner and as a creator of cosmetics and hair pieces.

We have not moved beyond these descriptors. You need not look further than the new installation at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. However, the most stubborn and overly used moniker is "Canada's Rosa Parks," which I have seen in CBC News, CNN, Washington Post; The Globe and Mail to name but a few (see Tattrie, 2016; Criss, 2018; Schmidt, 2016; Annett and Stone, 2018). She is not readily known as an entrepreneur (see Government of Canada), let alone a pioneering female black entrepreneur, a community leader, the architect of a new business model in Canada, an innovator of industry, products and services, or as a mentor to young women.

KW: What inspired you to start your business?

VD: I saw an opportunity and a need. I understood that women, "black or white—they are women. They want to look good, they want to go out to a party" (Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 40).

Having spent much of the last 10 years interacting with very accomplished entrepreneurs and business leaders who sponsor and support my organization, Viola sounds much like them. She saw an opportunity and went for it.

KW: You started your business in 1937 and it was called Viola Desmond's Beauty Store?

Her sister Wanda recalls the name of the store as Viola Desmond's Beauty Store (Robson and Caplan, 2010, 41) though several other sources indicate it was Vi's Studio of Beauty Culture.

VD: Actually, it was called *Vi's Studio of Beauty Culture* (Bank of Canada, 2016). It started at my family home and then grew to a standalone store on Gottingen Street in Halifax (Robson and Caplan, 2010). The beauty parlour was specifically devoted to serving black women. Within a few years, I established the *Desmond School of Beauty Culture,* which drew students from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec (Bank of Canada, 2016). I then created another business to manufacture, market and sell my products, which was called *Vi's Beauty Products* and this business generated orders from across Nova Scotia (Bank of Canada, 2016).

KW: And you made all of your own products?

VD: I did. I focused on hand-crafted, quality products, such as face powder, perfumes, lipsticks, hair dye, hair pomade, hair pieces, falls, chignons and wigs (Bingham and Yarhi, 2013; Robson and Caplan, 2010). The "hairpieces, falls, chignons and wigs [were] very painstaking process[es], it takes a long time" (Robson as cited in Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 41).

She pauses and takes a sip of her tea.

My reputation is important to me and I placed my image on all of the products that I made by hand, and my name went on all of my businesses (Robson and Caplan, 2010).

Viola was more than just a businesswoman and entrepreneur and talented marketer; she was a craftswoman, inventor and artist. She had a brand! Viola's products and services were about more than just beauty; she gave women the gift of dignity. Access to products designed specifically for the needs of black women's hair and skin meant that an entire community of women could be pampered. It was also about the politics of visibility and performative effects (Tate, 2007). Her services and products reduced feelings of shame and stigma, and helped black women navigate a complex classist and racist environment. Though viewed wrong today, she helped women fit into the dominate white beauty paradigm of the time. When an environment offers neither industry or society inclusion, Viola's services provided a bridge to confidence, empowerment and acceptance. Such acceptance often meant employment and success.

KW: I also understand from speaking with your sister, that you served as a role model and mentor in your community (Robson and Caplan, 2010). How did this arise?

VD: I knew how difficult it was to acquire training, because it was not available to me. I had been a teacher, so I started to teach young women in my parlour to do what I had done (Robson and Caplan, 2010). I wanted more young black women to have careers and be successful (Robson and Caplan, 2010).

The majority of community minded leaders that I have met, always find a way to give back, so it does not surprise me that Viola would too, but I am reminded just how exceptional her circumstances are when we layer on the burden and barriers she would have experienced due to the intersectionality of her racialized and gendered identity.

KW: What other ways did you support your community?

VD: I did little things. I offered my services for free when needed. I "did hair for the girls going to the proms, dances, even funerals…that work was always gratis" (Robson, as cited in Robson and Caplan, 2010, p 40). I also made sure that my business on Gottingen was open for women from our community to gather and meet (Robson and Caplan, 2010).

What Viola did to support other black women, is remarkable and perhaps underappreciated. This might have been her biggest contribution to our understanding of female leadership models in black entrepreneurship. Her business was not a simple 'beauty parlour' – such descriptions (feminine descriptions) really belittle what she did. She built a social-purpose organization. She achieved a level of success and independence in a segregated society and she wanted to give that opportunity to other women in her community. She did so through her products and services and training. Black women's perceptions of their body, hair, skin colour is rooted in social, political and economic conditions, which extend back to slavery (Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, Ward, 1986). Whiteness was used as a yardstick to measure beauty (Tate, 2007). Viola understood that

women simultaneously sought refuge from objectification, but also wanted to develop an attractive self-concept, self-love, confidence and access (DeLoach, 2006). My friend, Shakara Joseph, thinks that had Viola lived, her business would have continued in its innovativeness and reflected the new discourse on black hair culture (S. Joseph, personal communication, January 25, 2020). See also Jahangir (2015) who offers a perspective on the African origins of hairstyles and the revival of natural hair.

KW: Do you think your family understood what you were trying to do?

VD: Sometimes. I was given lighter duties at home (Robson and Caplan, 2010). I "never did any cooking" and "seldom baked" and rarely did "anything domestic" (Robson as cited in Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 46-48). I could feel that some of my siblings did not think that I was contributing enough. We did have a big household and there was never a shortage of things to do. Wanda thought that I was given lighter duties because I was "tiny" and "delicate", but really, I was just so interested in learning, always reading and then I was building my business. I think my parents understood that (Robson and Caplan, 2010).

I noted tension in Wanda's writing when describing Viola's domestic habits. There are a few comments about the demands of her business, and I suspect she held a little resentment towards her sister's lack of support in a busy home. However, given she was assigned lighter duties, it would seem that her parents perhaps understood.

KW: To what do you owe your success?

VD: I think that there are two important things to consider. I was and remain committed to learning and my parents stressed education and reading from the beginning (Robson and Caplan, 2010). I did what was necessary to train in my field and to grow as a professional. I saved up when I was a teacher to take more training and I travelled around to learn everything that I could (Robson and Caplan, 2010). In addition to learning, I think that you must also be focused, dedicated and hardworking. I "worked full days, six days a week" (Robson, as cited in Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 42). I created "a pattern of living – get up in the morning, and get to work, and get going. [I] was so driven" (Robson, a cited by Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 41).

Viola relied on an attitude and disposition towards business, which today, we can appreciate as an entrepreneurial mindset, though even stating that is problematic. However, the broad term seems to fit: an entrepreneurial mindset is "the ability to sense, act, and mobilize under uncertain conditions" (Haynie, Shepherd, Mosakoweski and Earley, 2010, p. 217). Why it may be inappropriate is because entrepreneurship is shaped and defined not only in masculinist terms, but capitalistic ones as well and these ideologies are colonialist. How then do we understand Viola and her story? Let me signal here that I feel more than ever, the need to tread carefully, sensitively and reflexively. More recently, black entrepreneurship has been theorized as a cultural practice in the context of black diasporic discourses (Walcott, 1997). Black feminists have been exploring the intersection of race, class and gender to understand identity and subjectivities

and inform praxis (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013; Mills, J. 2015). And many have found that black women's experience is not widely understood (see Carbado, 2013). Thus, individuals like Viola become hidden, but her story is a critical addition to scholarship. Viola's experiences offer rich insight into the entrepreneurial journey of a woman who challenges the prevailing narrative and disrupts the patterns of inquiry and current historicizing of labour activity as nothing more than the survival work of exceptional men of colour, to one that includes feminine models and feminine lessons. If we give her the credit, which is due, she makes what has been invisible, visible and tangible.

KW: I wonder if you would agree with the idea that you were ahead of your time?

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights has said she was ahead of her time in recognizing an underserved market and responding by "creating a line of cosmetics for people with darker complexions". I find the rationale given, feeble and insulting; she was so much more than one of her product lines.

VD: I did not feel out of place; not until that day in November 1946. I understood that it was harder for me. Harder to find opportunities to learn, harder to teach, harder to run a business. But there was never a moment that I thought I could not do it. Perhaps because I was the first to do it, I was ahead of my time, but it could have easily been someone else. Why not me?

Blacks in North America have complex cultural origins and historical experiences (informed by the legacies of colonialism, slavery and immigration), which shaped (and arguably continue to shape) economic life (Knight, 2004). "The labor

market was segregated by gender and racially stratified" (Mills, J. 2015, 419). For black women, we can add to this complex framing: sexual aggression, battery and rape, to a broader understanding of the shared experience in a system of domination and oppression (see Crenshaw, 1991). According to critical scholars, the current study of ethnic entrepreneurship is undertheorized, and our narrow understanding extends to the experiences of predominantly entrepreneurial males and immigrant groups' inclination towards self-employment (Knight, 2004; Mills, J., 2015). Black women are cast in history routinely as domestic social capital (i.e. caregivers) not enterprising individuals (Knight, 2004). Further, entrepreneurial business activity is framed as organizing around specific ethnic markets and locations in an informal or "underground economy" (Knight, 2004, p. 105), firmly placing it outside of theorized and accepted capitalist modes of production (Knight, 2004 cites the work of Portes, 1981and the lens of ethnic enclave theory).

KW: Mrs. Desmond, I want to thank you for your time today. I think that your story is so much more than what happened in your court case. You are inspirational. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me?

VD: You are very kind in saying so.

She pauses and takes another sip of her tea before continuing.

When I graduated my first large class of young girls that I had taught, "they went out and began working in various parts of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec" (Robson, as cited in Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 113). I would like to

believe that by "sticking to [my] goals, maintaining a successful beauty shop, and training other women in black beauty culture while setting very strict standards […] [I hope that I was] making significant positive racial and feminist achievements […]" (Robson, as cited in Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 113).

KW: I believe you were.

Wanda wonders what would have happened to Viola if she "had not been stalled" and I cannot help but wonder too (Robson, as cited in Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 113). I thank Viola for her time and hospitality and take my leave. As I did with Frances, I feel compelled to visit Viola's grave once I am back in Nova Scotia. She rests with her family and husband John "Jackie" A Davis, at Camp Hill Cemetery in Halifax. I believe that Viola would appreciate all that her sister has accomplished. She has said to me that everything that has come since the pardon has made her very happy (W. Robson, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

7.04 Post Interview Reflections

What got in her way? One of the challenges highlighted with Viola's story is that it remains alive and highly active in the present with many authors contributing the narrative at once. This presents both challenge and opportunity: challenge in terms of expanding the current narrative beyond recognition in civil rights, which is strong and necessary, and the opportunity to contribute to a growing enthusiasm about Viola as her life continues to be of considerable public interest. There are still regular media stories coming out on a weekly basis, which emphasize various ways Viola is finally being

recognized. However, her identity as an entrepreneur hides behind a larger identity, which has carefully (and appropriately) cast her as a civil rights leader.

There are two other challenges, which hide Viola's contributions from view. First, Viola's voice is conflated with her sister's, who proudly speaks for her and about her. Essers (2009) concedes that there are many challenges in constructing life stories and interpreting them and asks, "whose story is it?" (p. 176). Even in my own telling of Viola, I cannot answer that. Secondly, Viola's story is embedded in a powerful discourse of a racialized experience. This experience is impossible for me to understand. However, Visweswaren (1996) argues that feminist research where relationships become personal can provide an opportunity to enact agency and allow subjected voices to be heard. At the very least, I hope that I have offered that.

What were her overlooked contributions? Viola's orientation toward business and entrepreneurial approaches is shared in a very restricted way through her sister's recollections and storytelling. As I have said, it was not Wanda's focus. As a researcher, I am disappointed that I cannot share the many innovated strategies that Viola must have employed to enable her success. The reality is that there has not been a significant effort to truly understand Viola's contributions to entrepreneurial learning, nor have the barriers she would have faced at the intersections with class, race and gender been investigated in the context of building her business. We do know, however, that she built something no one else had done before in Canada, and she innovated her model and expanded it to include three highly successful verticals. Her story is remarkable on its own merits even by today's criteria for entrepreneurial success. Adding that she was also a black woman

operating in segregated society in the 1930s and 1940s, makes what she achieved astonishing[29].

Evident in the telling of Viola's story is that her lived experience (not just her accomplishments) is the basis for new knowledge (Essers, 2009; Harding, 2004; Smith, 1988). Women are excluded from theory and practice, so their voices are significant and their "experiences of gender oppression are intrinsically connected to other forms of social domination and are historically and socially constructed" (Hirschmann, 1997, p. 81). In addition to these marginalized positions, the experience of a pioneering Canadian black female entrepreneur is incredibly unique and valuable to understanding the marginalization discourse within entrepreneurship (Essers, 2009). How can Viola's identity be understood through a discursive analysis of her story (Essers, 2009; Czarniawska, 1998; Hirschmann, 1997)? What can I give as an interviewer in this conversation to make her story more tangible and interpret her experience? In this exercise, as with all of the women in my study, my effort has been first and foremost to give them voice (Esser, 2009; Etter-Lewis, 1991). I am fully aware of the power that I wield in this process, but also sensitive to the objective of surfacing her identity and voice, her contributions, her barriers, her subject positions, and her ability to thwart convention. It is a difficult balance between taking responsibility for the construction of a narrative, while also handling someone's identity in the process (Essers, 2009).

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[29] Her Honour, Dr. Francis openly mused with me about how wonderful it would have been to see Viola driving down Gottingen Street, in her own car and wearing her fur coat. She said it would have been "a sight to behold" (M. Francis, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

What was I like with her? I felt the most careful with Viola. I have sought the most input from various supports on how to approach Viola and her story. The validation that came from her sister, Wanda, was both a great relief and a boost of confidence. The regular conversations that I have had with close friends and fellow scholars have also motivated me. Blind reviewers from the *Academy of Management*, the *Atlantic Schools of Business* and *Culture and Organization*, have also given me valuable feedback. But I still felt nervous and uneasy in the interview, and I still feel the most risk exists in Viola's telling. I have been inspired by Viola since I saw her portrait at Government House. Nova Scotia was her home and it is now my home. I chose to come here, whereas her familial legacy is tied to slavery. I see the remnants of racial tension today that existed in her time, but I do not understand them the way she would have. She somehow feels both closer and further away than any of the women in my study. To Viola's interview, I hope I have brought the right level of reflexivity. I hope that I have managed my blind spots well and offered up a sincere and inspiring portrait of a remarkable woman.

What did the interview achieve? My biggest concern about including Viola in this study has been and continues to be, how much to say, and what to say about race. I have asked myself questions such as: Am I the right person to tell Viola's story? Does my telling displace another? If I do not do this work, then who will? Can I not use my privilege in a way that advances a broader story of neglect? Can I tell this story in a way that inspires others to take on a study that emphasizes the value of a critical race theory (CRT)? CRT would be a revealing lens to apply here and was suggested to me. It emerged as a response to the limitations of the class-only analysis by Critical Legal

Scholars (CLS), who engaged a Marxist critique of U.S. juris-prudence (Crenshaw, 1995). While not abandoning class as an explanatory factor, CRT scholars believe that the law plays a specific role in reification (and was often responsible for) "racial subordination and inequity" (Dixson, Royal and Hill, 2018, p. 233).

I was able to meet with Wanda and her husband Joe in person on February 14, 2020. It was a very special, personal experience for me. She just turned 93 on December 16, the same birthday as my older son. She loves chocolate, has a quick and mischievous wit, an infectious laugh and an all-consuming smile. She is the kind of person who carries the sunshine around with them, with happiness enveloping her like an aura. As she had done on the phone and via letter, she endorsed my effort – both the academic work and the advocacy – with warm support. At one point, when she was talking about my manuscript, she paused, looked at me directly, pointed, and with a calculated emphasis said: "you-got-it-all-right" (W. Robson, personal communication, 2020). I think this important to share, because our broader conversation included her well-articulated and sharp criticism for other efforts to recognize Viola, describe her, or tell her life story. I think that in a way, I must confess, dear reader, that I have looked to Wanda to evaluate my credibility and success in this effort. I held her views above all others.

We all know the constraints of writing and I am hoping that the way I have offered up Viola's story has served her and not marginalized other voices from surfacing important insights and new knowledge. By no means do I wish to offer an anemic account of a brilliant woman, but I do think that I am most qualified to speak only and

directly to her role as an overlooked female figure of significance to MOS/MH. I have no doubt that this is not the end of Viola's potential lessons for scholarship and practice.

Chapter 8: Discussion

At the start of this thesis, I introduced myself as a feminist polemicist investigating the potential of a new method, called ficto-feminism. This method fuses aspects of (1) collective biography (multi-voiced narratives), (2) auto-ethnography (self-reflection, emic insights and embodied knowledge) and (3) fictocriticism (blurring the boundaries of fictional, factual and theoretical). I used this method to produce a non-fiction, fictitious conversation with four historical female figures and investigate their lost contributions to MOS. To review, this method is marked by several unique facets, including (1) its potential to unlock agency for subject and writer, (2) its potential to offer reflexive and embodied/emic insights, (3) emotional engagement and resonance, (4) the opportunity to surface discourses at work over time, and (5) its capacity as an alternative strategy for studying the past.

In this discussion, I will begin with a review of the facets of ficto-feminism. I start with dispositional considerations towards discourse and agency as related subjects and the resulting emic insights (facets 1 and 2). I then discuss the value of emotional engagement and resonance (facet 3). I continue with an analysis of the discourses revealed through this method in two parts (facet 4). I then provide my final thoughts on the general utility of ficto-feminism as s strategy for studying the past and summarize both the advantages and challenges (facet 5). I conclude the discussion with some final thoughts.

8.01 Agency and Reflexivity (Facets 1 and 2)

8.01.1 Discourse Meets Discourse

"mirror facing mirror, nowhere else" (Ikkyu, 15th century)

From Foucault (1972) we understand that discourse involves everything that is said, and not said (linguistic structure and language practice) and that it refers to the systems of language, ideas and ideology, which shape our understanding of the world (Sam, Kerrigan, Johnson, 2019). In this study, the women are shaped by various discourses. And further, I am shaping them, and I am also affected by discourses, and I project those discourses into my research and onto the women (as have various chroniclers). How then is it possible to appreciate what discourses are at work and navigate how my discourses meet and interact with the discourses of the women or other authors? This is not only a highly relevant question, but it is also often ignored by researchers (Cunliffe, 2003). We bring ourselves into our research and we interact in various ways subjectively with our subjects, through method, in theory and in writing. I believe it entirely impossible to identify and weigh the effects of such discourses because they often act on us in unseen and unknown ways.

It is time to get personal, and this entire effort is personal, but let me make a point…If we consider Frances and me, we have several attributes and experiences in common, which is one of the reasons I was so attracted to her as a subject and a person. By examining the experiences of each of these women, I am also examining my own life. Our collective experience is a form of rationalization and meaning-making (Weick, Sutcliffe, Obstfeld, 2005).

Which discourses might intersect for the benefit of understanding? Can this give us a false sense of confidence in our interactions with historical figures? For example, both Frances and I are mothers (discourses of motherhood, wife, working mother), both of us are mothers who have lost a child (pain and loss, broken bodies); both of us occupy leadership roles in organizations where we are both powerful and yet also subservient to others (discourses of patriarchy, capitalism, hierarchy, gendered roles, gendered sectors); both of us are feminists (discourse of power, equality, unity, difference, sameness); and both of us are advocates (discourses of rebelliousness, cultural boundaries, voice and silence). These on the surface might suggest an alignment of discourses at work, which: (1) might make them more visible, (2) might enable me to be equipped as an - ethnographer to bring my emic understanding to the analysis, and (3) might extend the knowledge which is gathered from my research. Further, I could argue that I can bridge the understanding of such knowledge to my reader as a knowledge translator. I could further argue that as a translator, I might be equipped to mobilize that knowledge (and replicate it). However seductive this approach is, we must consider that the socio-political context, the time(s), the attitudes, and the customs of our different contexts, which will operate differently on each of us. No assumptions about how discourses operate on one person can inform how they might act upon another.

Of concern for auto-ethnographers engaging in history is the politics of one's own position. Where do we begin this process of revision for our subject (Adams, 2012)? How do we "disclose ourselves, [as also] learning about ourselves as we try to learn about the other" (Adams, 2012, p. 396). I have tried to do so in this study, with a strong auto-

ethnographic voice throughout. And like oral histories, these histories that I have developed contain several points of view (in addition to my own) and I wish these points to be seen without interfering with the story so that we might appreciate the wider social history to which she was and remains a part of (Adams, 2012). But I then become responsible for the interpretations and the understanding of experiences for the purpose of sharing, and this decoding work must be signaled to the reader as a discursive process.

This process is ripe with complexity; enabled and constrained; influencing and influenced by; and constructed and deconstructed (Adams, 2012). "I am writing myself and my self" into the historical process, along with including the messiness of deconstructed and reconstructed narratives (Adams, 2012, p.397). Booth (2005) offers this description of such engagement:

> A fully reflexive historian will engage with her or his ontology, epistemology, sources, theory, ethics, morality, politics, viewpoints, concept of time and space, context, narrative, rhetoric, genre and field (p. 212).

Operating in tandem with discourse and positionality, is the idea of social influence (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). Influence is a natural human tendency to affiliate with the behaviour and choices of others, at times unconsciously (Forbes, Suddell, Farmer, Logeswaran, Hamilton, 2019). Researchers have argued that the perspectives of others are mapped onto our own self-concept and vice versa (Laurent and Myers, 2011). I have already conceded my admiration and love for these women and this has undeniably affected me and changed me. It has made me protective, even defensive. It has made me aspire to be more like them. How does this serve the research process? I

am not sure. However, I do know that I have learned something from these women and that I am changed by them. Hopefully for the better. Is this not something?

Though it may only offer ontological uncertainty, it has been argued that the idea of the individual is crafted in material practices (Bettin, 2019), which stimulates the question of: Are you even reading about Frances, or Hallie, or Madeleine or Viola at all? Am I even writing about them? Or is this an exercise in a crafting and understanding of the self?

In so acknowledging, I think, dear reader, we must also consider your positionality to this work. You are now an active collaborator in this telling, bringing your own discourses, influences and self-concept to bear on interpretation.

What is the solution to these various and complex quandaries? I believe it is acceptance…acceptance that we will enter such experiments with our eyes open. We will understand, to the extent possible, our own subjectivity, our own proclivities and that we will be skeptical of the limited power we hold over our own will, under the weight of discourse and the restrictions of subject positions.

We will need to be equally skeptical of accounts of history, not only of the subject's own trappings by various discourses, but of their chroniclers as well. This skepticism will not negate the importance of what is achieved through writing history, but it is necessary reflexivity. We will try to understand that various events, which shape a *telling* are also shaping the practices of *listening*, of *interpreting*, of *understanding*, of *keeping*, of *archiving*, of *letting go*.

8.01.2 A Feminist Critique on the Suppression of Agency

"I may get to know her in this moment. But it is only for this moment, in the reading, that I can experience her" (personal reflection, 2019).

Feminism, in an effort to chart a history, has been critiqued as falling into the same traps of broader historical practices (i.e. a narrative of progress, causality, linear development, see Nusser, 2014). One of my hopes with this research was to shift agency back into theory and practice within feminism. This has been a quest of feminists since the 1980s when the theorizing of feminism began to depoliticize it (Pillai, 2012; Scott, 2011).

In the studying of discourse(s), we can see the ways in which agency is stripped away in an effort to uncover how power operates (Hoff, 1994; Rose, 2010). In garnering agency, I take this opportunity to remind us that feminists are looking for: (1) women's voices to be heard, (2) women achieving political influence, (3) women authoring their own self-concept and (4) women creating contextualized opportunities for individual action (Morabito, Shelley, Rabe-Hemp and Miller 2018). Agency is a concept within a broader framework of women's empowerment (Pillai, 2012). It is the idea that women can be "significant actors in the process of change" and not just recipients (p. 4).

If discourse shapes what we say, what we do, and our social construction of a perceived reality, then is there any such thing as agency? Is agency also a social construct? Perhaps. But the idea of agency is important. The *idea* is the kernel of *advocacy* of *voice* and of *personal power,* which can be wielded, and thus holds a promise of social justice and social change. Therefore, *the idea*, may be all that is

necessary. I am not alone in this thought, see Ermarth (2007; 2011) who argues that agency resides in its enunciation in the discursive condition.

The promise of poststructuralism is that we can identify the discourses at work, but can we also identify the ways in which it has not depleted agency. What are the ways in which agency can be otherwise asserted (Ermarth, 2007)? Discourse privileges the production of what is seen as worthy knowledge (Sam et al., 2019). So, can discourse be used to shape a polemic in service to agency, voice and advocacy? I believe it can. I believe that the relationship between history, storytelling and using a radical method to surface lost voices is very powerful approach to exercise personal agency and restore agency to the women I am attempting to serve in this thesis.

In this feminist experiment of advancing ficto-feminism as a method and style of writing (through fictitious conversational narratives) I am shaping an alternative, gendered and highly discursive polemic. In so doing, I am critiquing the current accepted knowledge of each woman and her contributions. I am further challenging the accepted ways we write. In this exercise, I submit that the idea of agency is returned to both subject and writer; even if it is just for a moment.

I believe that an appropriate critique to this assertion is that agency is only achieved by (for) me, and that I also potentially suppress the agency of the women by speaking for them and with them. I do believe the dead can have agency. My method requires this assumptive bias. When and where is the appropriate question. I return to the idea of temporality later in the discussion.

Essentially, the women in this study are *managed* by me. However, let us look at the components of agency, which include: (1) a level of understanding a person has of herself (2) a psychological capacity to formulate opinions for herself, and (3) opportunities to enable and act (Vijayamohanan Pillai and Asalatha, 2012, p. 15). Ignoring temporality, each of these components is met by my approach. Through the interviews, I was able: (1) to surface her voice and bring into light those who have tried to undermine such endeavors, (2) to demonstrate her sense of self, her opinions, and the ways she has socially constructed herself (over time), and (3) to reveal her ideas and her actions.

Where the critique might stick is with respect to a *critical autonomy,* which is also part of the empowerment framework. I refer to the elements within the literature, which are generally considered common inclusions in the framework. These elements include: (1) to be empowered, you must have first experienced gendered disempowerment, (2) empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party, (3) the ability to make decisions and carry them out with a focus on the individual (critical autonomy), (4) it is considered an ongoing process (see Mosedale, 2005). Level of empowerment may also be affected by class, ethnicity, age, wealth, family position and more. Other considerations within the framework include: *Power within*, which refers to the self-esteem and self confidence, *power to*, which increases what is achievable, and *power with*, which refers to collective action (Mosedale, 2005).

I have become the proxy to effect cultural rules (Vijayamohanan Pillai and Asalatha, 2012). But no approach is perfect and without limitation. The gain of agency is

no small feat! And the opportunity to inspire action, to give the women of today tangible mentors and agents of inspiration, and ideas and practices has the potential to bring change. This is a process of empowerment: "by which women redefine and extend what is possible for them to be and do in situations where they have been restricted" (Mosedale, 2005, p. 252).

8.02 Emotionality and Resonance (Facet 3)

In this section, I review the value of emotional engagement with the research, which involves not only reflecting on the research in general, but specifically how I (and you, dear reader) respond to it emotionally. It is a process of researching the researcher, while simultaneously researching the women (Blakely, 2007). I argue here for the many advantages to emotional engagement and resonance, including enhanced intellectual clarity, increased social justice, greater participation, enriched moral character, epistemic insights, and enhanced believability.

Making emotionality and resonance an explicit and visible aspect of this study significantly enhanced the creation of a persuasive and compelling account, while also helping me and you see these women as something beyond "subjects" under study. Like other feminists, by doing so, I am also rejecting positivist criticisms about the presence and value of emotion in research (Reinharz, 1992). Feminist methods favour emotional engagement in opposition to the notion that a researcher can remain objective and a "detached truth-finder" (Blakeley, 2007, p. 59). Emotional engagement recognizes the research effort as experiential and that we engage in both thinking and feeling in order to

understand (Campbell, 2001). In this respect, I concur with Blakely (2007) who argues that emotional engagement in the research process offers “intellectual clarity” (p. 59).

This thesis is written in an unconventional way and draws on approaches, which favour reflexivity, embodiment and “imaginative and expressive dialogue” (Chang, 2013 as cited in Harwood and Eaves, 2017, p. 151). Emotions were baked into both the process of undertaking this research and the resulting practice of writing. And though a reader’s reaction is unknown (I cannot possibly know how you think and how you feel), my attempt was to achieve an emotional response (resonance) in you, as my reader. It was my hope that such responses would aid in my objective for social justice for these women by inspiring your commitment. If you, as reader, felt close to these women, saw their overlooked value, understood their challenges, appreciated their barriers, you might also share with me a desire to see them recognized and thus become a part of my advocacy effort.

Within auto-ethnography, scholars have become interested in sharing approaches to this method, which spans learning, practice and emotions in the context of a “shared domain of experience” (Harwood and Eaves, 2017, p. 145). “Personal experience” is a very critical part of auto-ethnography as a method (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2011, p. 273) and thus visible in the practice of research. Emotions help us understand personal experience. Emotions also underpin social phenomenon and reveal its complexity and subjectivity (Harwood and Eaves, 2017). Thus, drawing on emotion (in addition to thoughts), can give us a broader window into understanding new knowledge by producing a richer level of participation and engagement (Harwood and Eaves, 2017).

Indeed, my emotional orientation to the research effort, sustained both my motivation and desire to understand and reveal something new.

It is also fair to consider how the role of emotions might develop uncertainty and self-doubt from the vantage point of the researcher (Harwood and Eaves, 2017). I certainly felt doubt and I offer here two significant instances, which are worth sharing. First, even though I knew ficto-feminism was novel and interesting, I was concerned that the method would not perform as I envisioned it might and therefore be a worthy scholarly contribution. If not for the sustained and thoughtful mentorship and support of my committee, I am not sure that I would have fully committed to the development of ficto-feminism. Secondly, I experienced hesitancy, fear, and anxiety with including Viola as one of the women, because I did not know if I could understand her experience enough to relay her story with the appropriate reflexivity. I was thankfully rescued from my doubts by her sister Wanda Robson and brilliant and caring community leaders who gave me the strength to persevere, but also bestowed in me a strong sense of moral accountability.

When we make research personal (and I believe all research is), emotions cannot be bifurcated from the endeavour (Gannon, 2006). This suggests that my position towards emotion in research is epistemic in orientation: "The body, the emotions, and lived experience are texts to be written and to be read in autoethnography" (Gannon, 2006, p. 474). What I believe Gannon (2006) means is that there are many emotional subjectivities to consider: (1) our emotional orientation as researchers; (2) our response as researchers to social phenomena; (3) the emotionality of our subjects with "feelings, flesh and

thoughts" (p. 476). This would extend to various emotional subjectivities within the reader, which reveals the complexity of subjectivities. Probyn (2003), Zita (1998) and Gannon (2006) link emotional subjectivities to the physical body as a site of theorization, suggesting that theorization is a "labor of the body" (Zita, 1998, p. 204). Feelings then become the tools by which we make sense of other bodies relationally (Probyn, 2003). Accordingly, knowledge cannot be understood without emotional engagement and the process of research and the resulting found knowledge should be permitted to engage readers emotionally as well.

Finally, verisimilitude is a literary device, which when wielded by writers, makes the text more believable. The relationship between emotions and verisimilitude is interesting to consider. My conversations with these women were what autoethnographers refer to as "performance texts" in that they are ethnographic, but also novelistic (Gannon, 2006, p. 477). As such they draw together the writer and reader in a relationship, which creates an aligned sense of "emotional verisimilitude" (Denzin, 2003, p.137). In other words, we (you and me, dear reader) share a common sense of the women as believable, even if we know that these texts are fictional.

In summary, emotions played a significant role in ficto-feminism's performance, by (1) offering intellectual clarity; (2) increasing commitment to social justice and recognition for the women; (3) producing a richer level of participation (4) increasing accountability in the research endeavour; (5), revealing emotion as an episteme (site of knowledge); and (6) demonstrating how emotions increase verisimilitude (believability).

8.03 Discourse: Part 1 (Facet 4)

In this section, I review the functions of *gender*, *history* and the *socio-political context* as major discourses. This section and the ones that follow reveal how ficto-feminism performs as a method to reveal discourse. At the start of this research, I indicated that I expected to see these particular discourses at work, as they typically form a starting point in feminist inquiry. An advantage of ficto-feminism is that it can make these discourses more visible. When comparing the work of many writers, over time, the way certain writers bring discourse into their work stands out. Perhaps it is a strange focus on the manner of dress (Frances), or the lack of historical traces (Federal Theater), or hyper conservative politics (antifeminism).

For each of the women, the discourses present the ways in which she has been socially constructed. Discourses are noticeable in how the women are written about and in the voids, or liminal spaces. These discourses help explain why each woman has been largely overlooked, both in the past and since. Such writing also reveals the ways in which we continue to construct female leaders, thus limiting new insights, understandings and her value to broader disciplines, like MOS/MH (Williams and Mills, 2019a). The only way to see such effects in action is to examine moments in the women's lives through various texts and reveal their discursive character, while being mindful of the discursive practices we bring to the process.

8.03.1 Gender

Gender has a starring role as a discourse. Sometimes it operates in the broad light of day, explicitly in the foreground. It also operates more quietly and duplicitously in the

background. It is also not difficult to find examples of it operating at a macro or micro level.

When constructing a gendered, gender history, I adopted some well established tenets (see Adams, 2012): (1) gender is a central analytical concept; (2) women's experiences and perspectives embody and create historical and situational 'realities'; (3) these 'realities' work to construct and deconstruct our understanding of what is 'history' or taken for granted knowledge; (4) advocating for women's own interpretations of their experiences is a way to offer important understandings of the past; and (5), that my understanding and interpretations are <u>just as valid</u> as those who have come before me and those who currently operate in a similar or different paradigmatic traditions.

For Frances, the discourse of gender played out openly. It was about so many *firsts*: she was the first female cabinet minister in the US and before that, the first female Industrial Commissioner of Labour in New York State. She was also one of the first social workers in a then emerging new field. A woman in a leadership role in the 1930s was unusual. She herself, admits that the pressure of her gender, played a significant role in her decision making, particularly about the ministerial post. Her authors throughout her history and continuing today, seem infatuated with her gender and constantly link it both to accomplishment and attitude. Things happened in *this way* or *that way* because she was a woman, not because she was a cabinet minister. I suspect that this is largely unintended and more a product of the prevailing attitudes towards women; however, we cannot ignore the effects.

Gender also manifests in ugly and subversive ways. Frances was often the butt of political satire, and openly criticized by peers and stakeholders. And she was incredibly private, and some suggest she lacked public relations skill, which may be why she did not fight these descriptions more directly (Williams and Mills, 2019a; Keller 2006; Martin 1976; Colman 1993). She was even critiqued by other feminists of her time, like Mary Anderson: "So every time there was a chance to single out women, she leaned over backward not to do it. I understood her difficulties and sympathized with her, but just the same it was discouraging not to have more enthusiastic backing" (Anderson, as cited in Mohr, 1979, p. 200). She was boxed in on all sides!

Hallie, like Frances, was also perceived to be an anomaly of her time. She served in a leadership role in the 1930s and in a job and field, which many felt should be occupied by a man. She was simultaneously touted as a woman with nothing good to say about the United States (US Congress, 1938), a woman who was entirely reliant on her husband for leadership and comfort (Bentley, 1988), a communist (US Congress, 1938), and a feminist who could have it all and do it all (Bentley, 1988; Dossett, 2013). Her gender was always associated with her actions; as a kind of reason for or explanation of. There were many instances where a gendered ordering of place and function was reinforced, and similarly good-intentioned accounts set to establish a more favourable view of her accomplishments.

Like Frances, the discourse of gender operated differently over time and often adopted the agenda of many storytellers. There are many gendered narratives, which have been published. For example, for Hallie, I saw evidence that she was shaped as a liberal feminist by Bentley (1988) and as a more rebellious, contemporary fourth wave feminist

by Dossett (2013). Did my feminism project onto her? I have no doubt. Unfortunately, Hallie never speaks directly to the seemingly obvious role gender would have played in her leadership. In all her personal accounts, she focuses on the work and her devotion to the mandate is clear.

For Madeleine, feminism was wielded as a weapon against the cruel environment that women and children were subjected to in organizations. But, while ascribing to feminist ideals openly, Madeleine also made herself the target of politicians, leaders and others who saw it as a way to marginalize her and make her part of an extreme sensibility, such a communism, or part of a convenient villainous trope (e.g. being a *witch*).

For Viola, gender plays out as a domestic role she is reluctant to take on. Viola had a different focus, perhaps not understood by her family. She wanted a career. Viola was criticized by her family for not being domestic in inclination and avoiding the family duties: “Viola seldom baked” (Robson as cited in Robson and Caplan, 2010, p. 47); “she was given lighter duties because she […] Viola, you know she’s delicate” (p. 46-47).

In Viola’s case, her gender, race and class all play an intersectionally oppressive role that she somehow succeeds in challenging, at least for a time. This interlocking system of marginalization cannot be compared to the other women in this study who never experienced the kind of discrimination, poverty and colour barriers that Viola would have experienced daily as an African Nova Scotian woman in segregated society. Hill Collins and Bilge call this the “myth of equal opportunity” (p. 11). The fact that Viola briefly achieved great wealth and independence is astonishing and speaks to her remarkable tenacity and wit.

The prevailing attitudes towards women, particularly in highly visible roles, which were outside of the roles we expect is that she is doing something wrong (Williams and Mills, 2019a). Therefore, her gender is one of the points of interest, not her or her accomplishments. This is compounded by various attitudes and behaviours the women would enact as well e.g. Frances privacy, Viola's focus on work etc. The focus on gender obfuscates her achievements.

I will return to discourses related to gender further in the discussion.

8.03.2 History

> *"Death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell. [S]he has borrowed [her]authority from death" (Benjamin, 1968, p. 94)*

Rose (2010) highlights in her analysis of gender history that poststructural approaches have denied lived experience and abstracted materiality. This is an important point for feminists who challenge essentialism. The argument in part levies a critique against the notion of a cultural representation as being the same as a constituted subject. I would suggest that this lack of materiality may be retrieved and be present in the auto-ethnographic voice in the ficto-feminist and associated mode of writing. If a subject can be no more than a cultural representation, than certainly a writer and author can be proxy for the constituted subject. As a result, a symbiotic relationship emerges and the limitations of poststructural approaches are reduced.

Rose (2010) concedes that there is a general increase in focus on subjectivity within the study of gender history. I suspect that women as writers are recognizing that subjectivity is an essential part of the knowledge-making process: not a barrier to be

managed, but rather, an epistemic window to new knowledge. If gender is performative, per Butler (1988) with recognition that bodily acts conform to a notion of gender (Swan, 2005), which is constructed and maintained by discourse, then so is subjectivity. Subjectivity is the recognition of materiality and lived experience, but it is also being constructed and maintained by discourse in an historical situation (in past and present) (Beauvoir, as cited in Butler, 1988).

I observed in this study, the ways in which the women and their work was disregarded or minimized, and this affected what is known of her historically. These efforts spanned the work of other individuals, existing structures, or even self-censorship. For instance, Frances was rather keen to stay out of the limelight and allow FDR to take the credit for the programs she developed (Perkins, 1946). Had Hallie not written *Arena*, and the faculty of George Mason had not gone looking for the archive, the FTP and Hallie's success might have been lost forever. Recall that the FTP's physical archive was lost for 50 years (George Mason University, A History (1972-1978)!

The dilemma when writing a history of women, is that the sources are so small, the figures have been overwhelmingly marginalized (sometimes at their own hands), and the socio-politics of the time influence and constrain not only what activities were considered worthy of remembering, but also how, what and who is remembered. When I was reviewing the transcripts of the HUAC congressional hearings, had I not known what to look for (which was a small reference that I came across, while reading *Arena*), I would not have been able to locate Hallie's testimony in the thousands of pages of transcripts. Not only that, but the testimony was clearly edited when compared to Hallie's

personal account (Flanagan, 1940). Therefore, even the so-called evidences we have, are subject to prejudicial activity and suppression. An example is the excerpt that I have included in our conversation on page 132 in which Hallie cleverly gets the committee to appreciate that she is addressing American *inactivity*. Instead another quote is often shared in which she talks about the ambitions of the FTP as having a “Marlowesque madness” (in reference to Christopher Marlow, a Shakespearean playwright), but in rebuttal Congressman Starnes accuses her of referencing a communist (Williams and Mills, 2018, p. 289). Hence the focus is on the communist rhetoric, not the purpose of the FTP.

For me, history is a relational process (Foucault, 1972). But the ways we have come to generally accept studying and writing histories supports the idea of a *grand narrative*. This idea suggests that the historian’s task is just to continue to find the missing pieces. However, we are looking to a past whose cultural creations are not made by and for women. We are not there because we were never there. Our subjective selves have been excluded.

There are powerful structures and ideological practices, which operate on the historian and the academic/scholarly space to ensure that these practices remain privileged and powerful (Jenkins, 1991; Scott, 1987; Munslow, 2012; Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016). How then do we negotiate the worthy narratives? How do we identify the missed opportunities?

If we can accept that all work is discursive, then what becomes the measure of value? If the account is persuasive, moving, socially valuable, is it not also powerful? Is

power the determination of worthiness? Is privilege? What about plausibility, persuasiveness or even inspiration? It certainly is not 'truth'! White (2010) argues that historians necessarily embed their data into a literary form, which reveals something about the writer's epistemology. Essentially, all history is an imaginative literary narrative. My experiment here has been to challenge the boundaries of what is accepted as a history with at least the potential that it holds the same or more sway than current practices. And it would appear that our consumption of a history seems readily contingent on how well the historian has told the story.

8.03.3 Socio-Political Context

> *And women faced a "triple day" which consisted of waged work, domestic work and caring labour (Strong-Boag, 2019).*

The socio-political context is a rich area for observing the role of subject positions women can be constrained by. There is a tension within feminism, which considers itself a heterogeneous and complex ideological practice, which is then often pitted against simplistic notions of woman, mother, wife, which plays out in mainstream media. Deviation from such simplistic roles, creates controversy and consequence (Loke, Bachmann and Harp, 2017). Women in public positions are often described as social deviants for taking on malestream roles (Williams and Mills, 2019a; 2019b; Loke, et al., 2017). Loke et al. (2017) acknowledges that women in "the public arena struggle over the right to define and shape issues, as well as the discourse surrounding them" (p. 123).

Critical scholars are examining the ways in which WWII, unions and radicalism of the 1940s, and a postwar faltering masculine identity, "provided some of the seeds of

protest movements of the 1960s" (Horowitz, 1996, p. 3). However, when "women's activism combined feminist and anticolonial causes, the Cold War context rendered it uniquely threatening to anticommunist governments" (Castledine, 2008, p. 59).

Anticommunist politics was in the foreground in both Canada and the US. Madeleine was engaging in it on the front lines in union work in Canada with the Duplessis government in Quebec, while Frances and Hallie battled it from inside the political arena in the US, through the HUAC. The House of Un-American Activities Committee had a direct mandate to investigate those suspected of having communist ties. Some have argued that right wing anticommunists in government were also antifeminists and used popular antifeminism as a tool to fight the liberal sentiments and preserve and defend the conservative sexual order, as well as class, religious and racial hierarchies (Horowitz, 1996; Storrs, 2007). Even though more women held government positions at these times, a striking number of them were accused of having communist sympathies (Storrs, 2007). Anticommunists deployed antifeminism to generate support for attacks on the labour programs and labour unions and the players involved (Storrs, 2007). In Canada (Quebec), these efforts were punctuated during the Quiet Revolution to which emerged a New Left and the Voice of Women[30] (Strong-Boag, 2019).

In Nova Scotia, WWII brought black women into the unions for the first time, but Viola's story does not intersect with this narrative. Though there were no official Jim Crow laws in Canada, the racial practices of segregation were quite consistent with the US (Reynolds, Clarke and Robson, 2016). The NSAACP was there to support Viola's

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[30] The Voice of Women emerged in 1960 as a voluntary non-partisan organization with members in every province in Canada to promote disarmament and peace (MacPherson, 2016).

case in 1946, which came before the courts, as African Nova Scotians were challenging discrimination. A case, which followed Viola's in 1954, saw two black men denied service in Ontario and brought a spotlight to the issues within Canadian laws (Black History Canada). And though the efforts did not culminate in dramatic events as they did in the US, with the landmark Supreme Court decision in 1954 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Canada's development did unfold province by province around the same time (Reynolds, et al., 2016). Comprehensive civil rights acts concerning fair accommodation, fair pay and fair employment were passed in Saskatchewan in 1947, Nova Scotia in 1953, 1956, 1959, Ontario in 1962, Alberta in 1966, New Brunswick in 1967, Prince Edward Island in 1968, British Columbia in 1969, Newfoundland in 1969, Manitoba in 1970 and Quebec in 1975. The consolidation of civil rights occurred at the national level in 1982 under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (see Reynolds et al., 2017).

What is also of relevance is the socio-political context of this telling in the present day. What of me as writer and you as reader? What context are we a part of? For example, I write in a time of post truth, when political actors have become caricatures, comedians have become political news pundits, fiction is taken as fact, and there is such a thing as "fake news" and "alternative facts" (Freeman and Jones, 2018). In part, this relationship between fact and fiction is not only playing out theoretically in this thesis, it is playing out in popular press with "the deliberate conflation of truth and lies to nefarious ends" (Freeman and Jones, 2018, p. 6). The moral question at the heart of this study is: can this convergence of two discourses: (1) the aesthetics of the 'real' (e.g.

documentary) with (2) the post truth (e.g. reportage and opinion) be of service to a nobler calling? Is it the ultimate exercise in irony or cynicism?

8.04 Discourse: Part 2 (Facet 4 Continued)

There were several other discourses revealed by this method, which are perhaps less visible, but still merit some discussion in this study and certainly held influence in the lives of the women and the way we do or do not remember them. Ficto-feminism effectively brought them to the fore for examination. These include: (1) alternative ways of organizing, (2) valourization, (3) “villains” versus “heroines” and (4) being “ahead of her time” or “out of place”.

8.04.1 Alternative Ways of Organizing

Be it the evolution of management schools without consideration of industrial labour, or the propensity of capitalism to eschew socialism, or non-profit sensibilities competing with other sectors, there were a myriad of alternative ways of organizing which were raised, while studying the lives of these women. These ways of organizing go against the dominant discourse of patriarchal capitalism. The critique of capitalism has been its lack of consideration, greed and selfishness (Berger, 1988). A number of cultural presuppositions, which formed the Protestant ethic and made room for capitalism to take hold, created the spirit of capitalism (Weber, 1958).

All of the women were concerned with social good and welfare, which runs counter to capitalism. Madeleine spent her life as a defender of civil rights and equality in organizations, Frances negotiated fair labour practices and developed policy, Hallie engaged workers in meaningful ways and helped reattach them to the workforce, and

Viola developed a business, which gave other young black women similar access to financial independence. These alternative ways of organizing are slowly emerging as fields of interest and organizational contexts to examine within MOS, but their consideration comes late and remains on the fringe. Current debate engages where work actually happens and the relative contested spaces of women's work and the general subordination in work for women (see Vachhani and Pullen, 2011). Segregated sectors (Catalyst, 2018) and segregated work have been well examined (Williams and Mills, 2019b).

Women organizing in labour movements or for women's rights (economic well-being, legal, social and political status, health and more) is nothing new (See Goss and Heaney, 2010) but there have been rare attempts to bridge our understanding of female organizational methods in the context of the discourse on management, which remains fundamentally male (Williams and Mills, 2017). Female organizing, with its association to feminism, social welfare, the ethic of care, unionism and labour action stands in opposition to contemporary and historic views of management practice. Such biases render their utility and lessons for MOS, and the theorists involved invisible.

It is also interesting to note that in MOS/MH, women are considered latecomers to the workforce, despite being part of the formal workforce since the industrial revolution (Anderson and Zinsser, 1988; Williams and Mills, 2019b). This means that (1) models of feminine organizing and (2) women as worker, manager or leader are two ideas, which conflict with generally accepted management pedagogy and practice (Williams and Mills, 2019b).

Additionally, those involved in union organizing, arts, social work, were generally not seen as labour, but rather as "outside the realm of labor" (Williams and Mills, 2018, p. 293). MOS scholars did not even begin to engage in knowledge work until much more recently. The political fallout of linking some of these realms of work (arts, management and labour) would have been significant, if not criminal in the 1930-1960s. And Marxist theory would only confirm communist sympathies, despite being well suited to critiquing the effects of alienated or oppressed labour.

8.04.2 Valourization

The valourization discourse was not something I was certain existed until I met Viola. Hers remains the clearest example in this study. Her social construction in the present is akin to a kind of hagiography. This is not a critique, but an observation that it may be entirely necessary to idealize women in order to give them fairer treatment.

However, in the process of venerating Viola, we missed a rather important element of her story. She is currently known primarily for her role as a civil rights leader and not as a pioneering black female entrepreneur. One kind of valourization has blinded us to another worthy attribution. Similarly, Frances is known as the first female cabinet minister in the US, not as the architect of ground-breaking labour policy or practice. Hallie is known for being a theatre producer, but not as an innovative leader of one of the most ambitious labour programs in the US. And finally, Madeline is largely seen as a feminist advocate, not as a shrewd negotiator that put the unions in the hands of Canadian labour leadership. This study has been an invitation to see these women more broadly and to test the utility of ficto-feminism in achieving that perspective. I do find it frustrating

that remarkable women are not permitted to have a broad resume represent their accomplishments. In most cases, the practices of historians have been to describe them as a one dimensional figure (if they remember to include them at all) (Marcuse, 1964; Williams and Mills, 2017).

I think that it is also fair to point out that when it comes to women, we tend to want to valourize them in ways that serve to reinforce a gendered role. I think of contemporary approaches to rebrand women as heroes, like Wonder Woman, are still built on an aesthetic, which operates within the trope of woman as sex object. She is strong and superior in every way, but still must conform to certain ideas of what it is to be a woman to allow us to be comfortable with her. For example, Wonder Woman can still be wooed.

Women are easier to valourize in a subject position, which conforms to the discursive limits we place on gender. This was perhaps most apparent in Frances' case, where she came under constant scrutiny as a working wife and mother (Williams and Mills, 2016). Martin (1976) suggests that Frances' friends did not feel that she was a natural mother and that her daughter, Susanna, suffered because of her mother's need to work. When pressed to defend herself, Frances reports in Severn (1976) that she had "a rich maternal enjoyment of her young daughter, meeting fully every obligation of motherhood" (p. 76). What a strange thing to have to do and say! When women put themselves in the spotlight of a non-conforming gendered role, the critiques can be harsh. Can she even access a normative model of a role when she does not hold the same privileges as the ideal (Swan, 2005)?

Brewis and Sinclair (2000) argue that management and the management environment has been coded and there is a Taylorist distinction between mind work (managers) and body work (workers) and that women present with “problematic signifiers” in the workplace e.g. forms of femininity (Brewis and Sinclair, 2000, p. 195). Thus, when she is in the workplace, she emulates the normative male, but then she must also miraculously transform to also meet the expectations of her gendered responsibilities.

As a busy soccer mom of two boys, a CEO of a large provincial charity, a PhD candidate, and a part time university instructor, I am often asked: how do you do it all? What at first sounds like a genuine kind of inquiry with maybe a hint of concern, often feels like a backhanded critique. I hear under the question: “you are making us look bad” or “you are setting an unreasonable expectation for the rest of us”, “you must be neglecting something”. And because this comes from other women, I am often left befuddled as I attempt to make *her* feel more comfortable. I sometimes reply to “how do you do it all?” by saying things like: “not very well” or “well the house is a mess” or “I have a lot of help” or “my husband is amazing”. These are all true, but why do I have to defend my choices and make other people feel more comfortable? What are we doing to women? What are we doing to each other?

When I completed a study on management textbooks in which I tracked the various ways women as workers were socially constructed over time in management pedagogy (Williams and Mills, 2019b), I learned that women were offered two difficult choices when attempting to take on leadership roles: conform to the role of manager and

leader and fit with the malestream version of leader, or remain different. If she is different, she does not conform to the accepted ideal and will suffer the consequences, but if she emulates the ideal, her unique ability to conform makes her incomparable to the female collective (Williams and Mills, 2019b). So, it appears to be a choice of conforming to gendered subject positions, but if you do take on a malestream role, you may then be critiqued for the female gendered roles you are perceived to be neglecting.

The valourization discourse also serves a particular agenda and I am also guilty in this regard. I have an agenda to revise a history for management and organizational studies. This is an openly discursive feminist experiment and my admiration for each of these women is clear. I have used hagiographic tools to help you, dear reader, love them as I do. I must confess that I do want them to be revered and celebrated.

My emic knowledge of this process allows me to identify the same potential in others. Where Viola is concerned, evoking her as a civil rights leader was also about changing a history. And valourizing Viola in relation to how she addressed her experiences of abuse in that theatre in 1946, has given millions of Canadians an opportunity to reflect on racism in Canada (in the past and present). So, the motive can be sound, but it is still a discursive activity.

8.04.3 Villains versus HERoines

They were simultaneous fierce and revered, celebrated and persecuted. A persistent exercise by chroniclers of all of the women, was a constant altering of subject positions from villain to heroine, over time and often conflicting even in time. Frances

was "one of the most controversial, dangerous figures that roamed the United States in the 1930s" (President Kennedy, as cited in Mohr, 1979, p. 294). Hallie was a "wild little woman" (Houseman, as cited in Taylor, 2008, p. 248). Ironically, these two examples were considered compliments! And there were contradictions: Madeleine as a nun (Mulay, 2005, p. 113) and a militant (Lévesque, 2005, p. 52); Viola as a criminal (The Clarion, 1946) and civil rights activist (Bingham, 2019). Whatever the intent, the result is that we never get entirely comfortable with her. And when we hear her voice, if at all, the voices of her critics are often more powerful.

In Frances' case, she seldom engaged with the media to correct their ideas about her, though she would if it were about an issue of great policy concern[31]. Hallie was not permitted to participate in media interviews on the FTP and though there was an internal magazine produced for a brief time, that voice was censored and ultimately cancelled (Flanagan, 1940). Viola's voice was recorded in the news on occasion in 1946 and 1947, but more often she was positioned as a criminal under examination. The heroine she is seen as today is a stark contrast to the Viola of 1946. Perhaps Madeleine was able to see more than any other, the fruits of her labour and receive a fairer assessment. Later in life she enjoyed many appropriate tributes, but there is no question that for most of her career, the label of *seditious criminal* stuck. I cannot quite make sense of this pattern, but I know that I am unnerved by it. In some instances, the critiques are offered in a tongue and cheek manner; however, I do not think sarcasm has any place in describing these women. They are simply remarkable people.

[31] She boldly issued a statement in 1930 to counter President Hoover's unemployment stats (Perkins, 1946).

Admittedly, I have attempted to show these women in the best possible light, though I recognize they are not perfect. I have come to their defence, because I believe there has been an unusual level of focus on the negative and this focus has left a residual effect. They remain marginalized in some significant way.

In the textbook study I mentioned earlier, women are socially constructed as a problem to be managed (a problem to be managed by men) in organizational environments (Williams and Mills, 2019b). I saw how various popular negative conceptions of women were repeated over time and consistently showing up in management pedagogy. This not only reinforces gendered roles, but also vilifies women as an intruder to the work environment and emasculating the male responsibility of being the breadwinner (Williams and Mills, 2019b).

Cooper (1985) did a similar analysis but examined feminine images over time in popular music. When I examined Cooper's 1985 study, in which she outlines several common image tropes, I was struck by the similarities to both my study on textbooks and to the way various chroniclers framed the women in this thesis e.g. woman on a pedestal, woman as having a need for a man, women's physical characteristics, woman as evil (Cooper, 1985, p. 502).

Hunter (1976) did a study, which mapped the historical positionality of women in religious teachings, classical civilizations and the Middle Ages and found three prominent and familiar tropes: woman as inferior, woman as evil and woman as sex object. These studies (and countless others I could point to) provide insight into the

sociological forces and discursive limits we set on women, which constantly work on us and remind us of her place.

Negative female stereotypes are pervasive and powerful and require very little effort to create a potent effect (Cooper, 1985). They confirm bias and can have profound implications on attitudes towards women (by both women and men) (Cooper, 1985). And these tropes are so widespread that we cannot doubt the constant effects on cognition and behaviour (Cooper, 1985; Williams and Mills, 2019b).

This sense of her inferiority is also durable; replicated again and again over history by both men and women (Hunter, 1976). I am not arguing that women cannot transcend the boundaries of subject positions, as clearly many women have and will, but it is hard to do so with a constant pressure to assume certain roles (Hunter, 1976). In the case of Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola, the thwarting of conventional roles caused discord in their environments, attracted a lot of critique and I think largely distracted us from taking account of their tremendous success. Chroniclers spent so much time describing her, and making sense of her in a particular role, that it largely distracted us away from who she was and what she did. We seem to be left with one of two terrible choices in which to choose from: a gendered, all together inadequate description, or no inclusion or consideration at all.

8.04.4 Ahead of Her Time or Out of Place

I have tried in a variety of ways to understand this idea of being *ahead of her time*. As I have said, I think it a convenient trope, which is levied as a kind of answer to explain some unexplainable remarkability. However, I think it also signals something

deeper. If you conduct a simple Google search, it is absolutely bewildering the number of instances this phrase appears and who it is ascribed to. In my library database at Saint Mary's University, over 1 million academic resources came up and over 600,000 are peer-reviewed journal articles. The unfortunate thing is that both women and men have adopted this description. Which means that women are using it on other women, probably not realizing it is not benign. Though the trope is assigned to men, the majority of uses that I traced were applied to women. So, how can it be both something so special, but also clearly omnipresent? Was she really ahead of her time? My conclusion is that she was/is not. Rather, she simply feels *out of place* within the context and players around her. She did not do or say things, or act in a manner, which conformed to established norms or expectations.

Feminist scholars have engaged with this idea of being *out of place*, using terms like "politics of presence" or "identity politics" or "biological determinism" (McCallum, 2007, p. 56-57). It is a symbolic disassociation with certain expected confines of positionality, but it assumes an *a priori* position for woman. Women are part of a totality; to be dominated over and excluded from (hooks, 1991). hooks (1991) argues further that such identity politics are ripe with essentialism; eliminating inquiry into oppressive hierarchies, rhetorical strategies and subjectivities. hooks (1991) also believes that such essentialism leads to harmful assumptions of a homogeneous identity and experience.

Therefore, I argue on behalf of Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola that they were not *out of place*. It is not a matter of her not *knowing her place*. It is us accepting her without qualification. When we hear such attributions, we should not dismiss them as

a polite or even deferential compliment, we should challenge our own position and use a critical lens. It is far more likely that she is exactly where she is supposed to be, and we are just far behind.

8.05 Ficto-Feminism: A Strategy for Studying the Past (Facet 5)

In order to evaluate the apparent success or challenges of ficto-feminism as strategy for studying the past, I need to tell you how I got here; how I arrived at this approach. In chapter 2 and 3, I laid out the theory and approach and defended the promise of this method as scholars typically do. The reality is however, that scholars arrive at approaches for a variety of reasons. For me, ficto-feminism represented a way to approach my research anew.

Publishing work about your dissertation before you have finished writing it is really challenging. On the one hand, you have a great command of your data and you have benefited from peer review. On the other hand, you struggle to provide something more, something different.

I thought at first that I might be able to simply share what I had already learned from prior approaches and past research. I thought I could make the findings of my past research fit nicely into similar or uniform case studies. However, this really did not work. I could not find a consistent way to present each story using the methods I was familiar with. Ultimately, I felt I needed to come at the story of these women from a completely different vantage point. And, I needed a way to tie it all together. I reflected significantly on whether a new method could give me something more and reveal something my prior approaches had failed to do.

I also felt a pressure to build on other feminist work, but to also make the approach accessible. Some methods are really intimidating. You can read and read and read and still not really understand how to try a method. I asked myself if I could come up with a method that others might like to try but also show how to do it (or at least how I would do it). I wanted to make the process visible – not mysterious. So, my reasoning straddled the practicalities of developing a method that worked in terms of revealing something other approaches had failed to do, while also being an approach, which might inspire others to study historical figures in this way.

8.05.1 Challenges

In developing and using ficto-feminism, I should warn you of its challenges. The first is that it requires a significant level of familiarity with your source material. Initially, when doing the research for Frances and Hallie, which ultimately resulted in some of my published work, I coded various passages to highlight what insights might fall into a theme of analysis or discourse or a missed contribution to MOS. Returning to this same material later, I felt I could easily repurpose this material and the breadcrumbs I had left myself were very helpful. However, such approaches do not give you the global view necessary to chart a fictious (or fictional) conversation as I did. That effort took more than just good organizational skills. I had to know the women, inside out. I had to be able to play out a conversation in my mind's eye with confidence and trace back ideas to the sources which inspired them. I had to be able to ask a question and recall where and when she might have offered an answer and then where and when others might have also commented on such ideas.

The second challenge with ficto-feminism is that you also need to spend considerable time understanding context over time. You cannot simply lift the substance of a passage you have read somewhere and not understand what it reveals about that time or that place. Because I went back and forth through time, I had to be very careful to contextualize 'my data' in the time it was developed. This was particularly relevant not only for what the women felt or did at as specific time, but also what their chroniclers felt or said at a specific time. This context gave me a sense of the discourses at work, but also served as an explanation for why certain things were either perceived to happen in a certain way or explained by chroniclers in a certain way. For example, Bentley's (1988) biography of Hallie has several layers of context to reveal. I had to consider Bentley's motivations. Some of the passages that I used easily revealed the discursive nature of her motives and the constraints of her authorial subject position as a writer of women in the 1980s.

Additionally, navigating several chroniclers' motivations and temporal subject positions can be really challenging. For example, Frances has benefited from many chroniclers with good intentions; however, it becomes revealing when chroniclers continue to regurgitate the same information in similar ways. What does this replication mean? When chroniclers depart from replication and offer something different, what does that mean? How do they justify a change? An example of this that I shared in this study is Frances' "list"; the so-called 'ultimatum' she gave FDR when she was offered the ministerial post. As a researcher using ficto-feminism, you must be on the watch for such things. Why was it repeatedly the subject of inquiry? How was it presented by each

chronicler and what does this reveal about that chronicler? What was being said? Or more importantly, what was not being said? What is revealed in the liminal space?

In the case of "the list" I was able to reveal the potential motivations of various chroniclers, which speaks to how some discourses like gender might influence such versions of events over time, but I could also focus on what was not said. Namely that such focus on the exchange between Frances and FDR was deprived of the most important thing…what information did the list contain? This list's contents are never specifically revealed, but we know that it represented the work she would undertake in the Roosevelt administration – the very legacy of her success as Secretary of Labor. The significance is astounding and the approach that various chroniclers took is fascinating!

So, in undertaking ficto-feminism, it is not enough to simply surface the similarities and differences over time, which you could do with critical discourse analysis, or other forms of narrative analysis, you must also consider the gaps (in context). The context reveals something about why the information was not shared. Chroniclers were more concerned with the nature of the relationships between Frances and FDR than they were about Frances' contributions to improving working conditions. Therefore, the findings can be quite profound. A single passage could be the substance of deep analysis, enough for a paper all on its own. However, the advantage of ficto-feminism, is that when you find such treasurers, my conversational approach offers an efficient way to reveal to a reader the skepticism we should maintain with all 'evidence'. However, this does not reduce the effort upfront necessary in a deep reading of source material.

This brings me to a third challenge. You may not find all you need. In each case, I was left wanting more. For Viola, I had a lot of material, which spoke to the challenges she experienced as a black woman in the time segregation in Canada, but I had mere hints of her entrepreneurial legacy. Madeleine's chroniclers were equally tied to her advocacy narrative over her explicit contributions to improved working conditions and policies she influenced. Frances's chroniclers were so concerned with how and why she did things that I had to look her own writings and others in her social circle to understand what she did and its value to MOS. Hallie's own writing and her chroniclers are understandably preoccupied with outputs of the Federal Theater (namely, the plays) that it is quite difficult to understand the specifics of her model of leadership in a complex organizational space.

As I mentioned at the start of this thesis, not all material pointed directly or even indirectly to the women's potential lost contributions to the field, because the connection had not been made before. Making that connection for the first time and departing from the proclivities of other chroniclers presents challenges. A danger that exists is looking for the kinds of things that others have done before (specifically that which men have done or been credited with). Making comparisons is a seductive approach.

Why not compare Frances' social welfare priorities to that of the triple bottom line? Or why not use her ideas of research to develop evidenced-based management? There really is not anything wrong with this, but it supports the idea that all management theory and practice should fit within a certain ideology. So, it becomes advantageous when making a value statement about what one of the women has achieved because it fits

a familiar mental model, but it also serves the broader discourse of a patriarchy and capitalism. And that becomes particularly problematic for feminists interested in challenging such dogma and for the women in this study whose lived experience might have other inputs and influences: such as the ethic of care (Frances), the vestiges of colonialism (Viola), the motivations for social justice (Madeleine) or the desire to create meaningful art (Hallie). So, on the one hand, it does make for a significant argument to show a departure from existing ways of theorizing and praxis, but it also offers no anchor by which to compare. Thus, in this thesis I have tried to do both. I have shown you both the potential comparison, but also maintained the inherent critique.

To review, the three major challenges in my approach are as follows: (1) it requires a depth of knowledge and familiar of source material likely beyond what is typically required for research purposes. This speaks to a level of passion and motivation required for this approach; (2) understanding context is critical and specifically how it changes over time and affects certain chroniclers and their motivations, or stems from certain subject positions; and (3) you might not see the immediate value to MOS without looking very closely and you need to be careful not to fall into the trap of reinforcing the practices we are attempting to critique.

8.05.2 Advantages

At the beginning of this thesis and again here in chapter 8, I have reviewed the facets of ficto-feminism and its performance and promise, including: (1) its potential to unlock agency for subject and writer; (2) reflexive and embodied/emic insights; (3)

emotionality and resonance, (4) the opportunity to surface discourses at work over time; and (5) a feminist strategy for studying the past. Here I reflect further on the advantages.

I am particularly thrilled by the enactment of agency for both researcher and writer. As I have said, *agency* is central to feminism and a means to access power and an autonomous self-concept. Achieving this for these women and for myself speaks to the potential for social justice and my role as a strong advocate in support of these women's recognition.

Secondly, the opportunity to write *reflexively*, offer *emic* insights and bringing myself into this writing is cathartic. This revelation comes with the appreciation that I am part of the knowledge making process, a central generative figure. It is also scary and bold. I have wondered several times 'am I enough?', 'is this worthy?'.

Laying bare my emotional orientation revealed several advantages. I had sustained interest and engagement in the research process, while also remaining deeply committed to achieving social justice in the form of recognition within MOS/MH for these women. Emotions had significant range, from sadness, to anger, to joy. Thus, the effect was more than intellectual stimulation.

Given the importance of *discourse* in framing and limiting the roles of women, I am very pleased with the performance of ficto-feminism and the opportunity to reveal several discourses at work, particularly over time. Finding newer, less obvious discourses is also compelling because discourse tends to work on us in unknown/unseen ways (Foucault, 1970). This form of writing allowed me to openly share the origins of certain discourses and reflect on their influences both during the conversations and afterwards.

And finally, I do believe that ficto-feminism offers a *persuasive strategy* for feminists interested in revealing hidden figures and their lost contributions. The promise of ficto-feminism is that it has the capacity to reveal a more plausible and persuasive sense of an overlooked, understudied, and underappreciated female figure and reveal (or restore) her broader importance.

The adoption of first person narrative approach in the application of "dear reader" also helped me to surface my ideas, my apprehension, and my emotions. In a way, "dear reader" represented an ongoing self-construction of an intersecting identity, while also accounting for the surrounding rules in academic writing (Ruel, Mills and Thomas, 2018). "Dear reader" was at times my alter ego, or my internal voice playing out as a real character along with me and the women. At other times, I felt that I needed a friend to cheer me on and "dear reader" became that friend. And there were times when I felt that "dear reader" represented the naysayer and critic, which allowed me to tease out a slight dissonance or friction that I was experiencing with academic, patriarchal or capitalist convention. It represented an internal conflict within me, ascribed to you. So, thank you "dear reader" for revealing an unexpected level of depth to my writing.

I would also like to share some of the other advantages, which revealed themselves to me during this study. To be candid, this was a very fun way to write. I have such love and appreciation for these women and writing in this manner allowed me to interact with them in a very satisfying and personal way. It came easily once I landed on my plan (getting to the plan was a bit more of a windy path). Writing conversationally, with a confident command of the resources unlocked a passion for the writing process in

addition to the figures of my study. If my only outcome of this thesis was that you learned something important about some amazing women that would be a significant contribution. However, I have also created a way to write, which enlivens the research process; a process, which can be very hard and frustrating at points. I had sustained motivation through the empirical chapters, and I believe that is a unique and desirable experience for any writer. Hence, in this method, I offer up not just a strong scholarly strategy, but also a fun, satisfying and motivating way to write. This thesis unlocked my imagination and deployed it instrumentally to advantage these women and their stories.

8.05.3 Breadcrumbs

My final thoughts on the performativity of ficto-feminism relate to how others might approach this method. I realize that this thesis has given you many clues, but the demonstration of the method has focused on my idiosyncratic approach. Essentially, you have seen it in action through me. This is because this method is deeply personal. I used all of myself to do it. However, to assist you, I want to highlight some starting points that may make the method more accessible, in service to you, dear reader, and in service to scholarship.

First, find a historical figure that inspires you. Intrinsic motivation, driven by an emotional connection will take you to a deep level of analysis, which is critical to developing a confident command of the material. I saw this in the sustained interest I have maintained for all of the women. I have happily revisited their stories over and over again. For Frances, this journey has been the longest, the deepest and in a way, the most gratifying. And though you might at first be attracted to a historical figure you admire,

you might also be attracted to one you relate to. Such is the case with Hallie, who I see as peer and contemporary in a social purpose organization. Lastly, do not let your admiration or your fondness be overwhelmed by either how much you can find (such as in Madeleine's case) or how little (such as in Viola's case). You must focus on the social justice you can offer and the further development of the field (MOS or otherwise). It is about you, but it is also not about you, if you follow my meaning.

Secondly, do not get caught up in a trap of looking to the typical organizational spaces. Think in the broadest sense about organizational spaces. If you do, you will find women and you will find alternative ways of organizing, leading and more. I have no doubt about the lessons and figures that you might find and the potential value they will have in expanding our thinking and the discipline of management and organizational studies.

The third piece of advice is that you will need to find some sources, which give you a sense of the historical figure's personality. This presents in many ways, but most effectively in personal writings. If you cannot find direct personal writings, such as in the case of Frances (People at Work, 1934) and Hallie (Arena, 1940) who both penned their own story, you might be able to find other rich sources close to your protagonist who will give you a sense of her (such as in the case of Madeleine and Viola). Hopefully what you find will give you a sense of her, but it will also reveal how she socially constructs herself or how others have variously socially constructed her. What are these contestations or consistencies about?

The fourth piece of advice is to have fun with it. I really enjoyed the tangential research on the historic times, styles of dress, places, technology etc. The research into dress and tape recorders was particularly fun. The research into Parkinson's disease, less so, yet important for plausibility. I also enjoyed the process of visualizing the conversation and giving the reader enough information to picture the conversation in his or her mind's eye. I realize that this is a process familiar to literary writers, but as an academic, I must confess how satisfying it is. Perhaps you will find yourself having imaginary conversations out loud, like I did. Perhaps you will even try a New England accent on, like I did (rather badly).

Also, it is important to look for sources related to social-historical context. As you try to make sense of the life of historical figures, variously conceived over time, you need to support that investigation with other sources, which help reveal what is happening either in the time of your historical protagonist, or in the chronicler you are relying on. Media is excellent, because it not only introduces you to other chroniclers, but it often situates remarks in their socio-political and historical context. A convergence of sources also helps to reveal discourses at work, in addition to revealing her accomplishments, her lost contributions, her barriers and her subject positions.

Finally, you cannot be afraid to get personal. So much opportunity lives in our authentic engagement with material. I really had to feel my way through it. I had to believe in myself and take a leap of faith. I was fortunate to work with some exceptional senior scholars who had faith in me. Even so, I had to be prepared to take risks. When I first thought of having non-fiction, fictitious conversations, I sat on the idea for weeks,

before bringing it up to my supervisor. I really thought he would think I was crazy! Then and every other time since, where I felt I was out on a limb, he was there to offer more encouragement. As the work developed and its promise unfolded, I became more confident as well. I have come to believe that in the process of embodied writing and writing differently, we become a vessel to make sense of various traces of the past and we must acknowledge this process and how we become a part of it. Our feelings throughout are a good measure of our authentic engagement. I experienced a range of emotion, grief with Frances, joy with Hallie, nervousness with Madeleine, inadequacy with Viola. These emotional signals helped me understand, helped me find a way forward and ultimately, I think that they made the work better.

I hope that these six starting points offer you some concrete ways forward, along with some sincere encouragement. I hope that you see this method's vast potential and are keen to give it a try. Part of my motivation was that as an organizational leader, I saw many inspiring stories of male leadership, but so few of women. And the stories I did find, I could not relate to. This was the start of an indication of the narrow and gendered scope of our field. I now have four brilliant women that I feel offer profound insight into management and organizations, leadership, entrepreneurship, market-based economics and social good. I hope you find some too.

8.06 Final Thoughts

8.06.1 Full Circle

In the first year of my PhD studies, I picked up (for the second time) Lyotard's writings on the postmodern condition (1984). I had read it in my undergrad, but it took on new meaning 25 years later. In a way, I have not only been sensemaking about myself (and the women) in this thesis in this time, but also sensemaking about myself (and the women) over time.

An important idea stuck out to me. Upon reflection, I believe it is a thread that has followed me these last 5 years. In Lyotard's argument against scientific knowledge and the trappings of positivism, he promotes the idea that "imagination" provides the opportunity to make something new or "change the rules of the game" (p. 52). He further argues that knowledge is fundamentally attached to narrative (Lyotard, 1984). In this thesis and with this way of writing, I have not only surfaced discourses, which is the opportunity provided by poststructuralism; but I have also taken on a generative project, which brings new knowledge to the foreground. I have allowed my imagination to fill in gaps and create a narrative, which is plausible and full of possibility.

At the heart of this argument is what constitutes knowledge? For feminists, I believe that we can take on the critical role of knowledge creators. Our mission is not just one of challenging, debating, uncovering and revealing, it is one of authoring and even inventing.

At the start of this thesis, I shared the views of current challenges within feminist theory, including: (1) gravitation towards universalism (Witt, 1995); (2) difference vs. same argument (Williams and Mills, 2019b); (3) locating agency in feminist theory (Vachhani, 2019); and (4) moving beyond binaries (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016). I had

the opportunity to provide four uniform case studies with these women, but I knew that it would sacrifice a more nuanced understanding of lived experience (agency) and it would have reduced my presence in the writing (reflexivity). I have tried in this thesis to address some of these challenges, and I believe I have meaningfully engaged with them and made an important contribution to our understanding of: (1) the importance of cultural contexts, (2) the idea of common discourse does not mean common effects; (3) that agency can be an important and visible part of feminist theory, giving rise to writing as advocacy; and (4) categorical approaches to women's experience does not provide a deep enough level of analysis.

I also believe that I have contributed to our understanding of embodied writing through my approach, because "feminism is an embodied practice, not just an intellectual one" (Sinclair, 2019, p. 145). There is a strong feminist tradition of writing differently as feminists and I want to be a part of it. This means being fearless, subversive and attentive to the self (see Sinclair, 2019; Weatherall, 2018; Pullen, 2018). In doing so, I follow the path of other feminists, which are using themselves as a site of inspiration towards feminism (Sinclair, 2019).

8.06.2 Forward (?) for Feminism

In writing a thesis, there tends to be a strategy employed by authors to argue the merits of one approach over another; however, I do not subscribe to the idea of feminist intellectual hierarchies; I would rather help support diverse theorization (see Sinclair, 2019). I am not here to silence or marginalize. There is too much work to be done in creating feminist knowledge and in serving the feminist agenda. I will not, indeed I

cannot, condemn other approaches by feminists. This is one of the reasons there are so many feminisms.

All that I hope to do here is invite an opportunity to reflect on the utility of a variety of approaches in advancing the work of feminist scholarship. For me, poststructuralism has tremendous capability to uncover how power operates, how discourses define and maintain subject positions, and reveal the performativity of discourses like gender, history, valourization etc. But I also subscribe to the general skepticism and irony of postmodernism. However, where I have found the most utility is in the opportunity to be both generative and critical, fragmented and whole, operating in the 'past' and present. This has been the value of ficto-feminism. I can tell stories, while also being in the story and part of the story, with the women.

Jenkins (1991) argues that the past is everything, which has come before and that history (or historiography) is the engagement in and writing of historians (or historiographers). However, I believe what I have presented in this thesis is the opportunity to think differently about both the past and the writing of a past. History is something that happens in the present. Novelist and scholar, Beth Kephart (2014), argues that the best historical fiction reads like the present. Perhaps the best history does as well. Every time I write or read about Frances, Hallie, Madeleine or Viola, they are with me in the here and now. You as my dear reader, are with me in the here and now. Though this is typically thought of as an asynchronistic approach (I write and then you read), instead I feel that as I write, I imagine you are reading, which means that part of you is with me in the writing.

Writing a conversation with each of these women, is a challenge to the general way we perceive the past temporally. Is this a challenge to the ontological safety of the past as being distinguishable from the present and future? I think it is. All we have is the *present* in this thesis. Therefore, I have revealed one of the ways presentism can be enacted in philosophical debate in historiography. Ingram (2016) argues for "thisness presentism" in which in the here and now, we see the proxies for those we believe exist (past and present – it makes no difference). Existence takes many forms. Since we cannot know the past nor future, our vantage point of what exists in the here and now is substantiated by the enunciation of it. Therefore, existence is uninstantiated (incomparable) anyway. The presentist accepts the things, which are present (Ingram, 2016). The essence of this argument is that what exists here and now in the present is all that exists. For Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola, it is their proxies, in other words, me as writer and enunciator of their essence, and you as reader (Ingram, 2016). For example, see Ingram's (2016) argument about thisness presentism and historical figures, like Socrates:

> Socrates's thisness ontologically depends on Socrates insofar as Socrates's thisness couldn't exist without the initial existence of Socrates. However, this ontological dependence doesn't imply that Socrates's thisness must cease to exist once Socrates ceases to exist. The initial existence of an entity is sufficient for the existence of its thisness; the loss of the entity doesn't necessitate the loss of the thisness (p. 2873).

The thisness of Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola is also bound up in the thisness of their chroniclers and we are all here in the present in various forms (Ingram, 2016).

Jenkins (1991) also argues that in reading a history, you are reading the history which has been conceived by the historian (or historiographer or enunciator). In this case, I made very explicit the idea that you would be reading about Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola, but also reading about me. You were actually reading about the *idea* of these women social constructed by me. I openly disclosed the process of writing, the contested views of chroniclers and my place in it. I have done this for three reasons: (1) it was a necessary step to make a marginalized past more visible (2) it disrupts the idea of the past only existing in the past, and (3) it challenges the past as full and uncontested, and as having a reasonable understanding of all important figures.

Scott (2011) argues that feminism must embrace an open future, and White (1987) argues for a historiography, which embraces poetics (as cited in La Greca, 2016). This thesis is a contribution to a potential direction for feminists interested in writing history by embracing possibility and literary devices. This is an epistemic challenge, which remains at the heart of the study of history and its propensity for uncovering so-called *truth* (Spiegel, 2013). But it is also an ontological challenge about the nature of knowledge. This has been an experiment in testing our open-mindedness for what is knowledge, where do we find it and how is it produced and presented pedagogically.

Perhaps a more interesting question remains about the utility of this new history (its theorization and method of writing): how do I expect others to engage with my work? If I had chosen to present my work with some grand authority, perhaps other historians

would feel more comfortable engaging with my narratives. But I expect my work to be met with reluctance, even though all I have done is laid bare the subjectivities, social influences and general unreliability of traces and our ability to conscript such traces for a purpose. This is done by historians all the time, but not openly. How do we invite a different debate, which is not predicated on the reliance of so called evidence and instead puts the emphasis on the figures, the story, the learning and the potential implications?

8.06.3 Scholarly Contribution

The primary scholarly contribution of this thesis is the development of a new method and the opportunity to see it in action. This is not to suggest that other revelations are not significant, but the application of ficto-feminism is what is responsible for developing a new and persuasive account for Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola in the context of management and organizational studies and management history. It is through ficto-feminism that they are revealed, their contributions brought to the fore, and an understanding as to how they became lost in the first place emerged. The presentation of four non-fiction, fictitious conversations engaged my imagination, my intellectual curiosity, and my emotions. I hope that it achieved this resonance for you as well, dear reader. In this effort, ficto-feminism has revealed new knowledge, both feminist and feminine. As Calás and Smircich (1991) argue "writing ourselves into the organizational text has provided us with the pleasures of resistance and activism" (p. 598). I agree with their argument that writing outside of the dominant academic order has allowed my thinking and writing to be more powerful and for me to feel more powerful (Calás and Smircich, 1991).

The secondary contributions of this thesis engage with feminist theory and the intersection of feminism and critical historiography. My engagement with feminist theory has included (1) an exploration feminist theory development with a sustained focus on feminist politics and advocacy; (2) revealing how assumptive bias and discursive limits operation within organizations and upon organizational actors; (3) disrupting universalistic claims and so-called enduring truths; (4) and advocating for and respecting non-traditional voices and their subjective accounts.

While challenging our notions of what is history and who are the pivotal actors, my work has explored (1) discourses which serve to reinforce patriarchy; (2) the performance of a new method and new postmodern way of writing; (3) the value of a poststructural lens to reveal the role of discourse and a variety of subject positions which they produce and reinforce; (4) and understanding a broader view of what is worthy knowledge and where it can be found.

Returning to the methodological contribution of ficto-feminism, there are some key learnings from the women, in terms of what role they might have played in the development of management and organizational studies and management history…

Frances was the stoic steward of change. She was passionate about fair working practices, but she played ‘the game’ and worked along side male leaders from inside the system; a system which did not favour her. Though, many gave the credit to President Roosevelt, Frances was the author of ground-breaking US labour policy, which we continue to take for granted today. She was a shrewd negotiator, a writer of labour policy and legislation, and an advocate for better and more accountable management practices.

She also created and maintained during her tenure, the important links of social welfare to economic performance.

Hallie was charged with a nearly impossible mission. She was tasked with creating a grand federal theatre, which served the non-working artist. She had to make it work as a theatre, a relief plan and a government arts program. She had to engage workers and audiences in common belief, avoid political bias, discrimination, cooperate with unions, keep costs low and compete with Broadway. And…It had never been done before. And, it has not been done since. In Hallie, we have a remarkable example of female leadership, a window into the makings of a social enterprise, and the benefits of providing meaningful work to workers on relief.

For over 8 decades Madeleine fought for the rights of women. She fought for marginalized workers, including children, immigrants, indigenous persons, and persons with disabilities. She fought for fair wages and safe working conditions. She reshaped the Canadian labour agenda and brought the leadership of unions under Canadian ownership, and thus serving Canadian interests. Madeleine was a thought leader and an extraordinary mentor to many. She helped forge the Canadian worker identity.

Viola was a pioneering female, African Nova Scotian entrepreneur. She designed a new business model, innovated it and mentored other women to follow in her footsteps, which afforded her students with access to employment and financial independence. With Viola's story we gain an understanding of the marginalization discourse of black women, within the broader sector of entrepreneurship. Her lessons and contributions, as well as her lived experience are the basis for new knowledge.

These revelations from ficto-feminism do not stop at just the recognition that each of these women were significant proto-management theorists. The lessons span models of leadership, of approach to policy and practice, of entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour, and the important bridges between the market economy and achieving social good. It is my hope that this study and the introduction and performativity of ficto-feminism raises your cynicism for current privileges players and practices in management and organizational studies and management history.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

> *"The self both is and is not a fiction; is unified and transcendent and fragmented and always in process of being constituted, can be spoken of in realist ways and cannot; its voice can be claimed as authentic and there is no guarantee of authenticity" (Davies and Gannon, 2006, p. 95).*

The purpose of this study was to advance a new model of inquiry, ficto-feminism. In so doing, I wanted to make *her* and *her contributions* more visible to management and organizational studies. I also wanted to reveal the circumstances and discourses, which acted upon her and contributed to her marginalization in management history. I believe that this approach is a daring, but effective way to study lost figures of significance. It is defiantly feminist, contests the limited scope of the current domain, disputes who was included in history, and challenges taken for granted academic thinking and writing.

I remain concerned about the repercussions for leaving these women and their accomplishments out of account. Speaking as a feminist scholar, advocate and a female leader, I have been longing for mentors and models. I want women leaders that I can relate to, and from whom I can draw inspiration. And even though so much remains hidden from view for Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola, I have shared the core of who I think they were and what they achieved. In this writing, I was inspired, and I hope this inspiration spreads to other women scholars and practitioners alike.

Embodied writing allowed me to be transformed in this writing; to engage fully and intimately with each woman. I held nothing back. They feel more real to me, and I hope that they feel more real to you too. They have moved beyond abstracted figures

plucked from the margins of history, to real women, working in challenging conditions, accomplishing amazing things, with experience to share.

As there are with any research undertakings, I too have regrets to reflect upon. Unlike the limitations I outlined in the last chapter, my regrets concern another woman: Eileen Sufrin. She almost made it into this study. It seems more than appropriate to share what almost came to be -- my lost chapter: *The Curious Case of Eileen Sufrin (1913-1999)*. In many ways, Eileen met the criteria of selection for this thesis. She is little more than a footnote in Canada's labour history. There was enough information to spark my interest, but insufficient information to include her. I could never get a sense of her because she never uses an active voice. In tribute to her and to inspire future research, I have included a biographical profile of her in an epilogue. I believe that my method needs further development to serve figures like Eileen. I must be prepared to take more risk. But I muss confess, it worries me that for some women, being lost to history is unavoidable.

I set out to make some critical contributions through the development of a *ficto-feminism* as a new method. This approach includes a new narrative style and a blending of collective biography, fictocriticism and auto-ethnography. Using ficto-feminism, I wanted to introduce you to Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola. At the core of this effort is my hope and desire that you see them as proto-management theorists of a different kind of MOS. Can you imagine the debates their ideas might have inspired? What would our field of study look like? What would practice look like?

I have used many analogies when describing my approach to peers. I did at times, feel that I was assembling a large quilt; consisting of wonderful patches of various voices and traces that I sewed into a meaningful and inspiring pattern of conversation, which could be appreciated both up close and at a distance. I tried to make the patches of her voice the brightest and most beautiful.

All we have is what we create.

Epilogue

The Lost Chapter: The Curious Case of Eileen Sufrin

Eileen led the battle to unionize the original Eaton's, considered Canada's largest department store in history and Canada's third largest employer at the time. Afterwards, she remained active in labour related work and was ultimately enlisted to conduct a study by the federal government, which remains the most comprehensive, comparative examination of federal and provincial labour relations Acts in Canada, outlining provisions for settling labour disputes and legal obligations (*Labour Relations Legislation in Canada*, 1969).

To tell her story, I looked to her book *The Eaton Drive,* which is widely cited, but regrettably shares little beyond that brief chapter of her life, save a small résumé in the appendix. *The Eaton Drive* reads as a case study and textbook (Sufrin, 1982; Farrell, 2001). It is hard to get a sense of *her*, only the process by which the action took. Labour literature has much to say in terms of the influence of the Eaton Drive (but not explicitly about Sufrin) and a single article published on *section15.ca* and cited repeatedly is remarkably the only source for much of what is known of her. For Eileen, the utility of my methods fell short. There simply were too many gaps to bring her story to light and I remain disappointed that I cannot do for her, what I hope to have achieved for Frances, Hallie, Madeleine and Viola.

In what seems like a completely insufficient testimony to what I believe is a remarkable woman, lost to history, I have included a biographical introduction to her

here. I hope it serves to inspire others. I certainly hope to return to Eileen in the future and give her the attention she deserves.

> *In economic terms, of course, Eaton's Toronto employees were the prime beneficiaries, whether or not they joined Local 1000. Increased salaries, pensions and welfare during the Drive took many millions of dollars out of the coffers of the Eaton family (Sufrin, 1982, p. 203).*

Eileen was born in Montreal, Quebec in 1913, but moved to Toronto, Ontario, where she grew up. She was the head of her class at Vaughan Road Collegiate. After high school, she became interested in working conditions and equality for women and joined the Canadian Commonwealth Youth Movement (CCYM), a division of the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF), later known as New Democratic Party (NDP) (Farrell, 2001). She found her vocation as a social activist and "forceful, street-corner speaker" (Farrell, 2001).

In addition to her work on the election team with the local NDP, Eileen founded the Surrey-White Rock branch of the Choice of Dying Society. Her first major push to unionize involved organizing bank clerks and spanned the country between 1940-41, culminating in the first strike of bank employees in Montreal in 1941. She then joined a campaign in Toronto to unionize steelworkers at John Inglis where 7,000 workers were women. This campaign was a landmark for war plant labour disputes (Farrell, 2001). She spent 19 years organizing women in union movements in both Ontario and British Columbia, during which time she unionized 15,000 women workers (Farrell, 2001). She is best known for her chief effort: Eaton's, a campaign to unionize Canada's largest

department store between 1948 and 1952. The campaign is one of the longest organizing campaigns in Canadian labour history (Farrell, 2001). Eileen penned: *The Eaton Drive* (1982) as a case study and training tool (Sufrin, 1982; Farrell, 2001).

Eileen continued labour work after Eaton's, heading the Office Workers' Department, National Office, United Steelworkers of America (from 1953 to 1956). In 1953, she represented the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) at the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions' Women's School at La Breviére, France. Between 1957 and 1958 she studied Italian trade unions with a Canadian Council Grant and wrote articles for the Canadian labour press. From 1959 to 1964, she served as the Industrial Relations Administrator for Crown corporations in Saskatchewan in the Government Finance Office. In 1965 and 1966 she served as Editor for *Canadian Packinghouse Worker* in Toronto. From 1967 to 1972 she was posted to the Department of Labour in Ottawa in the Legislation Branch to research and write *Labour Relations Legislation in Canada* (1969). Under the Economics and Research Branch she wrote studies for the Women's Bureau and Federal Industries Division.

She married Burt Sufrin in 1960 and moved to BC in 1972 to be active with the local NDP. She was awarded the Governor-General's Persons Award for efforts to improve conditions of Canadian working women in 1979. She died in 1999.

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