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A POSTMODERN GLIMPSE:

THE PRINCIPLES OF MARY PARKER FOLLETT

IN A CONTEMPORARY WORKPLACE

A Thesis Submitted to the

College of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the

Department of Educational Administration

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, SK

by

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Canada

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Abstract

This thesis was undertaken to explore the philosophical principles elaborated by Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) and to examine their relevance in the contemporary workplace. The contention within this thesis was that concepts Follett expounded bear close resemblance to postmodern notions of organizing; juxtaposition of Follettian and postmodern philosophy and a postmodern take on research methodology add credence to the contention and allowed the researcher to examine the practical relevance of the notions explored.

The initial few chapters of the thesis are expository, as they acquaint the reader with Mary Parker Follett and her philosophy. A brief biography and a review of her work is followed by a discussion of organization theory, past and contemporary, with the intention of providing an opportunity to situate Follett's philosophy contextually. Although situated in and identified with the human relations school of thought, upon a study of postmodern ideas, Follett seems to enjoy more comfort in a contemporary discussion of a postmodern, communitarian, learning organization. A more lengthy juxtaposition of Follettian and postmodern philosophy lends credence to this idea.

A case study within a manufacturing company provided the venue for a further exploration of Follett's ideas. Observation and interviews allowed an examination of several of the most important of Follett's ideas: "power-with" rather than "power-over"; the "law of the situation"; democratic "small group government"; integration as a more favourable manner of dealing with conflict over voluntary withdrawal, domination, and compromise; the benefits of coordination; circular response in the creation of people; and

individual and society as process. The stories of the participants are told and contemporary insights add to those provided by Follett over seven decades ago.

The postmodern approach to the field study within the manufacturing company allowed fluidity, as the participants changed the method from an original intention of focus group interviews leading to the creation of a survey instrument, to observation and individual interviews. The considerable time spent in observation, combined with the interviews, allowed me to learn the language of the participants and move with comfort within the company. That integration as researcher-participant allowed for personal transformation based on the experience of the research with its collaboration with the employees, lending credence to the most profound of Follett's insights--the reciprocal creation of people--the circular manner in which we create as we communicate. It was found that many of Follett's ideas have applicability in a contemporary company. The interviewees displayed exceptional ability to comment regarding the application of Follettian principles within their workplace setting.

The significance of the study lies in the process itself--the opportunities provided for the circular creating and communicating of meaning. The study may encourage readers to reexamine the nature of their relationships, as well. While that examination is not the purpose of this research--no claim of generalizability is offered--it is hoped that others may learn lessons from the process that is documented herein.

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Dedication

To Mom

The seeing of self as, with all other selves, creating, demands a new attitude and a

new activity in man. The fallacy of self-and-others fades away and there is only

self-in-and-through-others, only others so firmly rooted in the self and so fruitfully

growing there that sundering is impossible. We must now enter upon modes of

living commensurate with this thought. (Follett, 1918/1920, p. 8)

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CHAPTER ONE

BECOMING INVOLVED

All human intercourse should be the evocation by each from the other of new

forms undreamed of before, and all intercourse that is not evocation should be

eschewed. . . . To free the energies of the human spirit is the high potentiality of

human association. (Follett, 1924, p. 303)

Mary Parker Follett--her aims were practical, her writing passionate. The

quotation speaks to me still and continuously inspires my relationships with others. I

"discovered" Follett while researching the history of the theory that has evolved into

recent discussions of "organizational learning" (Armstrong, 1995).

Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) was an American philosopher, political scientist,

social theorist, social worker, and advisor to management (Urwick & Brech, 1949).

Except for a year's study in France early in her life and five years spent in England late in

her life, she lived in the United States, in the Boston area. She was of relatively modest

birth, but she developed connections with Boston's intelligentsia, perhaps because of her

good education (for a woman at that time) and the connections of her companion, Isobel

Briggs. She developed a small loyal following in her time but not a global reputation.

Follett's gender is of particular importance, as it affected her choice of career--social

work--which, in turn, affected the nature of the philosophical positions expounded in The

New State: Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government (1918/1920).

Creative Experience (1924), and her series of lectures, many of which were published

posthumously under the title, Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary

Parker Follett (1941). Follett's work broke from the scientific management tradition of

the time in that its philosophy centered around humanistic concepts and emphasized

process rather than structure. Although written early in the century, the reciprocal

creative process Follett elaborated bears resemblance to contemporary postmodern

notions of the nature of human interaction.

Purpose of the Study

In general terms, the purpose of this research was to concentrate my attention on

Follett's life, the philosophical principles she espoused within her writing, and their

practical applicability in a contemporary workplace. The attention was postmodern in

approach, as Follett's concepts, my personal outlook, and the contemporary

consciousness within organizational analysis tend toward postmodern sympathies. The

initial literature review informed the field research, which took place in a manufacturing

setting. The field research was intended to explore the practical translation of Follett's

philosophy in a workplace setting. With that purpose in mind, the contribution of the

employees was sought, through individualized semi-structured interviews and informal

conversations, to facilitate the creation of new understanding concerning Follett's

philosophy and its practical relevance with reference to their situation. The responses

were first woven into a story, then reflected upon as lessons to be learned, both with

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reference to the employees' particular situation, and with reference to all our relations in the broader sense. The worth of the research rests within this mutually creative activity.

While the purpose has been stated and was that which prompted the research, it is important to note that an emphasis on process underlies both postmodern notions and Follettian philosophy. When reflecting upon purpose with such a mindset, one realizes that:

> In the social process the purpose is part of the integrating activity; it is not
>
> something outside, a prefigured object of contemplation toward which we are
>
> moving. . . . You can never catch a purpose. . . . A system built around a purpose
>
> is dead before it is born. (Follett, 1919, p. 579)

Follett (1924) believed that when we consider our social processes, we make a mistake if we intellectualize a purpose that is unconnected to the evolving situation (p. 82). If the Follettian postmodern researcher accepts that "purpose is a constituent of the process" (Follett, 1919, p. 579), it would follow that this initial discussion of the research purpose must be intentionally nonprescriptive. Otherwise, the researcher falls into the same pit occupied by the modernist researcher who puts the answers before the questions, thus manipulating the questions to arrive at the desired answers.

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study and for the approach was my desire to become involved in and to document, while studying Follett's philosophy, a moment in the process of human relations. Follett's ideals have come to life in the research through my attempts to acquaint others with her ideas and through the exploration of those ideas for

relevance and applicability within the realm of everyday workplace activities. I have been influenced toward a more communitarian manner of relating because of the study of Follett's work juxtaposed with my research into postmodernism. What we learn through our interactions with others is not restricted to what we gain from our present relationships. To a great extent our creation is affected by those who have come before us. Historical analysis alters the movement of the creative psychic force of our personalities. The process of that movement is exciting both to experience and to attempt to document, as the documentation also becomes part of the force that shapes our creation. The historical aspect of this dissertation is therefore extremely beneficial and is considered an important contribution to the study.

What I hope that this study achieves for the people who will share this experience is a wider understanding of the intricacies and beauty of "the practice of community" (Follett, 1919, p. 587). What this practice of community signifies varies for each person; however, absolutely essential is a process of engagement. Engaging prompts one to reflect upon the issues being addressed. In the case of this study those issues had to do with the manner in which we relate to one another and create one another through our relations. When the participants and I examined the movement of our daily activities, much of which has reached the level of complacent and unquestioning automaticity, we could begin to deconstruct the seeming essential nature of those activities and change in and while the process of engagement was taking place. While Follettian ideas may provide the message, that message is meaningless without the medium. The research participants and I provide the medium and change and are changed by the message as it

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flows though us and between us. The examination of our relations that further creates those relations strengthens the practice of community and provides significance for this study. The aim is simple yet of great importance.

Readers may be encouraged to undertake studies with a similar approach, studies that are not tied to entity but which move instead in response to process. That eventuality may lead to process research becoming more acceptable and respected as a worthwhile pursuit in our efforts to democratize our lives and live in harmony with our environment.

To reiterate, the process of this research has been undertaken with a postmodern sympathy, with reference to my personal philosophy, the subject of the dissertation, the field research, and the writing of the document. In a more structured type of study, the researcher tends to proceed sequentially from a literature review that has been designed specifically to support the field research. This study does not follow that pattern; the chapters discussing Follett's life, her work, and organizational theory support the field research, but are not intended solely for that purpose. The intention is that an expository address will serve to educate the reader, not only with the purpose of specifically understanding the context of the field research, but also with the goal of allowing readers to explore the translation of their own approach to relating within organizations. In other words, the intention is that this research provides many avenues through which readers can become involved in their own reciprocal relations with the story. The provision of a specific road map must be avoided as such a map may constrain the reader's journey to only the same traveled path of the researcher. An outline of the organization of the dissertation, provided at the end of this chapter, provides for readers a view of the path of

my document. After that, the exploration becomes mutual, as readers, researcher included, travel and create while traveling.

Evolution of Interest

Although Mary Parker Follett championed concerns of the common person, she lived within what is known as the scientific management era; it would be a mistake to assume that she was in defiance of the proponents of scientific management. She espoused the scientific management principles of what has become known as the classical school of management (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941; Urwick & Brech, 1949), but she had a different view of what those principles meant than Frederick Taylor had, for example, and thus embraced a different method of their translation to practice. Taylor had addressed the application of his principles from the point of view of management, the "thinkers" who devised the most efficient manner of operations and who then instructed the workers, the "doers." Follett became concerned with workplace issues indirectly through her career in social work. She was actively involved in employment placement services on behalf of the poor clients with whom she worked. Her association with her clients convinced her of their ability to achieve great things, given opportunity and encouragement. Her experience confirmed her belief in the importance of each person contributing to the making of the community, of which they were both a part and potentially the whole. Everyone, then, was a "thinking doer" who would be dynamically involved in the psychic force that was, in her opinion, the essence of human association.

Contrary to current opinion (Graham, 1995), Follett was not ignored in her lifetime. While she did not receive the attention accorded to Taylor, she did have a loyal

and devoted following (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, pp. 7-29). However, the momentum was with Taylor's translation of scientific management, even though he experienced his own personal heartache over the practical misinterpretation of his philosophy (Viteles, 1934, p. 48). Many writers at the time, like Taylor (1911b), were of the opinion that the worker was slothful and unintelligent (pp. 46, 59). The characteristic elitist attitude of many business owners may have guaranteed little practical application of many of Follett's principles even while her ideas received high praise (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, pp. 7-29). As well, while Metcalf and Urwick (1941) have called her writing style clear and precise, it may well be that her philosophical mode of address was not easily translated to pragmatic conversation and practice by business managers of the day. The philosophical and idealistic manner of Follett's writing may well continue to be an issue as we seem often more inclined to practice that responds to sloganeering than that which is motivated by high ideals.

Gender was undoubtedly a factor affecting Follett's reception, as well. While it may be plausible to state that Follett's gender did not play a direct role in her lack of receipt of more wide-spread attention, it may also be noted that she and Lillian Gilbreth (Gilbreth, 1914/1973, Spriegel & Myers, 1953), her cohort in gender and in philosophy in many respects, had access only to "female" careers. The experience within those accepted feminine careers influenced their philosophy. While Gilbreth's philosophy had enormous influence on her husband, Frank, who then could serve as spokesperson for both, Follett had to depend on her academic liaisons and her middle class mentor, Isobel Briggs, to give credence to her writing. After having the doors to several more lucrative

careers closed to her, Follett settled on social work. In a caring, service occupation she came to know the common person much more intimately than many of her elitist academic and business companions. Her comments reflected the insights she gained through her experience. Although lack of widespread attention to Follett's work may have been due more to her non-hierarchical communitarian philosophy than to her gender directly, her philosophy was undoubtedly affected by the nature of the opportunities accessible to her because of her gender.

Neither should Follett be considered the "mother" of the later human relations movement, sharing parenthood with Elton Mayo (1933/1960, 1945). Quite by accident, Mayo and his team of researchers discovered during the Hawthorne studies that employees desired contact with their co-workers (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1946). The workers desired a sense of belonging to a group; they craved camaraderie. However, unlike Follett, Mayo did not give much credence to the ability of the employees to contribute intellectually within the workplace. If opportunities were provided for social contact and for the venting of feelings to a supervisor who circulated on the shop floor for that purpose, the workers would be motivated to achieve to capacity. Decision-making remained autocratic; rewards remained extrinsic and unrelated to the job, for the most part.

During the 1950s and 1960s a more participative style of management began to gain credence. Prominent social scientists whose writings received attention were Abraham Maslow, Rensis Likert, Douglas MacGregor, and Chris Argyris. Maslow's (1954) theory suggested various levels of human needs that have been fashioned into a

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hierarchical type of definition, whereby each lower level must be satisfied before proceeding to the next. At the lowest level are the individual's survival and physiological needs, followed by safety and security needs. Taylor's (1911b) scientific management principles spoke primarily to the fulfilment of those needs. The human relations philosophy of Mayo (1933/1960, 1945) concentrated on the next level, which referred to one's social needs, the need to belong. Associated somewhat with belonging would be a satisfaction of the next level, one's need for esteem. However, the need for esteem has been associated more closely with what Maslow considered the highest level of human endeavor, the need for self-actualization. While the application of Maslow's hierarchy translated to management control by using external rewards at the lower levels, it reverted to external social control by management at the human relations level, and to self-control at the highest levels. It may be argued that Maslow's theory reflects and is constrained by Western culture and that its usefulness has proven limited. While there may be some truth to that claim, Maslow and his cohorts ushered in what has been called the industrial humanism school of management thought, which focused on the individual. Liberalist in approach, the group was perceived in relation to the individual as secondary in conception and importance.

Likert (1961, 1967) championed a systems approach to management which would facilitate the diffusion of information throughout the organization. The better this "interactive-influence system" approach "the greater [would] be the power of the organization to use fully and in a co-ordinated manner the skills, abilities, and resources of the persons in the organization" (Likert, 1961, p. 179). McGregor's (1960) Theory X

and Theory Y referred to the conflicting notions reflected by the classical management and industrial humanism views on motivation. Theory X assumptions were that humans were essentially lazy and could be motivated only by external rewards and punishments, whereas Theory Y assumptions were that people were able to exercise self-control, aspired to achieve to their fullest, and were motivated most deeply by intrinsic rewards. Argyris (1957) originally focused on the development of individual potential, albeit with recognition of the importance of interaction and attention to participative management skills. He (1974, 1978, 1985, 1992, 1993) and long-time fellow management thinker, Peter Drucker (1974, 1980, 1993, 1995), have shifted to postmodern notions--to discussions of community, to an emphasis on the constant need to question, and to a focus on the necessity for interdisciplinary training.

For the most part, industrial humanism has focused on the rational capabilities of individuals to decide their own direction and control their own fate. In some sense, classical management, human relations, and industrial humanism are alike in that they all concentrate on the inevitability of rationality. They differ only in the proposed dwelling place of that rationality, with the classical and human relations schools proposing that rationality resides within the organization and the industrial humanists contending that rationality exists within the individual. The notions of efficiency and effectiveness are just as prominent in all three schools of thought, although the suggested methods that will lead to the most effective modes of behavior differ because of variations in philosophical positions.

Some writers (e. g., Graham, 1995) have suggested that the reason why Follett did not receive more attention in the industrial humanism era was because she had been dead for more than twenty years. It is true that those who are alive are somewhat more capable of making their views known on a continual and consistent basis! As a research community, I think that we also often ignore history as a teacher. We seem to display a fetish for the contemporary, accepting it all too soon as better. However, I am suggesting that a primary reason for the lack of major attention to Follett's work until recently has been because it had not yet found sympathy with researchers, a group more concerned with theory than with practice. Follett contended that ideas primarily sprang from activity rather than activity from ideas. For that reason, Follett's philosophy has found its niche among postmodernists in that they, like Follett, look at the importance of our daily activities as the dialogue that dynamically creates our persons. There is currently more sympathy for Follett's philosophy, as postmodern notions are also tied closely to practice and to process and are more community oriented than liberal philosophies.

Follett was not a prophet, as Peter Drucker suggests (Graham, 1995), for prophets intend to foretell the nature of future events. She was only describing what she perceived to be the truth in the context of her time and in the light of her experiences. It is just that the rest of us are now also beginning to look at the "everyday" experiences of our interrelationships as a source of the knowledge that shapes our "becoming." Because our activities are being given more credence as that which instructs our theory, an investigation of Follettian philosophy may inform our current study of the process of organizing. It is my contention that Follett's philosophy resembles more current

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postmodern notions of human interaction than it does the philosophies underlying the previous classical, human relations, or industrial humanistic schools of thought. For that reason, and given my own postmodern sympathies, I translate the practical application of Follett's ideas in a postmodern fashion.

A Postmodern Glimpse

There exists much confusion concerning the meaning of postmodernism. For the purpose of this research, my usage of the term "postmodern" is both epochal and epistemological in nature. The epochal usage is indirect and assumed, as I have suggested that Follett's thinking may have been postmodernist and thus more meaningful now in a postmodern epoch. But epoch and epistemology are related, as the name given to the epoch (a modernist habit) will reflect the dominant philosophical and epistemological notions of the time. Postmodernism, as I view it, focuses on text--all means of communication--as that which defines our becoming and labels what we consider to be "knowledge." The metatheorizing of modernism loses credence as that which defines knowledge, as through a process of deconstruction we become aware of the constraining influence of dominant philosophies (Derrida, 1978). Small narratives, local or situational theorizing, are accorded greater validity, as society is recognized as existing for each of us within the groups that we regularly inhabit.

Cooper and Burrell (1988) divide modernism into systemic and critical varieties. Systemic modernism relies on the rationality of the system and constrains the goals of the individual to fit the goals of the organization in the name of progress, or what Lyotard (1984) termed "performativity"; critical modernism attempts to liberate the lifeworld of

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inhabitants from its colonization at the hands of systemic reason (Cooper & Burrell.

1988). Postmodernism observes reason only in terms of the discourses in which we

engage. Because the meaning of our conversation must depend on the attachment given

to it by others, reason is therefore elusive, as it always points away from the speaker.

However, reason still plays a role as that which motivates and inspires our language

games. Attempts to satisfy the perceived lack of, or inadequacy of, rational explanations

leads us to constant dialogue which continues dynamically to shape our creation. We

therefore exist as continual process, not as entity, and we are able to study only a moment

in that process. Our research is thus outdated before it reaches the paper, and it informs

future actions only insofar as the interpretation of our study guides the knowledge that we

continually produce.

Connections are drawn between Follettian philosophy, postmodern notions, and

my own movement within the dialogue of this study. By engaging in the research process

with a purposed sense of awareness, I may be more observant of and thus more able to

write about the knowledge creation that the process itself involves. Postmodern

researchers continually deconstruct and construct the process, simultaneously creating

and learning about themselves and others, about themselves in others, and about others in

themselves. Follett's philosophy validates this postmodern communitarian approach.

The research provided for me an exciting opportunity to build community with and

through others, thereby also satisfying my own perceived need for the constant direct

involvement of others in the activity of my life. If consensus is encouraged by dissensus,

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as postmodernists contend, this research may provide for all participants opportunities to intensify community through expression of diversity.

Follett's Principles

The works of Follett from which will be extracted the concepts given the most attention within this study are <u>The New State: Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government</u> (1918/1920), <u>Creative Experience</u> (1924), and <u>Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett</u> (1941). A brief discussion of these concepts is followed by a more expansive treatment in succeeding chapters.

Follett offered her concept of *integration* as a more desirable manner of dealing with conflict—preferable to voluntary submission, domination, or compromise. Efforts at coordination underlay integrative efforts. Coordination requires that all constituents be consulted so that all impacting factors can be considered; it is a continual process that begins in the early stages of decision-making. The *law of the situation* allows a flexible leadership to move among participants, depending upon who has the most knowledge in a particular instance of need. Integrative efforts provide the foundation for the success of the law of the situation as continual dialogue is necessary to become acquainted with and accept the skills of one's cohorts. If employees experience *power-with* management, rather than feeling that management has *power-over* them, the organization benefits from establishing a venue for the creative input of everyone. The *small group government* that Follett championed takes place in what she called "neighbourhood groups," which resembles the team approach in the contemporary workplace. More difficult to study, but of great significance, is Follett's notion of *circular response*, which refers to the

reciprocal notion of creation through social interaction, and the notion of *individual and organization as inseparable process* rather than as entity.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

The assumptions with which this research has been undertaken are general in nature. A postmodern approach to the study has been taken and assumed to have been valid in its worth as a perspective for organizational analysis. My personal sentiments and research approach sympathize both with Follettian philosophy and with postmodern notions of organizational analysis. While a postmodern attitude has been adopted within the study, I admit to its personal "impurities." In my efforts to learn of the practical applicability of Follettian philosophy, the occasional reversion to a modern way of thinking and writing is assumed but not perceived as overwhelmingly problematic. A readership that, while sympathetic, will take note of my occasional regression into modernism and draw my attention to such instances is anticipated with eagerness, as the dialogue that ensues will further inform my research.

Follettian philosophy is similar to postmodern notions in that reflective activity is considered constitutive of knowledge creation. The research process was initiated with the assumption that the study within the chosen company informs participants about the nature of their current organizing processes. That premise led me to map the progression of my research in an ongoing fashion and to integrate techniques of research in such a manner, as well. The inference of employee ability and willingness to serve as continuous informants, both with reference to techniques of research and to information

within those techniques. has been assumed to some extent. given the invitation to enter the company.

Each informal conversation and interview with company employees increased the understanding of the topics addressed, but these were not referred to in other conversations. even anonymously. This manner of research, it is hoped, alleviates to some degree the charge that modernism puts the answers before the questions. thus only validating previously decided upon conclusions. Research undertaken in a postmodern fashion is intentionally nonprescriptive so as not to lead to staged hypotheses.

Although I proceeded with my study in a postmodern fashion, I have delimited my research. as much as possible, to the study of Follett's principles of management. Other issues arose and are reported to some degree within this research document; however, the emphasis has remained with Follett's concepts. How do we define Follett's concepts in the contemporary workplace? How viable are those concepts in practice? If they are viable, how do they manifest themselves? If not, what are the perceived roadblocks to their implementation? Do some of Follett's concepts receive more of a sympathetic ear than others? Why? I asked these questions, as well as others offered by the employees. If. in the final analysis, Follett has something to say that instructs the contextual organizing processes within this company and others, we may learn from her. If her philosophy does not speak to us in particular, the process of the research will still have enlightened both the participants and myself concerning those issues deemed most important by employees and so will give credence to her more elusive philosophical principles of circular response and of individual and organization as process.

Not only is the "moment in the process" that has been studied small, media time within the written document is granted only to those portions of the research process that are related to Follett's philosophy. Among the myriad of data that have been collected I have therefore selected to report and reflect upon only those that relate most closely to the nature of the research.

Because Follett's philosophy is the focal point of the research, my interview questions were idiosyncratic to my research. They were constructed in consideration of the contextual language and interests of the participating employees. Their input continually influenced the amount and style of explanation that I provided regarding Follett and her philosophical principles. This researcher instruction could be regarded as a limitation. I recognize that the research was guided by my own interpretation of Follett and has been greatly affected and limited, at least in its initial scope, by my own interpretations. What both the participants and then the readers will receive, as Follett would note, is a "Follett-plus-others" translation. While it cannot be otherwise, it is noted that other writers who have researched Follett may have understood her philosophy somewhat differently than I have and so may have chosen a dissimilar approach to their research.

Outline of the Study

This section provides a retrospective view of the evolution and organization of the research, with the purpose of providing for the reader an understanding of the process involved. As has been noted, my reading of the work of Mary Parker Follett during study for a Master's degree stimulated me to continue research at the doctoral level. Emerging

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from a recent career in business. I was intrigued by Follett's principles of participatory management. My course work for my Master's degree had obliged me to locate and interview a person involved in the practice of adult education. I had been attracted by a reference in a local paper to Paul Sedor, a participatory manager who actively encouraged and financially supported the further education of his employees. My liaison with Paul led to research within Sedor Enterprises Incorporated. That research completed, my interest in Follett herself became more intense and my reluctance to terminate my study led me to find a new venue for my energies.

I intended, at the outset of my doctoral research, to conduct an historical and biographical study of Follett. That intention has been realized to some degree; however, the main interest quickly became philosophical as I detected similarities between Follettian philosophy and postmodern notions of organizing, which I had also been studying. I was drawn magnetically to the underlying meaning of the ideas expressed and was carried into the study with the excited anticipation of a rafter approaching white water rapids.

I read as much as I could about Follett, accounts of her life, all her work that I could find that elaborated her philosophy, and references that others made to her. Simultaneously, I devoured articles and books elaborating postmodern notions. The first phase of my study encompassed literature; in fact, the initial intent was a philosophical study involving no field research. Follett (1918/1920, 1924), however, firmly believed that knowledge begins in the realm of activity and then is translated to ideas. With that in

mind, and given that I was suggesting contemporary relevance of Follettian ideas, I decided to embark upon field research.

That decision obliged me, I considered, to attempt to remain true to the principles about which I was writing and in which I believe. I have struggled to achieve a postmodern slant to the field study, attempting first to come to terms with what that might mean for the participants and me. I was well received within the company where I did my Master's research, and I returned to that company again to conduct an exploration into the applicability of Follettian philosophy.

The participants assisted me in decisions regarding research process and educated me about their company. That education proceeded simultaneously with and was inseparable from observation and formally structured individual interviews. The connections to postmodernism and Follettian philosophy are inferred in the discussion of my perceptions after observing within the company for a few weeks. Follett's ideas were explored for contemporary applicability within the individual interviews.

After the field research was concluded and the document was nearing its completion, I explored, autobiographically, what the research might mean for all manner of our relations with one another. The process of reciprocal creation continues for myself and those who engage with me here.

Organization of Chapters

This introductory chapter has provided a commentary on the general nature of the study, outlined its purpose, offered background information, and given the reader an indication of my position within the discourse. In Chapter Two, I begin by giving a short

biography of Follett, after which I review her major works, dwelling especially on the concepts that have received the most attention within this study. In addition, in order to build a better understanding of organizational theory and Follett's place within the conversation, I expound upon the evolution and current development of that theory. In Chapter Three, I reflect upon some perceived similarities between postmodern notions of organizing and Follett's philosophy. Such a consideration may acquaint the reader with my reasons for suggesting that Follett's philosophy relates more to current, rather than past, developments in organizational theory and analysis. Chapter Four deals with the method of the study and attempts to justify the ongoing methods decisions as indicative of Follettian and postmodern notions of "activity informing theory." Some of this chapter has been written retrospectively, "after the fact," as the initial practical considerations were conjecture to some extent because of the scant participant input during the early writing stages of the chapter. Chapter Five focuses on the reporting of the observation data and their interpretations, interwoven with a discussion about the research process itself. Chapter Six includes the stories of the participants with reference to Follett's principles and their contextual applicability. Chapter Seven summarizes the research process and reflects upon the lessons to be learned from that process. Various issues that have surfaced in the course of the study are discussed and implications for a broader understanding of human relations are offered. A comment on directions for further research is included, as that relates to both the contextual and the broader significance of Follett's work and to other issues discussed by participants. Closing remarks suggest the nature of the part I have played in the research and the personal insights I have gained.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LIFE, WRITINGS, AND CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

OF MARY PARKER FOLLETT

"You are not out to eulogize her," one professor admonished. I have not come to

terms with whether one can study the life and thoughts of another without the exercise

developing eulogistic characteristics. It is doubtful that many have conducted concentrated

study involving another human being without having been deeply affected by that person.

Such is the case here. I readily admit to a fascination with Follett and a keen interest in

Follettian philosophy. The purpose of this chapter is to give expression to the

conceptualization of my study, all the while attempting to come to terms with how I may

both give voice to the lessons I have learned from this extraordinary person and deconstruct

those same lessons. My treatment of the matter at hand will be both academic and intensely

personal in interpretation.

I admit, with postmodern abandon, that the instruction I have received from Follett

may not be true to her intentions. It is said that once our words leave our mouths they are

no longer ours, that they belong to the listener and are interpreted in light of the experience

of that listener. If that is true of our interactions with the people of the present, to whom we

may return for constant clarification of original intention, the opportunities for the

misinterpretation of one who has preceded us by many decades are manifold. For there is

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no opportunity to talk directly to our subject. The reciprocal connection with these departed people, the uniting which Follett so eloquently referred to as that which shapes our becoming, has been broken. I am left with the artifacts of Follett's existence and with "Follett-plus-others," the stories of her work as she has been interpreted and discussed by those of her time and since—but not with Follett herself. Of course, my interpretation will also be affected by the time and place of my existence and by my experiences. My story is not just of Follett, her philosophy, and its contemporary applicability but is an idiosyncratic narrative fabric, an intricate interweaving of Follett, others, and myself. The proposed reciprocal process of this study creates relation as it studies and reports relation.

This chapter begins with an outline of Follett's life and work and continues by positioning Follett within her time. The organizational philosophy relating to the workplace, as it has evolved over the last few decades, is examined because it is that evolution that has resulted, in my opinion, in the resurfacing of Follett's work after many decades of relative obscurity. While some have wondered why her work did not receive more attention, given the scientific management mindset of her times and the fact that she was a woman in a feminine profession, what may be more intriguing is that it received any attention at all. The chapter concludes with a discussion of contemporary organizational theory and how Follett's philosophy may instruct the contemporary organizational scene.

Mary Parker Follett: Biographical Sketch

The following outline of Follett's life traces her childhood development, her education, and her career. In addition, a brief outline of her final years and an appending eulogy give a concise picture of this remarkable woman.

<u>Childhood</u>

Mary Parker Follett was born on September 3rd, 1868, in Quincy, Massachusetts, the first child of Charles Allen and Elizabeth Curtis (Baxter) Follett. Her family life was not particularly happy. Her father was an alcoholic and died in 1885 while she was still in her teens: she did not sympathize with her invalid mother, whose death preceded hers by only a few months. One can speculate that, being of an energetic and driven nature herself, she would be inclined to become impatient with her mother's frail nature, which she may have interpreted as staged. As well, she may have been resentful that she was not allowed to develop friendships with other children because of her care-giving duties, obliged as she was to look after both her mother and her younger brother. Little is written of her association with her younger brother, George Dexter Follett.

Although her relationship with her mother was strained and all connections were eventually severed, it is reported to have been from her maternal grandfather that Follett received most of the money that allowed her to live comfortably and to pursue her studies (Graham, 1991, p. 187). Her maternal grandfather was a prosperous banker in Quincy and was involved in several lucrative business dealings. Her father, on the other hand, although connected with a family that had long had an interest in the granite industry in Quincy, was reported to have worked as a machinist in a local shoe factory after having served in the Civil War (Crawford, 1971, p. 639). Other writers admit uncertainty about her father's occupation, saying that various sources have identified it as mechanic, minor businessman, or clergyman--quite a variation (Graham, 1991, p. 187).

The young Follett was brilliant, not only in her academic studies, but also in the management of her family's home and business dealings. Although she had effectively handled the domestic duties of her family's home for several years, following her father's death, Follett, at seventeen, began to manage the financial affairs, as well. The family held mortgages on several residential holdings. Follett not only tended to the houses already held by the family, but she was active also in the purchase of more houses, inspecting the buildings herself for structural soundness.

Education

Different sources have somewhat conflicting chronological accounts of Follett's early formal education. According to Graham (1991), Follett "graduated" at the age of twelve (from what institution is not stated), then went on to study at Thayer Academy, an outstanding New England school in Baintree, Massachusetts, where she spent eight years (p. 188). That would translate to her having completed grade school in 1880 and leaving Thayer in 1888. However, Crawford (1971) states that Follett graduated from Thayer in 1884 at the age of fifteen (p. 639).

Whichever account is correct, it was at Thayer academy that Follett was influenced deeply by her first mentor and history teacher, Anna Boynton Thompson, a philosopher, idealist, and dedicated scholar. Thompson (1895) had written a book about the German philosopher, Johann Fichte (1762-1814). Follett, too, came to admire Fichte's philosophy, and his influence through Thompson is apparent in her writings, especially The New State. Fichte was a communitarian philosopher who expounded on the interconnectedness of the group and the individual. The free will of the individual was connected to and interrelated

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with the group. Individuals could develop to their full potential only through interaction with the group. Thompson, who also impressed Follett with her simplicity of lifestyle, was to hone Follett's inductive reasoning skills while impressing upon her the importance of scientific methods.

Both Crawford (1971) and Graham (1991) agree that in 1888 Follett entered the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women by Professors and Other Instructors of Harvard College, later named Radcliffe College. Created as an appendage to Harvard University (it was called "The Annex"), it allowed women access to a university education and to the professors of Harvard, which, as women, they were not allowed to attend. Follett studied at Radcliffe for two years in the areas of political economy, English, and history. Here she was the protégé of Professor Albert Bushnell Hart, a practical man whose specialty was the current American political scene. He taught her the skills of deductive reasoning-- the ability to decipher the interconnecting details of situations.

In 1890, at the age of 22, Follett traveled to England for a residency at Newnham College, Cambridge University, where she studied philosophy with Henry Sidgwick. She stayed only one year and did not complete her final exams, as she was called home because of the illness of her mother. However, by all reports, the experience did much to transform an inexperienced young student into a mature, confident woman.

It was during her stay at Newnham that Follett read an essay entitled "The Speaker of the House of Representatives" to the Historical Society. Although accounts do not say so, this paper may have been begun, or at least inspired, during Follett's previous study with Bushnell Hart. The paper was well received. Upon her return to Boston she resumed her

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studies at Radcliffe with Bushnell Hart, intermittently taking time off (apparently six months of four successive years) to transform her essay into a book by the same name. The book was published in 1896 and was reviewed by Theodore Roosevelt in The American Historical Review in October of the same year. Roosevelt's (1896) declaration that Follett's book was indispensable reading for any study of Congressional government established her credibility and her reputation as a serious writer (p. 177).

Meanwhile, Follett continued her studies at Radcliffe during the years 1891-1892 and 1894-1897 (Crawford, 1971, p. 640), culminating in 1898 when she received her A.B. (Artium Baccalaureus, Bachelor of Arts), *summa cum laude*. She had studied economics, government, law, and philosophy during that time. Upon the completion of her degree, Follett went to Paris to the Sorbonne for graduate work, returning to Boston two years later in 1900. Her formal education had ended, but an incredibly important "learning" chapter of her life was just beginning.

Career

The following outline of Follett's career divides her interests into social work and industrial relations. There is no clear demarcation between these vocations; rather, Follett's efforts in social work led naturally and easily to the business world.

Social work. Follett's choice of career was to be influenced by a very dear friend. Upon her return to Boston in 1900, Follett became acquainted with Isobel Briggs, an Englishwoman devoted to social good. Although two decades separated their ages, Briggs and Follett undoubtedly shared a love of England and soon became fast friends. They set up house together and remained devoted companions until Briggs' death in 1926, from which

Follett may never have fully recovered. Briggs was an avid supporter of her young friend. She totally devoted herself to Follett's needs, allowing Follett to divert massive amounts of her time and energy toward her writing and her career. In addition, Briggs moved in the finest circles in Boston, and Follett became an accepted member of Boston's intelligentsia through her association with Briggs. Follett was at ease with acclaimed writers, politicians, philosophers, and business people. She had studied within a wide variety of disciplines and could converse comfortably on many issues. However, she was driven continuously to learn and apparently would corner prospective "teachers" at evening gatherings and exhaust them of information. One can readily picture her in animated conversation from evening's beginning to end, arising at dawn to write feverishly about what had transpired. Her appetite for learning was voracious.

Follett's initial career did not take her into the hallowed halls of academia in spite of all her learning and her important connections. She had for many years been chagrined by the social evils that followed in the wake of industrialization (Urwick & Brech, 1949, p. 49). The exodus to the urban centers had spawned the growth of slum areas that offered little advantage to many of their inhabitants. Follett was interested in improving the opportunities for the citizens of those areas and successfully lobbied for the use of public school buildings for evening activities, both for recreational and educational purposes. Briggs no doubt influenced Follett toward this purpose and was her staunch supporter in these philanthropic efforts.

Using school buildings as the meeting places, in 1900 Follett set up the Roxbury Debating Club for Boys and the Roxbury Neighbourhood House, the latter which provided

social, recreational, and educational opportunities. Meeting in the poorest part of Boston where the police would not travel unless in pairs, these organizations were to consume much of her energy for years. One can greatly admire the tenacity of Follett who, when several young men locked themselves in a bathroom with bottles of liquor, promised to get a ladder and come in through the window to get them if they did not exit voluntarily via the door. Apparently, the men decided the voluntary route was preferable (Graham, 1991, p. 191).

Follett hoped that the expanded network of Neighbourhood Houses, by providing citizens with a recreational gathering place, would stimulate interest in and encourage a responsibility for the well-being of the community. In 1902 Follett visited Edinburgh and returned invigorated, full of new ideas about how to utilize the community centers as vocational placement offices. Impressed and enlightened by the vocational guidance work done in Scotland and elsewhere in Britain, she drew on her new-found knowledge and her undaunted determination to successfully establish these placement bureaus in the school centers of Boston (Graham, 1991, p. 191). She recruited students from her alma mater to research employment opportunities in and around Boston and to interview and record the skills of the young people attending the community centers. The two sources of information were correlated, and the young people were matched with prospective employers.

In 1909 Follett became chairman of the Committee on the Extended Use of School Buildings, a committee formed by the newly-founded Women's Municipal League of Boston. She occupied that post until 1920. Her leadership inspired an effort in many municipalities for the creation of the Evening Educational and Recreation Centers (Urwick

& Brech, 1949, p. 49). By 1912, these Boston Centers had become famous throughout the country and were regularly visited as models by those wishing to establish similar centers in their own communities.

Follett financed much of her early work in this area herself, especially from 1912 to 1917. She was supported, however, by the directors of the Boston School System, who set up a Placement Bureau in connection with several day schools, and the Girls' Trade Union League (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, p. 13). In 1917 the Boston Placement Bureau was absorbed by the city's Department of Vocational Guidance, and Follett became a member of the department's advisory committee (Crawford, 1971, p. 640).

Follett's involvement in social work during these years developed her skills as a manager. She had ample opportunity to reflect upon the practicality of her academic theories and to hone her perception of the nature of individual interaction in the group. Her work with diverse people possessing conflicting agendas gave her occasion to practice the most effective ways to develop the larger community while satisfying everyone's individual concerns. She recorded her thoughts that then became the substance for her next book, The New State: Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government (1918/1920). The book was a criticism of the popular concept of democracy as "majority rule and ballot boxes," which, according to Follett, involved only a fictitious consent of the governed, in favor of full participation in the neighbourhood group as the epitome of democratic contribution.

Industrial relations. Follett's work with the Department of Vocational Guidance led to contacts with many of the business leaders of the day, among them manufacturer Henry

S. Dennison and merchant Lincoln Filene. It was a natural progression, given the nature of her academic studies and of her work with vocational placement, that she develop, along with her activities in the political and social spheres, an expanded interest in industrial relations. Metcalf and Urwick (1941) state:

> In a gradual transition, involving no abrupt changes of viewpoint nor severing of old connections, Mary Follett had passed naturally and logically from political science and the problems of government to social administration and the solutions of social problems, and thence smoothly into the realm of industrial organization and administration. (pp. 15-16)

During her work with the Placement Bureau and the Vocational Guidance Bureau, Follett had amassed files of information about the working conditions in different industries. Following the passage of the Massachusetts minimum wage law for women in 1912, she became a member of the Minimum Wage Board, working to determine minimum rates for work in various industries. She answered requests by the public to serve on numerous minimum wage boards, arbitration boards, public tribunals, and similar official bodies (Graham, 1991, p. 193).

Although Follett was not, by most definitions, a business woman, her experiences in the arena of arbitration led her to develop a well-defined theory of the interactive processes within industrial relations, particularly the collective bargaining process between employer and employee union. Because she was involved "in the trenches," she observed first-hand the strategies of the opposing sides, who often were more concerned with power issues between each other than with the merits of the cases being discussed. She investigated the

emotional and psychological issues that often lay at the root of disagreements and attempted to apply to the industrial scene the knowledge she had gained during her group work with the Neighbourhood Clubs. The ability to analyze situations, developed during her years of study with Thompson and Bushnell Hart, was put to use as she extracted from situations the fundamental issues at stake and expounded upon them clearly, simply, and concisely (Urwick & Brech, 1949, p. 50). Much of the substance of her 1924 work, Creative Experience, and of a series of her papers (fourteen in number) given as lectures during these years and compiled posthumously under the title Dynamic Administration (1941) grew from the knowledge and insights she gained during this most influential stage of her career. She was increasingly called upon to aid in the efforts to find solutions for complex industrial problems. She served as an adviser to many businesses, often conferring with harried businessmen at hastily-called meetings to discuss their problems:

"Often," she is reported to have said, "they could only spare time for luncheon, but I never had such interesting meals. One of these men gave me in a nutshell the threads of a tangle he had with his employees. He wanted me to straighten it out. I answered him straight from Fichte; he didn't know that, of course, but I did, and it seemed to meet the case." (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, p. 15)

Follett's career as an industrial consultant seems to have terminated in 1926, precipitated, it is surmised, by the death her dear friend and companion, Isobel Briggs. Follett was devastated. Her close friends from her Harvard days, Professor Richard Cabot and his wife Ella took her to Geneva for a holiday.

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The Final Years

It was during this trip to Geneva (or a later one; sources differ) that Follett met

Dame Katherine Furse. There were similarities and differences between the two women.

Furse, like Follett, was intensely involved in social issues. She had been a director of the

Women's Royal Naval Service in World War I with the equivalent rank of Rear Admiral

and she had been appointed Dame Grand Cross in the Order of the British Empire in 1917

(Crawford, 1971, p. 641). As well, she had been a leader in the Red Cross, and when she

and Follett met in 1926, she was Director of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl

Scouts (Graham, 1991, p. 194). However, unlike Follett, her background was literary and

artistic. She had been married to a painter, had been widowed for many years, and had sons

in the Navy. Following a holiday together in Italy, the two decided to occupy

accommodations together in Cheyne Place, Chelsea, England.

During her stay in England, in 1926 and in 1928, Follett gave readings of some of

her papers, which were adaptations of lecture papers that she had read in the United States

and which were later published in the collection <u>Dynamic Administration</u> (1941). Although

her understanding of industrial issues was apparent in her addresses, outside of a small

circle she aroused little enthusiasm and had little impact on the English industrial scene.

Her talents as an advisor to business management were underutilized in that country. In

spite of that, she continued to study English industrial conditions and attended group

discussions and meetings with industrialists and business men. She considered business a

most vital and important field of human activity.

During this time Follett also became intensely interested in the organization and activities of the League of Nations, an interest that was sparked during the 1926 visit to Geneva with the Cabots. She visited Geneva several times over the next few years, educating herself on the problems that the League faced, finding similarities between those problems and issues she had encountered and addressed in the course of her work in the industrial organization arena. She was idealist enough to see in the League of Nations an opportunity for the development of her principles of integration and co-ordination, explained so eloquently in <u>Creative Experience</u> (1924) and many of her lectures.

In 1932 Follett returned briefly to the United States. While there she gave her final paper in her home country, "Individualism in a Planned Society," to the Bureau of Personnel Administration. Returning to England early in 1933, Follett was invited to give a group of five lectures to the newly-formed Department of Business Administration at the London School of Economics. She sailed again to Boston in October of 1933 to attend to her financial affairs, as she was concerned with the effects of the depression on her investments. Her health had also been declining for some time, and she consulted physicians, entering the Deaconess Hospital in Boston in early December for what has been reported as a goiter operation. Surgery on December 16th revealed advanced cancer, and she died two days later at the age of sixty-five. Funeral services were conducted in Boston at the Forest Hills Crematory Chapel, and her ashes were scattered on a hill behind her summer home in Putney, Vermont. (See Appendix A for photo and eulogy.)

The Writings of Mary Parker Follett

This portion of the chapter reviews Follett's writing with major emphasis on her later books. The New State (1918/1920), Creative Experience (1924), and the collection of her papers under the title of Dynamic Administration (1941). Although The Speaker of the House of Representatives (1896) has been accepted as an excellent work and would have affected the evolution of her communitarian philosophy, it was her later writings that seem to have had the most effect on both past and current organizational perspectives.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives

Follett's first book, The Speaker of the House of Representatives, grew from her paper of the same name that she delivered during her year of study at Newnham, England. She was guided during the research exercise and writing by her Radcliffe mentor, Albert Bushnell Hart, who had likely inspired the original paper, as his area of study was American politics. He said of her efforts:

> The book represents the strenuous labour of a well equipped investigator for more than half of each year during four successive years. Whatever may be done by diligent research into the records, by visits to Washington, by conferences with ex-Speakers and by comparison of all the varied material, has been done by the author. (as cited in Follett, 1896, pp. xii-xiii)

The book, published in 1896 when Follett was only twenty-eight years old, impressed those in government with its account of the intricate processes involved in the American legislative system. It consisted of an integration of exhaustive literary research and the examination of the methods used by strong Speakers to exert their influence and

power. The approach she used in this book was followed in all her work, that of detailed study of documents and records combined with interviews and illustrations from the practical experiences of the participants involved. Such a method brought her writing to life and solidly grounded her theoretical position in the world of practice. No doubt the reception of the book was enhanced by Theodore Roosevelt's (1896) favorable review. Although not yet President of the United States, Roosevelt was already an important political figure as President William McKinley's newly appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy. (As Vice-President in 1901, he assumed the position of President following William McKinley's assassination on September 6th.) Roosevelt had also developed a circle of intellectual friends, such as scholar-politician Henry Cabot Lodge, and had written the four volume The Winning of the West, published between 1889 and 1896. Roosevelt's endorsement provided Follett recognition as an important writer in the political field.

The New State: Group Organization the Solution to Popular Government

The New State (1918/1920) evolved from Follett's social work. In this book Follett espoused the concept of the neighbourhood group as the most desirable political entity. She was so bold as to suggest that neighbourhood groups should replace traditional political parties and ballot-box, majority-rule democracy. Although she had thoroughly researched the bureaucratic institutions of government for her first book, in The New State she advocated their replacement with group networks in which the people of the community would organize to discuss their own needs and problems and work out their own solutions.

The influence of the German philosopher Fichte is evident in this work. Fichte believed that the individual did not have free will but was intricately connected with others

in an interpersonal network to which all people belonged (Wren, 1979, p. 325). Follett (1918/1920) agreed:

> We find the true man only through group organization. The potentialities of the individual remain potentialities until they are released by group life. Man gains his true nature, gains his true freedom only through the group. Group organization must be the new method of politics because the modes by which the individual can be brought forth and made effective are the modes of practical politics. (p. 6)

It was not that Follett disagreed with the concept of individualism. In fact, in a later paper, "The Process of Control" (1932/1937), she was to state most emphatically: "The fallacy that the individual must give up his individuality for the sake of the whole is one of the most pervasive, the most insidious, fallacies I know" (p. 163). But the individualism that was being touted in her time had been wrongly defined, in her opinion, as the particularism of *laissez-fare*, or every person for himself. True individualism was arrived at only through association. "Individuality is a matter primarily neither of apartness nor of difference, but of each finding his own activity in the whole" (Follett, 1918/1920, p. 67). She viewed society and the individual not as an organism, but as a psychic, dynamic force, as a mutually sustaining center and circumference (Wood, 1926, p. 760). Each part contributes to the whole and potentially, because of its ubiquity, also constitutes the whole.

The collective will was continuously created by group processes. Follett was clear that she intended a disciplined method of creative inquiry, that she was not referring to the rule of the crowd or herd action (pp. 148-155). "At present the people are to a large extent a mass led by those who suggest" (p. 151). Follett contended that the crowd theory and

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particularism rested on the same fallacy, that individuals were atomistic and could be mechanically united by the power of imitation. The neighbourhood group provided the venue for the collective will of democracy to be practiced:

> The group process, not the crowd or the herd, is the social process. Out of the intermingling, interacting activities of men and women surge up the forces of life: powers are born which we had not dreamed of, ideas take shape and grow, forces are generated which act and react on each other. This is the dialectic of life. But this upsurging of power from our hidden sources is not the latent power of the mass but of the group. It is useless to preach "togetherness" until we have devised ways of making our togetherness fruitful, until we have thought out the methods of a genuine, integrated togetherness. Anything else is indeed "blubbering sentimentality," as Bismarck defined democracy. (p. 149)

Follett dismissed definitions of democracy that stressed libertarianism because they focused on atomistic liberty and individual rights; she also rejected definitions that stressed liberal majority rule because they devalued the contributions of the minority members. She stated:

> To have democracy we must live it day by day. Democracy is the actual commingling of men in order that each shall have continuous access to the needs and wants of others. Democracy is not a form of government; the democratic soul is born within the group and then it develops its own forms. Democracy then is a great spiritual force evolving itself from men, utilizing each, completing his

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incompleteness by weaving together all in the many-membered community life which is the true Theophany. (pp. 160-161)

The state defined as a collection of units missed the mark and created fertile ground for immoral conduct, she believed, as one does not identify with the state if one's part is translated as so small a fraction. One's part in the whole, according to Follett, was not synonymous with the importance of the grain of sand on the beach:

It is a part so bound up with every other part that no fraction of the whole can represent it. It is like the key of a piano, the value of which is not in its being 1/56 of all the notes, but in its infinite relations to all the other notes. If that note is lacking every other note loses its value. (p. 336)

Follett was aware of the difficulty of what she was suggesting. Collective thinking was not an automatic skill. She recommended regular "experience" meetings that would facilitate the creation of the collective will, suggested that everyone take responsibility for a variety of shared learning activities, and that strong connections be established between various levels of government. Methods must be devised that would encourage the activity of democracy. "Exhortation to good citizenship is useless. We get good citizenship by creating those forms within which good citizenship can operate, by making it possible to acquire the habit of good citizenship by the practice of good citizenship" (p. 339). Follett was clear about the advised training ground and about its purpose: "The neighbourhood group gives the best opportunity for the training and for the practice of good citizenship. . . . The chief object of neighbourhood organization is not to right wrongs, as is often supposed, but to found more firmly and build more widely the right" (pp. 339-340).

The New State went through several editions and was reviewed extensively both in

the United States and England. One of the foremost political thinkers in England, Lord

Haldane, wrote to Follett requesting permission to write the introduction to the edition

published in that country. Some, for example Wood in his 1926 review, found some points

with which to take issue. Wood recognized that the changes suggested by Follett were a

long way from being realized, if, in fact, they would ever be possible. It was not her

idealism that he found unsettling, however. His question was: "Can neighbourhood

organization be relied upon to supply the basic units in political structure under the shifting

and changing conditions of city life?" (p.764). Given Follett's stated philosophy within The

New State, she could have answered that the resulting dynamic movement was exactly what

enriched the group, that it did not require stability of membership for cohesiveness. At any

rate, some of the more pragmatic issues which Follett did not address in The New State

were addressed in the 1924 publication of her most brilliant work, Creative Experience.

Creative Experience

Follett continued and refined the same theme in Creative Experience that she had

begun in The New State. In her opinion, the collective gives the individual opportunity for

self-fulfilment. Through interactive discussion and activity, humans constantly evoke from

one another and create in one another unique abilities that remain latent without interaction.

Follett argued for an increase in empirical studies of human relations, as she contended that

social research would aid in the discovery of methods to help experience "yield up its

riches" (p. xi). Follett devoted this book to a discussion of the concept of experience within

the activities of the group and how experience can be enhanced through and contribute to

the process of integration. The notion of integration is key to the understanding and enrichment of experience.

Follett began <u>Creative Experience</u> with a statement of position on the use of experts. She acknowledged the value of the expert in the desire to dispense with muddle but warned about the use of an expert as a mechanism to escape responsibility instead of facing it (p. 4). She cautioned against an unquestioning acceptance of the research reports of experts who may have their own agenda. With reference to social research, Follett maintained that data gathering and data interpretation are inseparable in that the gathering is itself an activity of interpretation (p. 27). Experts are never objective; they influence the path of knowledge by the selection of "facts" that are reported. Vicarious experience is another fallacy, she thought, as the activities of others always become an intregal part of our being. Follett's concept of "circular response" involved the notion that we are creating each other all the time (p. 62). The acceptance of the concept of circular response added a new dimension to the meaning of responsibility. It implies that we cannot apply what we have learned from past experience religiously to the next because the next experience will be different from the last because of our and other's subsequent interaction. The realization of the interaction between stimulus and response increases our sense of responsibility for omnipresent moral activity. The concept of circular response assumes that behaviour will be viewed not simply as a response to environment but as a function of the interaction of self with the environment (p. 72). Follett stated:

My response is not a crystallized product of the past, static for the moment of meeting; *while* I am behaving, the environment is changing because of my behaving,

and my behaviour is a response to the new situation which I, in part, have created. (pp. 63-64)

Follett provided a lesson for management only recently being learned in the contemporary workplace: "Some people want to give the workmen a share in carrying out the purpose of the plant and do not see that that involves a share in creating the purpose of the plant" (p. 82). She noted that the acceptance of life as process, as purposeful activity, will allow us to leave the restrictions of limited thinking behind and to adopt new modes of thinking and ways of acting:

> This psychology is both a challenge and a reward: it carries in one hand the compass for the journey, and in the other the only gift we can ever hope for all our pains, the opportunity for greater pains, for harder things. We give ourselves to our task and our task not only becomes larger but at the same time it becomes deeper and higher. The reward for all activity is greater activity. (p. 90)

Follett compared her concepts to Gestalt psychology, which is the doctrine of wholes. The personality cannot be understood as consisting of several separate traits but as a whole with various characteristics interacting. She spoke of the federalist principle in ethics and human experience, which could be applied to the political situation (p. 101). In all cases, the "ethical unit gets its character of 'wholeness' by an interweaving *with* the parts as well as an interweaving *of* the parts" (pp. 112-113). Therefore, the "whole" units are not super-values nor are they static; they respond to the constant interaction.

Follett emphasized that experience should not involve a process of adjustment. "Adjustment harmonizes the existing; it does not create. Only integration creates" (p. 228).

Interestingly, Follett suggested that the idea of mastering the natural environment, which she decried, had been carried over to human relations and social environment with equally detrimental effects (p. 119). She noted that some behaviorist psychologists conceived of adjusting ourselves to a rigid environment. Such rigidity was nonexistent, Follett said, as the environment always interacts with response. Integration is thus a creating relation between individual and society (pp. 128-129):

Is it, then, ever legitimate for me either to conquer you or to submit to you? Both of them fail in the long run—and often in the short run. I can only free you and you me. This is the essence, the meaning, of all relation. . . . This reciprocal freeing, this calling forth of one from the other, this constant evocation, is the truth of "stimulus and response." (p. 130)

Follett maintained that experience is a creative process more than a verifying process. "Experience is the power-house where purpose and will, thought and ideals, are being generated" (p. 133). While we cannot apply lessons from past experience totally to new situations, we still cannot discard them. Our history is always a part of our present make up. In addition, Follett contended that creating will be primarily a concrete activity and only partially an intellectual activity (p. 143).

In Creative Experience Follett dealt with the integration of percepts and concepts that is desirable in the understanding of thought. The perceptual and the conceptual meet in our concrete activities (p. 144). She stressed that harmonizing of differences must take place on the motor rather than the intellectual level by providing opportunities for agreement through the activities of the participants (pp. 150-153). The digested experience

of our activities develops into concepts, also evolving, that pass into the realm of perception, then again, integrally affect daily activity—the fusing of stimulus and response. Within this process of relation Follett emphasized the importance of the integration of differences:

> When differing interests meet, they need not *oppose* but only *confront* one another. The confronting of interests may result in either one of four things: (1) voluntary submission of one side; (2) struggle and the victory of one side over the other; (3) compromise; or (4) integration. (p. 156)

Follett did not even speak about submission, quickly disposed of domination, and dismissed compromise as sham reconciliation, a postponement of the issues (p. 156). Compromise involves combining the old ways to stay with the old. Integration is the desired route, as it involves a change in ideas to create a new action plan; it requires the revaluation of interests and, as such, is the source of progress. Such a revaluing of interests involves more than inspection, introspection, and retrospection. It comes from the interrelated activity of people (pp. 171-172). According to Follett, the more people cooperate, the more they become aware of their differences (p. 164). "The basis of all cooperative activity is integrated diversity" (p. 174). Again there is an emphasis that the integrative process appears first in the realm of activities:

> When Lloyd George said, as he so often did, "We were able to find the formula," he meant that the solution had already been found in the field of action. The agreement had come off but could not be released because they had not found the intellectual terms for an agreement that had already established itself subliminally. Professor

Sheffield has shown how in controversy the real consensus takes place subterraneously in the motor activity of the controversy, while the intellectual form of the controversy must proceed in terms of language and does not keep pace with the real integration. (p. 176)

Follett's notion of power relates not to coercive control, but to coactive control (p. xiii). Can we develop power within ourselves without exerting power over others? "What we have to do is to discover how to integrate the power trend in an organization and the freeing trend. . . . The integrating of wants precludes the necessity of gaining power to satisfy desire" (p. 184). Follett noted that individual power need not be sacrificed for the achievement of joint activity, that the power produced by relationship is a qualitative rather than a quantitative thing (p. 191). Follett elaborated the preferability of "power-with" rather than "power-over." The former is the only legitimate and lasting form of power. This notion has been used by many writers since Follett, many of whom have either been unaware that Follett created the concept or were reluctant to give her credit for it.

Follett stated that the theory of consent rests on the fallacy that thought and action can be separated (p. 198). The intellectual persuasion upon which consent is based is often coercive and thus not democratic (p. 200). The process of intellectual consent often results in "power-over"; participation results in "power-with" (p. 225). The participation of self-government rests in the activities of the people. "Democracy means a genuine interplay and a cooperative constructing" (p. 226). Thus, contribution is crucial for the development of the participant electorate of a democracy:

Experience meetings as an experiment in democracy I am urgently advocating. We are not now master of our experience; we do not know what it is and we could not express it if we did. We need an articulate experience. And I should like to add, for it seems to me important, that from such experiments a new type of leadership might appear. (p. 216)

Such meetings would allow for the "gathering of facts before discussion begins rather than the presentation of different 'facts' by the two sides of a controversy" (p. 225). In that way interests could be *re*valuated (p. 225) and combined before they become rigid: "We must seek the plus-values of experience if we wish for progress. We advocate democracy for no sentimental reason but because we believe it will, rightly understood, give us the plus-values" (p. 228).

Follett admitted that the many activities that now serve to constrain human activity present challenges to the achievement of a participant electorate; yet, she believed that the only way for people to feel a part of the organization was to have a say in the development of the purpose of the organization (p. 221). "Our main duty toward the state is not the contribution of a static self, but of a developing self" (p. 221). "The only valid consent is a growth, a long and slow process of education" (p. 222). Follett noted:

The problem of democracy is how to make our daily life creative. People talk of the apathy of the average citizen, but there is really no such thing. Every man has *his* interests; at those points his attention can be enlisted. At those points he can be got to take an experimental attitude toward experience. The result will not be a mere satisfaction of wants—that alone would be a somewhat crude aim -- but the emerging

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of ever finer and finer wants. The lamp of experience is both to illumine our way and to guide us further into new paths. (p. 230)

Follett discussed law as a self-creating activity evolving from the activities of people. Again she extolled the benefits of conflict which she saw as the essence of creativity. "We should see life as manifold differings confronting each other, and we should understand that there is no peace for us except *within* this process" (p. 262). "The interweaving of desire, not the domination of the desires of the strongest, should be the social process: the service of law is to help find those methods by which desires shall more and more fruitfully interweave" (p. 270). Follett recommended small group experience meetings as a format for the interweaving of desires into the dynamic laws which would guide the actions of the group.

In the concluding chapter of Creative Experience, Follett again extolled the benefits of diversity. She stated:

What people often mean by getting rid of conflict is getting rid of diversity, and it is of utmost importance that these should not be considered the same. We may wish to abolish conflict but we cannot get rid of diversity. We must face life as it is and understand that diversity is its most essential feature. (pp. 300-301)

Follett completed Creative Experience by stating that it is the confronting and integration of desires that result in real freedom. "Integration is both the keel and the rudder of life: it supports all life's structures and guides every activity" (p. 302).

All human intercourse should be the evocation by each from the other of new forms undreamed of before, and all intercourse that is not evocation should be eschewed. .

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. . To free the energies of the human spirit is the high potentiality of all human association. . . . This is the stuff of experience. This is the challenge of experience. (p. 303)

The practicality of this, her third book, enhanced the demands for her services by business leaders of the day. Although not a management consultant by contemporary definition, she was called on to examine contextual dilemmas and offer her advice. As well, the success of this book led to numerous invitations to appear as a lecturer. From 1924, when Creative Experience was published, until Follett's death in 1933, she did not write another book. Following her death her lectures were compiled in the volume Dynamic Administration (1941).

Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett

The lectures within Dynamic Administration contain Follett's philosophy of management. They complemented her earlier writings in that lessons learned from the communitarian nature of group psychology were applied to the business context. The fourteen lectures within this volume will be listed, the date and occasion of their address will be noted, and they will be reviewed, some very briefly. Others, particularly those lectures that contain the more salient of her ideas which have been exposed to contemporary organizational analysis, will receive more attention.

Metcalf and Urwick began Dynamic Administration with a biographical sketch of Follett, a discussion of the evolution of her thought, and a short description of her three books. Most of the lectures contained within the volume were reprints from other books. Some were also given in England in somewhat adapted form and with different titles; while

this was noted within <u>Dynamic Administration</u> (pp. 318-320), the alternate lectures did not

differ significantly from those appearing in Metcalf and Urwick's edited volume, and will

not be discussed within this document.

The first four papers in <u>Dynamic Administration</u> were reprinted from <u>Scientific</u>

<u>Foundations of Business Administration</u> (1926), a volume edited by Metcalf. The

psychological foundations of management were the main themes of these lectures. The first

paper, "Constructive Conflict," was presented initially before a Bureau of Personnel

Administration conference in January of 1925. In this paper Follett stated her belief that

efforts to eliminate conflict were not always desirable. Instead, she said, just as mechanical

friction, which is often detrimental, also can be harnessed for useful purposes, so can the

diversity apparent in conflict. "As conflict—difference—is here in the world, as we cannot

avoid it, we should, I think, use it. Instead of condemning it, we should set it to work for us.

Why not?" (p. 30).

Follett elaborated on her concept of integrative decision-making in this lecture with

the use of many examples, among them the instance of the dairy co-operative that solved its

dilemma through integration. The dairy was situated on a hill; the farmers delivering to it

were arguing about whether those arriving from above or below should have unloading

preference. A solution was devised that pleased both parties and did not require

compromise; a second unloading dock was built on the other side of the building, so that

both the farmers from above and below could unload simultaneously. Follett was acutely

aware that integration of desires was not easy. Integration, she said, "requires a high order

of intelligence, keen perception and discrimination, more than all, a brilliant inventiveness;

it is easier for a trade union to fight than to suggest a better way of running the factory" (p. 45).

The second lecture in the four part series was entitled "The Giving of Orders" and was presented in January, 1925. Within this paper Follett elaborated the importance of a responsible attitude toward experience while learning the lessons needed for the giving of orders. She emphasized that orders should be depersonalized, or rather *repersonalized* (p. 60), and should flow naturally from the situation. As the "law of the situation" was always evolving, there would be a requirement for circular response, not linear behaviour. According to Follett, situational leadership would erase much of the resentment arising when orders are given to one person by another person, resulting in one party having to submit to subordination.

"Business as an Integrative Unity," presented in January, 1925, addressed the desirability of integrating the needs of the employee with the needs of the company. In this lecture Follett took issue with the system of collective bargaining. Although she advised its continuation until some better system was devised, she viewed it as the setting up of an antagonistic system to contain the "other side" of an issue. Collective bargaining does not create; it only sets limits (p. 72). Instead, Follett stated that "a form of departmental organization which includes the workers is the most effective method for unifying a business" (p. 81). She believed that almost everyone has some managing ability and that each person should be encouraged to exercise that ability in the workplace. Addressing also the interdependence of processes within the business, she stressed the importance of philosophically understanding the nature of relations:

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We have spoken of the relation of departments—sales and production, advertising and financial—to each other, but the most profound truth that philosophy has ever given us concerns not only the relation of parts, but the relation of parts to the whole, not to a stationary whole, but to a whole a-making" (p. 91).

In the fourth lecture. "Power," presented in January, 1925, Follett spoke of the desire that all people have for power, which she defined as "simply the ability to make things happen, to be a causal agent, to initiate change" (p. 99). She went on to say that "control might be defined as power exercised as means toward a specific end; authority, as vested control" (p. 99). During much of this lecture she elaborated her concept of "power-with" versus "power-over." Power-over causes resentment and either passive or active resistance. Power-with, on the other hand, is "a jointly developed power, a co-active, not a coercive power" (p. 101). When wishes are integrated, the interactive influence creates power-with. Such power is not conferred, which is an empty gesture, but is created. Follett decried the notion of a "balance of power," which she believed involved the concept of dividing what would have to be considered an absolute entity.

The fifth, to and including the eighth, lectures in <u>Dynamic Administration</u>, are reprinted from <u>Business Management as a Profession</u> (1927a), edited by Metcalf. Lecture five, with the lengthy title of "How Must Business Management Develop In Order To Possess The Essentials Of A Profession?" was presented in October, 1925. Follett began by stating the definition of a profession as an occupation resting on a proven body of knowledge which is intended for the service of others rather than for one's own purpose only (p. 117). In her opinion, the efforts to develop professional business managers should

focus on applying Taylor's scientific methods to management, as well as on defining and organizing the body of knowledge on which management should rest. That body of knowledge should be accessible to all levels of management through the use of discussion groups and conferences.

The sixth lecture, "How Must Management Develop In Order To Become A Profession," delivered in November, 1925, continued in the same vein. While the earlier lecture concentrated on the necessity to apply a foundation of science to management, this lecture elaborated on the aspect of service. Follett again returned to her concept of the group, as she advised that professional standards be developed and effected through group organization (p. 135).

The seventh lecture, entitled "The Meaning of Responsibility in Business Management," was delivered in April, 1926, and was also given to the Rowntree Lecture Conference in Oxford in October, 1926, but retitled "The Illusion of Final Responsibility." In this lecture Follett stated that *"an executive decision is a moment in a process. The growth of a decision, the accumulation of responsibility, not the final step, is what we need most to study"* (p. 146, italics added). Follett's focus on process illuminates an important connection with contemporary notions of organizational analysis and provides an integral validation for the approach taken within this study. This emphasis on research process will become apparent in the succeeding chapters. Follett again reiterated her viewpoint that authority and responsibility derived from function, in effect, the situation, and so had little to do with hierarchy (p. 147).

The fourth in this series of lectures was entitled "The Influence of Employee Representation In A Remoulding Of The Accepted Type Of Business Manager" and was presented in May, 1926. In this lecture Follett discussed the meaning of employee representation plans, their pros and cons in their present form, and how they could be used most effectively in business. (Employee representation plans essentially were employer-sponsored unions. Viewed widely as a method of stripping employee-sponsored unions of power, they were eventually outlawed in the U.S. by the Wagner Act of 1935 [Brandes. 1976].)

The next group of lectures also numbered four and were reprinted from Psychological Foundations of Management (1927b), another volume edited by Metcalf. The first, "The Psychology of Control," was presented in March, 1927. In this paper Follett decried the departmentalization of approaches to management, for example, the isolation of economic issues from moral issues. Drawing heavily on Gestalt theory, the doctrine of wholes, Follett argued that conceptualizing "either-or" situations ignores complexity and attention to all the issues involved in a process. Her steps in attaining control included seeing the complex field of control as an integrative unity, developing the ability to pass from one field of control to another, and then preventing the fluctuations often involved in that passage, in effect, constructing productive configurations (p. 209).

"The Psychology of Consent and Participation," the tenth lecture in Dynamic Administration, was presented in March, 1927. This paper again elaborated some of the ideas Follett had introduced in Creative Experience. Her emphasis on the value of consulting alternative opinions during the process of integration was evident in her

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comment: "Mere consent, bare consent, gives us only the benefit of the ideas of those who put forward the propositions for consent; it does not give us what the others may be capable of contributing" (p. 210). Follett believed in the consent of participation, a slow process of the interweaving of many activities. Participation can be encouraged, she wrote, by management that recognizes its values and acts on its principles with methods designed to encourage the contributions of people with diverse training, personality, and accomplishment. Openness and honesty in communication, she believed, were crucial to the process of integrative participation.

In "The Psychology of Conciliation and Arbitration," the third lecture in this series, presented in March, 1927, Follett emphasized the desirability of conciliation over arbitration as a method of settling disputes. Arbitration is an adjudicated dispute, with both sides being heard by an intermediary who then gives a decision. Conciliation allows for the integrative process and encourages agreement among parties rather than the declaration of a winner and a loser. Although Follett was realistic enough to understand that the arbitration method of union/management negotiations would likely remain in existence for some time, she advocated efforts to change the adversarial nature of union/management meetings to encourage the examination of all pertinent issues and the integration of the desires of everyone.

The fourth lecture in the series, "Leader and Expert," was given in two Bureau of Administration conference series (April, 1927, and November, 1927) and appeared also in Business Leadership (1930), edited by Metcalf, as well as in Psychological Foundations of Business Management (1927b). Follett drew on her concept of circular response in her

discussion of the leader, emphasizing the importance of the influence of the group on the leader, as much as the leader on the group. Once again, power was addressed as that process created by the leader *and* the group. Follett addressed a new role for the expert as one whose advice is integrally associated with the situation, not apart from it and offered with a "take it or leave it" attitude. Follett listed the principles of organization as those of evoking, interacting, integrating, and emerging (p. 267). The leader, in Follett's view, has a duty to draw from all persons their fullest possibilities and to provide venues for interacting from which will emerge integrative solutions to issues. The notion of emerging involves the evolution of the organization--the innovation and creation that allow the organization to go forward and to develop larger purposes in the ethical sense. To achieve this, according to Follett, the concept of leadership must undergo a transformation:

> Our old idea of leadership was that of being able to impress oneself upon others. But to pursuade men to *follow* you and to train men to work *with* you are conceptions of leadership as far apart as the poles. The best type of leader to-day does not want men who are subservient to him, those who render him a passive obedience. He is trying to develop men exactly the opposite of this, men themselves with mastery, and such men will give his own leadership worth and power. (p. 267)

The thirteenth lecture in <u>Dynamic Administration</u>, "Some Discrepancies In Leadership Theory And Practice," was a reprint from <u>Business Leadership</u> (1930) and was presented by Follett in March, 1928, and again at Oxford to the Rowntree Lecture Conference in September of that year, with some additions, under the title of "Leadership." It elaborated the concept of leadership, noting the previously accepted view of the leader as

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one with a forceful personality who wields his power and forces others to obey his will (p. 270). Follett contended that the practice of leadership often did not fit this definition. For example, even the word "orders" was falling into disuse in many factories, or was being redefined as that which emerges from action as the outcome of daily activity, not that which gives impetus to action (p. 273). In current practice, the leader is able to show how an order is integral to the situation, emerging from it, and not from the authoritarianism of the leader himself. As well, "the most successful leader of all is one who sees another picture not yet actualized. He sees things which belong in his present picture but which are not yet there" (p. 279). Continuing in the same vein, Follett wrote:

> The best leader knows how to make his followers actually feel power themselves, not merely acknowledge his power. But if the followers must partake in leadership, it is also true that we must have followship on the part of leaders. There must be a partnership of following. The basis of industrial leadership is creating a partnership in a common task, a joint responsibility. (p. 290)

This type of leader does not appeal to people's complacency but to their deepest potentialities, their greatest capacities.

The final lecture included in Dynamic Administration was entitled "Individualism in a Planned Society." This paper was the last prepared by Follett for the Bureau of Personnel Administration in the series entitled "Economic and Social Planning" and was presented in April, 1932. Follett began the paper with the statement that the economic interdependence of individuals necessitates collective planning on national and international scales (p. 295). She emphasized the necessity, once again, of recognizing the individual as a contributor to

the whole, not as existing apart from it. For her, coordination was the essence of the organization of a planned society. Follett listed her four principles of organization:

1. Co-ordination by direct contact of the responsible people concerned.

2. Co-ordination in the early stages.

3. Co-ordination as the reciprocal relating of all the factors in a situation.

4. Co-ordination as a continuing process. (p. 297)

Much of the remainder of the lecture suggested means whereby these principles might be realized. (Note that in the previous lecture Follett listed the four principles of organization to be evoking, interacting, integrating, and emerging [p. 276]. Rather than contradict the four principles of coordination, I think that the two listings can be correlated.) Follett also emphasized, once again, her position that the only true freedom is that obtained through the process of organized relations with others, the achievement of "individual freedom through collective control" (p. 314).

Early in 1933 Follett was invited to give a series of inaugural lectures for the newly-opened Department of Business Administration in the London School of Economics. She delivered the lectures in January and February, adopting the theme "Freedom and Co-ordination." All of the lectures were adaptations of her American papers and were entitled: "The Basis of Order Giving," "The Basis of Authority," "Business Leadership," "Co-ordination," and "Basic Principles of Organization." The last paper paralleled "Individualism in a Planned Society," which appeared in yet another revised version in Papers on the Science of Administration (1932/1937) under the title "The Process of Control."

Follett's lectures, collected and published posthumously in Dynamic Administration, are a lasting tribute by her colleagues. The book reinforces and refines her contribution to the evolution of organizational theory.

Follett in the Context of Organizational Theory

This portion of the chapter briefly examines the evolution of organizational theory touched upon in Chapter One in order to situate Follettian philosophy both within the context of her time and the present. The discussion may help to acquaint the reader with the reasons why Follett's work is currently receiving renewed attention. There is also an attempt within this portion of this chapter to juxtapose several philosophical concepts that I view as connected with one another and with Follettian philosophical principles. This Follettian-postmodern juxtaposition is further elaborated in the succeeding chapter. I write in terms of time periods, all the while keeping in mind that there are no clearly demarcated epochs identifying the various concepts.

An Historical Context for Follett

It is advisable to begin a discussion of Follett's contribution to organizational theory by examining the relevant thought and movements of the past. Although such an examination cannot be exhaustive, it may serve to expose evolutionary trends and so provide a more complete understanding of how previous patterns of thought influence existing forms of organizational theory. As well, if resistance to Follett's concepts of organizational integration and situational leadership remain within organizations, an examination of such movements as scientific management may enable the reader to

understand the legacy of the restrictive principles associated with that philosophy and so be more able to devise corrective activities. An understanding of the paternalistic nature of many of the programs under welfare capitalism may forewarn proponents of participative principles that the hierarchical nature of employer/employee relations can even now often perpetuate paternalistic practices. On a more positive note, the progressive thought of many of the theorists referred to may be instructive in our efforts to understand both Follett's philosophy and organizational theory in a contextual and an evolutionary sense.

Large scale industrialization changed the complexion of systems for the production of goods. Cottage industry decreased in importance. The gathering of many people in one place gave focus to issues created by such organization. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the heyday of what was termed "welfare capitalism," companies became involved in nearly all aspects of employees' lives, from education to religion to medical care to housing (Brandes, 1976; Fisher, 1967). Welfare capitalism was defined as "anything for the comfort and improvement, intellectual or social, of the employees, over and above wages paid, which is not a necessity of the industry or required by law" (U. S., Bureau of Labour Statistics document, as cited in Brandes, 1976, p. 155). The purpose of these company-sponsored programs could be viewed as much more related to control than philanthropy; closely regulated socialization of employees and education of the young for employment within the company factory were important objectives. In addition, company management hoped that the programs would eliminate the employees' inclination toward union activity.

The number and expansiveness of the social betterment programs declined by the

1920s. That deterioration gained momentum in the United States with the passing of the

Wagner Act of 1935, an act which outlawed company-sponsored employee representation

plans, thus opening the way for the growth of the union movement (Brandes, 1976, pp. 143-

145). The depression of the 1930s served as the final blow to such expansive sponsorship

of company programs.

Coexisting with welfare capitalism early in the twentieth century was scientific

management, the principles of which have been explained and defined by the writings of the

man considered their founding father, Frederick Taylor (1911a & 1911b). Taylor (1911b)

believed in "the necessity for systematically teaching workmen how to work to the best

advantage" (p. 122). He stated that "every single act of every workman can be reduced to a

science" (p. 64). Taylor was thoroughly convinced that his principles, when properly

applied, would eliminate virtually all management-labour disputes (p. 135). No longer

would the workman be at the mercy of the idiosyncrasies of a supervisor, as the supervisor

would be responsible for strictly applying the constructs of the most efficient methods of

task completion. Minor wage incentives would encourage the worker to achieve the utmost

and would eliminate "soldiering," the practice of restricting output (Taylor, 1911a & 1911b;

Viteles, 1932).

At its worst, scientific management removed from the work situation any

recognition that the employee possessed skill and initiative for industry independent of

external incentives. Innate ability could only be given practical application with the

coercive input of a supervisor: "Taylor aimed at transferring to management the knowledge

of the workers and at developing it to the utmost" (Watts. 1921, p. 103). His solution encouraged the atrophy of all spontaneity and creativity.

The predominance of scientific management in the early twentieth century conceals the importance of simultaneous contributions of industrial and behavioral psychology to organizational theory (Waring, 1991). A focus on the application of psychology to the workplace organization ushered in what is known as the human relations era.

Follett's (1868-1933) philosophical and theoretical contributions to organizational analysis, even within her own time, were substantial. Philosophically, she has been alternately identified as being of the scientific management or of the human relations mindset. Although it is argued within this document that she was neither, a brief discussion of her here will serve to situate her historically. Follett was a political scientist, a philosopher, and an historian who was intensely interested in the psychological foundations of human activity (Urwick & Brech, 1949). She viewed humans not as the sole creators of their thoughts but as partially molded by the influence of the groups of which they are a part. The group is more than the sum of its individual parts, as it has a plus value gained by interaction that makes its influence all the more significant. This insight has important implications for the study of the workplace, as new knowledge will continually develop from the interaction of individual experiences, creating new perspectives different from any that existed previously (Follett, 1924, pp. 156-178).

Those social theorists who attempted to give voice to more of a human relations orientation in the workplace continued to have an impact on thought concerning the various facets of workplace organization. This became especially apparent in 1927 during a labor-

management problem that arose at the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne Works in Chicago. Company investigators had discovered "that workers at the Hawthorne plant systematically restricted output, established a 'fair day's rate,' falsified records, and subjected 'rate busters' to ostracism, sabotage, and physical threats" (Sonnenstuhl & Trice, 1990, p. 4). The inability of industrial engineers to solve the problem in purely technical terms contributed to the invitation and subsequent research of Elton Mayo, a behavioral scientist. The researchers concluded, among other things, that the attention paid to the employees as experimenters and their identification with their co-worker group were deciding factors in improving worker satisfaction that, in turn, led to increased productivity (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1946, pp. 179-186).

While the influence of group interaction was being explored, theories also continued to be expounded concerning the nature of the individual. Those theories would affect the approach taken to learning activities and would usher in the industrial humanism era. In 1960, McGregor, in his book The Human Side of Enterprise, constructed two conflicting formulations of managerial beliefs: Theory X and Theory Y. Those who adhered to Theory X, like the Taylorists (Taylor, 1911b, pp. 46, 59), believed that human beings disliked work, were essentially lazy, and had to be bribed or disciplined into performing adequately (McGregor, 1960, pp. 33-44). On the other hand, the philosophy behind Theory Y resembled that of theorists such as Maslow (as cited in Knowles, 1980; Maslow, 1954) and Likert (1961, 1967). It held that workers were self-actualizing, wanted to grow, and wished some measure of control over decisions affecting their work (McGregor, 1960, pp. 45-57). As mentioned, the hierarchy of human needs, as devised by Maslow, has been connected

with the evolution of organizational theory. The suggestion is that the organization viewed the individual as concentrating on the basic needs during the scientific management era, on the need to belong and to be loved during the human relations era, and on the need for self-actualization during the industrial humanism era.

Investigation into organizational functions such as participatory decision making and group processes was also carried out by researchers such as Kurt Lewin (1935, 1947a, 1947b, 1953), Paul Blumberg (1968), and Chris Argyris (1957 to 1993). Lewin, in a study of boys' clubs, found that democratic participation increased productivity in the long run, led to positive interpersonal relations, and increased morale and satisfaction (as cited in White & Lippitt, 1960). The participative approach would be more effective, especially in the long run. Blumberg (1968) concurred:

> Participation strengthens the belief, or creates it, that they, the workers are worthy of
>
> being consulted, that they are intelligent and competent. . . . The participating
>
> worker is an involved worker, for his job becomes an extension of himself and by
>
> his decisions he is creating his work, modifying it and regulating it. (p. 130)

Argyris was influenced by the thinking of several of his predecessors and contemporaries, but particularly by Lewin (Argyris, 1993, pp. 8-11) and McGregor (as cited in Waring, 1991, p. 118). He (1957 through 1993) has remained a tireless advocate for the improvement of organizational communication and democratic workplace participation as catalysts that enhance opportunities for organizational learning.

This brief examination of evolutionary movements allows one to ascertain the influence of past theoretical perspectives on the contemporary organization. It may be

found that vestiges of previous approaches continue to have an impact on the workplace. A knowledge of prior dispositions to organizational analysis allows for a more concerted and informed deconstruction of the present situation. That understanding allows us to appreciate the context in which Follett worked and reflect upon her philosophy given the nature of the times in which she moved. An historical, as well as a contemporary view of organizational theory, lets the reader ascertain the compatibility of her sympathies with past and contemporary theorists.

The Context of Current Organizational Theory

The hierarchy of human needs, attributed to Maslow, has been juxtaposed with the evolution of organizational theory within this document. This hierarchy, rightly or wrongly, has moved the individual within the organization from a "non-thinking doer" to a "thinking doer," to what Schon (1983) has referred to as a reflective practitioner. The reflective practitioner is in constant interaction with other people and so develops an intricate system of relationships. From the communal connection one develops and learns in a reciprocal process that is ubiquitous. The connection with Follett and with postmodern notions of relating surface.

The purpose of this portion of the chapter is to explore the notion of a dynamic communitarianism in a postmodern learning organization. It is within this context that Follett's work most succinctly addresses the present, although that eventuality she certainly could not have foreseen. In order to provide a cursory map of the issues involved, I begin with an exploration of the meaning of the three concepts—communitarianism, postmodernism, and learning organization. The initial section establishes inferential links

among the three concepts. Succeeding sections examine the role of discourse in the establishment of agency, discuss the implication of valuing alternative viewpoints, address moral concerns, and present a synthesis of the concepts. The chapter concludes by noting how the work of Follett supports the evolution and possible juxtaposition of the various concepts.

The philosophies underlying communitarianism, postmodernism, and the learning organization emphasize discourse as a crucial element for creative social interdependence. The contention is that meaningful and substantive discourse is the means that will serve to enhance community in the postmodern learning organization. The insights of researchers who predeceased the naming of communitarianism, postmodernism, and learning organization may serve to enlighten the discussion.

Communitarianism.

No man is an *Iland* intire of it selfe;

every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine;*

(Donne, 1623-1624/1970, p. 98)

Follett's philosophy reflected the communitarianism of German philosopher, Johann Fichte (1762-1814), whom she greatly admired. As we become acquainted with the inadequacies of atomistic liberalism, especially with its failure to meet the needs for co-operative thinking of the contemporary organization, Follett's notions of community speak more sympathetically to us. The guiding notion of communitarianism is the concept of the "common good." The common good is the *raison d'etre* of the communitarian organization; it is toward the common good that everyone should work. Some authors

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would have us believe that the notion of the common good means that "the community's way of life forms the basis for a public ranking of conceptions of the good, and the weight given to an individual's preferences depends on how much she [sic] *conforms* or contributes to this common good" (Kymlicka, 1990, p. 206, italics added). However, the contemporary and preferable conception of communitarianism is sympathetic with Follett's notion that the community and the individual are self-referential. Like opposite sides of the same coin, one can not be one without the other. To say that the individual conforms to the wishes of the community is only to say that once having collectively and dynamically established moral and ethical guidelines, one agrees to abide by them. This type of community is synonymous with the evolving activities of the collective will. Detractors of communitarianism may say that such a notion can be manipulated by the unscrupulous to serve controlling ends; however, we do not have communitarianism then, but tyranny, whether that be by one, a few, or even a majority.

Communitarianism is characterized by three notions (Selznick, 1986). First, the concept of the "implicated self" contends that humans are not autonomous individuals but depend on interaction with others for their moral and intellectual development. As such, there is no clear distinction between the individual and society. As Follett (1918/1920) stated:

> We cannot put the individual on one side and society on the other, we must understand the complete interrelation of the two. Each has no value, no existence without the other. The individual is created by the social process and is daily nourished by that process. There is no such thing as a self-made man. (pp. 61-62)

Lippmann (1937) would have agreed:

> We are in truth, members of one another, and a philosophy which seeks to
> differentiate the community from the persons who belong to it, treating them as if
> they were distinct sovereignties having only diplomatic relations is contrary to fact
> and can only lead to moral bewilderment. (p. 348)

Second, the notion of implicated self does not subordinate the individual but recognizes that the social activity and subsequent contribution of each person is unique. The person is thus recognized as a distinct and dynamic process, as an end and not merely a means.

Third, communitarian writers ascribe to the "principle of continuity," which perceives, and then observes, interdependence in the formulation of ethical principles (Selznick, 1986, p. 5). The contention is "that without attention to fundamental continuities autonomy can degenerate into a perverse and self-defeating isolation" (p. 5).

> Selznick (1986) addressed the concept of community itself, which he defined as:
> a *framework* for social life. I emphasize "framework" because, although in a
> genuine community there must be a minimum of integration, including shared
> symbolic experience, we also expect to find relatively self-regulating activities,
> groups, and institutions. Put another way, communities are, ideally, settings within
> which *mediated* participation takes place. (p. 5)

The morality of communitarianism flows more from identity and relatedness than from consent; obligations are thus more open-ended and unspecified (Selznick, 1986). Organizations, once formed, are considered to be dynamic forces that continually self-

create. Thus, the obligations and responsibilities will flow from the changing nature of the

community rather than from the terms of an overarching initial agreement. Such a notion

allows communitarianism to place rights as secondary to duties without charges of coercion.

Every person belonging to the community is continually involved in the formulation of

duties through an interactive process of reasoned judgment, governed by inquiry into what

course of action may be deemed prudent in a particular concrete situation. The particular

knowledge and experience of each person are drawn upon to achieve a collective wisdom

that becomes a characteristic of the particular and the general for the benefit of both.

Communitarianism thus perceives the person as a dynamic individual who

simultaneously creates and is created by social interaction. Individuals are constrained by

the community only in so far as they have chosen to be constrained, because they are the

community.

Postmodernism. The succeeding discussion expands upon the introduction of

postmodernism in the first chapter and connects that interpretation to Follett and to the

practical elements of my research. A comparative discussion of modernism and

postmodernism ensues. Disagreement over whether postmodernism is a separate process

from modernism or a radical continuation of it is noted.

The modern industrial era, epitomized by the machine metaphor, emphasized

rationality and knowledge gained through objective research guided by theory. The

underlying belief was that humanity had the power to perfect itself through rational thought

(Cooper & Burrell, 1988). *Systemic* modernists, perhaps the best-known being Taylor

(1911b), the creator of scientific management principles, have viewed the system as rational

and have attempted to manipulate the goals of the individual to fit the goals of the organization. *Critical* modernists, with the wisdom of hindsight (e.g., Paulo Freire, 1971; Jurgen Habermas, as cited in Power, 1990), have postulated that the systemic reason of the organization colonizes the life-world of the less powerful. Viewing the human as the logical subject, critical modernists advise an emancipatory rationality arrived at by a network of humans engaging in "ideal speech situations" (Habermas, as cited in Burrell, 1994, p. 9).

Postmodernism displays some links with critical modernism, as the issue for postmodernists "becomes a question of analyzing . . . the production of organization rather than the organization of production" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 106). There are differences, however. Epistemologically speaking, postmodernism sports four characteristics not shared by modernism (Ritzer, 1992, pp. 632-636). First and foremost, postmodernism rejects grand narratives, which it views as unitary, linear, and totalizing or absolute. Metanarratives constrain viewpoints, causing the researcher to filter out perceptions that disagree with the theory held, thus putting the answer before the question and preserving the status quo while suppressing alternate voices and courses of action. Second, postmodernism favors local or "smallish" narratives that theorize for the given context or situation. Postmodernists may respond to critics who call this an "anything goes" mentality by quoting John Stuart Mill (1863/1949): "The accusation supposes human beings to be capable of no pleasures except those of which swine are capable" (p. 9). The criticism is based on the mistaken assumption that grand theories are somehow more ethical and value-driven than those arrived at through local efforts.

Third, postmodernism erases the boundaries between disciplines. borrowing from many fields (e. g., philosophy, political science, history, sociology, psychology, theology) in an effort to gain a multi-dimensional perspective. This comprehensive approach may result in a more accurate assessment of situations because information is derived through the avenues of diverse but interconnected disciplines. Fourth, the theoretical rhetoric from those various disciplines is viewed as text, which is deconstructed, revalued, and reinterpreted by using contemporary perspectives and tools for application in local situations. In this fashion, what is considered knowledge is continually scrutinized, and both previous assumptions and new information are critiqued for bias and error. The constant instability created by inquiry from diverse fields and perspectives and the continuous examination of the texts of knowledge will prevent the impotence of status quo complacency.

Postmodernists consider discourse as the essential and vital constituent of agency, or active will. (Rychlak [1992] defines agency as "*framing and behaving for the sake of predications that are in conformance with, in opposition to, or without regard for biological or social determinants*" [p. 50, italics in original]. For the sake of brevity and clarity, I here shorten the definition to the phrase "active will.") "The subject is no longer self-directing but is instead a convenient location for the throughput of discourses" (Hassard, 1993, p. 15). The knowledge gained through such discourse "refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology but the inventor's paralogy" (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxv).

To reiterate, postmodernism departs from modernism in that it rejects grand theorizing, opting instead for the input of alternative perspectives and disciplines applicable to local contexts. Through the medium of discourse, past and present contributions alike are deconstructed for applicability in those specific contexts. Nothing purporting to be knowledge is viewed as absolute or definite. The organization is viewed as a dynamic force, or an arena for discourse, rather than as an entity. Similarly, Follett (1918/20) wrote of human relationships as psychic force (p. 75). Through the process of constant interaction, people continually create each other. The contemporary organization depends on such mutual creative efforts for its vitality. This contention will be further elaborated in the following chapter.

The learning organization. The metaphor of the "learning organization" is commonly used in current education and business circles. Unfortunately, its overuse may be endangering the dignity and the integrity of the concept. The unscrupulous can give all manner of unpopular changes an air of respectability by clothing them with the language of organizational learning. Those involved in and dedicated to the exhaustive research into organizational learning need to remain cognizant of the temptation to contextually interpret the concept for unethical purposes. Its overuse and manipulation noted, this section attempts to explain the concept and suggest its concomitancy with postmodernism, communitarianism, and Follettian philosophy.

So what is "learning" and how can it be juxtaposed with "organization"? Some authors (e. g., Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Levitt & March, 1988) define organizational learning in adaptive terms, reflective of Argyris' (1993) "single loop" learning concept, characterized

by cursory, truncated. or short-term solutions to complex, many-faceted problems. In fact. Argyris and Schon (1978), in their earlier writing, stated that "organizational learning refers to experience-based improvement in organizational task performance" (p. 323). More recent authors (e. g., Argyris, 1993; Marsick, 1991; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993) have defined the learning organization in more innovative terms that require the interactive, communicative, and long-term process of "double-loop" learning that is intended to facilitate substantive structural change. For example, Senge (1990) has stated that learning organizations are "continually expanding their capacity to create" (p. 127). For the purpose of this discussion, the learning organization is defined as an *"organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights "* (Garvin, 1993, p. 80, italics in original). The use of this definition allows for the integration of both adaptive or maintenance learning and innovative learning.

However, it is important to note that organizational learning involves even more than adaptive and innovative processes occurring between and among individuals and teams to be diffused within the organization. It is influenced by the presence of the organization itself as an existent, although socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Cohen, 1991; Follett, 1918/1920, 1924; Glynn, Lant, & Milliken, 1994) and is connected with, and emergent from, the interactions created within that given context or situation. Such an organization assumes the presence of learning that is uniquely combined with the organizational process and so seems to give a life to the organization and a perspective that differs from the sum of the individual perspectives of the employees within the

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organization. That dynamic and distinctive collective process both affects the thinking of the individual members and survives the departure of the individuals who have been a part of its creation.

Many authors have addressed the defining characteristics of a learning organization (e. g., Argyris, 1993; Mitchell, 1994, 1995; Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). The thread that creates pattern among the characteristics is dialogue. For example, critical reflection (Brookfield, 1988) is the process through which individuals scrutinize assumptions. Mezirow (1991a, 1991b) refers to the process as perspective transformation, Friedlander (1983) as reconstructive learning, Freire (1971) as conscientizacao, and Senge (1990) as mental modeling. Individuals engage in constant critical discourse that examines ideas for relevance and allows for personal and collective formation of visions. Through collective or shared leadership, dynamic vision directs the organization's activities. On-going double-loop learning promotes the continuous examination of assumptions underlying visions. The status quo is redefined in a more positive light as the ubiquity of inquiry.

The learning organization, by emphasizing the interdependent processes that encourage both adaptive and innovative learning, works to create venues for deconstructive discourse. That discourse involves participants in a continual examination of previously held assumptions of what constitutes knowledge. In postmodern thought, the inquiry is enlightened by contributions from alternate perspectives that allow for the development of appropriate action plans for given situations. All participants are invited to share in the inquiry. In that fashion, decisions are based on the input of all members of the community

and are made for the community. The community is both the individual member and the collective; there is no separation; they are self-referential.

The interplay of discourse and agency. The postmodern learning organization conceives of itself as a process of changing relationships rather than a structure with defined roles, rules, and hierarchies. The dialogue within that organizational process encourages learning and a sense of community. The postmodern emphasis on symbol, in its many forms of communicative discourse, not only revolutionizes the workplace organization as a conversation rather than a structure (Berquist, 1993), it also explodes the boundaries of workplace learning with the instruments of technology. The modern organization, which had assumed sole guardianship of rational thought for the top echelon, has been obliged to recognize the skills and knowledge of its entire work force. In a technological age, access to information is readily available, and employees cannot be so readily manipulated by guarding the knowledge base. The discoveries facilitated by technology have opened up the world as a global marketplace. Paradoxically, the world has become smaller as a result of that same technology, and companies once financially comfortable in isolationist complacency have now awakened to discover that the combined intelligence of the people within the organization is necessary for continued existence. The result, as Zuboff (1988) has stated, is that:

> The contemporary language of work is inadequate to express these new
>
> realities. . . . A new division of learning requires another vocabulary--one of
>
> colleagues and co-learners, of exploration, experimentation, and innovation. Jobs
>
> are comprehensive, tasks are abstractions that depend upon insight and synthesis,

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and power is a roving force that comes to rest as dictated by function and need. A new vocabulary cannot be invented all at once—it will emerge from the practical action of people struggling to make sense in a new "place" and driven to sever their ties with an industrial logic that has ruled the imaginative life of our century. (pp. 394-395)

The previous paragraphs may have alerted the reader that the "language games" of postmodernism and modernism often co-exist, exchanging moves and counter moves in the evolution of the learning organization. Such organizations *may* struggle to redefine progress in an ethical direction that truly creates a new sense of expanded community in a smaller and smaller world. On the other hand, the same tools allow financially-pressured organizations to entice workers to dedicate themselves exclusively to a workplace that flatters them by encouraging their special talents and their contributions as dialogists. Ever-expanding personal sacrifices will promote the erosion of a balanced life. Such has been the charge laid against the Japanese model of organization (Ritzer, 1992, p. 15).

Agency in many transitional organizations is a fickle companion. At times agency, or active will, may reside in the system, involved still as it is in a ubiquitous search for the elusive perfection of productivity or "performativity" (Lyotard, 1984), grasping at all manner of life preservers floating by. Sometimes the lifeline may be called "organizational learning," at other times perhaps "reflective practice"; the terms and their definitions will be manipulated always with "effective" ends in mind. At other times agency may reside in the individual, or the group of individuals, as insights constantly jolt recognition that life-worlds are still constrained by the specious authority of our institutions. As the Brazilian

political activist. Roberto Unger (1987), has stated: "those institutions can often induce in those whose life chances and daily routines they shape a blank and despairing resignation that muddies the clarity of the distinction between consent and coercion" (p. 61).

As postmodernists would prefer it, agency may be a system of relations between strata (Derrida, 1978), with will then becoming "a weave, a texture, fragmented but intertwined rather than hierarchical and integrated, a process and a paradox having neither beginning nor end" (Linstead & Grafton-Small, as cited in Hassard, 1993, p. 15). This eventuality constitutes the desired environment of the learning organization that struggles to create a community through the discourse which constructs, deconstructs, and reconstructs a chaotic world through the exploration of all manner of texts. That world acts upon and is acted upon by the de-centered subject. The alternative voices of the de-centered subjects within the discourse generate both chaos and community with a dynamic psychic force.

Recognizing alternatives and the self-referential. As has been noted, detractors of communitarianism base their criticism on the contention that the individual will be sacrificed for the common good. Postmodernists would decry this type of dichotomous thinking, contending that such irrelevant statements have been encouraged by the tendency of modern theorists, who construct grand theory for universal explanation and application, to engage in "black or white" reasoning. As Follett (1941) recognized, "the objection to this way of opening discussion is that by presenting two alternatives, you by no means exhaust the possibilities of a situation; it means a greatly impoverished thinking, a diminuation of your mental resources; it often paralyzes thinking or canalizes thinking" (p. 219).

The encouragement of alternative voices is given full play by postmodernists, as grand theories and accepted ways of doing things are deconstructed collectively for relevance in local situations. Again, the charge that this suggests that "everyone goes off and does their own thing" (It could be murdering or raping someone, so how could anyone give credence to postmodernism? A rather blatant attempt to deliver the *coup de grace* to all further discussion!) misses an important concept of the postmodern mentality, which is the notion of the self-referential associated with diversity. It is a notion that is difficult to understand, hampered as we are by modern frames of reference.

The concept of self-reference has been alluded to earlier in this discussion. The basic notion is that the individual and society cannot be separated. To do so would be to consider only part of the picture, to treat the fronts of our bodies, for example, as if there were no backs. It is not possible to provide nourishment to one part of our bodies without nourishing all of the body; conversely, harming one part of our bodies will harm all parts. The contention of postmodernists, to take the metaphor of the body one step further, is that modern theory recognizes only torsos, albeit giving them various shapes depending upon the theory, and by so doing causes dysfunction, paralysis, or amputation of the limbs, which in turn greatly inhibits the development or causes the demise of the whole body.

The body metaphor has its limitations in this discussion, however, because the postmodernist contends that organization is more a process than a structure, an arena rather than an entity. Individuals are both part of, and the whole of, the process. Through the medium of the "language game" the process continually creates itself. In turn, the creation is affected by the process. Only through full participation in the process can individuals

realize their potential. This contention assumes the encouragement of others to participate fully, as their contributions enrich the process that advances the creative genius of each person.

A mention of what Cooper and Burrell (1988) refer to as the "formal" and "informal" characteristics of organization may serve to shed further light on the issue of self-reference (pp. 108-110). Formality characterizes the modern organization; informality, the postmodern. "Formality signifies social distance, well-defined, public, insulated roles. Informality is appropriate to role confusion, familiarity, intimacy" (Douglas, as cited in Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 108). Formality takes on moral implications as the "way it is" and becomes a moral imperative, rendering the exclusion of the informal, which becomes the immoral (p. 109). The task of the informal is to expose the censorship of the formal, but it is also to recognize the formal as part of the informal, as mutually-defining processes which create and are created by the other.

It is important to note, risking a charge of redundancy, that giving voice to alternatives does not equate with giving exclusive license to the realization of banal immediate pleasure. That, in the end, would sabotage society, which is oneself. On the other hand, there is a recognition of the importance of the ephemeral in the lives of humans. The authors of The Good Society define "attending" as the concern for common meaning, whereas "distraction" is characterized by short-sighted goals and pleasures (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, & Tipton, 1992, p. 273). While it may be destructive in the long term to concentrate totally on distraction, the authors state that in the good society attention *takes precedence* over distraction. While they stop short of suggesting that distraction is

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necessary for the sustenance of attention, the inference can be made. The recognition of the importance of both attention and distraction allows for a more realistic collective striving for "generativity," which is described as "the virtue by means of which we care for all persons and things we have been entrusted with" (p. 274).

The crux of the concept of a communitarian, postmodern learning organization lies in the recognition and encouragement of diversity, contradiction, conflict—all manner of difference and instability. Far from destroying the collectivity, instability creates it and is created by it. The notion is that social supplementarity is encouraged by diversity. In other words, the interdependence of community is actually dynamically created and revitalized by the encouragement of difference. The contention is that each term of text, each activity, each concept, is inhabited by what has been identified, up until now, as its "opposite," and that one needs the other for survival. The more complete the separation of the words of our texts from us the closer to us they become, as we refine our ability to recognize the meaning of those texts and our mutually-defining creative activities. It is only through interaction with diverse others that we recognize our uniqueness and realize the value of all contributions, while simultaneously questioning the assumptions underlying those contributions. This underlying notion of the postmodern learning organization bears strong resemblance to Follettian philosophical principles.

Addressing moral concerns. Far from ignoring ethical and moral issues, because of its inclusiveness, the communitarian, postmodern, learning organization embraces them. Follett (1924) likewise equated the exercise of reciprocal response, or mutual creation, as the process that gives life its moral fiber. Modern organizations, characterized by lack of

recognition of the inherent contradictions within human nature, have often displayed "moral muteness" (Walker, 1993, p. 83). Emphasis on objective rationality neglects the influence of the affective domain and ignores values. A drive for consensus, which involves a reactive move away from conflict, provides an atmosphere that may nourish unethical behavior of both the commission and omission variety. Such environments encourage "the aspersions of immorality from others, internal moral stress, the repression or neglect of moral issues, and a diminishing authority given to the persuasion of common moral sense and critical thinking" (Walker, 1993, p. 83).

In contrast to this, the postmodern learning organization encourages what Unger (1987) calls the ethics of "negative capability." The core idea of negative capability is that the very forces which serve to stabilize are those which provide the opportunities for destabilization. Destabilization, while antithetical to productivity or "performativity," is also the essence of creative survival. The dissonance of destabilization is a prerequisite for intellectual development and moral learning (Friedlander, 1983, pp. 196-7). The degree of negative capability is directly related to the degree to which a formative context can be "disentrenched" by inviting and responding to challenge in the midst of the stability of ordinary social life: "It is the relative facility with which we can interrupt the oscillation between the narcoleptic routines and the revolutionary interludes of history and achieve conscious mastery in the midst of civic peace" (Unger, 1987, p. 279).

The expression of diversity and conflict is encouraged as an essential characteristic of dynamic contexts, which recognize that the search for moral guidelines cannot be conducted by the immoral elitist practice of valuing only certain voices. It is, as Unger

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(1987) states, "an impoverished and unbelievable idea of community [that] emphasizes the exclusion of conflict and the sharing of values and opinions" (p. 560). Follett (1932/1937) would add that in formative contexts the "reciprocal relating, co-ordinating, unifying, is a process which does not require sacrifice on the part of the individual" (p. 163).

Both of these writers believed passionately in the idea of a moral community, but a community can be moral only through the constant interactions of its members. Its members are not valuable as a fraction of an entity because that would involve such a small influence that the individual would lose interest in the essence of the whole. Rather, the individual, according to Follett (1918/1920), is similar to the piano key, and, as such, is integral to a musical repertoire that is without limits. The notion of community inherent in the postmodern learning organization involves the improvisation of complex plans of action arising from the interaction of all members. Harmony and diversity are incorporated, as each contribution is given more breadth and range precisely because of co-ordination interrelated with difference.

Communitarianism reaffirms the contribution of the individual, as it realizes that a prerequisite for open discourse is the recognition of the value, not only of others' experiences and knowledge, but also of one's own. So ingrained has become the habit of self-protection that we, as individuals and as groups, often attach to some issues an immunity to discussion, for fear that conflict will ensue or that our ignorance will be discovered. Such activity is anti-learning, as we inhibit the very inquiry which would enlighten (Argyris, 1993). An attitude of self-acceptance allows us to value our ideas even after we recognize that some have outlived their usefulness for present situations. A

dynamic deconstructive approach to these present but obsolescent ideas feeds the spirit of inquiry that we need to respond creatively to future challenge.

A postmodern community recognizes our need for privacy, which coexists with our need for society. Within a "zone of heightened mutual vulnerability" there is an awareness that individuals simultaneously crave the feeling of belonging and the inspiration of participation in the community while fearing that the community may subjugate or depersonalize them (Unger, 1987, p. 562). This recognition is apparent in the action research of Mitchell and Sackney (1995), which has suggested that the dialogic process within the learning organization includes several phases. They list indicators of those phases while noting that there is no clear distinction between phases nor any clearly defined linear play. During *naming and framing* participants develop a spirit of trust, common understandings, and shared vision, as they exchange information and engage in collaborative professional practices. The *analyzing and integrating* phase is characterized by the presence of reflective self-analysis, which heightens awareness of one's own and others' beliefs and assumptions. This phase draws on the skills developed in the first phase, as sensitive issues are discussed and conflict often surfaces. During the *applying and experimenting* phase participants who are engaging in the ongoing process of inquiry experiment with new practices, as personal and collective frames of reference are reformulated (pp. 10-15, 31).

The moral community of the postmodern organization is not a structure that requires its participants to obey laws that have been arbitrarily formulated by others. It is a process of community ethics that reflects the essence of the participants. The moral act is that of

creating and being created by the process in a never-ending spirit of inquiry. Dialogue provides the avenue for the journey of discovery. Participants continually examine the ideas and assumptions inhabiting their own and others' minds in an effort to understand and discover meaning. This process cannot be owned nor given definite, totalizing structure. It is a force, not an entity. One cannot adhere to only one theoretical viewpoint without inviting the impotence of isolated and constricted perception. It is only constant inquiry which revitalizes the ability to inquire, but it is also wise scrutiny, ethical and moral questioning, which allows our prodding to welcome, and be welcomed by, similar inquiry by others. The effort to refine one's ethical approach within discourse and within action plans integrated with discourse is a continual growing process.

The organization, once formed, takes on a life of its own, a life that is continually being developed by the participants and that, in turn, affects the development of the participants. The organization receives its dynamic nature from the creative and innovative plans of action that arise through the process of interactive and interdependent dialogic relations of the members. A dynamic community is formed that reflects the contextual, ethical decisions of members for the guidance of those members.

Summary

The communitarian, postmodern learning organization is characterized by a conception of ethics that is a continual process incorporated within the language games of dialogue. The common good is dynamic, as it is continually being revitalized by the participants while, in turn, affecting the perceptions of the participants. An atmosphere of inquiry sustained in caring environments encourages the individual to be actively involved

in the continual creation of the community. The process of integration. occurring in the concrete everyday lives of individuals. quantitatively and qualitatively enriches lives by the very acts of co-creation. A recognition exists that ideas unfold from reciprocal experience and do not have momentum apart from reciprocal experience.

Paramount in the continued evolution of the learning organization is a recognition of the importance of social supplementarity. This concept contends that "rationality is pre-eminently a product of social collaboration" (Gergen, 1992, p. 220). With that in mind, the participants in formative contexts will be more willing to be open about issues and will be more accepting of themselves and others. As Roberto Unger (1987) has stated, it will then be:

> easier for us to give our attachments the qualities of love: the achievement of a
>
> heightened mutual vulnerability; the imaginative acceptance of other individuals
>
> that tears through the screen of stereotyped images, roles, and ranks; and the
>
> effacement of the conflict between our need for others and the jeopardy in which
>
> they place us. These qualities of love represent the least illusory and most durable
>
> aspect of our communal ideals: the part best able to outlast the disappointments of
>
> life and the surprises of history. (p. 593)

The community existing within the contexts of learning organizations provides host for the collective growth of individuals who actively participate in the re-creation of theory in practice.

This chapter has introduced and attempted to explain the concepts of communitarianism, postmodernism, and the learning organization. It has been noted that

dialogue has received renewed attention within current discussion addressing the three concepts. In fact, agency within the postmodern organization rests within the interactive learning involved in the creative, mutual inquiry of the dialogic process. Within the continually changing venues for discourse, diversity, both from the point of view of discipline and individual perspective, is encouraged. It is the ethical expression of diversity that revitalizes the community and is revitalized by it. In addition, what has been previously considered opposing notions actually are self-referential concepts. Stability requires the discomfort of instability in order to survive; community requires the expression of difference in order to develop and maintain cohesiveness.

Several key interconnecting concepts developed by Follett have been recognized as providing immense opportunities for instruction in the contemporary communitarian, postmodern, learning organization. The earlier portion of this chapter acquainted us both with Follett's life and the philosophical notions underlying those connections to current theory, summarizing the most salient of Follett's ideas which enlighten the present-day organization, with its emphasis on the full participation of its employees. These concepts include her notion of the "law of the situation," or situational leadership, which involves "power-with" rather than "power-over" employees. In addition, those interested in the team approach in the postmodern communitarian organization may be especially interested in her small group experience meetings and her notion of circular response, whereby individuals continually create their realities during their interactions with others. Of great importance is her concept of integration as a method of addressing conflict, rather than the usual submission, domination, or compromise methods. Integration results in a co-ordination of

desires, which leads to a dynamic, heightening evolution of human experience through reciprocal relations.

The following chapter expands upon the perceived similarities between Follettian philosophy and postmodern notions of organizing. As well, connections are drawn which establish relevance to the practical side of organizational analysis. The purpose of such an exploration is to establish the contemporary relevance of Follett's philosophy.

CHAPTER THREE

MARY PARKER FOLLETT, POSTMODERNISM, AND THE ORGANIZATION

In this chapter, I examine in more detail some of the philosophical concepts

shared in common by Follett and leading postmodern thinkers and their interpreters and

discuss their relevance to organizations and organizational analysis. The purpose is to

give credence to my contention that such similarities explain the contemporary relevance

of Follettian philosophical principles. A discussion of the variations in opinion

concerning the intricacies of postmodernist ideas and of the debate about the labeling

both of the concepts and the positions of the best-known writers in the area is beyond the

scope of this chapter. My address is limited to those concepts that have received the most

consistent reviews and which are most amenable to organizational analysis. Although I

perceive similarities between various postmodern concepts and many of Follett's ideas,

there are no lines of demarcation among the groupings of the various concepts I will

discuss (it is excruciatingly difficult even to discuss the concepts as separate entities, so

intertwined are they), nor any suggestion that postmodernist notions have evolved directly

from Follett's writings. Borrowing a Follettian concept, I shall also struggle for "power-

with" rather than "power-over" my subject matter, ever mindful both that my

concentration on similarities alone is a dangerous exercise in reductionism and that the

originating texts will be changed with my comparative analysis, just as they have been with the interpretation of each secondary author I reference.

The concepts of Follett's philosophy that are of particular relevance to organizational analysis are her notions of the desirability of an integration of desires over domination or compromise, circular response in the creation of people, "the law of the situation," organization as the process of small group government, the interweaving of individual and society, and the desirability of "power-with" rather than "power-over" others. Although various postmodernist concepts will be addressed during a comparative analysis with Follett's work, the discussion will concentrate on "undecidability" and "differance," on writing, on deconstruction, on the postmodern emphasis on organization as process rather than structured entity, and on the rejection of grand narrative in favor of local theorizing.

Undecidability/Differance and Integration/Mutualism

Both Follett and postmodern philosophers propose the necessity of the coexistence of seemingly contradictory concepts. Follett (1918/1920) proposes the mutualism of the individual and society:

> People often talk of the social mind as if it were an abstract conception, as if only the individual were real, concrete. The two are equally real. Or rather the only reality is the relating of one to the other which creates both. (p. 60)

Derrida's (1967/1973, 1978, 1981, 1988) notion of undecidability refers to the necessary coexistence of contradictory meanings within a single term. Many early languages often used the same word to denote opposites. The Egyptian word *ken* meant

both 'strong' and 'weak'; the Latin word *altus* meant both 'high' and 'deep'; the Greek term *pharmakon* meant both remedy and poison, good and bad (Cooper, 1989, p. 486). As *pharmakon*, the social translation of our writing is capable not only of recording and transmitting our knowledge, but also of legitimizing only certain forms of knowledge, while simultaneously depersonalizing knowledge by removing the person. Derrida (1967/1973, 1978, 1988) also invents the term "differance" from the French verb, "differer," to refer to the nature of a concept to *defer to* other concepts which *differ from* itself. Part of the meaning of a concept is centrifugal; it points away from itself. The meaning of the text can never be quite grasped, as it depends on something apart from itself for the inscription of meaning.

Undecidability and differance are connected also to the notion of "supplementarity" (Norris, 1987). In reference to speech and to writing, it is noted that writing was added to supplement and to serve speech as its communication device. The presence of supplementarity suggests deficiency in the original concept. The original concept points away from itself to a supplement that will give it meaning. Speech, of necessity, requires writing to overcome the need for the direct voice of consciousness. Similarly, the activities of the individual require interaction with others for the attachment of meaning. That interaction, the social bond, is a crucial supplement of our becoming. The subservient supplement takes precedence over the dominant concept.

Recognizing undecidability in an organizational context translates to a postmodern emphasis on what Lyotard (1984) calls "a search for instabilities" (p. 53). New and unpredictable moves that are antithetical to the creation of a stable environment

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are essential for progress (Power, 1990, p. 116). Roberto Unger (1987) refers to this

capacity as disentrenchment or denaturalization: "Society becomes denaturalized to the

extent that its formative practices and preconceptions are open to effective challenge in

the midst of ordinary social activity (p. 164). Unger (1987) uses the contradictory term

"negative capability" to refer to the empowerment of diversity that denaturalization

makes possible (pp. 164-170).

In contrast, the logic of logocentrism, which refers to an a priori internal logic,

depends on locatability, on presence, on decidability. A logocentric organization will

discipline the roving tendencies of text, attempting to assure stability by defining a

centripetal, consensual structure. Diversity, as centrifugal, is silenced, dishonored. But

postmodernists contend that it is not consensus, but dissensus, that demands our attention;

the need for efforts toward consensus dissipates in the absence of dissensus. The one

concept both defers to the other as necessary to its existence and differs from the other.

The community would thus wither if it ever achieved its oft-stated purpose, the stability

of consensus.

Follett's ideas concerning social interaction bear a kinship to postmodern notions

of differance and instability. This is especially apparent as she (1924) discusses the

paradoxical nature of efforts to achieve cooperation:

> It is interesting to notice that the adjustment of difference becomes increasingly
>
> important as cooperation increases, for cooperation instead of automatically
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> absorbing difference, as is sometimes thought by theorists, does nothing of the

sort actually. When men come together to do something, the first thing that is obvious is their differences; the question then is what to do about it. (p. 164)

Follett believed that the practical answer to the "question" lives within the activity of integration. The elaboration of the integrative process became a focal point for Creative Experience (1924) and many of Follett's lectures to management (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941). Her discussion is enlightening for the contemporary organization, as she (1924) talked of several ways of dealing with conflict (p. 156). One way was the *voluntary submission* of one side. The contemporary organization would choose this solution only if it thought it could survive on the ideas of the few. Alternately, a struggle can ensue with one side eventually gaining a victory over the other--Follett's *domination*. This activity benefits no one, as attention is focused on gathering forces for the next skirmish. Part of that attention often involves resistance, passive or active, against those who have "power-over" us. *Compromise*, Follett's suggested third solution, involves sham reconciliation and a postponement of the issues. We do not discard our unsatisfied desires; we keep them with us, ever watchful for an opportunity to insert them in the game plan. Given that, compromise is not a solution at all.

Our integrity is maintained only by seeing clearly our diverse concerns and defining those concerns in integrated activity. "The basis of all cooperative activity is integrated diversity" (Follett, 1924, p. 174). The principle of *integration* rests on the notion of a creative answer which combines the diverse issues to arrive at a new solution that satisfies everyone's interests. Diversity can continue to thrive; consensus and dissensus coexist. Disagreement is embraced because it is viewed differently:

Fear of difference is dread of life itself. It is possible to conceive conflict as not necessarily a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities, but a *normal* process by which socially valuable differences register themselves for the enrichment of all concerned. One of the greatest values of controversy is its revealing nature. The real issues at stake come into the open and have the possibility of being reconciled. A fresh conflict between employers and employees is often not so much an upsetting of equilibrium, really, as an opportunity for stabilizing. Our unfortunate ethical connotations are a handicap to clear thinking. (p. 301)

Thus, similar to the postmodernist contention, Follett believed that concepts we have been constrained to think of as opposing or incompatible are complementary. Indeed, the one concept is necessary for the survival of its opposing notion. The secret of integration and cooperation lies in the honoring of diversity and conflict. The settling and unsettling of our relationships create integration as a fluid process, always necessary as differing interests move within the group, always leading to new ways of creating the process of the group. Reducing the conflict of the process reduces creative potential:

We should see life as manifold differings inevitably confronting one another, and we should understand that there is no peace for us except *within* that process. There is no moment when life, the facing of differings, stops for us to enjoy peace in the sense of a cessation of difference. We can learn the nature of peace only through an understanding of the true nature of conflict. (Follett, 1924, p. 262)

Perhaps Follett's best known example of integration concerns the "library window" incident (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, p. 32). She wanted fresh air, so wanted a window opened. Her colleague did not want his papers blown about. An integrative solution satisfied both. A window was opened in an adjoining room. As Kolb, Jensen, and Vonda (1996) have so aptly pointed out, all we know about the library window incident is what was done with the window (p. 158). We are ignorant of the dialogue that passed between Follett and her colleague. Although the solution seems simple, Follett (1924) was aware that integration of desires was often much more difficult than submission, domination, or compromise. Much of the difficulty associated with the process of integrative decision-making exists because, as Follett (1924) points out, integration occurs in the sphere of activities before it enters the realm of ideas: "In controversy the real consensus takes place subterraneously in the motor activity of the controversy, while the intellectual form of the controversy must proceed in terms of language and does not keep pace with the real integration" (p. 176). Follett reversed the commonly accepted order, as we usually think that our ideas drive our activity.

Follett's notion of integration revolutionized the concept of management on several counts. The logic of unilateral decision-making comes under scrutiny. If purpose is derived from our integrated activities, the rationality of mandated goals dissipates. "Some people want to give the workmen a share in carrying out the purpose of the plant and do not see that that involves a share in creating the purpose of the plant" (Follett, 1924, p. 82). Opportunities for dialogue interwoven with activity are crucial in that the evaluation and revaluation of interests is impossible without activity-integrated discourse.

However, the difficulty of newer creative styles of decision-making is recognized. "We can more easily choose one way to the exclusion of the other; it takes more effort and far greater intelligence to give both a place" (p. 173). An awareness of that difficulty may create more patience for and acceptance of the constant upheaval created by the expression of diverse viewpoints. We will no longer act as "the man whose fear of difference is so great that he looks alarmed if the most friendly argument breaks out at the dinner table" (p. 301).

Circular Response and Writing

Integration assumes circular response. Follett's (1924) notion of reciprocal relating, or "circular response," is one of her most important philosophical contributions to the understanding of organizations. The contention is that we create one another, that our becoming is a continuous interweaving of our communication with others.

Follett believed that cause and effect, or stimulus and response, are not entities but activities with no distinct lives. The words are misnomers, as cause dwells in effect and effect dwells in cause; the words refer only to moments in the process that have been extracted for the purpose of description. The relationship is symbiotic. "We shall see that the activity of the individual is only in a certain sense caused by the stimulus of the situation because that activity is itself helping to produce the situation which causes the activity of the individual" (Follett, 1924, p. 60). Response is response only because it is part of the activity; otherwise, it would be called something else. Thus "activity always does more than embody purpose, it evolves purpose" (p. 83).

Response assumes relation, reciprocation. As we relate to people, they change with our relating, in turn, changing us and our subsequent relating. As Follett (1924) stated, "my response is not a crystallized product of the past, static for the moment of meeting; *while* I am behaving, the environment is changing because of my behaving, and my behavior is a response to the new situation which I, in part, have created" (pp. 63-64). Circular response thus involves continual movement, in which we are always being created on the rebound, so to speak. That creation is an elusive process, something we can never quite grasp, because its happening depends on activities which point away from it.

The individual's and society's actions and reactions are thus undeniably connected. One is not simply reaction and the other action. Individuality and society evolve in symbiotic fashion from the constant interplay. Follett (1924) compared reciprocal relating to the notion of compound interest in that part of the activity of the growing is the adding of the growing, the increment of the increment (pp. 64-65). Her (1918/1920) elaboration warrants extensive quoting:

> The relation of the individual to society is not action and reaction, but infinite interactions by which both the individual and society are forever a-making: we cannot say if we would be exact that the individual acts upon and is acted upon, because that way of expressing it implies that he is a definite, given, finished entity, and would keep him apart merely as an agent of the acting and being acted on. We cannot put the individual on one side and society on the other, we must understand the complete interrelation of the two. Each has no value, no existence

without the other. The individual is created by the social process and is daily

nourished by that process. There is no such thing as a self-made man. What we

think we possess as individuals is what is stored up from society, is the subsoil of

social life. (pp. 61-62)

The implications of Follett's views for contemporary organizations are much the

same as they were early in the century. While it often occurred, Follett stated, that

solutions to difficult situations were attempted by studying the situation alone, she

contended that the employees *and* the situation had to be studied together, as they were

inextricably connected.

Derrida's notion of "writing" can be compared to Follett's reciprocal response, as

his notion gives precedence to the reflexive nature of writing. Writing does not have

impact as a functional neutral, whose purpose is only to supplement direct speech in the

communication of a supposed objective reality. We relate to that which has been

inscribed, and we further inscribe as a reflection of that relation.

The physical act of writing is concerned only with the structure and style of the

representation, not with meaning and content (Cooper, 1989, p. 484). But meaning is

necessarily inscribed for writing to have purpose, thus the object is dependent upon the

interpretation of the subject. Meaning comes on the rebound, similar to the impression

left on the base of the magic slate after the celluloid has been lifted (Cooper, 1989). It is

not the marks on the celluloid that are significant; they are easily erased. But the marks

that remain on the base of our subconscious come to life in the inner interweavings of our

mind. The reflection on the base of the pad is what forms our reality; the representational thus becomes the real.

Representation takes the form of the communal sense-making activities, verbal or nonverbal, of at least two people. Social interchange, the representational, is thus necessary for language to come to life. Written words, as individual activities, remain inert marks unless someone other than the writer ascribes meaning. The creation of text by an individual has no independent meaning. The essence of speech is its "for others" connotation (Harvey, 1986, p. 195). Our relationship to ourselves is thus contained within the currency of social exchange. The distinction between speech and writing is therefore overthrown, speech desiring writing for breadth of circulation and the writing having no meaning without the subjectivity of signification evolving during dialogue. Sense and meaning are enigmatic collective processes, as the essence of a message always points away from itself. Follett's (1918/1920) concept of circular response is similar to this postmodern position: "We find the true man only through group association. The potentialities of the individual remain potentialities until they are released by group life" (p. 6).

Acceptance of Follett's concept of circular response and Derrida's opinion of the nature of writing have an impact on the view of and importance granted to organizational communication. If our language is identified not as a functional tool for imparting knowledge, but as interactively being involved in the formation of knowledge itself, we will become more alert to the socially creative aspects of communicative efforts. If we discard the assumption of the objectivity of communication, we become more open to

that communication being questioned. We may become more aware of our logocentric bias--a presupposed metaphysical structure and an a priori internal logic of our speech patterns. That awareness may lead to a critical examination of our assumptions. The new rationality will be "based not on finding answers to problems, but on 'problematizing' answers" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 101). Organizations can expect that this process will be difficult, because, as Brookfield (1988) stated, "becoming aware of assumptions that are so internalized that they are perceived as second nature or common sense is problematic precisely because of the familiarity of those ideas" (p. 90).

If we are aware that our relations with others help to form us, we may be more empathetic also to our dwelling within others. In addition, if our becoming depends on our relationships, we will recognize that there is no opportunity for the longevity of what Follett termed "power-over" others; that, in fact, the concept is self-destructive. Only "power-with" others is assured immortality. Leaders, recognizing that they have attained their positions only through inference, and that their power gains validity only through mutualism, are thus invested with the duty to draw from every person their fullest potentialities and to provide venues for interaction that will encourage the development of potentialities.

Deconstruction and the "Law of the Situation"

Derrida's notion of deconstruction and Follett's concept of the "law of the situation" are both introductory to, and part of, the concepts of the succeeding section--local theorizing and small group government.

The concept of deconstruction begins with the assumption that there is no a priori knowledge. What is accepted as knowledge has received its validity because of the meaning we have attached to it, similar to writing. Meaning and understanding are not intrinsic to our writing, nor to what we define as knowledge. They have to be constructed. By reversing that process we can recognize the artificiality of that construction. Thus we may become more aware of our ability to create fluidity in that construction to reflect our integrated values. We can learn to problematize the tendency to generalize our answers.

Deconstruction allows us to recognize what Unger (1987) calls false necessity, which refers to our tendency to act as if we are constrained by the routines of social reproduction. These routines Unger calls "formative contexts"--"the basic institutional arrangements and imaginative preconceptions that circumscribe our routine practical or discursive activities and conflicts and that resist their destabilizing effects" (pp. 6-7). These formative contexts often cause the inhabitants who move within them to lose sight of whether the context constrains or facilitates their creative activity and of the extent of their ability to effect change within the context. The measure to which an organization will be stable, according to Unger, depends on the extent to which those formative contexts can be challenged and overturned in the midst of ordinary social life. He calls this concept negative capability. The nature of deconstruction is similar. Construction will advance, the organization will progress, only insofar as it can accommodate continual deconstructive exercises.

Derrida's deconstruction is similar to Lyotard's "agonistics" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 101). "Agonistics" refers to the contests that give drive to our social life. As soon as the element of the struggle goes out of the language games that we play, their power to motivate human action dissipates. The vivaciousness of our social bonds depends on the alacrity of our language moves and counter moves. Viewed thus, agreement would be considered as an anemic objective, as antithetical to organizational survival. Disparity, indeterminacy, differance, undecidability: these are the source of human advancement. "Answers are merely temporary inversions of problems, . . . expressions of the 'haste of wanting to know'" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, p. 101).

Detractors of postmodernism charge the concept with nihilism and assure us that the embracing of postmodern concepts is self-destructive (Harvey, 1989, p. 116). The point, however, is missed. Lyotard's (1984) opinion bears repeating: The issue is one of problematizing answers. The purpose is to deconstruct, not destroy. Construction is a necessary part of the continual process of deconstruction. Each concept points to the other.

Follett (1924) also stressed the importance of the deconstructive process. During her discussion of the process of integration she said:

> In my emphasis on integration, it must not be supposed, however, that I ignore the part of disintegration in the creative process. . . . We should always see the relation between disruptive and creative forces; disruption may be a real moment in integration. . . .We see clearly disruption itself as a constructive process. . . . Often it is disruption which leads to fresh and more fruitful unitings, . . . disruption is . . . a

part of that total life process to which, in its more comprehensive aspect, we may give the name integration. (p. 178)

Follett sought a practical way to take advantage of the differences that we cannot eliminate (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941). Why should friction of viewpoints be any less valuable than mechanical friction? We can capitalize upon friction of the minds in the same fashion. Follett thought integration would help us take advantage of difference. Integration involved a continual process of obeying the "law of the situation." That process of continually responding to the situation would honor diverse viewpoints. The concern would not then be one of encouraging people to obey orders, but allowing the order to evolve from the situation. That process would eliminate subordination, which involves "power-over" and offends human nature, and would replace it with "power-with" one's cohorts. This alternative, rather than eliminating disagreement, actually makes more room for it. Obeying the law of the situation allows us to *repersonalize* (p. 60) our interactions, as we do not separate them from their context: "We cannot have sound relations with one another as long as we take them out of that setting which gives them their meaning and value" (p. 60). The situation and the orders arising from it coexist and are always evolving.

The recognition of the paradoxical nature, not only of construction, but of many of our other activities, is not the exclusive achievement of postmodern philosophers. Conflict has been long recognized as a prerequisite for learning. Within the individual, or between the individual and the environment, it is heterogeneity, not homogeneity, that gives rise to the realization that our "knowledge" is incomplete or flawed. Inconsistencies and contradictions motivate learning because they challenge our

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assumptions and encourage us to scrutinize our values. The famous Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, in his study of children, found that learning occurred through the dynamic process of assimilation and accommodation, which were continually unbalanced as new inconsistencies surfaced (Furth, 1969). Similarly, Kohlberg (1969) suggests that moral development occurs in relation to moral dilemmas that present themselves to the established framework. Within the formative context of an organization, tension occurs among functional units that perceive of the environment in contradictory ways. Not only to recognize this contradiction but to encourage it and to provide for it an open, honest, and caring forum for integrative expression is the challenge for the postmodern organization.

Local Theorizing and Small Group Government

Logocentrism leads to grand theorizing, to universally applicable explanations. Grand theorizing is the aim of the empirical research of modernism. Theories that are applicable to the general understanding of the nature of the individual, society, organizations are suggested (Ritzer, 1992, pp. 632-636). Postmodernists contend that grand theories are inherently oriented toward the maintenance of order and control by defining boundaries and setting up limits (Power, 1990, p. 110). Foucault, in his book, The Birth of the Clinic, refers to a self-identified group of experts who establish truth and falsehood through their statements (Burrell, 1988, p. 223). Only certain forms of knowledge are labeled valid. Only those questions that serve habitually to validate that recognized knowledge will be tolerated.

The theories suggested by modernism, according to postmodernists, put the answers before the question, thus perpetuating the status quo. Lyotard (1984) identifies

the domination of technical reason, what he calls "performativity"--the ideal of efficiency and optimal performance--as that which guides knowledge. Feminists and people of color point to the Eurocentric male bias of what is considered knowledge. Lyotard (1984) contends that theoretical discourse is contained within the power and monetary structure. The poor and the powerless have little influence over what is defined as knowledge. Those without power and money cannot purchase the technology necessary to give breadth to their direct speech through the medium of writing (writing defined here as all forms of communication). The voices that receive "air time" are those that are validated. Lyotard speaks of postmodernism as incredulity to such metanarratives. "Let us wage war on totality; let us be witness to the unpresentable; let us activate the differences" (p. 82).

Replacing metanarratives in postmodern thought leads to a process of local theorizing, which involves the creation of "synthetic" or alternative "smallish" narratives that suit the situation and allow for diversity. In such a way, all voices are honored. Lyotard's notion of "paralogy" refers to the introduction of the new moves created through the continual interruption of the forced consensus of the grand narrative. Foucault describes the method of historical analysis used in place of the metatheorizing of modernism as "archaeology" (Burrell, 1988, p. 223). The archaeological method perceives discontinuities in discourse, yet continually engages in series of discourses, in order to understand the diversity and sometimes amorphous nature of those discourses. Interweaving the strata of the discourses are continually changing synthetic theories that are reflective of the discourses. The theoretical ideas thus emerge from the activity and

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develop a reciprocal connection with the activity, as each informs the other. Theory and practice are wed.

Likewise, Follett emphasizes the "neighbourhood group" as the desirable political entity. Her belief grew from her years of social work within the poorest neighbourhoods of Boston. Follett (1918/1920) expressed the belief that "society" exists for us only through our groups and not in a larger universal sense (p. 20). We are members of many groups, many organizations, simultaneously. Our participation in these groups is the process that gives shape to our lives. She believed that democracy is not "ballot box" defined but is an activity that is created within the workings of our groups.

Follett (1918/1920) appreciated that the process of integrative thinking was not an automatic skill. She suggested five methods for the development of the group through the raising of neighbourhood consciousness (pp. 204-205). First, there should be regular experience meetings to consider issues, not just sporadic meetings called for specific purposes. Second, there should be genuine dialogue at these meetings. Third, there should be much learning together, through lectures, classes, the shared experiences of social gatherings, and learning of forms of community art. Fourth, there should be more responsibility taken by everyone for the life of the neighbourhood. Fifth, there should be some connection established between the neighbourhood, city, state, and national governments. Follett (1918/1920) believed so strongly in the ability of the group that she completed The New State by declaring with conviction that "the time spent in evolving the group spirit is time spent in creating the dynamic force of our civilization" (p. 372).

Similar to contemporary postmodernists, Follett regarded the search for consensus as the ironing out of the creative complexities of the collectivity. In contrast to consensus, her concept of integration honored diversity, and its incorporation was necessary for the small group government that she advocated. Follett's emphasis on integrative discourse of the group requires the exercise of Derrida's deconstruction or "metaphorization" (Cooper, 1989, p. 483), as participants continually examine the content and effects of their various interests, the structured metaphors of their logocentrism. Deconstruction encourages participants to allow for the entry and integration of what may have been considered conflicting viewpoints, to embrace that which is necessary for our healthy survival--*differance*--the division that simultaneously separates and joins. Deconstruction is an important companion to the success of the local theorizing efforts both to the neighbourhood groups of Follett's time and the groups that gather within our contemporary organizations. The neighbourhood groups would be involved in the local theorizing that is compatible with postmodern philosophy and would be governed by the "law of the situation." This latter concept gives credence to the ability of everyone to contribute, to Follett's notion of "power-with" rather than "power-over."

Contemporary organizational analysis displays characteristics of Follett's group government idea and the "local theorizing" notions of postmodernism (Gergen, 1992). Not only has narrative research gained a place alongside empirical research, empirical research itself honors the place of the narrative within its own boundaries. Efforts to give voice to diverse viewpoints is the *raison d'etre* for the various forms of narrative research. There still remains, within what has been termed "qualitative" research,

vestiges of the temptation to base validity on the generalizability of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), to adhere to our "quantitative" habits. The substance of much scoffing at postmodernism is similar, the charge being that its concepts lose validity in that they are described with modern terminology. The weakness does not invalidate postmodernism; it is evidence, rather, of our difficulty in defining something different when we have only the terms of the previous concept in our repertoire. Recall Follett's (1924) contention that our activity precedes our intellectual ability to give it words (p. 176).

The current emphasis on action research, which involves the active participation of the researcher in the field situation, honors local theorizing activities. The purpose of the process of action research is to make changes in response to the integrative will of the participants as it is expressed through their activity. The rationality of action research lies in the integration of diversity. On the other hand, "the theory of consent rests on the wholly intellectualistic fallacy that thought and action can be separated" (Follett, 1924, p. 198). But "there is no will of the people except through the activity of the people" (p. 205). Ideas emerge from experience and have no life apart from experience. While some express concern that the place of the researcher continues to be privileged (D. Shakotko, personal communication, September 10, 1996), others, while in agreement, might contend that that awareness allows for the continual reciprocal deconstruction of bias in the effort towards integrative activities. There may be no better way to achieve this critical inspection, given our difficulty in recognizing our own biases. It is also important to keep in mind, as Collins (1991) states, that "if the conditions described here refer us to

an ideal situation, efforts to attain it are worthwhile even though we fall short" (p. 12).

These matters receive more attention in the next chapter.

The contemporary attention given to "organizational culture" (Linstead &

Grafton-Small, 1992; Schein, 1984, 1992; Trice & Beyer, 1991) reflects a postmodern

recognition that culture is situationally idiosyncratic and constantly evolving and that the

culture and the individual are involved in reciprocal creation. A proliferation of writing

on socialization recognizes the importance of the inculcation of culture for the success of

internees in any organization (Judson, 1991; Trice & Beyer, 1991). That that culture is

also recognized for its ability to control and manipulate the initiate (Ray, 1986) is further

evidence of *pharmakon*, the contradictory nature that postmodernism claims is contained

within many concepts.

<div align="center">The Individual and Society as Process</div>

As noted, the rationality of logocentrism rests on presence. As fully constituted

experiences, an event or a thing can be studied as an entity, and logical conclusions can

be deduced from that observation. Cooper (1989) cites the individual and society as

examples of what social science has previously defined as entities that display presence.

Postmodernists and Follett view the individual and societal organizations not as entities,

but as process.

The subject, a process, is de-centered as the locus for understanding. Instead,

understanding is to be sought within the language games of our discourse. There exists

no entity to be understood, only an elusive process whose truth is propelled away as we

pursue it. Human agency is not bounded, but is created within our discourse, the symbol

system we use to communicate. We have no identity except through these symbols; our agency flows as relations within the strata of our communication. That communication, which is the representational, thus becomes our reality.

According to Bohm (1996; also as cited in Senge, 1990) there are two forms of discourse: discussion and dialogue. Discussion comes from the same root as percussion and concussion and involves, not an intermingling of ideas, but a back and forth exchange, where the purpose is to have one's own ideas prevail. Postmodernist social theorists prefer the notion of dialogue, which comes from the Greek roots *dia* and *logos*, which connote "meaning flowing through" (Issacs, 1993, p. 25). During dialogue, participants learn to deconstruct their logocentric assumptions and establish venues for the vigorous explorations of the collective background that is the substance of integration. Meaning can be simultaneously discovered, examined, and created. New possibilities constantly emerge through the dialogic exploration of diverse viewpoints. The integrative process of dialogue is a creative activity. As such, it opposes consensual decision-making, which generally is concerned more with compromise than the more ambitious and difficult exploration and deconstruction of underlying patterns of meaning. Dialogue is the substance of the organizational learning process (Senge, 1990).

Within the dialogic process, the identity of the individual is a fluid process. As Follett (1918/1920) stresses, individuals cannot be separated from one another. They coalesce; they are confluent. Indeed, the word "individual" is a modification of the Latin *indiuiduus*, meaning "not divisible" (Partridge, 1958, p.160). Follett (1918/1920) expressed the notion most eloquently:

It is as in Norway when the colors of the sunset and the dawn are mingling, when

to-day and to-morrow are at the point of breaking, or of uniting, and one does not

know to which one belongs, to the yesterday which is fading or the coming hour--

perhaps this is something like the relation of one to another: to the onlookers from

another planet our colors might seem to mingle. (pp. 60-61)

The relationship of the individual to society is thus implied. They are indivisible,

they evolve simultaneously. Follett (1918/1920) espoused a communitarian philosophy in

her exultation of the connectedness of the person and society, the belief that the individual's

will was created through one's connections with others.

It was not that Follett disagreed with the concept of individualism. She insisted that

individuals did not have to give up their individuality in deference to the whole.

"Whether we are talking of the individual man, or individual department, the word should

never be sacrifice, it should always be contribution. We want every possible contribution

to the whole" (Follett, 1932/1937, p. 164). Follett did not believe, however, in an

atomistic libertarian approach; true individualism was arrived at only through association.

"The individual . . . can never make his individuality effective until he is given collective

scope for his activity" (p. 73).

The essence of freedom is thus not contained within the irrelevant spontaneity of

particularism, but in the fullness of relations with one another. One's freedom is contained

within one's ability to be dynamically involved through one's will in the activity of the

evolving creation of society. It is the collective scope that provides opportunity for the

individual to achieve to the fullest. The collectivity should not suppress the individual, as it is only through the collectivity that one achieves one's whole nature.

This social interpenetration Follett (1918/1920) referred to as a psychic force. The individual is both centripetal and centrifugal and creates, through the radiating, converging, crossing, and recrossing energies with others, the psychic force of society (p. 75). She viewed society and the individual, not as an organism, but as a moving and roving power with center and circumference indistinguishable and mutually supportive (Wood, 1926, p. 760). While liberalist notions construct individuals as developed entities, first existing, then coming together to form something else called "society," Follett contended that society is not the numbers that result from such a practice, but an evolving process. That process, as a psychic force, is always shifting, constantly changing and being changed.

Summary

It is especially within the realm of "representation" that Follettian and postmodern philosophy meet to serve the organization. If our becoming does indeed depend upon our reciprocal relating and our "language games," the contemporary organizational emphasis on culture, a representation, is well placed. The cultural study of organizations serves as a cross-disciplinary process that includes psychology, sociology, history, political science, ethics, and semantics, for example. Organizational researchers talk about the importance of symbols, idiosyncratic language, rites of passage, subculture, and of sense-making (e.g., Trice & Beyer, 1993). Within the contemporary organization, the representational has become the real in a sense not foreseen by many postmodern thinkers, let alone Follett, as computer technology allows us to communicate almost exclusively by written

symbol. The social effects of computer communication have not been explored to any great extent although some authors (e.g., Postman, 1993) recognize that the introduction of computer technology changes not just one aspect of our relating; it alters the whole process.

Follett did not live during postmodern times. She did not use the terminology of postmodernism. She did not emphasize the importance of the representative symbols of society in the contemporary study of organizations. She did not use the words "culture," "socialization," or "metaphor." She had not heard Marshall McLuhan's (1964) dictum, "The medium is the message." Yet postmodern organizational analysts may turn to her writings to gain an appreciation of the history of their ideas. Follett's writings may lend a practical slant to an elusive philosophical discourse concerning the intricacies of organizational communication.

The discussion of the commonalities between Follettian philosophy and postmodern notions is an individual exercise in sense-making. My choice of the groupings of undecidability and differance with integration and mutualism; circular response with writing; deconstruction with the "law of the situation," local theorizing with small group government, and a discussion of the individual and society as process have been somewhat arbitrary. Another might choose a different way to discuss the concepts. What is undertaken here is an attempt to achieve "power-with" rather than "power-over" Follettian and postmodern philosophical ideas and relate them to current practical organizational analysis. The purpose of this process is to lend credence to my contention that Follett's work enjoys contemporary relevance.

The following chapter discusses the research process. An effort at a postmodern notion of research and research reporting is attempted in this study. A discussion of methods is interwoven with a postmodern deconstructive process that analyzes and problematizes the constructed fashion of the research process itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCERNING METHOD

Within this chapter I reciprocally construct and deconstruct the study method, both with reference to selected literature and to my approach. The purpose of this research is to study Follett and her philosophical principles within a postmodern perspective in relation to a contemporary workplace. A postmodern approach assumes an evolving method based upon the participant involvement and relationship with each succeeding technique and with me, as the researcher. Retrospectively, within this chapter I address those methodological techniques that were utilized in the research and discuss their use in a fashion that encourages "power-with" rather than "power-over" research participants. I begin with a note on the place of the researcher in a postmodern study. The practical intricacies of the interview process are examined for applicability to this research. An initial discussion focuses heavily on relevant philosophical issues with which the postmodern researcher struggles.

The Researcher

Postmodern researchers view themselves neither as objective onlookers nor as "noise," the sound of which should be corralled and muffled as much as possible, but as integral players in the research process. The distinction between researcher and researched, between the self and other, is addressed anew in postmodern research. As

Fine (1993) states, much of qualitative research has set up a "self and others" dichotomy (p. 70). Postmodernism attempts to interrupt that dichotomy. Postmodern researchers consider themselves and their behavior and attitudes as much to be analyzed and interpreted as the behavior of other participants. Continually and consistently, postmodern researchers attempt to address their own experiences and the effect that their life's history will have on the manner in which the stories of others will be told.

To a large extent, the stories that emanate from the research process are considered autobiographical, a reflective and evolving product of the researcher's experiences. The postmodern researcher, by assuming and accepting this, reflects upon the interconnection between self and others in the research and analyzes the path of the evolution, knowing that the analysis itself constitutes part of the process. More lengthy philosophical discussions are warranted in the written document, as postmodern researchers speak about their philosophical thoughts and discuss the manner in which the research, in every aspect of its interrelationships, simultaneously reflects and shapes those thoughts. The researcher searches for the instabilities and the logocentricity of the texts and deconstructs both those perceived contradictions and patterns of similarity.

Postmodern researchers, in Fine's (1993) words, "work the hyphen" of the self-others notion of the researcher and researched relationship (pp. 70-82). With that in mind, privilege is probed and examined, and "objective" distance is traded for the acceptance of researcher intentional and/or unwitting collaboration in the research process. There is no assumption that the hyphen will dissipate with attention; it still exists. I was not an employee of the company in which I did my research. I *was* a

"foreigner." However. I discard the assertion that the research process was unaffected by my intrusion; I do not ignore the hyphen. Rather. I acknowledge it and address its implications for my research. As Fine notes:

> When we opt, instead, to engage in social struggles *with* those who have
> been exploited and subjugated, we work the hyphen, revealing far more about
> ourselves, and far more about the structures of Othering. Eroding the fixedness of
> categories, we and they enter and play with the blurred boundaries that proliferate.
> (p. 72)

Although the postmodern researcher embraces the deconstruction of the division between self and others as a research objective in itself, the researcher still approaches the study with the realization that deconstructive activity may not be readily accepted by the "others." Awareness of the oft prevalent perception of the researcher's position as one of domination alerts the interviewer to the necessity of continually addressing the manifestations of, and reactions to, such perceived domination. Such manifestations and reactions may have become so ingrained in what has been previously defined as the "self and others" relationship of the research process that confronting the ramifications of such attitudes may consume much of the energy of the research process; rapport-building often takes considerable time. My position as a graduate student, the philosophical nature of my research, my academic manner of speaking, and my dress identified me as an intellectual, mental, and emotional, as well as a physical, outsider.

Most of the company employees were quiet at the general meeting at which I first explained the nature of my research. Joe, the quality control manager, noted that he, too,

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was often met with silence at these meetings. He suggested that the employees often were not interested in the broader aspects of their employment. I wondered though if he, as well as I, were perceived to be the rational, articulate, and professional voices that were defining the legitimate topics for discussion, thus privileging our stories to the exclusion of those of the Others. If that was the case, the Others may be displaying not disinterest so much as domestication. The fact that I needed to secure the approval of the management before entering the company and talking at the general meeting may have encouraged the employees to view me as aligned, in a hierarchical company division of self and others, with management and not with them. If that happened, and I suspect that it did to some extent, the self-others alignment of the research process may have been further solidified.

I had hoped to elicit more interviewees from the general employee contingent at the outset. The five original volunteers were mostly from management. Did the rest of the employees view the study as something apart from them? If so, how did I eventually encourage the employees to "work the hyphen"? How did I negotiate my role, as the domesticator, in releasing the voices of the domesticated, the tranquilized? How was I able to assure the constrained participants that activating their voices would not only go unpunished, but be rewarded? In other words, how did I translate the study to something that would be of direct and practical relevance to all the participants? Did I effect changes in the original degree of willingness to participate, or was it some other factor quite independent of me that brought about the change? Such questions may not have been considered in many studies of the past, let alone have caused the researcher to

agonize over ways to interrupt both a participant-assumed hierarchical pattern of

relationships and the unwitting perpetuation of such a pattern by everyone involved in the

process. My efforts to deal with the issue of researcher relationship to participants

constituted an integral portion of the study. Failure to ameliorate a potential hierarchical

nature of relationships might have labeled the study as management-controlled, made a

mockery of the postmodern concern for granting everyone voice, and given a distasteful

slant to the Follettian philosophical notion of reciprocal response in the creation of

people.

The definition of rapport building as the process of building trust and good will

with participants involves ongoing attention in any study. In this study, the credibility

both of a postmodern approach and of contemporary applicability of Follettian philosophy

was dependent upon the extent to which hierarchy could be mitigated within the research

relationships.

Case Study Approach Examined

The research undertaken in this dissertation could be termed a case study. Having

said that, some description of what that involves and does not involve with reference to

this study would be appropriate. This portion of the chapter talks of case study process

that is sympathetic to a postmodern approach.

As a study undertaken with a postmodern perspective, any definition of case in

structured terms would not be compatible. Most definitions of case study speak of

research as entity, of the case as a "functioning specific" (Stake, 1994, p. 236) or a

"bounded system" (Smith, 1978, p. 327). Merriam (1988) refers to "a qualitative case

study [as] an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a *bounded* phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiv, italics added). The boundaries that I recognized within my study were two: The first was that imposed by the physical structure of the manufacturing plant within which I conducted my research; the second was imposed by the number of people I spoke to directly, which was limited to those employed by the company and to the former owners. I do not pretend to know how description can be both bounded and holistic simultaneously. I accept none of the items on Merriam's list of bounded phenomena as entity; programs, institutions, people, processes, and social units all are very much affected by text from many avenues. As such, they cannot be bounded. Process especially is not an entity, as process denotes movement. My learning is a process, my becoming is a process. While I may look at these processes and tell my story in an effort to make sense and find my place in the narrative, to speak of a study as leading to definitive conclusions concerning what is within a "package" would be misleading.

As well, to define "bounded phenomenon" or "bounded rationality" in terms of what we, as limited human beings, can discover, is oxymoronic, especially when one includes, as Merriam does, the word holistic. We could all too easily digress into a discussion of degrees of "boundedness," an absurd scenario, albeit somewhat cynically amusing entertainment perhaps. As the process of our becoming always points to the infusion of the effects of others, the word "holistic" loses credibility. While the efforts of our research were motivated by the desire to satisfy *the lack of* the "whole" picture, we should recognize that our attempts to make sense of our experience will never be

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satisfied. Those attempts only lead to efforts to satisfy more refined experiential "lacks" which our continuous research efforts uncover as being missing pieces of the elusive whole. Within falling short of our goals lies the discomfiting adrenalin that inspires our continued questioning. Indeed, as Follett (1924) says, "the reward for all activity is greater activity" (p. 90). Lyotard (1984) would add that "consensus is a horizon that is never reached" (p. 61). What I hope is that the study of the practical applicability of Follett's philosophical principles has lead to a greater understanding on the part of the participants of the process of organizing within their workplace. If it was found that Follett's principles have direct meaning for a receptive participant group and were instructive in the understanding of their workplace, the postmodern researcher would contend that we would enjoy a bonus. The important process of this research dwells within the activity of our gathering, in the providing of an opportunity for Follett's "reciprocal response," the mutual creative efforts to which she so often referred. The anticipated provision of a creative and interactive research venue was an indirect motivation for this study, more important in the long run perhaps than any personal desire directly to validate Follettian philosophy.

Stake (1994) refers to case study as "not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied" (p. 236). I would like to address the initial part of his quotation rather than belabor my disagreement with the latter portion. Some, Merriam (1988) for example, tend not only to speak of case study as methodology (p. xiii), but to further delimit the discussion of case study to techniques that have been given the misleading misnomers "qualitative" and "naturalistic." Interview, observation, and the mining of

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data from documentation are techniques Merriam identifies as most sensitive to the understanding of the participants' patterns of making sense of their world. In addition, narrative research has joined other qualitative techniques and is currently receiving attention as the technique most conducive to participant control (Riessman, 1993). Quantitative research techniques have primarily focused on the use of survey research. Because the participant has often had little opportunity to elaborate, but has instead usually been asked to respond to preset questions composed by outsiders and administered by the researcher, quantitative research has lost favor in a postmodern epoch. Quantitative research has also been inappropriately described as empirical, quite a malapropism, given that the term "empirical" refers to evidence that can be derived from the senses and not to any suggestion of the oft-used manipulation of numerical data.

In addition to internal inconsistencies, the debates between proponents of quantitative and qualitative research have lain waste many trees. Yin, in an exemplary attempt to diffuse rivalry between qualitative and quantitative case study research methods, has struck upon four areas of commonality between the two methods; he suggests that both methods bring expert knowledge to bear upon the phenomena to be studied, that all relevant data are unearthed, that rival interpretations are examined, and that generalization is examined and attempted (as cited in Stake, 1994, p. 245). It is advisable to address Yin's ideas with reference to a research process attempted in a postmodern fashion.

First, postmodern researchers do not masquerade as experts. While they may have an interest in areas that are different from those of the participants, posing as expert

immediately sets up a hierarchical dichotomy between researcher and participant (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). "Going native" is not the desired route either, as such efforts can be perceived as decidedly patronizing and paternalistic by participants. Empathetic understanding between the researcher and participant as reciprocal teacher and learner is more the intent of the postmodern research exercise (Kvale, 1996, p. 132,135). Second, postmodern researchers consider all data as relevant at the same time as they recognize that reporting all data is impossible. The participant and researcher are affected by many things during data creation and gathering—time, current understanding, ability, and willingness to communicate. All experiences are considered part of the postmodern research process, no activity being defined as "noise," to be eliminated before the real study can begin. Third, especially where interview and narrative research are conducted, while there may be an attempt to consider all interpretations, to give all participants voice, there is no suggestion that conflicting interpretations are rivals, but only different reports of participants' various ways of making sense of their experiences. Validity becomes associated with an onus on the part of the researcher to report the "story" in collaboration with the participant rather than the degree of "sameness" among various participants' stories. Finally, generalizability also becomes redefined. The researcher does not engage in wide-arching efforts to generalize. The researcher grows in understanding, having had the privilege of listening to the narrative "expert," to another's manner of understanding. Participants, during the telling of the stories, personally construct knowledge and learn lessons that they may apply at other times. Readers, upon reflecting on how others have made sense of their experiences, may find their own

experiences validated, may learn from another how to give voice to their concerns, may grow in understanding and empathy toward themselves and others, and may further create and formulate their own interactive knowledge.

The next section outlines the philosophical issues encountered when utilizing the interview as a technique for collecting data. Following that, I address each research process at some length and discuss my manner of dealing with discrepancies between the techniques as described in the literature and as addressed within my research. Participant observation and the semi-structured narrative interview technique will receive particular focus.

Interviewing as a Case Study Technique

Case study is not a method; it is a choice of a research "moment in a process" (Follett, 1924; Stake, 1994). Within this case study research, the interview method of collecting data was utilized. Types of individual interviews are discussed in this section. Participant observation will be explored as a form of interview. Initially, this section deals with philosophical issues to be addressed when contemplating the use of interviews.

Philosophical Concerns

Because the interview method does not assume transferability of data results, it would fall under what has been defined as qualitative study. While not enamored of the terms "qualitative" and "quantitative," a reference to the definitions in Websters Encyclopedic Dictionary (Cayne, 1988) has allowed me to understand somewhat the evolution of the current usage of the terms and the inclusion of interview within the

former term. Qualitative analysis refers to "the branch of chemistry *concerned with the constituent elements* in a compound mixture" (p. 816, italics added). Quantitative analysis, on the other hand, refers to "the branch of chemistry *concerned with the determination of the relative quantities* of the constituent elements in a compound or mixture" (p. 816, italics added). Given that research, for the most part, has been previously considered as entity, the definition is understandable. In addition, the conscription of a definition from the natural sciences as applicable to the social "sciences" confirms the propensity of researchers in the social field to establish their credibility by attempting to fashion a link to natural science. Within my research I used informal conversation, formal conversation within company meetings, and semi-structured interviews to generate data. While recognizing that interviews have been largely defined as qualitative, I prefer to think of the interview as a process of interrelations initiated with the express purpose of communicating and constructing knowledge.

Among the many writers who have addressed the interview technique, Kvale (1996) is instructive in looking at interviewing in a postmodern fashion. While he talks of entity and fails to address the role of interrelational text in influencing the dialogue, portions of his conversation are enlightening. Of particular interest is his use of metaphor in describing the postmodern interviewer (pp. 3-4). Until recently, the interviewer has been viewed as the miner. In that role, we, as researchers, can be accused of stripping the site of its valuable information, leaving, then refining that data for use by the academic community. In recent years, the traveler metaphor may be more descriptive of our role as

researchers. In the traveler role, we may view our research processes as journeys. We encounter other travelers, all of whom have their stories to tell. With them we have what we call "conversations," derived from the Latin word *conuersari*, which means "to associate with" (Partridge, 1958, p. 770).

The traveler metaphor is inadequate, however, if we think we are only discovering what already exists, mapping lands that have been there always. For during our journey, the lands we "discover" are often being *created* by the participants within the stories that they relate to us. What they tell us is knowledge in the making, very much affected by our presence and interruption. Our interviewees may never have considered our particular topics of conversation. Therefore, we do not only discover during our research process; we also create. We change the process of organizing within the company with our intrusion. What is reported is not simply what *was*, but what *is*, given the interpretation of the hour. Upon our return home, we tell our story to our listeners, all the while recognizing that our telling, too, is an exercise both in the communication of knowledge and the creation of knowledge--Follett's reciprocal response. The researcher's tale is not unlike the interviewees,' as description does not exist independently of interpretation. Readers likewise attach meaning to the story and find the researcher's story interwoven with the stories of the previous experiences that have created their beings.

As travelers, interviewers rarely leave home without some idea about where they want to journey. Purpose and structure are acceptable as contextually defined and are subject to change in response to insightful observations along the way. In other words,

although it is necessary to have a starting subject for the conversation, the grand itinerary of many research designs gives way to a situationally alert design that floats in response to the stories of the interviewees. Some stories take longer in the telling. Some lead to other stories not anticipated. Thus, while the researcher must initially explain to the participants the nature of his or her research interest, the participants then converse with the interviewer about the sense that they make of the particular topic in relation to their lived experience.

Participant Observation as Interview

Participant observation cannot be separated from interview. As a uniquely everyday way of being in the world, observation exists as an assumption for the postmodern researcher. Although literature had been read, this section was not included until the research was completed, indicating the ease with which assumptions can remain unexplained.

Much of the accessed literature proved to be of limited value except as an historical study of the evolution of participant observation. Many (e.g., Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Merriam, 1988) refer to Junker's 1960 fourfold typology which went to great lengths to divide observational roles into categories: complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant. The delineation along the continuum was related to the degree of covertness or overtness of the activity. Much later, Wolcott (1988) spoke of an active participant, a privileged observer, and a limited observer; he, too, bases his definitions on the role played by the observer in the research setting. Gans (1968) spoke of participant observation as a type of formal arrangement in

which the investigator is emotionally distracted: "It requires the surrender of any personal interest one might have in the situation in order to be free to observe it" (p. 304). Fourteen years later, Gans' (1982) identical chapter appeared in Burgess' edited text, giving the impression that little had changed in the philosophical approach to participant observation. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), while delineating the definition of qualitative observation as being subjective, emergent, and broad in scope, still speak of its purpose as triangulation, intended to verify results obtained through formal interview and documentation (pp. 343-4).

Clifford (1988) talks of participant observation as a predicament turned into a method. However, when research is conducted in a postmodern fashion, participant observation is viewed as neither predicament nor method but as " a mode of being-in-the-world characteristic of researchers" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994, p. 249). As such, it is not separate from any other part of the research but interwoven throughout the entire process. All of the unique methods used within the research involve participant observation; they include looking, listening, watching, and asking to the point that it becomes difficult to tell if there really can be any demarcation between observation and interview. As Ely (1991) points out, "interviewing cannot be divorced from looking, interacting, and attending to more than the actual interview words" (p. 43).

Having said that, however, it would be a mistake to conclude that observation just happens naturally, without effort, and can be taken for granted by the researcher. Not so. "An attitude of curiosity and a heightened attention are required in order to attend to those very details that most of us filter out automatically in day-to-day life" (Ely, 1991, p. 42).

That attention requires a period of intense immersion in the world of the participants so that the culture of the setting can be comprehended. Part of that enlightenment involves conversation, formal and informal, so that the history of the setting and the personal activities, loves, and frustrations of the participants can become known. To facilitate open conversation and unstaged observation, an atmosphere of trust must be built while the researcher and participant dwell in the borderlands of an emerging relationship. Stories are exchanged as researcher and the researched discover and create each other and constantly interchange roles in a reciprocal creative process.

The Individual Interview

Interviewing undertaken within a postmodern concern for power relations and reciprocal purpose obliges the researcher continually to address the philosophical and ethical underpinnings of the interview process. Philosophically, a penchant for postmodern research requires that the researcher develop a tolerance for the ambiguity of less structured interview processes. Lofland and Lofland (1984) talk of the purpose of the intensive interview, what they call a guided conversation, as a search to discover the informant's experience of a situation (p. 12). While this initial statement allows for the interview process to be involved in both the communication and creation of knowledge, the authors go on to say that "the unstructured interview seeks to find out what kinds of things exist in the first place" (p. 12), a statement which seems to leave little room for creation. The Loflands' definition of the interview resembles Merriam's (1988) semi-structured definition, which talks of the interview conversation being guided by a set of questions (p. 74). Likewise, Patton's (1990) standardized open-ended interview process

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begins with the interviewer approaching the interview with a set of predetermined questions for the respondent, with the purpose of eliciting responses in particular areas. The interviewee still has the freedom to structure the response individually and interpret the situation based on personal experience.

The formal interviewing within this research context has semi-structured characteristics. The purpose of these semi-structured interviews was to elicit the participants' practical interpretation of Follett's philosophical principles. For example, the law of the situation essentially means that leadership floats, based upon who has the relevant knowledge in the particular situation. After the law of the situation has been contextually defined, the questions in this instance were: Do you see situational leadership happening in your organization? Please tell me something about that process as you experience it here.

The interviewer initially introduces concepts that may not have been within the repertoire of the interviewee. Therefore, most of what the interviewee has to say will not have been given voice before. After the introductory questions, the interviewer likewise becomes enmeshed in the creation of new thought, as interviewee and interviewer combine to create a new integrative interpretation, so that, as a researcher,

I am willing to go along, to accept

the becoming

thought, to stake off no beginnings or ends, establish

no walls: (Ammons, 1968, pp. 137-138)

Merriam (1988) notes that it takes a skilled researcher to handle the flexibility of unstructured interviews, as the interviewer is faced with a myriad of viewpoints and seemingly unconnected pieces of information (p. 74). She adds that few research studies rely solely on unstructured interviews. Merriam's definition of unstructured interviews as essentially exploratory with no predetermined set of questions would be compatible with narrative research (p. 74). In most research interviews, however, the issue is not so much whether we have an initial question as it is whether we have the flexibility to adapt succeeding questions to the interviewees' interpretation of, and response to, our initial question. Totally unstructured interviews would be a rarity, as even the decision to choose one case as opposed to another suggests structure.

This Study's In-depth Interview Process

The reference to the interview process as "in-depth" considers Taylor and Bogdan's (1984) definition: *"By in-depth interviewing we mean repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words "* (p. 77, italics in original). In addition, Kahn and Cannell's (1957) definition of the in-depth interview as "a conversation with a purpose" is illustrative of my research intention (p. 149). The interviewees were invited to define contextually their understanding of the applicability of Follett's philosophy. My initial task as a researcher was one of explaining clearly the concepts of Follett's philosophy that are conducive to organizational analysis.

The stories I elicited from the interview respondents were directed toward the particular concerns of the research. In spite of the directed nature of the initial questions, the interviewees' commentaries could be termed *narratives* because the accounts consisted of the creative sense-making stories of the speakers. Narrative research--"narratology" (Riessman, 1993, p. 6)--includes the study of narrative texts and is a type of research that is compatible with a postmodern orientation. Polkinghorne (1988) refers to narrative as "the primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful" (p. 11); Mitchell (1981) says that narrative is "a means by which human beings represent and restructure the world" (p. 8); Chafe (1990) sees narratives as "an overt manifestation of the mind in action: as windows to both the content of the mind and its ongoing operations" (p. 79); and Fawcett, Halliday, Lamb, and Makkai (1984) talk of narrative as "a specific cultural system" (p. 20). The narratives related to me by the interviewees opened a window on their culture and further created that culture in the telling.

The interviews reflected the two functions of narrative identified by Cortazzi (1993, p. 44). The *referential* function of the narrative serves to give the audience information through the narrator's recapitulation of experience. The contextual interpretation of Follettian philosophy assisted the employees in understanding the concepts addressed in that they were encouraged to relate those concepts to their personal experience, which they then elaborated. The *evaluative* function of the narrative serves to establish positive communication with the audience by establishing personal involvement. It was assumed that the personal involvement of the participants was

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encouraged by the use of culturally-specific definitions and language. The narrative of the meaning created by the interviewees would involve the reader in a connecting creative relationship with the stories.

The value of the interview data lies primarily in the relating of the stories themselves; however, some interpretation is assumed, both purposely as I gathered in common threads among the stories, and subconsciously, as certain portions of the stories were selected for the document. The responsibility on the part of the researcher to understand and reliably report the narratives is understood and accepted. The fashion in which the interviews were both conducted and related affected the authenticity and the clarity of the stories told here as text.

Most authors who address interview methods (e.g., Patton, 1990; Stewart & Cash, 1985; Whyte & Whyte, 1984) talk about the importance of building *rapport* with the participants. Stewart and Cash (1985) refer to rapport as a process of building trust and good will between the interviewer and interviewee (p. 59). My previous presence as a researcher within Sedor Enterprises Incorporated (SEI) had acquainted the employees with me and the general nature of my research orientation (Armstrong, 1995). Having said that, the nature of this particular research project involved much more participant involvement in the ongoing structure of the research than did my last study with SEI. Initial invitations to be interviewed did not elicit as much response from the employees as I had hoped. The participation in a research study that may have been fundamentally perceived as highly academic, whether referring to my position or my presentation, might have discouraged willingness on the part of some employees to become actively involved.

Personal relevancy may not have been established if the approach was deemed academic rather than practical. At least that was the opinion of those interviewees who did volunteer their participation.

For these reasons, I viewed as increasingly important, as did the interviewees, a focus on the contextual and practical definition of Follettian philosophy. The initial participant observation and informal and formal interviews established a deeper rapport with most of the employees, sufficient that many more were willing to participate in the formal interview process. The purpose of initial conversations and observational activities was to allow time for the employees to become comfortable and to render our mutual activity beneficial in a practical sense. Within the interaction of the activity itself lay a large part of the purpose of the research, as the participants were involved in the Follettian processes of reciprocal response, small group government, and integration, for example. The possible desire to explore the extent of further practical application of Follettian principles, or the possibilities for such application, was a bonus.

The process of establishing rapport, as Schwartzman (1993) states, has previously been viewed as groundwork, as an activity that eliminates research "noise"--extraneous influences that interfere with the reliability and depth of the interview data (p. 48). However, with a postmodern perspective, the building of rapport is very much considered data in itself, as the activity is instructive of the culture both of the researcher and the researched. Building rapport was a major concern of this study; although a lengthy initial time for rapport building was not necessary, the process, which really is about extending respect and building trust, continued throughout the entire time with the company.

The initial five interviewee volunteers were very open in voicing their opinions regarding the nature of my research and the fashion in which they thought it should be conducted. It seemed to me that they were situating themselves in what they viewed as two separate cultural positions--the researcher's and the participant's. They displayed the self-confidence to be able to relate to what they seemed to perceive as two levels of communication, viewing their roles as interpreters, as if I and the other employees were speaking different languages. Rather than being apprehensive concerning the research, they seemed to be inviting the personal intellectual challenge that it would involve. Colin, a production floor employee, approached me after the first interviewee group meeting, enthusiastically asking more questions and requesting more written information.

While impressed by the positive reaction of the first interviewee volunteers, I was aware that I must remain cognizant that the majority of the employees might regard me as an intellectual, whose presence could be threatening. The process of building rapport was not an initial task to be achieved, but an ongoing activity of integrative effort. Each question posed was perceived as either building or detracting from rapport, as did each researcher response to interviewee questions. Rapport assumes a non-judgmental attitude on the part of the researcher to the content of what the interviewees say. In addition, in my opinion, the reliability of the research data also depends on the extent of rapport; the complexion of the data collected is undoubtedly affected by the relationship between the researcher and the participant.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) speak of elite interviewing (p. 83). Although I did not choose the interviewee volunteers, I was initially concerned that I had garnered

primarily the participation of members of the organizational management and administration. Even later, with many more interviewee participants, the concern remained that the more vocal and assertive were those who agreed to be interviewed. This may have had its advantages. The interviewees who volunteered their time and expertise were more willing, thus also more conversant and more comfortable in expressing themselves openly and honestly. However, it may have been construed by the remainder of the employees, some perhaps with less complimentary stories to tell, that this was yet another example of hierarchical separation. If that was so, my efforts to strive for organizational relevancy may have ironically exacerbated both the difficulty of my rapport-building activity with the employees as a whole and various hierarchical divisions already in place within the company. The negative relationship of such an eventuality to the essence of Follett's philosophy is another matter!

The questions posed to the interviewees followed an instructive module about Follett and each of her philosophical notions as they would be addressed in the questions (See Appendix B-2 for an outline). The instruction was interrupted from time to time by the interviewees as they asked for clarification or became comfortable enough to define contextually the concept with reference to the company. The participants were questioned during individual interviews, so as to encourage openness of communication and discourage groupthink, the tendency of group members to think alike for various reasons (Janis, 1982). An invitation to contribute suggestions toward the relevance of Follett's ideas helped to establish the importance with which I viewed the interviewees' knowledge, experience, attitudes, and feelings.

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Fontana and Frey (1993) note, as well, that nonverbal communication both informs and sets the tone for the response to, and further creation of, interview questions (p. 371). For example, changes in facial expression, body posture, and the ways in which the researcher dresses and sits all communicate to the interviewee in the question and response situation.

The research questions took an open-ended direction, as that approach speaks best to organizational context and culture. Open-ended questions are those that, according to Cohen and Manion (1989), supply a frame of reference while putting a minimum of restraint on the answers and their expression (p. 313). While the subject of the study was determined by the researcher, the content and manner of the interviewees' replies were not restricted. This allowed both the researcher and the interviewee to clarify by requesting more explanation and to probe if more depth was desired, thus creating further contextual definition of the concepts addressed. The latter technique refers to what Cohen and Manion call the "funnel" approach, starting with a broad question and narrowing down to more specific ones (p. 313). For example, I began an explanation of Follett's notion of situational leadership with the idea that we were all leaders in various situations, depending upon our area of expertise. I then related the reference specifically to Follett's notion of a situational leader and asked the interviewees if the concept had relevance with respect to their workplace experience. The initial general explanation and questions continually led to further contextually specific definitions and examples.

This section has focused on the interview and the importance and nature of the interviewer/interviewee relationship to the success of the research study. What has not been adequately addressed is the approach to research credibility in a postmodern study.

Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability: An Emphasis on Credibility

Validity, reliability, and generalizability are addressed differently when conducting interview-based research than when doing survey-based research. If research is valid in a quantitative study, it reflects the world being described, namely the situation as posed by the researcher. If the investigation is reliable, another researcher conducting a similar study should achieve similar results. However, the passage of time, with its concomitant new experiences that may change one's opinion of previous experiences, make these assertions open to debate.

Generalizability refers to the extent to which the results may be applied to similar populations. Survey research rests on the assumption that the results of a random sample can be generalized to the entire population that the sample is intended to represent (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 289). While generalization can prove to be a useful and convincing tool for the researcher, it could be alleged that the publishing of survey findings of the expected voting results of an election, for example, can create self-fulfilling prophecies. However, such overarching claims continue to characterize and decide the worth of many a quantitative research project.

References to generalizability are of limited use when using the interview method of research. The aim of a single case study research is to relate and perhaps interpret events within a setting (Merriam, 1988, p. 10). Generalizability is limited to the

possibility of readers finding that the stories of the participants relate to their own experiences, or finding that they can take lessons from the participants that are instructive in some fashion. That eventuality is not the purpose of the research, however. If it occurs, it is a gift. The worth of qualitative research lies contextually and often aims no further than for contextual significance. The important purpose of qualitative research lies within the process itself, its purpose being "to describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2).

Validity and reliability in postmodern research take on different connotations, as well. The qualitative study is valid and reliable if it is *credible*. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), the credibility of a qualitative research study is judged by its *transparency*, *consistency-coherence*, and *communicability* (p. 85). Interviews should be designed to achieve these standards.

If the study is *transparent*, the reader is able to follow clearly the path of the data collection (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, pp. 85-87). The processes followed within the study are apparent, allowing the reader to judge the study's strengths and weaknesses, intellectual and logistical. In addition, a clear picture of the researcher's personal philosophical position, biases, and assumptions is provided. The researcher is conscientious in the conducting of the research, and the reporting of the data and their analysis. Careful records are kept of the interview data; as well, the researcher keeps a log of observations and of reflections upon the research process. The interview data are kept in their originally recorded fashion. If complete written transcription of the interview is warranted, an unedited and unmarked copy is always kept. Whether the

interview has been reported from the tape or from the field notes (some interviewees do not wish to be recorded), the researcher should return to the participant to substantiate the written report. A running log of the research process, which includes the researcher's thoughts and summaries of experiences, is kept. The log helps the researcher when writing the report, as the process can be related more fully and will depend less on memory or imagination. In addition, the researcher is able more fully to evaluate the process.

According to the Rubins (1995), the goal in interview research is not so much to eliminate inconsistencies as it is to understand why they occur (p. 87). Contradictory responses within a single interview are checked out, as are inconsistencies across settings or cases. If inconsistencies are accepted, the researcher must explain why both stories are being accommodated. If one version is chosen, evidence must be given for the choice. If, as may have been the case in this study, proposed themes are refuted, it is necessary to modify original assumptions in reference to the context studied and to explain the extent to which the findings have altered the path of the research and the thoughts of the researcher.

Three sub-sets emerge from *consistency* (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 88). First, the themes that are examined within the study need to display a coherency. If they do not, the researcher should explain the apparent contradictions. This could have been a challenge within this study, as the participants grappled with the interpretation of Follettian principles in the context of their work situation. However, I began with an explanation of my interpretation of Follett's ideas, and all the interviewees seemed capable of reflecting

upon those ideas as explained and commenting on their transferability to their contextual workplace experience. Much of the value of this study rests within the dialogue that continued to allow for individual interpretation and input. A concerted reporting of the path of the dialogue allowed the researcher and reader to track the interviews and to detect emerging patterns.

Second, the consistency of each individual's story should be established (Rubin & Rubin. 1995. p. 89). Where contradictory stories emerge, the researcher should carefully and courteously check out the reasons and offer explanation within the document. It is quite plausible that interviewees change their minds, or even hold contradictory views simultaneously. For example, one can admit to being both competitive and co-operative. What does that mean? The checking of the story can often add more depth to the interview conversation and can create new understandings--reciprocal response. Checking of inconsistencies encourages a reading audience that is more likely to believe that interviewees were responding openly. In addition, the researcher is more likely to elicit reflective responses.

The third subset of consistency notes a desire for harmony across cases (Rubin & Rubin. 1995, p. 90). While this may be coming very close to generalizability, within my study this requirement translated to a repeated examination of the proposed implications of the practical application of Follett's principles. If consistencies do not occur within the interviewees' accounts of contextual applicability of Follettian principles, explanations can be offered for the differences in both contextual definition and application.

The third requirement of interview research is *communicability* (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 91). The richness of detail within the account that the researcher gives of the study setting and the research story should give the reader a vivid picture of the context. Interviewees should relate to the story and be sympathetic to the researcher's description of their accounts. While I agree with the Rubins that the reader should understand the text and accept the descriptions as accurately related, I disagree that they should do so because that would complement what they and others have seen (p. 91). It may be that they do not. The validity of qualitative research simply does not rest on such evidence of transferability or generalizability. It does not even rest on the legitimacy that the interviewees' stories give to the researcher's proposed hypothesis, as the Rubins also suggest, although that may enhance the researcher's ego. The legitimacy of interview research lies within the process itself; while the researcher begins with a purpose in mind, the knowledge creating activity comprises the essence of the study's value. Communicability is very important, not so much to validate anyone's preconceived ideas, but to further enhance learning through interpretation, as that concerns the researcher, the participants, and the reader.

Within this study, credibility was enhanced by responding to contextual situations. Such acknowledgment allowed for additional questions that were sympathetic to initial interviewee translations of Follett's principles and their application within this particular workplace. As a researcher, I was more concerned with this individual translation and application, although I considered it important to give what I interpreted as an accurate account of Follett's originally defined principles. Along the way an account was kept of

digressions from the original interpretation, the participants' and my accounts of why

these digressions may have occurred, and how they seemed to have manifested

themselves within the workplace. Responding in such a manner to evolving data lessened

the likelihood of the research project continuing on a path that indicated evidence of

obsolescence or redundancy. While accepting that I, as the researcher, affected the data

and the interpretation, every attempt was made to reflect the thoughts of the participants

and the activity as it occurred within the workplace.

Attending to the Ethical Concerns of Research

Qualitative research is value-laden and interwoven with ethical concerns (Ely

1991, p. 218). Ely lists the main ethical concerns of qualitative research lying with the

integrity of the study, the impact on the participants, and the broader social implications

of the study. Questions concerning the integrity of the study have been addressed within

the redefinition of reliability and validity in response to qualitative research. In effect, the

emphasis is placed on quality, on the value of the research, and on the honesty of the

research process. To address briefly the third issue: It would be tantamount to

constructing a false dichotomy to state that one method of research concerns itself more

with social implications than another. Any research study should be undertaken with the

aim of creating and understanding experience and its accompanying knowledge; that goes

without saying. The second issue, participant impact, will receive the most attention

within this section.

All research that includes other people involves personal and ethical obligations to

those people. When you ask others to become interviewees, to compliment you with the

expression of their opinions and feelings, you incur responsibility to respect the interviewees and their viewpoints. Attention to ethics in research means acquiring and relating information from participants in ways that will do them no harm (Neuman, 1994; Rubin, 1983).

Among these obligations is the responsibility to avoid deception by explaining honestly the purpose of the research. Although deception has been involved in research studies in the past, it is no longer acceptable to deceive informants about the purpose of the study, nor to give them misleading information within the study in order to elicit particular responses. Participants need to be made aware that their anonymous stories and the researcher's reflections concerning those stories may be related within the research document. As a researcher, I favor allowing the participants to review written reports of interview narratives in order to verify my storied accounts of the interview. While some may consider that permission as an opportunity for the interviewee to change the translation, I consider that eventually worth the rapport that consultation builds between researcher and participant. While the researcher invites the possibility that interviewees might choose to delete some of their original stories or change the interpretation, the exercise of reflecting upon one's words in print, or their interpretation, also constitutes knowledge in creation, as well as constituting an ethically polite exercise. If the choice is between reporting conversation verbatim that relates the interviewees' thoughts at the time, or deleting some of the original transcript to avoid possible hurt or embarrassment, the choice should always be the latter. The overriding message of all

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codes of ethics is to be open and honest with one's participants and to cause them no harm (Neuman, 1994, pp. 461-467).

Most educational institutions require research proposals that outline the nature of the study and the methods that the researcher plans to adopt to protect the participants. The University of Saskatchewan requires that all research projects involving human subjects be approved by the University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Human Experiment (U.A.C.E.H.E. - Behavioral Sciences). Copies of interview questions are usually required (See Appendix B-1), as well as copies of the informed consent forms that the researcher will ask that the participants sign (See Appendix C). Such consent forms state in clear and concise language for the participants the nature of the research, the background of the researcher, and the possible risks and benefits of the research. As well, the researcher usually indicates that the results of the study will be shared with the participants and indicates the degree of confidentiality of the findings. The researcher is obliged to review the consent form with the participants so that they are aware of their agreement not only to participate but to withdraw from the research at any time. The consent form used in this research study included mention that, while the results of the study would be reported in an anonymous fashion, the nature of the research interviews and the small size of the company would, in all likelihood, identify the participants to co-workers. Ethics committee approval was granted before the research began (See Appendix D).

Although the plan is above reproach in theory, in practice it does not allow for an evolving research design that responds to the participants' input. In such cases, the

researcher is simply not able to detail fully the study as demanded. As well, as the Rubins (1995) point out, the inopportuneness of pulling out a consent form while one is simultaneously trying to build rapport with participants is evident. However, having said that, when researchers plan to respond to participants with an evolving research process, the onus is increased that the research techniques undertaken in reply to participant response are respectful of the participants themselves and that no one is singled out for attention that may be embarrassing or hurtful.

Synopsis

I have attempted in this chapter to address the concerns of the researcher who undertakes a study with a postmodern sympathy. In particular, the place of the researcher is addressed and responsibility is accepted that the presence of the researcher integrally affects the nature of the stories that are told. The field study is viewed as a manner of being in the world: the distinction between observation and interview disappear as the researcher spends a great deal of time in informal discussion and sharing of living space with the participants. While often not accounted for in the stories told, time spent at the workplace allows the researcher to understand, to read meaning, to make sense of the stories, even those that are not verbalized by the participants.

Research undertaken in a postmodern fashion thus concerns itself with local context and responds to that context with an evolving research design. To that end, it is important that the voices of all employees be heard and that participants be encouraged to communicate in a language with which they are comfortable. The researcher is obligated to become acquainted with the particular workplace culture and be willing and able to

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conduct the research using the language of that culture. This does not imply that the researcher must attempt to be the same as the participants. only to be empathetic to the culture of the participants. The research process is thus turned on its head in that the participants are considered the experts. While the presence of the researcher will always be considered "noise" in a more traditional study where the reporting of the "real" world of the participants is the purpose, the researcher is a co-creator of new knowledge in a postmodern study such as undertaken here. As such, postmodern researchers continually address their part in the process and serve as arenas for the throughput of the empathetic creation and interpretation of knowledge. Therein lies the beauty of the postmodern research design; therein lies the worth of the postmodern research project.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR WORK CONTEXT

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know

What I was walling in or walling out,

And to whom I was like to give offense.

(Frost, 1949/1964, p. 48)

I have begun this chapter with a statement of my reflections, what I have sensed through the experience of this research. While the research progressed in a linear fashion, day by day, this report is written in retrospect and mirrors the reciprocation of the experience of the research with my "before-research" being. I have all my field notes and interview tapes with the many participants. By sharing them, or rather, me-plus-them, I will tell what I have learned of these people, from these people. Their stories may help us all to grow in our ability to take down the walls.

This chapter provides a narrative of the various participants in this study, what they said through their actions, and how I perceived each tale relating to the whole story. The purpose of such a narrative is to provide for the reader, for the participants, and for me, as the researcher, a picture of the investigative process in some interconnecting complexity. The straightforward description of the research setting is followed by a more reflective discussion concerning the nature of the interrelationships of the various

participants. Throughout, within, and around spins the ubiquitous interconnecting presence of the researcher.

The Case Setting Described

Sedor Enterprises Incorporated (SEI) is a company with which I was familiar; it was the site of previous research I conducted into the practical application of facilitators and inhibitors of workplace learning (Armstrong, 1995). SEI was chosen for that study after an initial interview with the former owner indicated that this company was involved in encouraging and providing formal and informal workplace learning opportunities. That interview experience led to my successful request of the present managers to continue the research within the company, thus initiating an intensive two month study at the Master's level. I judged that SEI would provide an excellent setting in which to examine the facilitators and inhibitors of organizational learning, using various research techniques within a case study.

SEI is a small manufacturing company that designs, builds, and markets ventilation units. Paul Sedor founded the company in 1980. It grew steadily over the years under the ownership and management of Mr. Sedor and his wife and business partner, Judith Sims. In April, 1992, the company was sold to a privately owned Quebec firm. Mr. Sedor continued as the general manager for two years. He was succeeded by Raymond Olette, one of the shareholders and vice-president of the parent company. Shortly after my research tenure in 1995, the company was again sold, this time to an international firm. At present, the Saskatoon plant is moving its product manufacture totally to commercial ventilation units, leaving residential manufacture to another plant.

The company has undergone several moves over the years because of its continual expansion. An employee of seventeen years has seen four moves. At present, the work environment consists of a 35,000 square foot plant. Within this area is a large production floor which encompasses approximately 80 percent of the total space. The remainder is divided into two office areas. One area houses the company general manager, the research and development team of engineers, and the members of the marketing department. The other houses the production and the quality control managers, and the operations, finance, and administrative employees. Employees within these two areas work in individual offices, with either solid permanent walls or mobile partial walls.

The number of employees varies, depending on the time of year. The time of my first study coincided with the "slow" time at the company which traditionally occurs in April and May. Layoffs of several workers, decided by seniority, had reduced the employee population to forty-seven. The employee number eighteen months later was the same. Management consists of five employees—a general manager and four department managers in the areas of production, finance, marketing, and quality control (See Appendix B-3 for an organizational chart). Twenty-one people work in production, including the team leaders. Also within the production floor area are the shipper and the receiver. Five people are on the operations team (a "sub-team" connected with production and including the shipper and receiver); four are on the finance team; four are in the engineering department. There is an assistant to the marketing manager, a technical service employee, and a person in commercial sales, all of whom are members of a marketing team that is expanding with the

change to a concentration on commercial manufacture. There is only one employee not on a team, the information administrator (computers). All the rest are members of teams.

The employees of SEI became unionized in the spring of 1992, shortly after the transfer of ownership to Trimeck from Paul Sedor, but they voted to decertify in June of 1993 after becoming disillusioned with the service provided by the union. There had been no official contract with the union, The United Steelworkers of America, during that time. At present, there is an internal bargaining unit that consists of two management people and four production employees. The company operates on a wage scale that is negotiated every three years. Settlements of grievances are attempted in seven days through a procedure agreed to by both workers and employer.

If an opening comes up within the company, employees are given first chance to bid for it. The most qualified employee usually gets the bid. All employees are encouraged to bid even if they know a co-worker with more seniority is bidding, so that management will learn of their desire for a change. According to Mark Runge, the production manager, usually about one-third of the manufacturing employees will actively request a change.

Team leaders hire people for their particular manufacturing line in consultation with the production manager. Other employees are hired by the particular departmental manager. Pay is negotiated with the person or people who do the hiring in line with, and governed by, guidelines set by company management. During slow times manufacturing employees with the least seniority will be those who will be laid off first. Usually the layoffs are only for a month or two, but the employee can be laid off for as long as a year without losing seniority.

Employees have three weeks paid vacation until they have ten years service with the company, at which time the paid holiday time expands to four weeks. A sheet is circulated so that the employee can note the desired time for vacation. Employees with the most seniority have first choice if too many people in the same department want holidays at the same time. An earned-days-off (EDOs) system was implemented a few years ago, effective for the summer months. Employees work an extra half-hour each day from May to August to earn four summer EDOs. Employees have sick day and disability benefits. There is no employee pension plan contributed to by the company.

There are tightly-structured and loosely-structured teams within the company. The more tightly-structured teams have defined team leaders, defined by that title. Those leaders have been appointed by management and are senior company employees. These teams are in production. The nature of the manufacturing work involves interdependent processes that necessitate constant interaction.

Although the members of the loosely-structured teams are joined by common interests, their responsibilities are not as interdependent as those on the tighter teams. They may have a senior member or a department manager to co-ordinate activities, but they do not have a defined team leader. Loose teams are defined by function (e.g., engineering) or by process (e.g., management information systems within operations).

The tightly-structured production teams are defined by function. The make-up of all the teams was in flux during the time of this study because of the sourcing out of the plastics to the former team leader who was starting his own business and because of the change from residential to commercial manufacturing within the plant itself. The *metals* team cuts and

shapes all the metal for the units. This team was undergoing personnel changes during my tenure, with a new team leader and some employees from other areas cross-training in the metals area. The *plastics* team, now defunct, has had its previous team members assigned to other duties in subassembly and in plant redesign. The *subassembly* and *final assembly* teams, previously separated, have been merged under the guidance of a single team leader. The subassembly team partially builds the units. Two work cells that construct whole units were also considered to be part of this former team. (With the completion of the Commercial Focus Layout [CFL] project since the period of my research, there are no longer any work cells; all commercial manufacture is completed on assembly lines.) Previously, the *final assembly* team, with its leader and seven members, completed the assembly of the residential units. During my research term, some residential units were still being built, but only three employees were engaged in their final construction. The team leaders from plastics, sub-assembly, and final assembly had had their offices in a single subdivided room next to the shop floor. With the change in the manufacturing focus, the number of team leaders had been reduced to two, one in metals and one in assembly, leaving a vacancy in the team leader office area which is located adjacent to the office of the production manager, with direct access to the administrative office area. The team leaders, and especially the production manager, serve as connectors between production and administration.

For a small company, SEI has an extensive meeting format built around various committee and project functions. My observations while attending many meetings during both my initial research and this study led me to conclude that the meeting format served as

a useful tool for information transference and creation of new ideas. Joe Smithson, the quality control manager, outlined the committee and team meeting schedule two years ago, and the pattern has continued to be followed. Meetings were scheduled at regular intervals. Committees included: Team Leaders, Operations, Social, Production, General Staff, Sales, Project, Departmental, and Product. The focus of the meetings, if not the names of the committees, had changed somewhat in the two intervening years. Of special significance during this period of my research was the change to commercial production from residential. A project that will result in a substantial change in the layout of the plant floor, the Commercial Focus Layout (CFL) project, under the leadership of the production engineer, Jerry, commanded much of the company's attention.

The meeting format within the company was, and remains, structured and purposeful. Meetings were chaired with a definite purpose in mind; committee members were prompt in arrival and informational reports were given clearly and succinctly. (Members were fined if they were late or if they forgot a meeting; the money went into a fund for the purchase of treats for everyone.) The meetings that I attended were intended primarily for two purposes: as information transfer tools (e.g., sales and general staff meetings) and/or as brainstorming venues (e.g., marketing and CFL meetings) to solicit new ideas in relation to company processes, products, or projects. They appeared to achieve those interrelated purposes. The general meetings that I attended were used to inform all employees about what was happening in every department, not just their own. Generally, the meeting structure seemed to create a forum for creative dialogue and information transfer that appeared to be used to good advantage within SEI.

The description of SEI is intricately connected with the process of the research itself. For that reason a further recounting of the company operation will be juxtaposed with a description of the process that was followed for the research study.

The Research Process

Within this section a description of the initial process of the research serves as an introduction for the story of the company as perceived through a process of participant observation. There is no demarcating line illustrating where participant observation ends and interview begins. However, for the purpose of this document the narrative of observation and interview are divided between this chapter and the next. The placement here of a discussion concerning the initial phase provides for the reader an understanding of the context of Sedor Enterprises Incorporated (SEI), the manufacturing company in which I conducted the field research.

The Initial Approach

I had been in contact with Joe Smithson and with the former owners, Paul Sedor and Judith Sims, several times since the completion of my former research study. I considered the company a good location for my current research; in addition, the majority of the employee population already was acquainted with me and had been receptive to my presence in the first study. For those reasons I decided to ask permission to enter SEI once again.

I contacted Joe, who had served as my liaison for the first study. After briefly telling me of current happenings at the plant, Joe scheduled a meeting to be attended by the general

manager, Raymond Olette; the production floor manager. Mark Runge; and the two of us. During that meeting (December 4th, 1996) I learned more about the current status of the company and presented my proposal to the three men. That proposal consisted of an introduction to Mary Parker Follett and her major ideas that had particular relevance for the workplace. These included her concepts of circular response, "power-with" rather than "power-over," "law of the situation," small group government, co-ordination, integration, and the individual and society as process (See Appendix B-2). I explained that I wanted to examine these principles for contemporary relevance within the workplace. The management team was receptive to my request. I then asked permission to speak to the employee population in order to seek their approval and invitation. Management was also receptive to that idea but suggested that I limit my presentation to fewer concepts for the time being. They were finding that the present Friday afternoon time for the general meeting was not the best and planned to change the time to Tuesday mornings in the new year. Given the time of day, the time of the week, the time of year, and the busy agenda, a half-hour time frame was considered advisable for my report of the proposal. That report was delivered on December 6th, 1996. Upon delivering my proposal, which was limited to an explanation of four of the more easily explained of Follett's principles and their suggested relevance to the working experience of the employees, I left the plant in order to facilitate a free vote on my acceptability as a researcher. That vote garnered the willing participation of five interviewees at the outset. A further meeting with those employees was scheduled for December 18th, 1996, to discuss the practical applicability of Follett's ideas, and to decide upon further research activities.

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I had planned that the five interviewee volunteers would begin with a dialogue concerning the research process to decide, for example, whether a focus group interview, including all of them, or individual interviews would be the better means for contextually examining Follett's principles. The intention was that definitions be collated with the input of the participants. A final series of definitions would be approved by participants and be arranged in the form of a survey questionnaire. That survey would be reviewed once again, this time at another general meeting. An opportunity would be afforded for employees to pretest the survey instrument before it was administered. Changes would be made based upon the feedback of the employees. After administering the survey to all employees, the results would be tabulated and reported in descriptive terms at a general meeting. Further focus group interviews or individual interviews might then have been advised for help in interpreting results contextually. What would have been done beyond the reporting would have depended on the employees. Changes within the workplace could have been suggested that reflected the wishes of the employees for more application of Follettian principles. As well, the proposed manner of those changes would have been discussed. The process of the research itself would have received attention, the employees being encouraged to provide evaluation and suggestions for future focus. The field research was expected to last between two to four months, from the time of the interviews to the final meetings with the employees.

The preceding discussion addressed the proposed research process. However, the research was affected by the evolution of the process itself. (Proposed interview questions and the actual outline referred to during the interviews, which are included in

Appendix B, were considered points of departure for the interview journey.) The process continually responded to the "law of the situation" at SEI.

The meeting with the five interviewees on December 18th, 1996, served to acquaint the five men more fully with the purpose of the research and the nature of the proposed research process. The interviewees' input was invited with reference to the research method. Although I had hoped to elicit more response from the general body of employees, those present explained that some may have been apprehensive about their ability to contribute to what they presently perceived to be an academic study. The feeling was that individual interviews, rather than focus group interviews with employee groups, would be the advisable initial route. The information from the interviews could then be circulated to the other employees, alleviating much of their concern and creating more widespread willingness to participate.

I took the advice of the participants; I began to observe within the work setting and slowly started the interview process. As well as the interviews with the initial five volunteers, fourteen more employees agreed to be interviewed and others were also receptive. (The information from the initial interviewees was never circulated; in fact, the first five volunteers were not all the first ones interviewed. Among the nineteen people interviewed they came first, second, eighth, eleventh, and twelfth. The interviewees are noted in Appendix B-3.) The succeeding section discusses both the extensive process of participant observation that occurred and the individualized interview process that was undertaken within this study. It is estimated that of the six weeks spent at SEI, the approximate time spent participating in formal observation within meetings, informal

direct observation within the confines of the entire company building, informal indirect observation while entering data in a portable office, and in conducting formal interviews would be comparable; that is, approximately 25 percent of my time would have been spent at each activity.

Participant Observation

During the initial proposal stage I had not considered including a section dealing with participant observation. I do not know if that was because I did not really intend to "observe" or whether I did and it was so much of an ingrained assumption that I saw no need to say anything. At any rate, from the outset I had considered that it would take some time to develop rapport with the employees. In addition, I wanted to get a picture of what was happening in the company in order to develop a deeper understanding of Follett's notion of circular response. How do we as humans relate? How do we continually inscribe one another? I shall deal with rapport first, then with the more difficult notion of circular response.

Rapport. There are several ways by which rapport building can occur. Ely (1991) speaks of the "apprenticeship" method of observing. I perceived that to be an important method of building rapport and also as necessary to understanding the situation in which the employees were working. The expert researcher/passive participant roles are reversed for the most part. I entered the company as the uneducated. I looked to the employees to answer, "What it is like around here?" And they did, in all manner of ways, some by talking, some by being silent. The conversations occurred in structured interviews, in informal chats, in the interaction of structured meetings, and in unstructured

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conversations about work and other subjects. Most engaged willingly with me and with others; some purposefully avoided me and/or others.

Attending a large number of meetings served to build the connections with the employees and provide a venue to reflect upon Follett's notion of reciprocal creation or circular response. As well as my more structured presence in meetings. I wandered about, spending considerable time on the production floor and in the office wings; that presence provided the opportunities for the employees and me to engage in mutual questioning about our activities. In such a fashion I set about the research process, attending every meeting I could, interviewing, loitering, watching, sauntering around, chatting, and typing field notes in a portable cubicle space that also provided the opportunity to "lurk" in the office area.

I quickly found that the extensive rapport building process that I had anticipated was not necessary. Most of the current employees had been with the company during my previous study. In addition, there did not exist an initial overriding sense of suspicion to be dispelled; SEI continued to be a company where there existed a spirit of trust and openness. The department managers, having filled other work roles in the past, seemed to work the borders with the general employee population with substantial success. Not that some distrust did not exist at certain times and between certain functional areas of the company, but it was not pervasive within the culture of the company. This pattern of interrelating, noted previously and reconfirmed during this period of my research, resulted in a rapport building process that was juxtaposed with other research processes rather than occurring previous to concerted data collection. At any rate, rapport building in a

postmodern study is considered an integral part of the study whether lengthy or not, and will hereafter be addressed in integration with the whole of the research process.

Circular response: Walls. I think we all have some sense of awareness that the perceived reaction of others to our behavior affects the nature of our behavior. Just how others might create our becoming, the variety of manner in which they and they-plus-us might affect us, and we them, occupied my attention during this study. While reflecting upon Follett's notion of reciprocal response in relation to my time within this company, I struck upon the effect of *walls*, literal and metaphorical.

From the outset of my research I found that I was drawn to the production floor. I had to force myself to tour the office wings. It was not the people, but the nature of their roles that left little place for me to share. What was I to do? Sit in a corner and watch them at their computers or at their papers? There was no transparency there, no opportunity, unless I interrupted the person in a very artificial way, to learn informally of the worlds occupied and the sense made. Particularly among the research and development people, my presence seemed to be an interruption; they were so busy. They took time occasionally to talk to me and did kindly explain to me the nature of their roles within the company. But I did not feel comfortable; I was a nuisance; their angst seemed to tarry very close to the surface of our conversations. Although I wanted a participant for a structured interview from among these four people, it never happened.

I am not sure why it never happened, but I have some ideas. There seemed to exist a great deal of pressure on these people to "produce." On the manufacturing floor the intent of production is obvious. At the end of every day the employee can stand back

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and survey the completed work: there is an object for one to appraise. The major

responsibility on the production floor is to construct the product according to the design

plan and to accommodate colleagues in their purposeful work toward the same end. Such

is not the case for the research and development (R & D) people. Their role is more

elusive, the day-to-day "product" of their labour is not so evident; their responsibility is

sometimes onerous, as it involves the constant pressure to improve a design and to create

new products to compete in a global marketplace. These people often seemed

preoccupied, impatient, and stressed. I infringed on each occasion I talked with them.

After the initial few days when the R & D employees explained their work to me, most

kindly I must reiterate, I spent little time with these people.

I did, however, observe the nature of their relations with their colleagues inside

and outside of R & D. Within R & D there was a separation of roles and obvious

seniority. The two most senior of the people, Murray and Tim, were also the most vocal.

They were confident, intense individuals. During meetings they questioned continually,

challenging their colleagues until they themselves were assured that what was suggested

would work well. Murray's face would mirror the effort of his concentration to

conceptualize the ideas being presented. Tim would become impatient if participants

would not come to grips in a very concerted manner with the issues at hand. Raymond

Olette, the general manager and an engineer, was associated with the R & D team.

However, he considered himself only a member and openly admitted his lack of

continuing expertise in the area, as so many of his day-to-day duties fell within the

demands of managing itself. He participated as a learner in the R & D meetings; he did

not pose as an expert. Murray and Tim seemed to control the direction of the R & D meetings.

I perceived the differing roles, and the expectations within those roles, to exist as walls between the employees, serving as an interruption to contact among the people within different roles and affecting the attitudes of the people to colleagues behind the walls of other roles. Although this was evident throughout the company, nowhere was it more evident than between R & D and the rest of the people. Production people made direct reference to the superior attitude of the R & D people and to R & D's neglect of advice from the production people who had the "hands-on" experience with the products. It was suggested by some of the interviewees that certain kinds of people were suited to certain jobs and that some just wanted to work their hours and go home. While that may be so, it could also be that those who perceived their practical advice being ignored have been *taught* to keep silent. They may even secretly hope that the product operates poorly, as they said it would, in order to prove that their initial observations were correct.

Concerted efforts are necessary to avoid such regrettable undercurrents of interdepartmental ill will, exacerbated as they are by the separation of and perceived competition between workplace roles. Management seemed well aware of the undercurrent of suspicion that existed between R & D and production people. Near the end of my research at the company a major shift in work roles was being undertaken among many of the staff. This shift was largely due to the change from residential to commercial production. However, there were other changes, as well, changes intended to improve communication and learning between departments. One member of the R & D

team was being reassigned to the role of production engineer. In that role he would serve as the integral connecting link between production and engineering. Interestingly, this man's personality was seen as an important component of his ability to fill the role. His ability to learn and his expertise firmly established, his quiet unassuming nature and his willingness to listen to the production people were perceived by management as necessary attributes for his new assignment. Also interesting was the apparent conscription of this employee for the reassignment. His willingness or lack thereof notwithstanding, he was presented with a *fait accompli* at a meeting, an obvious example of Follett's "power-over," seeming to set up an atmosphere that would encourage him to "throw his lot in" with the production employees if that inclination existed at all.

Connected with the differences in roles within the company were differences in levels of formal education. Employees within management, marketing, R & D, finance, and quality control had on average more formal education than those on the production floor. Although not directly tied to status within our society, education remains one of the keys, even more so in the present knowledge organization, that opens the door to the traditional "climbing of the ladder." Within this company, the situation has been somewhat mitigated because the increased education of many of the employees has been combined with changes in work role; many of the employees now occupying various administrative positions once worked on the production floor. The people who were once on the floor appeared, in most cases but not all, to be also the people who had a good continuing relationship with those still on the floor.

SEI encourages additional training of the employees and reimburses its staff for the expenses incurred for that training. Many of the nonproduction people take continuous advantage of the opportunity to upgrade their skills in response to the increasing expectation of their work roles. Although the focus for manufacture and the design of products changes, affecting the production floor people, essentially the need is not so pressing to seek outside education to deal with these changes. The result is that the production floor people do not take comparable advantage of opportunities for additional formal education. While some of their co-workers have also moved to different roles, as noted, the limited number of these nonproduction roles may also discourage employees from taking time from other responsibilities to increase their education if no opportunity is readily available for movement to other roles. While displaying reminders of education, such as diplomas and rings, may be a source of deserved pride and accomplishment for the people who have spent many hours studying, those symbols of success may also construct another wall affecting the nature of the relationship between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

Related to the differences in roles and education is the issue of the literal walls themselves. While the construction of walls may be necessary for the effective completion of one's individual responsibility, conducive to the concentrated completion of tasks and to uninterrupted communication with people outside the company, they also construct barriers discouraging internal communication. Not only does the existence of the wall literally make it impossible to talk, figuratively it establishes a division between insider and outsider, which the outsider is often loathe to cross. The individual office

allows control to rest with the occupant; while doors are often open, they may also be closed at the will of the occupant, shutting out or inviting in as the insider wishes. The partial wall of the cubicle is often considered as a substandard type of office. However, the very reasons for its apparent undesirability are the same reasons that it seems to alleviate the intensity of the feeling of division to some degree; the occupant is more accessible to outsiders but has less privacy for the completion of tasks, thus has less control. The reaction to the barriers seemed not so pronounced between insiders because all insiders had walls, had become accustomed to their presence, and were less likely to observe their potential constraining influences. However, the outsiders, who occupy a more public space, may have been reluctant to enter the private, walled maze of the insider's world.

The space occupied by the outsiders, because they work on the production floor, was considered public. The outsiders had little measure of control ordinarily. Insiders and foreigners such as myself infringe on their territory without asking permission. People did not say when they went to the floor, "May I come in?" Some of the insiders at SEI had need, or chose, to consult the outsiders directly, mitigating the effects of the walls, meeting the outsiders on their turf. The outsiders, occupying the public space, evaluated the "visits," the perceived intention of the insiders or the foreigners. If the intent was perceived as genuine, if the insider was seeking information, knowledge that the outsiders possessed, to advance the outsiders themselves as well as the whole company, the outsiders were usually sympathetic. This seemed to be the case, for example, with the production engineer, Jerry, who consistently spent time on the floor

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talking with the employees as he was planning the CFL project. It was also the case with the quality control and production managers, both long-term employees with SEI. My presence was also accepted by many of the production floor people, although it seemed apparent by their reluctance to engage with me that some considered me a less than welcome addition to the everyday landscape of their work world. If the reason for the appearance of the insider on the outsider's turf was perceived as lacking in sincerity, or if the insider was judged to be engaging in a "royal walk-about," for example, and this also was the perceived reason for the appearance of some of the insiders from time to time, then the outsiders became resentful and relations worsened and appeared to become solidified. The only method of taking control for the outsiders, when they are given only very limited command over the space that they occupy, may be the resistance to unwelcome interlopers. In addition, many of the roles of the office staff did not afford opportunities for work-related reasons to go to the production floor, making it more difficult to forge a bond with the employees there. There seemed to be closer ties between those performing role-related jobs and between those in closer physical proximity. These closer ties were also apparent among some of the female employees.

Other symbols of the division of roles also seemed to be creating barriers between the production and the nonproduction people. The nonproduction people worked in the front of the building and parked at the front of the building on a paved parking lot, entering the building through the front door. The resurfacing of the front lot was a topic of discussion during my stay. The production people worked in the back of the building, parked at the back of the building on an unpaved stretch of ground, and entered through a

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side door near the shipping dock. There was no talk of any intention to pave their portion of the parking area during my stay.

Production people were wage earners. They were paid an hourly wage that increased with their seniority with the company. Wage earners work more and different hours than the salaried nonproduction people. Their times of work are regulated by a horn that sounds for coffee and lunch breaks. Many of the salaried people take their breaks at the same time and mix with the production people. Sometimes, however, when the horn goes to end the break, the salaried people tarry, causing resentment at times among the production floor workers. While the extra time at coffee break is obvious, the time salaried people may spend working late or coming in early can be missed by the group because of the very privacy that the offices afford. On occasion, the resentment of the production floor people has festered to the surface, for example, when company-purchased food was available and the salaried people arrived early at the cafeteria in order to be first in the line.

The difference in work roles, education, the concern for physical walls, and the differences in advantages enjoyed by the production and nonproduction people have been explored as potential negative effects on the reciprocal creation of one another within this company. It would be a mistake to conclude that all relationships observed had only negative connotations. While the negative aspects have been noted, the pervasive feeling within the company was positive. For the most part, the employees were strongly attached to one another and supported each other through good times and bad.

Circular response: Reaching across.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall.

That wants it down.

(Frost. 1949/1964, p. 48)

The employees at SEI did not seem to like the walls. The barriers continue to exist. even within the flattened type of hierarchical structure in evidence at SEI. But the employees take down the walls where they can, or they reach over them to join hands with one another. Nowhere was that more evident than in the case of Jill, a production floor employee.

I think Jill was one of the main reasons why I was so quickly drawn to the floor. A friend told me once that a successful teacher creates a safe place for everyone to belong (DiAnn Blesse. personal conversation, February 12th, 1997). I think that Jill would have been a good teacher if that is the case. She created for me, as a "foreigner," a safe place within the company. I had met and interviewed Jill during the course of my Master's research (Armstrong, 1995). She told me a tale of the love and support she had received from her co-workers when her life had been threatened with cancer. They had strengthened her with daily messages of support and love, with gifts and smiles and tears, through the long arduous procedures of surgery and chemotherapy. She recovered, was declared cancer-free, and returned to work on the production floor.

When I arrived at the company for this research and went to address the general meeting, there she was, with a big beaming smile that enveloped me with warmth. And so it began.

At the general meeting, two of Jill's co-workers, Grant and Jack, told everyone of their decision to leave the company. They gave details. Jack spoke of his dream for his own business being realized with the assistance of SEI; he would provide SEI with all the plastic parts needed for the manufactured units. Grant spoke of his dream also and how the company had supported him in its realization. He was taking a leave of absence for a year to return to his reserve to serve in an administrative capacity. He wanted to help his native people and felt that the time was right for him to do so. He wanted to continue with the company on a part-time basis, however, coming in on the weekends to cut metal whenever he was needed. When the meeting ended, Jill put her hand on Grant's shoulder on the way out of the cafeteria: "I'll miss you," she said. Grant is a quiet man, but I knew the depth of meaning behind Jill's words. Grant had written beautiful encouraging words to Jill when she was ill and had organized prayer circles for her amongst his people. Jack had been a minister, said Jill, when recollecting, and he too supported her with prayers and constant encouragement. (Casting a shadow over the good wishes for Jack was the fear that his leaving with the contract for the company plastics would place the jobs of those who worked in the area in jeopardy.)

Over the next few weeks, the employees, at Jill's suggestion, gathered items for "survival kits" for Jack and Grant. Grant especially was the target for many good humored gifts. As the days went by, the conniving co-workers would hover over Grant's kit, laughing at the contents. I was invited to bring a gift too; I made a special trip to a store to purchase "toe socks" to put in Grant's box. On April 30th a lunch in the cafeteria was planned for Jack and Grant.

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Mark, the production manager, chaired the program for the gathering. Mark had been with the company since its inception. He identified with his co-workers and so found his role difficult that day. Several times he walked to the front as if to begin; the people would become quiet, and then he would wander off again as if to do something else. Finally, people began to laugh at him; the tension was eased somewhat, and he began. Both he and Raymond, the manager, spoke of Jack and Grant and how they had added to the company. They spoke of Jack's honesty and of his innovative ideas; they spoke of Grant's understanding nature and his personal growth during his time with the company. Mark spoke of Grant's dedication to his job, of seeing his van parked at the plant on Sundays when he would be flying overhead, returning home from a meeting or a conference.

The men received their wrapped gifts and thanked their co-workers. Jack invited everyone to his place of business for an open house and told how he would continue to be associated with the company. Grant had a present too, a beautiful symbolic aboriginal painting that he presented to his co-workers. He shuffled constantly, struggled for composure, and began to talk softly. He told of his time with the company; he told of how he was encouraged, how he felt safe here, how he would come on the weekends often to work, but sometimes just to be in the building, to write, to contemplate. He talked about discrimination: "There's a lot of racism out there," he said, "but racism stops at the door here."

Thank goodness for the survival kits. After the men opened their company purchased gifts (for which Jill had taken responsibility), the survival gifts were viewed.

There was much laughter as Jack and Grant opened their boxes. Grant pulled out his gifts one by one and examined them, chuckling. Co-workers gathered around for the fun, their noses in the boxes. I had been "let in on" Grant's extra gift, so I knew what was happening when someone announced that Grant was wanted in the women's washroom. He was escorted to the area by his jovial colleagues. There to meet him was an "old girlfriend" in the person of a well-endowed blow-up doll, purchased and adorned with "extras" by some of the female employees. "What's her name?" queried one, who continued in mock consternation when Grant hesitated, "You don't even remember, do you?"

I was invited to join in this gathering; whether to attend was a difficult decision ethically, both because of the nature of the occasion and because I was a foreigner. But I felt comfortable in being there, and I feel comfortable now in telling about it. I would not have wanted to miss it, for it was a strong indication that, in spite of a myriad of walls, the employees, especially the long term employees, enjoyed strong bonds of mutual love and support that broke through all barriers.

Everyday evidence of the camaraderie and support permeated the workplace. There were at times company-purchased donuts for coffee breaks, a hot lunch of chili and buns. During coffee breaks the employees enjoyed cards and foozball. The building reverberated with the noise of the rolling balls and the shouts and laughter of the players and spectators. The cribbage games were accompanied by good-natured banter.

Grant appeared to be correct in his observation about the absence of cultural discrimination at SEI. Co-workers, aboriginal and nonaboriginal, mixed and chatted

amicably on the production floor and at coffee breaks. No evidence existed of a cultural group on their own on the sidelines. There was, however, evidence that all of the production floor employees were not in the accepted group. A few consistently did not join in the games and frivolity; these few were, in fact, conspicuous by their absence from all company gatherings other than the meetings at which their attendance was considered obligatory. In some cases, a particular incident had precipitated the alienation. In those cases, it appeared as if the employee and the co-workers collaborated in unspoken agreement that the original incident would continue to be observed as a solid wall preventing future mutual understanding and acceptance. The idiosyncratic examples of these misunderstandings were most obvious on the production floor; because of the more social arrangement of the work there, it was obvious who was "in" and who was "out." However, such misunderstandings also occurred in the administrative area and created an atmosphere of tension between some of the co-workers, two in particular; some of the others resented having to observe the personal tension that existed by continually making allowance for it, for example, in the make-up of project teams.

Males and females within the company enjoyed a good working relationship, supported each other, and generally seemed to work well together; however, there was also strong evidence that the groups identified strongly with those of the same gender. The women sat together at meetings. If there was not an empty chair at the "women's" table when another appeared for a meeting or a social gathering, a chair from another table would be moved and the others would shuffle over to make room. While the support for one another was encouraging, the lack of comfort in mixing was evident.

Likewise, at coffee breaks the majority of the female staff on the production floor would

habitually converge in Jill's work area. One of the women, however, always joined her

male co-workers for card games. Social gatherings outside of work seemed also to appeal

more to men than women. An annual fishing trip and golf games, for example, saw few

female participants.

As noted, Jill went to great lengths to welcome me. I had added "as a researcher"

to the last sentence but then realized that I was not just a researcher to Jill. In fact, I do

not think that I was even primarily a researcher, simply another human being, a "friend,"

as Jill called me the other day. She would always invite me to join the group. "Oh, there

you are," she said one day. "We're collecting for a wedding gift for Raymond. Do you

want to give? Here's the card for you to sign." I went to get my money, I gave it to her,

and I signed my congratulations to the card. "Now I can stroke your name off the list,"

said Jill, finding where my name was included with all the others and putting a pencil line

through it.

One day, after I had completed my stay within the company, I saw Jill and her

husband outside a restaurant. I knew as soon as our eyes met that something was wrong.

The cancer was back. Jill had six months to live. I went to see her in the hospital after

that. Her lungs were filling with fluid. I took some toys for her--a hula hoop to signify

the jumping through of just one more hoop, a golden ball to show that our golden girl

would bounce back again just as before--and other things, all with some meaning that I

had invented. We laughed--she, her husband David, and I. When I phoned her the other

day, she told me about the company and how her co-workers had sent baskets of fruit and

a wheelbarrow, even bigger than the one before, filled with balloons of hope: they sponsored a trip for Jill and David, all expenses paid, to Vancouver to visit with her son. Just as before, the messages of support and encouragement flowed to the home nearly every day.

It seemed that on a day-to-day basis the SEI employees found occasions both to bond and to engage in skirmishes. However, especially when a co-worker experienced good times or bad, the walls of role and wage differentiation, personal disagreement, and gender differences crumbled with the force of the gentle breezes of love.

Working the Hyphen

Fine's (1994) notion of working the hyphen involves "unpacking notions of scientific neutrality, universal truths and researcher dispassion" (p. 71). A proper place to discuss the issue of my own involvement in this research is artificial; it could come anywhere or nowhere, being left to the reader's awareness. My interest in these people as friends should be obvious by now. There was no particular singular effort at building rapport. When I entered, I was accepted by most of the employees from the outset. It was as if, as old acquaintances and friends, we had simply picked up where we had left off two years earlier. There were some, of course, who would have preferred my not being there. Jill said some people just wanted to come to work, do their jobs, and go home. They were not hired to talk to me, and they preferred to keep their distance. Jill may be right; I cannot say for sure why some did not wish to talk with me; I hope I respected their wishes. I think that some, like the R & D people, were pressured with work expectations, expectations that left them little time or patience for my intrusions. Some were

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suspicious of me, I sensed; some of these, especially those who were new employees, took their cue from their co-workers, especially management, and warmed to me in time. Some remained reluctant to being interviewed but always greeted me with warm smiles and talked freely about their work, willingly showing me details and explaining procedures. One or two never were comfortable with my presence.

I remained cognizant of the potential for alienating the people with all manner of behavior. My dress most days was blue jeans and a shirt, just as most of the production people wore. I was out on the production floor sitting on a crate or a trolley for much of my observation time. One of the employees constantly joked with me, offered to take my notebook and I could do his job, and shouted one day when he was talking to his team leader: "So you want to study conflict, Helen? Come over here. I got one for you." We all laughed--he, the team leader, and I.

I tried to work the hyphen of the researcher-researched even while knowing that I still had my place. What was especially important was that I not be viewed as particularly sympathetic to any single person or department. I willingly gave to all and attempted to show no partiality. I knew however that I did feel more close to some than to others. I found that some of the employees were especially welcoming and friendly, and I had to make a concerted effort not to gravitate toward them for fear that the others would judge me as having favorites. I lunched with one of the employees with whom I had become friends, but she and I met at an outside restaurant in order not to alienate any of her co-workers. She talked of her job, but more so of her outside interests and her family. I

doubt if I was successful in even appearing not to be drawn to Jill. But I think that that was accepted by the rest of the employees.

At the outset, the assumption of this postmodern Follettian approach to research replaced neutrality with engagement in the process of reciprocal creation. In addition, with the telling of the stories of the participants through me, there existed assumptions, first, that "co-writing" would occur between them and me; second, that the stories told here in an effort to make sense of what I observed would create the world of the participants as much as reflect it; and third, my intrusion would alter the path of the creation of the stories that would create the reality even during the telling. There is no universal truth to be discovered during reciprocal creation. A picture of a moment in a process informs while it continually creates: As we write, we are written.

Researcher dispassion is impossible when one is engaged so intricately with the day-to-day lives of people. For several weeks these people were the center of my life. They shared joys and sorrows and dreams with me. They asked me for evaluations of their performance in meetings. They told me about their families, shared jokes, chided me, taught me about their work. I continue to talk with Jill. When I phoned her recently, she told me of her health, her activities, her co-workers, her husband's forced return to work, her funeral plans. On October 15th I phoned her again, but she and David had gone to British Columbia to visit her son; I talked with David's Mom instead. We had not met before, but we had a good visit. She told me many things about the family; we each had a turn struggling to keep back the tears.

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I talked to Jill by phone again on October 30th, and we met at SEI. The occasion was Raymond's farewell. He was leaving to manage another of the parent company's family of subsidiaries; I had talked to Raymond earlier, and he had invited me to his party. I was greeted at the company with welcoming handshakes, hugs, and conversation. There were refreshments and trays of food laid out; employees showered Raymond with gifts and fond remembrances. I also presented Raymond with a gift and thanked him, as well as all the employees, for welcoming me at SEI. I had thought I would stay for one hour, but it turned into three. I received a farewell hug and kiss from Raymond as he left SEI for the last time as its general manager.

If I had been dispassionate, I doubt that I would have been as successful in working the hyphen. My passion existed as a fundamental reason of my success as a researcher within this company. Without it there would have been no embracing of the reciprocal response that creates us, that writes our lives even as we are writing the lives of others.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTING UPON FOLLETTIAN PRINCIPLES

The people's stories are the focus of this chapter. I hope that the narrative will

stimulate the imagination of the reader and paint a picture, albeit fleeting, of each of these

remarkable human beings. These men and women have been in my mind's eye as I have

written, the man who is Grant, the woman who is Anne, everyone. They shared with me

their Follett-plus-others translations of Follett. In so doing they shared their lives, their

sorrows, their happiness, and their frustrations.

The methodology used within this research involved participant observation and

individual interview. In the previous chapter the description of the company was

interspersed with observations and with reflections regarding Follett's notion of

reciprocal, or circular, response. Nineteen interviews were conducted with various

employees, with representatives from all work roles within the company except research

and development. This chapter deals with the stories of the interviewees as they

interacted with questions dealing with various of Follett's notions. Specifically, these

were the concepts of "power-with" versus "power-over" which lead to the notion of the

"law of the situation" then into Follett's understanding of "coordination"; the various

methods of dealing with conflict--voluntary withdrawal, domination, compromise, and

integration; and the notion of small group government. Follett's ideas on the process of

individual and society will be discussed along with a concluding analysis of the research process in the final chapter.

Oft times the interviewees shared ideas in common with one another concerning the contextual applicability of Follett's concepts. Each of the respondents answered in relation to the manner in which their person had been created through the reciprocal relations with their co-workers and all the previous others in their lives that constituted their present "moment-in-a-process" person. I have chosen to artificially "split" the people's stories into thematic patterns so as not to repeat common statements by each, reporting the conversations as contextual stories within each concept. I have attempted to include each person's ideas as they relate to each concept in order that all might see their words and recognize the importance of their contribution in the research process.

Power-with and Power-over

I have previously and purposely not dealt specifically with Follett's ideas concerning "power-with" and "power-over." Reference to the notions are interspersed throughout the conversation of this dissertation intentionally as I attempted to expand my power-with the ideas and the participants--my own reciprocal creation. In order to provide a basis for an understanding of Follettian philosophy, I began the interviews by explaining Follett's notions to the interviewee (See Appendix B-2).

Follett believed that that power-over could be reduced through integration, responding to the law of the situation, and the making of the business into a functional unity through coordination. Follett defined power as "the ability to make things happen"

(Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, p. 99). She stated that the consideration of facts governing the situation increased power-with and the withholding of facts increased power-over: therefore, the worker must always have the necessary facts and responsibility in order to have genuine power. The contemporary notion of "empowerment" can be compared with Follett's power-with: "We can confer authority; but power or capacity, no man can give or take. The manager cannot share *his* power with division superintendent or foremen or workmen, but he can give them opportunities for developing *their* power" (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, pp. 112-113). It was the possible existence of these opportunities within SEI that the interviewees were asked to address.

All of the employees interviewed thought that power-with was much more predominant at SEI than power-over. However, each related their positive responses to their experience in a different manner. Anne said that she felt most people in the company were empowered to make their own decisions; the vehicles were available that facilitated empowered decision-making. But she added that some people choose not to contribute: "They don't feel secure enough; they may have been in situations where they made decisions and were reprimanded, at work or even in childhood. Some people openly say that they don't wish to contribute." She said that within her job she makes many of her own choices, but she often goes to co-workers for information when she feels she lacks adequate knowledge to make a good decision. About disagreements she had this comment: "I like to suggest that we look at the issues, the various choices and ideas that have been suggested, and weigh those ideas on their merits." When I asked Anne if this worked, she said that 70 percent of the time she thought it did. Sometimes, however,

an individual identified with an idea and was annoyed if it were not chosen to guide the course of action.

Grant chose to address the question in relation to his experience as an aboriginal man. His notion of power-with was personified in the person of the original owner of the company, whom he greatly admired. Paul Sedor had hired him, encouraged him, and had provided for him and the other employees an excellent role model. Grant told me how Paul had taught him self-confidence and taught him how to love himself and others. "I had problems with some of the other employees when I came here 12 years ago. I was the only native. I was the one being left out. I stayed away from the other people. At that time racism played a minor part; I mean we didn't talk about it like we do now. I sensed it was there, but I couldn't put a finger on it. Over the years we learned together. I had a hard time, but I stuck it out. I wanted to show that people of my race could contribute, could come to work every day. Just a chance, that's all I asked. If I'm in a position now, I help others." Grant talked of the 12 employees of native ancestry he had hired over the years. He looked out the window to the production floor as we talked and pointed with pride to his aboriginal co-workers. "I'm very proud of the award SEI received, in 1995 I think, for hiring native employees."

Joan said that employees do have a job description: "After that the company makes sure you have the tools and the knowledge to do your job." Pat mentioned the opportunities to educate oneself at the company's expense as an example of encouragement of a power-with atmosphere. Agatha noted that work is delegated in an appropriate fashion. While the work is demanding, when everyone works together, it is

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completed in a timely fashion. Shawna said that she was doing much more in her job now than was the intention when she was hired. "That's what I wanted," she added with pride. She said that she only saw "power-over" when it was necessary, when someone was not doing their job. When I asked her if that could be a management or a co-worker exercise of power-over, Shawna was clear that she thought that this was acceptable only by management; hard feelings would result if co-workers attempted "power-over" in such instances. Jack corroborated Shawna's perceived need for leadership. saying that formally-appointed leaders facilitate the process of power-with. Susan said that her team leader was very receptive to her suggestions for improvement: "'If it makes your job easier, do it,' he says." Especially on the production line, a leader could coordinate suggested improvements so that all employees would benefit from the implementation of suggestions.

Jerry thought that there was a combination of power-with and power-over at SEI. At interdepartmental meetings there is much interaction ending in a common meeting of the minds, a power-with situation. There is power-over in certain projects, depending on the make-up of the team. Even if power-over is not exercised by the project leader, the dynamics of the group may see power-over exercised by an informal group leader. "If it's a team of educational equals or equals in experience or responsibility, there's more power-with. If, within a project or team, there's a big difference in education or responsibility, there tends to be more power-over." I asked Jerry at whose instigation. "It's difficult to say. I see people sitting back if there's someone to make the decisions; sometimes people impose, but sometimes people step back and let it happen. If we have

a brainstorming meeting and there's silence it's assumed there's agreement. That's stated up front." But, I wonder aloud, "If a person did not have ideas right away, would a statement like that bully them into silence, discourage them from contributing later on?" Jerry said that could be so. Some could feel power-over in their reluctance to oppose the boss.

Joe was reflective about the phrases, then went on to talk about a different kind of power-over--the attempts of employees to influence one another to particular viewpoints. According to him, sometimes employees did not express disagreement in a positive fashion, with the intent that issues could be resolved, but behind the scenes with the intent, it seemed, of poisoning everyone. He spoke of this expressed dissatisfaction as a type of power-over. Everything about his expression and demeanour indicated that he thought this a highly unacceptable manner of relating, with no positive purpose or outcome.

Adrienne mentioned the Employee Satisfaction Survey as one method that employees have to tell management of problems they perceived within the company. She added that Raymond had had a series of meetings with employees after the results of the survey indicated some employees felt unhappy with some aspects of their jobs. Some of the contentious issues were also discussed in small group meetings.

Raymond smiled when I asked him about power-with and power-over in the company: "Good question. I'd like to know what you've come up with. I think we have both here. There are many committees and meetings, many projects that invite the input of everyone; there's a team working on the project, but still they invite the ideas of

everyone in the area, get their feedback. Personally I don't like to impose my views; I know I'll get resistance if I do." Raymond added that some decisions are mandated from the company but power still exists within the plant about how best to meet required objectives. Mark corroborated Raymond's statement that some decisions were made by the parent company, with methods for achieving those externally mandated objectives decided upon locally. He also added, "Power-over decisions often give a short-term gain but don't last long. You get resistance. For myself, I see power-over happening when I get frustrated. Things are not happening fast enough, or things are happening at the wrong time, given company objectives. I try to say, this is my feeling, this is the way I see it, given what we want to achieve at this time. I don't say, 'Do it this way,' and that's all. I try not to tell anyone directly what to do."

Keith said that his supervisor Mark gives him "free rein" to do his job: "That goes for most people who work with Mark. Some days I don't even see him. . . . I don't know so much about other departments; I don't interact very much with accounting; I do more so with engineering, and Raymond is the same way there. He doesn't tell the others what to do. They decide as a group." When I asked Keith what he thought contributed to this kind of a company, he replied that it was the mindset of the first owner: "New people have more of a power-over expectation. They come in expecting more to be told what to do, how to do it, then go home. But they gradually change. They start to ask." Allan agreed, saying that as a team leader he does not like to tell people what to do; instead, when they come to him with a problem, he likes to ask, "What do you think?" "At times when there is disagreement on the floor people look to me to step in and help with a

solution. Sometimes I can help people find a solution themselves: sometimes I provide the answer if people are stuck. I might go to R & D or to Mark when there's a problem in production." Allan added, "Sometimes there's a hesitance from R & D to accept responsibility for something that's not working. There's tension between R & D and production, especially if a problem continually reoccurs." I asked Allan if he thought this was an example of power-over. "Yes, in a sense R & D has power-over production. They sometimes say, 'Do it this way': it may be just a band-aid solution, and we'll soon run into problems." On the whole, however, Allan was very positive about the power-with opportunities, saying that the company was growing so fast and needed the many meetings to deal with changes. "We need constant interaction," he said.

Don added that the sale to the Quebec company and the related expansion created a need for internal departments and diffused leadership. He also emphasized that responsibility is an integral component of power-with. "I would say that I'm a power-with kind of person. You try to make people accountable. If you empower people you need to know that they'll be responsible. Some people are not willing to accept responsibility. They want a nine-to-five job. There's no pressure. There's stress with responsibility. You have to start slowly and take it step by step in order to build responsibility. I ask people if they want more responsibility. Actually I think managers should be called coaches. The more people you have empowered the stronger your company is. In the past managers tried not to give away their secrets. Good managers will now educate their employees. It makes the manager stronger too."

Conversation relating to Follett's notions concerning power led smoothly into a discussion of the "law of the situation." The employees easily comprehended the connection.

Law of the Situation

Follett's notion of the "law of the situation" evolves naturally if power-with exists within an organization. Only if employees feel power-with will opportunities exist for responsible decision-making based on the law of the situation:

One *person* should not give orders to another *person*, but both should agree to take their orders from the situation. . . . Our job is not how to get people to obey orders but how to devise methods by which we can *discover* the order integral to a particular situation. (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, p. 59)

As well, Follett believed that the situation was always evolving, necessitating circular behaviour, or response, between the situation and the participants (p. 66).

A short explanation was all that was necessary for the employees to have a clear idea of the meaning of the law of the situation and to be able to comment on its contextual relevance within their company. Most were direct and concise in their comments. "There's so much variation in expertise here that we work this way all the time. There is no other way to do it here," said Adrienne. "Yes, you see that here," agreed Colin: "Sometimes people are gifted or experienced and I go to the people with the information and ask for their advice. I may go to other lines, other departments, and say, 'Will this work for you?' I do that especially when we're working on something new." Agatha concurred with Colin, stating that management encourages them to go to

the people with the information. At times, she said, it becomes difficult though, especially if management is left unaware of what is being done. The Saskatoon company has to present a common story to the parent company and wants to know what everyone is doing.

"The law of the situation is only common sense," agreed Betty. She spoke of management's role, as well: "If management dictates, it may not be the right way. But management must be open to ideas and willing to listen to why it should be another way. It depends on where you work. The last place I worked you did what management told you, and you were disciplined if you went beyond that. This workplace is unique. You can suggest things here, ways of doing things that are different than what you have always done." Susan agreed with Betty: "There's no fear here of trying something new or different. Allan is really good. Sometimes when we brainstorm for ideas, I'll contribute something and somebody else will throw in a quirk that I never thought of; I have to go back and rethink. If we know of something that will make a job easier or better, we're encouraged to contribute the idea."

Some of the interviewees pointed to the committee meetings and projects as examples of respect for the law of the situation. "In a group situation everyone states how an issue will affect them. When we had the split between residential and commercial, we had meetings. Everyone affected gathered and had an opportunity to state how the changes would affect them. Raymond and Adrienne come to ask me questions. Our input is always weighed," said Joan.

Marketing lends itself to the law of the situation. according to interviewees from that department. Each person has a particular area of expertise and educates the rest at meetings. But everyone asks questions. Brainstorming sessions also bring ideas from everyone. with the slant of their particular area, as well.

Raymond stated that the law of the situation happens in meetings: "If someone has the expertise they will be the leader. We're trying to let that happen." Mark agreed, "I see this especially in EDR meetings. The person leading the project will be the leader of that conversation: for example. Tim is gas packs. Joe is wheels. But everyone gives their ideas." Jerry stated, "I like to think that this project [Commercial Focus Layout] is like that. When we address people's area of specialty, they step up to be the leader. The rest can ask questions. But there still is one main leader--one person with the "buck stops here" responsibility. This is typical within projects and within the company."

In addition to formal projects and meetings, informal opportunities allowed leadership to revolve. Allan said of the production floor, "If a problem occurs, we call everyone in with knowledge of the situation. In that sense there are a lot of leaders at the same time. I'll call a meeting if we have problems on the floor and call in who we need-- R & D for sure and sometimes marketing, too, because what we do affects the marketing of the product." "Yes, everyone has the opportunity to be the leader here, in meetings and every day, just when talking. If you know what you're talking about, people will listen to you," said Shawna. Jill mentioned, too, that everyone has responsibility for some part of the decision-making: "When we're in the transition now Mark has told the people in cores to keep busy; that's his decision; but it's up to the people there *how* to keep busy,"

was Jill's comment. According to Grant, the law of the situation simply meant treating everyone as you would want to be treated, guiding people when they needed assistance, and treating them responsibly with freedom both to work autonomously and to take time off when the work was complete.

Several people talked about the way in which individual personality traits might affect the success of response to the law of the situation. Anne stated that self-confidence was needed in order for the law of situation to be successful: "The workplace can build confidence. Opportunities to build self-confidence were here more in the past than they are now. The company is at a crisis point now and is too busy fighting fires and cannot offer support as in the past. The last six or eight months we have shifted to survival mode. Actually, the opportunities to build self-confidence have decreased since Trimeck took over. There was a real focus on people when Paul was here. He had a knack for surrounding himself with compassionate people; he hired those kinds of people. . . . We worked very hard and had a true concept of team. We identified very much with one another, and we relied so much on one another. We were an independent company then, and so we controlled all the decisions. Now you can separate yourself from the business; there's less pressure now because there's more detachment. There were more emotional ups and downs in the past, but the rewards were more personally overwhelming. The involvement is not the same now."

I asked Mark how the law of the situation would work if people tended to be more quiet by nature. "There are cases where people have the information, but they are too shy to talk. What often happens then is that everyone has a little knowledge, and they begin

to ask the person questions; they draw the information out of the person who has it. You force it through questioning. The rest of the people at the meeting have to draw the shy person out." Don said that sometimes the quieter people will write their ideas on sticky notes and put them on the board. He will then get the person to elaborate and that seems to work well. There is more willingness to elaborate once the ideas are on the board than to introduce them right out. "You have to encourage a participative management style. You should never condemn anyone for their ideas or comments. Management has to encourage that there be no criticism of ideas. There'll always be some people who are shy." Pat added, "Some just don't have the courage to stand up and speak. It's not just whether you're allowed to or not. Sometimes this is a self-esteem thing."

Raymond spoke of people's reluctance as well: "Sometimes people will not be the leader. It can be personality. But leadership can be developed if people have the opportunity to speak and can get to the point to where they can articulate better. Our role as a company is to facilitate leadership opportunities so that people can develop skills. Some people will always be intimidated. Some will take up the opportunities and some never will." I asked Raymond about meetings and suggested that some are not comfortable in those more public venues for contribution and wondered if others were available. Raymond replied that there were other venues, but they were informal; it was at the discretion of the team leaders or the manager to engage in a one-on-one conversation. "Team leaders are not instructed to look for this; some will and some will not." Keith, one of the more quiet people, commented, "If I have an idea, I'll contribute it at meetings. I don't think you should ramble at a meeting though. That happens here. I

could contribute at a meeting or afterwards. There are lots of opportunities for a one-on-one law of the situation here; it doesn't always happen in meetings."

Joe spoke of gender differences that he perceived to be influencing the ability of the company to be successful in implementing a law of the situation atmosphere: "The situation here is very much affected by the people involved. I am not a male chauvinist by any means. but I find that men can be much more direct in their comments. If women are that direct. they get angry with one another; they don't speak. . . . They won't let things go. . . . I don't think that men would do that. . . . I'll challenge a male more; women get hurt; they're more sensitive. The law of situation is O.K. for some people but is more difficult for others--those who are female, who are quiet, or who may not be interested in a topic."

Those who are responding to "the law of the situation" in an environment facilitated by "power-with" are. in effect, engaging is the process of small group government. This was the next area reflected upon by the interviewees.

Small Group Government

Follett's concept of small group government defines a process of decision-making that involves the input of everyone within the various small groups to which they belong. She (1918/1920) believed that humans are created in relation to the connections within these groups:

> We know that there is no such thing as a separate ego, that individuals are created
>
> by reciprocal interplay. . . . Likewise there is no "society" thought of vaguely as

the mass of people we see around us. I am always in relation not to "society" but to some concrete group. (pp. 19-20)

With that in mind, it is important that opportunities exist for developing the skills necessary for participative decision-making; for, as Follett says, "no one can give us democracy, we must learn democracy. To be a democrat is not to decide on a certain form of human association, it is to learn how to live with other men" (p. 22).

Employees within SEI perceived that their meetings provided one of the best opportunities for democratic decision-making. They agreed with Follett (1918/1920) in that regard:

Perhaps the most familiar of the evolving of a group idea is a committee meeting. . . . I go to a committee meeting in order that all together we may create a group idea, an idea which will be better than any of our ideas alone, moreover which will be better than all of our ideas added together. For this group idea will not be produced by any process of addition, but by the interpenetration of us all. (p. 24)

In order for successful interpenetration each person must participate: "To a genuine group idea every man must contribute what is in him to contribute" (p. 28). This Follett contrasted with the "law of the crowd," which involves only suggestion and imitation (p. 23). The reader is left to decide, after purusing the accounts, to what extent genuine opportunities for democratic involvement exist or are being facilitated at SEI.

Joe said, "Employees get to contribute most when we have a project on the go, for example, JIT, CFL, or EDR. Some don't contribute. They just want to do their jobs and go home. Some respond only when spoken to, take responsibility only when told to;

some will take on change; some people you have to force." The crux of Joe's response was that some choose not to participate in opportunities for small group government even when they are provided: "People exercise their democratic opportunities based on their interest." Joe spoke of his own expanding ability to teach others and to exercise his own ability to participate. He said he used to be too strict and expressed himself too strongly. As a management person, his aggressiveness discouraged the quieter people from contributing: "I'm maturing much more with time in the company. I'm becoming more knowledgeable. I have more self esteem. Paul helped me, but Raymond has helped me so much--he's great--he has really built my self-esteem. Our relationship is strong. Raymond is an operations guy. He understands people from a production point of view. He's accepting of ideas, but he challenges. I'll take him something and he'll say, 'What are you talking about?' I'll realize that I didn't do my homework, and I must go back and do some more thinking."

Mark also spoke of his own opportunities for involvement, given his management position. When I asked him if he thought others had the same opportunities, he said that more and more he is trying to facilitate those opportunities for others: "Sometimes I get too involved and have to back off. I have to remember to let others do it. If they come to ask me how to do something, I try to say, 'What do you think?' Maybe that doesn't work as well when we're trying something new--we maybe need more direction then. As people do more and more on their own, they need less and less direction. At least that's what has happened in the past."

Don agreed with Mark, saying that as a manager he tries to provide opportunities for others in the department to learn participatory skills. He encourages all individuals in the department to give their own reports at general meetings, saying, "I would rather have others up there from my department, not me. They do most of the work. Having them speak empowers them more and gives them the recognition they deserve. We have moved our general meetings to mid week, hoping for more involvement." (They had previously been held on Friday afternoons.) Don spoke of the reciprocal learning: "As you grow with employees, they too will get better." He thought that opportunities for small group government existed within the company: "The groups would be the departments. Marketing makes its own decisions. Groups have to be small, have a focus, everyone on the same trail. They could be large, but everyone would still have to have the same focus. People tend to be quieter in large groups or meetings, though."

Both Keith and Pat suggested that the meetings were good venues for the growth of small group government; however, Pat said that because of time constraints she sometimes chose not to contribute at meetings. This would suggest agreement with Don, as the fewer people at the meeting, the more time each one would have to contribute. Pat also stated that sometimes meetings were used by some people to grandstand, to "blow their own horns," as she put it. If there was a need for feedback, she contributed. Keith also said that if he had an opinion, he would voice it.

Agatha was reflective: "Given my position, I have that kind of input. Some, given their positions, do not have this kind of opportunity. [Pauses] Well, now that I think of it, though, each department has its own meetings. If issues can be resolved at the lower

level, they are. We often hear only of matters that cannot be resolved at that level."
Raymond, the general manager, had this comment: "There are different groups and meetings and committees in which we look at different types of topics. I am not involved in many of these. Most of the people here are ingrained in the culture and exercise the opportunities for small group government in these groups. There are opportunities for democratic decision making." Raymond and I talked further about Follett's notion of democracy. "It depends on what you mean," he said: "If we're developing new products, we get input from the people in the field (our reps can tell us what people are looking for), marketing, engineering, and production. What do we need in the field? How do we build it? Promote it? We try to get the people in the positions to have input into the discussion. There's no point in involving people who are not affected--finance, for example. It would be a waste of their time." Joan seemed to corroborate Raymond's statement, saying that opportunities existed within her group, but not within the company as a whole. Anne, Shawna, and Agatha also were in agreement.

Betty, however, was more positive about the potential impact of her contribution: "I think many of my opinions and ideas could affect this company and others within our group of companies." She mentioned the Employee Satisfaction Survey as a vehicle for employees to address issues of concern, saying that management was very responsive to the results of the survey, meeting with individuals and groups of employees to rectify areas of discontent. But problems still persisted at times because, as Betty said, "Some will complain to their own little group but not to the person who can make the changes. The opportunity is here, but it's whether you decide to exercise it or not. It depends on

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the personality. Some are too shy, too worried about what others may think. Some may think that nothing will be done, anyway. Sometimes people do not make the suggestions at the right times. . . . They complain in their small groups, but when it comes time to have a meeting, they say nothing."

Like Betty, Grant believed that the employees had opportunities for democratic small group government: "Yes, very much so, in various projects. The input from the employees has changed the company. Sometimes the changes are not possible at the time, but the company listens. Yes, the company I work for listens to their employees." Similar to his response to other questions, Grant related his answer to his experience as a native person. "When I come to work, I feel very safe here. Racism is not as rampant now as it was when I came to the city. But racism stops at the door here. I used to stay at work late and write down my thoughts. There was racism in many other places. You would go to Safeway and your money would be tossed at you after you paid. The person in front of you would have been treated differently--with conversation. Paul especially has been a role model. I wish all people could be like him, so understanding. I hold those two people [Paul and his business partner and wife, Judith] very dearly to my heart. They have given me love and understanding. They are very down to earth, in tune with the world around them, with nature."

Susan agreed with Grant that the employees' ideas are elicited and respected. "Yes, we have those opportunities here [for small group government]. When we did our previous plant rearrangement, a lot of the ideas were from the floor. Roy was working with me then and he said, 'What if we tore down this wall here and did this there?' It was

the ideas that our department had that they eventually incorporated to a large part. They always ask for our input on the rearrangements. They don't have to."

Allan corroborated Betty's statement regarding the reluctance of some of the production floor people to speak in meetings, especially large meetings. He said that they were more comfortable in exercising their "small group government" opportunities on a one-to-one basis or in smaller meetings on the production floor: "Sometimes I feel like the big meetings aren't worth it. As information givers they're fine, but not to elicit any feedback. If the group is smaller, it's a different story. We have a more open situation with our own people. But in our larger production meetings once a month only a few people speak, as well, and it's always the same ones. One-on-one or small meetings are the best. In a situation on the floor that involves the disagreement of people we will get the three, for example, together to work on the issue, talk it out. We follow that whether the issue is work-related or personal. We have gone one-on-one [he and first one of the complainants and then the other] before and it doesn't work. People on the floor, even with their different interests, seem to work well together. There have been no complaints for some time. I have one-on-one interviews with people twice a year; I know it's not that much. But people can always come and talk to me about work or about something in their personal life. Some take that opportunity more than others."

As a production floor worker, Jill spoke positively of the opportunities there: "As a small group in production, we can make an impact. When production floor people deal with team leaders, they definitely have an impact. The team leaders then go to Mark if they need to. Team leaders are very responsive. Allan is a member of our team, as well

as a team leader. I am pretty much focused on the production floor. I don't know if that's anyone's fault but our own. Sometimes we are afraid to tread into deeper water. Not everyone is as yippy as I am. But it's easier to go to someone on the production floor with an issue than it is to approach someone in an office that you seldom see and voice an opinion. . . . Our small group is the production people; I don't usually go beyond. It works great when it's Allan who is our team leader."

Jack, as well, spoke positively about the capabilities of the production floor employees to exercise responsible decision-making: "The people in my department do their own scheduling. They receive the orders for the cores and figure out how to arrange their work in order to complete the orders when needed. They come to me saying that they need this or that. . . . I have more of a coordinating role; I make sure everyone has what they need to do their job."

Two or three mentioned that although their ideas were elicited, the management then had the final say and used, or did not use, the ideas as they saw fit: "Well, we are asked what is suitable for our work situation, but then management goes and makes the decision themselves. We are invited to submit our ideas, then someone else makes the decisions," said Colin. As a new team leader, Colin spoke positively about the team atmosphere in the department but said that often his requests for ideas from his co-workers do not elicit as much response as he would like to see. He said that he and his former team leader would discuss issues, but a lot of others would say nothing. "Grant would suggest how to improve, but would not criticize. He wouldn't say, 'You are doing this wrong'; he would say, 'I wonder if it would speed this up if you did it this way.'"

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When told about the concept of small group government and posed the question about its relevance at SEI, Jerry replied, "Are there opportunities here? Yes and No. That depends on the make-up of the group. If you're not willing to vote or give your ideas, then you don't have a democracy. You have to participate in order to have a democracy. There are a lot of decisions reached by voting. Project teams at times give opportunity for small group government, main areas too. If there are time constraints, the decisions tend to be more dictatorial. It takes more time for democratic decision-making." In response to my query whether these were instances of power-over, he agreed, saying that if there is time there is more joint decision-making. I asked Jerry about the decision to speed up the CFL. "Yes," he said, "That was a power-over decision. It was not my decision to speed up the project; it was mandated in order to keep everyone on because it's slow now. But then I decide how best to speed up the project. It sometimes has to be that way. I accept that. Sometimes we have to have power-over to expedite the process. I don't have a problem with that. So this is a compromise situation, but with compromise we get integration."

Successful integration of ideas among co-workers leads to a more coordinated organization. Follett emphasized the need for the coordination of activities and of decision-making processes.

Coordination

Follett believed that discovering and following certain principles of action encouraged individual freedom (Metcalf & Urwick, 1941, p. 304). She included four principles of organization under what she called coordination, believing that these

principles were essential for the creation of business as a functional unity that would encourage participation. She (1932/1937) stressed:

1. Co-ordination as the reciprocal relating of all the factors in a situation.

2. Co-ordination by direct contact of the responsible people concerned.

3. Co-ordination in the early stages.

4. Co-ordination as a continuing process. (p. 161)

The first principle, that of the reciprocal relating of all factors in a situation, is reflective of Follett's entire philosophical essence. She referred to Einstein's theory of relativity, saying that it should also be applied to the realm of social theory to stress that all factors in a situation are not an additional total, but a relational total (p. 162). The situation at a manufacturing business like SEI is utilized in Follett's discussion:

Merchandizing shows you this principle at work. For merchandizing is not merely a bringing together of designing, engineering, manufacturing and sales departments, it is these in their total relativity. (p. 162)

Second, if power-with is to be exercised and the law of the situation observed, then all people who are concerned and responsible for the issue at hand need to be consulted. As Follett (1932/1937) said, "This seems sensible, as these are the people closest to the matter at hand" (p. 164). It is through such a process that the information necessary to exercise democratic participation becomes available.

Third, the formulation and adjustment of policy should be one process, according to Follett (1932/1937), and so should evolve together. If various departments confront each other with policy statements, agreement will be difficult; but if they meet during the

formulation of policy, successful coordination will be more likely: "Their thinking has

not become crystallized. They can still modify one another. Their ideas can interweave"

(p.164). About the alternative probable conclusion with employees Follett was clear:

> If we don't, one of two things is likely to happen, both bad: either we shall get a
>
> rubber-stamped consent and thus lose what they might contribute to the problem
>
> in question, or else we find ourselves with a fight on our hands--an open fight or
>
> discontent seething underneath. (p.165)

Fourth, Follett also thought that committees should meet continually, not just

when specific issues arose:

> If a board is set up to consider a special problem the tendency is naturally to think
>
> only of the question under discussion; the incentive to discuss the principles
>
> which can serve as guides for future similar cases is not so great. (Metcalf &
>
> Urwick, 1941, p. 303)

In order to achieve the fullest advantage of continuous coordination, Follett (1932/1937)

believed that we had to learn how to classify our experiences by observing them, keeping

a record of them, and organizing them, so as to see the relationships between them and, in

so doing, to learn from them (p. 166). Even so, she stressed that the meeting, not the

solving of problems, was the concern. The notion that one can solve a problem is

misleading; however, if one thinks of meeting a problem, one may be more amenable to

accepting that solutions, in the sense that the issue is rectified permanently, do not occur.

Changes in a situation only create new problems to be met. Follett said, "When this

happens men are often discouraged. I wonder why; it is our strength and our hope. We don't want any system that holds us enmeshed within itself" (p. 166).

The interviewees reviewed Follett's four principles of coordination and commented on them. There were answers both positive and negative concerning the response of the company to the principles of coordination as a whole or to particular concepts. Joe said, "I don't see that we do this at the early stages most of the time. We should have, as we knew two years ago that we were moving more to commercial. We should have seen the need and worked more proactively. It seems that everything we do around here is more reactive. For example, we have big competition from Airteck in the U.S. We are always trying to stay with them; we are losing on price; we keep looking to find products to compete."

Joan, too, seemed a little discouraged: "I'm not involved in co-ordination in the entire company; I'm not involved unless I'm directly affected. Sometimes I should be involved more; if there is new labeling or new coding and I'm not aware of it, it screws up my books. I don't think they try to do this; they're just not aware that it affects me. Now I try to catch changes in the middle of the month so I don't have a problem later at the end of the month. I find these changes now because my books don't balance. Sometimes the technical people don't understand why you need the information."

"Sometimes we fail," said Don, when I asked him about the presence of Follett's four principles of coordination. "We have cross-functional and cross-relational committees. Sometimes not everyone is involved that should be; sometimes the wrong people are around the table. We need to improve the process. But sometimes we do

succeed." Don viewed the problem as a function of the workload: "Sometimes it's seen as slowing the process down. We need more cross-functional teams. In an ideal world we need more, but sometimes it's not practical." When I asked Don what he would do if he could rearrange the situation, he replied, "Every project team would have reps from every department. For example, CFL should have someone from marketing and from engineering. The plant arrangement affects marketing and engineering, too. We need to make a commitment to the importance of this type of management. The more you can educate everyone cross-functionally the better. You have a better understanding of what others are doing. Management should make the decision to focus on this; it would take time and commitment."

Several others seemed to agree with Don's assessment, commenting positively about coordination within departments but noting that between departments there was often less success. On the positive side Colin said, "Whenever something is happening, team leaders get together. When we plan something, we have the first meeting with Operations, then we go back to our departments and have a meeting with our employees to get their input, then we go back to the Operations meeting. For the most part, our efforts are coordinated." But Colin perceived areas for improvement: "Between departments there is some problem with time management. Sometimes there are scheduling changes, different departments are not notified [about those changes], and there are parts shortages--a communication lapse. For example, we had an order for five units of one type, and two of those were pulled off to go out for powder coating for another order. We weren't informed, then people wondered why we hadn't cut the metal

for two of the units; we had, but they had been pulled out. I asked Allan, 'What is the process for informing us of this?'"

Susan agreed with Colin: "There are some problems with coordination among departments. People come into metals and want something right away. They don't realize that it takes time to change for the job. Between some departments there's trouble communicating, especially in metals. That's where all units start, and it stops everything if your metal isn't ready. It's tougher now when we have gone to one bin from three for Kanban [inventory stock of parts]. I realize that it's stuff on inventory if no orders are in, but if a bunch of orders for something come in, metals is scrambling to keep up. But it's a hard call; you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. . . . Yes, communication between departments can be an issue." However, Susan said that all major decisions were made in consultation. She referred to decisions for the rearrangement of the plant floor for commercial production, the CFL (Commercial Focus Layout) as an example: "Jerry [the project leader] consulted the production floor employees about what we all needed. He wandered around the floor and talked and also had formal meetings." Susan added, "On a day to day basis there's coordination. The general meetings are good for sharing. They tell us lots of things; some things seem a little trivial, but they don't have to tell us this stuff; lots of other places wouldn't. They let us know well in advance that residential was moving."

Keith, as well, commented on the CFL project: "We followed all four of the guidelines. With the CFL project we went out to production, brought back ideas, then put them all together, then took it back to them: 'This is what we have, what we have come

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up with so far.'" Keith paused a moment before continuing. "I guess that Raymond wasn't in on a lot of the meetings. But he did want to be in on a meeting to see what we were doing and planning. He more or less just agreed with everything we were doing so far." It struck me that ordinarily, at least in traditional organizations, this type of "rubber-stamping" is required by employees more often than it is offered by a general manager.

Jill also referred to the CFL project: "We didn't make the first decisions. They showed us a plan and then gathered in our opinions afterward. They listened and took notes and went back and redrew the plan. Then they presented it to us again. It was good the way they did it because if you have thirty people in on it at first, it would've been difficult. This way you are presented with a loaf of bread, and you can change the slices if you want. They tried to get the whole picture. I got to see where sub-assembly was, how it was changing. It was good even though I'm in shipping and receiving. You have to have coordination on the production floor." Jill, as well as some of the others, mentioned that changes in job description on the floor can result in less coordinated activities until everyone is aware of the new duties. She also referred to production's relationship with the other departments: "I don't know if everyone is brought in all the time. Sometimes decisions are made and then they will say, 'What do you think about it?' Usually this happens with the office wing, for example, accounting or R & D. We talk about it at general meetings. It's not a problem. When dealing with the production floor, it's more important that we be brought in at the early stages, and we usually are. When it's time for a new contract or to renew stuff in our handbooks, for example, we get together as a group."

"We try to coordinate all departments," said Allan. "We run into problems, though. We may think we've covered everything, brought everyone into the loop, but then we find out that we haven't when we run into a problem. We make efforts to coordinate, as far as the manufacturing is concerned. We all know what we have for due dates on stuff; but if someone isn't able to make a date, then everything is thrown off. We try to involve each department. We have to now because we are getting bigger, heavy into commercial; there are more parts, more people." However, Allan said, "We don't have much interaction with finance or marketing. People are not actively interested if they're not actively involved. They want to know if there are orders and who is ordering. As far as other information, once a month is not enough involvement, not enough contact so that you really get to know what's going on."

Overall Shawna thought there was coodination in the company; however, like Allan she thought it could be improved between departments: "Before I started in marketing I had no clue what was happening. The company is trying to change that with the new format for staff meetings. They have been moved from Friday afternoon when they just ran for 1/2 hour and everybody was just thinking about getting out of there. Now they're on Wednesday mornings, and they're much longer and more detailed. There are more reports about what is going on in every department. I'm appreciative, but it's still not enough. We need more information; maybe we should all get e-mails from everyone. But then some would complain that it's too much. You would have to ask if you want to know; but if you're not in the meetings, you do not know enough to ask. You don't know what you're missing." Adrienne agreed with Shawna that coordination

exists within the whole company while improvement is still needed on a smaller scale: "We do not have a lot of interaction from day-to-day. Day-to-day more boundaries are drawn. I have a tendency to go to the management in another department."

Pat referred to coordination as an integral requirement of her job: "When there's a change, it affects so many other departments. So you have to remember everyone that's affected, to make sure everyone is aware [of the changes]. It took awhile to remember everyone that was affected, to even realize who was affected." I asked Pat about the efforts to provide the "big picture" for employees: "Sometimes it takes awhile for everyone to find out. Not everyone is advised. On a day-to-day basis people are made aware, but on a larger scale, often no. When people have been moved from one job description to another, often there hasn't been a proper process. It creates confusion. We need more feedback on process. That's part of power-with--being open and honest with issues you have a problem with--speaking up." I also asked Pat whether people were brought in at the early stages: "Sometimes we find out early, sometimes later on. We are growing so fast, sometimes we are not notified [of changes]. There's no intention to keep people in the dark; we're just moving very fast, and it doesn't get done." Finally, I asked Pat if coordination was a continual process at SEI: "We're progressing. It's better now. A couple of years ago we sat down and did a flow chart of our own job description. It made sense. I wrote a description of my own job in relation to others. It built a greater understanding of what was involved in our jobs and how our jobs related to others. The process of sitting down and writing about one's own job helped. . . . We did it recently in marketing, as well. We sat down and talked about process. I called it together and had

Don head it up. Now we have a set process for new reps [sales representatives in the field]. Before, they would maybe get all our literature before their credit had even been approved. Then there would be an order placed because they had our stuff; but they had not even passed approval yet; it made us look bad. Now we communicate and have a process of how to handle new reps."

Agatha agreed with Don that more cross-training, while difficult to manage, was a desirable way to improve coordination through learning what others do and how it affects your own job. As it is, she said, "We can go back to people in other departments, but we don't get the hands-on experience. You have to trust the people you work with. If you have a problem, you go back to the people in another department; you don't have the time to learn about everything. But it's frustrating that I don't have the time to find out why. We are trying to find the time now to do some cross-training. I like that. I would like to train in the inventory control area. I'm foggy there; they use a software that I'm not familiar with; it's hard to figure out my part if a cost margin analysis has been used; I would like to know more."

Many of the interviewees pointed to the committees and their corresponding meetings as a primary tool for coordination within the company. Betty, who is in marketing, said, "When we have our meetings on Mondays, every one is there. We get the whole picture. It's almost like a soap opera; it continues from week to week, so you do get the whole picture, and it *is* continual when it is every week. It would be hard for someone coming in to pick up when we continue from last meeting as we do. Everyone has a chance to give input. But it's more difficult now that the marketing team is bigger.

Before there was just the five of us; now there's nine; it's a little hard for everyone to have input on everything." Betty continued: "The general staff meetings are once a month. They changed the format, hoping for more input. Now there is more input from each department, so we know more about what is going on in the company. But now some are complaining that the meeting is too long. Overall, though, most people appreciate it. I do. The company is good at sharing what they do. Some of the information they give us would be "hush-hush" in many companies. Some companies wouldn't want their employees to know what they tell us here. It's basically a time for sharing; it's too big a group for input and a lot of ideas. Decisions have already been made in the smaller departments."

Both Jack and Grant also pointed to the many meetings, both regular and around projects, as examples of coordinating efforts within the company. Grant spoke of the involvement during projects, in particular, saying that, "People have a big role in suggesting change. Because you work in a department, you know what would make your job better."

Mark spoke of the importance of coordination in his role as production manager: "My role has changed a lot, to that of a coordinator. My role is bringing together the big picture, pulling everything together so that people can see it; for example, the change to commercial. I'll involve everyone who expresses an interest, even if they're not directly affected by the decision." Mark agreed with the necessity of involving everyone at the early stages: "If not, you spend a lot of time fixing because things didn't happen. It hurts people, affects their motivation. If you have to back up, morale is damaged and there's a

real struggle in getting back going on the right path." I asked Mark if he thought coordination was a continual process: "Yes, for sure, you have to be in touch or people will spread out later. For some people this is more important so that you don't end up in conflict. We need day-to-day involvement more now that we are in commercial than when we were in residential; it was so repetitive there was not so much contact needed. We never used to have sales meetings; now we have them twice a week. There's much more coordination necessary in commercial than there was in residential."

Mark stressed that responding adequately to the greater requirement for coordination was a learning process, one that required constant attention and commitment. Along with most of his co-workers, he seemed to be cognizant of the difficulties of the process. He pointed to areas where success had been enjoyed at SEI, as well as to definite areas for improvement, particularly between departments during the change from residential to commercial production.

The constant efforts to coordinate activities leads to more interdepartmental dialogue, often between people with initial conflicting interests. How to encourage and benefit from conflict engaged Follett's creative energy.

Dealing with Conflict

Having been involved for many years in social work, Follett was in a position to have had many occasions to observe the manner in which people related with one another and, indeed, her own manner of interacting with others. She was aware that we have dissimilar views that we bring to our relations; however, she (1924) believed that such contrast could be positive:

> When differing interests meet, they need not *oppose* but only *confront* each other. The confronting of interests may result in either one of four things: (1) voluntary submission of one side; (2) struggle and the victory of one side over the other; (3) compromise; or (4) integration. (p. 156)

Follett did not discuss voluntary submission outside of the list. She summarily dismissed domination, saying that unless we found some other means than submitting to power or a show of power, we would always be controlled by those who could muster the greatest force, whether that be military or economic (p. 156).

Follett devoted a large part of her discussion to reasons for the futility of compromise. She called it "sham reconciliation," "a postponement of the issues," and stated that it was based on the mistaken assumption that the truth lies somewhere "between" the two sides (p.156). While valuing the past as that which provides the material for creative integration, compromise does not move from the past to anything new; it deals only with what is, combining or taking pieces of it, but not moving beyond it. In addition, compromise requires that the individuals give up part of themselves and suppress some part of themselves in order for action to occur (p. 163).

> Moreover, if you believe in compromise it means that you still see the individual as static. If the self with its purpose and its will is even for a moment a finished product, then of course the only way to get a common will is through compromise. But the truth is that the self is always in flux, weaving itself and again weaving itself. (pp. 163-164)

Follett believed that it is only through integration that the individual is respected and that new ideas emerge through the unsuppressed activities of all the participants; compromise involves a bartering of ideas and results in a continuation of the same behavioral tendencies:

> In compromise, I say, there is no qualitative change in our thinking. Partisanship starves our nature: I am so intent on my own values that other values have got starved out of me; this represents a loss in my nature, in the whole quality of my personality. Through an interpenetration of understanding, the quality of one's own thinking is changed; we are sensitized to an appreciation of other values. By not interpenetrating, by simply lining up values and conceding some for the sake of getting the agreement necessary for action, our thinking stays just what it was. In integration all the overtones of value are utilized. (p. 163)

Follett was well aware that the process of integration was the most difficult and lengthy of all the processes we can use when confronted with conflict. All interests needed to be brought together; confronting the many differing interests is of utmost importance: "Reciprocal reinforcement is the task of existence and that can never come by abandonments. But to control cooperating allegiance requires a higher order of intelligence than to choose one of two allegiances" (p. 173).

Follett's study of behavioral psychology was reflected in her belief that to integrate diversity one must deal first in the realm of activities; ideas and values followed and were reciprocally created in interpenetration with one's activities: "The evaluation of

my interests changes as I *do* things. The evaluation of interests comes from the interbehavior of men. . . . Experience is the creator of all criteria" (p. 172).

If one accepts integration over compromise, domination, and voluntary submission, then one seeks the method through which it can occur. Perhaps the starting point is to examine, as Follett would, one's experience to ascertain the situations where integration occurred and to learn from them. This examination was the focus of the questions for the interviewees; they were asked about the existence within their company of all Follett's methods of dealing with conflict. All were articulate concerning Follett's four approaches to conflict, with most saying that all four procedures were used within their company.

Voluntary Submission

The replies concerning the presence of voluntary withdrawal (term used interchangeably with submission) were mixed and varied. Some, like Adrienne, thought it not an issue for the most part: "Not here," she said. "Most people contribute. But maybe the younger ones without as much experience are less likely to speak up and give their opinions." Anne thought voluntary withdrawal was focused, but much more prevalent that Adrienne viewed it: "You see it on a constant basis here but always with the same people. I still think that they should be included in the meeting when it's something that affects them; they should be there, but they shouldn't be forced to contribute. You don't want to embarrass or hurt anyone." Jerry also pointed to the circumstances and the differences between people: "It depends on the situation, on the makeup of the team, on the "synergy"--the term that we use now. One or two can set the

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pace: if they speak up. others will. If all are reserved, then it's tough: you may get nothing--consent by silence. But it takes more than one sometimes to set the pace."

Several spoke of the instances of their own submission, of their own purposed silence. Joe saw voluntary withdrawal more as a condition that happens when he is not interested: "Sometimes I just withdraw. at marketing meetings for example. I'm just not a marketing person. If there isn't value added with my presence, if I feel I can't contribute. I won't go. For example, I told Jerry that I wouldn't be at the latest CFL meeting when they talked about budget." Joan said that she withdraws sometimes to make someone else's job easier and for the sake of harmony: "Sometimes I find that something is a nuisance, but I do it anyway if it saves someone else some time; five minutes for me may save someone else an hour; we are a company as a whole." Colin remarked, "In metals people don't oppose an idea. If you say, 'What do you think?' there's no comment. I find that I voluntarily submit in my department; I have to suspend giving my ideas and keep coaxing others to give theirs. If I begin with my ideas, there'll be no further input. In Team Leader or Operations meetings you don't find this so much." Susan was discouraged: "Sometimes that [voluntary submission] happens. If I give someone a suggestion that might help them and they resent it, then I don't bother to make suggestions any more."

When it is a knowledge issue, voluntary submission is not a problem, according to Betty. People will recognize who has the knowledge and will go with that person's decision. If it is an opinion issue, then she said that she likes to take the matter to a larger group and request others' input into the decision: "I don't say, 'This is his idea and this is

mine. Which one do you think is better?' I say. 'We were thinking of a couple ways of doing this and wanted your input.'" She added. "If it's not a big deal. I'll let someone have their own way. Why not if it doesn't make a big difference to you? It may improve your dealings with that person the next time."

Shawna spoke of her own reluctance and also agreed with Raymond's opinion of the difference in gender responses: "I think that [voluntary submission] happens. I try. I say, 'This is what I think.' If I don't get a response. I just back off. If you don't. it often turns into something bigger. People aren't happy when voluntary submission happens." "Is there a carry over?" I asked. "Yes, people will complain to other people. I see it mostly with women. They talk about it afterwards and are mad at the other person. Sometimes people will get permanently ticked off. There's a festering kind of thing, more with females. That's the way women are if they have a disagreement. Men will be fine the next day; women will be mad for a week or two."

Like Shawna, Keith noted that what he was referring to was submission, but not voluntary: "Well, you may see submission, but it's usually not without a fight. There may be instances on the shop floor. R & D may mandate a design, and production has to comply. Production may suggest changes, and R & D doesn't listen very well. Production has to make it as designed. Even if they have a good idea, it's not necessarily taken up. I don't see this in administration meetings."

Several spoke of their own and others' reluctance to speak in a meeting situation. Susan said, "Sometimes I don't like speaking up in front of people. I'll do it one on one later." Pat added, "If there are too many people, you'll see that. A smaller group is

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better. Some get forgotten in a large group." She noted, as well, "Sometimes people are not willing to stand up for themselves." Allan concurred: "I'll sometimes do this [voluntary withdrawal] in a meeting if I can't get my point across. I don't think that the general staff meetings are that effective. I identify with others and their discomfort at these meetings, so I'm often quiet too. You get more information in small meetings. The large meetings aren't working."

Agatha agreed with her co-workers concerning the reluctance of some employees to speak: "Yes, you see it here. It's hard to give an example; it's just that you know that some people have ideas, but for one reason or another they don't contribute. Perhaps they have been humiliated sometime, perhaps showed up late for work and were gotten after by management. Now they may have decided to just be quiet and do their job." Don thought that there was a difference in the people, depending upon the department; production people may have less opportunity and less desire for input, whereas the nature of the work in marketing attracts people who want to contribute. Even so, he says, "It depends on the knowledge of the issue at hand. If knowledge and confidence levels are low, people will not contribute. But this isn't good because it doesn't spark creative ideas. I'll say, 'What are your thoughts?' Some meetings many will talk, but at other meetings only one or two." Jill agreed with Don on one point: "That happens a lot here because a lot of people are very quiet; so they just go with the flow. It's just their personality. You see it more on the production floor."

Raymond noted, agreeing with Follett, "You lose the strength of the team when this happens. There are probably quite a few instances when this happens; you probably

see more than I do. I try not to let it happen." In spite of that, the instances of submission, voluntary and involuntary, are prevalent enough at SEI to be considered a definite issue needing to be addressed. Raymond was right; I had seen and heard of enough instances to be able to reach that conclusion, within the meetings and during the interviews.

Domination

All but two of the interviewees perceived that domination was used to some extent at SEI. Grant and Agatha did not point to any instances of domination at all. Some pointed to what they perceived as gender or personality differences in the approach to different methods. About domination Anne said, "I find it more among males, typically also in a mixed gender meeting. In the past sometimes, two strong males have had a decision made when they come to a meeting. They will ask for people's input, but they really don't consider it; they're looking for a "rubber stamp." Adrienne agreed with Anne: "I think you tend to see domination more in the meetings with males. Men are more inclined to cut in and voice their opinions. Females are more inclined to sit back and be asked for their opinions. I don't think that I practice domination; it's more in the competitive all-male meetings. If there's a mixed meeting, especially our general meetings, one finds that only certain people talk. If the meeting is all female, everyone tends to be equal." Adrienne added that in the mixed meetings she was treated as an equal.

Raymond began by noting that domination, a more autocratic method of dealing with people, is sometimes brought by employees from their former jobs where such a

manner of dealing with people was accepted, indeed expected. He said that SEI used more of a consulting approach. He chose to continue in a general manner: "Gender does come into play here: my perception is that a group of women is more backstabbing. They're not open and honest at meetings; they agree in the meeting and come out later and begin to whisper. They try to get informal power and affect the rest of the group from behind the scenes. Women in a mixed group tend to be more open and honest. . . . I find that if females are in the minority, they tend to stick together; if in the majority, they start to compete and backstab. But sometimes you find that with men, too. They will go to the background and backstab. I try to encourage people to integrate. If they don't and it doesn't affect their work, it isn't a big deal. But if it does, maybe you need more drastic action: you'll have to let the person go."

Joan did not distinguish on the basis of gender when she said, "There are a few very strong people, and they know how to get what they want. I think it's more personality than position, the "squeaky wheel," you know. It's more in the admin. and office staff, not all in management. I don't see it in production." Keith agreed with Joan but with a unique slant: "You definitely see some dominating people here; some that think that their way is the right way. There are dominating people, but they don't end up dominating in this company." Joe also noted that the more domineering personalities are "toned down" at SEI, with the emphasis on the consulting type of management. He pointed to the review meetings with Raymond as an excellent opportunity to talk over one's personality traits and point out those areas which may need work: "We bring what

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we think are our strengths and weaknesses, and it's surprising how well they match up with what Raymond has."

According to Susan, differences in role and education influence the use of domination: "Sometimes we'll have a suggestion on the floor and R & D will just brush it off: they won't even listen. It's fine to have the education, but you have to be on the floor to know how something really works. There's definite contention between the production floor and engineering. Education makes people different. . . . I realize that engineering is a tough course: but it's general stuff, and every workplace is different, so the workers in the situation will have something to teach the engineers in that case. People here sometimes know more than someone with initials; sometimes R & D think that if they didn't think of it, it's not a good idea. There's definite contention here between those formally-educated and those not formally-educated. There's also resentment of the salary earners in the company by those on an hourly wage. When the bell goes, we're scrambling to get back to work, and those guys are just sitting there."

I remembered Follett's statement that people find subordination offensive and asked Susan if there was a certain amount of subordination and if it was offensive. She answered, "Yes." But Susan's openness at telling me about her complaints also told me something else, which she articulated well: "It's still a great place of work. We come in here off the street and start at $7.00. I don't feel intimidated. If Raymond or Mark walk by, I don't break into beads of sweat on my forehead."

Allan also noted the tension between the production floor and R & D, as well as interpersonal tendencies to dominate within one department, "We do have that

sometimes. If there's a problem on the floor, sometimes one person likes to dominate the direction of the decision. In larger meetings sometimes there's a person who tries to be dominant. He's trying to get on the good side of the boss. In R & D there's a person that's that way; the guys on the production floor had a good idea on how to fix a motor and this guy wouldn't listen, just said that R & D had a better idea. People begin to think, 'What's the point of suggesting something if you're just going to be shut down?'" Allan added as well, "Sometimes, too, when we get real busy, people need the answers quickly, and they get frustrated because the answers don't come fast enough. If you get busy, you want the solutions fast." Allan suggested that domination was more likely to happen at those times. Jerry agreed with him: "Sometimes decisions have to be made and made immediately. Then there's very little discussion. The person responsible makes the decision: 'This is what we're doing, and that's it.'"

Some of the interviewees pointed to the existence of management as an obvious indication of a tendency for use of domination. Don said, "There definitely is, obviously. I don't want to get into the exact instances. Sometimes management says, 'This is the way it's going to be.' It depends on the situation." Pat agreed, "We have a little bit of domination. After all, we have a CEO, and he's not called that without reason. Some decisions are made there." Jill's comment was, "It doesn't happen often but sometimes there's a decision mandated by them [team leaders]. For example, some were leaving a few minutes before the horn; we were told to stay until the horn went." As well, Keith said, "Some ready-made decisions have been presented to us, for example, the change in ownership and the change from residential to commercial." Colin also noted the change

in production orientation as an example of domination: "People didn't want to get rid of res.[residential]; it had pulled us through when commercial was slow and vica versa. People were resentful; res. was ours, and we had to give it to Trimeck. People are coming to accept it now, but you still hear comments like, 'We would be busier if we still had res.' I don't know if we would be, but you hear it." Colin added, "With myself, I try to be open. If you're domineering, people get resentful."

Shawna felt that domination was seldom used at SEI, except, she said, "when a decision couldn't be made any other way." Betty agreed, "Once in a while you see it but it's quite rare. In most cases, it's probably something that the group doesn't know as much about as the person who's speaking. They're more knowledgeable, so they make the decision. But the reasons are always shared. For me, I would say, 'Well, we could do it that way, but this might work better,' and I suggest what I think. Sometimes we can only do certain things here; when it comes to the technical part, there's some domination."

Mark agreed that the technical side may lend itself more to domination, particularly with processes that have been around for a long time. Mark smiled as he commented about his own personality: "In operations sometimes I dominate, I get nitpicky, I want to see it a certain way. I have to let it go. I think, 'Well, I don't have to work out there.' But I do try to speak for the people that will have to work in that situation. I'll be more likely to let things go if it affects only me, but if I see it benefiting others—what I want, that is—I'll be less likely to let it go. I'm more adamant as the spokesperson for others than for myself." As well, Mark said, "I see more people relating

as equals now than in the past. There was less domination after Raymond arrived. As well, when Jerry arrived, there was less domination than when I was here alone. He helped me; he could see the big picture. He also helped me because he knew so much; people thought that they better start learning stuff if they were going to stay with him. He was so direct; if he didn't agree, he would state it outright. He had general knowledge, and people wanted to know, too; you have to keep sharp, too. He may be a threat to some people, but most everybody started digging into things; suddenly people started to participate better. Jerry is more outspoken now; when he was new, he was more quiet; he was taking everything in. Now he understands how everything works, and he'll say what he thinks. So everyone else has to stay sharp, have general knowledge."

The discussion of domination was readily engaged in by the interviewees. Their extended focus on domination may indicate a serious problem; it may indicate the annoyance of the participants at any instance of domination whatsoever; or it may signal a limited acceptance of domination in certain circumstances. It also may be that it is simply easier to identify particular instances of domination or personalities prone to dominating tactics and elaborate on them.

Compromise

With few exceptions, the interviewees made brief comments about compromise. Only a few elaborated on concrete examples although most conceded that a lot of compromising occurred at SEI. Maybe it was an activity so much taken for granted that few could articulate its presence. Agatha commented, "Yes, maybe we take it for granted in our department, no doubt. We find certain tasks that may be more suited to one person

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than another; we just divvy up the work load." Jerry said that in administration and managerial meetings there was compromise. Colin commented that in his department there was no compromise. Raymond was thoughtful: "I suppose it happens sometimes, but we try to come up with a better solution. It depends on how set a person is; also, they may be set at some times but not at others. We are trying to stay away from that because everyone feels they have lost in those situations. I like people to feel that they have had a voice."

Anne, like several of her colleagues on other issues, focused on gender: "I find this particularly in meetings with women, almost totally. Then people will go away and start to backstab. The decisions will be made, and then it will filter back that people aren't satisfied; they'll say nothing at the meeting--they won't even offer their ideas sometimes--they'll just criticize afterwards. I never feel that we have come away with a good decision after I have been at all-female meetings."

Some interviewees focused on particulars. Susan thought that the plant rearrangement was an example of compromise. She also mentioned times when she had given a colleague suggestions about how a procedure could be improved and her suggestions were unappreciated and rejected; she considered her conscious decision to say nothing as a form of compromise, as neither she, who saw a better way of doing things, nor the colleague, who continued to struggle, were satisfied. Jill mentioned the change in work hours as a particular decision that was reached through compromise: "It makes me smile because some of the boys said, 'No way do we want to come at 7:00.' But they said 'O.K.' because the majority wanted it. It was funny because some were

bound and determined that they weren't coming at 7:00. But others talked to them and said that it would be nice to have the Fridays off."

Like Susan, Don mentioned personality: "Yes, it happens; where, I'm not sure; it depends on the management style. On our side [marketing] there's integration. But some people are afraid of confrontational issues, and you do end up with an undercurrent of dissatisfaction afterwards." Don was suggesting that some people did not care to disagree openly at meetings but still were unhappy with the decisions reached. Pat said that compromise did occur on the technical side of their department: "People do not have hurt feelings and they're not crushed, though." Betty was thoughtful: "That's a hard one. I can't think of anything specific. There may be times like that, but they may affect the company as a whole more than our department." Betty added that the literature aspect of her department may involve compromise: "There are time constraints affecting technical information. It should be checked over by Roger and R & D. We have to compromise if R & D say that they don't have time. Roger has to do it on his own instead." Shawna said that compromise was preferable to the alternative: "Yes, we have compromise, but as long as you're not giving in totally, it does not cause as much resentment as if you were giving up totally."

Several talked about some issues that came to a vote, therefore requiring compromise: "Yes, sometimes when there is a vote people have to give up their side," commented Mark. "If there are five people and five ideas we would talk about all the ideas. Some may change their ideas. But eventually there's a forced compromise if we come to a vote. If everyone has had an opportunity to voice their opinion and give their

ideas and defend their ideas, there's nothing wrong with a vote. As long as people have had an opportunity to explain their ideas, it's all right." Like Mark, Keith emphasized the positive: "It happens a lot; it's better than the first two [voluntary submission and domination]. It's generally positive." Allan expressed ambivalence: "Sometimes you feel as if it is the best solution you could come up with, so you're O.K. Other times people leave, and we haven't gotten to where we wanted. I want to leave the meeting knowing that we are at least going in the right direction, that we have at least gone a little way toward some progress. But sometimes that doesn't work either. Sometimes you're just not getting anywhere, and you have to take a break and come back at another time."

The interviewees struggled with the concept of compromise and its presence at SEI, with what they considered its positive and negative aspects, and with their own part in its presence within the company.

Integration

Follett believed that the best manner in which to deal with conflict was integration. Within her writing she saves it for last, perhaps with the intention of quickly dealing with the other notions, then focusing on integration. Although I talked about all the concepts before focusing on each one, I then asked interviewees to address them singly, in the same succession as Follett did within her writing. It is impossible to ascertain what effect the relative position of integration (or any of the other concepts) might have had on the responses of the participants. One thing was clear from the interviewees' replies: If one wishes to reach an integrative decision, it is advisable to begin, as Follett said, at the early stages in the process. Nearly all of the interviewees

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talked about the brainstorming sessions around a new product or the rearrangement of the plant floor as examples of integrative decision-making.

The most prolific of the interviewees on the concept of integration wanted to talk about it before she talked about the other concepts: "Can I start here? I want to start here because that's what our department does," said Betty. "We brainstorm. We try to get the input of all the people in the group. We come up with many ideas that way. For example. Montec was suggesting a 2 x 2 foot board to take to the school shows. It was much too small. too plain. We had a brainstorming session. Everyone had ideas. Usually, once the ideas are suggested and people get a chance to see them all, they can see which idea will work best even if it isn't their own. You don't feel bad if your idea isn't chosen. You see what will work best. So it's not really a compromise. Sometimes it's not easy to let go of your ideas, but you begin to see that it'll work better another way. When I started here, I found it harder to let go of my ideas. I've changed so much, my whole personality. When you first start, you don't know what everyone is about. Maybe someone is out to get you; that comes from my last job, my previous experience. That's what it was like. Everyone here is more comfortable, easier to work with. Basically, everyone here is like that. They want to come to work. They want this to be the best place it can be. It was easier though when I was in the smaller group here. We all seemed to get along well and solved whatever came up." When asked about the ability to separate ideas from the person, Betty said, "You can have differences and it not be taken personally, that's true. But if your differences of opinion are always with the same person, then it gets harder. You begin to think that it's you that the other person had a

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problem with, not just your ideas. Now that the department is bigger there's a change; there's not as much agreement; it depends on how closely you work with someone. Pat and I work closely, and we have gotten that we seem to think the same; if one of us suggests something, the other has often been thinking the same thing."

"I know they have brainstorming sessions in marketing all the time. In marketing they often have to come up with brand new ideas; there's no idea to begin with. R & D is the same way," agreed Shawna. "In accounting there are no meetings ever; there are no group decisions," was her opinion as well. Pat said, "That's easier if there's a smaller group. It doesn't have to happen just when one is problem solving. It can happen when you're trying to be creative with new ideas. That's a positive thing to begin with, so integration is easier." Agatha noted that integration involving new ideas in her department must also be integrated with the needs of other departments: "A few times you might have a new idea, but all it does is cause more work for someone else. Sometimes, then, a compromise is necessary; sometimes domination, too, but domination is few and far between."

Pat also mentioned the difficulties with personalities, noting that sometimes she practices voluntary withdrawal because of a personality difference. This makes the goal of integrative decisions impossible. Don also talked about having to deal with different personalities. Even in his own department, he said, agreeing with Betty, there were different ideas, resulting in some conflict: "People have to be open minded, have a willingness to change for integration to work. Stubbornness has to be tossed out the window. You have to separate your ideas from your person. But it isn't easy." Don

added, "In brainstorming sessions we write down all the ideas. We don't criticize. We can sometimes take "off the wall" ideas and make them into good ones. We look at all the ideas later even if we don't have time right away." Given some of the other comments on gender differences, I posed that query to Don about his department: "No, there's no gender difference. We're all on an equal footing. I think you'll have compromise more with all males, integration with a mixed group, and voluntary withdrawal with a mixed group. You have a better potential for integration with a mixed group."

Anne didn't agree, saying that integration was "more likely with males. They're more open. Females really are very new to the workplace. We have a lot to learn to be on an equal playing field with men. Men will support each other before they will support a female. As a female, before I go to a meeting, I must be better prepared, have more backup, more ammunition, an airtight case." When I asked Anne if she thought this type of behavior was a conscious decision on the part of the men, she said, "No." As well, Anne noted, "There are several females here who need to separate business and personal. Some of the newer people especially don't seem to be able to separate business and personal; sometimes they become angry if someone else's ideas are different."

Anne went on to talk more at length about conflict and gender issues: "My previous manager loved conflict; you need that in sales if you're going to stay alert and vital. He taught all of us who worked there to be comfortable with conflict. It's energizing to have healthy conflict. I mean conflict of ideas, not of personalities. People who are in sales and are successful thrive on that success. They need the conflict in order

to be continually stimulated. I brought that attitude with me, but I'm the only female here like that. But I think that some jobs are more mundane and it's harder to stay energized. You see some compromise in meetings with male and female. Conflict is not here yet with the females; our group isn't there yet." Anne added, "Most female jobs here are less dominant. With the culture here, females have little chance for progress in position; there's tokenism here. The manufacturing industry has to change. Perhaps I will be a part of that change, but perhaps I will move on to something new."

Like Anne, Jerry talked about the coexistence of confrontation, or conflict, and integration. He perceived a greater comfort level for confrontation existing among the administrative and management people. He viewed conflict of ideas as that which encouraged interplay and amalgamation and spoke of himself as being confrontational, as having a greater comfort level with that manner of relating with others.

Like Betty, some of the other interviewees gave concrete examples of integrative decisions. After I had told Joan about Follett's "library window" and "creamery" scenarios, she replied, "When we went with Trimeck, I didn't want their receivables intertwined with mine because we would have to split ours off. The person at Trimeck didn't want something new because she would have had to learn a new language. In a group meeting in our conference room we came up with an integrative solution. (Sales, receivables, payables, Keith, Raymond, Adrienne, Warren, whoever the decision affected was at the meeting.) We decided to put a T in front of the Trimeck items. I was satisfied, as I had the separation I wanted, and the Trimeck employee was satisfied because she didn't have to learn a new language."

Keith continued with another example: "The CFL project is a good example of this. I'm responsible for the finished goods area. We merged two or three ideas into one. At first we each went in with a layout, we merged them, then we took sections. We had a survey with the production floor people, about 20 questions--what they wanted, what they liked and didn't like. Then we merged this with the ideas for the whole area, and then we took it back to the employees. That's when we had the subcommittees on the floor. They had department meetings on the floor and gave us feedback for the next stage." Allan added, "This happens with the production people when we have brainstorming sessions. We tell people that no idea is a dumb idea. We were very good at brainstorming for the CFL project. A while ago we also had a damper problem. As a group, we came up with what the problem was--Mark, Kurt, Aaron, Ryan, and myself. Jerry came in, as well. We had a steering committee come from that with Mark and Joe. We have Drew now, too; we always could work with him."

Colin talked about the Efficiency Project: "At first no ideas came out on how to speed things up. People said, 'We're working as fast as we can.' We had brainstorming meetings; Jerry and Mac were the project leaders. I talked to the group and commented that we may be working as fast as we can, given the way we're doing it now, but maybe we could do things differently. We can suggest anything at all; it doesn't matter if it seems off the wall. Some people's suggestions were used then; some were put on hold for later. . . . I'm not so much involved in the CFL. It doesn't affect my department so much, as our floor layout won't change. Sometimes I wonder why I'm at the meeting because I'm not affected." When I asked Colin if he thought that it may be important for

him to be involved even so, he replied, "Yes," that being included kept him informed about what was going on. But he added, "I guess here's where I voluntarily submit because I don't know as much. If there's an issue about how something affects the assembly line, then I don't know. I don't comment on the floor layout, but I do comment when we talk about the storage of metals, for example, because that affects my department."

About the Commercial Focus Layout project Jerry said, "With the CFL it's tough to say. I would say 50/50 integration and compromise. I would like to say 75/25 for integration, but I cannot in all honesty. We integrate to get a better solution for the company, but sometimes it feels like compromise to me. I have to give up things. It depends on the type of project in the company as a whole. I do go away not satisfied sometimes; sometimes we do reach a "what can we all live with" decision." I remarked to Jerry, "I wonder if our original defensiveness gives way later once we have time to reflect." "Yes," Jerry replied. "If the project is successful in the end, you do. If we have time to separate ourselves, it helps. In the end, if you can look at a project and say, 'I did that part,' you're pleased. Most people will feel better afterwards if some of their ideas have been picked up." Jerry emphasized one point, "There's no integration in budget meetings. Everyone fights for their part of the budget. But eventually people say, 'Whatever is good for the company.'"

Raymond was confident when he commented, "Integration is dominant here. We try to bring everyone to the meeting whom the issue will impact and listen to everyone. We try to keep in mind the objective. What do we want to accomplish? Usually

everyone can agree on that. Then how can we get there? If we focus on the objective, the issues become more clear." Mark was equally as enthusiastic: "We may start with the intention to compromise, but once we start talking and finding out about others' ideas we start thinking. We climb a ladder to a new optimum decision. We find that this happens with a new product; we get input from R & D, operations, marketing--all departments--to come up with a new and better solution, a new product. How do we design it? How do we build it? How can we bring it to market? But people have to realize that we're looking for a new and better solution, not just for a quick fix, or the process will not work. Raymond is good that way."

Jack noted that "Integration is the best way in my mind and is the ideal in the company, I think, although I do not know if it is articulated." Perhaps it was that lack of articulation that made the concept of integration somewhat more difficult to address.

Summary

Within this chapter I have told the interviewees' stories. Their tales were spun in relation with Follett's notion of "power-with" and "power-over", the law of the situation, small group government, coordination, and the four methods Follett suggested for dealing with conflict--voluntary submission, domination, compromise, and integration.

The interviewees seemed very open in their assessment of the presence of Follettian principles within their workplace. Depending upon their work role, they articulated particular examples and gave an overall assessment of the contextual applicability and success of the many notions explored. Within this chapter, after introducing and explaining Follett's concepts, I have related the interviewees' stories with

little interruption for intentional interpretation. Within the succeeding, final chapter I

reflect in more depth upon the narratives of the participants.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REVISITING AND REFLECTING:

THE PROCESS AND MARY PARKER FOLLETT

Mary Parker Follett's notion of reciprocal or circular response is an apt manner in which to characterize this final chapter, as I both revisit the various moments of this research process and look toward the future. I reexamine the purpose and the process of this research study. In so doing I provide a concise summary of the research "moment in a process" from beginning to end. As well, the methods used and their responsiveness to the participants' needs and interests are reviewed. Further, I reflect upon salient moments of the observation process and of the participants' conversation and make recommendations, both for the Sedor Enterprises Incorporated as suggested areas for attention, and for myself and the reader as proposed areas for further research. Some concluding thoughts are provided on the learning process that was involved for me as the researcher.

The Purpose and the Process

My stated purpose in doing this research was to learn from Mary Parker Follett. I focused my attention on examining her life and the principles she espoused; I reviewed the context of her ideas, past and contemporary, and suggested that she might be receiving renewed attention because her philosophical principles were similar to

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postmodern notions of human interaction. With that in mind, I continued the study with

the intent of a postmodern perspective and paid considerable attention to drawing the

links between Follett and her contemporary sympathizers. As well as reviewing such

connections, I went to the field to study the contextual applicability of various of Follett's

notions, particularly circular or reciprocal response, power-over and power-with, the law

of the situation, small group government, her four principles of coordination, and her four

suggested methods of dealing with conflict. The notion of the individual and society as

process, although not addressed as an interview question, has been assumed and

discussed throughout this study and has been respected within the methodology, as

changes in recognition of an evolving process have been readily adopted. While the

purpose of exploring Follettian philosophy remained constant and is easily stated, the

growth that has been derived from the activity surrounding that purpose may not be so

easily deciphered and explained. Reflections to that end are mine only; more important,

perhaps, but impossible to report, are the changes among the participants who were

involved--changes that occurred with my interruption, my requests to think and vocalize

about the concepts, and their own reading of their stories.

Why one's imagination is excited by particular people is sometimes unclear.

Many people have written insightful text; only a few succeed in writing at the same time

for the many and yet directly to the individual. Mary Parker Follett is one of those

people; readers get the distinct impression that her words have been written for them

alone, so strongly do they reverberate with the intensity of the reader and become

internalized. And so the Follettian concept of reciprocal response does seem feasible,

even after Mary Parker Follett's death over 64 years ago. Although Follett will obviously not be affected by this concept any longer, still she has gained immortality as countless others learn from her words, both directly and with a renewed awareness after having examined her words with others. These activities will change the process that is shaping the individual and encourage the reexamination of values, a revaluation of one's life process.

The initial few chapters of this research laid the groundwork for an understanding of Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933). She was an American philosopher, political scientist, social worker, adult educator, philanthropist, and organizational theorist who gave credence to the ability of everyone to participate in the practice of democracy. In fact, she reconceptualized the meaning of democracy, believing it not to consist of ballot-box majority rule, but the practice of full participation by all citizens. That participation was best encouraged within the various groups to which people belong. She was called upon to focus particularly on work groups; the business leaders of the day requested her services because of the knowledge of people she had gained from many years of involvement in social work and employment services.

A brief biography of Follett was followed by a review of her books and lectures. The Speaker of the House of Representatives (1896) was Follett's first book, published at the age of 28. However, for the purpose of this research, her later books have received focus as the primary sources of her philosophy: The New State: Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government (1918/1920), Creative Experience (1924), as well as her lectures, published posthumously in 1941 as Dynamic Administration: The Collected

<u>Papers of Mary Parker Follett</u>. A review of the evolution of organizational theory encouraged a better understanding of Follett in the context both of her time and the present.

The essence of Follett's philosophy rests with the notion of circular or reciprocal response. Follett contended that we do not exist as atomistic individuals but as a constantly evolving process created by our many relations with others. As such, opportunities to engage in a concerted fashion with others must be made available in order to develop to the fullest the potential of each individual. Only through the full participation of each person would not only that person, but the "neighbourhood group," which is simultaneously each and every one, be enabled to achieve to the fullest. Follett often spoke of evolving personality as psychic process and of the integration of differing interests as that which leads to the creation of new and better ideas through interpenetration. Difference, dialogue, and collective will she honored as that which provides for the progress of the "neighbourhood group."

Connections have been drawn between Follettian philosophy and postmodern notions, particularly those concepts compatible with the idea of a learning organization, or the more current term, learning community. As well, ties with the development of values have been drawn, as Follett viewed the process of democratic participation as that which constantly creates and examines values. Several key postmodern notions, many of them derived from the writings of Jacques Derrida, were examined alongside Follett's ideas: Undecidability and *differance* (integration), the notion of "writing" (circular response), deconstruction (the law of the situation), local theorizing (small group

government), and the commonly held ideas on the individual and society as process. This exercise provided an explanation for the current interest in Follettian philosophy while further explaining the nature of both Follett's philosophy and postmodern notions.

The first three chapters of this document involved an exploration that both informed the reader about past and current ideas concerning organizational theory and provided the information necessary to understand the process of the field research that followed. The process of the field research did not involve an extensive period of initial instruction for the participants. Because of both time and interest considerations, the notions surrounding the philosophy of postmodernism were not explored. My role as a researcher involved much initial study of various concepts, careful deliberation, and examination of various research methods. I entered the world of the participants' expertise; the onus rested with me to explain my interests and to relate those to their interests and areas of expertise and to integrate the two to develop a common focus.

With that in mind, I spent considerable time exploring the ethical manner in which to conduct the research, attempting to respond to a method that would respect the wishes, the skills, and the comfort of the participants themselves. I chose to conduct my study with people who already knew me, within a company where I had already conducted research. While I arrived with ideas of focus group interviews and a survey instrument, I rapidly changed to methods more compatible with the desires of the participants. Nonobtrusive observations, both informally throughout the plant and formally within many meetings, and informal conversations were interspersed with more structured individual interviews. After a series of intermittent meetings over several

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months, my presence was continuous for six weeks. The constant presence both increased the comfort level of the participants and satisfied my own enthusiasm for the learning processes within the company. Reflections concerning my observations were discussed within Chapter Five.

Participants were asked within the interviews to comment on the contextual relevance of several of Follett's notions. These have been woven into a narrative in the preceding chapter, a narrative which I attempted to relate in the words of the people themselves, with little interruption from me as the researcher. Within the succeeding section of this chapter, I reflect upon the stories of the interviewees, my interelation with those interviews. and make recommendations, both for the company and for further research.

Learning From the Text

It is not my intent within this section of the document to generalize widely from the participants' stories, either with application to this case or broadly to other situations. Interpretation involves manipulation if the researcher pretends to distil, even from a single case, patterns that reflect the thinking of the participants as a group. Individuals are intricately complex, as well. To say that one particular person has portrayed a consistent picture would be erroneous. Instead, there have been many stories told within this research process, by the many and by the individual.

Follett's Principles

I have studied Follett in the context of current postmodern notions, particularly those offered by Jacques Derrida. I have found, both in my theoretical juxtaposition and within the context of a particular workplace, that Follett's principles are compatible with the current focus on the importance of communication, defined as all manner of text. Just as postmodernists contend, language does not serve merely as a means by which to tell each other of activities; it also serves to create those activities and, through them, us.

Many of the employees as Sedor Enterprises Incorporated talked of the influence of the first owners, Paul Sedor and Judith Sims. It would seem that there are key figures who influence the venue for the creation of activities that fashion the text. In the case of SEI, the text that was originally legitimized was that which honored the contribution of all employees. A particular culture was fostered that survived, for some time, the departure of Paul and Judith; that survival was nurtured by many long-term employees and by an affable general manager, all of whom also valued the process of participation. Over time, however, the employee contingent was augmented by new members; more of the long-term people left; the direction of the manufacture shifted; the physical outlay of the plant changed. The people, the symbols, the caring, the tightly-knit culture became unstable so often that there may now exist insufficient opportunity to create stability of pattern. When I began my research in December, 1996, the employee contingent had changed little from the time of my Master's research two and one/half years previous; there would have been two or three changes in personnel perhaps. In the last few months, and especially since the completion of my formal research, there have been many

personnel changes; at least twelve people of the approximately 47 employees have left. There is a sense of disquiet, dissatisfaction.

Circular response creates us not only in a positive sense, we know, but also in a negative fashion; *pharmakon* is both remedy and poison. We come to recognize that SEI manufactures not only air exchange units, but also the lives of its employees. The company seems to be manufacturing a text, of late, that may be losing sight of people in its frenzy to remain economically vibrant; the recognition of the interdependence of one with the other may have been mislaid.

My sense of the recent movement of the text within SEI does not disprove the applicability of Follett's principles; at the time of my research the employees were very articulate about the nature of their presence within the company. Most expressed the predominance of power-with situations, rather than power-over, within their company. Many felt that the law of the situation was just "common sense," as Betty said. Opportunities existed for the exercise of small group government in meetings and everyday decision-making in relation to one's one role and those of others, especially within departments, although not so much between departments, according to many of the employees. Follett's four principles of coordination are connected to good practice, according to most of the employees, although many thought SEI needed to improve in its application of those principles. Sometimes the coordinating efforts were not initiated at the beginning of a particular process of change. As well, people were, at times, either unaware of all those affected by the decisions made by their particular department or unwilling to include those other employees; all factors were therefore not considered

when all those affected by decisions were not included. Although the process of coordination needed attention, most employees thought that it was continual within their company.

All of Follett's suggested methods of dealing with conflict--voluntary submission, domination, compromise, and integration--were viewed as existing within SEI. The orientation of my explanation within the interviews may have influenced the conversation significantly within this area of discussion. as the employees shifted from talking strictly about conflict to the overall nature of decision-making within SEI. Some of the employees regarded the preferable manner of decision-making and resolving conflict as situational, also, that the manner of relating within the decision-making context was dictated by the nature of the circumstances; for example, Colin put a positive twist on voluntary withdrawal, saying that he used that technique to force the contribution of his more reluctant co-workers.

My comments are reflections upon interviews, observations, and informal conversations conducted during, the time of my formal research. If I were to go back now to SEI for another period of time to discern the effect of the many changes that have occurred, the story would be different than that which I have told here. For the purpose of this story, however, I considered Follett's concepts as both applicable to and in evidence at this contemporary workplace.

An Ethic of Care

Having said that I would not generalize, there still is one overriding sense that I felt when I was within Sedor Enterprises Incorporated during the time of my research.

There existed an ethic of care. Jill spoke of this; she told how, in her times of need, the people at her workplace surrounded her with love and support. Betty spoke of this; she talked of the encouraging atmosphere of trust that allowed her to expand her abilities and embrace challenge. Grant spoke of this; he said that the original owners of the company had taught him how to love, first how to accept and care for himself, then how to embrace others in the same fashion. I felt this caring attitude when I was at SEI; it was extended to me, as well as to one another as co-workers.

When Follett focused on circular response, she assumed the care that flows among people. Follett interchanged, as I have throughout, the phrases "circular response" and "reciprocal relation." Interestingly, current writers who focus on the ethic of care also stress the importance of relation: "An ethic of care starts with a study of relation. It is fundamentally concerned with how human beings meet and treat one another" (Noddings, 1993, p. 45). Noddings adds that "attention (or engrossment) is central to an ethic of caring" (p.47). The authors of The Good Society (1992) also focus strongly on "attention": "Attention implies an openness to experience, a willingness to widen the lens of apperception" (Bellah et al., p. 256). The relating involved in attending utilizes the psychic energy so often referred to by Follett (e.g., 1918/1920, p. 75), as well, as that which creates the person and the community:

> For paying attention is how we use our psychic energy, and how we use our
> psychic energy determines the kind of self we are cultivating, the kind of person
> we are learning to be. When we are giving our full attention to something, when

we are really attending, we are calling on all our resources of intelligence, feeling, and moral sensitivity. (Bellah et al., 1992, p. 254)

The culture of care creates an attitude of receptiveness to relation. The atmosphere of openness to one another continues to allow for the creation of new possibilities, new knowledge, as co-workers explore each other's ideas and suggest new processes. Within the everyday life at SEI there were many opportunities, formal and informal, for the continued sustenance of an ethic of care--the many coffee breaks and lunch times shared, often with food bought by the company or donated by a group of co-workers; the many games of cribbage, foozball, and, recently, pingpong, engaged in with great fervor; social events such as sporting outings, fishing trips, and Christmas parties; scheduled gatherings to observe employees' moves to new experiences and new positions; and the many informal chats and quips exchanged on a daily basis. The bond that exists flows through the relations, and co-workers smoothly carry their affection for one another over to the business of the company, as they explore with the same empathetic exuberance the opportunities for healthy sustainability in the marketplace. That underlying atmosphere of trust provided me with a safe place to belong among the employees; they accepted me as someone who must care, also, or I would not want to be there. In turn, I became more attached; I attended at a deeper level. That attention was possible because of the relation, the reciprocal response.

Sustaining the ethic of care is very difficult, however. Co-existing with and threatening the caring relations at SEI is a considerable amount of distraction. This distraction takes the form of gender and role conflicts, for example. Connected with

those conflicts are many others, like the various walls that exist, the advantages enjoyed by some employees that are not enjoyed by others. Personality differences, part of the evolving process interconnected with the differing experiences of the people, also form a type of distraction. Some of the employees noted the difference in attitude in some of the new employees and the distancing of commitment with the purchase of SEI by an international company. Although the ethic of care is still pervasive at SEI, special focus needs to be maintained for the sustenance of that bond and for continued commitment to creative mutual growth as a community. Especially with the departure of an engaging and participatory general manager, this attention needs to be a priority.

If Follett is correct, and there is no such thing in our experience as a larger concept of society but only various neighbourhood groups, then the meaning is clear: The employees at SEI have within their power the ability to create and sustain a neighbourhood group whose influence will extend to many other groups to which these people belong. The focus of the company should be as a proactive influence toward the establishment of a visible example of an organization attentive to the needs of its citizenry. The positive influence would then extend to the many groups occupied by that citizenry. While this goal may seem idealistic, it is, perhaps, still within the reach of this company, given the overriding influence of the ethic of care.

Connections: Follett and Postmodernism

Within the field portion of the research I did not introduce postmodern notions to the employees. I considered that that introduction would complicate reference to specific Follettian principles and turn the interview conversations into theoretical academic

exercises that would leave little time, energy, and interest remaining for the actual exploration of the contextual practical applicability of Follettian principles. The reflections here of the practical connections between Follett's philosophy and postmodern notions are mine alone.

I have drawn connection at the outset of this research between Follettian philosophy and postmodern notions. I have juxtaposed the concept of integration with the Derridian notions of undecidability and *differance*, Follett's circular response with the postmodern "writing," the "law of the situation" with deconstruction, Follettian small group government with the postmodernism belief in local theorizing, and the contention of both Follett and postmodernism that the individual and society are process rather than entity.

While I concentrated on Follett's notion of integration in relation to the Derridian notions of undecidability and *differance*, I explored, with the employees, Follett's other three methods that she says we use when dealing with conflict--voluntary submission, domination, and compromise. While I maintain that the connection exists between undecidability and integration, it would seem, in a practical sense, that there is still a limited amount of skill in the process of and tolerance for integration. As Follett noted, integration is more difficult, more intellectually taxing, and more time-consuming; however, in a practical context, there seems to be more comfort with *differance* and integration when eliciting new ideas. Employees within the marketing department approached with great fervor the "brainstorming" sessions; the marketing manager especially delighted in such exercises and often attempted to incorporate such activity in

his conversations within other meetings. Although I did not, in the theoretical portion of my dissertation, juxtapose Follett's ideas on coordination with any postmodern notions, it became evident that "the search for instabilities" is facilitated by a process that attempts, continuously and before positions have been solidified, to explore many avenues with all the participants who might be affected by the decision; this was evidenced by the increased comfort level with the process of coordination during situations where new ideas were being invited.

The "law of the situation" is connected to the search for instabilities; deconstruction encourages the stakeholders to contribute their ideas; employees participate in the collaborative activity of small group government, a dynamic contextual process that depends, for its very cohesiveness, upon the ability to tolerate continual situational inquiry and decision-making. Within SEI, this process, while encouraged at times, is also often discouraged; those with experiential knowledge rather than extensive formal education sometimes find that voluntary submission is expected; domination is exercised at times until withdrawal has been habituated. When these situations occur, the deconstructive process is truncated and the company does not benefit from the potential contribution of many of its employees.

Local theorizing and small group government are connected in a very practical sense within SEI, especially within departments, although not so much in the company as a whole. The most excitement for the process seemed to be evident among the marketing employees, who, as mentioned, more often talked of the generation of new ideas rather than the manipulation of what already existed. Although the production floor employees

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spoke of domination from R & D. they also enjoyed many opportunities within their own groups for participation in decision-making, particularly because of the encouragement of team leaders who identified closely with the production employees and encouraged their contribution. Similarly. the marketing manager lived the philosophy of participation and seemed to derive much of his potential for engagement from his colleagues, evidence of reciprocal response.

I did not question the employees directly about the relationship of circular response to their workplace or address the notion of individual and society as process. The notion of text and its creative influence on our lives I read silently, rather than orally, during the interviews and observations; the employees spoke of the level of encouragement they experienced in the various departments and how it affected their subsequent participation. They also referred to the process of cultural change within the company as employees left and new people entered; especially as key participative leaders left, the process of circular response seemed to have shifted in focus, with *pharmakon* existing more often as suspicion and the emphasis on remedy not tended so diligently.

The practical relationship between Mary Parker Follett's ideas and the postmodern notion of text became more evident to me as the research progressed. But not until recently did I fully realize the essence of this connection although I have talked of it throughout the study. What is common, although even to speak of a commonality in such a fashion may be construed as a relic of modernism, is interrelated activity-- reciprocal creation.

I am struck by the conspicuousness, the simplicity, and the power of the obvious, that knowledge is created not so much by our ideas in isolation as by our activities in relation with ideas. It is to the psychic reciprocity of theory and our practice that postmodernists and Follett speak. "Experience is the power-house where purpose and will, thought and ideals, are being generated" (Follett, 1924, p. 133). Our selves and what we define as knowledge are process because they are inseparable from the activities in which we engage:

> We often hear people talk of the "interpretation of experience" as if we first had
>
> an experience and then interpreted it, but there is a closer and different connection
>
> between these two; my behavior in that experience is as much a part of my
>
> interpretation as my reflection upon it afterwards; my intellectual, post-facto,
>
> reflective interpretation is only part of the story. (Follett, 1924, p. 140)

Purpose does not exist simply as an intellectualized ideal that we construct, fling out ahead of us, then run to catch. Purpose flows among the constant discourses of our lives, created each day while we live in relation; therefore, it is those discourses that we must constantly deconstruct even while we engage, forever attentive to the morality of the purpose that we live through our activities.

A continual process of local theorizing within the small groups to which we belong, a system of small group government, in our families, our workplaces, our schools, our community organizations will provide venue for the continual revaluation of our activities. Only if we invite the scrutiny of those unlike us will we have the advantage of the interpenetration that will allow us to deconstruct our own knowledge

creation. For that reason. *differance*. undecidability. a "search for instabilities." the upsetting and resettling of our activities, is necessary for ethical progress. There is no place for domination, for imperviousness to criticism, within such a "neighbourhood group."

The connections between Follettian philosophy and postmodernism, while maintained. is not what is most important, therefore. The real issue is what we collectively choose to learn from these ideas that have been conceived in and are inseparable from the realm of our day-to-day relations.

Coalescence: Deconstructing the Walls

I have "worked the hyphen" of the researcher-researched dichotomy within this last few months. But I think we work many hyphens within these lives that have been fragmented for us in so many ways. For the purpose of description we provide titles for the topics of our conversation. We call some topics "disciplines"; for example, history, philosophy, theology, or psychology; we call others "occupations"; for example, business, education, or social work. With the passage of time we seem to engage in what Woolgar (1988) refers to as the splitting and inversion model of discovery:

Stage 1: document exists

Stage 2: document-----> object

Stage 3: document   object

Stage 4: document <---- object

Stage 5: 'deny or forget about stages 1-3.' (p. 68)

We forget that we have extrapolated for the purpose of description and we begin to assume a separate existence of the concepts we have named simply for the purpose of description. We then begin to treat our social constructions as entities separate from one another and from our creation of them. We proceed to attach constructed bodies of knowledge to particular titles and assume that the knowledge attached to that title is idiosyncratic to the title; that is, we forget that we originally attached titles merely for descriptive purposes and proceed to construct inquiry into the activities of an occupation, for example, based upon our assumed manner of that occupation's objective and separate existence. This splitting and inversion model of discovery, what Whitehead called a 'fallacy of misplaced concretenes,' has been attributed to a modernist manner of thinking (Chia, 1997).

Only the most recent of the organizational theorists whose works we read in my current study in educational administration are what we now term "educators." We realize, however, that many lessons can be learned from these theorists that will assist our practice of administering to all stakeholders in education; that is, we recognize that what happens in other occupations affects our own, that circular response is ubiquitous. Considerable time is spent "working the hyphen" between what have been termed "disciplines." The comfort level in my department with many methods of research has created for students an opportunity to deconstruct the tendency to engage in the splitting and inversion model of discovery.

Drawing connections to my "other selves" is an exercise for the purpose of description, therefore. We must be careful not to lose sight that research in all venues

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will instruct all our relations. My field research occurred within a manufacturing setting. The experience of that research has entered my psyche and now affects all my daily activities: I have been motivated by my experience to learn how better to live the practice of democracy in all my relations. It is within the context of some of the other "neighbourhood groups" within which I move that I here direct further reflection.

I have made both practical and theoretical connections, through this research, to my teaching practice. Those connections I live with my students as we engage in our own reciprocal creative processes, as we research on a daily basis, how better to relate with one another. As institutionalized educators, I think that we may take instruction from this research for the practice of our profession, both for our everyday living and for further concentrated focus.

Teaching is autobiographical; it is that that makes the experiences of your life, and through them, your chosen career, so very important, I tell students; for your autobiography will influence the subject matter that you will teach and create the manner in which you will teach. Our autobiography and the biographies of our students coalesce, that is, our manner of relating shapes the choosing mentalities of all those we teach, either for their benefit or toward a manner of relating that will create negative experiences for them. I doubt that I can express it better than Follett (1928/1970): "It seems to me than that the core of the teacher-student relation is continuity--an unbroken continuity between the life and understandings and aspirations of the teacher and the life and understandings and aspirations of the student" (p. 139). What this signifies has also been addressed in the language of critical theory: There is no such thing as a neutral education; we either

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educate to the status quo, or we live with our students a life that will encourage them to recognize, in Roberto Unger's words, the "false necessity" that is often associated with our institutions, and the power that we can collectively create to continuously transform our institutions for the benefit of all citizens.

Jerry from SEI said to me during our interview: "You must participate in order to have a democracy." If our role as teachers is primarily to educate for full participation in the life of what Follett called our "neighbourhood groups" (and, like Follett, I do not accept democracy defined as majority rule and ballot box government), then the democratization of all our relationships, including those within our classrooms, is absolutely necessary. That process exists as an automatic skill for neither us nor our students; indeed it is not a skill so much as a way of life to be learned day-by-day. As Follett (1918/1920) said: "No one can give us democracy, we must learn democracy. To be a democrat is not to decide on a certain form of human association, it is to learn how to live with other men" (p. 22).

But if it is so, the question becomes: How will we relate to experience when we know that that experience is tied to our reaction in a moving psychic pattern of circular response, that the experience itself is always shaped by our presence within it? I think Follett (1924) gives us good advice in this regard:

> We seek reality in experience. Let us reject the realm of the compensatory; it is fair, but a prison. Experience may be hard but we claim its gifts because they are real, even though our feet bleed on its stones. We seek progressive advancement through the transformation of daily experience. Into what? Conceptual pictures?

No, daily experience must be translated not into conceptual pictures but into spiritual conviction. Experience can both guide us and guard us. Foolish indeed are those who do not bring oil to its burning. (p. 302)

With and through others we continually create new knowledge in our everyday lives, in all our neighbourhood groups. The worth of research experienced in the fashion I have described herein rests in the process itself, and the manner in which we deconstruct and reconstruct the walk on the stones of our experiences. The exercise of deconstruction includes, for me, the process of examining the circular manner in which the lessons I have learned from my research reciprocate with the activity of my teaching practice.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

Both within and without Sedor Enterprises Incorporated this research project has led to other inquiry that would be interesting to examine and to deconstruct. Within this section I will address those areas which have both become evident to me and are of particular personal interest. Others, when reading this document, may become motivated to explore in different areas.

Sedor Enterprises Incorporated

I have spoken about the ethic of care that I sensed at Sedor Enterprises Incorporated, and about its recent more tenuous existence. The creation and sustenance of caring, ethical organizations is a challenge; those dedicated to their creation should be forever mindful of the threats to their "neighbourhood groups" and should, in a concerted fashion, attend to the dangers of distraction. Other researchers, whether from the

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academic community or SEI itself, may wish to focus on the several areas of distraction within this company.

Of particular focus is the gender issue: Do men and women approach relation differently? Anne pointed out that women are relatively new to the workplace field. The ethic of care has been widely touted as being particularly compatible to females' ways of knowing. If that is so, why the apparent discrepancy within this company? Is there a breakdown in translation? Several of the employees--men and women--pointed to relation problems among the women in the company and generalized from their observations. Shawna stressed the difference in gender relationships and was motivated enough to give me an article addressing the issue. The short piece, entitled "Avoiding Gender Fender Benders," led me to the author's Web site. According to Hathaway,

> women converse to build connections and intimacy. They view conversation as negotiations for closeness. . . . Life is viewed as a community and women desire to preserve intimacy and avoid isolation. . . . Men, on the other hand, view conversations as negotiations to obtain the upper hand. They view life as a contest and men struggle to preserve their independence. Men tend to see individuals within a hierarchy and they are either one-up or one-down. (http://www.thechangeagent.com/rolodex.html, p. 3)

Whether Hathaway is correct in generalizing her assessments is open to question. Be that as it may, while the area of gender differences in communication has received considerable focus, a concerted effort to build understanding and make allowance for different approaches within the workplace setting may be slow in developing. It would

seem that the interviewees, both men and women, viewed the female characteristics of discourse as undesirable and needing correction. Rather than reaching that conclusion, a great deal of study is needed in order to become more conversant with how to build strong relationships in response to the needs of all participants. Both the staff at SEI and the research community would be well advised to initiate more concerted study on the manner of building the caring relationships that encompass all manner of communication styles.

The walls built by the traditional hierarchical structure within organizations still exist within SEI, albeit somewhat softened. The customary advantages enjoyed by those positions previously considered superior are still in evidence, for example, the front door entry and office locations, the paved parking lot, the ease in the shifting of work load in order to accommodate mid-day appointments for self or family, and the greater encouragement for more formal education (pp. 158-166). While the difference in work roles also makes for a difference in work location, some of the traditional advantages enjoyed can be either eliminated or shared throughout the company. For example, lots can be drawn on a monthly basis for the preferable parking spaces. Salaried people would be well advised to be more alert to the needs of their wage-earning counterparts and be willing to build power-with through the shared planning for more advantages in recognition of everyone's contributions. All employees need to suspend judgment and be willing to reciprocate when their co-workers extend their hands in cooperative friendship. Past grievances need to be forgiven.

Recognition of the experiential knowledge that is gained during the course of one's work needs to be encouraged at SEI. At present the perceived lack of respect for informal education is a substantial issue. A few interviewees stated that some employees just like to come to work, do their jobs, and go home. While that may be the case, it also may be that some of the employees have offered their advice in the past and the suggestions have not been acknowledged, let alone taken seriously as an alternative idea.

Tension seemed particularly in evidence between the production floor and R & D (pp. 158-166). Given that these two departments are so interconnected in purpose, to tolerate the continuation of such tension and the resulting discontented acquiescence of the production floor employees, is indeed counterproductive and regrettable. SEI is aware of the tension and has initiated moves to correct the situation. Jerry, the production engineer, worked in close relationship with the production floor people, actively soliciting their advice on the change in plant floor layout required with the change from residential to commercial production. During my research tenure, Drew from the R & D team was reassigned office space and began to work even more closely with the production floor employees concerning product change orders for the commercial units. He was viewed as more acceptable by the production people; while his expertise was established so was his respectfulness concerning others' skills, whether acquired through formal education or informal workplace experience.

Efforts toward such mutual respect of everyone's abilities needs to continue on several fronts within SEI. The need for improved communication between departments was mentioned by several employees. Perhaps if employees in close physical proximity

also tend to develop closer relations, more emphasis needs to be placed on get-togethers that encourage interaction. At present, the majority of employees seem to congregate with those whom they have the most direct work interest in common. This tendency was evident among both the women and the men, with the production floor male workers more likely to congregate playing cards at breaks and the other men playing foozball or pingpong. This segregation could have been reflective of the difference in physical exercise within the various work roles, as well, those with office jobs choosing an activity involving exercise and those with production floor jobs choosing an activity that would allow them to sit down. The nonproduction men most likely to join in the card games were those with the closest work interest in common with production workers. Female production workers tended to group together with one or two exceptions; the female nonproduction workers similarly kept to themselves and out of the more public areas for their lunches and coffee breaks. The production and nonproduction people were thus often segregated, a phenomenon not conducive to increased mutual understanding and relation building, either personally or professionally.

The decision concerning where to focus energies for improvement must be made by the people themselves, of course. They will read the stories; they will decide whether to do much or little. However, if any initiatives are to enjoy success, they must come from all the people; there must be developed a common will, a mutual commitment. The employees at SEI have the benefit of a culture of care. But if it is to be sustained, it needs constant attention, constant labor toward the common will, achieved in an atmosphere of dedication to serve one another and so oneself, as well. It is here within this organization

and the many other neighbourhood groups to which these people belong that true democratic participation is created and nourished.

Many changes have occurred within this company, changes that would have destroyed the culture of care in many an organization with bonds less strong. Having said that, the culture of care is threatened within this company; employees need the activity of the common will, generated by each and all, to be maintained, not just, or even primarily. to meet the demands of the marketplace, but for the continued ability of all participants to create institutions that forever respond to the needs of those who people them.

Follettian Principles and Postmodernism

My treatment of Follettian philosophy and postmodern notions has been very personal. autobiographical; it could not be otherwise. How fascinating it would be to have another person address Follett with a postmodern perspective not having had read about my research at all, so that it would not have entered their psyche and affected their approach. In addition, a concerted effort to deconstruct my treatment of the concepts by someone who has read both Follett and Derrida would be most instructive. My own additional reading of both Follett and other postmodern philosophers would allow for a more informed personal deconstruction of my own work, at some later date after I have been involved in other additional experiences, as well.

Follett herself, irrespective of postmodern connections, continues to fascinate me. I have been fortunate to have connected with many others of a variety of ages and experiential backgrounds who have read and researched Follett. My continued research of Follett will be informed by the interaction with these other interested people. Perhaps

those who read my document will be motivated to want to join their insights with ours for the benefit of all.

I have given the historical analysis of organizational theory a scant treatment within this document. Although there are many books that have explored one theorist or another, I have found none that examine the connections among the various philosophical notions underlying what we have come to call scientific management, human relations, industrial humanism, and postmodernism, for example. Particularly fascinating to me would be the exploration of Follett's personal and philosophical connections with other organizational theorists such as Lyndall Urwick, Eduard Lindeman, and Frederick Taylor. It would seem, for example, that although Follett was a member of the Taylor Society, she manipulated Taylor's notions to the point of completely separating herself philosophically from Taylor, even while exclaiming her allegiance to the principles of scientific management. How could one who expounded upon situational leadership at the same time believe that all work tasks could be reduced to a clearly defined science, defined by management? Taylor's promotion of the depersonalization of orders Follett (1941) reframed as the *repersonalization* (p. 60) of orders, the "re" being extracted from relation. Was Follett laboring under pressure from the scientific management trend of her time, a captive of her own reciprocal response? Did she want to present an alternative to Taylorists without alienating them? What was her motive? These initial questions would lead to others in the exciting exploration and creation of new research venues.

And what of the postmodern search for instabilities? How do we continue to deconstruct the logocentric metaphors of our existence? If our knowledge is indeed

interconnected with activity, then the importance and immensity of this task cannot be underestimated. The search for and creation of instability must remain a constant activity for all participants in neighbourhood groups. I view activity as very important: for through the hype of contemporary omnipresent media, we are bombarded by activity that infiltrates our psyche and leads us to believe that what we see is what we want. Organizational structures are built to perfect and to perpetuate the "performativity" of consumerism. Our reality begins to move within the cosmetics, the designer clothing, the fancy cars, the big houses, all manner of material wealth gained at the expense of environmental sustainability; we develop "affluenza" (CBC Morning News, December 18th, 1997. Term coined by the Adbuster Media Foundation). What Lippman expressed in 1914 we still experience to even a greater degree:

> We make love to ragtime and we die to it. We are blown hither and thither like litter before the wind. Our days are lumps of undigested experience. You have only to study what the newspapers regard as news to see how we are torn and twisted by the irrelevant: in frenzy about issues that do not concern us, bored with those that do. (pp. 211-212)

That frenzy often provides the definition for our lives, as we list the chores and demands that give unexamined expression to our days, as if the more expectations that we can invent the greater is our importance. Our goals we seldom critique in the realm of activities; we think it suffices to express a modicum of dissatisfaction from time to time.

How do we digest our experience so that the ragtime sirens do not entice us to our doom, so that *pharmakon* does not lose its ability to serve as anecdote, and Mr. Hyde

alone occupies our psyche? How do we constantly disentrench, facilitate that challenge which creates instability and stability in circular response? These are questions to be answered; the answers will lead to new questions, again answers, only to be again unsettled in our urgent search for solutions, our haste to know, the activity of our language games, creating always in circular response.

Always the Educator/Educated

As I become more immersed in the practice of formal education, I am encouraged to explore, in a institutionalized fashion, the manner in which we can encourage the practice of democracy. How do we encourage our educational "neighbourhood groups" to practice postmodern Follettian notions, to deconstruct the logocentric metaphors of our existence, and to elicit the contributions of all stakeholders? There are several areas of research focus that I think should engage our attention.

Within the teacher education program at the university in which I practice and study, a concerted look at Follett's four methods of dealing with conflict--voluntary submission, domination, compromise, and integration--would be of interest. A concentration on dominating tactics seems at times to render some relationships totally *pharmakon*. People sometimes withdraw in an intentional, yet unsuccessful, attempt to isolate themselves. How do we begin to repair the damage of domination that we see around us and within us so that we may begin anew with creative and integrative growth, for ourselves, and for our students? If Follett's notion of reciprocal response is valid, then we need to pay more attention to what we teach our students through the process of our daily activities. The manner in which we relate to our students, and they, in turn, to

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theirs, should receive more direct focus. There needs to be more research in just how this attention should be directed. What should be the nature of a "power-with" "relation" curriculum?

Follett's notion of small group government would enjoy application at the level of the small rural community. Current pressure on small school divisions to amalgamate needs to be deconstructed with a view to the "law of the situation." We need to examine the seeming need to create these "metatheories." If Follett was correct in that opportunities for democratic participation should be nurtured within our "neighbourhood groups," then we should encourage the citizenry of small communities to engage in participatory methods of inquiry into alternatives to school closures.

We need to develop a Follettian culture of "circular response" among teachers within and across disciplines, so that learning from one another becomes the norm. The situation would, once again, instruct the types of activities that would benefit the particular group of teachers; for example, in southeastern Saskatchewan, near the border with Manitoba and the United States, the teachers initiated a local inservice to include teachers from the two provinces and nearby North Dakota. More such initiatives need to be encouraged. A portfolio documenting those inservices could be complied and kept as a reference for all teachers, with copies in the schools involved, in the division offices, and with provincial and state teacher organizations. That process of responding to the "law of the situation" could be begun retrospectively at any time by those interested in compiling successful processes of co-ordination.

At the school level, formal time needs to be allotted for circular response. The practice of Follett's principles of coordination may be applied to the sharing of ideas and methods within and across grade levels and disciplines. With encouragement and time allotment provided on a weekly basis, teachers may be more inclined to arrange time informally, as well, as the sharing of situational resources becomes incorporated into the school culture. Such activities could perhaps occur on a "jigsaw" basis, as some teachers shared, while others supervised combined classes of students, perhaps of different age levels, who were simultaneously also assisting one another in their efforts to learn. This process could perhaps be initiated and facilitated by a "power-with" principal, who would coordinate the process for the benefit of all participants and in response to the contextual needs of the participants.

The few connections to formal education and relevant suggestions offered here are the creative impulses vibrating within my consciousness at this moment in the process. Perhaps their movement within my psyche might encourage other ideas in circular response with these ideas. When others read of these ideas they may also be stimulated not only to incorporate these ideas into their daily activities, but to expand upon and contextualize these ideas into a dynamic activity that creates a more democratic educational experience for all citizens.

Looking Forward/Looking Back

Having set out to study the life and work of Mary Parker Follett and assess the current applicability of her philosophical principles, I have learned a great deal, not only from my own reading for the study, but from the people within SEI. Indirectly, they have

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encouraged me to read Follett's work again and again for reference, for ideas, for knowledge about self and others. In so doing, I have expanded my ability to understand and empathize with others, increased my commitment to the building of community through circular response, the making of the common will.

I have understood that attending is about finding deeper meaning, that sense-making is a social activity, that living is a spiritual matter. And I have found that, instead of citizens learning from larger governments how to live, larger government needs to learn from the communities that constitute, in interconnected relations, the essence of society. That realization makes each and every activity in which we engage very important. For each activity, no matter how trivial it seems, constitutes part of our ever-expanding knowledge base from which we learn and from which others learn from us. The conclusion as to how the larger society, the state, is to become a moral and spiritual authority is clear. according to Follett (1918/1920). Authority is derived:

> Only through its citizens in their growing understanding of the promise of
> relation. The neighbourhood group feeds the imagination because we have daily
> to consider the wants of all in order to make a synthesis of those wants; we have
> to recognize the rights of others and adapt ourselves to them. Men must recognize
> and unify difference and then the moral law appears in all its majesty in concrete
> form. This is the universal striving. This is the trend of all nature--the
> harmonious unifying of all. (pp. 333-334)

Continual attention toward methods not to destroy but to unify difference was Mary Parker Follett's goal. It has been and remains my contention that postmodern

philosophy, in the recognition and blessing given to difference, at once recognizes the essence of human nature and the path of progress as being toward greater understanding and respect for one another. By focusing on an evolving purposeful process that embraces all people, opportunities can be initiated and institutions can be developed that will honor difference while uniting it in common efforts for the benefit of all participants in democracy.

These individuals, this government, this society is not an entity; it is an evolving process, for a moral neighbourhood group is neither stagnant in its purpose nor rigid in its membership. Whatever group we inhabit the truth is the same: That group can reach a "moral state only through its being built anew from hour to hour by the activity of all its members" (Follett, 1918/1920, p. 335). For others, for ourselves, for all our groups, we would be well advised to attend to our responsibility diligently, lest our ability continually to democratize our lives be lost in the heady distraction of meaningless pursuits that leave little legacy for our children of which we may be proud.

An advantage to doing research in this postmodern fashion is the freedom one enjoys as a participant in the research. A passionate immersion of oneself in the study obliterates pretense of objectivity; the autobiographical nature of the evolving purpose is admitted, examined, deconstructed, revalued. I have been encouraged by this research to engage with life with a heightened sense of awareness. My passion will remain but will be perceived differently:

Men follow their passions and should do so, but they must purify their passions, educate them, discipline and direct them. We turn our impulses to wrong uses,

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but our impulses are not wrong. The forces of life should be used, not stifled.

(Follett, 1918/1920, p. 340)

My relations with others will receive more scrutiny, my questioning of myself and others will become more urgent. I will pay more attention to critique, to a search for the instabilities, in a continual attempt to create an environment amenable to the democratic participation of everyone in the "neighbourhood groups" to which I belong.

Mary Parker Follett, her ideals, and the notions explored by postmodernists have led me to believe that what really is important is relation. There is really no life without relation to other humans, to all forms of life and inanimation within the universe. I hope that I may always give to my relations the attention of an ethic of care.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Mary Parker Follett: Photo and Eulogy

.

Appendix A-1: Photo of Mary Parker Follett

(Urwick & Brech, 1949, p. 48 insert)

Appendix A-2: Mary Parker Follett: A Eulogy

Mary Parker Follett was a tall, slender woman, five foot seven or eight, with dark brown hair and blue eyes. By most people's standards she would perhaps be regarded as plain looking. However, judging by the remarks made about her, her lack of striking beauty was compensated by her quick mind and her engaging personality. Metcalf and Urwick (1949) write:

> Mary Follett's outstanding characteristic was a facility for winning the confidence and esteem of those with whom she came in contact; she established a deep-rooted understanding and friendship with a wide circle of eminent men and women on both sides of the Atlantic. The root of this social gift was her vivid interest in life. Every individual's experience, his relations with others and with the social groups--large and small--of which he was a part, were the food for her thought. She listened with alert and kindly attention; she discussed problems in a temper which drew the best out of the individual with whom she was talking. (p. 11)

Her writing reveals the thoughts of an energetic, refreshing, idealistic mind. Many who came in contact with her and her writings became her devoted friends and followers. And she, in her turn, complimented everyone she met by being sincerely interested in their affairs, interweaving their knowledge and experience with her own in the dynamic process of co-creating one another, the process in which she so passionately believed and about which so she eloquently wrote.

During Follett's lifetime, business had emerged as a dominant force in American and European culture. Her study in a wide range of disciplines--economics, political science, philosophy, psychology--gave her an appreciation of the impact of many fields on business, and she was able, as a member of the Taylor Society and a proponent of scientific management, to appreciate and to attend to the importance of the human factor in business. For that reason, she was seen as having a foot in both scientific management and human relations fields, and as being instrumental in focusing attention to the human aspects of business organization. However, it is now recognized that Follett progressed far beyond human relations thought with her advocacy of the development of the individual's full potential through the integrative process of group interaction. In the contemporary postmodern era, there has been renewed focus on the development of small group theory through the process of discourse (Lyotard, 1984) and on the principles of communitarianism promoted in a co-operative "learning organization" (Senge, 1990). Follett's books have been taken from the bookshelf, dusted off, and her philosophy has been rediscovered by researchers and practitioners (e.g., Graham, 1995). Her words are remarkably relevant, not only for the present business environment, but for all manner of our relations with one another.

Appendix B: Interview Questions and Company Outline

Appendix B-1: Proposed Sample Questions

Follett's notion of the "law of the situation" involves a process of continually responding to the evolving situation by respecting those who have relevant knowledge and granting them temporary leadership. The leader and the orders evolve from the situation at hand. The process of continually responding to the situation allows for the honoring of diverse viewpoints. The growing of power within the situational context encourages the increase of "power-with" one's cohorts. The feeling of subordination, of someone else having "power-over" you, is decreased.

Is Follett's concept of the "law of the situation" practised at SEI?

In what ways?

Do you think that employees in this workplace would (or do) enjoy these kind of "roving" leadership opportunities and responsibilities? Why or why not?

Do you think that the concept of the "law of the situation" is viable for your workplace?

How would you advise that implementation be begun?

Follett considers four ways of dealing with conflict -- voluntary submission, domination, compromise, and integration. The best way, she thinks, is through integrative dialogue during which we can devise new solutions previously not considered.

Which of the four methods of dealing with conflict is most prevalent in your workplace? Second most prevalent? Third? Fourth?

Why do you think that this is so?

Do you agree with Follett's opinion of compromise in relation to your workplace experience here? Please explain.

Which would you like to see as the most prevalent manner of dealing with conflict?

How can this happen in your workplace?

Do you think that Follett's concept of "integration" would be viable in your workplace? Why or why not? How would you advise that implementation be begun?

MARY PARKER FOLLETT (1868-1933)

HER INSIGHTS INSTRUCT CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS

The Individual and the Organization as Process

Circular Response

Integration

Coordination

Small Group Government

"Law of the Situation"

"Power with" rather than "Power over"

The Individual and Society as Process

Rather than viewing ourselves and our groups as entities, Follett stressed that the individual and the organization are continual evolving processes. When we conduct a study of our organization, we realize that we are looking at a "moment in a process." With that in mind, we are more able to approach our study as members of a "learning organization." What we learn continually informs us and changes our daily activities with one another, even as we conduct the study.

Organizational Relevance: Emphasis on the importance of communication as a creative force. Organizational attention to constant change and its effects. The shift is to an emphasis on community and collaboration as learning processes.

Circular Response

Follett contended that we create one another during a continuous interweaving with one another during social interaction of various types (e.g., conversations, written memos, body language, organizational symbols and patterns of behavior). The individual and the organization evolve together through this continuous interaction and cannot be separated from one another.

Organizational Relevance: Company recognition of importance of employees to the vitality of the business. Given that recognition, the business is more attentive to the input of employees. Everyone is expected to think about and to question "the way we do it around here" and to contribute their ideas for improvements.

Integration

Differences of opinions are invited and expected in a "learning organization." Follett contended that there were four ways that we can deal with conflict:

1. Domination -- Autocratic leadership decides issues. The business has the benefit of the ideas of only a select few.

2. Voluntary submission of one side -- Can the contemporary organization afford to encourage such passive reactions?

3. Compromise -- Each side harbors some resentment for having had to give up some of their wishes and saves those wishes, waiting for the first opportunity to inject them into the "game plan."

4. Integration, as the desired alternative invites diversity and honors conflict. Mutual benefit is derived from our differences. New solutions which satisfy the wishes of all are created through collaborative efforts.

Organizational Relevance: Honoring of diversity Encouragement of conflict Participatory decision-making The healthy existence of the contemporary company is linked to how successfully it can encourage the instability of difference within a stable environment, a "search for instabilities."

Coordination

The concept of coordination contained what Follett believed to be the four principles of organization:

1. Coordination is the reciprocal relating of all factors in a situation. We attempt to get the "whole picture."

2. Coordination occurs with the direct contact of all responsible people concerned. Control is exercised through cross-relational communication among and within departments, and from within and without the company.

3. Coordination is necessary in the early stages so that the benefit of everyone's input is maximized--no "rubber stamping."

4. Coodination is a continual process. We do not meet only when difficulties arise.

Organizational Relevance: Attention is granted to the importance of continuous input from everyone. Formal means for the exchange of ideas are provided.

Small Group Government

"Neighbourhood groups" are the desired work and social entities, according to Follett. The many groups to which we belong constitute "society" for each of us. Our work group is one of these. Within participation in our groups lies true democracy and opportunities for integrative activity.

Organizational Relevance: Policy is put in place that provides opportunities for employee groups to self-direct their activities in relationships with other groups. Organizational learning moves to the forefront.   Opportunities for continual dialogue are present.   Responsibility is shared. Individuals achieve to their fullest with and through the encouragement of others. "There is no such thing as a self-made man." (M.P.F., The New State, p. 62)

"Law of the Situation"

Follett emphasized the importance of orders evolving from the situation. An examination of the issues at hand would allow the orders to flow from the context. Leadership shifts according to who has the most knowledge in a given situation. Integrative decision-making allows for continual contributions from those with diverse viewpoints, thus for leadership to be shared in many situations.

Organizational Relevance: Employees are encouraged to contribute to each new situation. Hierarchy and subordination fade. The organization becomes more able to respond rapidly to changing demands.

"Power-with" rather than "Power-over"

Power, defined as the ability to make things happen, should not be thought of as a contained entity of only a certain magnitude, to be hoarded or even to be shared. Rather, power, like love for example, may continually be built up through a process of interactive influence. The resulting "power-with" allows for the continuous creation and release of the abilities of everyone. "Power-over" allows only for the contribution of a few. The abilities of many of the employees are suppressed. The resultant feelings of subordination attack our self-respect and prevent us from achieving to our fullest. "Power-with" is a jointly-developed power, co-active and not coercive.

Organizational Relevance: Employees have both power and responsibilities in their areas of expertise. The good leader is one who encourages everyone to be a leader.

Appendix B-3:   Organizational Chart and Overview of Company Employees and Interviewees
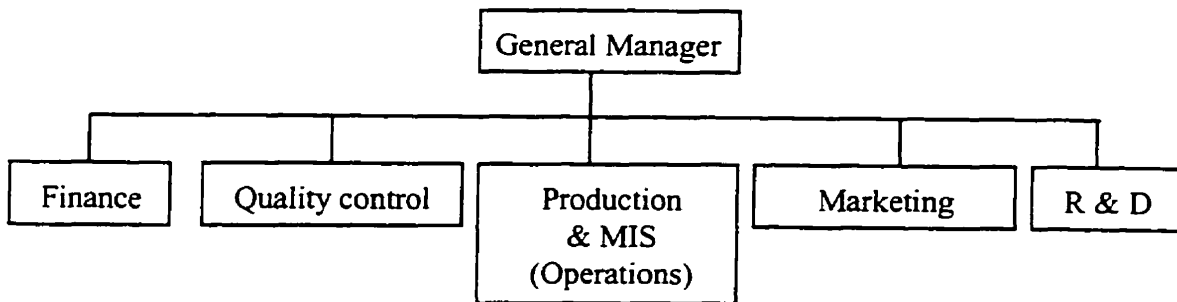
Organizational Chart of SEI
Note: Composed by the researcher

The approximate number of people in each department has been noted in parentheses directly after the departmental listing. Because the company was undergoing a reorganization during the time of my research, the number of employees in each department was in flux. Interviewees are identified with an "i" in parentheses. Others listed have been mentioned in the document during the discussion of observations within the company.

Previous owners: Paul Sedor and Judith Sims

Present general manager: Raymond Olette (i)

Finance: (4) Adrienne (i), Agatha (i), Joan (i)

Quality control: (4) Jerry (i), Joe (i)

Operations: Production floor and management information systems: (21 to 23) Aaron, Allan (i), Colin (i), Grant (i), Jack (i), Jill (i), Keith (i), Kurt, Mark (i), Ryan, Susan (i)

Marketing: (4 increased to 9) Anne (i), Betty (i), Don (i), Pat (i), Roger, Shawna (i)

R & D: (4) Drew, Murray, Tim

Appendix C: Consent Form

Appendix C: Consent Form

STUDY NAME: The Applicability of the Philosophy of Mary Parker Follett in a Contemporary Workplace
RESEARCHER: Helen Armstrong   Phone: 955-9660

You are being invited to participate in a research study, which is being conducted to partially fulfil the requirements for a Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Administration from the University of Saskatchewan. The supervising professor is Dr. Larry Sackney. He may be contacted by phoning 966-7626.

The purpose of this research is to concentrate my attention on Mary Parker Follett's (1868-1933) life, the philosophical principles she espoused within her writing, and their practical applicability in a contemporary workplace.

You are being asked to participate in an interview. All information supplied will be anonymous. However, your signature will indicate that you are aware that the nature of the information you have provided may identify you to your co-workers, and that you agree to its use with that realization in mind. Within the academic final report, which is a public document, the company and all interview participants will be given fictitious names. A copy of that document will remain with the company for all employees to access. The oral report to the company employees will focus on the company relevance of the explanations of Follett's philosophy which you discussed and how those explanations may affect the nature of the interaction among employees. Only the researcher will have access to the interview data which will be locked in a filing cabinet in the researcher's home when not in use. If you agree to let the interview be taped, the tape recording, as well as all raw written data, will be destroyed once the final written report has been submitted and approved. The interview information will be returned to the interviewee in its written form for correction or amendment prior to its inclusion in the academic report.

There will be no financial remuneration for participation in this research. If you decide to participate, you are still free to discontinue that participation at any time. Should you desire, all data collected to date will then be destroyed.

Your signature below indicates that you have consented to participate in this study and that you have read and understood the consent form. Please keep one copy of this consent form.

Thank you.

Participant's signature _____ Date_____

Researcher's Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix D: Ethics Committee Approval

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**UNIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON ETHICS IN HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION**

(Behavioral Sciences)

NAME AND EC #:	P. J. Renihan (H. Armstrong) Educational Administration	For Reference: EC# 97-70
DATE:	April 24, 1997	

The University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Human Experimentation (Behavioral Sciences) has reviewed your study, "The Applicability of the Philosophy of Mary Parker Follett in the Contemporary Workplace" (97-70).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.

2. Any significant changes to your protocol should be reported to the Director of Research Services for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.

3. The term of this approval is for 3 years.

Michael Owen, Secretary
for the University Advisory Committee
on Ethics in Human Experimentation, Behavioral Science

Please direct all correspondence to: Michael Owen, Secretary
UACEHE, Behavioral Science
Office of Research Services
University of Saskatchewan
Room 210 Kirk Hall, 117 Science Place
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5C8

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

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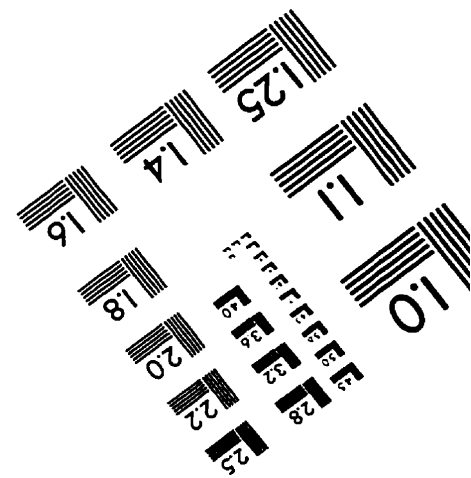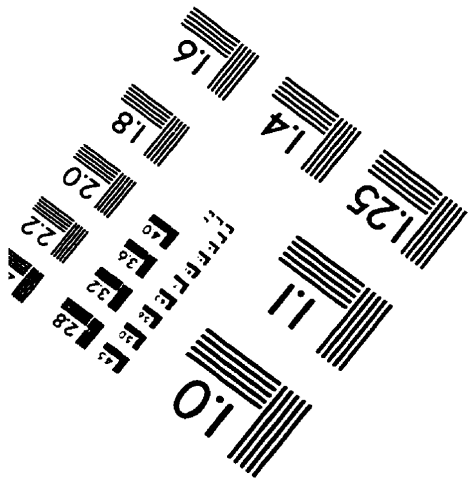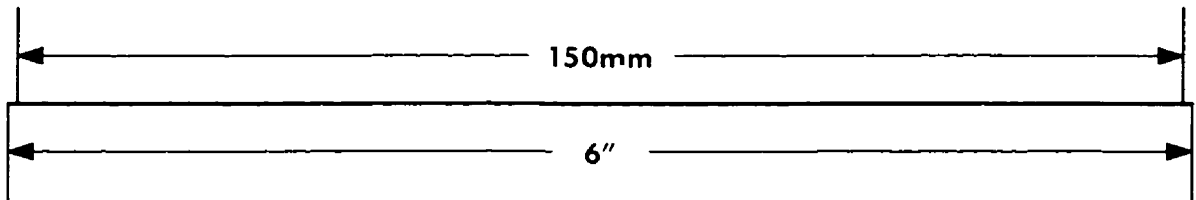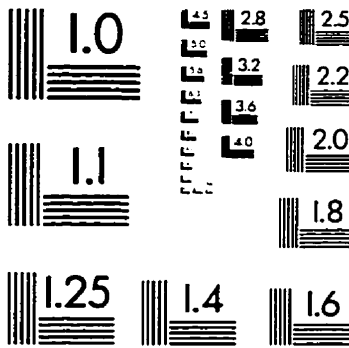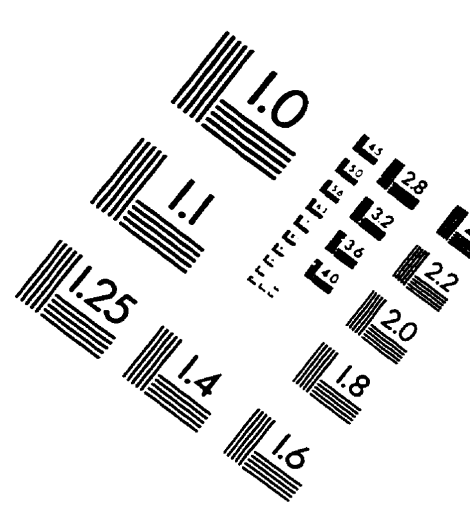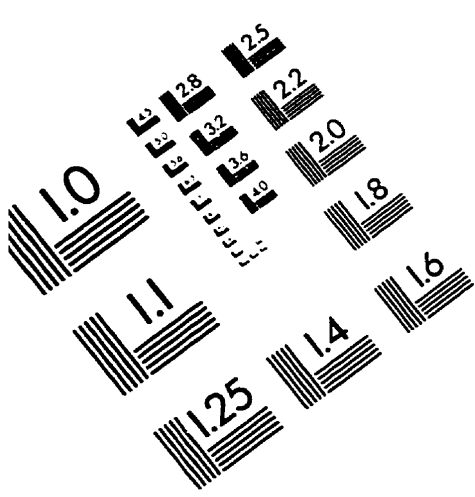
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