

Historical Female Management Theorists

The appearance of Kristin Williams' exquisitely produced, and provocatively written book creates a true sense of excitement for all of us expecting feminist theorizing to continue as a legitimate research and theory development area in the field of organization studies. This book offers three important contributions to the field: first, it brings to visibility four female historical figures whose ideas, often unrecognized, are present in the field's lexicon. Second, it accomplishes this aim by developing a novel theoretical framework bridging feminist theory and critical historiography. Finally, a creative methodology – ficto-feminism – brings to the present these figures' lively voices, inviting all of us to partake in their conversations. An extraordinary accomplishment to work within extraordinary times!

Marta B. Calás

*Professor of Organization Studies and International Management
Isenberg School of Management University of Massachusetts – Amherst*

How many times, when reading a biography of a woman who was no longer with us, we dreamt about a conversation we could have with her, asking her questions and receiving answers that could change our lives ... Kristin Williams has fulfilled this kind of dream. Introducing ficto-feminism to management and organization studies, she emboldens us to use a variety of methods and approaches heretofore unknown in our discipline. May the conversation with the feminists continue into history!

Barbara Czarniawska

*Senior Professor of Management Studies
Gothenburg Research Institute, University of Gothenburg*

History brought to life. *Historical Female Management Theorists* is a must read for anyone wanting to learn about women figures in management history. A beautifully written and engaging book that houses historical archival research, feminist and historical inquiry in management, and fictional writing. This book is methodologically precise, representationally creative, and theoretically sophisticated.

Alison Pullen

*Editor, Gender, Work & Organization
Professor of Management and Organizational Studies, Macquarie University*

This book feels the pulse of contemporary feminist thought, finds it to be lively and inventive and then, finding it/us receptive to new intellectual endeavours, takes us on a series of adventures. What adventures! Readers not only find a new methodology, ficto-feminism, but also a new way of writing that draws on the devices used by authors of fictional works. Along the way we are introduced to a new way of doing management history. Through the re-discovery of four pioneering female thinkers Kristin (the use of her given name is deliberate) invites us to explore the practices that erase women from history. She tracks the consequences of that invisibilization, notably the ways in which the academic discipline of management and leadership became constrained within an over-arching and stultifying way of thinking about how work should and must be done. By introducing

us to Frances Perkins, Hallie Flanagan, Madeleine Parent and Viola Desmond, Kristin offers us four proto-management theorists and feminist icons who open ways of thinking (and writing and dreaming) differently about management and organizations. This important and timely book invites us into a conversation in which we may find ways to dismantle those taken-for-granted structuring devices that have dominated the field of management and organization studies for far too long. It offers inspiration and guidance to anyone who wants to break free of the oppressive weight of much contemporary MOS thought.

Nancy Harding

Professor of Management Strategy & Organization, University of Bath

Kristin Williams engages in a genre-blending experiment that breaks the conventional framing of historical writing in management history in a highly creative and original way. This book will be of interest to all scholars and students of management who are interested in writing differently as a means of disrupting hegemonic modes of knowledge production and exploring alternatives.

Emma Bell

Professor, Organization Studies, Faculty of Business & Law, The Open University Business School

In this deeply personal and political book, Kristin Williams takes us into the remarkable lives of four North American women activists in labour, civil rights and the arts in the early twentieth century. Blurring the genres of history and fiction into 'ficto-feminism', she breaks patriarchal narratives to recover them as makers of history. Yet, as history is fiction, Kristin is not interested in truth claims. Her activist writing rather develops through engaging, intimate conversations, in which she interweaves herself, reflectively, into the text. Determined to 'challenge our understanding of what is worthy knowledge and where it can be found', she rewrites these brave, intelligent and complex women's pioneering ideas and work into management and organization studies. Thanks to her imagination, these women inspire us to transgress. I cannot think of any better reason to read this book!

Patrizia Zononi

Professor, Organization Studies, Faculty of Business Economics, Hasselt University

Journey with Williams as she bridges the historical divide and engages in conversation with proto-management theorists Frances Perkins, Hallie Flanagan, Madeline Parent and Viola Desmond. Using the fascinating activist method of ficto-feminism, Williams introduces us to women who have been ignored because they didn't meet the gender and ideological requirements of traditional management scholars. Her work opens a door that will draw you in to letting go of convention and illuminating the pluralities of histories in management theory.

Patricia Genoe McLaren

*President, Administrative Sciences Association of Canada
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Historical Female Management Theorists: Frances Perkins, Hallie Flanagan, Madeleine Parent, Viola Desmond

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This book is dedicated to my husband, David, and my children, Michael and Graham, for your love, support and encouragement. To my friend, Albert, thank you for believing in me.

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Preface

I love fiction, and particularly historical fiction! I have been surprised more than once with the inspiration I have found there. The historian and the fiction writer do not see themselves as doing the same thing, but there are occasions where figures like Margaret Atwood and her work could be confused for history. There were moments when writing this book where I felt like I was the author of fiction and other times where I revealed where fiction exists and has been taken as fact. To be candid, there are times where I need not necessarily know where the facts end, and the supposition begins; I just want to know the story.

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Acknowledgements

I wrote this book in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the 'Treaties of Peace and Friendship', which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources, but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. We are all treaty people.

I would also like to recognize the over 400-year history of communities of African descent and the 50 African Nova Scotian communities located throughout the region today.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

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

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

I offer in this book, an unapologetic, feminist polemic. Polemics are a form of prowoman writing (Ferguson, 1986). Ferguson (1986) presents three kinds of feminist polemic: (1) *reactive* (to counter misogynous diatribes); (2) *reasoned* (significant and sustained arguments); and (3) *personal*. I draw on the third, which fuses *autobiography as polemic* (opposing the convention of silence) and *polemic of the heart* (emotional journals) (Ferguson, 1986). I see feminist polemics as passionate, strong and engaging ideas and arguments, which can be both controversial and challenging to dominant notions and ideas. I use polemics to re-politicize feminism and to 'question the notion of boundaries or limits' (Flannery, 2001, p. 117).

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

This method is marked by several unique facets, including: (1) its potential to unlock agency for subject and writer; (2) its potential to offer reflexive and embodied/

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Frances Perkins, Hallie Flanagan, Madeleine Parent, Viola Desmond

Critical Management Studies, 1–19

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

This book presents the *true, untrue stories* of four incredible women: **Frances Perkins** (1880–1965) Social Worker, US Secretary of Labour and First Female Cabinet Minister; **Hallie Flanagan** (1890–1969) Playwright and Director of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Theatre; **Madeleine Parent** (1918–2012) Feminist Icon, Advocate and Labour Organizer; and **Viola Desmond** (1914–1965) Civil Rights Libertarian and Pioneering Entrepreneur. Though my selection was highly subjective they do have commonalities, which I will elaborate on later in this chapter. Of significance here is that they and their potential contributions have been overlooked. These women have been ignored by both MOS and MH.

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

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

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

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

I have one key objective, with five supporting contributions. My aim is to introduce and then demonstrate *ficto-feminism* as a new method for feminist historiographers with the aim of inspiring others to also experiment and explore its potential.

In the development of this method, I have bridged my disposition as a feminist polemicist, with an inclination towards poststructural inquiry and postmodern writing in the study of historical figures. By drawing on collective biography, auto-ethnography and fictocriticism, I will present a conversational narrative, neither fiction, nor history, but in service to scholars as a linguistic and stylistic strategy. The sources I draw on are ‘verifiable’ traces, but I then engage with these traces and the women in a fictitious encounter. In developing ficto-feminism I also hope to:

- build on current research which interrogates the role of MH in the neglect of women leaders and their accomplishments;
- contribute to the development of a bridge between feminist theory and critical historiography;
- explore how personal agency can be enacted in subject and writer;
- draw attention to Frances Perkins, Hallie Flanagan, Madeleine Parent and Viola Desmond and their lost contributions to MOS; and
- introduce a new approach to writing, which is narrative in style and inspired by fictional writing.

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

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

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

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

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Additionally, I am also interested in the relationship between history and storytelling and presenting an entirely radical approach to surfacing lost voices, while exercising personal agency (for myself and the women).

It is important to recognize that I build on the work of many others, who have questioned both the gendered and limited nature of MOS and MH (Hartt, Mills, & Mills, 2012), its propensity to ignore clear demonstrations of remarkable leadership (Berman & Van Buren, 2015; Calás & Smircich, 2012) and to ignore programs, which sit outside of the conventional, capitalist models so very prevalent and privileged in literature and practice (Williams & Mills, 2017). I also draw on those scholars who value writing differently and in so doing, adopt novel lenses to broaden who is included in MOS/MH, and question why we value certain contributions and certain ways of *knowing* and *telling* over others (Gilmore, Harding, Helin, & Pullen, 2019; Pullen & Rhodes, 2008; Rhodes, 2015; Weatherall, 2019). I also hope to offer something new, by providing key insights into leaders unrecognized, and stories untold in the context of MOS and MH, while simultaneously continuing to advance the reshaping and maturing of the disciplines. I will speak further to my theory and approach in the next chapter.

The Women

The selection of the women for this book was not easy and arguably highly subjective. Many women present as remarkable. When there are so few women featured in MOS and MH, the task of choosing is daunting. However, this task is also managed by how much or how little is currently available in public records, which unsurprisingly favour male leaders and theorists.

I picked these four women first and foremost because they intrigued me. I was immediately fascinated by each one and was compelled to dig deeper and to understand them. Ulrich (1976) offered some inspiration with her well-known quote: ‘well-behaved women seldom make history’ (p. 20). None of these women took the easy path. Each in her own way was a rebel, a rulebreaker and a change-maker. They were brave, resolute and inspiring.

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

How did I choose? Well, two were suggested to me: Frances Perkins (Secretary of Labour) and Hallie Flanagan (Federal Theatre Director). Both were part of the New Deal (a series of public works projects and financial reforms enacted in

the 1930s in the United States). The New Deal has been studied in terms of its exclusion from MOS (Foster, Mills, & Weatherbee, 2014). As a result, the contributions of these two women leaders were also lost. I became interested in the New Deal, while completing course work for my PhD. I was so interested, that I published several works on Frances and Hallie (e.g. Williams & Mills, 2017, 2018). During my studies of these two women, I amassed a considerable set of resources and knowledge, which I wanted to incorporate into this book.

The two Canadians were shortlisted from a longer list of remarkable Canadian women. After studying two Americans, I was keen to find Canadian women to learn from and quite frankly, I thought that other Canadian scholars might be interested as well. Madeleine Parent (Labour Organizer/Feminist) and Viola Desmond (Entrepreneur/Civil Rights Activist) came out on top of a list that originally included: (1) Mary Shadd Cary (1823–1893, the First Black Woman Newspaper Editor and Advocate for Universal Education and Women’s Rights); (2) Jane Constance Cook aka Ga’axstal’s (1870–1951, an Advocate for Indigenous Rights, Women and Children and the Executive of the Allied Indian Tribes of BC in 1922); (3) Hanna (Annie) Gale (1876–1970, the First Alderwoman in the British empire, who established the local consumers’ league and advocated for workers and women); (4) Justice Bertha Wilson (1923–2007, the First woman Supreme Court Justice and Advocate for understanding and revising laws, which disadvantage women and minorities); and (5) Eileen Tallman-Sufrin (1913–1999, Labour Organizer, Trainer of Union Leaders and Advocate for fair working conditions for women).

I became interested in Viola as her story unfolded in the media in Nova Scotia (my home province in Canada), whereas Madeleine’s death sparked my interest in her life. Like Frances (but in Canada vs. the USA), Madeleine was involved in the early days of Canadian labour work, while Viola has been more recently recognized for her role in the Canadian Civil Rights movement.

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

Though I have been cautious not to ascribe these women with attributes or slot them into categories, which make it easy to compare them, I will make the case that all four women are overlooked historical figures – their leadership, ideas, theories and contributions never forming part of the development of MOS. There are similar themes and discourses, which span all women and contribute to their marginalization and status as an ‘overlooked’ figure of significance.

When I refer to the term ‘overlooked’ I am not suggesting each woman does not have a history, but rather that her history and her ideas were overlooked by

the early developers and scholars involved in MOS and the development of MH. I am also arguing that being an overlooked figure means that we have also lost her potential contribution of ideas as theories, methods and practices. There may be other contributions to other fields, which have not been considered either. However, as a management and organizational scholar, I am perhaps only qualified to speak to my own small slice of scholarship.

Regrettably, many remarkable women are simply *a footnote* in so-called *history books*, and I needed enough data to support a book. There also needed to be enough information available to draw from, be they primary or secondary sources, evidence of discourse or historical context, first voice or proxies. My consideration of sources is also an exercise in unravelling a gendered discourse. What is deemed primary versus secondary, evidence versus opinion? These evaluations are influenced by the trappings of scholarly judgements, wrapped up in a narrative of patriarchy (who gets to have a voice), academic rules (the levels of evidence) and even capitalism (the motive behind the evidence). By replicating a value judgement, I am at risk of operating within that discourse. Thus, my approach to all ‘evidence’ is skepticism. My motivation is to transcend these judgements: I want to generate a feminist polemic and make a persuasive narrative in favour of the women individually. In my next chapter, I will explain how I addressed the deficiencies in various records.

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

I ultimately selected four women from North America (two from the USA and two from Canada) as from my vantage point it was easier to relate to them and their experiences. I also wanted to see myself in these women. I have spent 25 years in leadership roles in various sectors and as a leader myself, I am not interested in abstracted figures plucked out of history. I am interested in ‘real’ women, working in dynamic organizational settings and achieving success against enormous odds.

All research is limited in some way, and my scope was set by reasonable constraints. In the process of selection, sensible conditions emerged and my prior work helped inform some basic criteria. Each candidate (in my view) has:

1. a valuable, but overlooked contribution to MOS/MH;
2. a substantial public profile, which has resulted in the attention of some past research (academic) or historical recordings (e.g. media clips); and
3. has contributed to their own storytelling and history-making (own writings and reflections¹).

¹Viola’s sister Wanda Robson serves as a proxy for first person accounts which regrettably are not broadly available. However, Robson’s writing is germane to the arguments levied here.

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

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

All are notable women, but none have been embraced by management theory or organizational studies. Each woman has profile and recognition; however, this profile serves to ensure a certain kind of limited history is constructed and lauded, while also hiding the potential for her contribution to MOS/MH. In some cases, her history has been reduced to anecdotal statements, such as *Frances Perkins was the first female cabinet minister in the United States* or *Viola Desmond was Canada’s Rosa Parks*. She has become a single dimensional figure, an exception and someone *ahead of her time*. Their current valourization discourse has hidden their potential for MOS.

In part, this lack of visibility is because each is recognized or operated in a field, which sat outside of capitalist modes of production. Modes of production are economic structures, which are social formations (Economakis, 2005). Capitalist dominance speaks to the dominance of monetary power over labour and exploitation of such labour for capital gain (Marx, 1990, 1991). Such dominance also extends to the priorities of scholarship and education in MOS. The relationship between gender oppression and capitalism has been the focus of study for Marxist feminists, who argue that capitalism ignores socially necessary work, which is essential to the maintenance of life (Arruzza, 2016; Brenner, Tomkiewicz, & Schein, 1989). This schema of capitalism underlies and reproduces what is considered necessary labour both within the family or within the market economy (Arruzza, 2016).

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

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

1. *Frances Perkins*: a social worker and the first female appointed to the US Cabinet, serving as Labour Secretary from 1933 to 1945.
2. *Hallie Flanagan*: a theatrical producer and playwright who led the US National Federal Theatre Project, from 1935 to 1939.

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3. *Madeleine Parent*: an organizer in the textile strikes in the 1940s in Quebec; responsible for establishing the Confederation of Canadian Unions (1969).
4. *Viola Desmond*: a Civil Rights leader who challenged racial segregation in Nova Scotia in 1946 when she sat in a 'whites-only' area of a local movie theatre.

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

1. *Frances Perkins*: the First Female Cabinet Minister and one of the longest serving in the United States, as well as the author of ground-breaking labour policy, which continues to govern all modern American workplaces, including the 40-hour work week and minimum wage.
2. *Hallie Flanagan*: a celebrated Playwriter and Director of Experimental Theatre, and the Architect of one of the most ambitious US labour relief programs involving over 12,000 workers in 40 cities and across 32 states, and audiences of over 30 million.
3. *Madeleine Parent*: a top Labour Organizer, Advocate and Feminist who took union ownership from 30% American to 70% Canadian, reshaping the Canadian labour agenda and working conditions and establishing the Confederation of Canadian Unions.
4. *Viola Desmond*: a Civil Rights Leader and a Pioneering Female, African Nova Scotian Entrepreneur operating in a time of segregation who defined a new business and model and expanded her reach and success across eastern Canada, while mentoring and teaching young Black women in the field.

A First-name Basis

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

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

I have been reading and talking about each of them for such a long time. I feel close to them, and I want you to feel that familiarity and closeness as well.