The Battle for Orillia

Report of the Conference *Explorations in Human Futures*
Orillia, Canada. 15-18th October, 1985

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2021 Introduction to the *Battle for Orillia*

This is the full report of the conference at Orillia that led to the theoretical insights about the origin of Bion's group assumptions, and the nature of the group assumption of Pairing in particular, that I published in *Searching*, 1999. The conference was called Explorations in Human Futures but it turned out to be explorations in **human communication**. It was this conference with its detailed record of the group's subterranean life of its assumptions tussling with task oriented work, the "music of the group', that convinced me that human beings are the most expert, sensitive and sophisticated communicators.

People will now be able to read the full build-up of evidence to those conclusions and get a feel for themselves the sad wastage of time, great intentions and highly experienced and knowledgeable people that gathered at Orillia.

Reading it again now, 36 years later, I am struck even more by how sad it was, what a desultory ending, what a waste and how totally unnecessary it was. By 1985, we had an excellent grasp of how to avoid the occurrence of group assumptions but unfortunately, that knowledge was obviously not widely shared in the design group.

I suppose I should look on the bright side and think that if we hadn't had this record I wouldn't have been able to elucidate both the relation of assumptions to design principle and the complex nature of the 'pairing' dynamic but given what it could have achieved, that is a minor compensation for what was lost.

While much of this level of communication is below the level of consciousness except for those who have learnt how to tap into it on demand, most people show some consciousness of what is going on at different times, as is shown by this record. It is impossible to show it in a written report but the actual speech of the participants was the result of the whole range of our perceptual apparatus all concentrated on the central purposes of what amounted to two subgroups of participants, those who wanted the conference to achieved a solid agenda for the future with coherent creative work **and** those who wished to break out of, or simply break, what they saw as the dominance of the 'old guard' who established open systems as a powerful and practical as well as reliable body of social science knowledge.

My conclusion that humans are great if not extraordinary communicators is of course in direct contradiction to that school of thought which would have you believe that people need to be taught how to communicate with each other. That view is nonsense based on ignorance of the group assumptions and also the genotypical design principles. As we showed in *A Choice of Futures* (1976), the first design principle and the structures it creates produce inequality of status which refracts communication, both quality and quantity. It is that

refraction which leads to the erroneous conclusion that we are inadequate if not inept communicators.

Design principle 1 (DP1) also destroys intrinsic motivation and the longer a person lives or works in one of these structures, the less motivated they are to communicate efficiently or effectively with those of unequal status. This applies to both superiors and subordinates. When high flying consultants diagnose a communication problem, they are actually telling you the poor communicators are immersed in a DP1 structure and are no longer motivated to communicate on time or with adequate or accurate content.

This report demonstrates just how acutely we are attuned to this underworld of meaning, these many complex dimensions of group conversations, and how theories that neglect this music of the group completely miss the real purposes people are pursuing when they choose to communicate primarily at the level of the group assumptions rather than the conscious superficial meaning of individual words and sentences. Our powers of communication really defy simplistic analyses.

This record also totally refutes any suggestions by our tech experts that their electronic digitally expedited 'communications' are the equivalent of face to face communication; that typing to each other is 'talking'. It isn't and can't be. The record below shows just how far from the complexity of face to face conversation their simplistic, trivial and drastically impoverished communications are. They are not just poor cousins, they are merely ghosts, only good for ordering junk food in a hurry!

So here is a record of a real event in all its complexity, its emotional impacts and its sometimes hidden purposes pursued with all the stubbornness of a mythical donkey, and its total failure. Read it and weep – or read it and learn just how exciting, and devastating, these Neptunean depths can be.

The full report shows how the various papers and talks given at the beginning of the conference initiated the conflicted dynamics and lays bare both its personal and professional roots. However, for those who are interested primarily in the unfolding of the music of the group, the analysis in Chapter 3 (p58) can be read as an almost self contained document.

At the time, the report was circulated only to participants with encouragement for them to provide feedback. That I did not receive but I did receive a couple of documents, one by an individual in the P & M group and another by several members of the P & M group after they had met subsequent to the conference. Both are by the way of further explanation or justification of the tack their group took during the meeting. Neither adds anything new. Both confirm in different words that they ignored the methodological dimension of the task their group was supposed to attempt, in fact the whole task, as they merely acted as a T group, and then scrambled to try and turn it into some semblance of work done. There are reiterations of some of the old shibboleths from the Human Relations School such as 'to make change, you must change yourself'. There is also some confusion about creativity as if creativity is something quite separate from working to complete a task, reified to a thing in itself instead of an approach to basically anything. They demonstrate that those at Orillia who thought the best way to deal with the P & M group was to ignore it were on the money, but of course that was not to be.

I have chosen here not to attach the list of participants, the discussion in the metaphor group or the other papers which were delivered either in part or in full at various points during the process. The enduring value of Orillia lies in its elucidation of how a sustained instance of the battle between the forces for creative task oriented work and for the maladaptive group dynamics first described by Wilfred Bion, not in the individuals who

attended the conference.

Similarly the discussion of metaphors; it is perhaps interesting in places but not particularly illuminating about the nature and role of metaphors, and certainly not illuminating of the battle which followed it. The same applies to the additional papers – many of the main points they make were picked up in discussion, built into the very ramparts and moats the groups and individuals built as the battle proceeded.

However, these other papers did not have the impact of the talks by Eric Trist, Hans van Beinum, Fred Emery and Gareth Morgan which are reported in full. They were the formative influences throughout the conference, setting the ground for the battle, and constantly refuelling it. Eric, Hans and Fred carried the weight and expertise of the older generation or 'old guard' while Gareth was the champion of the younger generation, those groupings, named accurately or not, that took to the field in that sustained warfare.

The two major mistakes built into the very structure and function of the conference were the design and the management. The design was a mixed mode, an alternation of the design principles which is virtually guaranteed to generate conflict of some sort. The sole manager, another mistake as it is always preferable to have two who share responsibility for management of the process between them, but a minor mistake compared with the nature of the management performed, was not up to date with the theory and practice of 'working conferences' as they were called then. He was more attuned to the Human Relations theory and practice where managers intervene in the content whenever it suits them, usually under the rationale that it is facilitating the task of the group. He was also a believer in the myth that all such conferences must experience conflict, a myth we destroyed years before by running innumerable Search Conferences without any conflict whatsoever. Therefore, he proceeded to turn his belief into a living prophecy at every opportunity.

So while it is my view that the majority of those at Orillia genuinely wanted to 'work' in Bion's sense, the odds were stacked against it. Time after time, as soon as work got a go on, it was stopped either by the manager himself or by somebody else caught up in the dynamic who was then usually supported by the manager to fully reinstate conflict. Right to the end, it dragged itself along until time ran out, a tragedy of sorts. Although Eric Trist did not know it on the night when he talked about the forerunner to Orillia, this was to be a similar failure. The meeting at Gerrards Cross was to set an international agenda for the social engagement of social science in the world emerging after World War II. None was set then and none was set at Orillia. Looking back from the vantage point of 2021, we could have done with it.

Those who are looking for more information about the genotypical design principles will find it under the appropriate heading on this website. Basic theory and practice about the Search Conference can be found in *Searching,* 1999.

1985 Introduction to the *Report*

1 was asked to write a report of this conference by Hans van Beinum on behalf of the Design Committee. My commission as I understand it then and now, as it was reiterated during the conference, was that I should report both content and process. This was quite an exciting prospect as it is actually rare for a group conference either to write up their own process, or request that it be documented. Most of our work with Search Conferences and their variants involve reports which are totally content or conclusion oriented as part of the necessary action steps towards the task. So this was an opportunity to practise skills rarely exercised in the sense of writing a coherent account at the level of the dynamic. Search Conference managers must necessarily practice them during these events but this is a minute

to minute monitoring and adjusting of the dynamics in order to keep the conference in the working mode. Once the conference has successfully done its work, our job as process managers is also complete.

As the body of the report shows, this was an excellent opportunity to practice those skills. For a Bion fan, such as I am, this conference was a dream. That should not be taken to mean that I either enjoyed or approved of a large part of the behaviour of this conference. I didn't. Some appreciation of this comes through the analysis of the process. But if the conference had spent the majority of its time in the working mode, there would have been little by way of process to write about. It would have been a very brief report, as is the norm - a few highlights of the moments when we slipped into dependency, or when there was a hurried three-rounder on the back steps, but nothing sustained. As it is, we have here, I believe, a magnificent demonstration of the way highly sophisticated and well educated (but not in Bion's work) people can get themselves into a great deal of trouble. My overall feeling is that it was all a bit sad: too much was wasted.

I was in fact worried about the process from the time I first heard about the design and spoke about this and its effects before we left Toronto for Orillia. Another dimension of the problem of the conference for me, and also in writing this report, lies in the old (?) saying - 'once a manager, always a manager.'

Once you have learnt to hear at this level, the level of the group or the dynamics, you sometimes have difficulty in not hearing it. (We all hear and know it but some of us have practised using it consciously). My problem was compounded by the fact of an uneasy role definition. I wasn't the manager (or designer but as I had to keep a conscious ear on the dynamics, I really couldn't be a participant. 1 tried a couple of times with mixed results. So I spent most of my time listening to the play of the group assumptions and the work culture, engaging in conversations which enabled me to check on my first impressions and putting notes together afterwards. But it's the easiest thing in the world to make a mistake when you're managing the process and it's even easier to criticise other manager's mistakes when you're the listener. I have relied therefore, not merely on my memory or notes, but heavily on the taped record.

As I spent an increasing number of hours listening to these tapes 1 was also increasingly drawn into the fascinating ingenuity with which people pursue their purposes. It was with some reluctance that 1 realized 1 would have to draw this report to a close. It is a report of only the most superficial of the many levels at which people transact their futures. There are others, greater complexities of meaning, but to have begun to report them here would have made the report unwieldy. Chapter 3 illuminates only the high spots, or mountain peaks of a range which the conference formed as two plates met. As California separates from the continental mass we can expect major deformations and reconstructions and it is probably best that we be, at least, aware of these upheavals. This report illustrates that action research too is subject to field or tectonic forces beyond its control when the plates grind past each other. A little geology never goes astray and I am grateful for the opportunity to delve into this sub-surface level again.

I have in this report, mixed my metaphors many times, but my overriding impression is that of a war. It was all too purposeful and human in all its dimensions. In the most classical Bionesque sense, it was a confrontation between the force towards creative work and those which wished to inhibit it. Of those, that which takes as its assumption that the leadership is inimitable to the life of the group and must be replaced, was clearly ascendant-. This is the group assumption known as fight/flight. The two camps can be designated as the task of the conference (work or the creative working mode) and the attempt to depose the current

leadership of the field. At any given moment, different individuals and groups were participating for either side. This then is the story of 'The Battle for Orillia.

There do however, need to be other qualifying remarks made about such an analysis. These have been well made in the quote below from Labov and Fanshell (1977) who expended 360 pages of text on five minutes of conversation.

> As we will see, the expansion itself is often a help- to our understanding and plays a crucial role in the analysis of *interaction.* But the expansion can also be somewhat deceptive, since there is an interactive component of over-explicitness, which throws many of the actions into a wrong light. This is a general property of microanalysis: ordinary behavior takes on a Machiavellian intricacy, and hostilities that are latent and unobtrusive be- come overpowering and oppressive. Expansions magnify the strains and tensions in the social fabric and will produce distorted interpretation unless we remember that the expansion loses the important dimension of back-grounding, which subordinates one form of social interaction to another.
> Any microanalysis, therefore, will over-sensitize readers to the conflicts contained in ordinary interaction. Psychotherapists at the agency being studied expressed their appreciation for the insights gained, but remarked that this kind of analysis makes the therapeutic session seem like a type of "warfare" and makes the relationships with patients seem much more abrasive than they actually are. We have not fully solved the problem of how to restore the subjective effect of mitigating devices after analysis. We will only note here that mitigating devices do mitigate; they place in perspective behavior which would otherwise be intolerable for the participants" (p51).

Thus while my title is undoubtedly correct and at this superficial level of implicit meanings, there was a battle in progress, I would not wish the reader to gain the impression that this was a vicious, ill-humoured or desperate fight to the death. There were a few short sharp direct interchanges but on the whole the conference was highly sophisticated in its use of mitigating devices, the two primary ones of which were tone of voice and laughter, good humour. These two served as such efficient masks that at times 1 found myself not concentrating on the message. Tone was in some cases directly opposed to my memory of an episode, for e.g. where somebody had been absolutely furious, but of course body language is not on the audio-tape. These elements can work together for maximum amplification of an intention or may work in various combinations to attenuate or disguise it. The latter approach dominated at Orillia. Without this basic regulatory, recombinant flexibility, our group life would be far less adaptive - and far less interesting.

The distinction between task-oriented 'work' and the group assumptions cuts straight across that of content/process. As chapter 3 illustrates, much of the 'content' of a conference in the grip of a group assumption is not content in the sense of working towards the task but the expression of the process of pursuing the assumption. These are often inextricably interwoven and any particular utterance can serve task and assumption simultaneously. However, I have attempted to extract out those elements which were certainly the conference

working on its stated task. Those of you, therefore, who are interested in the substantive work of the conference confine yourselves to the final reports, the first couple of chapters. Those who are also interested in the other ways in which humans disport themselves when given a chance, can dip into Chapter 3. I have also attempted to pick my way through the morass of instructions I was given in the final plenary. The final reports (despatches) are as the groups wished them presented and the reasons for this form are to be found at the end of Chapter 3. The work leading up to these final reports is to be found in Chapter 2 which also contains some supplementary comments and discussion which could not-easily be incorporated into the final reports. I have attempted to be scrupulous in terms of people's various perceptions and the collective non-wish of the conference that there be no overall statement which could indicate that the conference as a unit endorsed any particular statement or direction. The reports are ordered so that the preamble supplied by the Democrats of 207 could serve for the whole.

I have, however, introduced these final despatches with the diagram for 'steps towards empowerment.' This was a participant's suggestion and does not contravene the 'no conference statement' clause as it was clearly agreed much earlier in the conference that this was the driving force or agenda for the working time.

As groups had self-selected around the areas of democracy, organization and processes and methods to explore how these may be developed to contribute to the empowerment of people, this appears as a basic structure. The group names used are those which came into currency during the course of the conference. This then is neither a summary of *conference* conclusions, nor formal recommendations, but a collection of the final workings of four subgroups or temporary affinities within it. Even our most war-torn correspondents could not, I think, object to that. Nor have I made any additions to the reports apart from incorporating the substance of some of the discussions of the time which were clearly in the area of work.

I have even tried to meet one of participant's requests that we have a report "that begins in three different times, ends up in the middle and goes around." This report begins once at the end, twice at the beginning and once in the middle. I have also in Chapter 3, told you about our differences which I was certainly urged to do. If we couldn't agree, we could own up to the fact that we had disagreed. And as I was distinguished as a member of one of the two sides of the battle as it developed, I decided it best to give a blow by blow description of its progress. I was told there should be no whitewash and this is no whitewash.

Let me turn finally to the fine detail. First, as a sometime student of the differences between media, I respect their intrinsic unique structures. I hope it is accepted that a written report must follow the rules of that medium. Anybody who has ever tried to convert the full meaning of the utterances of a group into the written word will know the endless hours of good clean fun that can be entailed. It can be accomplished only with the aid of some literary devices which serve to bridge the gaps opened by intonation, context, and 'the presence of the word' (Ong, 1967). If Chapter 3 was to be the story of the life of the conference it did have to utilize these devices so the reader's imagination would have a chance of reconstructing a reasonably rich moving picture of the proceedings.

The 'content' is put as much as possible in the exact words of the speakers. Editing has been done in the sense of translating utterance into the more precise sentence form of text and removing redundancies. Some long speeches have been summarized but the sense and the critical words are intact. The interpretation of the process therefore, relies heavily on the 'word as spoken' but the final product is, of course, my responsibility. I have adopted a convention which is particularly important in Chapter 3, which is that direct quotes are marked ", while my paraphrasing or editing is marked ', and my personal or idiosyncratic

comments are given in brackets.() This should enable the reader to find a path through to an individual judgement of what *did* happen at Orillia. I have provided an inconclusive conclusion but 1 am indebted to the Design Committee, Labour Canada and the participants of the conference as a whole for making this opportunity possible. I hope you find 'the product' useful.

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Timetable of the Conference

Tuesday 15th

    4.00pm.   Introductions, background and expectations

    6.00pm   Drinks and dinner at 7.00 followed by Fred Emery's presentation

    9.15pm   Group work begins on agenda for society and social science

Wednesday 16th

    9.12am   Gareth Morgan's presentation

    9.45am   Group work on agenda's resumes

    11.15am   Groups report to plenary

    12.00   Conference splits into <u>Task Force</u> to synthesise agendas, and the *metaphor group*

    12.35pm   Lunch

    2.00pm   Roger Schwass' presentation followed by Francisco Sagasti's

    3.15pm   Do we accept the Task Force's agenda

    3.26pm   Rest time – Design and Management Committee meets briefly

    4.30pm   Self selected groups begin to explore the areas of democracy, organisation, processes and methods as steps towards empowerment

    6.00pm   Booze is available and dinner is set for 7.00pm

    9.20pm   Plenary for interim reporting back from the groups

Thursday 17th

    9.15am   Plenary (brief). Group work resumes

    11.15am   Groups report back to plenary

    12.40pm   Lunch. Design and Management Committee meets over lunch

    1.45pm   Plenary 'Where do we go from here?'

    3.20pm   Presentations by Linda Glennon and Hans Van Beinum

    5.15pm   Group Work resumes

    8.30pm   Dinner with Remarks from Eric Trist, followed by video tape

Friday 18th

    9.10am   Plenary sessions at which groups present final reports

    12.27   Conference Closes

EXPLORATIONS IN HUMAN FUTURES

Final Despatches from Orillia

'In attempting to synthesize our various agendas for practical social science we found some natural clusters of items. Each of these clusters of democracy, organization and processes and methods overlaps with the others, as is to be expected in an internally consistent paradigm. The ultimate intersection, integration or central purpose of working on these clusters is the EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE. By empowerment we mean the development of personal liberation *and* collective responsibility.
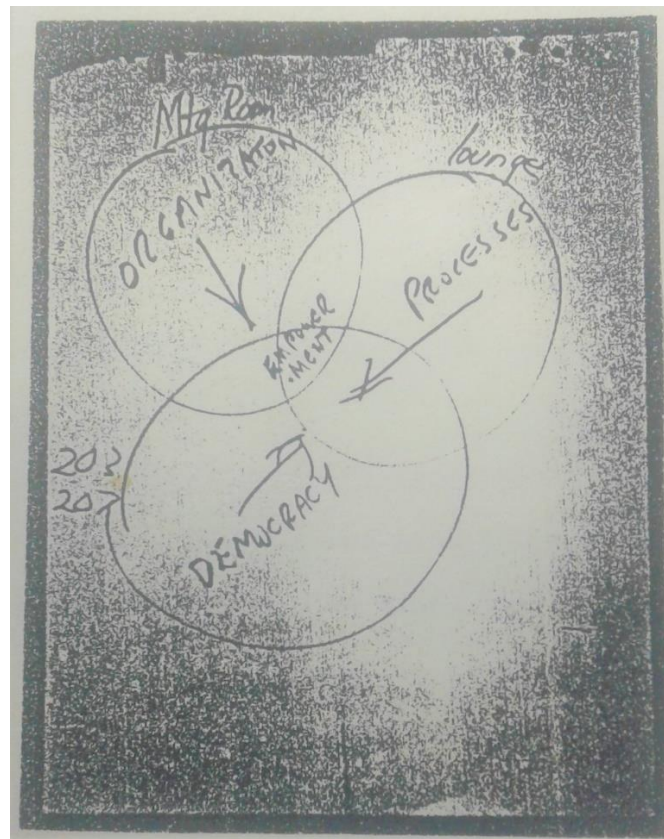
Organizing Figure: Steps towards Empowerment: A Practical Agenda.

We suggest this model as a guide or practical agenda for the social sciences and the

significant re-direction of human futures.'

Paradigm lost: Can it be regained?

(With apologies to Milton)

1. Crisis and Promise

(a) There is a sense of crisis which has been both explicit and implicit within this conference. By crisis we mean turbulence, the accelerating and unpredictable process of economic, cultural, social, political, technological change, the feeling of blockage and the attendant conceptual problems.

(b) At the same time in this process of crisis we felt there is a promise, some new openings, and it was for us to identify, explore and exploit them to the greatest possible extent.

(c) Allied to this was the break down of the paradigm of dominant hierarchies, asymmetric dependence and the emergence of the new paradigm of symmetric dependence. This new paradigm will mean new ideals-, new knowledge and new forms of action; acknowledging the inseparability of knowing and acting. To guide us through this transition we need:

2. To-Liberate the Potential for Self-organization

This is the critical precondition for the *promise*. We have tried here to make empowerment more clear and explicit,. We found that at least three things were required in order to liberate this potential or readiness for action. if only we could remove the constraints imposed by Paradigm I and bureaucratic structures people would get on and liberate themselves.

(a) There is a sense of the future in the present as a principle for liberation which breaks time barriers and helps us avoid walking backwards into the future which seems to be a characteristic of Paradigm 1.

(b) An appreciation of the context of the crisis and therefore the openings is required. We must break these boundaries too, learning to be inside and outside of various systems at the same time.

(c) Develop conscientization and awareness through dialogue, or perhaps better, multilogue. This is a long-standing tradition in Latin America.

For these to be realized we need to put together the ideas, concepts and methods we have developed over the last thirty years into –

3. Tools-for Action and Learning

(i) The gradual replacement of the electoral process by selection by lot, should be done in

every governing body, work-place, voluntary organization, so that every person becomes a

citizen in the best sense. Everyone has an obligation to serve.

(ii) The establishment of economic planning councils at all levels, sector regional, state,

national; in order to judge socio-economic viability and allocate resources. These should be selected by lot and operate by Search Conference procedures.

(iii) Development of assistance programs such as the Canadian Assistance which entails a shift of responsibility for the distribution and use of resources from the centre, to those who are supposed to benefit from them.

(iv) Building non-statutory mediating institutions with shared or multiple governance so as to blur the boundaries between government and non-government. We need to get away from the statutory, legal, currently organized institutions and into something much more flexible which can mediate and produce shared governance.

(v) Exploring non-governmental forms of delivering public services -a point also made by and discussed with the organization group. (See below).

(vi) Enact non-retributive laws for deviant social behaviour. History and our analysis shows that we have designed systems for perfect people and we have, of course, ended up with all sorts of perversions and deviations. We want to design system, a perfect system for imperfect people which takes into account the basic imperfections and gets away from 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

(vii) At the international level we explored moving towards groupings of countries, regionalizations in the world economy which we called the 'high front fence and the low back fence' model. The idea is that if you are a middle-level economy you will raise defences against economic invasion by those who are bigger than you while opening up commerce with those who are smaller than you. Can we therefore imagine a new form of United Nations which operates on all these principles? Two minor issues were also raised as questions. One is the question of system level: which functions are best done at the local level through to the global? Many of our best examples are at the local level and we could push much more down to that level. There will, of course, always be things which cannot be handler at that level. The second was an intriguing question: how would multi-nationals work in this situation?

The Democrats of Room 203

The task of the social sciences is to organize social relationships in such a way that people can gain control over their own futures. The practical task is not distinct from the theoretical in fact, we believe there is no task but the practical one. When we talk about human futures we are talking about ourselves, our futures. So it has to be. it is difficult to find out what is happening out there in the wider world, but we can prepare ourselves. The future is not made by people like us who go out and tell others what their future will be.

1. There is a need for research to discover what sort of society we are actually striving for. In Eastern Europe one finds social scientists constantly making declarations about the desired society but it's overdone; too much. In North America, it's too little. It *is* necessary to make choices and take a stand. Having researchers simply make a list of their values is insufficient. Therefore, we have agreed on the common thread of participatory democracy as a distinct political system and starting point.

2. Researchers must accept a basic link between language, understanding and practice. If we expect people to change their understanding, we must help them to change their practice. For us, there is no truth to our social theory beyond what works; there is no way a social theory can be validated except by trying it.

3. Research has a system of concepts, tools that we use. But other people also have their

concepts and we cannot expect our concepts to be superior. We can help them to understand their situation but we cannot take over their understandings. We can only offer our insights.

4. We must not see the world as falling entirely into groups. 'Group dynamics and 'psychologising' have a role to play in overall strategies but there is much more to it than that. if we divide the world of four billion into groups of ten, then where are we? The task is beyond us. We have to find the common issues beyond small groups and refine our methods for re-designing total enterprises: it is socio-technical design in an extended sense.

5. Researchers need to share pedestrian tasks. This means that when we participate in shared developmental processes we also have to share all those boring every- day tasks of the change process, not just give them the broad concepts. There is a lot of preparatory work, attending meetings, participating in day-to-day social events; you cannot be the brief visitor who drops in with a few good words here and there: you really have to be there. It is not all grand strategy and we cannot remain above others.

Also, the researcher does not need to be the most senior person. We need more democratic research organizations as well as more joint projects. Credibility also rests on *operating* in a democratic manner, not just preaching it.

6. There is a question as to the extent of interests and concerns that people should bring to group discussions in the participative process. Collective bargaining meetings for example may be the only democratic forum in which they can discuss serious issues such as nuclear weapons.

7. It is also necessary to emphasize very strongly the relation between direct and indirect forms of participation in an historical context. We have a history of repeating ourselves and many of the debates we hold have been conducted before over the last twenty years. There are reasons for this but it should not be necessary that we re-do it every single time. Some historical context should be available.

8. Finally, we noted that this may be the end of general theory, because if we finally pursue the line that we have to develop joint futures with other people, we also have to accept that they have the right to their own opinions and many opinions cannot be knitted into a general theory. We should be aware that assembling concepts into lofty conceptual structures like values doesn't mean very much. This is a type of intellectual exercise which reached its peak in Germany. One of the chief conditions was that there was control of language but today these linguistic prerequisites for general theory have fallen apart. It has been noticeable to this conference. Now we all have to construct our world as we find it.

The Organization Group

1. The Public Sector

The public sector is one of the important areas of society that remains organized for the most part to the traditional design principles. If people in the public sector are to be empowered the differences between the public and private sector, particularly the goods producing private sector, must be better understood. The missions of the public sector organizations need to be re-defined to allow people to influence them, in particular to allow clients to influence the service providers and to let individual actors assume more responsibility. We would like to see collegial relations fostered. Lateral relations have been weak because of the ubiquity of hierarchical bureaucratic structures. Evaluation criteria used in the public sector in terms of service measures and performance also need to be developed if the empowerment of people is going to be possible.

2. Changing Boundaries.

Changes made by policies and decisions, revised thinking about who are the stakeholders of the organization will all shift the boundaries of the organization to include or to exclude different other groups and organizations. Within conditions of changing boundaries new individuals will be empowered and new opportunities for organizations will appear. Also, this will blur the boundaries of organizational and inter-organizational theory.

3. Small-and Medium Businesses

Introducing alternative work design principles to small and medium sized businesses will empower the largest number of people in our society. As they grow, these organizations must have the opportunity to become aware of their organizational alternatives and these alternatives must be capable of responding, to the needs of small and medium businesses as they are created, as they change, as they succeed and as they get into trouble. Growth in employment is largest here but awareness is low. Family businesses may require variations in our methods such as merging family therapy with traditional approaches. This sector also represents a growing opportunity for women.

4. Economics in the-Market Place

Making money, confronting competition and other economic and marketplace criteria must become considerations in the calculus of the empowerment equations.

5. The-Potential of People

Mobilizing the male and female potential within all people will empower people and organizations. This does not mean the type of affirmative action programs which we have now as they are products of the first Paradigm.

6. Future-Methodologies

The technology of making decisions with future implications needs to be further developed. We know that those with futuristic orientations talk about this often but we want to get that down to the specific level of decisions within groups that have to work together.

Summary Statement

These proposals will contribute to the empowerment of people in society because they will:

i. stimulate reassessment of concepts that currently limit our ways of thinking about people and their potential, about how the processes of organizing are carried out and about organizations and their relationships with different stakeholders.

ii. focus our attention on the sectors of society that have been lightly exposed to and are much in need of alternative work design principles, sectors such as the public sector and small business.

iii. explicitly incorporate economic and market place criteria.


The Process and Methods-Group

PROCESS

The process group took as its responsibility to the conference the generation and demonstration of the critical nature of process for empowerment. The issue was - could the group by designing a process for self-empowerment assist in the empowerment of the wider group? To explore this perspective on human futures the group's 'products' took the form of

enactments of its Process. (Its first report was a non-verbal one; its second a picture and its third, another picture together with a demonstration of the role differentiation between men and women).

What is provided below are the visual images of the nature of the empowerment process. They can be viewed as a personal statement, a design for facilitation, or a map for 'breaking out' within the wider context. These notes necessarily give an incomplete impression of a creative process in which we believe that the reader can engage.
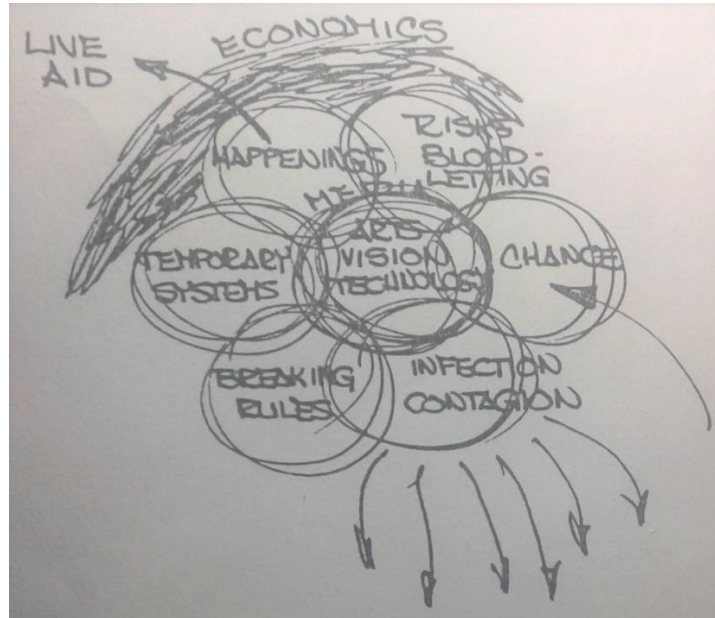
Second Report of P & M Group
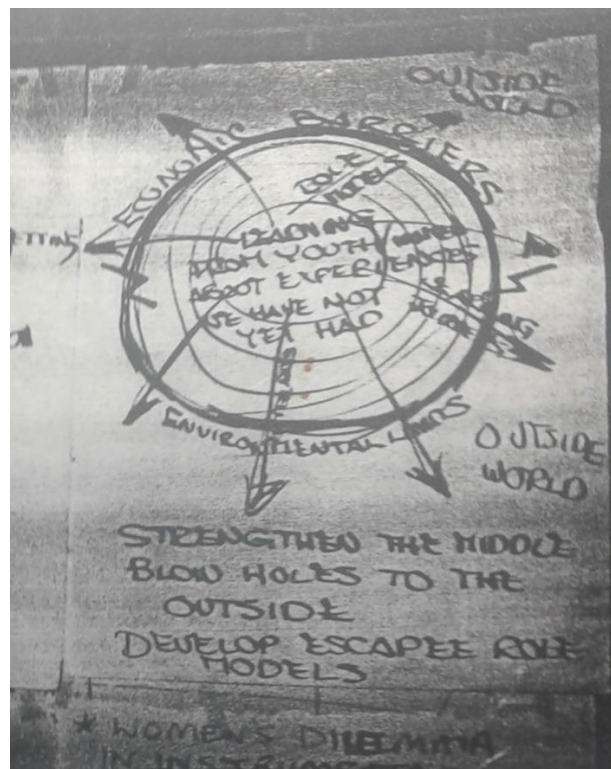
Third Report of P & M Group - Breaking Out.

From this we must deduce the need to:

1) Maintain the notion of process *consciously*
2) Create theatre and stage manage *collectively*, recognising
(a) levels of action
(b) the outside world
(c) that we must facilitate ourselves

Change Setting for Youth for Learning

1) The agenda must be set by youth
2) "Teacher" becomes a process facilitator
3) there is no single discrete learning event (a course) but a creative learning journey
4) learners must be in control of stops on the journey and the route between
5) there needs to be resilience in learning
6) we must embrace error – 'unlearning'
7) these amount to holographic learning where the 'pilot light' stays on and the capacity to learn does not wither.

Chapter 1. The Formative Phase

This covers the period from the beginning of the conference (4.00pm Tuesday) to the point at which groups resumed work after listening to Gareth Morgan's talk, first thing Wednesday morning. I have chosen to delineate this period for two reasons. First, while some group work had begun on the Tuesday, it was not a form that could properly be described as indicating a 'work group' culture. Rather, it appeared as a continuation of the 'getting to know you' process together with a first tentative feel or anticipation of what lay ahead. The real dynamic and work of the conference began after this phase, but by then the pattern has been set. This period did, I believe, generate the powerful mixture of forces which played themselves out through the next three days. This then is the second reason; both the uneasy mixture of design principles built into the conference and the conflict of content in the two major presentations of this phase were clearly more than sufficient to ensure that we were in for a lively time.

Introductions and Background

Ron Matty opened the conference on behalf of Labour Canada and welcomed all members.

We have here distinguished people from many countries and it says something for the calibre of this conference that they include Australia, Norway, Peru, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. We were very interested, as Labour Canada in helping to sponsor this conference because we felt that this was somewhat of a crisis time for government in terms of direction and pursuing quality of working life (QWL). It's timely, in as much as we have had the Macdonald Commission of Inquiry operating in Canada for the last 2 years on the economic prospects for Canada. Their Report was just recently issued and among the things that we found of great interest, was of course recommendation to Government that there be much more research and much more done to make possible innovative work practices within Canadian industry. At the same time, the Commission of Inquiry was also recommending free trade across the border with the United States of America which of course is going to make some parts of the manufacturing industry very nervous in this country inasmuch as they are protected by various tariffs. We are not quite sure how that will all work. But certainly the Commission of Inquiry made very strong recommendations about the ways that productivity might be achieved through innovative work practices.

1 also suggest that one of the other reasons we wanted to be part of this conference is simply for Labour Canada which has sponsored the quality of work life for many years.

It all started when Professor Trist, our distinguished guest, met with my Minister and Deputy Minister some ten years ago. This year is an evaluation year for us to determine what future directions that program might take. In that context we are very interested in what this conference has to say about future directions, particularly where those play a part in the programs of Labour Canada, which themselves, we hope, will become more innovative in the future.

Again I welcome you all on behalf of Labour Canada, on behalf of the design group in which I had the honour to participate and 1 trust we have a successful conference. We look forward to the results in anticipation that they will indeed give government and others some sense of future directions. Thank you.

Various members of the design team then provided background to the genesis and evolution of the conference. The idea arose from a discussion with the current Director of QWL in Labour Canada who was a student of Eric Trist and a graduate of Environmental Studies at York University. The conversation originally concerned the current evaluation of Labour Canada's efforts towards QWL in Canada but rapidly broadened to include the new wave of thinking about alternative paradigms which themselves go beyond concepts of QWL. There was also the wish to thank Erie Trist for his long standing relationship with Canada and his contribution made in that time. Members of the Action Learning Group (an informal group within York) then met and subsequently invited a broader spread of interested people to work on the design of the event. The design group having gotten the conference underway, having negotiated the specific roles of process manager or moderator, and rapporteur, could then become participants in the Conference proper. These two roles were accepted by Max Clarkson and Merrelyn Emery respectively. However, the design and management group found that it did have to meet during the event, but that is another part of our story.

A member of the design group introduced the form of the conference as follows:

"It was decided that this was to be a working, future oriented conference, which would focus on the ideas Eric has been associated with for the last thirty years. Therefore, the theme of this conference can be formulated as the development of the new paradigm in the context of various ecological settings. We have tried to bring together a group of people who are involved in and concerned about the role, design and development of various social systems i.e. families, work organisations, unions and government in their interdependencies and with their various requirements.

In order to create the conditions under which we can start to work and learn from each other, we thought that we should try and design this conference in accordance with the new paradigm, namely to design it according to the principle of 'minimum critical specifications.' -This means simply identifying some boundaries and what's even more important, creating a lot of empty space which people can fill in. They will do this by means of agreeing on what themes, agendas and what social issues are important within the objective of the conference. They will to try and push forward into the future, breaking new ground with regard to the development of the new socio-ecological paradigm.

The idea is, or our fantasy was that this would be a conference which would have a large measure of self design. We felt if we managed to create the right starting conditions, the conference would manage to design itself. We also thought that it would be helpful to have some stimulants or punctuation points and we decided to on four of those. I want to emphasise at this stage that the idea was not to invite people to give an academic paper followed by discussion. We have merely invited people to make some personal observations about issues crystallized around certain perspectives. One has to do with a new generation of issues, the second with the role of government and public policy, another will look at the shift in paradigm from the point of view of feminism and the fourth will explore the meaning of the transitional object in paradigm shifts.

Then we thought it would be interesting if we could identify, and I've reached the age when 1 can say so, some people who represent the next generation, to a role in starting discussion by coming up with additional problems. Again I would emphasise that they are not acting as traditional respondents because it's not that kind of academic structure. We hope they can present a few personal observations and problems with regards to our theme.

So to summarise, we are the conference: we are so to speak the ground and we will determine the figure, using the figure-ground metaphor. This conference will be what we make of it. This afternoon we will begin to become acquainted with each other. After dinner Fred will talk about the next generation of issues and then we will move into four groups which maximise our heterogeneity. Those four groups will start the process of agenda setting in the context of the paradigm shift within the context of our current world. They will identify the kinds of issues, themes, concerns, and social questions we would like to pursue. We will come together and see if any clusters are emerging, whether there are the first contours of the agenda for this conference as a whole. If that is the case then tomorrow we may have to rearrange ourselves; regroup. People will be able to self-select around emerging issues of their choice. We also though it would be wise to have an open space in the afternoon so there will be a gap from lunch till about four o'clock

Hans continued to describe the plan as designed stressing the need to redesign and assess as we go. A boat trip on Thursday was being kept open but the design group recognized that the process was an unfolding and predictable one. Every effort had been made for flexibility and creative work.

Max then asked Eric to capture for us the historical context in which we were operating. For the next three days we will be developing an agenda for the social sciences and we thought as a background to what Fred will say tonight and as background to this conference generally, that we should have a little history of the development of agendas in the social sciences. We though this was the time for you Eric to talk about the meeting at Gerrards Cross in 1949 when agenda setting was the business of the day. That would be very helpful for us here now.

Eric Trist. The Last Time Around. 1949

"We held the conference in the pub at Gerrards Cross in 1949; it was a setting of great beauty. The people there were mainly from the United States, mainly in group dynamics and ourselves, i.e. the Tavistock group. We also had some very distinguished guests from Europe, particularly from France and one from Czechoslovakia. This was very important to us as this man had suffered under Uncle Joe and we had got him into Britain.

So we had this mixture and this was the age when group dynamics first came into social science. We had very different backgrounds but we all knew the work of Kurt Lewin. He had recently died in the USA. The conference had originally arranged for 1947 when he was to come to England. He was very excited by many of the things Tavistock was doing and excited by developments in British Psychoanalysis as they became interested in field theory and were attracted to exploring the social scene.

Lewin himself still had a lot to work through; he didn't really know whether he wanted to stay in the USA or go back to Germany. He had very great problems about that. But if that visit had come off in 1947 I think things would have happened between him and us at the Tavistock. But at the 1949 meeting the key individual wasn't there and it didn't spark the kind of relations we had hoped for between our organizations on both sides of the Atlantic.

We had come out of the war with a background in socio-clinical psychiatry, social science and operational action research projects in the British Army. They, the Americans had done a lot of work in food habits and other subjects at the Commission for Community Relations in New York, out of which came the term 'action research', just after the war. Everything seemed right for the two groups to get together and to establish a trans-Atlantic bridge. We wanted a European connection too with people who wished to do something in the real world

which involved groups, which was then a very new idea. So we thought that even after Lewin's death we would still have a meeting and it was arranged at Gerrards Cross. But the key person/ the integrator was dead and that was really why the meeting did not produce the results that our people were looking for.

By that time Lewin's main pupils had separated into two branches, one had gone to set up the group dynamics centre at Ann Arbor which was the group that came over, and the other, the psychological ecologists had gone to Lawrence, Kansas We didn't know enough about the split or we might have invited the other group. We didn't know, even though we had had-visits from the Ann Arbor people, that we were going to go on separate roads. We discovered that when we met at the conference.

It was an intense meeting lasting two weeks. Beulah and I planned it. There was no work in the afternoons. Everybody had to play a game after lunch; cricket or tennis, golf, or ride a bike. Everybody had to do something and not work all the time. Jack French, an American was very good at cricket and he took on the local club. Work-resumed after tea. But some of our best meetings occurred after this break.

Anyway, what transpired was that our crowd in the UK were headed in the direction of taking up projects in the real world. We were already set and had started with a lot of confusion and much anguish. The Europeans too had also set in that direction but the American group had now located themselves in a university. I should have explained that Tavistock was not a university, it was an independent research and action organization. In those days it was very, very hard getting anything going in the real world from a university setting in Britain. But in America you could do it and they had plenty of scope if they wanted to. But we found they had begun to turn in the direction of academic research, on proposition dealing with group theory. I could hardly recognise Lewin's field theory as I had come to understand it from the expositions that they gave of the concepts, which were extremely interesting but they were going somewhere else.

So what I think I should say to us is that I hope that the fissure is bridged between the action researchers and the people whose minds are largely set towards academic production. I have nothing against that per se, but it is academic production which is taking the social sciences away from the commitment to Fred famous phrase "the important practical affairs of mankind", taking us away from that important directive correlation. We, in the UK wanted to get on with things which were in the practical interest. The Michigan group had gone into methodology, concept development, testing these out under careful conditions. That was their direction. This was what we discovered during the conference. I think we probably learned more from them than they did from us, as we learnt a lot from their conceptualizations, but they did not learn from us the commitment to go into the society which was exactly what Lewin himself had been doing in his time. We were moving into the society and they were moving away from it. We continued to publish the Journal which we founded with Lewin but we had discovered that we were different types of people.

As far as I know and I know most of the people in this room, I don't detect any manifest signs of people who want to go off uprooting the connections between the social sciences and social reality. So I am very hopeful that we will do something here which we did not do in our meeting with Michigan. Let us be different from what we were thirty six years ago."

Following Eric's analysis of that first historic agenda-setting meeting, Max asked us all to begin the process of getting to know each other by sharing around our small tables what it was that we wished to see come out of this conference, and what we did not want to see

happen in these three days. The need for this fairly classical 'expectations' session had been disputed in the design group but judging from the energy with which the discussions were pursued, their length and the babble of accents, it would appear that this period served a useful function for the participants in getting a first 'sniff' of those on this social island and what was to come. Perhaps it was Eric's exhortation that we should do better than last time but the feeling was one of animation.

The groups began sharing perceptions of the different environments within which they lived and worked, illustrating with examples of work they had been doing. The international mix looked good, providing from the outset the basis for an integrated or global perspective. Max finally had to break it up to meet the time constraints and it became clear-that the groups had been more interested in their discussions than with the business of appointing a reporter or keeping notes. (Social scientists are notorious for breaking their own rules and the process of this conference showed that nothing has changed).

Expectations

Group 1

"We discussed academics raising the issue of academics and practitioners: What separates us, and what links us? The co-learning role that links us is we suggest, the one that this conference should really be examining. I as an academic made the point of recognising that what separates us is our introspection of the need to perform for our students which often brings out in us distancing and language. We agreed that that was something that we should not be fooling around with. That lead to discussion amongst the practitioners of some very pragmatic purposes we wanted to see out of this conference. We want to see for example some real frameworks for evaluating QWL programmes and looking for new eras in WL theorising - very direct, very specific. They wanted to look for and find, clues for defining future programmes, those addressing critical issues not yet addressed. They hoped for guidance that can be directed at the political level of government. The whole notion of a new paradigm - how can that be transmitted to that kind of setting and what are its implications for future policy? They also referred to setting their discussion in the broader social context-of global thinking, a notion essential to the purpose of the conference.

We then got into discussion of the specific Canadian role and the importance of the fact that this was happening in Canada. It was suggested that there is an ambience in Canada in which this kind of event can emerge and which gives particular kinds of insights, particularly where it's a setting in which people are drawn from, many contexts: that which concentrates on shared perspectives, shared appreciations as opposed to confrontation. And later on, in fact, we followed that through and said that we have a responsibility, in a conference like this to recognise the very significant role we have to play in bridging the gaps and reframing problems that are happening both at the top and below. The responsibility for creating settings where confrontation yields to middle ground is one that the conference itself has to demonstrate and to design for wider use, so that became another specific purpose. Like most of you we were talking about how to emerge with a vision that is pragmatic but draws people in, to combat the tidal wave of public mean-mindedness? It was pointed out that we face a world economy in decline although that is not necessarily a setting in which many of the objectives we're looking for are unachievable. But what is blocking that is an attitude of people. Can we explore ways of responding to that? Finally, a conference like this must see itself as creating something more than just a mere event, it must see itself designing a

network, a nucleus of people with a collective view of the future where the 'new generation of hope' to use Eric's term, commitments to the future, consciousness in future actions can be hopefully obtained, among us and within the settings from which we come".

Group 2

"We certainly share this concern about the relationship between the people involved in action research and other parts of the community, not just the academic but other institutional structures like government. We had a lot of ideas but didn't come to a conclusion. We also shared the feeling that we were looking for new lines of action, and that there was a hope for this in the minds of people here. There was much discussion of where that might lie, some discussion of immediate ground, and of the new conceptualising of the relation between people and the environment. There were diverse expectations of this but a collective hope of a new direction.

Group 3

"Our discussion was similar with a concern about each of us developing our ideas by being with this mix of individuals; to help focus what we see as new paradigms coming from different perspectives. There was a lot of concern for the middle ground; what kinds of concepts, what kind of action can we foresee that would help us deal with many of the problems? I think that basically summarises it. One point though, relates to comments about Canada being a place there some of the future thinking is occurring together ways to resolve and deal with issues. I think we had a little different perspective at this where we talked about Canada being a place where there has been some thinking at the conceptual level, but it hasn't really been translated into practice, that is a bit of a concern for us. Hopefully through the course of these three days or so, we may get some other sense of direction to translate these concepts into positive action.

Group 4

"Ours was a very full group from small marginal countries. We see two problems – one can be called 'disillusional meaning', the other is perhaps a problem of constituting any meaning whatsoever. By these two problems, we refer to the kind of situation in which Scandinavia and countries like Mexico exist. To take Scandinavia – we have a fairly new development there in terms of quality of working life programs. There are new agreements between the unions and employers which have led to a high degree of activity and there is nothing to indicate that this will not be sustained through the 1980s and probably the '90s'. The problem we are confronting had very much to do with the after effects of the change which the quality of working life movement went through in the 1970s. We changed from working from something which resembled a specific theory to the situation that is referred to as participative research and things like that, where virtually any type of theory moves into the field to guide practical work. To a large extent our chief consideration today has to do with just that.

There are a lot of things floating into Scandinavia in terms of ideas, in terms of people who come with very fast consultancy contracts, and many of very short duration, I think, from North America. These often have a very problematic impact on the situation. What we need to get out of this meeting is some sort of international discussion which can function as a process to assign legitimacy or the reverse in Industrial Democracy. We have to consider

some sort of mechanism which can enable us to deal with quality circles and the like because they keep on coming in and we are not able to deal with all these things ourselves. A lot of things that move into Scandinavia come with a type of legitimacy which passes them as quality of working life, particularly in North America, but not necessarily elsewhere.

Group 5

"We agreed with much of the above. In particular we note a paradox: that there is rapid social change but a stagnation in ideas. It is moving too fast and we need new concepts and methods, bridges between the community and our concepts. More of the same will not be the same and a new stimulus is needed. This conference may provide it."

(With the exception of perspectives on Canadian progress there was obviously a large degree of commonality in expectations with high hopes of constructive work. One element of the dynamic had been set. As we trooped out for drinks and dinner as 5.45 that first day the feeling was that we were off to a good start. Discussions begun during the expectations session were continuing in sub-groups while others caught up with colleagues from distant parts.)

Hans van Beinum

"When I was asked to introduce Fred, I was very pleased. But it is not easy. I have known him for about twenty seven years and we I've had drinks together in about twenty two countries. I can use many metaphors but one thing stands out.

Fred is someone who is inclined to go for the dark corners. In social science and social reality he goes into those parts which are a bit foggy, misty; the twilight areas. I have never seen him select an easy way out.

His work is well known in this company and I don't think it is necessary to say many things about it but it might be likened to a mountain range with many peaks. Some of those peaks are his development of open systems thinking, socio- technical systems, the causal texture of the environment, the notion of people as purposeful and ideal-seeking systems, the new educational paradigm, his conceptualization and work on the organizational paradigm, the development of participative redesign with Merrelyn and the Search Conference also with Merrelyn.

We know he has a very close association with Eric and many of his publications are joint. In fact, Emery–Trist became a concept in the sixties and the story goes that the younger-Americans thought it was one person. Emery-Trist was invited to a conference in the U.S.A. and so Fred and Eric went. Eric was then asked which one of you is really Emery Trist? That is symbolic of way they worked.

I thought about all of Fred's very many publications but there is one document for me which is typical. This is now a vintage document, the original, dated 27 May 1960, and it is called "Notes from Discussion of the Swiss Cottage Proposal". It spells out his views of the basis for a distinctive competence of the Tavistock Institute. They are still very pertinent and they very much reflect Fred Emery. I want to give just a few quotes from that document.

"The primary task of the Tavistock Institute appears to be the mutual enrichment of social science and the important practical affairs of man. This presupposes that the enrichment of

social science and the enrichment of the important practical affairs of men are not necessarily, nor even generally in our society, mutually exclusive ends. Also, mutual enrichment is not equivalent to doing task A for practical enterprises and task B for social science. Mutual enrichment implies that one and the same class of activities serves the enrichment of both the social sciences and the practical enterprises."

I think this is a most important understanding, but it is more than an understanding. It expresses the nature of the relationship between social science and social reality. Fred went on to talk about the kind of distinctive competence which must be developed and which he says must really be based on the pursuit of the primary task, and that requires that we look at social science in a broad sense, of not being tied to any specific discipline, theory or methodology, and furthermore, that we must be very conscious of the need to professionalise our role. If we fail, he says further down, to create a stand that in its totality is broadly social and scientific, we will inevitably be blind to the aspects that are important to the man we help and thus achieve a distinctive bias, not a distinctive competence.

Then he spoke about the second distinctive aspect of our competence which has to do with the professionalization of our role. It is the development of roles which are consonant with the values implicit in the primary task which is meeting that dual objective, that mutual enrichment. I think the critical thing is this set which lies in the inter relationship and derives from the identification of the primary task, developing distinctive competence and being willing to express, operate and act upon *values*. That is very much the man, Fred Emery.

Fred Emery: On the Next Generation of Issues.

"My underlying concern in accepting Hans' offer was with the agenda that must necessarily or should, concern the Social Sciences if they are going to do something in the next couple of decades to overcome their essential failure in the post war years. They have failed to meet, or to contribute in any deep way (with exceptions) to the programs brought up by Kurt Lewin in his paper "Frontiers in Group Dynamics" in 1946 (his posthumous paper). It was supposed to have been carried on by his colleagues in conjunction with Tavistock at the meeting Eric spoke about this afternoon.

Now if one is going to draw up such an agenda, and it's one thing to draw up a personal agenda and another thing to suggest to other people that it might be more broadly engaged in, then I think it's necessary to undertake two tasks. The first task is along the lines of what Hans was just saying. We first have to see what the next generation of social issues is, because our agenda really is subordinated to and must be directed to the agenda that the society is currently setting itself.

It may well be that when drawing up some of the reasonably convincing agenda of social issues, we might look at it and say 'we, as social scientists are not really in much of a position to contribute to any of the important items on that agenda'; that may well be the case. Or it may be that we can identify some of the items on the social agenda that are significant to which theoretically we should be able to contribute, but we find that we are not in a position to do that because of a lack of resources. There are vast resources in social science now. We need only look at the post 1945 expansion of departments of sociology, psychology, psychiatry, and anthropology; look at the expansion of biology and ecology into areas where they become human ecology. We have vast resources but you might still conclude on Friday that there is no way these resources can be released from their commitment to academic disciplinary pursuits in times to make a contribution that the society requires. When the society draws up an agenda there is an implicit sort of pressure as to when these things need

to be achieved, and how they will be orchestrated in time. Don't be surprised if on Friday you come to some such negative conclusion.

Now I'll add one complication. Although I've used the term 'the agenda for social sciences' this does not properly reflect what I have in mind as any of you who have seen the Volume 2 in 'Systems Thinking' will realise. When I came to do Volume 2 in 'Systems Thinking', ten years after doing the first edition of that collection, it was clear that many of the major advances, in what I call Open Systems Thinking were being made in areas of linguistics and ecology that were not represented in the first volume. When talking about social sciences I am talking about all those sciences that contribute to our understanding of human ecology. That clearly covers areas of physics which must turn to ecological physics, the physics of the world within which humans live. That's described by one of those beautiful essays of many decades ago on the candle flame. Some physicists have gone out to the subnuclear, but there is another physics which quite properly applies here and which the Gibsonians have had to invoke. There is a science of chemical ecology which we are coming into as we learn about the human effects of pollution, for example. There's a science of ecological biology which applies to human ecology and which is not necessarily related to the ecology of rats.

Remember that, as Hans said, this is just one person's thinking, it is not intended as a first draft for your agendas. Tomorrow morning, Gareth, coming from the younger generation, will indicate an agenda which while probably overlapping will undoubtedly be very different from mine. But they might be complementary.

When we project an agenda for social issues I think the first critical issue is to try and work out an appropriate time horizon. Is it an agenda for tomorrow? Is it an agenda for the early 1990s? It was only after 1976 that we detected the breakdown of our assumptions of assured economic growth. That turned our attention to the fifty year economic cycles, the Kondratiev cycles and I was able, very early in the piece, 1979-80 to establish empirically that there was no question about the occurrence of these cycles over the past two hundred years of industrial society. It's very clear indeed through all of the countries involved in the world economy and it was also clear that once that was established, I needed t go back and examine the periods and the depth of these crises.

These periods of struggling out of the fifty year cycle were all characterised by a tremendous efflorescence of ideas and institutions built around ideas. Many of the ideas had in fact emerged before this period of efflorescence but people coming out of these depressions were confronted with challenges to the expectations that they had had for the previous forty years or so, expectations under which they had time to bring up a new generation of kids according to those expectations. The ideas that were scattered around were treated almost as trivia before as you might say, Schumacher's 'small is beautiful' was treated as faddish for a while. But it came up and as Karl Marx said "there's time when ideas become a material force in the way a society changes". I'm suggesting that these periods following the depths of depression are such times.

This current crisis is more serious than before because more nations have been brought more tightly into the international economy with the growth of the transnationals. There may be a possible post-industrial society, but as we got further into the matter and try to examine and identify what are the basic conditions in terms of infrastructure, social structure and social control, it became clear that some of those basic conditions were not present – we couldn't see them on the horizon. Some were. We had solved some of those basic conditions. But of the others, two or three out of the five, we could see no solution to at all: a typical example is a power base. Pulling ourselves out of these troughs did seem always to

require the emergence and development of a new broadly usable and cheaper source of power.

We thought we had that with nuclear in the sixties and the early seventies but the bottom fell out of that; it was *not* a cheaper source of power. It was not going to do for this depression what gas had done for the one before and steam turbines had done for the one before that. But that just meant that a much higher probability had to be given to the concept that we were possibly having to deal with an horizon which was not a fifty year horizon, but something more like a two hundred and fifty year horizon; in other words, a movement from industrial-based society to something which is post-industrial society.

But it became clear that in fact the challenges that were emerging were deeper than social structural change, and the challenges that were emerging were cultural changes. When we tied together things like the beatniks, what they meant and how they went down, rose again with the hippies, and are showing signs of coming back up again now and certainly showing no signs of going away, we see a much more fundamental challenge to the *culture*, not just to social structural arrangements. Now sweating over this for the last eight weeks or so I'm quite convinced in my own mind that what we are facing is in fact nothing less than a challenge to western civilisation itself. A challenge going back to the choice that was made when the intellectual achievements that Plato made in the latter stages of his life were overruled, turned under and buried, by Aristotle's school in Alexandria. The social choice of that time sets us on a path that gave us a basic pattern of civilisation and it is now that pattern which I think is under challenge. Many of you would have read Stavrianos in his 'Promise of the Coming Dark Age'. He has suggested that the challenge might have gone back to the period of 5th century roughly, but I'm going back further than that because of what I think is involved in the philosophic formation of the foundations for our civilisation, prior to the Roman empire, not after.

This challenge has to be taken seriously now. The question has been raised by Nietzsche and others in the crisis at the end of the nineteenth century and it's been raised by Spengler and subsequently of course by Toynbee. The reason why I think it is serious is twofold – that this is the only civilisation to our knowledge – and here I'm basing myself in Toynbee's massive study of all the known civilisation that has ever based itself on what we call design principle 2. All the other civilisations, those prior to the emergence of western civilisations and those coexistent with us such as China and Japan base themselves on the first design principle. Many of you know what I mean by that, but I'll just spell it out very simply. The first, the usual design principle for getting stability in large civilisations , which come with the emergence of urban areas and the network of mutual reciprocal relationships that are required to enable the urban centres to emerge, involves 'redundancy of parts'. One of the ways you can get reliability in a system of potentially unreliable parts is by building in 'redundancy of parts' so if one part fails, another part is there to take over. The American shuttle for instance has four computers each of which working in parallel and they have a fifth one on standby in case one or all of them fail. That's 'redundancy of parts'. As we see in the price of labour and necessarily in the life expectancy of most of those countries, individuals are prepared for a specific function in life. You prepare enough of them that is someone drops dead or is kicked to death, you've still got enough to get on with the job.

The alternative principle for getting reliability of a complex system is design principle two, building in a 'redundancy of function'. You overeducate all the people who are constituent parts of the society so if any one person fails to carry out a particular function during that time, them someone else has the additional functions at their disposal; the capabilities to help out.

If you design on principle one then it's essential that you have a control body, some other specialised group of people who will decide when a person is allocated to one part of the system or another. The parts can only do their own bit, they cannot, not knowing the other bits, decide whether and when they are moved around. In other words, you need some hierarchy of controls in a society when you are talking about human beings; a hierarchy leading to some sort of elitist society.

In moving to the other design principle, theoretically all that is required is the multiple functioning parts, equipped parts who share a sufficient appreciation of the field within which they are mutually operating, share a sufficiently extensive range of values to enable them to individually decide what ought to be done in certain circumstances, and expecting that because of their commonness of values that they would make the same sort of decision. If that is required, then theoretically the second design principle should result, in large measure, in a self controlling society and not require postulation of a special control section; not require a hierarchical arrangement.

I will make one point in brackets. Personally, I have a great deal of respect for Gerd Sommerhoff who came up the concept of direction correlation. His analysis of much material had been put together in a book called 'The Logic of the Living Brain', with J.Z. Young. He said that all the evidence we've got about the brain shows that there is no way in the world the brain could carry out the functions it does in respect of the bodies activities, perceiving and acting, if nature decided to work on the basis of design principle 1. If the brain had been designed like a telephone office with people in high rises of control, it couldn't possibly do what it's doing without something about ten times as large as it's got at the moment for a head. Obviously, it had to work on design principle 2.

The point is that I asked you to bear in mind that western civilisation is the first and only civilisation that has attempted to establish a stable and reliable society with extended interconnections maintained over time on design principle 2. The second point is that it's the odd man out and I think that in itself suggests that you have to watch to see whether it's a going concern. This particular experiment in time, in western civilisation, has been inherently more unstable than any of the other civilisations that we know. Inherently unstable, not just more subject to climatic change or disease, but inherently unstable, because the civilisation that we've had has been built on a lie from the period between Plato and Aristotle. A choice was made there and the lie is pretty simple and straightforward. It is a civilisation dedicated to the notion of the second design and yet it was a civilisation which in practice said 'there's no way all of you characters alive in this civilisation are going to live with design 2. Because of the scarcity of resources it'll only be possible for people to be in that act; the rest of you are going to have to put up with the 'redundancy of parts'. We know that if we've got any sort of system where there are two system principles operating then you have got dead trouble. Now that trouble was containable by us despite our ups and downs until quite recently.

Let me get back to the instability that we had historically up until fairly recently. It did not prevent the existence of design principle two leading to a culture which was tremendously more creative, and willing to be creative, than was found in any civilisation built on design principle one. The only sort of thing that would motivate a civilisation built on design principle one to be creative in any significant sort of fashion, was warring against someone else; warfare was just about the only thing that got them going. If you look at the history of technology through the early stages, even of our own western civilisation, you can see a fair bit of that. War was still our major force. The crisis we've lumbered ourselves with is that we did by 1944 achieve a tremendous mobilisation of our productive forces on the basis of our technical knowledge. In 1944, while masses of our prime workforce in uniform were

wasting production, not producing, we managed to reach magnificent heights of production. We were producing more guns, tanks and planes that the admirals, generals and the airforce commodores were literally able to use. We were running short of willing people at the end of the European War and in the Pacific Theatre but with a still cast surplus of production. From that point, there was never any question that the argument that scarcity of resources, the favourite argument of the Malthusians and the modern day Economists was effectively dead right around the world. That did not prevent us reinforcing the existence of this gap between those who had and those who did not have, in their own Western civilisation. It did not lead to that collapsing straight away. It was just there as a primary threat, because it was still possible to use the threat of warfare between our own nations and nations coming out of the other civilisations. It was still possible to use that demand that people subordinate themselves to in the interest of the nation in order to survive.

But when warfare went from atomic bombs to thermo-nuclear devices in October 1954 and then to ICBMs carrying thermo-nuclear devices, any such appeal to patriotism, love of God and country wasn't worth a brass razoo with the new generations coming up. There was little point in fighting for your country if there was no country left at the end of the fight. That pulled the last plug out on that which held together western civilisation with this inherent contradiction in it.

The final straw on that point of course comes out the moment when we find that civilisation deeply rooted in and probably the best living representative of the old type of civilisation, designed on design principle, Japan, beating the pants off the Americans and Europeans. So the sheer ability of our type of civilisation, our basic design model to meet the needs of its people better is under tremendous threat. The challenges to our western civilisation are mounting to a threat. A further problem is coming up I suspect – I am going to leave it till further on in the week – which only intensifies demands upon our civilisation, demands that either we get our act together or we will almost certainly make the choice to revert to design principle one, and that threat of reversion is not an idle one.

In 1917 you saw a major section of our western civilisation, the same sort of double faced dedication to design principle two, switched over to design principle one and a few others joined it behind the iron curtain. Make no doubts about this, the other side of the iron curtain is in fact a reversion to design principle one. We saw it in Germany faced with the last fifty year crisis. That is a threat as long as we have both design principles in our civilisation and it's becoming more real. So there is a degree of choice and a question of when we make our choices.

With a group like this the pressure would be to try and turn the principle over a bit. Now how do we handle that challenge? Well, that is also pretty clear, and is the second major point. The first tried to suggest that it was a challenge of civilisation, not just a challenge to get the post industrial society. The first step in meeting the challenge clearly would have to be total commitment at all levels and at every point in society to establish design principle two as the ruling design principle, the system principle. It would have to apply in any sort of group activity which one can engage in, whether it's international, national, regional or community: it doesn't matter. Efforts should be made to move towards establishing design principle two consistently.

That's not totally impossible. Engels and Max Weber in 1895, both came out with the conviction that you could not unleash the resources of a major modern enterprise of that sort that emerged through the 1880s, without autocracy. We went along with this picture. Autocracy appeared to be the price we had to pay in order to live according to design principle two in other areas of our lives. Now in the past 20 odd years I think action

researchers coming out of the Lewinian post war tradition have shown that we can't manage and get the benefit of the development of that technology *without* moving into design principle two. So what looks like an impregnable area of autocracy has already been fundamentally flawed and undermined. If it can be done there I should say that the practical lessons are that it can be done in any other area. One area I would never have thought it possible to do it is in the Catholic Church. I'm Australian –Irish and was brought up that way without much choice till I was fourteen, but what the hell happened? The Catholic Church blew itself apart with its Vatican Council and John XXXIII.

Given the contradiction between those parts of our society that were based on design principle one and those in principle two, we have had a pretty good run up till now. Still not enough to give us too much comfort unless we work and get more resources devoted to that. We have to have it clear in our mind what our target is – we've got to get rid of design principle one wherever we find it, in the classroom, in a factory, a voluntary organisation. The second thing is that we are not going to achieve this at any real speed until we can get into people's minds, remembering that people's minds operate between them and other people and the ecology they are operating in; unless we start to crystalize out ideas and values that they are committed to and can see. Bear in mind that the values that carry through because of that contradiction in western civilisation have been totally negative. In Christian society we have the Ten Commandments – 'thou shalt not!' They are all nono's. The idea appeared to be that if men were to hold those negatives, not act against those negatives then that could be sufficient orientation for them to keep a Christian civilisation.

This is hardly adequate and in as far as we have tried to go towards positive ideals we've had the idea of plenty, the ideal of good, justice and the ideal of beauty. We left the economic machine to look after plenty and it's not doing a very good job of that in terms of distribution of the wealth that's been created, and it's certainly not doing any better today despite what we achieved in 1944. We left the ideals of good to the churches and that seems the best thing that can happen for war. We left the justice to the lawyers and the courts and we have seen similar sorts of results. In other words we've assumed because of this contradiction that positive ideals are carried in and looked after by our institutions. With truth for example, we really believed in universities acted for the Nazis in 1934, just like that, overnight, is one example. It tells you about institutions. Now we've got to do better than that.

I have tried to formulate ideals which are appropriate to a civilisations based on design principle 2, not a mixed bag of principles. That's why I've suggested such ideals were those of humanity, homonomy, nurturance and beauty. I should hope the ideal of beauty takes a different meaning with a system of persons related together under the condition of design principle 2 than it does in design principle 1.

We also require a different world hypothesis. With our western civilisation, we've gone through three major world hypotheses, the Aristotelian, the Newtonian, and Organicism. Organicism, just like Newtonianism and Aristotelianism, denied that people could have direct knowledge of the world around them. They promoted the belief that knowledge has to be processed by certain special elite groups before it became meaningful knowledge. It's only with the emergence of the contextualist concept that for the first time we've got a world hypothesis that in fact, starts from realist notions, or naïve realism, of direct perception and knowledge of the real world. It's the first world hypothesis of that type that we've had. And that word, 'hypothesis' has had a pretty bad time since it was formulated by Peirce in the 1890s in the middle of that crisis then.

In the last crisis Pepper formulated it more specifically in talking about it as a

conceptualization, or hypothesis and then of course as soon as we started to recover and the old powers got back, it was beaten down again. It's coming up again, you'll find contextualism around all the fringes of all the sciences, but particularly in those dealing with child development, around the Gibsonians and the world of perception. This has to be our paradigm because it's the only one that justifies what we're doing in action research. It's the only paradigm based on an epistemology of realism, it is naïve realism, not the sort of realism, which talks about the semantics and that stage of Aristotelianism. It is based on common sense. It's the only paradigm which has ever taken charge as the reality from which we start. The others have all started from the static substance, as the real world. Contextualism starts from change in the emergence of quality and if we don't consciously work as action researchers within that, we're not going to look at the world around us, the two things follow – we're not going to look at the world around us, the one we are confronting which gives us the crisis and we're not going to be able to accumulate our findings, the results of our own work in action research. If we try to accumulate what we learn in action research in either the Newtonian framework or the Aristotelian then you can forget it. If you think what you're learning from action research is going to be welcomed into the columns of any of the established journals, tied to the old paradigm, forget it. You won't even have an analysis of variance of your data probability; conditions in the field usually prohibit the collection of such data.

Thirdly, we have to resolve the problem of the relationship between language and our perception. Given that we have direct perception, given that we are realists, then we've got to solve the problem of relationship between that and the way we use language. If we don't do that than we're going to be completely foxed all the time by the academics working in the old paradigm, with problems of learning, problems of memory and above all, problems of thinking.

Language as it is treated in the old paradigm denies the use of language to us, the ordinary people. Written text is not what language is about and that's what Peirce went through in the 1890s, not only with realism, but showing how the relationship between the realist concept of the world and language, in fact, worked. The revival in semiotics in the last ten years is absolutely staggering and people have moved in their views. The most advanced thing has been happening in language is that they have rediscovered Peirce and are beginning to see the treacherous way in which language can be used – the most effective and broad spread way for preventing people coming together to discuss and change their own experiences. Language has become the major day to day, minute to minute way of tying people down to their perceptions of the ruling elites. This involves the role of metaphor and I hope Gareth raises it tomorrow. One of the striking examples of the way this is done is where they have denied to use the use of metaphor as a means of exploring and developing new ideas. They've assumed that you could only transmit real meanings tightly if you could get them into a syllogistical or propositional form. Now that is total nonsense. We have established through the work of Peirce that, in fact, the most effective way of getting a logical argument across is at the simplest level, the iconic with diagrams, the thing that Herbst did some work on a couple of years back to convey the ordinary people who can only handle language at an iconic or indexical level that they can safely engage in the most rigorous distinctions and analysis of their problems at the diagrammatic level. We almost got there with Lewin's field theoretical diagrams and then it was suddenly 'de trop'. Anyone seen using a field theoretical diagram wasn't engaged in proper thinking. In fact the facts were upside down, that *was* the proper thinking appropriate for handling the contextualist situation.

Another element is what's being developed in regard to participatory democracy as against representative democracy. This is clearly a major tool for restructuring the institutional

sector around design principle two. What we've done with regard to developing techniques, which we didn't realise at the time, is work implicitly off the same realistic assumptions that belong to contextualism. Search conferences would not work unless these assumptions about perception and realism work; are correct.

Search Conferences, Participative Design and further development of matrix type organisations involve non dominant hierarchies. You may have a hierarchy of functions to be carried out; some functions will need to be carried out at a regional or national level but that doesn't imply that it's got to be a dominant hierarchy. It's a type of hierarchy with functions that can be identified with various contexts and in no way implies a dominance. I think we've made some steps to design that into our human affairs, but we've got a hell of a lot more to do. The people we're working with in action research also have these capabilities to see and understand our affairs and on the theoretical side to improve our accumulation of work in action research. We can do it if we operate explicitly within a contextualist world hypothesis. We will not do it if we try and add it up in the Newtonian or Aristotelian concepts because those concepts do not admit the reality of the processual change that we are busy creating. We are working right outside those paradigms and we just defeat ourselves trying to convert into them. We are explicitly doing action research in the contextual framework and I think you will find very little difficulty about translating those results and transforming them, communicating them to other people.

Now that was supposed to be a stimulus, but it has not been trying to put ideas on the agenda. I'm just trying to show one person's agenda, the sorts of considerations which ought to go into agenda building. Gareth, coming from a generation which is going to have to work on the next agenda will probably show you a completely different way tomorrow.

9.12 am Wednesday

Max gave a rundown on the projected plan for the day and then introduced Gareth Morgan as Professor at the Faculty of Administrative Studies at York University and a very highly valued colleague.

Gareth Morgan. Six Provocative Probes

I am in a very interesting position here. It's the first time I've had to comment on a paper which I haven't read because it's not written, and which I haven't heard because I wasn't able to make the presentation. But why should that stop us, eh? But I was privileged last night to get a few very fine synopses of about two minutes each in terms of key issues, so what I've decided to do is take my point of departure from the cues that I was given.

My first premise is the sense of crisis – wherever I look we're in one hell of a lot of trouble. I know it would be nice to bring an optimistic view and say everything is fine but I think it's more sobering to say that the present socio – economic – political situation is very worrying. When we look at pollution in the environment, at the arms race or structural decline in cities, the restructuring of modern economies, there seems to be trouble all over. I take it as a premise that basically the old ways will no longer work as a means of getting us out of this. We need new approaches, new thinking and new actions to try and do something really developmental.

I am also building on a premise of Eric's paper. For example, we each move forward to a

new ideal of a paradigm S sort of world where synergy, synthesis and balance is appropriate. Also I am building on Fred's comments of last night about the idea that we need a radical new way of thinking about our perceptions of the world and the way we develop ourselves as people and as individuals so that we can empower ourselves and others to become our own source of knowledge and our own way of thinking, reframing and acting in relation to problems. I also build on the premise that the second design principle is far more relevant and appropriate to the problems that we have than the first design principle that has given rise to bureaucracy. That's the backdrop and what I'd like to do as a main contribution to this seminar is to really pick up Hans' idea that this is a punctuation, or puncture if you like, and try to focus on what I would call *provocative* probes because that's essentially the way I see them. So I'm going to throw ideas out in a way that I've worked through in my own head, and have written about most of them. In terms of today's presentation I can't present the complete logical package.

1 .Relationship with the Environment

The first probe I'd like to identify is absolutely critical. It is that we need to rethink relations with the environment. One of the major pathologies of the time rests in the fact that whether as individuals or organisations, we see ourselves as being different from the environment. You also know as social scientists that this was perceived a long long time ago and the concept of the open system as opposed to the closed system as a way of trying to get over this, trying to emphasise openness in relation to the environment. I think that this has only been partially successful and in a way, the idea of the open system has begun to create a disservice to the way in which we think about the problems around us. You can argue that because what the idea of the open system does is to suggest that the environment is separate from ourselves. What it does is create the idea of an external world, an independent world, that is cut off from ourselves. It places us in the position of being against the environment. To recognise openness is not in itself sufficient. Over the last six months or so, I've been trying to think of ways in which we could perhaps begin to get a reframing of our understanding of the environment which embraces the open system concept but which tries to get at this other dimension as well which obliges people to recognise their unity with the environment. The sources which I've found most provocative has been a theory coming out of South America based on the idea of autopoiesis, the theory of self renewal. We needn't get into details of that perspective and I know that the authors would probably groan with the interpretation that I'm going to place upon it. But I don't think that matters too much. What I find in the theory is a provocative insight that may help us to unlock a number of ideas.

Basically, the theory of autopoiesis is a theory of self renewal and it's been pioneered by two young scientists. Basically what they argue is that all systems are organisationally closed systems because what a system tries to do is seek closure in relation to the environment. The only way we can entertain the concept of an open system is put ourselves outside the system that we are currently in. It is only from the outside that a division between the system as an entity and the environment becomes closed. This is very interesting because what it means is that in creating the idea of an open system we create a hierarchy of knowledge because we almost automatically give pre-eminence to an external point of view. We create the role of the observer of the system. So what they argue is perhaps, it might make more sense to see all systems as trying to seek closure and that their environment and their understanding of their environment is really part of their own mode of organisation.

So let's take, for example, the image of people in the boardroom of a corporation, looking at charts on the wall. On the charts, we have sales, productions, futuristic trends, we have all sorts of scannings, all sorts of assessments of what the environment is like. They are looking

at the environment aren't they? No they are not; they are certainly not looking at the environment. What they are doing is looking at themselves, their own projections of themselves on the world around them. They are engaged in a narcissistic process of enactment, seeing reflections of themselves in the world around them. And that to me is the provocative insight that would come out of the theory of autopoiesis though it wouldn't be presented that way.

Basically, we are narcissistic as individuals and as organisations, trying to organise the world out there in order to give identity to ourselves. This is a very radical implication because it shows that we are not able to handle the environment, or change the world other than by changing ourselves. The problems of adapting to the environment are not the problems of moving in relation to the 'out there', though the ideas of trying to do that may be very powerful and very relevant, but it's really of posing the question, who are we? Where do we stand? It's because you are able to distance the environment through the closed system thinking. The problem I want to identify is that the concept of the open system isn't enough if the organisations is to have a closed system identity in terms of who it is and the image it wants to send. Somehow or other you have to open that identity process and what I'm talking about here provides a way of doing this, of trying to get organisations and individuals to completely rethink their relations with the environment. Arms negotiators (in the arms race) have to see that the other side is in point of fact produced by themselves and is not independent of themselves. The problem that organisations are facing in the environment are produced by their own actions and their own punctuations of the world out there as much as they are presented by others.

I have been working on this as a provocative idea as a way of trying to impact corporations and their thinking. Interestingly, it taps into a very attractive notion that has good credibility in business strategy: the concept of 'what business are we in?' is the classic one, which really has opened up a lot of thinking. If you take that sort of question as an opener of identity you can develop in all sorts of ways and I think we have interesting ways of doing this. I think the real priority in this is to try and develop new methodologies that will allow us to probe identities to get a better understanding of ourselves in relation to the environment and take it on. That is one of the first sorts of probes that I need to identify. All these I take it are going to create discussion or an opportunity to pursue them as we go on.

2. Understanding the Logics Producing Change

The second thing I want to say how to do is to get a better understanding of the logics of change. In a lot of our concepts of the way the world works, the way organisations work, change is something that happens as an independent event or individual process to an entity. Again it is a part of this externalization and distancing of the problem. I believe that we have to realise that change is an emergent process that can be understood. We ought to approach change, not in a sense of trying to make predictions of what is going to happen, but more in terms of getting to understand the unfolding process that is producing history; to try to discern the logic that is driving the world around us. I guess I'm building on a point that Fred made very forcefully in his paper on the next thirty years in 1967. Somehow or other we have to develop methodologies for understanding how this unfolding process is occurring.

I think that there are all sorts of exciting ideas that we can bring to bear on this problem. For example, this whole idea of the unfolding nature of change is getting a lot of attention in physics at the moment through the work of David Baume. We could perhaps begin to see the world around us as an unfolded explicated empirical reality which manifests a deeper organising principle. What we experience around us is an unfolded expression of this deeper logic. If you think about change in these terms than we bring to light a lot of the ideas that

Marx was trying to get at, in his dialectical analysis of how society is always producing itself through logics that are built into its structure through a process of unfolding negotiation. I think that there is an enormous amount in the Marxist point of view, stripped of its conclusions and the ideological aspects. Marx was supposed to die in 1883 because he left a set of conclusions that were relevant of conclusions that were relevant to that world. I think that if he lived and was able to develop the methodology and highlight the importance of the methodology as a means of understanding unfolding then we would have a very powerful set of techniques in trying to understand change in ways that we probably don't do to the extent we might at present. So I feel there's an enormous amount in the theory of dialectics and dialectical analysis that can help explain the unfolding process. I also think that there's a great deal in the type of cybernetics developed by Maruyama and others in terms of trying to understand the various loops and relationships that tie the world together in holistic ways. By being pro-active in relation to it without being concerned to predict, because prediction is always about the unfolded, the empirical world. I think it's more important to get to grips with the process.

3. Radical Demystifications of the Nature of Knowledge

This we need. This brings in Feed's point about perception and the need to radicalise this and empower people to engage in perception.

Firstly, I don't like the word 'perception' as a way of dealing with this issue because again, it gives too much credence to the external world 'as is.' The word perception creates this idea of something else that has real characteristics. I'm not a solipsist who believes there isn't a real world but I do believe we always live within our social constructions of it. I always believe we see 'as' rather than seeing 'is'. I believe that basically our understandings of the world are all metaphorical understandings, all to be interpreted; that we can only understand the world by playing on patterns of difference. I think it's been established that difference is the basis of knowledge and creation of form and in the idea of metaphor and related forms such as metonomy and synactity we find a play on difference as a way of creating knowledge. It is my belief that social scientists have to deal with this idea; that we, like the poets or the literary people, or like the people in everyday life, deal in fruitful metaphors. We create paradigms and world views, we don't discover them. We socially construct ways of seeing by getting colleagues or clients or subjects to buy into various ways of seeing. I think that the whole idea of the metaphorical nature of knowledge explode this. It has incredibly empowering sort of effects because it demystifies the role of the expert, and puts a lot of traditional science and social science into an appropriate perspective which is a very narrow, socially constructed view of the world.

I've developed this approach to understanding organisations in a very practical way by using it in teaching about organisations on MBA and undergraduate courses. What I find id that within an hour and a half, you can usually take a group of intelligent students and get them to recreate the last fifty years of organisation theory by generating metaphors for organisations by taking these metaphors seriously, as scientists do, and working out their implications. So by thinking of organisation as machines, organisms, cultures, prisms, instruments of domination or whatever, you quickly move to the grand theoretical insights that have shaped our understanding of organisations. Sure, we don't have all the scientific knowledge that supports, or rejects or refines the ideas, but most of the conceptions that we have created to think about organisations are usually there for discussion. Crude, but there. This is a symbol of what can happen when we recognise that this is what knowledge is all about – finding creative, productive, interesting and evocative metaphors which provide a basis for action and meaning in the world around us. So that will be my way of trying to

tackle this demystification.

4. Holographic Imagery

Next thing I think is really important, is to develop holographic imagery as a means of organising in the social world generally as a way of guiding social change. The image of a holograph of a system where all the paths attempt to reflect an approximate capacity of a whole is an incredibly powerful one that can shake bureaucracy to its knees. I spend a lot of time in teaching organisation theory, in trying to counterpose the bureaucratic vs the holographic image of organisation. As a way not just of critiquing bureaucracy but of showing a very coherent organisation principle that is based on all the opposite principles. What's interesting is that the cutting edge of organisations approximate the holographic metaphor to an extraordinary degree. One of the major trends at the moment is away from the massively centralised organisation to the decentralised organisation where organisations clone or spawn representations of themselves over and over again. One of the most successful in Canada for example would be the Magna Corporation in the automobile parts industry. It opens a factory every three weeks. What it has are blueprints, rather like the DNA blueprint for creating the Corporation in a small sort of sense. So rather than trying to develop a massive bureaucratic type structure controlled from the centre, it is trying to create images of itself to embody the Magna principle, the Magna philosophy in each of its parts; it tries to instil it right down to the level of the shop floor. This is an explication of a holographic process that is having very practical bottom line results. Big companies like 3M, a lot of firms in the computer industry are doing the same sort of thing. They talk about spawning organisations in their own image. It's very easy to use this holographic principle to make sense of what some of the most successful organisations in high change environments are doing and its really salutary to watch managers as they use this idea.

Another example of holographic metaphor is evident in the change in the nature of the modern corporation and is found in the cult of culture and the preoccupation with corporate culture as the new way of building organisations and holding them together. What is culture? It is a holographic phenomenon. What it is trying to do or what is it? It is a process where the systems of norms, beliefs, attitudes, religions, philosophies or whatever, are encoded in each and every part of the system. So that each and every part of the system when interacting with others can produce approximations of the whole system. Why is it that corporations now want to encode culture in all its employees so that each and every employee can reproduce the whole? So that the receptionist in the Four Seasons Hotel in Washington can exude the corporate values that are shared by and emanate from the Board Room.

It's trying to reinterpret organisational culture as a holographic process and to try to show that basically what the gurus of modern management have done is to discover a different manifestation of holography as a major effect on managers and organisations. It gives them a practical, easily understood way of organising which is a complete alternative method to the bureaucratic model. One doesn't have to worry them in the first instance with the high points of theory in this regard – it's a principle they understand. It's easily assimilated and developed so that in the holographic principle we have again a way of bringing down the centralised control, breaking down the hierarchy: we have a way of empowering and of endangering a transformation which might actually challenge bureaucracy in a powerful way. One of the things I notice is that bureaucracy is so persistent because the concept of bureaucracy is ingrained in people's minds as a way of organising. The more that we can show that there are other organising principles and the holograph does provide here a set of organising principles, the more we have a way of going forward in relation to that area. So holography is a way of trying to organise and generate change.

5. Rethinking Politics

At this point I think we have to rethink the nature of politics and the political system. We

all know Winston Churchill's phrase "Democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others" and he's probably right. As social scientists we look at the political system whether it's at the national or local level and we have to conclude that in Argyris & Shon's terms that it is no more than a single loop learning system that is concerned with covering its ass and following a narrow principle of accountability. Any sort of debate that occurs within the public domain is single loop – you say something and you're held accountable. You're forced into the defensive position as soon as you go public, there is very little room to accept ideas from elsewhere and to engage in sort of double loop learning whereby you are all the time looking at the norms, challenging assumptions and going forward. Once looked at in systematic terms what we find is that politics now is very reactive and regulative in its own orientation. Any concept of the transforming proactive leadership that was there in the early days is completely out of the window. It is interesting that accountability is one of the strengths of politics, but it's also the Achilles Heel to learning because it prevents openness, it prevents risk, it puts all the interesting discussions into the private scene rather than the public. The whole idea of democracy and of trying to find ways of re-energising politics from the grassroots level was on the agenda last night and certainly I think that we need to take it very seriously indeed.

6. Rethinking the Role of Social Science

I think we need to do this and rethink also the contribution it can make. First point, very briefly, are we taking ourselves too seriously? Here we are in Orillia some 100 kilometres from Toronto talking about the future. Realistically, how do we expect anything to come from this conference? Can we do anything as a result of it? Can we do anything as a band of social scientists? What I'm really posing are the power issues which I think are much neglected in the way in which social life unfolds. I put forward a scenario of five proactive propositions for changing the way things are. But can we have any real effect? Is it just rhetoric? Are the realities of power and the way things are said so difficult and so immense that perhaps we would be better served, instead of developing theories, by being more involved in the political process? Do we need to rethink our role as social scientists in this sort of action? The reason that I feel it is important to us is that in so many areas science and social science is seen as the answer. We look to the experts whether it's salt pollution in the Great Lakes or whether it's to redesign our organisations. Perhaps this is part of the problem, and I think that we need to engage in this sort of self-critique as a means of really questioning whether social science is the right platform to really achieve these sorts of changes that we are talking about. If we are to continue to have an effect, because time is not exactly plentiful in terms of relation to a lot of problems, then the whole idea that change is going to come from reflection and production of an objective type knowledge which is unassailable, is something which is just not on. In the Great Lakes at the moment they are relying on objective knowledge for pollution control and acid rain, in solving the problem. It's completely counter-productive, it's not going to get anywhere and I think the whole idea of trying to take social science into an action mode which would receive a lot of sympathy here, is a very very high priority.

So, there are the six provocative probes, far from worked out in terms of detail. Maybe we'll have a chance to chat about them in the next few days.

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(The interactions of this very traditional conference opening, the group work and the major disagreements of Fred and Gareth, are described and analysed in Chapter 3.)

Chapter 2. The Evolution of the Content

In this chapter I present the various reports made during the conference in their chronological order so that the reader may examine the development of ideas towards the final reports. Substantive discussions following the presentations has also been included for the same purpose.

We begin with the reports from the heterogeneous groups which had been asked to explore and decide upon the two agendas, that which was society's agenda and that which should be the agenda for social science. Their reports were filed at 11.15 am on the Wednesday. Work on these reports had begun after dinner and Fred Emery's talk Tuesday night and continued after Gareth Morgan's presentation first thing Wednesday morning.

The Social and Social Science Agendas

Group 1

We've had very incomplete discussion and these items are not in any order of importance. We started talking about what we felt were important social issues and discovered in the middle of talking about that that we were talking about different arenas. Some people were talking about their social issues from their country of operation; others of us were talking about more than one country. That is part of the reality we all live with.

1. Decolonising the Future

The arena of what is and is not a social issue is a moving target but on the whole we believe that a social issue affecting us all is what we call the 'decolonisation of the future.' West Churchman would say that we are living off the futures of our children. In more concrete terms we have governments handling our entitlements that they cannot cover in the present, so we are mortgaging our future to give ourselves ample material with which to satisfy current greed. A problem then, or a social issue is how do you pay for what you spend? Is it ethical and/or efficient to mortgage your future to pay for the present or to invest in your future to pay for your present? What does that mean?

2. From Vicious to Virtuous Cycles

A second large issue was how do you break out of vicious circles and make them into virtuous circles, particularly those based on economic disparity; the increasing foreign investments of Latin America being a case in point. If you take the metaphor Gareth suggested this morning of society as a hologram, then there are lots of people that simply do not fit into the hologram; that are excluded from it. Do they continue to be bought into exclusion through welfare payments or do you in some way try to put them into the hologram? What do you do with people that have different values both at a national and international level?

3. Governability

A third issue id the governability of the current situation particularly in terms of Western democracy. Are Western democracies systems which can govern the complexities that they both generate and which they face? We see that in three particular terms (i) of the legitimacy of the government (ii) of the government vis-à-vis the governed, the capacity to control the complexity that is faced and (iii) how do you integrate diverse holograms?

Because in Canada for example, by constitutional law, the Canadian native Indians are allowed to have a different hologram than the overall society. How can you integrate different holograms? How can you govern the differences and the problems that arise from having different holograms under on supposed umbrella of governability?

4. Limits to tolerance

The fourth but certainly not the last social issue that came up was the problem that we face at the moment in terms of the limits of tolerance. The notion was that we can be very tolerant as long as the difference is not something that is very important to the tolerator. It was discussed that for example in Canada the Mennonites are in general very different from the overall main society and yet they are tolerated because they do not impinge on fundamental aspects to the main society such as property rates. Gipsies in Western Europe, however, are a problem because they steal and property rights are sacred to the western way of being. So the problem is how do we manage to go beyond the tolerance that society currently has?

Then we went into the second part of our deliberations which was what are the agendas for – social science or social action. There was unanimous agreement in our group that we *saw* social science as being committed to social action and that the agenda for action and for social science was the same.

1 We certainly did not finish on that one. We discussed liberation; personal liberation as well as broader types of liberation, not as a therapy but as how to get away from who you are; or how to understand how individuals suddenly change dramatically. There is no real understanding of how that happens or can be made to happen.

2 How to change the metaphor of organisation? Taking on Gareth's contribution this morning, how do you change the metaphor of organisation while at the same time avoiding the seductive and manipulative possibilities that it has? Certainly, in one case, it was said that a lot of new metaphors are generated by management for manipulating everyone else. How can you avoid that while at the same time changing the metaphor? In particular how do we produce alternative modes of organisation to the bureaucratic one?

3 The generation of methods to create alternative futures. There was quite wide shared opinion that in the work that we have all done, we have difficulty in visualising an alternative future and in creating it. How can that be made possible? Particularly in sustaining it?

4 The need to develop a 'science' not in the traditional positivist sense but a rigour, a cannon and a set of defendable criteria for action research – furthering the work of Chris Argyris and people like that. What makes us distinct, what are the distinctive competencies that action researchers must have?

Group 2

We went backwards and forwards across social issues vs what is relevant for social science. We started off talking about some of the things mentioned (immediately above) – how to go about democratising the workplace, what sort of alternative forms of organisation and the role of action research in generating these. We felt that in terms of a social issue, that tied in with the whole notion of control and power under new forms of organisation. We talked about social science as a social science issue and how that was going to emerge, also cooperation and conflict as part of the whole notion of control and power.

We talked about environment as 'other' as Gareth mentioned this morning and how we would deal with that. There was also accepting change and dealing with it as it occurs, the

notion that you have to be in the stream and allow things to flow and be where the action is and the question there was, is that good enough? We later talked in terms of social science as having action in front and to what extent do we need a so called science of 'action in front'.

We also discussed whether we needed a compelling image of the future and if we did, what nature that image would take? We talked about the fruitfulness of paradigms in general and the notion that we use paradigms as a way of structuring reality. But in fact there was a question as to whether that was a fruitful way of organising our thinking or not, and perhaps that should be an agenda item for discussion.

Other things we discussed were the nature of theory, the processes by which theory is developed – is the process the important element of the theory itself? Experiments in differences raised questions of how we develop ways of legitimation and legitimacy. And how do we learn from our failures? Then we finally thought "So what? Many groups like this have met and worked before."

Group 3 (There is no tape recording of this report and the following has been compiled from my notes.)

Social Science Issues

We discussed the following points:

1. "Dialogue" as a metaphor – is there a future for a Social Science of what nature? If it becomes more relevant what will the name be?
2. Caution! We are lay experts interested in the self – organising process. What is:
   i.   the structure of the process
   ii. the structure of the results
   iii. how do we get a better understanding of the 'current' limits to it?
   iv. what are the 'real' limits?

There are limitations of the systematic basis for choice. These involve values in the areas of technology, culture and assumptions about care.

What is the role of power and its relation to learning? We believe they influence each other.

The *Social Issues* are very similar and should be if our work is to be practical and relevant. Again we have power and learning and the creation of a critical mass for change. Clearly there are pressures towards more participatory and responsible citizenship. It is important that we start with and learn about the "now", the current situation or environment.

Group 4

We certainly found Gareth's 'provocative probes' just that, stimulating and demanding. They linked up very well, with last night's discussion and created the kind of interactive space that generated very good thought, meaning and a sense of the need to think about action. If we had a focus it was a little introspective. I don't want to use the term 'social science' all the time, because in a sense we are identifying ourselves with something called social sciences and we're backing off the real pressure of Gareth's questions of 'who are we?' and 'what business are we in?' So when we write 'social science' we're really talking about social actors and social action and we're thinking of ourselves as merely elements of the full range of interveners in the wider social setting.

The group presented the diagram in Figure 3 and spoke to it as follows:

Group 4 Figure: Clusters of Issues
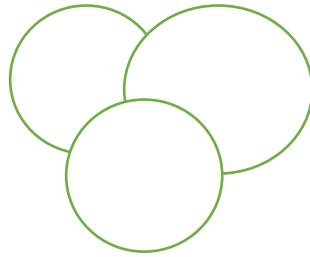
Inside the circles:

1. Role of 'social scientists'? Whose issues? Whose metaphors? Creating their own metaphors? Responsibility for creation/ understanding of new ideas.
2. Environments/boundaries are multiple and shifting
   – insider/outsider
   – logic of change
   – collaboration and interests
3. Empowerment, social learning and action – to reach wider groups. Participative vs representative.

Paradigm S does not address the creative role of conflict.

4 (which didn't have a circle): The nature of organisational design principles and change

We have here clusters, of issues, themes, ways in which to confront the dilemmas we kept coming across. It is really we think the take-off point for our future discussion. So for us this diagram is what seemed most helpful to us as practitioners in making best use of these next two days. It forces us to address issues which we often accept as unaddressable. The clusters fit with Gareth's collection of ideas.

Cluster No. 1, what was the role of the social scientist, or intervener, the role of the social actor? We're particularly questioning ourselves as to whose issues it is we are dealing with, whose metaphors we are generating or reinforcing and what is our responsibility in that respect? We talked about the creation of metaphors and the understanding of new ideas. We very much recognise them in practice, most of us now work in a co-learning, co-generative situation with the stakeholders of the setting we're in. These issues are not really ours, they're ours *and* those we're working with. That cluster includes our role and purpose and where it comes from.

Then of course, we were totally engaged in and would have spent the whole morning and beyond on the environmental boundaries issue. The inside or outside issue is obviously directly overlapping with the cluster one. We discussed stepping outside in order to change, and had a long debate on what that really means, and agreed that it means stepping outside in the company of others, looking at ourselves and our position through the viewpoints of our co-workers. Therefore we saw the essential nature of multiple interests, a multiple organisational approach with the recognition that there are multiple boundaries anyway. Our boundaries change as we find problems and boundary management becomes critical. The logic of change is very much tied up with that whole notion.

Thirdly, we have the empowerment point, the social learning point, and again the question

is 'one whose behalf and with whom are we operating?' It opens up debate on the participative and representative elements of democracy and the extent to which we work. But how does that work in with the way we define our role and the boundary.

We then tried to discover a fourth item from this list and found it was floating somewhere in this space of overlap. It really was the critical concern that Fred raised last night about the nature of the organisational design and change principles. That's I think where we're most uncertain. We have a feeling that somewhere or other this holds developments for us and will influence these three interlocking areas.

Another member of the group made additional comments.

We have to face the possibility of 'social scientists' working to create a set of concepts, metaphors, ideas and at the same time helping people to think, empowering them to create their own metaphors. There's a basic duality that we have to deal with in the first place. It's a basic duality because you *have* to be both an insider and an outsider. It's not enough to go in, have a discussion and then put yourself out of the system and look at it in its environment. That led to a discussion of whether you can do one after the other or two at the same time, or you could do it sufficiently quickly so it seems to be at the same time. Being inside and outside is a schizoid relation.

In the third point we talked about empowerment and social learning the whole idea was to see whether we could go into the issues of governance, participation and representative democracy with the hope of reaching a wider audience than the group or organisation you're working with.

Finally there was another set of issues such as the question of conflict. It appears to a certain extent that Paradigm S, as in the paper, did not explicitly address the issue of the creative role of conflict. It was there, fair enough, but I feel that we think away the whole question of conflict and what it means, and this is certainly one of the things we have to co-address in pulling together these organisational principles, but anyway this is just a footnote.

The Synthesis of the Task Force

A task force was drawn from the four groups. It synthesised the findings of those group into the following model to provide direction for the next working stage. The spokesman for the Task Force:

"We've got some ideas that seem to cluster naturally for us. We began with the notion of working towards the goal of empowerment and said that there were some components that were necessary, as Fred has raised last night. These were action, learning and language, working toward the metaphors that we're going to use as goals. Action, learning, language and metaphors are the leading components.
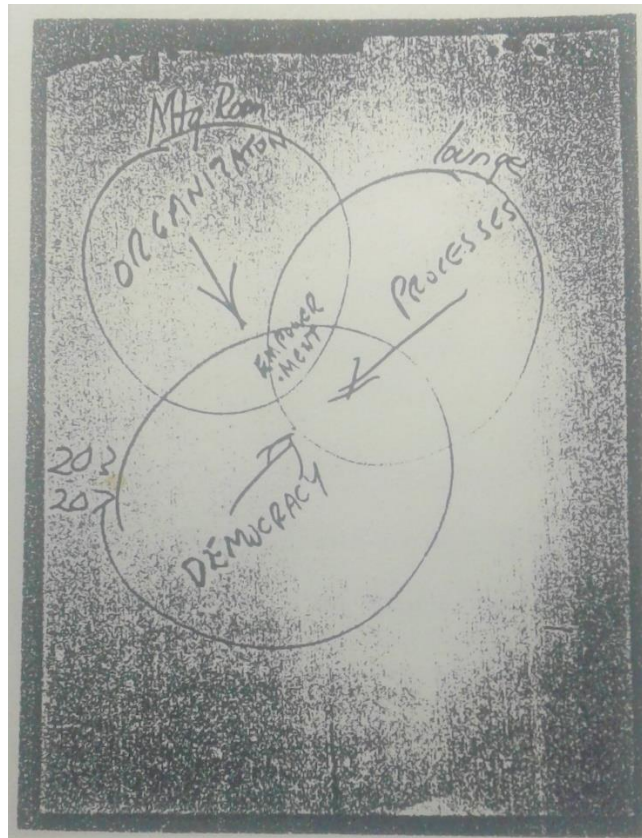
Organizing Figure: Steps towards Empowerment: A Practical Agenda.

We have a diagram that represents our major clusters which underlie and guide the empowerment in the middle. Our other clusters were a cluster around democracy, with issues of dialogue, power and representative vs participative. You've got to remember that this is a relatively consistent paradigm that we found; that we could take different components and they would show up comfortably on each of the other clusters. If you think in terms of any kind of consistent paradigm, that's going to happen.

The second cluster for us was organisation. Some of the groups have mentioned the concept of self-organising, almost all of the groups have dealt with issues of change or the process of change and how you go about it. We talked an awful lot, following Gareth's comments, about being on the inside and the outside of the environment and trying to interpret it. Environment and boundaries ended up as a set under this cluster called organisation.

Processes remained as a third set because we talked about methods, criteria, about the science of action research, about how we introspect and think about it and can develop methodologies for each of these major clusters. So we have three clusters, at the intersection of them, the word empowerment and they're our way of finding clusters that cut across the whole set of agendas.

It was later clarified and resolved that groups should self-select around each petal of this flower, exploring its potential as an area for the development of empowerment. This had been tentatively defined as personal liberation and collective responsibility. The four critical components of learning, language, metaphor and action were perceived as the necessary themes or groundwork for a re-appraisal of action research, or social science in its purposeful

and ideal-seeking mode.

Four groups then formed and became known as The Democrats of 203, The Democrats of 207, (or the Governance Group) the Organisation group and the Processes and Methods group. These groups presented their preliminary work on the Wednesday night (1) a second report on Thursday morning (2) and the final statement on Friday morning. (3).

Steps towards Empowerment: The Work of the Conference

The Democrats of 207

Report 1.

This was the group that explored democracy as 'governance'. It went straight into the crisis of governance that is currently reflected in cynicism and apathy throughout those countries with the Westminster system and the instability apparent in those which have stayed with the design principle of redundant parts, or have made uneasy accommodations to the Western mode, i.e. tried a mixture of design principles. Exploring a consistent alternative to design principle one was the first item on their agenda but there was a fundamental disagreement as to whether this was 'extreme', as it was seen by some, was necessary, or whether there was a chance of producing a demonstration of a 'creative synthesis' of the two design principles.

One side of the argument came straight from the empirical data gathered in Britain in the early days of action research. 'We did for a while in Britain find a 'synthesis' in the area of industrial relations when it was clear after World War II that there had to be more democratic arrangements because these had come into being during the war, for the war effort, with such things as productivity groups. So the human relations movement emerged. We took foremen out of industry, gave them the latest in psychology and sent them back to be caring, well educated foremen. That was the 'creative synthesis' of human relations and it has been discredited.' The forty nine years of Mexican democracy had also served to alert the group that perhaps there was no accommodation between the design principles.

An alternative system of governance based on the jury system was examined; a *selection* process for people to be involved in the process of governing. Whether it was workplace democracy or political democracy or political democracy in terms of municipal, provincial, federal etc. people would be entered into the jury system by some form of qualification; some experience in the workplace, education or whatever. One would serve, in the Canadian system, in the municipal process first by selection. People would be expected to serve at that level of government by way of contribution and by way of right and the only access to the second level, the provincial, would be through service in the first. And so through all higher levels. A lot of time was spent looking at refinements to that system and addressing the difficulties with people coming from the public service, the administrative side.

The opposite view was also put clearly. There is still the possibility for a synthesis of the two design principles but we need to escape from the straight-jacket of Hegelian dialectics. This group was left with a 'zeigarnik'; some unsolved business.

Report 2

We decided last night that what we were there to discuss wasn't democracy but governance. We can clarify that a little bit more by saying that it was governance not government; that governance includes what governs the system but it's a lot broader than

that. There was some discussion in terms of a point Francisco made in his talk yesterday, about how the blurring of boundaries between government and other institutions in society could be taken as quite a hopeful sign in opening up the boundaries and moving away from a more closed bureaucratic system. And that indeed a hope for the future lies to some degree in those kinds of dynamics whether they are called privatisation, or whatever, in terms of greater involvement of people who are not professional politicians, bureaucrats or others in the governance process, a spreading of that notion.

We talked about the various sorts of problems we saw coming with the governance system and took a sampling of those. There was a depressing convergence in all our perceptions; problems of legitimacy, the creation of dependency caused by the power relations between government and specialised governmental structure. This was a particularly powerful convergence as we were all from different countries. People felt they were subject to the governmental process but were not authors of it in any significant sense. There were other particular problems such as the welfare state and the development of a permanent under-class of people. These were sympathetic of a broader sense of dissatisfaction.

It's very difficult to see how you go beyond this in the context of the current governmental system and we were led back to the blurring of boundaries and decentralising to a level closer to the people, opening up more opportunities for people to become involved directly in decisions and the governance process. This is the question of direct rather than representative involvement. Then we went back to Fred's notion of selecting people by lot rather than by election, the notion of citizen responsibility to be involved in governance. We should think about mechanisms that foster that sense, e.g. the jury system.

The point was made that self-organising processes are ubiquitous, so it's not primarily a question of empowering people but of removing the constraints that exist to stop people from getting on with the normal processes of organising themselves. It's not unnatural for that to happen; what is unnatural and in fact ingenious is the way in which we've managed to block those.

We then asked how we actually get from here to there, what are the points of leverage, how do you turn the system around. The notion of how it's difficult to over-estimate the inertia of the system, the forces of 'changing in order to remain the same' are very impressive. But at the same time if those same forces go beyond a certain critical point they can flip over and the forces of change themselves can become as strong as the forces that keep the system as it is. How do you deal with that? How do you get from here to there?

We reached a point of talking about our metaphor; it was a double metaphor. Fred's version of this was the boat that weighs hundreds of tons, thousands of tons, up on the slipway, and how do you get this massive boat down into the water? The answer is 5 feet on either side, hit the right chocks at the right time and the boat slides in. Of course, if you don't hit them at the right time or they don't hit together or if you don't hit the right chocks, it falls over on its side and that's that. Hans said that you also have chocks in mineshafts and that they used to bring the roof down. So the question becomes 'do we know whether we are in a mineshaft or on the slipway before we take the chocks out?'

Other members of the group added into the report as follows.

There was discussion of Roger's population graphs which made us wonder if we were all actually lemmings. But it did point up the seriousness of some of the issues we are facing which are not just organisational. The world economy will affect small countries too such as Norway – if Canada was portrayed as a postage stamp on the economic map, how does one portray Norway? The data presented yesterday was frightening and yet we often push these

issues away. We don't want to think about them.

Because our group had people from such different national backgrounds it became obvious that we all have very different problems. It is important that we have this appreciation of the differences in the various countries because there will be differences in the starting conditions necessary to make significant change. The metaphor of the boat is useful for us because if we can identify and define the chocks that are holding the boat, we have some hope; we may be able to move it. We need that metaphor more concrete.

The point about Africa, South America and most of the Southern hemisphere, whose situations are so different to the majority of the Northern participants encounter was pursued. There was a sense among us last night that unless we get participative democracy in the northern countries instead of this representative Westminster system, then there will not be the will in the rich north to carry out the program that Brandt and other brought down four or five years ago, for North-South relations.

This was queried on the grounds that participatory democracy would act to preserve a group's self-interest as foreigners couldn't vote. A debate ensued. "Participative democracy eliminates the vote." "But the problem is that while those national boundaries are in place, altruism tends to be a pretty scarce commodity." "Well, if that is the case then that process of efflorescence which have been established in populations of other species all characteristically show that sort of process and the consequence of efflorescence is a smash, the way the lemming population in Norway smashes every four or five years. If we continue to behave like that and we don't have the will to help the other half of humanity, then that will happen."

The process used in Craig-Miller and Jamestown, called 'shared government' could be important. It came into being in crisis situations with the creation of independent innovating organisations which could use open space. But they didn't smash themselves up against the established organisations; they found ways of working with them, drawing resources from the existing organisations so a governance situation emerged which was a multiple one. They formed an organisational medium which was composed of different groups linked together which could move off in different and new directions from their points of origin. They have proved very robust in that they are still here and spawned others like them without resorting to illegal means or disturbing the other processes of government. The process brings together different people and it's essentially a power shift towards power-sharing in that there is more power and there are more people directly involved. They are more empowered because they are empowering themselves and on a small scale they may show a way forward. They change the usual meanings of governance and government in interesting ways because they are not passive but active.

This suggests the importance of a continuous scanning of the environment to discover these sorts of patterns. People are remarkably resilient and in very practical ways are experimenting to try to not only cope, but to reshape their own environment and gain greater control of it. In terms of the perspective of an event like this (the conference) the sort of things Eric is talking about are a powerful reminder to us to see what we can observe and learn from what's already starting to take place, almost in a spontaneous pattern. Some of it is moving from quite a deliberate conscious and philosophical base and some is simply moving out of certain circumstances, but as people discover its possibilities they are then extrapolating from that.

What is also important about it is what happens when those experiments bump into the existing systems. One implication is multiple governance but it can be painful when the

established forms of governance is not comfortable with what's happening. It raises public policy questions as to how political decision-making with a capital P gets shifted around in order to facilitate this sort of activity, rather than see it as a threat.

The concept of resilience is likely to be a useful on as we've all been brought up to place great weight on the concept of stability but for survival in rapidly changing environments, many species need not stability, but resilience. But it was argued that while resilience or adaptability may be useful in some animal contexts, leaping over the edge in order to preserve the species is a part of it. It does therefore entail some aspects which may be distasteful (particularly if you are a lemming).

In this context it was also noted that it is the small countries now like Scandinavia, Poland and Canada which appear most able to provide leadership. The USA clearly cannot and is not, and we may be seeing new groupings of countries emerging. We are on the edge of seeing a very unique public opportunity emerging, public in the broadest sense, precisely because of the very nature of the turbulence we are in. There is an increasing range of people who for themselves in their own community settings are making linkages between their own employee difficulties, conditions in the third world, issues of environment, and those of peace. People don't go to separate meetings anymore, i.e. this is the peace group or the employment action group, they are all the same people from a broader cross section who are showing up with all these concerns. That is very exciting as it means that people are experiencing things in such a way that they become personally linked with the larger issues. It isn't clear yet how we may assist in that process.

Report 3 (See Final Reports)

The Democrats of 203

Report 1

We observed, as we all have, that we live I a very turbulent environment. If we think of a distinction between the public sector and government and the private sector, we perceive that indeed it's possible that the private sector is forced to examine its functions much more readily in a turbulent environment than the government is. It's simply a function of the fact that it's accountable in some sense in the market place. For reasons of survival it's going to be forced to do that examination sooner. What does that suggest about government and indeed about representation?

We therefore touched on a matter of both democratic dialogue and the matter of a system of generation which we took from some of the earlier presentations, including Fred's. Rather than arguing the importance of fixed patterns of organisation that we could say are democratic, what we're looking at is embedding values in process and structure which are democratic, the arrangement of resources if you like. This will prompt some re-examination of democratic theory and the juxtaposition of representative government and anarchy. The feeling was that perhaps anarchy is the concept whose time is once again emerging.

Part of it is necessary to get government away from feeling that it has to do everything for everybody. There is a sense that we want government to do everything for us; solve all our problems. Even if we're not happy with the solution. [MEs note: That is the essence of the group assumption of dependency.]

With respect to the subject of decentralisation which is our popular trust these days, we

must try to get decisions back to a more local point, to those who are most immediately involved.

So that we saw as a powerful rationale for decentralisation. We were also conscious of the fact that there were inherent risks in that. They relate to the notion of equity in society and indeed to the whole area of other public interests and the importance of having a vehicle that continues to represent the public interest, ensuring the place of equity in our society. The key for government then perhaps, is to be less ambitious in its attempts to do everything and downgrade our expectations for it. Rather than say 'government has to do it all' government maybe has a responsibility to make sure it gets done. It's a question about whether government should be a kind of cheap worrier to make sure that somehow the problems are addressed.

This raised in our modern context of course, the whole notion of thinking global and then acting local which the Sudbury and other examples touch on. With respect to QWL we find that it is indeed worth exploring but that no one anticipated the amount of time it would take for this concept and these processes to percolate through and to be tested and for acceptance to be gained. It is something well worth looking at which is transportable to other social contexts. The caution is that the flexibility of the concept of QWL begs the question of democracy. That remains an open question. It's possible to have flexibility but not necessarily democracy. (That's called laissez-faire. ME).

Lastly then, now that we've raised the question – within what context do we try to do this bridging between the notion of the quality of working life and democracy as a whole. And that indeed is where Sudbury 2001 came up in our group as well. Because as we know, the nature of work is changing, the definition of work and where work is occurring is changing profoundly, and if too much attention is paid to the industrial sector and more and more people are being employed elsewhere or having to develop employment for themselves in other sectors, what does that say about the quality of working life?

Report 2

We started out discussing the enterprises of the future which became the 'work of the future' and what that turns out to be in fact, is 'work in the present that's on the leading edge' and I guess we did this mainly because some of our members had some very interesting personal experiences with different types of organisations, different types of work. While we ended up with a number of examples which are perhaps familiar to most, there may be some individual insights.

We discussed modern high-tech industries in which you have plants organised around the computer with zero defect, zero inventory, practically zero employees, run by small semi-autonomous groups of multi-competent workers, all paid the same, all with the same title, with maybe a few foremen who are mostly involved in chairing meetings. People handle information and the office / factory distinction breaks down. The basic building block is the group; it's definitely a theory 2 type of organisation. Everyone deals with part-whole relations. All these organisations explicitly deal with values and this, as we'll see in a moment, tends to produce a certain type of structure. We noted that this sort of organisation raised all sorts of questions; whose values? What are the possibilities for connection with other aspects of the community? i.e., you have shop floor workers extensively engaging in dialogue, that's presumably part of its assertiveness training aspect. Will this ultimately mean that the shop floor worker will take a larger part in community activities than perhaps at present?

There is first the structure of these organisations, something that's fairly prominent in current management literature – it's a pattern of an integrated shop floor, a relatively large top management and very little middle management. This is an organisation that's structured for dialogue. In the old type, the middle manager was largely a bottle neck. He might interact with the shop floor but he wasn't empowered to make decisions. The dialogue in this new type of plant can lead to decision making. The need to settle things by discussion of course, relates in part to the responsibility placed on these multi-competent individual workers in a high-tech setting and also, the environment is generally demanding more democracy. It was noted that in this type of organisation internal freedom grows but external freedom may decline perhaps, under competitive pressures.

We talked about the difficulty in involving employees in participation, in dialogue and decision making and came to the conclusion that this was a slow process, it's important to start out small, to get back to the way people are educated and there is also a need in this sort of discussion-based environment to share risks at senior levels as well as on the shop floor.

We went from this type of organisation to a discussion of flexible life cycles and work and after noting that in the present economic circumstances it may be involuntary, we talked also about major job creation activities and the service sector, multiple small enterprises, the question of health, safety and so on. It raised opportunities, for small enterprises and the possibility of linking them. There was a description given of a very interesting effort going on in British Columbia. As we know they have gone from riches to rags in a relatively short period and this concerns an umbrella provincial organisation to promote local enterprise development. It does this by starting off with consciousness raising activities, seminars and so on which co-sponsors with local organisations. One of the things that was stressed is that this is a predevelopment phase. They ask a question of who is not here that ought to be here? They start with an assumption that there are going to be no outside resources and they have to investigate what already exists. How much dollar leakage is there out of the community? How can it be kept down? Where is their money locked in? How much of the bank and credit union funds is going into local investment? It's usually found after these investigations that an awful lot of local resources are available.

If the project is viable, and to make sure the project is viable, there are links with the colleges and business groups to do the market analysis and testing. A small business might start in a college itself with students training to work in the enterprise. Where there is an ongoing mechanism established for continuous support of the enterprise, there seems to be a high success rate.

I've been talking about organisations and in fact we're concerned with democracy and the question is 'how democratic are the things that arise out of bootstrap efforts of this kind?' On the one hand, you obviously have people and families exploiting themselves rather than exploiting anybody else and at a minimum what you've got is a countervailing force against big corporations who are running everything else. There are small enterprises of various kinds. The question then was raised as to possible linkages between small enterprises and sharing of facilities – some experiences abroad were noted. In England the big corporations are helping to build this sort of thing, in part apparently to avoid social unrest which is considered a major threat. There are linkings of the medium size businesses in Scandinavia. In Germany you have groups of linked businesses with employees working for an umbrella organisation and shifting around from business to business, so that while one business group may decline, others may grow.

Report 3 (See final reports)

There was further discussion around the nature of North American culture and preaching and praising democracy. It was clearly an issue of much concern to some of the North Americans present and they took the opportunity to get an outside view. "Does that go to the root of the first point – that North America has not decided what kind of a society it want? Why do you think of this?"

"I am treading on dangerous ground here."

"It wasn't meant to be a challenge. I agree and support it."

"I notice the difference when we meet in groups like this. Nobody mentions the issue of what sort of society we want. In North America it seems to be assumed that the points of departure are given by science because perhaps there is a deeply divided society, but I'm not really prepared to say. But I always like a little more explicit statement of what sort of society we are aiming for because we have to do that before we can act and these divisions get in the road of that."

"We (the Canadians) recently had the McDonald report which was a sort of identificatory statement of where our society should go and its somewhat disturbing that even before the document was published, the 'other' McDonald report was published, the day before. One problem is that the academic world and the civil servants, have been compromised, constrained, bought into silence, and they are one sector leading into other countries. There is also an established power relationship between large business and large government and we have some rather horrible examples of that in recent times. People also tend to be fragmented into ethnic and economic groupings that perhaps you don't find in other countries. People generally feel powerless and I think the mission for people like ourselves within our organisational contexts is to structure that empowerment."

"There's a basic dilemma in the notion of having a shared vision of what sort of society you want, or a social consensus, or even a policy consensus. If you mean by that the capacity of individuals and small groups to contribute to the shape of the overall society, then society becomes an emergent product and the only task of agreement is that nobody gets to impose their vision of it. This means that empowerment is just another word for a tolerance for some degree of anarchy."

"I didn't ask for a shared vision. I wanted to know where people stood."

"But what can be shared is a product of the interactions you can create with other people. When an individual declares him (her)self in favour of something, then it's up to others to react to you and they may join you."

The Organisation Group

Report 1

The group had begun work by exploring the priorities and concerns of its members in the area of organisational change. These included:

- the current shifting or organisational boundaries reflecting rapidly changing interdependencies in the extended social field
- this tradition's emphasis on values other than materialism and the effects of this on

theory and practice
- gain sharing as a way forward into alternative forms or organisation
- the implications of the phenomenon of empowerment through self-managing groups
- learning from work in designated experimental sites
- gaps, failures, or neglected areas in the field
- the shift from expert consultants to Participative Design and the implications of this learning
- the apparent failure of making change at the upper levels of organisational hierarchies. The group had cohered around their collective perception that a revitalisation of organisational theory would come from learning from the field.

Report 2

We felt that what we needed and wanted in the future is to empower the people in the public sector. This massive area of growth is one which there is the very lowest level of the development of paradigm 2, general ideas of participation, people having a voice in the changing character of work. But to do that we really have to understand the difference between the public and private sectors, the difference between the way that goods producers could be organised and the public sector. We had some idea that perhaps we were trying to oversimplify and transfer that model into the public sector and that was one of the reasons we didn't understand the problems. Nevertheless, there was a very strong feeling that that massive growing sector that affected everybody's lives, was the sector of the lowest area of development and therefore a critical imperative for the future.

The second point we call 'incorporating externalities into organisations' and by this we meant that those things external to the organisation like communities and the environment and so on, need to be incorporated or involved. They are affected by the decisions and actions of the organisation outside. We felt that there were many issues here ranging from the relationship between work organisations to communities, to service organisations viz-a-viz their clients. The point was largely that in a service system you don't have a client in the sense that a goods producer does, the client is part of the system too, so involving them is a very critical part of understanding the whole process of empowerment.

The third thing was to empower the maximum number of people, so we need to work with small businesses. Most people are employed in small businesses. And yet the small businesses sector has attracted very little attention. We talked about the fact that this was the individual entrepreneur with *his* money on the line, he didn't have funds to play with, there was very little way of involving him. If we're really going to give people this sense of empowerment, we're going to have to reach the small business sector. The big business sector will finance itself because of its driving need. The small business sector doesn't see it that way. The argument was also advanced when you move into a highly participative system you have something like a 40% advantage in productivity so even in that area these people are disadvantaged when they don't move into it.

The next point was that the bottom line is something that is crucial to the empowerment equation. Here the problem seems to be that lots of organisations are just struggling around financing themselves. The issues that are in the minds of managers and boards are simply 'how do we balance the sheet, how do we survive?' and they discuss these things independently from any theme of organisation. And yet, also there was the feeling, not entirely shared within the group, that one of the things which is driving organisations

massively into this area, those who are aware of it, is exactly the bottom line.

One point was made at quite some length and was that today the only difference between competing organisations in our society is how they organise themselves. They buy the same technologies, they buy the same economic expertise, the same marketing techniques; in fact they look very much alike and the major difference is in their human organisation. A number of us have said that there seems to be an overwhelming wave of interest in this on the part of the more sophisticated corporate world. We felt there was a dramatic shift in the last five years. Also we hear from Shell that the same sort of growth is going on inside this massive corporation; there is rising interest in this.

Optimising the male/female potential will empower people. Here what we discussed was basically the male and female aspect of all people. It isn't a question of being a man or a woman, it is a question of optimising, bringing that out into all of our life. We started with the problem of equal opportunities, of bringing women into organisations but the really deep meaning of it is – are those aspects of ourselves going to be present in all aspects of life, particularly in formal organisations? We find that when women come into traditional organisations, they are more or less forced to deny their female attributes and adopt those of males. You get an asymmetrical organisation which only contributes male attributes. There was some argument too, that even where the organisation is entirely female, that also happens, so that the driving force of a classical hierarchical organisation is to deny a whole huge aspect of caring nurturance. For empowerment, this was a critical area and something we hadn't here discussed much. It seemed to be an interesting thing to add to any future we had, and a very important one.

And finally the issue came up that the technology of decision making required some methodology. It isn't that managers are opposed to more participative structures, more democratic structures, they don't know how to do it and get the results. Some people who are working in that area discover they don't have adequate methodologies to do this. So here was an important part of the future. Also we were aware of the growing movement in the management schools and management thinking around this area of sharpening of decision-making. The classical forms of arriving at the decisions no longer seems adequate. The people who are actually working with managers from day to day, particularly in the public sector, find that it is the difficult problem. They lack those tools and so we began to place some emphasis on those tools.

I should say there were a lot of interesting questions as we went round. One that I neglected concerns the concept or aesthetics of beauty in organisations, and how you include that and what it means. That seemed to be a very promising and fertile area, too.

The group was asked whether it had considered inter-organisational questions as well as the single organisational ones, to which it replied 'not yet'. Another member of the group added that most new employment at the moment was coming from new small businesses which made it a critical area.

Report 3 (See final reports)

There were some substantial examples and issues discussed here.

1.   Changing Evaluation Criteria of Performance

We had experience working with a small group of mine inspectors in Nova Scotia. Over a

period of time they began to admit that their job was really the reduction of accidents in the mines but that the work they did had a very marginal relationship and affect. They finally agreed to stop measuring themselves by the number of inspections they made and instead by the number of accidents that were occurring in mines. They developed a completely altered strategy, for example, using their time with miners and union leaders to make them safety conscious and this excited them enormously. But when it was passed into the system and they asked for $50,000 budget to educate the men, they didn't get it. It was a signal right from the union that they were not willing to be measured by such criteria, such undependable external criteria were too frightening. It was the sort of thing where people became empowered and they wanted to do a real task to satisfy themselves. They got very excited by this, very creative, yet the larger setting couldn't tolerate it.

2. Changing Organisational Boundaries

An example we discussed was what happened to Johns Mansfields in the USA. It ignored the effect it was having on its workers. It was noted that there was a changing of boundaries happening anyway, but if you make the empowerment aspect of the changing of the boundary an explicit part of your organisational policy, you would have better management. If Johns-Mansfields had, from the beginning, taken into account what it was doing to its workers and taken action to correct that, or to mitigate that, the eventual cost, not only to all widows and children of the workers but to the companies itself, would have been less than it was.

The other point we discussed was that it is getting harder to tell where an organisation starts and stops. Boundaries are very elusive and that what finally brings it home to people is the fact that make-buy relationships which are perceived as central to producing whatever it is you're earning your profits from changing. Even when very large companies depend on other sources for things that they would never have dreamed of depending on four or five years ago. Computers for example. Talking about 'the organisation' is a misnomer. Just because the scale is no longer as important a factor as it used to be, companies that try to build up the scale by integrating backwards and forwards really have to rethink their strategies.

3. Small and Medium-sized Businesses

Women are opting out of large organisations to start their own small businesses. I think the data at the moment are that three out of every four women MBA's ends up going to entrepreneurial route; that's a big percentage. Many women now are also owners. We looked at the numbers that we had just in our group and in Jean-Maries's program, 50% of the undergraduates in commerce are women, in my program 45% of the part-timer MBA's are women, and at the Harvard Business School a third of all the MBA's are women. So if we maintained that ratio of 3 out of 4 going off into small business and we know we are producing something like fifty thousand MBA's a year in North America, there alone is one hell of a lot of businesses being created by a lot of bright people. It would be nice to think that we could get to them somehow.

4. Relations between Private and Public Sectors

It was noted in discussion that when one looks at the relationship between the private and public sectors in terms of business dealings we can see there has been an enclave in which people have behaved in their own interests, ignoring the long-term and future effects, not

really in the interests of a democracy. Here in this conference we should be looking at the empowerment of the others, the populace at large. A recent report shows that the government, the forestry and paper industries have raped the forests, and left us with a legacy which will take hundreds of years to overcome. The history of the nuclear industry is similar. If we are truly looking at this in a democratic context there must be ways in which we can remove the muzzles on public servants, for example, so that they can speak out when they feel there is a matter of conscience. We must address this important issue because at the moment, you speak out and take the consequences, e.g. lose your job. That is a very real part of empowerment – to speak the truth.

The processes and Method Group

Report 1. No report. See chapter 3 – Analysis of the Process.

Report 2

The group presented a Figure and spoke to it as follows:
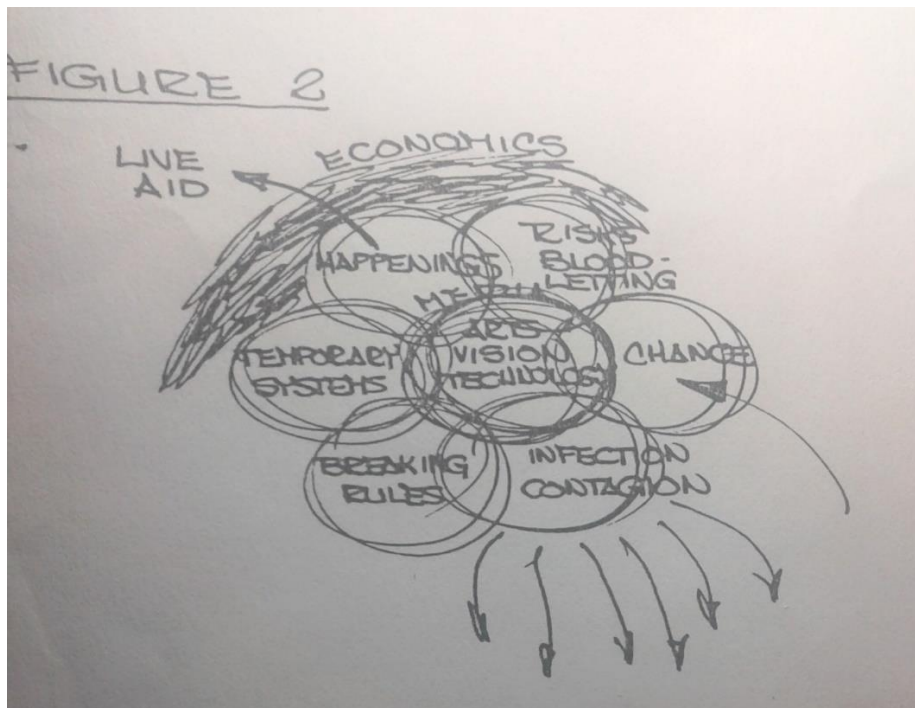
Figure. Second Report of P and M group (as redrawn by member of P and M group)

We found some connection between our experiences and ended up with a bubble in the middle which was the different kinds of arts and technologies and the ways in which these could be combined in order to more easily accomplish change. We also had a lot of themes which seemed to run around the edges of these processes. We also had a dark side which ran through our discussions which was the economic carriers we now use in our culture, as opposed to the emergent ones which were the more artistic carriers. Occasionally we had happenings which broke through the economic barrier, for example, the Live Aid concert.

This picture is our attempt to envision the process of change. We crystallised some themes and issues into processes that we don't often talk about and don't capitalise on; temporariness, the process of flukiness, chance, the process of breaking the rules, the process of blood-letting as part of the resolution and movement. The process of visioning was very central to us and this was where we began to see the links between arts and visioning. In the traditional societies the arts were linked to everything that was done and perhaps that's what we need to do now, not see them as a separate activity.

We talked about the process of inflection, the ground to ground movement between peoples, communities and organisations. The essence of this is not to look at it as a negative thing but to build on them and think strategically around the contagion. Economics for us is still the dark side and we're not sure how to deal with that; but we know that that's a really serious impediment. We need to make creative use of happenings. Live Aid could have been just one-time flushing out of guilt feelings so what's required is to build around that event in the way you build around a search event. We got into a discussion of the media and the need to use the de-massified media, cable systems, cassettes and link that into computer technology so that everyone can have access.

Q What are the infection creating conditions?

A It came up when people were asking why the arts based stuff hadn't come anywhere else (except Craig Millar) and I said, 'Oh but it has. It spread to another community twice the size of Craig Millar, then into another and there are now associated networks of communities.' How did that happen? Well basically, people to people. They found something exciting going on and wanted to try some of that. They got help from the original folks and it is a kind of contagion. If we are tuned into the process we can attempt to facilitate the positive sides. Although there may be some negative sides at the same time, we will get some movement.

Q And for the arts? Do you mean visioning the future is an art or artistically visioning the future?

A Using the arts to build up a version of the future, taking the arts back from the economic system.

Q Could you say a bit more about breaking the rules?

A Breaking the rules in our experience has been a way for a group, organisation or community to become aware of its own processes. It's the 'fish in water' sort of business. Nobody knows it's the rule not to fart in here until someone else does.

Q Do you mean breaking the rules as a deliberate change strategy?

A Yes. But we are uncertain whether we meant deliberately breaking the rules or using the occasion when it came up.

B Like the lady who sat at the front of the bus what that gave rise to.

Q Can you explain why economics is the black side and not just another opportunity?

A That was how we saw it operating at the moment but it does have the possibility obviously, of being a positive carrier.

B It seemed as if economics has been a limiting force on creative vision.

It was also noted that most new communication technologies exploit the monologue where one person, the centre, talks and the periphery, the great mass listen. There is always a need to re-appropriate the technology, as has been with the cassette and with talk-back radio, and

re-design it to be interactive. It is very interesting that this new technology is in fact going against what people need by way of empowerment, but video is now being recaptured for interaction into a dialogue rather than a monologue technology. The group accepted this observation, acknowledging its lack of expertise, but saw new technology as an area that could be used ultimately for empowerment.

Report 3

This is the report that was actually presented to the last plenary meeting of the Friday morning. That presented the Final Reports section at the front of this document is the form in which this group finally decided to contribute to this group of reports, over lunch following the closure of the conference. The form of these various reports and the reasons for them are discussed in the analysis of the process.

Before presenting this report, it is necessary to also present the setting. The metaphorical context was again the theatre. A narrator (Z) enters centre stage to put up the picture, tell the story so far and set up the scene for the next episode. He then retires to the back of the stage as three women (W 1, 2 and 3) move to sit at the centre and talk to each other. As they talk, a man captures their meanings on the flip charts behind them.
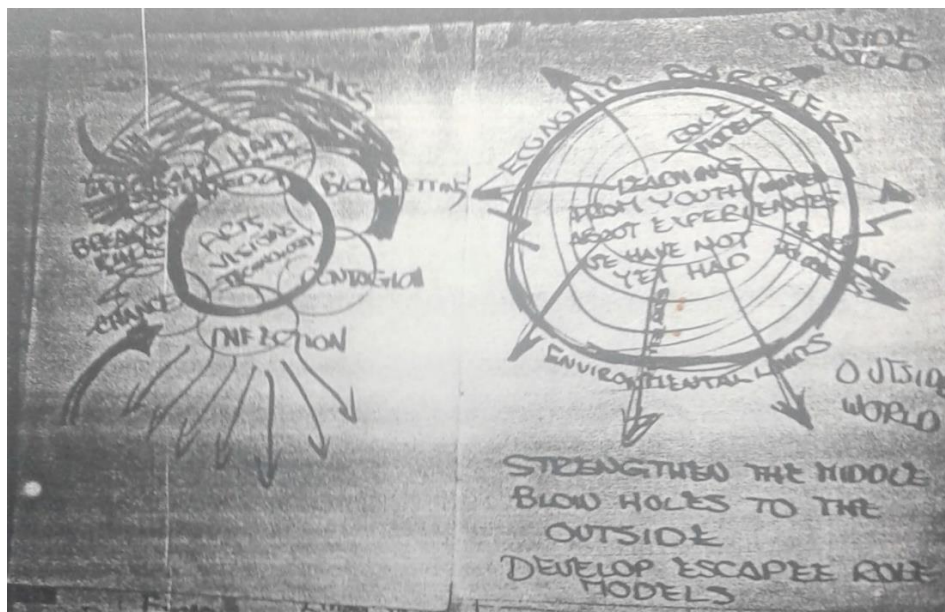

Figure: Breaking Out
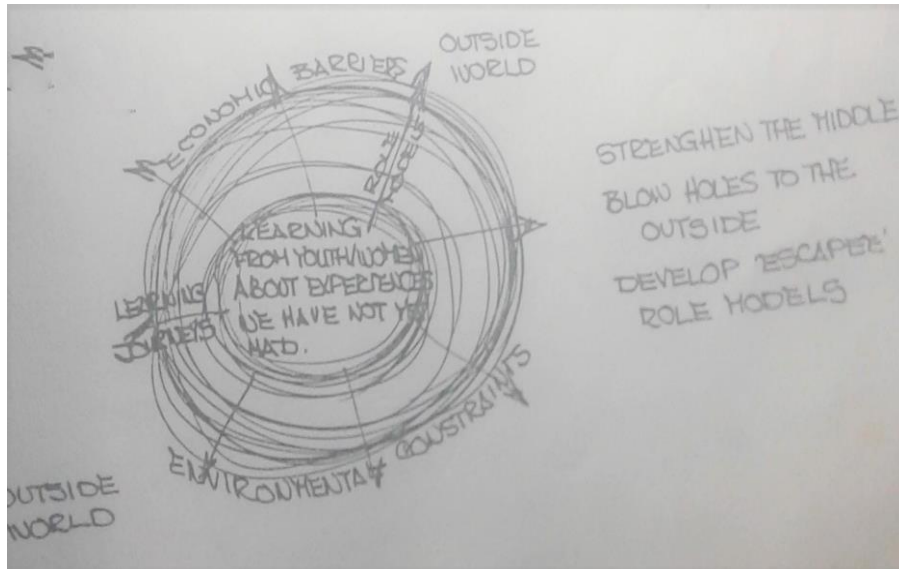
Figure Breaking Out as redrawn by member of group Susan Wright reported for subsequent to the conference (which is easier to read than the original)**.**

Z Remember we're talking about actions. Our group yesterday focused on how the arts could lead to the visioning process in various ways. Then we came to ask the question at various levels, 'how could we engage in action?' If we had to go for a strategic stance, where was the process? How could we facilitate, join, link to, a process which was already ongoing in the nearer and wider environment? We came up linking to and learning from youth and women; the phrase was used 'learning from experiences we have not yet had' and through that we saw a main pathway to break through the economic and environmental barriers to strengthen that process. Then we asked 'well, how can we start?' and we realised, of course, that we had women in our group, so we decided to ask them to dialogue about themselves, their work and their links in youth. Another question was how that could be used to facilitate the ongoingness of the facilitators themselves.

W.1. How about, the three of us, talk about, as women, how we could get from the middle to the outside (of the picture). Right now, as we discuss this, how could we suggest that we do that and have the others listen and then talk about that, and maybe get something from it in terms of what Steve (Z) has called 'getting the action going'. Could we just talk to people about what we feel when we're our best at breaking out of the barriers there around us. Have you got any ideas how we could do that?

W.2. We could just talk about these times when we feel we've just gotten the new paradigm going with us or, ways that we experience those constraints, barriers and what that may feel like.

W.1. Have you got something in your head?

W.2. One thing that comes to mind is that I always have the dilemma when I'm working with a group that is instrumentally identified or filled up with people, usually males, who are instrumental. I like to think that males stereotypically act like lions and roosters when they're in large scale groups and so I have the dilemma, should I become a lion or a rooster in order to compete effectively. I know a colleague of mine has been instructed to that what you should do is dress for success in the blue and white and so on and make grand gestures, talk

loud and stand up and so I always have the feeling I should do that I order to be effective. I'd like to think of some of the female or expressive side as being like a butterfly but if you put a butterfly in with a den of lions and roosters, what will be the outcome? Can the butterfly stay that way and still be taken seriously? So that's an example.

W.1. It reminds me of the position that I'm in right now which is being in this corporate board room with all these fairly senior males. I mean, here am I and I tend not to have the navy blue suit and the proper white shirt and I also tend to feel I don't want to be aggressive or roosterish or lionish but I also don't want to get flicked off like a butterfly. So it's a real dilemma of how I get to be just me which is both of those things, and how I can demonstrate my competence to this group of people and also at the same time allow myself to be whoever I am. If something is funny, I'll giggle – that's just being me. When I feel best about the kind of breaking out that we're talking about, is when I'm able to feel that what I'm doing is good, it's competent, but it's also being done in a way that allows me to be the expressive me as well – the giggly side of me.

W.3. I find that when I can manage to be the two things, that's the instrumental and the expressive, and I can't do it on my own, I find it very important to have another one or two women there so I'm not the total minority in the group. If there are another couple of women there, I can combine the two things and it seems to be accepted much more by the dominant group – males in this case, and in a sense it gives them a kind of legitimacy to express both sides of themselves too. I find that if we can get through, if we can get over that hump, then a lot of the differences will stop, will dissolve and erode and we can get on with whatever the task is at hand.

W.1. You've been talking about your teaching bit over the course of the group and it occurs to me that some of those stories remind me of my role as a parent. I'm thinking here about youth and women and the fact that sometimes as a parent I'm able to put the things together and really blow through because of the connection with youth and how I am with my son. It's a different kind of relationship than I have with others in my male world. So it reminds me of stories of how you feel when you're relating to the kids in your classes.

W.3. I agree. I think the parenting role is a very interesting one because people see it as static but in point of fact, if you can negotiate through from a baby to a teenager to a young adult, the flexibility and kind of 'being appropriate to the situation as it comes up' is an incredible balancing act, an incredible sensing and reading of the environment of a child. That's very similar to the change process.

W.1. How are we doing?

X "Very Well."

L What happened in that group at this point was that having filled up several sheets, the rest of us have been sitting really completely engaged in this experience, gathered around the sheets and began to ask ourselves what were the underlying themes or elements that could give us the clue to the design of the kind of change settings in people who were normally regarded as marginal, and treated as marginal, like you, frequently like women, could change settings in which they could both see themselves and be seen at the centre. The centre, in this case, means not the traditional centre-periphery view of the centre, but the centre of the practise of change; the centre from which people can break out of the position that they're in, rather in the way that these two diagrams display that. We gathered and began to discuss that, drawing from more data than this in the actual case, but drawing from that an expression of a group who were discussing women. We would rather like to invite you at this point, rather than us, to demonstrate it yourselves in any discussion you might have in this

presentation. Are there elements of change settings which we might be able to identify where this kind of process, which we believe is a fundamental one for initiating this sort of paradigm shift, takes place. So we invite you to join with us on that.

<div align="center">*******************</div>

(These sets of reports show clearly that there had been real development of ideas over the life of the groups. They also show that there has been cross-fertilisation between groups during the plenaries and the data presented by various speakers. There is perhaps least evidence of this in the Processes and Method group although they did draw heavily on the paper given by one of their members. But the conference had worked and learnt, and some substantive issues were addressed.)

Chapter 3. The Battle for Hearts and Minds at Orillia: An Analysis of the Process

This chapter is essentially the same story as that found in the content but told at a level which is too often neglected (Shambaugh, 1985). In our searches for understanding of the why's of human behaviour we tend to ignore, indeed even despise the fact that we are all perfectly aware of the undercurrents or 'second level messages' of our transactions; that we are highly sensitive to and listen intently to, the 'music of the group'. The problem for most of us lies in the fact that while we are aware of and reactive to this music, we are rarely conscious of doing so i.e. aware of our awareness, as we have been educated to depreciate the power of these perceptuo-emotional forces and to deny their existence. And yet there is little difficulty in recognising them once this level of behaviour is made conscious. These behaviours are not just 'emotional': they are as strictly cognitive as are our most intellectual knowledge and interact with that to produce the content of our conversations and work. Content and process can be separated only by artifice. To an extent I am doing that here but for a reason.

By far the most insightful framework for attempting to analyse events at this level is, to my mind, that perceived and developed by Bion and it is that framework which provides the foundation for this story. My hope in telling the story of Orillia in these terms is that we may all become a little more sensitive to and respectful of human potential in this sense. More often than not the music of the group explains outcomes over and above those obtained by more conventional analyses of the type to which we often turn, e.g. 'it had been a long day', to explain an instance of dependency or the 'extreme heat was making people irritable', to explain an outburst of the dynamic of fight/flight. Doubtless these factors impinge on individual behaviour but we are usually more purposeful, as a collective, than we credit. We do not exercise or demonstrate our unspoken assumptions about the work and the direction of the group unless there is a purpose to be gained. And we would not do it at all if we were not cognizant of the fact that such behaviour would be understood.

For people with the sort of intentions expressed at Orillia (see Expectations) understanding and managing these dynamics would appear to be a high priority. Deliberately intervening in the lives of other humans with the often prestigious sanction of the title of 'social scientist' demands something other than naïve good intentions. Learning about the music of the group is both a conceptual and practical task and requires the same attention as does learning about any other part of our complex lives. Without it, we see the 'barefoot social scientist' in its negative aspect. The group assumptions inhibit work and in part contributed to the plea from the 'Democrats of 203' that we may cease these endless repetitive debates by doing a little homework. An historical context and a little quiet study would certainly help but the now traditional debates in this field also serve the purpose of obstructing creative problem solving and puzzling.

I attempt to show here that the events at Orillia unfolded in a coherent fashion and that the record is replete with undisguised statements of purpose. It is a story about the group assumption of fight/flight at many levels. Some of these will become obvious below and while the record shows that much constructive work was achieved, that is, the dynamic was not operative for the whole of the time, it often continued to achieve its purpose by subjugating a small group work culture. It was thus also a battle between the forces for creative work and those for fight/flight at many levels. I have no doubt that ultimately this group assumption won the day at Orillia and perhaps this report should be sub-titled 'The Battle for Orillia'. Nor am I alone in this conclusion. It was put clearly on the final Friday

morning. "It's also a problem of breaking out in this conference, that we break out against the tradition established by the gurus, or it's a breaking out against their professors." There appeared little doubt in the mind of this group that they had done this successfully and it is of course no simple coincidence that this was the same group which suffered most from the group assumptions. That, together with the refusal of the total conference to produce a 'conference report', the final playing out of the dynamic in its flight form, indicates that they were correct in their judgement. The conference had been sufficiently infected with the fight/flight virus to effect a denial of responsibility for the total outcome. But I anticipate.

Let us first be clear about the phenomena to which I refer.

The Group Assumptions

Bion postulated that in any group it was possible to discern three *Basic Group Assumptions*, quite separate from the healthy, well functioning work (W) group, what we later elaborated and discussed as the Creative Working Mode. These he labelled dependency, flight/fight and pairing. All three he saw as modes which preserve the group, maintaining its identity.

Basic Assumptions of:

Dependency	Fight/flight	Pairing
←	**Learning** ——————————	→
Low		High

Figure: Relation between Learning and Group Emotional Assumptions

The basic assumption of dependency (BaD) is that there is somewhere a great and powerful being (leader) who exists to ensure that no untoward events will follow the irresponsibilities of individuals; to provide security. But in the dependent mode while the group is asking for this leader, cum teacher, cum expert, they show little inclination to learn from the leader. They act as is his/her knowledge of whatever it is that they need to know is good enough. They do not have to learn, it is only a question of letting the words flow and having faith.

The basic assumption of fight/flight (BaF) is that the leader is inimical to the preservation of the group and must be either killed in battle or seen not to exist. The subject matter or task must be ignored while the concern is with winning or losing. This basic assumption lends itself to health and learning more easily than dependency as there is at least, an active orientation, even though the group is not capable of proceeding with the task. The fight aspect of this dynamic is usually easier to recognise than flight when it is predominant. Full scale flight is quite easily separable from dependency however by the different emotional expression in the two. Even in extended periods of flight. People will feel stirred up, with adrenalin flowing as in the prelude for a battle. These periods are usually described as 'chaotic.' None of this is evident in the dependent group.

The third basic assumptions Bion called 'pairing' as he saw it arising from the group

allowing two of its members to indulge in animated conversation towards the purpose of building a sexual relationship, and through the excitement generated by this process, allowing them to assume leadership of the group. We have had cause to query this reasoning as we often observe pairing as a prelude to the creative working mode, a more accurate term for the W group, for the group as a whole, not an inhibiting 'group emotional' mode. Bion noted that in the pairing group there is a most unusual tolerance for people to get on with their discussions, the relation has bonds that have a libidinous character and the group is cemented with 'messianic hope' as if it contained an unborn genius (Bion, 1959, p 176 and 166). He clearly suspected that psychotic anxieties of an oedipal type may be triggered off in the pairing state.

But our culture today is far less anxious about the sexuality of its members and the conditions under which sexual bonding develops and is expressed. And while this phenomenon may contain overtones of sexual interest it may also express simple innate human bonding as a necessary characteristic of our nature as a group or social beings. We believe, now, that the most important features of the pairing state may coincide with the realisation of the four universal tacit assumptions that underline human, face-to-face interaction (Asch, 1952).

However, pairing can on occasions function as a group assumption rather than creative learning when it reflects collusion for the *sub*-group gain (Emery M, 1982, p 195). It can be observed when sub-groups have been allowed to exist for too long, have erected fairly impermeable boundaries and grown strong internal coherence and structure.

These dynamics arise from the nature of the structural relations that are designed in or develop within a social event, be it a small group or a large conference. For Bion the key structural dimension was the relation between the leader and the rest of the group but we know today that such leadership may take many forms and, as above, that a sub-group may aspire to leadership in these terms. The relationship between social structures and the group assumptions is a very simple one whereby the collective assumptions or 'hatred of learning' reflects our inability to fully function within asymmetric relationships. Intellectual activity of a higher order is possible only in a group free of this inhibition (Emery M, as above, p 174 & 227).

This brief summary of Bion's work plus some of those observations which have been made in much larger scale events may suffice as introduction to this analysis. There is little doubt about the reality of these phenomena, or their power, the more so as they are not fashionable at the moment and therefore almost entirely operate only at the level of awareness rather than consciousness. Some of this will be illustrated below.

The Origins of the Battle

There were I believe good reasons for the pattern of events that occurred at Orillia. First and foremost, the design of the conference was almost guaranteed to produce some mixture of the group assumptions rather than a work group culture. The design group clearly desired a 'working' conference but also just as clearly did not have the courage of its convictions. There was insufficient faith in 30 odd 'high flyers' to creatively construct work for themselves with the space provided by the minimal critical specifications without stimulation artificially administered. Euphemistically called 'punctuation points' and despite admonitions not to see what these as academic papers followed by responses, the scene unfolded quite predictably. Names have little power to overcome the effect of distancing one person from the rest, particularly when those so distanced enjoy above average status and

prestige in the field and are noted for intellectual specialisms. An asymmetric structure was therefore created on night one and its automatic effects were inevitably to be at odds with the intention of the design group. In brief, they had mixed their design principles. Incidentally, for those on the Wednesday night of the explicit fight, who disputed that one cannot mix design principles without dire consequences, the evidence was being played out before their eyes.

The obvious goodwill and intentions of the participants to work hard when given the opportunity probably, in retrospect, only accentuated the conflict of principles. It did finally become obvious to many that the papers were to be an intrusion rather than a useful stimulus and to none more so than to Roger Schwass who had to deliver his at 2.00 pm on the Wednesday.

> "I have had very mixed feelings about intruding on a process which I think is going exceptionally well. To have a speaker in the middle of it seems to me at least, the wrong thing to do. But if it is in wisdom of the organisers that there should be a punctuation mark here, an asterisk perhaps, or possibly a comma, I'll have to do it."

Following the two papers delivered here was a hastily called brief management meeting at which it was decided to have no more papers presented. It was not a question of quality. It was firstly expressed as 'now we have a choice of what sort of conference we want' but it was then quickly realised that in fact, there was no choice – a continuity of process in 'working mode' was the *only* option. Unfortunately, while that was on the surface the only choice, it was far too late for it to be reality at the dynamic level. The predominant assumption of fight/flight had to be brought into the open and following that expose it became clear that any management decision would be the wrong one. Early Thursday morning there was a call for the paper presentations to be resumed, which happened. This episode itself (text below) full of aggression even after the bloodletting of the night before, was the final clue that *nobody* was in control of the process; even those of us who were conscious of the dynamic were in its grip and either unwilling or powerless to break it. So it went. Lesson number one is 'don't mix your design principles'. Lesson number two would have to be that nobody is safe and prevention is easier than cure.

Flippancy aside, there is a real question as to why the dynamic which came to pervade and capture us so completely at times was that of fight/flight and not that of dependency. The design itself could have led to either. The answer lies in the participant mix and in the content of the papers given by Fred and Gareth. Indeed, it may also be in part a result of the fact that the opening papers were given by those two individuals.

Participants appear to have been chosen on two criteria, their closeness to Eric Trist and the excellence of their work in various areas. The latter alone would guarantee that few would be in any real sense vulnerable to dependency. These are the people who create it, either by their formal positions of authority or personal presence: they do not succumb to it. In meetings of peers therefore where the structure is such as to preclude a genuine working mode their choices are virtually limited to pairing or fight/flight.

This is not to say that there were *no* instances of dependency. There was at least one which exerted a powerful impact on the conference as a whole but it occurred in microcosm and was the result of another dimension of the participant mix. The criteria by which the participants were selected did not include one which intimated that candidates should have at

least working knowledge of the body of theory and practice of this Lewinian-based action research branch of social science. Consequently there were participants who, in some cases were not even aware that such a body of knowledge existed, let alone were 'au fait' with its basic concepts, values and theoretical infrastructure. Because dependency was not an acceptable assumption within the group as a whole, there was little opportunity for these people to move into a student mode as happened at the Search Conference Flocking (1985). There was little choice for them but to become unwitting victims of the larger game, being pushed hither and thither by the group emotional forces. If the choice is simply between one set of opinions and another, then of course one chooses what one feels most comfortable with.

Similarly, I observed instances of pairing, many in the best sense of the phenomenon. Others could I believe be accounted for by sub-group collusion but were again in the service of the wider interest which was that of winning the battle of the hearts and minds at Orillia.

Now we come to the critical content of the formative period. First of all, there had been a preliminary meeting between Fred and Gareth to discuss their roles. It was characterised by friendly informality, warmth, commonality and a desire on both parts to make the conference as constructive a working group as possible. As Gareth could not be present to hear Fred's paper, Fred gave him his nine pages of notes. Knowing Fred and being aware of the significance he attached to this conference, I know that his presentation on Tuesday night was one of studied thoughtfulness and care. He was highly aware if the dangers which such a presentation could provoke, but was not on the other hand prepared to sacrifice the grain gleaned from so many difficult harvests over so many difficult years. At the final design and management meetings of the Sunday night before the conference he stated that he did not want to talk to the paper or defend it on the Wednesday morning as that would put pressure on the conference and it was only to be a personal view.

The paper was very much an historical summary of learnings boiled down to the essentials for practical work and direction, plus a preview of the current leading edge of related research in contextualism, perception and linguistics. That it was a powerful presentation is indisputable and that he was aware of the possible impact of his speech is illuminated by his final remarks: "Gareth coming from a generation which is going to have to work on the next agenda will probably show you a completely different way tomorrow." Did he know what was to come? "No. The challenge was more direct than I expected, but from reading his stuff I knew it was lurking about."

It was particularly unfortunate that Fred and Gareth were the opening batsmen; Fred has virtually made the field after its early stages in Lewin, Trist and Bamforth, etc. while Gareth is one of the Canadian promises for the future. Putting up two such respected persons could have been profoundly creative – BUT THEY DISAGREED

Nor did they disagree agree only about the peripherals; in his first point Gareth invaded the heartland of Open Systems Thinking to assert (without further argument or any evidence) that it had "begun to create the disservice to the way in which we think about the problems around us", and hence worsened the problem between people and their physical environment. He continued by emphasising that we can change the world only by changing ourselves. As a response to a man who has demonstrated repeatedly that people change only when the hard realities of the organisational structures within which they are embedded change, this could be construed in only one way. Similarly, in response to the empirically based school of ecological perception with its radical implications for restructuring education and incidentally our perspectives on our environment, Gareth denied the concepts of direct perception and naïve realism. "I don't like the word perception…it gives too much credence to the external

world 'as is'…I always believe…our understandings of the world are all metaphorical,…all to be interpreted". Finally he threw cold water on the effectiveness of social sciences and 'to add insult to injury' endorsed "the idea of trying to take social science into an action mode" as a high priority – as if it never happened! As if Trist and Emery had no history!.

Gareth underlined the word 'provocative' when introducing his 'provocative probes' but I suspect he was not conscious of just HOW provocative he had been. Open season had been declared on the old leaders of the tribe, the foundations of the practical social sciences and its newest developments. Was he aware that a bush Aussie of many campaigns would come out to such a direct and extreme challenge mobilising every available resource? To defend himself and some of the achievements that had been made in the Tavistock tradition despite academic envy, cynicism and hostility? It could not be otherwise.

But more than this was the fact simply that the challenge had happened. The 'younger generation' had made its move and another element of the dynamic was set. From then on the challenge would have to be maintained in all sorts of ways, not least in the area of content. One comment made immediately after Gareth's presentation, namely, "Most helpful. It focuses a lot of thinking that was way up there last night" was a clue that one dimension of this at least would be anti-conceptual if not profoundly anti-intellectual.

So ended the formative period with the setting up of two competing forces – one towards creative work and the other impelling us into a maelstrom of powerful human affects.

Work Begins

The beginning of the conference proper in my terms was introduced by the finalisation of group work on the agendas for society and social sciences and the first plenary following the formative period began at 11.15 Wednesday morning. It was clear from these reports that each of the groups while employing different approaches to the task had delved deeply and concernedly into both the problems we face as people and those dilemmas and questions we confront as social actors or inventors.

There were only a few signs that all was not completely well. Certainly the most dramatic was the response of group 2 to their own good work. "So what? Many groups like this have met and worked before". The expression 'so what?' is the absolute essence of fight/flight, simultaneously rebutting and denying. In this case it was directed at themselves and by implication to the conference as a whole. It was if anything more powerful expression in its substance and tone of delivery than had been Gareth's more measured abjuration of the worth of the meeting. If the putative new leader didn't consider the venture of much value then it wasn't worth the effort. In this context it is probably also worth noting that Gareth received the lion's share of the direct references in these reports.

There was another revealing item in the report of group 3 relating to Fred's 'organisational design and change principles'. "That's what I think where we're most uncertain." On the work sheets of this group which were not presented we find a question – "Does design principle 2 exist in practice?". That such a question could be asked within such an assembly demonstrated that some people were under the impression that Fred had been talking about theory or speculation. In which case of course, had he been, Gareth's speculations could have been equally valid. Later that day I was treated to the view that the Search Conference is an old paradigm or paradigm 1 process (not on tape record.) Such a fundamental lack of understanding of the key word and concepts in the language of the conference could only fuel the fires which had already been lit.

However, the conference was clearly that of the opinion that the groups had done excellent promising work and as there were no questions following the reports Max asked where we wanted to go from there.

The following sequence illustrates a feature of this conference and of working conferences in general, i.e. that much of the progress of both constructive work and the group assumptions is conveyed by conversation which is actually decision-making leading to moves which often appear so quickly and 'out of the blue' as to be mysterious. This is, I believe, a classic example of these phenomena.

In this episode and those below I use the letters for speakers other than those who need to be identified for reasons of the following the dynamic. Editing has been minimal. I have underlined the critical statements.

While the groups had worked creatively, this conversation illustrates that it was not their only or major preoccupation. This is a debate as to whether or not the conflict between Gareth and Fred, and therefore within the collective, should be ignored or acknowledged. Participants were aware, although not necessarily conscious, that there was a choice between further work and letting fight/flight take over.

A   "Where do we want to go from here?"

B   "It seems to me that *it's a critical point for us* to see whether we have something we can collectively take forward. In processes like this, particularly for those of us who are used to them, we spin wheels a lot to begin with; we have to. We have to share languages and ideas and see to what extent the wheels are spinning in the same direction, in the same context. *By now we ought to know that*. We could go on spinning the wheels but this is the moment at which we must not. I feel quite confident in my group that we could pick the next step from that but I don't know if others do. *And if we openly discuss it here, there may be such a loud noise that it will drown out the little nuggets of consensus coming together in the groups*."

C   "One of the *interesting* things about that model is *that we all tend to agree. I haven't heard anybody say you're wrong about any of the issues including that action research has a future. Maybe I'm wrong, but I read a massive amount of consensus with no dialect emerging*."

B   "*If it's going to happen, it can happen at the next step*, it takes this long to feel out the level of that agreement and the extent to which you can risk disagreeing and confronting. This is why *it is so important to discuss conflict. We tend to suppress it in our discussion when we know that the issues are ridden with disagreement and conflict*."

D   "I think that all this discussion about the social sciences is often narcissistic. You can do it endlessly but at the same time I am interested in what you are all effectively doing. I don't see myself as a social scientist in the sense of constructing scenarios, although I do think about them, but *I am interested in the action*. And I'm not interested in a long discussion of what I should be doing. I want to know if people are effectively moving systems but *I don't want abstract statements. I'm disagreeing* with one part of that trilogy there which is the role of social sciences. *I don't feel comfortable discussing that in abstract terms*."

A   "All three of the groups put action right up there."

B began by expressing concern that if we were explicit about the conflict that we should all know about by now we might lose all possibility of further work as a conference. But he left open the possibility that small groups could do work within a situation of inter-group

conflict. This was either prophetic and/or purposeful. C was expressing cynicism about the group reports. "Maybe I'm wrong" but he clearly perceived that there was a cover up in progress. And remember that there was no questioning of any report by another group. There had been collusion to keep the peace, for the time at least. B replied, coming closer to the real content of the discussion, that he thought it was too early to take the fight directly, but yes, we were suppressing it.

Then D made a move to model that which we wanted to see happen immediately, namely, a bit of explicit fight action. He added that he didn't feel comfortable with the disguised nature of the debate and saw himself as a spectator rather than a participant in a gladiatorial process. This intervention was itself a classic of the total fight/flight pattern. He correctly perceived the group assumption, initiated an instance of it by challenging the speakers so far, asked that the larger issues relating to the nature and leadership of our social science be openly fought about and simultaneously divorced himself from them and the outcome of the fight. He was not going to follow the leadership of whichever party was victorious in the ring. Predictably, he received a fighting answer from A – 'You're wrong!'

We now observe a highly complex manoeuvre by Fred which served to maintain the status quo while providing an opportunity to fight back. Again it was D who provided the opening after his rebuttal by A.

D   "My two main interests are personal liberation and changing organisational metaphors. *I want to work with others with the same interests*."

Fred "Did you get those items up on the agenda in your group?"

D   "Yes."

Fred "Is there anyone who hasn't got their personal agenda up there? If you haven't, then get them up. We need now a small group to pull out the common items across these reports. There are too many there to be manageable but *there are clear overlaps* (i.e. opportunities for work across the battle lines), use of metaphor, organisational change etc. So why not get a sub-group to pull those together while we concentrate *on some other issue*." (the fight)

There were various suggestions as to how the items could be congregated and how the group be constituted. There were calls for *action and decisions now*, (unequivocal, direct action) *rather than endless debate* about the issues.

D   "I can't see four people walking out of here and us agreeing with them when they come back."

Fred "We're only asking them to collate what is up there. We'll decide what to do with it."

E "there are various ways to cut through it."

F   "We can *compromise* a bit by having eight people, two from each group."

Fred "The rest of us will obviously need to do something useful, not just go to the pub. If we're going to treat metaphors seriously then I recommended last night that if we are going to move to the new paradigms of thought then we have to distinguish between what are rich, useful metaphors and what are empty metaphors, what are living metaphors and what are dead metaphors. Whose metaphors have been forced upon us? (who is in control here?) So let the rest of us get into an international tangle about the metaphors while the small group does the real work."

D began with a further but very explicit complication – personal liberation or

empowerment had been emphasised by Fred, changing organisational metaphors by Gareth. D wanted to work with both but at the same time take sides. Fred immediately exploited the complexity, intimating that the groups may have discriminated against some people's interests and thereby asserting his own leadership in terms of justice and moving forward. The solution or resolution he offered was an extremely creative one as it happened, but at the same time as it separated into two rooms the processes of creative work and fight/flight, it also preserved the existence of both. His suggestion also reflected D's choices, 'use of metaphor' and 'organisational change'; rearranging them and thereby compounding the complexity and the dynamic. Both the desires for 'work' and a 'fight' were manifest in the in the ensuing babble of discussion but it was all over amazingly quickly. D returned to predicting only a fight from the suggested procedure of selecting a task force but the splitting off of the two primary components had already been accepted.

In satisfying both elements of the dynamic pattern, Fred had effected a major coup on, at least, two levels. He had reinstated himself as the major force in the process and had now, with the approval of the conference invaded as battle site, Gareth's heartland, the metaphor. Note clearly hear Fred's words: 'let the rest of us get into an international tangle about metaphors while the small group does the real work." He wanted the fight isolated and 'the enemy destroyed' before it contaminated the whole and lowered the probability that he saw as so necessary for revitalisation and steps forward in seven league boots.

It happened that way. Like magic, each group nominated its two members onto the task force which worked like a dream. In one of the smoothest, most creative group processes I have ever witnessed, this group of eight rapidly extracted the core of the multiple agendas previously presented without even a hint of 'the darker side' of the conference. There was nothing of it in either the content or the process. On the other hand, 'the rest' did enjoy the spectator sport that they had been promised. Given the other options, this was probably the best we could do but to my mind at least. This barely optimal compromise of separation was a tragedy compared with the potential within the whole group; that which was shown by this task force.

There is little to be said about the process employed by the task force once it has been stated that it worked creatively. The task was taken seriously and addressed directly. All members of the group co-operated in discussing various links and relationships and in checking meanings and interpretations with each other. Different formulations and tracks through were tried and discarded until it became clear that here was one that encapsulated the core of the reports. It was a *group* product.

In reporting their solution, the task force began "We've decided you have to be selective, pick your spots and decide where you're going to spend your time." The reporter then told an excellent joke about picking your spots which was well appreciated and served to further alert the others to the fact that the task force had continued in the genuine working mode with co-operation and positive affect. The diagram was then explained.

Because the experience had been so satisfying and the product so valued by the group as a whole here had been some disquiet that the rest of the conference may move back in and immediately restore the fight/flight assumption and in the process, destroy or dismantle this creative synthesis. The point was made to Max who relayed and emphasised it to the metaphor group.

The final item of the report reiterated this concern. "The next thing we decided was that we probably shouldn't give you the opportunity to discuss this. So we're just going to say its lunch time and you can talk about it over lunch." This tactic worked as there was only one

question and that for clarification. "Which lists were you working off; the social issues or the issues for social science?" "We worked mainly from the social science lists seeing the social issues as the context for all of this." Then there were calls of "lunch time!" "Back at 2.00 pm for Roger's paper."

One strand of the pattern had been experienced, found satisfactory and this had been communicated to the conference as a whole. It was noted in Roger's introduction as discussed above. We were in with a real chance of a powerful and creative conference outcome.

Skirmishing around the Metaphors

Now we must return to the other theme which had been playing in the room across the corridor. Before I turn to it in detail let me make two points. First, the tape recording is of very poor quality for reasons, I suspect, of bad siting. Second, for those who are particularly interested in the subject of metaphor I have included it in the appendices as it was not mainstream content for the workings of the conference. Its significance here lies in the influence it exerted on the subsequent process of the conference, but it is too long to be used in this chapter in toto.

I have described it above as a spectator sport and that is entirely accurate. At the superficial level it was an opportunity to discuss a matter of some interest to social science, particularly in this context, as it had been raised as an agenda item by both Fred and Gareth. But at the dynamic level it functioned to reinstate the structure of the first design principle and within this served as the arena for the battle for leadership.

As there were nine people in the task force room there must have been roughly twenty six in the metaphor session. Only eleven of these contributed to the discussion. The time was distributed as follows:

Gareth and Fred	21.4% each
Eric	18.1%
Two Supporting Players	15.5% and 10.3% respectively
Others	13.3%

Gareth and Fred occupied 43% of the discussion and together with Eric accounted for 61%. Moreover, these main characters made such longer speeches and one gains from the tape, the distinct impression that the role played by the minor players was very much that of sustaining and encouraging the debate with questions to be picked up by the contenders. The event was clearly a stage which permitted a performance to be judged by the audience. But rather than the single performer events built into the conference, the design principle had been modified to exploit and make explicit the ruling group assumption.

Fred exploited the advantage gained in the immediately preceding session and opened the play with "We have to make a distinction between a rich metaphor and an empty metaphor. And just as likely we'll have to get round to questions like what's a dead metaphor." It can be read as a warning to be careful about the sorts of metaphors to be used in this discussion. Undeterred, Eric almost immediately weighed in to support Gareth's endorsement of the

holographic metaphor as an extremely useful one. Gareth began by commending the points made by both Fred and Eric and proceeded to elaborate on the attractions of the hologram in terms of its relevance to the design principles. It appears as an attempt to build bridges and that he was aware of the growing chasm is shown by his statement: "If I put the cat back among the pigeons, I'd say that it gives a hell of a lot of power to some of the things that you've been trying to do Fred." Fred replied "You're only feeding pigeons to the cat that way." It was a retort that left no doubt that uneasy compromises were unacceptable while there were substantive conflicts.

Roughly the first half of the time was used in debating the value, advantages and disadvantages of this particular metaphor, Fred arguing against and Gareth for its value. It will leave it to the reader of the transcript to see how direct an interchange this was. Finally the theme was changed by introduction of the two other metaphors, that of the sailor and another of the theatre, and this latter was I believe to have a further significant effect on the conference process, in fact, later that day. From then, the discussion ranged more widely and it would appear that the focus moved somewhat to a debate between Fred and Eric on language and the relative values of utterance and text. It is a pity that much of this is indistinct.

So ended the battle of the metaphors. All in all it would have to be judged a draw. Both sides argued strongly. A clear cut victory or capitulation may have been more constructive for the conference as a whole though. The group assumption was left unchanged to continue into the next phase.

Before we leave this episode we should note the flip chart graffiti relating to this session.

"A pregnant metaphor is a living metaphor

Does a rotten metaphor smell?

Is a dead end a dead metaphor?

What is a meta for?"

Does this express some dissatisfaction on the part of the members of the audience? Was the session a pregnant or dead end? What was its purpose? At the very least this small contribution indicates that there was no lack of creativity within the participants. This we witnessed many times in the ensuing period but it is by no means certain that it was always put to the purposes in the best interests of the community as a whole.

Back to Work

Both presentations after lunch (Roger Schwass and Francisco Sagasti) were powerful incentives to work. Roger's brought a few basic facts about the world's economic and political situation home to us all, projected the curves to their ultimate crises if there was no intervention or change in the system principle, described an extensive series of Search Conferences at the Canadian national level, and made a plea that we should do more, particularly by way of further developing this effective method. Francisco gave a review of what is possible in circumstances more difficult than most of those in the Western democracies ever have to confront. Listening to what had already been achieved by these

two I asked myself "What could we not achieve with the adequate numbers of such dedicated, well educated action- researchers?" However, it is noteworthy that these two papers received little attention. The flight was not only anti-conceptual but also anti-effective practice and method.

Following these presentations the conference had to decide whether to proceed along the lines suggested by the task force, and if so, how groups were to be formed. There was further clarification of the mode emphasising that clusters were not discrete or mutually exclusive of content; on the contrary, the large degree of commonality or overlap was seen as advantageous if the labels chosen were treated as starting points for discussion which would ultimately concern increasing empowerment. It was suggested that democracy would better be called governance which had the additional advantage of clearer separation from 'organisation'.

"Would not empowerment get lost just being part of each cluster?" "Each group was to come back with their report which would include some explanation of how the work they had done would contribute to empowerment." This was satisfactory. Several issues relating to group size were also explored but self-selection finally won the day which resulted in two groups working on democracy with one each dealing with organisation and 'processes and methods'. Group work would begin after a short break with an interim plenary after dinner.

Given the possibilities inherent in the processes so far, this decision-making period was a victory for the work culture. The task-force really had no difficulty in either justifying its integrative model or of selling it as the way to proceed. All questioning was pragmatic in the sense of enabling participants to most appropriately settle themselves into an area of personal interest while securing coherence across the groups – as the model itself prescribed. And it was quick by large group standards of decision-making – only eleven minutes including a generous measure of good humour and wit. There was then to be a break with self-selected work groups resuming at 4.30 pm.

In that interval I took the opportunity to make sure that I had records of all flip charts so far produced and during this process encountered quite a number of people who were not resting but wandering about, clearly still involved in work. Some comments I recorded at the time: "Where is everybody?" "I thought we were to start at 4.00 pm" "This is ridiculous. A break of an hour and a quarter?" "Well at least you're working; there's somebody working around here." Naturally of course, I didn't meet those who were enjoying the break in proceedings but there were at least indications that some people wanted to get on with it for whatever reason. Given the excellent progress made so far; the motivating quality of the two lunch-time papers, the willingness of the management committee to cancel all further up-front paper presentations, the ease and speed with which the decision to accept the task-force model had been made, and the obvious energy in reserve for work, the groups could have moved into the working mode with great facility. But in two of the groups the fight/flight re-emerged with a crisis and flight in one and a fight in the other.

Regrouping for a Major Offensive

As the groups had self-selected, the groupings were obviously of interest. The Processes and Methods group was balanced on sex but consisted entirely of North American born and the majority could be described as the 'younger generation', most with direct connection to York University. The Democracy group in Room 207 consisted of six males, each from a different country of origin and included three of the tribal elders. The other Democracy group and the Organisation group were reasonably balanced on most dimensions. It appears

as if in two of the groups, some had selected on criteria other than sheer interest in the area.

Remember also that there had been a management committee decision to cancel the paper presentations and this decision had to be relayed to the Wednesday night speaker. This was done immediately and well I believe, but it was to have consequences for the Processes and Methods group. The speaker that night was one of those recruited to the conference from an area totally outside the tradition which the conference represented. It had all been new and must have been difficult although she had made constructive contributions. Given that there must have been some degree of insecurity present, certainly if she was at all sensitive to the group assumptions, having *her* paper cancelled could only have added to it. She joined the Processes and Methods group together with the two women who explained the management decision to her. But as it was explained to me: "Within the first fifteen seconds we had an 'insider-outsider' problem." I observed the group for quite a period immediately after this formative event and there was no doubt that the woman was distressed. This was later denied by another female member of the group although subsequently the woman herself was happy to discuss it.

The group moved quickly to care for her and she recovered quickly, but during this most appropriate and compassionate process other factors intervened. To help her, the group had gently invited her to relate her experiences working with her students as an informal change agent. Others began swapping experiences and there was clearly a point at which the group realised it had found a way of enjoying themselves immensely and evading work. They had discovered the T-group. I waited until I was sure that the personal crisis was over and then moved to see if the group could be gotten back to work. Rather than adopt the group's mode of personal experience I intervened by discussing the promise of experiences with parallel Search Conferences; i.e. I jumped to the conceptual level although maintaining the experiential component. These new developments could have been expected to interest a group called Processes and Methods but the response (lack of response) was a convincing demonstration that flight was well established. For whatever reasons of group composition, my probable status as a member of the 'older generation' and my name, my intervention caused only a slight ripple of shock and complete dismissal. The group continued to entrench itself further in its chosen mode.

In conversations much later that night it was admitted that the group had in no sense attempted to work on their part of the agenda but that it had been a very satisfying experience. I was asked "did you do that on purpose?" i.e. cut across the group process, to which the answer was of course "yes, in order to attempt to preserve the implicit contractual relationship between the group and the conference as a whole" or words to that effect. My only effect on the group assumption however, was to possibly strengthen it.

At the presentation on the Thursday a spokesperson for this group began:

A   "We started very much yesterday afternoon with a *sense of frustration, alienation and powerlessness*. We were also dealing with rounds of *abstractions* which allowed us to distance ourselves personally from any of the issues we were talking about. We then started, as a way of dealing with that, by telling stories about our own personal experiences, as human beings and as change agents in situations we had worked in. We spent quite a lot of time doing that and out of that we started feeling comfortable with ourselves and each other. We were legitimating and making authentic our own experiences and we began to feel some *sense of power* and sense of connectedness to the issues we were dealing with and we began from that to pull out themes and issues, to pull out some processes and to move onto the next stage which is to make an *actual* presentation to you."

B   "Q and I are going to talk a little about where we ended up although it is not complete. *We were enjoying our discussion and getting something personal out of it but when it came to present we were in a crisis about 'what are we going to say?', 'what are we going to do?'*"

This sequence is quite revealing. Why should this group have come into existence with a sense of frustration, alienation and powerlessness when others noted that so much good involving work had been going on? Could it be that it had not gone in the direction they wished to see, notably a deposition of the current leadership? Criticism of 'abstractions' is very much in the framework of the tradition. Clearly a way of further invalidating it is by ignoring it and becoming totally a-conceptual. The T-group is the perfect vehicle for achieving this. It seems to have worked well in this case by legitimating their experience (in this conference) and thereby inducing a sense of power to help effect a victorious outcome.

I have emphasised 'actual' as it is an admission that the non-verbal of the Wednesday was not a presentation. It did however, if I may pun, speak a thousand words, at the last possible moment they succumbed in some degree to the pressure exerted by the work culture. The extent of this excursion into work and the next was however, insufficient to render their final report acceptable to all those present and this alone was enough to ensure that the conference would fail to endorse a unitary report. To see this more clearly we need to move chronologically and therefore we return to it below.

In summary of this section: the Processes and Methods group suffered an unfortunate start but could have recovered into a genuine working mode if there had not been good reason to exploit this beginning for other purposes. There are far too many 'coincidences' in this story for the central purpose to be other than continuing the fight initiated earlier in the day.

Concomitantly, another group was embarking on a doubtful track, different in form and process and resulting in the active part of the same dynamic. The all male democracy group in 207 began with an alternating flow of work and dependency. (A brief part of this process was recorded). Fred had asserted his authority by 'suggesting' that what they were to discuss wasn't democracy but governance, and as it was related the next day, 'suggestion' was 'too weak a word for it'. Although there were three tribal elders in this group it was to Fred that the questions were addressed and in part it became a 'teacher-student' phenomenon.

As I have discussed above, there was very little change in this conference for any sustained assumption of dependency but as there were definitely breaks in the work-flow for the exercise of a group assumption it was probably inevitable that it should flick back into that of the prevailing one. The break in this group came over the widespread possibility and/or desirability or necessity for systematic participative democracy as opposed to representative at the higher levels of formal governance. The two combatants were predictably Fred and another outstanding member of the 'younger generation', Francisco Sagasti. In all senses, geographic, economic, social and political, there were good rational reasons why a Peruvian and an Australian should disagree on this issue but the fight broke out just before the plenary and these two carried it in where it continued its course through rapidly changing channels of content.

There was clearly more to it than rational differences of opinion. In his presentation earlier that day Francisco had objected to Fred's juxtaposition of Western civilisation as the 'goody' and the rest as the 'baddies' and argued for an 'interpenetration' of the two. This could be interpreted as a Third World defensive reaction to the arrogance of the oppressor but as Fred was talking at the level of design principles it was also a challenge to this level of analysis. It is also interesting that while Francisco clearly intended a testimonial to Eric, he

made no mention of Gareth's paper. He had his own challenge to make and had witnessed the skirmish about the metaphor, keeping entirely out of range. His strategy was more that of the 'indirect approach' or "guerrilla warfare within the government". Immediately following this criticism of Fred's analysis he conceded that "it was the western mode of knowledge generation that became the dominant one throughout the world" which is a real backhander because while it established his commonality with Fred's thinking, it was also a condemnation of the western influence. He took his challenge at a highly sophisticated conceptual and strategic level, and despite some attempts at peace-making in the early hours of Thursday morning, there was no resolution in this event. Fred's continued conceptual dominance and obduracy rankled with Francisco as is shown by his asides in the final report of Friday morning. "Allied to this was the breakdown of the paradigm and to this Fred added a few qualifications, *useful at least to him*, in terms of breaking down the dominant hierarchy, asymmetric dependence, *and for him*, the new paradigm of symmetric dependence. *We were struggling*."

It was though, a mixed conclusion as he also said in this report "I realised last night that what Fred had been doing in providing us with these catch phrases we are using is taking us back to ideas… as preparing ourselves, getting ready to move." The group had done sufficient creative and co-operative work to stave off the total dominance of the fight/flight assumption and as Francisco stated towards the end of the Wednesday night plenary, the only valid learning for him at this conference was at the personal level, not in terms of product or process. "We must acknowledge all that we have learnt from those who preceded us but we must also *realise their limitations*. We are now going beyond what we have learnt from them… That is a process of *personal learning, asserting our place*. So I don't feel a sense of disappointment but one of *reassertion*." Francisco clearly knows the rules of survival and was determined to live and work well for another day in order to re-challenge in the future.

Just in case the reader is by now so excited by the dynamism and drama of this unfolding event, I must add that the other two groups appeared to suffer little by way of teething problems. I visited the Organisation Group and found it coping with the early stages of coherent group formation. The Democrats of 203 encountered few serious problems as far as I was able to gather from conversations later that night and certainly had not anticipated the intensity of what was in store for the plenary session which began at 9.20 pm that Wednesday night. This was a pretty good indication that they themselves had not suffered from this dynamic. They described themselves later as a "non-group dynamic, structuralist and discursive" i.e. hard working, group.

That the intensity of the conference had escalated must have been obvious to anybody who wandered in for a drink before dinner on Wednesday night. Two at least of the groups sent representatives in for supplies so that they could continue working up until dinner. There was a definite edge to the atmosphere which could not have been missed – an excitement with a note of brittleness, feeling 'stirred up' which is the hallmark of the fight/flight assumption. People were aware that something was afoot, although they did not know what had happened in other groups. The dinner was hardly a relaxed affair. After the final course and the coffee had been served, groups rushed off, literally, to gird their loins for the reporting back. I can remember clearly sitting there contemplating this exodus until Eric and I were the only people left in the room. He too obviously had a sense of anticipation and as the last of the mob had gotten to the bottom of the stairs, we hastened to follow them, talking of other things; strangely enough, other battles.

In a Marathon the Tall Poppy Remains Standing

(Plenary Session of Wednesday night – at 9.20 pm)

It was here that the fight/flight assumption really came into its own. The 'processes and methods' group offered the first report. But it was a non-verbal report, a mime. During that silent period the following comments were made by the audience. Some clapping, some laughing, some disgusted and sarcastic.

"Shush."

"Hey."

"He said 'shut up'."

"Pay attention to the report from the other group."

"Sign language?"

Laughs, mutter, mutter.

"Well stand up and listen."

"After all that wine?"

Silence

"I disagree!"

"Nothing to report."

"This is the new paradigm."

"Autonomy!"

"Solipsism!"

"I think I've got the point already."

"Beautifully done if I may say so. Thank you. Would this group please report." (ie. the next group)

"Can't we ask questions for clarification?"

General hysteria

"Good on you."

More hysterical laughter

It was an absolutely brilliant report as the comments show, bringing flight into the service of fight. Finally, we all had an opportunity to participate in the great event. It was a 'free for all'. Needless to say there were those who did not participate and this again followed the same pattern. There were actually only 14 participants and yet nearly everybody was present. It was another 'great spectacular'. The cast was virtually identical except that Gareth was absent and Francisco took his place. If it had not been for the specific invitations to contribute as we see from the record, the participation rate would have been even lower.

Before the full extent of the offensive could emerge, the Organization group gave its report as requested.

"Raphael will talk about organisational boundaries, Jean-Marie is interested in why money and similar issues so not enter into organisational theory and will report our discussion on that. Gareth will report on the gain sharing discussion; Bill will talk about empowering

people who don't want to be disbanded after they've become involved in groups. Ingrid will talk about how consultants who start out being experts learn to change that role. I'll talk about focus factories; Bill will talk about why large corporations appear to have to be theory one and there is one issue we all discussed and that is organisational theory and learning from the field."

In essence, what the spokesman said was 'if you can refuse to report, so can we.' But he also let it be known that the group had done some relevant work in the area.

As the next little sequence shows the dynamic was not confined to the broad level but also operated on the nit-picking individual level.

A   "C'mon team, that was a special report."

B   "From the sublime to the ridiculous."

C   "Or the other way around."

B   "A super counter-point. Which of the other two teams would care to say something?"

D   "Would *dare* to!"

B   "I said would *care* to."

Fred   "Can I make a report for our group?" Silence, then explosions of laughter. Everybody immediately realised there had been a fight in this group involving Fred. He then went on to confirm it. "I thought it was understood, I would give the majority report then we would take five minority reports. The group I went into was on democracy but that was hardly observed. I had in my own mind that it was something about governance. We set up what's involved in governance in terms of design principles one and two. Design principle one we saw as being the most effective carried out in a democracy by the Westminster system with the subsequent development of the cabinet system and the kitchen cabinet. The alternative to that is that we stop electing people and the basic reason for doing that is illustrated by the Australian car sticker that says 'Don't vote! You'll only elect a politician.' Having got that settled as the basis for total disagreement, (interjection – "That's design principle 2") eliminating parties and political careers, etc, before dinner, we found the dinner so stimulating we went on to find a 'creative synthesis' between the two design principles. Because if we found a creative principle we could *sell* it anywhere, to the politicians or to the electorate. We could start a new party then. We found a number of examples of 'creative synthesis' of design principles one and two and someone's got a sheet of paper – who's got that sheet?"

B   "Sean."

S   "No. I don't have the sheet." Gales of laughter. "It was that one where you talked about 'sinthesis' as the boring of a tunnel from the monastery to the nunnery."

Fred   "That was the *conclusion* of the argument.'

S   "What can I do? I'm your straight man."

Fred has been honest about his role in the group and come fight, flight or high water, he was going to get his view across and wasn't above intensifying the barometric pressure by use of heavy sarcasm. Sean used his mediating and negotiating skills to attempt to defuse the situation and succeeded at this point, at least. Fred laughed too and continued much more seriously without the heavy overtones. There were good humoured interjections such as "That's when you insulted the Spanish." (Mexican Democracy)

His central point was that a 'creative synthesis' between the design principles has been, and is, impossible. That had been the last point at issue with Francisco.

B   "Sean is the first of the minority reports because he didn't say anything."

S   "I lied about that. Well, it seems silly to be serious." Sean was reading the process dynamic like an expert (which he showed he was) and was doing his damnedest to rechannel this plenary into work. After having said this, he was a model of seriousness as he carefully explained the thinking the group had done on how an alternative system of governance would work. "We *may* have found some agreement (*I have to be very guarded about this*) that *there is no creative synthesis of design principles* 1 and 2 in terms of ultimate success; in transition, yes perhaps, in absolute synthesis, no."

He was deliberately attempting to play down the fight in the hope of finding some more common ground but he was too honest not to express where his personal affiliations in the argument lay. His crack about not being serious was picked up by another member of the group. "I don't remember being this serious." He immediately reverted to his original ploy of diverting attention from the full import of his report, the fact that he had taken sides and did consider that they were engaged in serious work. "Yes, good, I'm glad. Was *he* in that group? No, he wasn't."

Sean also attempted to subvert Max in telling him that he still had questions of booze and a boat trip to discuss with the group.

It was an excellent try but the opposition were not to be that easily diverted.

There were demands for other minority reports and Francisco entered the ring. "*I reject* the idea that it was after dinner and the wine that we could choose between the two options or design principles *Fred was trying to push us into*, and that any attempt at 'eclecticism' was just that. All those examples he was giving us were of eclecticism working to 'awful' directions. *I'm still not convinced* and I think *it says as much about Fred and his own conceptual framework* that he cannot put together, synthesise, two very different things, as it does about the movements of democracy, QWL or human relations. *I simply do not accept* that we cannot lead towards a creative synthesis: the way *he mocked it* with the nunnery and the monastery. I believe it is possible to *transcend* the Hegelian dialectic of either/or and then reach the synthesis, finding the space to put together so many of the ideas we have discussed. We were just getting into that when we had to break."

Francisco's challenge was loud and clear: he rejected Fred and *his* conceptual framework; the style (mockery) and the content. Here again was an extreme challenge to the man and his work and his contender offered to *transcend* all of the problems of the past by achieving the creative synthesis; nirvana. We were invited to re-enter the dream time, the promised land of milk and honey; the peyote ceremony or the more synthetic recreational pursuits of our western youngsters.

Now that the two current contestants were both in the ring we had an interesting development. Before Fred could reply this challenge there was an immediate attempt to board Francisco's bandwagon and it was led by the person who occupied the most air time in the Battle of the Metaphors after Fred, Gareth and Eric.

E   "Our group agreed with you."

S   "How could you? You weren't there." This time he meant it. E had been in the Organisation group.

E   "We were split amongst ourselves."

Note this conjunction – the group was split but it agreed with Francisco, i.e. E was assuming leadership and exercising a casting vote as to the direction the group would take in deciding this challenge. There was a contribution here from the spokesman of the Organisational group, but it is indecipherable. There were several mutters indicating concern about this development.

Eric then dived in to either rescue or support the Francisco based challenge. "There is quite a strong movement amongst a lot of people at the moment to move from an 'either/or/ logic to a 'both/and' logic."

B   "Where either/or is system 1?"

Eric "Yes."

Francisco "And what Fred was trying to do was push us into a way of thinking which is system 1 while purporting to be system 2."

B then invited Hans to contribute as a member of that group, i.e. the Governance group.

Hans "I wonder what the workers would say of the reports we have seen here. People who struggle, who are in despair, who fight, who are anxious, who are angry, who are really in the front line of fighting to achieve some human dignity, who are really on the coal-face of making the transition to paradigm 2. If they could see this, I wonder what they would say?"

Hans didn't make any bones about where his values lay. Ingrid, his wife, later described it as an 'outburst', but he contributed it only after a direct request. But it was a heartfelt response from a man who has also worked all his life in action research for those to whom he referred; the bottom of the heap who never enjoy the luxury of playing such expensive games. The point was taken as Francisco immediately responded to correct his course and realign himself.

"Only three weeks ago we had a search where people were discussing the same issues and they were saying 'Great. It's the first time we have the future in our hands.'"

Hans "I'll tell you how it feels, I can tell you how it feels."

Francisco "Sure."

Francisco had certainly backed off after the power and intensity of Hans' statement. The old guard was putting up a fight to defend values, ethics, effort and progress they had made as the pioneers in this field. Their response here was as much to what they perceived as ignorance and disrespect as it was to an overt challenge. If the hard fought for gains were to be treated like yesterday's fashion, then where was progress to come from? It is a sad but true reflection of even this tradition within social science that there were very few people there who knew how hard fought had been the achievements to which we now automatically ascribe. Hans knew because he had been there. He weighed in therefore against the Processes and Methods group and to support Fred who had been the conceptual architect of our effective methods. There *was* a bitterness about this interchange which couldn't be avoided. What had they spawned? A swarm of jelly fish?

Then a bit of a gap.

B   "Anyone else in that group?"

Nobody responded to that so I came in to query the accuracy of the statement made by E to the effect that the Organisational group had agreed with Francisco. E had actually argued in the group that what was required was a situation where we have pockets of paradigm 1 in a

predominantly paradigm 2 environment, the reverse of what we see today.

ME   "Was this not correct?"

E   "Yes."

ME   "That is not a synthesis but merely a majority of one encapsulating a minority of another.

E   "No. When Fred said last night that *he believed* a system could not have more than one design principle, *I personally disagreed* with that. The only way you can go into paradigm two is by intuiting paradigm 1 and constraining its ability within the new paradigm. So it's not a question of either/or but one of the relationship between them."

ME   "And the word you used was 'cohabiting'."

E   "Yes. Cohabiting."

ME   "There I rest my case.'

E   "But I would say if you live with both of them in the same system, you have some sort of synthesis."

H   "Were you talking about the dynamics of transition?"

E   "No."

Although I am guilty of furthering the fight by this intervention, it is an interesting little episode as it illustrated that the issues had been brought down to the personal level of individual opinion. 'We don't care who he is – our beliefs are as good as his'. Note also the way language is distorted to serve the purpose of getting into the ring and persuading the audience: 'cohabiting' has become 'synthesis', something which doesn't usually happen until a new individual is conceived. Going in paradigm 2 by instituting paradigm 1 as the only method of limiting paradigm 1's influence is a beautiful bit of rhetorical nonsense as the standard briefing to the highly successful *Participative Design Workshops* shows. But concepts and hard data had no currency in this forum.

There were further efforts to get the discussion back to the 'rational' level. The spokesman for the Organisation group explained the genesis of the silly statement that I had picked up. It was an extrapolation of a discussion about way most of our examples of change to design principle 2 are at the lower levels of organisational hierarchies, and so few at the top. Volvo appeared to be an exception. (At this stage we should administer a kick in the bum to the Australian teams working in this area; for their slackness to report and publicise their successes at this upper level.) The spokesman continued to try and find the common ground by saying "It may not be a synthesis but it is certainly a transitional phenomenon."

But the hounds or the foxes were out and nothing was going to stop them. Francisco had realised that one of his supporters had gotten himself into hot water and went in to bail him out. "That just makes the point; that begs the question of what is synthesis? I get told its eclecticism, this and that, either/or; what is synthesism?"

Now Francisco was reverting to flight, arguing that it was all meaningless words; and he had another supporter.

B   "Its just a word."

This was just what the defence needed to resume the attack in the highest of style. Fred came in with all conceptual guns blazing.

Fred   "No, it's not at all. Synthesis is not a synthesis of opposites. Something is only an

antithesis to a thesis, if you want to use Hegelian logic. An antithesis to a thesis proceeds from sharing certain basic assumptions which is why the synthesis returns to getting a better relationship to the initial assumptions in the thesis. You cannot synthesise opposites. You can synthesise thesis and antithesis only because they have something in common. Now if you go to design principle one you find an asymmetrical dependence, in metaphor – the master/servant relation – but in design principle two, you find a symmetrical dependence. Now you want to find somewhere between a master/servant relation and a relationship between equals, a synthesis of those, then good luck. We have tried and not been able to find it, on the factory floor, in the office, between foreman or section leader and self-management of the group. If you leave a foreman in the group as they did first at Kalmar, sneaking one in under the guise of a trainer but with the same job specifications of course, then you get the strife that they got. Then we had to pull them out again, in 1972.”

Francisco “Dear friend. This exactly makes my point. You are still locked into a certain conception of thesis, antithesis, synthesis. What I am trying to show you is that there is something broader than that. It's getting away from and beyond the Hegelian concept of ‘this and that’ in a mechanical way. It’s the capacity to see a larger number of components, ideas, concepts and re-interpreting them, restructuring them and offering them something quite different. Now, if want to stay within the concept of a Hegelian system, then fine, I agree with *you*. But, my God, for at least the last ten, fifteen years I have been operating within a society where the thesis, antithesis synthesis don’t operate. They are alien to our culture and therefore we conceive as a synthesis is putting together many more things which are much more diffuse and you re-interpret them in a much more creative way. Perhaps it is semantics or language differences but I am looking for something different from the way you are putting it. So you can have a creative synthesis without being cynical or ironical or pedestrian which was the other adjective, however you wish to put it, but we have to go beyond that. And for heck, I am not going to accept those logical categories.”

Fred   “If you are restricted in your society, as most South American societies are, to mixing oil and water, then I would suggest in terms of governance that you might try the Westminster model, but it would go up and down. Up for two years and then a military dictatorship and back again. Oil and water tend to be like that. If you are after a synthesis I would suggest you go for water and whiskey. They make a good synthesis.”

Francisco “And why not? More peaceful and I would agree with that.”

Fred   “Right.” They both laugh a little.

Francisco “Then that’s back to the concept of synthesis or not.”

Fred had argued both at the conceptual level and from direct experience. In fact, he was saying very clearly ‘you should be learning from the history of action research. Reality has shown the rightfulness of that conceptual analysis.’ Francisco rejected the conceptual analysis on the basis of his experience in his culture. He said his reality was different. Fred then moved into Francisco’s reality reminding him that its history was exactly as he would expect it to be with a mixture of design principles. Francisco could not argue with that as he had admitted in his earlier paper that the political future was still uncertain. Fred sensed he had a tactical victory and in essence said: ‘I still want to drink with you, mate.’ Francisco said: ‘Yes, let's make peace and discuss it another way.’ They both knew they were worthy opponents and valuable to each other.

But an outbreak of peace was not what others had in mind and we see this repeatedly. As soon as the main contestants move away from the group assumption or there is a work orientated intervention, one or other of them, usually Fred, is dragged back into the ring. In

this case it happened almost before Fred and Francisco had finished signing the treaty.

B   "It seems to me that the human task is to deal with and accept paradox and the manager's task is to reconcile the irreconcilable and these are the kind of opposites you are opposing Fred, the same irreconcilables that we have to deal with in the business and managerial world all the time, and we don't bother about Hegel telling us we can't do it."

It was back on.

Fred   "No, that's not at all true which is why management in *progressive* organisations have been falling over themselves trying to identify missions for their organisations which are missions that their employees accept as well as the managers. So if the management of a sewerage system which serves three million people want to set up a mission simply to reduce costs, it won't work. How could they expect their employees to be committed to that as a mission? No way. *If they set their mission* to that of reducing the pollution on the beaches of Sydney they might possibly *find common ground* as these are the beaches the employed and their families surf on. Therefore, you can move on to get a synthesis of the things on which they were previously conflicted. But there have to be some underlying shared assumptions in the thesis and the antithesis. Otherwise, conflict will be settled by conflict, by guns."

As well as giving a concrete and current example of his point here, Fred also condemned B as a manager in two senses, as manager of an enterprise and for his role in this session. A process manager is not supposed to encourage the group assumptions but to find the common ground on which the conference can rebegin to work. But as we see later, B was undeterred. He was one of those who were most tightly in the grip of the dynamic. Although he wanted to stop the nonsense and get on with the work, Fred also issued a warning that he could continue to fight back and he wouldn't be mucking around.

At this point Eric intervened with the longest speech of the entire session. It was I believe an attempt to stop the fight by the simple expedient of using up the time and keeping the opponents apart. It was a relatively even-handed content giving points to both Fred and Francisco but it failed in its overall purpose. The following is an edited version but the critical expressions are accurate.

Eric   "I find the dialectical language something which has impeded me very seriously. I gave up using it about ten years ago and I've been groping for another language with which we can re-group elements of the older system in a new transformation. I am therefore very interested in Prigogine's work which has a powerful influence."

B   "Enormous Eric."

Eric   "We have to look at the way the brain can re-group and make new linkages. Kuhns started this whole movement with his appraisal of scientific revolutions. As Fred said when you have the opposites, it's a fight to death, and *I don't believe* these days that *that's possible*, able to produce a *viable future* for the planet. The Hegelian approach is something we have to grow away from. *In the concept of re-grouping you don't need to annihilate all the old*; you take some of it and some of the new in a process which evolves. Early on you can recognise implicit patterns which will emerge which is what I have been trying to do with Perlmutter. In projects *we have been looking for* signs of the new paradigm emerging, notions of *symbiosis and collaboration* in activities of usually multiple organisations. These experience their ups and downs and you wouldn't expect the new paradigm to emerge perfectly.

It's an aircraft recognition job that I'm on, searching for things that are leading to the sort of future that I'm interested in. The key inputs are coming from very surprising places. I used to hold the view that they would come from the periphery to the centre but I'm no longer that sure. It's a matter of new tissue…"

B   "When you talk of a tissue do you mean a new interconnecting tissue?"

Eric   "Yes, a new interconnecting tissue, in other words, formulating a logic of inter-dependence. The movement towards extreme self-reliance is not one I can go along with because they are denying the fact of interdependence. It's important that everybody come out with something, that we have a win-win situation."

Eric began by supporting Francisco and was supported in this by B. However, he then began on his real task which was to say clearly that he did not want to see a fight to the death and he knew Fred well enough to know that he had meant what he had said about fighting back. Eric did not want to see another holocaust and this was a plea for peace. B checked to see if that was really what he was asking for and found it was. Eric wanted interconnectedness, interdependence and a win-win.

But not even such a plea from Eric was going to work.

B   "But as we remember Ericsson we have dependency, counter-dependency and inter-dependence. The asymmetrical dependence Fred was talking about engenders counterdependency and that's where the conflict comes."

B brought it straight back to Fred and was well aware of what he was doing. He was suffering from counterdependency and maintaining the conflict and was prepared to risk the warnings by Fred and Eric that the stem of this tall poppy was made of Jarrah.

Eric tried again. "I don't believe we can resolve our issues by conflict as we have known it in the past." He reminisced about the conflicts of the thirties when he was "in the front line" and expressed his "great sadness" about the recent British miner's strike and the devastation it had wrought. "You can see the old patterns are not working. They've failed for both sides." He was simply saying 'don't go on with it – everybody will get hurt.'

Suddenly he changed tack and accentuated the positive, the way out as he had done above, stressing multiple re-groupings of the parts into new exciting phenomena such as the Craig Millar Arts Festival; demonstrating for them the "paradox of the very new coming out of the blackest of the old." He called it an "aesthetic affirmation which woke up and empowered enormous numbers of people… through the power of the ideal of beauty, in Fred's terms." He stressed that even though these people were among the most depressed they could produce works of art and he made a point of mentioning that these "searches for an alternative" were not unknown in Canada. The message was 'you too can have a beautiful experience instead of a black one if you just pull yourselves together.'

It had the desired effect on at least on person who also intervened in an attempt to re-direct the conference towards work. She began by supporting Eric's attempt.

G   "Can I just follow up? I was going to come in later but I've been emboldened by Eric's remarks to share right now some concerns I've had in the last couple of days. I think I do follow on from Eric. I'm wondering if we're not allowing two separate sub-themes of this meeting to get in the way of addressing the larger issue which in the words of the title is 'explorations in human futures'. That to me is the real agenda. There are some very exciting events and happenings and some very real issues which are not going to be addressed by us here if we allow the two sub-themes to preoccupy us as thy have done, until tonight. Those two sub-themes are the quality of working life and social science. I would just like to invite

us all tomorrow, to see us begin afresh to concentrate on explorations in human future, the human issues free from the historical constraints of social science and QWL (a bit missing here). They may become impediments."

It was a very brave try but then Eric launched into a very strong defence of social scientists which he had read G as criticising.

Eric   "But one of the key persons in Sudbury is a social scientist but he is committed."

G   "Sure, but he was acting as a citizen."

Eric   "Yes. In Jamestown one of the things which enables me to maintain that project was to get the commitment of two of my PhD's to go there with their families, for three and five years respectively, and that's a hell of a big thing to ask. I think that social scientists in action research have to commit themselves over long periods of time. The same applies to plant managers who have taken on a commitment to change and refuse promotion in order to see their projects through. These are the people who are making their own choices leading us into the future."

This episode was a bit unfortunate I think because having spoken with G earlier I knew she meant it not as a criticism of action-researchers but a way of starting to untangle some of the dimensions running through the conflict. She wanted us to rise above labels and particular areas of expertise such as QWL and collaborate as humans on our human problems. That's why she said she thought she followed on from Eric.

But it was an opportunity not to be missed. So leapt in another to support Eric against G. But apart from this aspect it is also quite an insightful statement.

E   "I think Eric Trist is the oldest person here and I am the youngest and I think that at some point I might be asked to report on this meeting in the way that Eric reported on Gerrards Cross. And *I'm getting very frustrated* because I don't think I'm going to have anything to report. I don't think that your throwing out the baby of social science with the water we are stuck in is correct. But *I do think we're stuck*. I think that what we saw here was a social defence about being stuck and joking around was a defence about being stuck, and that people are frustrated and pissed off. We all simply want to get away from the fact that we're stuck. The fact is that we're stuck. *The present design of this workshop is not working*, or has not to date worked. As discussed in our group we constantly find that there are things to do which *are exceeding our capacities* to do, that the innovations in our practice come from the practitioners and not from *ourselves*, that the innovations in our theory *do not come from social science, at least not in the last twenty years*, and that something needs to be done. Now there's a hell of a lot of researchers here and this meeting to date is one in which *the system is a helluva lot smaller than the sum of its parts*. What the hell are we going to do about it? Are we going to keep muddling into small groups and into big groups and not getting any directions or are we going to get something out of it."

He recognised that the conference and certainly himself were immersed in a group assumption from which they could not surface, 'exceeding our capacities', and that it had something to do with the design of the conference. He also saw that this assumption was diminishing the outcome rather than expanding it as good work would do. But we also get the feeling that there was something else that was exceeding their capacities and that involved the leading edge of innovation in theory. And who at the conference would embody this?

This is a particularly convoluted presentation at first, he separates practitioners and social scientists and puts all of us in the social science camp, including himself. Then he states that the innovations have come from the practitioners in the last twenty years, none of whom

could, by the drawing of his boundary, be present. So the innovatory leader couldn't be present either, by definition. Although he had to deny the fact of action research and *its* innovations to achieve this little victory, he had in effect deposed Fred. There was no leadership present and, at another level of course, he was also correct in this as the collective assumption of fight/flight was firmly in control of everybody. But having deposed the leader he then turned round and asked for one, some directions. His suggestions for coming unstuck was to change the assumptions from fight/flight to dependency. But it would have to be a new leader, of course. He continued: "Now, when I leave here, *what I want* is some list of issues that *need work done on them*. What I have so far are three suggestions but *that's not good enough*. I'm not talking only about ourselves, I'm also talking about the same people as Hans and Francisco. You go back and how do you justify spending $35,000 and 3 ½ days in terms of results and see what you've got. The idea of *model one versus model two design* was a very good one, I agree, but it's certainly not the future of social science, it's certainly not human futures and it's certainly not the whole agenda for our work. There is recognition of it, there are applications of it that have not yet been fully developed. Fair enough. But there are *other things* that need to be talked about. And what we should do now is get some idea of what we are going to do in the next day and a half. This discussion is fine but I don't see it getting us anywhere."

And guess who he thought should be the new leader? 'What *I* want are the issues that need work done on them and it had better be better than what you've done so far because that's not good enough for me, and we or I will have to justify ourselves. And don't bring me any of Fred Emery's stuff about design principles; the agenda of this regime is going to be different. So let's just get started on that. Fred had been great but that's all over now.' This may seem a harsh analysis but look back to his opening statement – I might be asked to report, like Eric was.' This person is not reticent about either his talents or his ambitions. And he had made an earlier bid for leadership when I took him on.

But dependency stood a snowflake's chance in this little hot-house and predictably E was called to account.

Sean   "I'm just reacting as very *proletarian* participant here and I kinda feel that your comments are very unfair to the process. I think there's a very honest effort on the part of everybody here to try and seek some sort of *resolution*, some sort of truth from knocking ideas with one another. If there happens to be some levity about it, that's fine. I think that's part of the process. You burn, you relax, you burn, you relax. That's a human process – don't deny that. Seeking truth is knocking ideas around and we've had some excellent contributions over the time I've been here and I've been enriched by it. *I don't feel at all cheated* as you do obviously, and I don't feel there's any constraints upon anybody to contribute to me what I can't contribute to others."

Sean made it clear that he had understood E's emphasis on Social Science and status but he didn't share his ambitions. 'Relax, be a human being; it's all very clear here and it will be resolved. Don't feel cheated because you can't win, and you won't win anything by putting yourself above others.' It too was a plea for a return to work within a structure of necessarily more equal relationships.

E's self appointment to the leadership was dealt with in an almost fatherly tone and E responded very quietly with "I don't feel cheated. I feel disappointed." To which the father responded "Well, it's the same thing to me, in very basic terms. I think the process involved here is very enriching and very *fundamentally necessary* in terms of my context and I have found things here that I have found things here that I can apply immediately, in terms of the trade union context. So I don't feel negative at all about the process and I hope nobody else

does."

B   "Some people will Sean. I was expecting it and I'm glad it came now rather than later. H, your group hasn't even had a chance to report."

In no uncertain terms E was told to grow up, that they had been itching for a fight and they'd had it. But now we were into the 'fatherhood stakes' with B attempting to correct Sean. As we have seen from the record, B was less expecting it than encouraging it, but he finally remembered that he did have managerial responsibilities.

H, highly sensitive to the state of play made a joke. "Well, after all this, perhaps we should come in with the answers." Immediately, someone burst in with "Who's winning?". On the surface it was a direct reference to the Blue Jays baseball game being played that night, but its insertion at this point was no accident. Was the fight over, and if so, who was the winner? As the Blue Jays were irrevocably down, we heard "Well then, we don't have to break up" (to see the finale). "We may have to break down though." Some wanted to continue the fight, others had had more than sufficient.

As H was obviously aware that this was not the time to present any work to the conference, the gap left by his reluctance to report was filled by Eric who dramatically changed the direction. He realised the implication of E's grab for leadership and moved to divorce himself from it.

Eric :I don't feel though, because of what E said that I didn't learn anything. I've learnt a lot. I feel the process has been enriching but the most powerful communication that has been made to me in this conference was your mime. That was a tremendous communication of the utmost seriousness about the fact that *we are really* in a very serious way, *stuck*. Not in a frivolous way because we are all trying very very hard. But I found myself moved and challenged by the way that you did that. It came to me as a surprise – it broke something. That was the effect on me."

B   "It was a synthesis."

"No" from many quarters.

Eric "Sometimes I think that if I hear that word 'synthesis' again…(Cheers) "Like if I hear the word 'paradigm' again" (more cheers). Most people were really sick of it.

B   "OK. Paradigms and syntheses are out."

Eric was undoubtedly tuned into the dynamics as shown by "if I hear that word again" but I his effort to redirect the conference from a fight he unfortunately precipitated another by praising the non-verbal report of the Processes and Methods group. He was absolutely correct about it being a "communication of the utmost seriousness about the fact that we (and the P and M group) are in a very serious way, stuck." But he had forgotten that for every fight there is an equal flight and that it had been criticised by Hans. However, not knowing the history or composition of that group, it must have been an easy choice in his desire to avoid further fight, to seize upon something which looked empty of content. It was a mistake. A member of the Processes and Methods group made a bid:

J   "I want to respond to E's point."

B, still in the managerial mode: "There's a group been disenfranchised here." The group spokesperson H was still reluctant to intrude upon the dominant assumption. 'It seems as if something needs to be completed here."

B   "It won't be completed that quickly. E will want time. Legitimately."

This is interesting. What was B really saying here? He had supported everybody else who had been in the running to depose Fred but he had not supported E, although he moved against Sean who had brought E into court. It sounded, and still sounds, as if E had intensified, *and* made more explicit the assumption that even B was prepared to tolerate (E had been illegitimate). He realised that some basic boundaries had been crossed and that E would need some period in which to prepare his defence. But B, to give him his due, was a believer in a fair trial, and he moved therefore to provide that time for E. He did this by finally bringing on the report from the Democrats in room 203. NB also that he had realised that deposing Fred was going to take a long time.

H then presented the fourth report of the evening and apart from his opener which was that he was going to begin at the end of the report which was an observation of the very turbulent environment in which we live (at this moment), it was a very straight and work-orientated presentation, raising many questions which could not have re-directed the course of the plenary if it had been so wished.

That possibility was foreclosed.

B " Thank you. Very helpful. Do you want to resume that debate?" He did not ask questions or comment on the report which may have provided a chance of stabilising the climate or at least toning down the interchanges which were to follow. These are however, much quieter and less pointedly fight. This following sequence illustrates a very interesting phase in the dynamic as the conference realises it has to let itself down softly from the dizzy heights it reached with E's brief ascension. In the descent it must explain to itself why it had to do what it did.

J from the Processes and Methods group began the justificatory, letting-down process with a most appropriate choice of style - slow and careful.

J "I would like to respond to E because it's a *useful challenge to us a group*. My response is a personal one in the sense that up till this afternoon *I was feeling quite ill at ease in terms of what we were doing*. More ill at ease *with myself* than I was with perhaps the group. *Unable to kind of find a way of really taking part effectively.* In our group this afternoon, what happened was we started to go back to our experiences *as opposed to working with ideas*, and decided OK we'll go back to experience and *keep the ideas up on the wall* there as a kind of reference point. Let's see what we can really learn from our experience. What I experienced from that was *a letting go of questions, of anxieties* which is not very common among social scientists. Even if we accept the view of ourselves as barefoot social scientists there's a tendency to have the view that we *should be somewhat expert* in terms of what we know. I felt liberated and excited that *we were legitimating* our questions or *uncertainties* and my feeling of response to Hans and the question of how would workers feel about this sort of event. I sort of think that they would feel better about this than if we were feeling very secure with ourselves because we would be acknowledging the realities which are a lot of uncertainties. So I am more hopeful or optimistic about this experience than I was six hours ago, because we've started to let go. We've gone back to *experience rather than just ideas or syntheses or paradigms* and so on, but *keeping those ideas in mind.*"

In this sense J does have several things all designed to ease the conference down the rugged and treacherous face. First, he acknowledged that E had made his challenge but softened it by calling it 'useful'. Second, he justified the non-verbal flight report of his group by speaking at two levels, the personal and the group. At the personal level he explained that fighting made him uncomfortable and ineffective and that he couldn't and didn't want to

compete with the experts in the world of ideas and concepts. He felt that there were expectations of him to join in the fight, and he had done so in the Metaphor group, but it made him anxious and uncertain. He didn't want to go on that way.

At the group level he replicated much of the above but added that it was liberating and exciting to find that others shared his feelings and he could begin to escape from the horrible and dangerous world we had been drawn into that morning. He had in fact been invited to contribute to the Metaphor discussion as a way of intensifying the conflict. In other words, he had been used as a pawn and he was aware of it. But despite himself, he had felt stirred up although he didn't like what was going on. (This is a typical guilty reaction to periods of fight/flight: Fighting is 'bad' and you're not supposed to get a kick out of it – but you always do.)

The group provided a haven in which he felt easy because their protection of one of their members had reassured him that his experience was not unique and that somebody should take a stand against the destructive forces which had been unleashed by the conceptually based experts. Therefore, they conspired to retreat from the conflict of ideas and to protest in a way which was as opposed to the verbal, conceptual facility of the contenders as possible. In saying, 'we're not like that' the group had become a secure little entity cut off from the rest of the conference. This was their legitimacy – they were part of the peace core who had gone totally pacifist.

There is another level of explanation of the flight of this group as described by J and is of course, as discussed above, that pertaining to the composition of the group. Their uncertainties could well have been about who was going to emerge victorious from the final round for the leadership. The flight into an a-conceptual mode or even one featuring ignorance, i.e. legitimating our uncertainties about our experience of how much we actually know in this field, was certainly a reflection of Gareth's provocative probes which revealed that he equated action research with management consulting.

Finally, he had both admitted and denied that the group was in flight. All of the justification points to flight, and there is more to come, but he keeps on insisting here that they didn't throw out the ideas, the concepts; they just kept them in mind, up on the wall.

J continues attempting to draw others into his justificatory perspective. ('We all have to get out of here alive you know.')

"The other source of optimism for me is the composition of this group which I think G, really does start to take us away from the sub-themes of QWL and social science. We have you people who are working primarily in industry, like Westley and myself. We also have people who are working primarily in communities like Michael, and yourself, perhaps, working in a governance area. That's very *uncommon* and certainly uncommon in the 'QWL' field, let alone the fact that we've got different geographical regions associated here. In our group we actually had a moment where we acknowledged the fact that there was legitimacy to come at this *on a personal level* rather than strictly from an organisational level and we dealt with that, accepted that and I think this is a sort of strength in this group. I'm not sure where this will lead us, I'm not sure whether it will give us any answers. But I feel much more positive about *that way of going about business*, than I do about *a whole lot of other things we've done*."

Here J goes further in his admission that they had become a T or sensitivity group (personal) rather than working for the conference as a whole (organisational level). Additionally, he invokes the 'we are special or uncommon' argument. But it had made them 'strong' which related them again to the fighting arm of the assumption. Why the need for

strength if you don't anticipate an opportunity to work for it? He also doubted whether the group would work, 'give any answers', as they were feeling great in the flight mode and definitely preferred it to that of flight. 'We've been fighting which is naughty and makes us feel bad and look! Now we're not doing it.' There is a sort of righteous morality about this speech which as we will see, was not missed by others.

B   "Do you want to think about it E?"

J's speech was supposed to have been a direct response to E's challenge but had begun the slowing-down or denial process and B was clearly now uncertain as to how E could cope with this. He *was* supporting him. E having immediately recognised the change, coped with it beautifully by mimicking J's style of presentation and justification.

E   "No. I have just two points. When I was talking about the stuckness I was talking at two levels; what's happening here and now, and I do believe there had been a degree of stuckness. (J "Sure.") But, more important, I'm talking about the *stuckness in the broader work that we do.* I think that being stuck is both frustrating and the reason why we come together. Now it is *not* that I'm *expecting miracles*, I know *there's no recipe* but it does frustrate me sometimes when things were just starting to work, there was a cut in the programme, then we go back, that happens in all kinds of settings and I'm not saying it's *unique* to us, I'm just saying I'm frustrated by it. I'm not implying that what is going on here is of no use to anybody. When Sean told me that he was talking to me as a *representative of the proletariat* I don't want to argue with various people who work with the more oppressed or less oppressed or…*it's not that*. Various people work as….. Mt statement is to just say let's watch out what we're doing because we're running out of time."

Sean. "That's very pious."

E reiterated his point about being stuck with the dynamic of fight/flight which was inhibiting work and picked up on J's hint that they may not really know what's going on in the field. They may not have done their homework or been using the most effective methods, or the current method in their most effective form. (If this conference was just the precipitation of a long incubation of dissatisfactions and new queen bees, there is a real question here as to how the methods of Search Conferences and Participative Design Workshop developed by Fred and his Australian team, have been modified to suit ruling fashion or dynamic in Canadian culture. They may have survived the transition to several cultures but I suspect from observing some of the performances at Orillia that they *may* have been treated as a 'recipe' and that as both the Australians and Norwegians amongst others, noted, a key ingredient had been omitted; precisely the need to manage and control the group assumption if real change is to be achieved. If these have been left to run riot, or indeed, if they have been elevated to the status of the 'work' or task of the Search Conference, then we can perhaps better understand the attitude of some that these methods were just yesterday's sliced bread. There is nothing more frustrating and dissatisfying than long periods of group assumptional behaviour without task-achievement – a definite feeling of 'stuckedness'. But a lot of us weren't and aren't stuck; another reason why authoritarianism-dependency was not a choice here.)

E also reinforced his intuition that the design was at fault but refused to support J in his thesis or uniqueness. Then he came to discuss the challenge he had made and the fact that it failed. 'He didn't expect it to work, it was just an experimental dish, and besides, he wasn't really trying to put himself above others – it wasn't that.' He was really only trying to fill in for Gareth – "what are we going to do that will make a difference to the future?" is an exact replication of Gareth's sentiments that morning. He was not about to leap another tall

building in a single bound but neither was he about to capitulate entirely. He was maintaining the party line that the current leadership had achieved nothing and was going nowhere.

"We're running out of time" has many levels of meaning: it was true for this session as seen below – the dynamic had been pushed past most people's tolerance of it; there was a crisis of leadership and direction here in this conference and it seemed no closer to resolution than it had at 9.30 pm; and now some individuals had personal crises because they had made bids for the big power play and had lost. The Blue Jays game had proven to be an accurate reading of the entrails.

After the prolonged attack and aggression that had been directed at Fred and his 'agenda' it was understandable that this effort at self-righteous justification received its predictable response – "That's very pious."

Then Francisco re-entered the fray after a long absence. He too, even after having securing the temporary truce with Fred, could not afford to be seen to be left out of the front line. Much of this has been discussed before but Francisco moved to both divorce himself from the highly aggressive plays of the preceding interval while keeping himself in the race. "I feel similarly but different." The edited text then follows:

We have three basic objectives: a product, a process and personal learning. Because we're practitioners of this art, the first two are almost irrelevant as we have been immersed in them before. So the only valid learning is the personal one. Having been away a long time and coming back into the fold as it were, we must acknowledge all that we have learnt from those who precede us but we must also realise their limitations. We are now going beyond what we have learnt from them and the people who come behind us will go beyond us too. So I am calibrating my relationship to my roots and meeting many of you who have been working in different areas. That is a process of personal learning involving, asserting our place. So I don't feel a sense of disappointment but one of assertion. We are far too experienced in these types of meetings to worry about the product or the process."

It was very much a statement that we should put away for the night perhaps, and get on with some constructive work; something that we could use for future rounds. He was measuring himself up but *not* but not making the definitive challenge now. He knew that while it was a testing session he had done relatively well and the outcome was not going to be finalised here. He did not feel disappointed with his performances and he would continue to prepare himself for what would obviously be a costly and drawn-out affair.

B then reasserted his rights as a process manager "Time is getting on and as your humble 'moderator' may I just say a couple of words?"

X   "That is the problem – time is getting on."

X like Francisco knew that it was all over for the night; it could only be indecisive so best to leave it. But B as a major player also had to participate in the closing-down ceremony.

"I am delighted that people are expressing frustration because now I know that I have some soul mates. To say that we are stuck is really a very polite understatement. Of course we are. That's why we came here in the first place. I sense that there are two groups of people, those who are prepared to go with the flow and accept what happens at the end, and those who want, and stated quite clearly in their expectations, to come out at the end with an agenda for human futures, and the social sciences if we can put that, following Cathy's warning, at a lower level than human futures. J's pointing out that we were beginning to let go was very helpful. My own prediction is had been that the explosion of frustration would

not occur until tomorrow afternoon, which is why I wanted to get you all on the boat.'

"And then you would sink it." (From several parts of the room.)

"My prediction was that the frustration, and the sense of powerlessness which you were experiencing would be so great by then that something would blow. I am delighted that it's occurring perhaps more gently than tonight so that we can become constructive in a building mode tomorrow morning. My suggestion is that we dream and sleep on what has happened tonight and the we try not and set agendas tonight, but that we meet here at 9.00 am to work on the agenda for the next day and a bit. Is that agreeable?"

B had been fed up with the tall poppy and was delighted that others were preparing to join him I an attempt to cut them down. He now clearly supported E and his perception of their conceptual and methodological paralysis. His two groups were those who were prepared to continue with the group assumption and those who wanted to work. As one of the former he had known that a clash was inevitable. The widespread interjections of 'you would sink the boat' were a recognition of the role he had played in this session and he had moved to reinforce the denial process – occurring more gently." 'It hadn't been a really big fight!' (If B had been promulgating the theory that a fight is an inevitable component of every conference because of some innate quirk of human nature, then the evidence is clearly against him. As I have shown, there were both structural and purposeful reasons for this one. In a well-designed conference whose members have no axes to grind, the total time can be spent in constructive work).

But B's attempt at closure had been premature and he had broken the rules again.

Fred "Hang on a bit."

B   "I hang on your every word.'

Fred "It concentrates the mind though, doesn't it?"

B   "Like imminent hanging."

This neat little interchange leaves little doubt about the relationship at this point. Remember that it was B who brought up counter-dependency and he hadn't escaped from it. Fred was still up there and obviously about to do some other dreadful thing to him.

Fred reminded him that there had been an agreement about what was to happen this night.

Fred "I thought our understanding was that this was just an interim reporting back just in case we found that either the agenda we had set for ourselves was fouled up or the mix of people we had to deal with it was wrong. So tonight we either change the agenda or we change the people in the groups. That's up to us. Then we've cleared the decks, got rid of that bloody boat, and then we have all that time to actually work on the agenda. We're frustrated because we haven't got to work on the agenda so we either change the agenda or the membership to get on with what we've got."

Fred is criticising B's management again and for the same reason, the failure to control the group assumption and create a work culture. Even the minimum set for that night had not been achieved. *He* was frustrated because so much time had been wasted and he wanted to work. If we could just do that little bit tonight and forget excuses like the boat, we might be able to do what we came to do.

B   "My suggestion was that we don't attempt to answer that question tonight. The focus has been if I may say so, somewhat diffuse tonight, it has not been particularly sharp. And I would suggest that it's not going to get any sharper as we sit here."

B's rejection of the suggestion was only partially softened by an attempt at humour. In fact the night had been particularly focused; it just simply wasn't on work. That the group assumption had had a resounding success was shown by Francisco who said "I don't even remember what each of the working groups is supposed to work on." Fight/flight had definitely won the day. All thoughts or even memories of work had disappeared. Then finally to sum it all up:

Eric "I favour starting in plenary tomorrow. I have been feeling disappointed after Fred's presentation which was so pregnant with his insistence on the word empowerment and we are feeling *the absence of empowerment within ourselves*. After *Gareth's presentation* we've been able to carry on but *some kind of total feeling is gone*. And I've changed my mind about the big groups and small groups. I think *we tend to break up too quickly without some search of the whole*. But if we can capture some wholeness by speaking out of ourselves, out of our experiences and what this has meant to us, then we will find a way to proceed."

Eric knew we hadn't been working and creating ourselves and he also knew exactly when the break came and the group assumptions took over. He could see the split in the conference and wanted it back in one piece. He held out a life-line to the P and M group (speaking from our experiences) which was also an invitation to the others to make peace. His suggestion was accepted and the conference retired to drown its various sorrows.

The Aftermath of Shock, Horror: Only Sniping

(Thursday morning plenary – 9.20 am)

B "How do you wish to proceed?'

Long silence.

"Slowly."

"What about the boat?"

B "The boat trip has been postponed."

"Until next year?"

B Probably until next year, and it's a gorgeous day. How do we wish to empower ourselves to proceed?"

Long silence.

All was not well from the start and it was not simply a matter of a late night. There was a marked reluctance to proceed at all. B showed that he was still annoyed by the fact that Fred had forced the cancellation of the boat trip – 'it's a gorgeous day.' (There had been a quick show of hands the previous afternoon which was roughly two to one against the boat.)

H who had given the very serious task-orientated report of the previous night as his attempt to break the group assumption again attempted to introduce a semblance of work by asking for an up-to-date report on the status of the rest of the advertised papers as he had heard conflicting reports. It was explained that one was available and that the management group had discussed setting up a 'speaker's corner' in which the cancelled papers could be given along with an opportunity for additional people to give short talks. He stated that he would enjoy hearing both speakers for additional people to give short talks. He stated that he would enjoy hearing both speakers and that if the papers were presented without a lot of

questions it could be fitted in and people could explore their interests further without the authors individually. It is difficult to doubt that H's intentions were honourable as his group had been ignored (disenfranchised) the night before and he didn't want to see that happen to the others. But in effect, he had re-opened the possibility of avoiding work. There was an immediate reaction.

Fred "I think that's a splendid idea as long as the rest of us can get on with our group work. OK?" He was ignored.

K "We could have one hour for each, in a sequence."

Hans then spoke for the management group realising that there had been no chance for them to explain their decision. "My feeling was, you see, that we had picked up a couple of signals that there was a lot of difficult work still to do, and if we really start to move then not only do we need all the time we have, but that irrespective of the quality of the papers, they may become interruptions rather than punctuations. It was as simple as that and *I still feel like that*." He had not missed the point of the previous sequence and was supporting Fred in arguing for some work to be done.

B "Well then, lets use that open space as constructively as possible, we need to get to work right away. It's now 9.30 am." Lots of murmurs of let's get back into our groups. Yeah. OK.

B "To do what?"

Fred "What we set ourselves last night. That was only an interim report."

B "We're going to move down those arrows towards empowerment, right?"

(General assent)

A "Last night when the groups came together we had a feeling that the process wasn't working. I didn't think, at least for the group I was in, (Organisation) that there was a central question. So I have no confidence that if the groups split out again that we will generate a focus breakthrough. I think a lot of people came here expecting that such a group would generate a vision of the future, some focal questions and I hope so, but I don't have any confidence that the pattern we set yesterday is likely to produce any more today that it did yesterday."

Fred "That's bullshit, A, you're talking about your own group. You don't know what happened in ours."

A "Yes, but somebody in your group also expressed no confidence either."

The interchange between Fred and A confirmed the fact that nothing had changed. The group assumption was still well and truly in existence and in his effort to get the groups back to work Fred was going to get sucked back into it. So then I leap in before it went any further, making, for me, what was quite a lengthy intervention.

ME "Can I just insert one thing? I think G made an excellent suggestion last night. I would suggest that each group goes back and keeps it firmly in mind. We have a topic here which is more important than the bits and pieces which contribute to it. There is going to be some sort of human future, for better or worse. What do we want to look like, how do we make sure it look the way we want it to, because we have some confidence in our own judgement, and how the hell are we going to get there? Now, there were all sorts of funny things floating around last night and they should be best left to last night. I would prefer we take the cut that G has suggested – its human futures, right, that's what we're talking about.

We've already got a lot of stuff on the ground, we want to consolidate that and build it in terms of processes of diffusion that make those human futures look bigger and better. Let's get on with the job of saying how we're going to do that."

It worked, at least for the moment. B reminded the group of the rationale of the guiding diagram, thereby reminding them that work *had* to be done, picked up my point about forgetting last night and recommended some action, i.e. work. The spokesman for the Organisation group also came forward with support and expressed optimism. Times were negotiated and as there was a desire for a successful plenary as well as small group work we compromised with a plan for one and a half hours in each structure. The same four groups returned to their rooms. The failure to cut Fred off at the ankles had been noted, in particular by B. He had survived and so had the two vectors towards work and fight/flight. Where now to invest? Work looked like the best bet for the time being.

The plenary which began at 11.15 was almost a model of the genuine working culture. It was here that the Processes and Methods group gave its first (real) report and explained that it hadn't done any work until the last minute. Discussion was serious, focused and co-operative. The spokesman for the Organisation group had a dig, however, at the Processes and Methods group by explaining in his introduction that they too had found simply sharing what they were doing very satisfying but *they* had resisted the temptation to only do that. It was nicely done but the point was made. This group also made the point of emphasising that more work needed to be done on tools, i.e. processes and methods. It is noteworthy that this was *not* acknowledged by the relevant group. Their flight had taken them far beyond such mundane realities.

But clearly the smart money was on work. At the end of his report the Organisational spokesman added "I don't think our group felt as much dissatisfaction as I expressed yesterday, but today we felt much more harmonious with what we did." He was admitting that he had been carried away by the fight/flight assumption, consequently had exaggerated but could see more clearly now.

The spokesman for the Democrats of 203 also began with "I sensed a feeling of considerable happiness with the process." Similarly, the Democrats of 207 had felt much better about the work they were doing. "We spent an hour last night screaming and shouting at each other which appears to work wonders and we recommend that highly to all of you as a way of getting ahead."

There were some flickers of the dynamic but generally they were muted. The spokesman for the Democrats of 207 explained that they had been just about to work out how to move 'from here to there' when "that damned B did it to us again." i.e. stopped the group working. It was a joke as B had only been doing his job but it was also letting B know that his role last night in stopping work had been recognised. Another member of the group mentioned that their discussions of 'humans as lemmings' may have been a reflection of last night's climate. This is actually a very nice metaphor for the dynamic of fight/flight. Then there was a very direct one. In asking around the group for further contributions, B had to be reminded that he had forgotten to ask Fred for a contribution to the group report. B responded "O Fred! Fancy forgetting Fred." There were laughs all round. "Sorry, Fred."

In responding to this situation, Fred picked up Per's point about the seriousness of the situation in Africa, South America and most of the Southern hemisphere whose climates and situations are so different to those the majority of the participants encounter. He argues that without participative democracy in the north there would be no hope of a substantial improvement in North-South relations. This was immediately queried by a North American

and reflected a minor vector running through the conference. I had noted on a couple of occasions that some of the international visitors had a sense that there was just a touch too much of self-concern or self-interest on the part of the North Americans; just a slight feeling that they really weren't too interested in other's problems and learnings. Fred had obviously sensed it too as he finished his response by saying "If we continue to behave like that (i.e. without altruism) and we don't have the will to help the other half of the humanity, then good bloody riddance" (to us as a species.)

Fight/flight may have been down but it wasn't out. Then Eric intervened and in essence what he said about the process was this: 'Shared governance or co-operative work is more important than fighting again. We have been in a crisis but we have also shown that we can create an independent innovating conference which uses open space. There's no need to smash yourselves up. Use what you've got, exploit your differences to creative ends. This conference is very robust because it is still working and you can do more of the same without fighting or disturbing others. Go for co-operative creative work because that will give you more power and involve more people who will themselves have more power because they will be not passive, but active. The conference is a microcosm of the whole and you can show a way forward.'

This was an utterance of great coherence at the level of both work and the group assumption and the reader can check the actual content as recorded in the Content chapter. Discussion then proceeded simultaneously at those levels. He came in to support Eric by saying they should all be monitoring the conference process to hear these things and get some better control of it than we had last night. 'We can observe and learn from what's happening here and we know it can be painful when purposeful systems clash. We should have a policy about and know how make decisions so that we use these clashes constructively rather than being frightened of them.' The points were reinforced in various ways, e.g. 'this (work) is very exciting as people are experiencing things in a way which links them with the larger issues. It isn't clear yet how we may assist that process.' H reiterated his point of the previous night that *we* were in a turbulent environment but added that it was coming together for us.

B thanked the group for the excellent discussion, announced lunch and a resumption immediately after.

Work Repulses a Raiding Party

The resumption began with B gently reminding the groups that they really should try and get their stuff on flip charts to aid other groups and this reporter. He also discussed the design committee meeting which had been held over lunch and their very positive feeling about the morning's work. We had obviously come a long way from the "confusion", politely termed, of the night before and now had to decide the next step. The suggestion was that we proceed immediately with the speakers' corner followed by a break with groups resuming work at 4.30. Dinner was re-scheduled for 8.00 pm rather than 7.00. Because the groups had made progress the design committee was of the view that they should attempt to see how far they could push the work further, looking particularly at what they would do to implement the visions arrived at. It really boiled to 'what are we prepared to do by way of action and implementation over the next thirty years?' This was the time frame suggested by the design committee as it considered Rafael's comments on time and space and felt the need to avoid rushing into short-term solutions and 'what are we going to do on Monday'? This

was an unusual opportunity for some long term strategic thinking and planning as so often we are trapped into 'the next week' phenomenon. He also relayed the committee's feeling that an underlying dimension of this work involved passion or commitment on the part of individuals, a desire to get something done or avoid those things which might otherwise happen.

There was an immediate response which took the form of "I don't like the thirty years time horizon" and from another, "I don't have it.' To which a member of the committee replied "That's why we put it in here." Rafael's point about the North American mind had been well and truly validated. The issue was well debated with views put that it was possible to do something useful without having such a horizon and alternatively, how can I decide what to do tomorrow if I do not have a thirty year horizon. A nested set of time-frames was suggested from the immediate to the long also predicated on the view that if we don't have the longer, we don't get the more immediate answers right. Processes must be directly correlated through time allowing a chance that the long term goals will not go awry. It was also pointed out that two decisions had been made in the US in the last ten years which affected people into the *twenty five thousand year horizon* and these involved two disabled nuclear power plants; therefore the thirty year horizon is really very short.

H   "There's an assumption about what level everybody in the room is coming in at. I don't think the assumption fits me. I'm not working on societal problems only. I'm also worried about free trade next year and what it's going to do to South-West Ontario."

E   "I agree but if the decisions being taken by utilities…are going to take 25,000 years to work through, then you cannot confine yourself to a thirty year horizon."

This dimension of tactics versus strategy also ran through the conference but it made a minor contribution to provoking a group assumption. B then gave a lengthy exposition of the differences between incremental and strategic planning and once again attempted to send the groups off to implement the management decision. Dependency did *not* set in. There was another objection.

H   "On the group works. I have several objectives to do with learning and understanding, and meeting the resources in this room. Our group did that a little better today, in a way which pleased me, getting to know who the actors were around the table, and I think the other groups did too. But as we approach tomorrow, I find that there's half the room here that I haven't got to know. I could make an argument for another rearrangement." There were murmurs of "No."

H   'I didn't expect a consensus."

A representative of the Processes and Methods group argued against the proposal on the grounds that they were now starting to feel comfortable with each other, had a good group process going and that all this would be severely disrupted if groups were to change. "In fact, I don't know how we would ever proceed." A member of the Democrats in 207 said that it was obvious that two mutually exclusive things were desirable but if the discussions were really to proceed fruitfully, it was necessary to hang on with the existing groups. Fruitfulness was the hope and therefore the choice was for continuity.

B   "Could we introduce any elements of choice here?" "No." from many and then laughs as they realised the other implications. There were mutters relating to dualism and dialectics "Where are the synthesists?"

It was clear that there could not be a compromise on this one but it was pointed out that the following speaker's corner would be an opportunity to mix and make further contact.

This little sequence illustrates something of the way decisions are made in a large group working mode. H was its primary representative as he did not want groups rushing off from plenary until all important dimensions had been raised and clarified. 'To continue well, we should not be making implicit assumptions. We are concerned with the learning and networking. I could make an argument but I accept the value of unity throughout diversity. *We*, not the group assumptions, are in control here and to maintain that we must be very careful how we proceed.' H was well aware that the self-managing groups who lack sufficient information to govern themselves usually end up dead ducks. There is another level to this interchange, too. H had also been aware that the Processes and Methods group were still in the grip of flight and was not at all surprised by their spokeswoman's defensive reaction to his suggestion. It *was* a threat to their continued existence but he was prepared to sacrifice one group in the interests of the whole. Three groups were working and the conference was intact. He preferred to leave them be, rather than reactivate the fighting arm of the dynamic.

It is interesting to note here also the difference between the arguments of the speakers for the 'P and M' group and the Democrats of 207 although they both argued for group continuity. The first raised only their internal relationships and fear of their demise. The latter stressed the substantive discussion and hopes for taking it much further.

Discussion then moved to the organisation of the 'speakers corner' and the majority view was to hear both the previously cancelled papers. This was strongly supported by Eric. "I believe their inputs are *essential* for further work in the small groups." There was and is a real question about the meaning of this intervention. Was he unconvinced that the groups would continue to work? Was it aimed at the Processes and Methods group? Did he want to see a reconstruction of asymmetric dependence? In the hope that one of the speakers would send a message 'You *have* to get back to work!' (?) The conference now entered a period of rapidly changing modes.

A question was raised as to whether the free time after dinner could be used for some sort of 'getting to know you' activity but this was strongly rejected by H on the grounds that he wasn't interested in team building and you really only get to know somebody when you work with them on a real and shared task. He didn't want any more opportunities for flight so two decisions had emerged. That the group composition should remain and that contributions to 'speakers corner' should be sequential. Other speakers were invited but Rafael replied that he had responded before the paper was presented which was *even more of a feat than responding*, as *Gareth* had done, to a paper he didn't hear. (Rafael's talk, given before lunch but not on the tapes, is in the Appendices.) Annella mentioned that we also had a film about QWL which could be shown as part of speakers corner or after dinner, perhaps twice and that it also would be done sequentially. The atmosphere was still light and good humoured despite a reminder that challenge and fight was still on the agenda.

There was then a recycling and clarification of the purpose of the next round of group work and it became obvious that some people had not missed the import of the immediately preceding interchange.

A   "Am I to assume that as we're into Model 2, that the groups are not to report back on any issue, but just to experience and to share. Is that what we're doing? There's no centrality no, I gather, as we've all reported back once. So we're just going to continue the group process and share the consequences with the plenary. Is that the language of our organisation?

H   "We have had a thirty-year horizon for a set of goals so we are trying to go beyond

just sharing and trying to work towards action steps."

A here was playing the subtle provocative role he had performed so well in previous episodes. First, he said that we were into 'Model 2', democratic group work, but he equated it with flight, absence of work on issues as per the P and M group. Second, he denied any centrality, i.e. work occurring in the plenary or the conference as a whole which meant that we could, with easy consciences, split back into our factions and take the consequences. It was a sounding of which direction the conference now wanted to follow seeing that once again, we had been presented with a choice. But he himself was having a bit on both sides – he was for model 2 and we had it, but it was not task-orientated work. H's response was again to head off the group assumption by cutting through A's 'New Speak'. A then had a choice of giving up or being more directly confrontationist. As we see from the following, he is a believer in really testing his hypotheses.

A   "Is it understood that everyone is supposed to come up with action steps?'

B   "It's what *you* are going to do."

A   "Personally? The group will collectively report what its individual members are going to do?"

B   "Yes. We want to get it *out of the abstract* and test it in reality, and the reality is yourselves."

A   "Has that been accepted by the group as a whole? I haven't heard much response to that. It's a unilateral sort of decision."

X   "You mean you're a realist?"

A   "It just seems to me, if that's the case, then why do we need the groups?"

Fred   "Right."

When A asked this question, he addressed it not to B as the manager, but clearly to the conference as a whole. It was a direct challenge to B's authority and b attempted to reassert it by telling A that he was going to do what he was told. A, in effect, said 'Am I personally?' B said 'Yes you really are'. A then appealed to the rest of the conference to support him against such bullying and he received two minor pieces of support; one which simply says, 'You're perceiving it accurately' and another from Fred who say in this, another opportunity: but he bided his time. There was then some debate around the usefulness of this approach of action steps; several attempts were made to defuse this particular conflict. I argued for it in terms that one of the purposes of bringing a group like this together was that new relationships could be formed, and they will be best formed around people pursuing common interests, common ground. Countering this was the view that backgrounds and interests were too different for feasible coalitions and besides, the groups were inappropriately structured for this. I was accused by A of changing B's explanation of action steps, to which I replied that B's conception of it had not been mine. I had already explained that moving into action steps had originally been my idea. B was put back on the defensive.

B   "Let me now explain why I put it on the individual basis. Because it is very easy in this kind of meeting to talk about 'them' and what 'we' have to do, if a vision is going to be translated into any form of reality, is that we can translate it only through ourselves, as individual. Then we can get back into the group; it's a form of self-empowerment. And unless we go through that process of accepting 'my' responsibility to do something, even if it's in the group, towards attaining the vision, nothing will happen. That's why I stressed the 'I' and I expected some reaction."

H   "Of the thirty two people in this room, almost every one of them doesn't need to be lectured on taking self-responsibility."

B   "I was just suggesting that it's very easy to have that happen." (i.e. not take responsibility)

Silence

In self-defence B invoked the classical warning – 'Beware of "us and them"' which is a double entendre in this context, and then resurrected Gareth in promoting the T-group theory that 'we can only change the world by changing ourselves.' H brought him up sharply and he backed down. In its silent response to this interval, the conference was clearly in two minds.

Then a compromise was sought by E in terms of letting groups choose either to stay together or re-cluster and giving any group the right to close its boundaries to new members if it felt that would disturb the flow of work. Self-organising systems should be able to do that.

Eric   "I am wondering if the statement is clear enough. If people are to make really personal commitments to do something about something, in the strategic sense for human futures as G mentioned, then we must be clear what IT is. Presumably there will be a report or a publication in the most serious sense from this conference, to Canada and the world, which is meaningful. It will state a happening of this heterogeneity of people towards a concept of the human future."

E   "It's not as if there is only one 'it'."

Eric   "Well that depends on how you define 'it'."

Eric was reflecting here a basic point of group progress. Groups simply can't work well unless they know what they are doing. It sounds so obvious as to be trite, but it is constantly forgotten. He was also reminding people that he and others of the elders expected something significant from this meeting to take their work forward. The younger generation was not about to accept the implication of this which was to derogate flight and the Processes and Methods group. This coincidence of speakers will become more clear below.

There was a brief discussion of various possibilities here and then B invited Fred to discuss an idea he had put forward in the management committee.

Fred   "Let me do what one of those Marx Brothers does; the one that can't talk."

He put up the following sheet.

A Suggestion: By 12.00 Friday we should have:

A PRACTICAL AGENDA FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
-A MANIFESTO FROM ORILLIA, 1985

Each group to prepare one page and a paragraph.

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That suggestion was for a "Manifesto from Orillia, 1985": a short statement of *a practical agenda for the social sciences*, one part of which to be written by each of the groups. The confidence with which the group reports had been given clearly suggested that such a course was feasible and fitted nicely with the hopes of the design committee for a satisfactory

outcome. Although there had been doubts that the conference may only be a few years too early for this to occur, those doubts had been dispelled by the work done by conference itself. Each group should present one page on which they could make six to eight points, making them sharp and hard, and each was to add one paragraph addressing the central feature of the guiding diagram; the empowerment of the people. The groups through these paragraphs must explain how they saw their points contributing to this empowerment. Working carefully with words and metaphors the groups could make a powerful statement. This process seemed more appropriate than leaving the vital task of synthesising an overall statement to a drafting committee after the conference.

H supported this: "That is an achievable agenda for the time before dinner."

There was some debate as to whether it was desirable to aim it for a natural landmark such as celebrating the year 2000. It was further suggested that the title be 'A Practical Agenda for Human Futures and the social sciences'.

E then re-initiated the group assumption – 'this leader is still dangerous.' He argued against a written report and for a record in another medium – a film perhaps to free us from the constraints of the written word. 'Besides we may not be able to do it in a page and a half.' He just wanted to open up the possibilities. He did. B immediately supported him, "Particularly since this group on Processes and Method had not one jargon word from the social sciences in their entire report." By praising the group in this way B was once again criticising Fred for being conceptual. Eric pointed out that the Gerrads Cross meeting he had been asked to report was composed entirely of social scientists but this one wasn't. Our reports should be for our world wide collaborators also. E interpreted this statement as Support and continued "In terms of agenda and the 'it' as a way of making the other happen' or enhancing the possibilities of encountering ourselves with the 'other'. There's a million different ways, but that notion of the 'others' seems to capture something for a number of people and its open enough to be interpreted in different ways that are not incompatible. So it seems that in terms of the 'it', it is a really good one."

'It' originally meant the task for the groups later that afternoon so E again accomplished several things. He didn't mention the report directly which was the subject of discussion but he did suggest they do something other than write a report, anything other than write a report, including just sharing experiences or encountering as the P and M group had done.

The forces for work intervened with J requesting that groups might like to consider suggestions from others "in as much as each of the groups is part of the whole of us." His was to the Organisational group to the effect that he would like them to take their work further into the inter-organisational domain as he saw this of increasing importance. He saw "*a need for us as a whole to grapple with the inter-organisational*" and secondly "that in terms of human needs I am not sure that we are doing as good a job as we could in terms of *meeting the others in our midst here*…(There is) *a dominance amongst us*…I think what has happened here is that we have subsumed those others in the groupings we have here rather than really meeting the other in a more *explicit* way. Right now I'm prepared to go with where we are but I offer my comment as a sense of where I see us and something we might use tomorrow perhaps in reformulating ourselves."

He had begun with mention of the content in order to get his flavour across but clearly intended the rest as a process comment. (where I see us). Yes, he knew Fred was dominant but we were starting to fight again and losing the whole. We had to reformulate the interconnections or there would be another spectacular with the audience left out again. Why not meet Fred and work with him? (It is noteworthy that J who finally convinced the

Processes and methods groups that they should produce a brief written report, that which appears at the beginning of this document.)

Francisco came in to support the work culture and *was* more explicit. "The agenda for a group like this, precisely what the whole thing is about, is that we need to know and can learn from each other that which will enable us in our own practical work to do better. What I am looking for in a group like this is precisely a short sense of the things we have to get done in terms of creating concepts, ideas, so that we may do our work in a better way. There is a group task which is collectively defining what we need to know, that which Fred is calling the agenda for the social sciences."

Work was definitely winning at this stage. Another made a constructive suggestion as to how the groups could get going again with perhaps a better sense of the whole. We could have two tasks, one to try and make sense of what had been done in the small and the large groups. This would give us four pictures of the whole and from that we could find come commonalities, produce an agenda. And another. "I would also suggest we follow Fred's suggestion."

The decision had been made. The speakers were then invited to give their papers.

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At the resumption of group work the Organisation group was briefly disturbed by new membership. Latecomers are a fact of life but there is a question as to whether they should be allowed into small groups at this late stage of their life. This group actually coped with it well, but it consumed valuable time.

A most groups appeared to have been working well, I thought it may be possible to advance the plenary planned for first thing the next morning. There was only one group, predictably the P and M group, who did not feel they had completed their task before dinner. As the T-group mode is a Timeless one and will therefore attempt to soak up all the valuable time available to it, this came as no surprise. I had enquired of some members of other groups would they be prepared to report straight after dinner and the common response was something like "Yes, we could do that". It was during dinner itself that I approached the table with most of the P and M group, explaining that it would seem a waste not to capitalise on it now for an excellent plenary. It would also give us more time tomorrow.

After some time to discuss this proposal there was an interesting little episode. I was approached not by anybody in the P and m group, but by E. He was still a member of the *Organisation* group but said "*Our group disagrees with you*. The reason there is a lot of energy around is because *we do not have to work tonight*." He said it in all terms of the coalitions and dynamic. I told him I thought *they* were wrong. As it happened, the dinner stretched out for so long (in contrast to the night before) that by the time I was to be given an opportunity for canvassing the question in a large group setting, it was so late; it was impossible. The group assumption was far from vanquished. It was a waste opportunity but after dinner the great majority of the conference retired to watch the QWL video. Both Fred and I said a few words about this before they left. We plus a few others did not consider this a higher priority or even a good move in relation to the realities we were facing. But that was it for the night.

With Only a Whimper

(Final plenary – Friday, 9.10 am – 12.37)

The processes and Methods group gave the first report by hanging another picture, played a little theatre and then explained its genesis. A male narrator set the scene for three women who moved into centre stage to talk 'as women' while the male captured the meanings on the flip charts behind them. A male again explained the process. Let us look firstly at just what this group *said* at the dynamic level. It is very much a description of the group's position and the experience within the conference. The exact text is in chapter 2.

'We asked the question about how we could link ourselves up with the process going on with the rest of the conference. We wanted to facilitate that. We had to get out, break out of the barriers around us. Should we become aggressive (lions or roosters) in the large group in order to compete effectively; make grand gestures, talk loud, etc? But we've been the pacifist group, the flight (butterfly) group, and what would be the outcome if we rejoined the conference? Or can we stay in flight and get away with it? The position that we're in right now is that we are out of place and while we don't want to behave like fighting cocks, we also don't want to get flicked off like a butterfly. So it's a real dilemma. We believe our stuff is good, competent, and we want to stay the way we are.

If we do stay together as we are, we may be accepted much more by the dominant group, the rest of the conference, and they may come to see it our way. Then a lot of the differences will stop, dissolve, erode and we can get with whatever the task is at hand.

What we need here is a really good mother, one who can put the thing back together now that its broken; one who can sense what's going on in our child's environment, balance all the bits and see the whole thing through. We have been regarded and treated as marginal but we want to be at the centre of attention! "Look, we're really doing it too, mummy. Come closer and love us again".'

Note the very pronounced shift here to dependency. They were in a dilemma and this was one of the few choices left. It was though, a plea from the heart and the Good Mothers among us came in to comfort and reassure them.

Francisco noted that it was only a few weeks ago he had witnessed an essentially identical process where participants expressed the same concerns in the same terms. Marginal groups had come together within a Search Conference and they put women and youth at the centre. They forgot about the rest of the conference and followed their own process, used almost exactly the same metaphors; how to break out, for example. This coincidence meant to him that something extremely powerful was going on in the social field. Another noted that he knew a woman who could express emotion successfully while, for example, conducting difficult business transactions. A "I'm feeling all the damn stuff and I don't say it, but she's sitting besides me and she starts to say it, and it's amazing because *it's there* and its part of the transaction and it turns out to be a much richer experience." A said he knew they were right and he wouldn't have talked about it but he was pleased they had. B added support: "You are then though empowered."

E then upped the stakes. "It is also *rare* in social science, even in action research or 'model 2', for emotion to be used as data. Yet this *often the most critical data*. There are now some methodologists emerging with which you can rigorously take account of emotion but not enough. Some organisations headed by women allow for these but there are still obvious *paradoxes*. Female supervisors sometimes get pissed off when caring is displayed. In the analysis of one case it became clear that this man was *putting* his supervisors *in a bind* because if she showed caring behaviour she was perceived as a soft motherly person, not a sufficiently efficient manager, and if she did not care, then she was a cold bitch – who wants

to work with one of them. *The way to deal with that was talk about it openly* and acknowledge the paradox being generated. This field is only now opening but it is already clear that it is *full of contradictions*."

E was also being a good mother, and perhaps an even better one, as he attempted to bring a little reality along with his comfort. 'What has happened to your group probably is the most critical element in the process but there will be two views of it. You have also put yourself into a bind by the nature of your demonstration and the only way out is for it to be discussed at the explicit level rather than this hidden one.' It was also an invitation to the rest of the conference to elevate it from the group assumption, and some took this opportunity. But not just yet.

W1   "For me, scanning is an emotional data-gathering. You can pick up a bit about what's going on technically but what is really about is picking up all that *stuff which is there, that's not on the surface.* Then you *feed it back to them* and say 'here's all that other data that you may not have considered…' It makes a very rich picture." W1 continued the discussion at assumption level saying 'we wanted you to know that we know what's been going on and you may wish to consider that.'

E tried again. "But what is amazing is that in *all this theory* of QWL, all the measures of the intrinsic job qualities are of the emotions, and *yet it is not dealt with* in emotions." In other words; 'stop the theoretical discussion and deal with it!' Another came into support him with an external example of a union where the issue was "maintaining a collective relation between parts and whole. There's no doubt in my mind that the presence of the several women who work and are very active in that local, allows this whole come together, by the way thy work." In essence he was saying, 'you've asked for leadership, now show us that you can re-establish relationships between your group and the rest. Other women have done it.' W3 responded quickly. "I think the interesting thing about the process in our group was that yesterday afternoon the three of us sat and had this little chat about *being a woman* in this conference, and having said that (what?) we went back into our group and then in a sense, it went out of the window – *it wasn't an issue anymore.*" W1 and W3 'We empowered ourselves and then *we could forget it.*" W2 added "Also, we used our experiences to discover that the really important thing about why *our group was working* was because *we had created a support, a safety net*…When I gave my paper yesterday I had that experience of *feeling totally divided*, I didn't know who that was that was doing that, and I said to the group that that basically our whole group was working as one of the things we are saying we have to do in working with new paradigms – is to create that kind of thing, or establish settings which are very beneficial. There's something about establishing the ground in which people can better *find their own visions*… that was one of our important processes."

This is a long sequence but important. In fact, decisive. W3's response was to deny that the male-female dimension was still of consequence and in this context, see their Final report. Although women and youth were stressed all the way through the work of this group, we find in this final version that women have dropped from the agenda. Why? Because it was becoming a vulnerable point. More on this below, but W3 quickly sensed the danger of the challenge made to them as women and was just as smartly supported by W1. They spoke simultaneously. Exploiting this retrograde move, W2 increased the distance between the P and M group and the rest by reasserting that they had been working and she was in favour of staying totally divided from the rest. That was the way she had felt in the beginning and this group had given her support and sanctuary, and she still needed them. Being separate, finding their own visions, was the most important thing for their group. Dependency had had its day: flight was back with a vengeance.

E, recognising that the group was being pulled away again, then also changed his tack. He *warned* them of the consequences of following W2's tug towards full-scale retreat.

He asked why they had put economic barriers in the diagram again. "If you feel like an apple rather than an orange and you take the apple, it's a satisficing economics. But if the choice between apples and *oranges* is based on monetary value, then the choice is one of *maximising* rather than satisficing. These logics conflict, so if you are departing, from an *emotional 'I feel like an apple'* and *not taking into account how much it is going to cost relative to having an orange*, then *you should perhaps buy as many apples as you can before the price changes*. Then the economics becomes a barrier. But if you somehow manage to design an economic system which *stays* with the logic of satisficing, then that economic barrier will no longer apply."

Convoluted again, perhaps, but as clear as a whistle. 'If you're going to go that way it's going to cost a hell of a lot but you still have a choice. You can find a way through those barriers and it will mean there will be more for all of us.' Members of the P and M group reacted immediately – "Yes, they understood that."

L   "That's why this notion of a learning journey. The notion was that the spaces of the traditional, social, political, etc barriers is this space and the journey from the centre taken by marginal groups. It's a notional barrier which *only operates, if* during that learning, *there are not ways defined and designed to break through it*. That's why we put environmental limits in there although it's a *total different kind of barrier* but it's expressive of the kind of limits which are assumed to *apply to a marginal group* working out, and in fact, to neutralise whatever they do, because *they can't break out*. That's the sense that those arrows are in fact learning tracks out."

L gave the distinct impression here that he was having a lot of trouble saying what he had to say without saying it. It too is a masterpiece of convolution. But all he needed to say and did say was 'We've been marginal and there are no ways here, in this environment, to re-integrate. You're making assumptions about the fact that we can re-join you, because we can't.' W2 had reminded them that they had agreed to protect her from the wolf-pack and they had to stick to their pledge. They couldn't desert her now – it was that kind of a limit. Some other time or place, perhaps, it may e different.

That seemed pretty clear so now H attempted to find a way through to them by examining what they had done rather than said, i.e. the message in the demonstration. This was the group that had adopted the terminology of expressivism, instrumentalism and synthesis.

H   "…This leads on from that statement, 'aims to express both sides of self, open up all process for all men and women'… Watching you, I was looking for the instrumental side. It doesn't come out very strongly."

B   "I saw it as soon as L got up to do the writing and I thought that was quite deliberate. The very act of listing this was an instrumental one."

W1 to H, "In what sense do you mean that. What would you have expected to see here that you don't?"

H   "Somethings towards the task, what we're here about, how these things will lead to the empowerment of people, all people, not just the marginal groups. I've seen four men sitting at the back and I don't see much of their contribution.'

There were contemptuous laughs and then a few moments of quite fierce debate in which each side accused the other of a perverse perception. Flight was angry and fighting once again with work.

There was a classical non-verbal rejection of a comment made by a male in the audience and this engendered quite some reaction. The comment itself: "I take it that what we have here is a partial program isn't it, to get more expression, expressivity, into the organisation?" It was mildly asked but the rejection was immediate and complete. X ""So much to expressiveness!" W1 "I expressed myself." H "That's a cop out isn't it?" W1 "Not at all; I just said a thousand words, to me at least, and I got my point across." H "But isn't what you are doing up there trying to talk to us?" "I did, but I don't need words; we've talked about the barriers to language." X "But it highlights the dilemma. Because you will have to talk about it again and again, so people can understand it." H "I've not understood it." W3 "People have to experience it themselves; it doesn't matter how much we talk about… and if you are a part of a dominant bounded group, it is doubly difficult for you."

Wham, bamm. And sock 'em again sister! If they weren't going to be allowed to fly away gracefully, without somebody hanging albatrosses around their ship, they were certainly going to kick them off the ground. Finally, they'd been told they hadn't worked, had looked after only themselves (see H above, and also 'partial') and that their way was never going to be effective in task-oriented terms. It was, of course, a highly effective tactic for keeping the conference in fight/flight.

But even then, more moderate voices attempted to find the oil to smooth the waters.

A   'I am hearing two things and that's what causing confusion here. There is the theme of expressivity and there is also the theme of femininity. It's a struggle and you cannot see yourself as simply a tool of expressivism or instrumentalism in such simple terms. Basically you have to let them flow from yourself, as you are, whether you're instrumental or expressive. I also hear, at another level, and that's what people are responding to, is how do we move away from the stereotyped masculine and feminine. I think it's ingenious of you to do that because it does open the vocabulary, but in another sense, this is a kind of loss because we remain in gender and we remain struggling with that issue, e.g. talking about feminising men. You say that well but when you say it you're also saying how precious being male or female is, and we don't want to lose that either. You know, when you respond to Alan that way, (the contemptuous non-verbal) you were responding to…. (can't get it, but it was the male side) I'm just sharing this with you."

This was another outbreak of fatherliness, in tone as well as content. There is praise (ingenious) but expression of a loss as the teenager flies off from reality. 'Patience my daughter. We don't want to lose you. Reality is complex and there are some things you can't escape. You really know that yourself because you just acknowledged it. I'm just trying to be here with you.' It is very interesting to note here that A and E had been notorious hot-heads in previous session when the object had been Fred. But now it was getting late and this was all seeming too silly to be precluding the last possibility for a constructive outcome. But W1 wasn't accepting any fatherliness whether it be in her interests or anybody elses. She got highly excited and somewhat upset. "I had the feeling that we had been talking about fundamental beliefs and values, dualism, our paradigms, our entire world views and to think that someone after four days of this conference, could say 'OK, we'll go and put some expressive stuff in organisations' just seemed such a trivial piece of it. I couldn't help but just react. I'm sorry, I wasn't meaning…" Fatherliness had certainly burst the bubble Several people talking – "not rejecting" "rejecting" mutter, mutter in general.

A   "Of course, she is talking too much." What her body reaction was saying – he wasn't understanding that, he was just saying something and womp!

B   "Now wait a minute. You're compartmentalising A. You're right back into

dualities. What I got out of it, is a clear demonstration of these different modes of behaviour and different feelings, animus/anima, if you want to use the Jungian terms for expressiveness/instrumentality, synthesism. They operate in all of us all the time. He continued with a lecture to A – the grandfather correcting the father, but A had already made the same points to W1. B still had his money on flight and to protect the P and M group he had to redirect the fight. His substance replicated A's but he one-upped him with theoretical language. A had spoken everyday father to daughter talk. B used his status. B concluded "When are we going to let the expressiveness in us respond to that (i.e. their) expressiveness and learn something from it." This challenge couldn't go without a response at the same level of concepts and logic.

H   'But that's only a partial response. Synthesis is a word we were talking about and throwing it in, in the middle of words like expressivity, instrumentalism etc.

B   "Listen, I'm using W2's typology, OK?"

H   "No. You're throwing it into the middle of expressivity etc as if they were all of the same state and in W2's typology, they were *ideal* states, right? And there was even a statement made by W2 that a desirable state is a synthetic one, right? And *it's more the synthesis that isn't evident to me.* That's what I'm asking about." (Do you want to throw meaty concepts into a den of lions?) You may well consider it dangerous but butterflies are actively adaptively prepared for such contingencies.

It didn't look like a *group* product to H and the transcript bears him out. There is no need to go into the complexities of life in a polygamous household but while it doesn't have any legal status, it is the pecking order inside the harem that often effects the critical decisions of the entire family, and this appears to be what happened in this case. We had been given a superb demonstration of the up-front high status male simply translating the meanings of low-status women, for the official written record. And the women, despite their protestations, hadn't wanted to change that situation at all. It was their wish only to let it be known. No wonder there was so much confusion to fertilise the group assumption. *Change meant no change.*

H made another attempt to reunite the P and M group with the rest. With some verve, style and good humour, he picked up on the word 'oscillation', introducing himself as one who had grown up as a control systems engineer. The conference roared with laughter. "Is that a lion or a rooster?" He was not knocking the group processes as it was the fastest route to change in control systems terms. His was a "mechanical response of a mechanical control systems engineer" and he wasn't sure it translated in human systems terms. With a rapidly drawn up little graph he explained that if we have a system which is trying to move from state 1 to state 2, then there are several ways of achieving this. The first way is to move very slowly, as in from Design Principle 1 to Design Principle 2. Another is to take oscillation and always overshoot; too much instrumentalism, too much expressivity and then the system oscillates and never settles. The fastest settling time is from a process that has an overshoot. The group process and report he saw as this form of overshoot and that's what he was responding to. It has this advantage, *if* human and social systems work like servo-mechanisms he DIDN'T know about that.

It was a highly creative attempt at bridge building: he was honest and explicit about his perception that the group had over-reacted in the direction of simply being 'expressive' but he could find a useful conceptual link. It was successful in so far as the spokesman L began to throw some light on other aspects of the group's work in similar terms. They had discussed the 'S' growth or diffusion curve and "this stage of virtually little evidence of the

connection between personal development, thinking and action and little impact of these on organisations." i.e. before the point of inflection. "We, interestingly enough, exactly tried to think within these terms but that was the curve we found useful." L realised that a substantial offer had been made to the group and was obviously keen to accept it.

(But in the interests of accuracy we should also note that many of us would simply disagree with the diagnosis of the group that the point of inflection has not been reached. An examination of the history of the movement towards democratisation in the world of work alone, shows the massive world-wide diffusion which has taken place. No single person in the world could keep a map of the already existing working examples, let alone keep in touch with those that are constantly springing up. The point of inflection was probably the middle seventies. In the community and family sectors, of course, there is even less chance of accurate record keeping as most have been 'do-it-yourself' ventures, well away from the prying eyes of academics. It is a pertinent reflection on this group however, that either, they were not aware of this diffusion (which was remarked upon by the Organisation group) or were so in the grip of flight, that they had forgotten it.)

H not wishing his invitation to be understood as wholesale acceptance of the group's report repeated his uncertainty that servo-mechanical curves would apply. But L rushed on with his end of the bridge saying that they hadn't stayed just with the marginal group of women but had translated it across to youth; "translated it into something that you might begin to see as an agenda… *it might satisfy you just a little bit more*." He was really trying hard too. But he had fallen into dependency and H, spotting it immediately, turned headmaster: "What does your one page look like?" L "There it is." H "That's it?" W1 "It's the picture." L "Well, yeah, but." W1 "That's our paragraph and that's our manifesto." X "What's the learning journey?" There were mumbles and then silence.

H like everybody else in the room was aware of the time, the fact that this group had been given every chance and they'd flopped. There *had* been a conference-wide agreement that in the interest of the whole, each group would come to this plenary with its final contribution to the product of the whole. He 'P and M' hadn't done it, hadn't even tried; obviously didn't have respect for the outcome of the whole or even any of the processes and conventions whereby people enter into and attempt to fulfil their interdependencies. Neither dependency nor defiance would cut any ice here.

Taking advantage of the mumbles and then the silence I intervened as I had 'fish to fry' with the women. I was already well aware of the history of the group and the meaning of the male-female demonstration as documented above and I was angry that a group of women had entered into a collusive relation with inertia and flight, and to a large extent, done and justified it in the name of the feminine and feminism, as well as liberation and empowerment. 'can I ask the women a question please? I think it's all good and it's all fine but what happens is that you can put a whole heap of women into a bureaucratic system and give them all the power and all the rest of it, and what inevitably happens is that in a very short space of time, those women turn into bureaucrats. Now, what is the answer to this? You've been in a setting where you've been able to get our message across but it seems to me that it's a product of the setting in which you've been. There's still something else missing here because you can take a pile of really good 'expressive' women, put them in one social field and turn they turn into what they don't want to be, and what they were not originally. There's no doubt about that data; that happens. How do you get around that?"

It was a criticism of the group, that they had not even come close to dealing with the realities of what organisational structures and expectations do to people, especially women, and these were a group of high-flying North American women. But guess who replied to my

question? A man! Not L but he who had given the brief introduction, now emerging from a deeper layer of the group's working.

A man. "You have to work for a setting where that doesn't happen, one which involves everybody. The group tried to prepare the setting and all the men saw themselves as learning in the situation. Also, we saw it as the process of recovery of the group, it's the same process you recover after you tried to leap to other processes and *have been knocked in the process*. We saw the key starting point as where the process was already possible and that could lead into anything, into the international arena because women and youth are everywhere, and of course the feminine and youthful parts of ourselves."

ME. "Process comment, Mr Chairman. I asked the women. Would the women please answer the question?' E. "Did you ask the women?" ME. "Yes I did." I said I had a question for the women." At this point the audience interjected: "he was responding with the feminine part of his soul."

Let us be clear about this interchange. First, I'm a woman who believes that women have a particular role, responsibility and capability in the effecting of change. But they must be prepared to work hard, learning the ropes and take the risks involved in trying to make real lasting change. What I had seen here were women evading their responsibilities – 'plastic butterflies'. Second, the fact of being answered by a man confirmed that nothing had changed in this group, it was the old pattern. So I followed H's example and became a headmistress demanding that the girls stand up and account for *themselves*. I was probably also reacting to his criticism of my early intervention in that group. 'The group had tried to recover one of its members who had been knocked, then it had to recover from your intervention which knocked everything we had been doing. We were starting from the only thing that was possible for us and we had great expectations. We were exercising the feminine and youthful parts of ourselves, which you were not. You represent the male, old and knocking, (fight) dimensions of this show.' So perhaps I too had been a headmaster.

But there was the split, the fundamental division created by the leader of the younger generation. And note E's intervention. He didn't even hear me address the question to the women. The women had done a marvellous job of ceasing to exist, or though, noisy as they were, creating a climate in which women couldn't be heard. Or perhaps E never listens to headmasters.

It continued.

W1. "I think for me Merrelyn that I'm not prepared to answer your question. What we've tried to do here is not to answer your question directly but to present a model that for me
presents some real hope that those questions can be answered. But I'm…" ME. "But for me, it doesn't answer the question, OK?"

W2. "Well, we can repeat it again that what we abstract out of this would be the manifesto. It's more or less our role in being (something) status. *We don't have the pragmatics* of that worked out. That wasn't what we were doing. *Is that what you're asking? – what are the pragmatics of creating the settings in which we can empower people* to go out into these bureaucracies and not get moulded into those pre-existing patterns?"

It was obvious that the question split the group and the women. First, a man replied, then the first woman refused to answer although admitting again that the group *had* refused to confront the task, and then the second decided to answer straightforwardly. 'Are you on about how you can *really* make it happen? *That wasn't what we were doing*. Are you really talking about changing the real environments for people so that they can take a bit more

control?' I replied particularly to W2: "Well, look, I just think that *it's reality* that you should be taking into account here. The world does not in the majority of cases, work the way this conference has worked." I had engaged at least W2 as she responded. "Yes, but part of *what we understood was that 'we change ourselves'* and that is part and parcel of the process. So for us to go in a kind of a 'non-process way' – *this is the best we could do* in terms of saying what it is that we want to do, and for others, and making that the message." (It is a comment on the state of the art (and the science) that 'process' has come to mean T-grouping.)

The group had followed Gareth's prescription faithfully: they had been narcissistic, opened the identity process and tried to change the conference and the world by changing themselves and they'd succeeded. They were a-conceptual, a-pragmatic a-methodological. (The Final Report of this group omitted the word 'Methods'.) They had followed the leader as well as they could. 'Wasn't that right?' W2 was beginning to have some very real doubts. She had been misled and now she knew it. Right at the end she began to see what the wolves (den of lions) were really intending. It wasn't eating people like her at all. And it wasn't about living in a metaphorically constructed bubble. It really was about the 'important practical affairs of human kind' and trying to change the hard ones.

But it was all too late and the 'action' was still continuing. A didn't like my intervention at all and tried to neutralise it. "In my experience, most of the time you're working, you're moving people out of normal bureaucratic settings into more free settings… One of the things we have found very useful is the 'mood check'"; i.e., reflecting people's feelings back to them in order to elicit a response. "If you had a mixed group and these issues were there then people could speak for themselves. All I was trying to say Merrelyn here was that, and you would do this too, of course, that we don't allow organisations to stay in the bureaucratic form… Merrelyn was saying that this was a very special setting and I'm saying that these special settings occur fairly frequently now within bureaucratic structures. And if you are aware that you have a much freer setting you can then use that to allow the emergence, and you can't say what emerges. It may not be this sort of thing at all, but it does allow a lot of affect into what is normally, an unpleasantly rational process."

It was an attempt to slide over the differences; the fact that the women hadn't spoken for themselves, that I had shown negative affect, but it was OK not to be 'rational' and besides we were all doing the same things in our work. I knew I could get into an intense fighting mode if I took A on about the difference between changing organisational structures and running sensitivity groups, so I let it pass.

J then also attempted to complete the bridge and better explain their work. He talked about looking at the pictures "intellectually" and the significance of the metaphor of "breaking out" to understand the change process. It was the combination of this with visioning that was important and they really hadn't worked out the interaction. Breaking out "was a recognition of what Merrelyn was talking to which were the barriers, the constraints. My view of where we are at now with our page, if you like, is that certainly there's a lot of incompletion there, but there's a sense of direction." He went on to discuss the importance of role models and story-telling as 'ways of blowing holes through the barriers.' He was telling us that they had really worked hard, on the same stuff as everybody else but they just hadn't got it finished.

But this was taking it just a little too far and another male member of the group spoke, for the first time. Part of this has been reported above but it is worth repeating here as it was the very honest summary of the group's purpose, designed to correct J's over-shoot.

M   "In terms of 'breaking out', we talked about feminism but as I saw it, my interpretation is that it's more than feminism per se. We went to the youth example where we could specifically focus on *helping youth break out*. But it's also a problem of breaking out in this conference: we break out against the tradition established by the gurus, or it's a breaking out of the students against the professors". That was it, straight as a die: the younger generation in this conference had tried to break out.

J   "Something else to elaborate the picture but I'm not sure there's a real sense of agreement about this so far, but for me, there may be a trap in youth and women as a social group, rather than as a *phenomenon*. It's a distinction between marginality and a willingness and capacity to challenge, and to grow. The root sense of youth' is growing." J confirmed M and emphasised that it was the purpose of the group, the challenge that was most important, not simply the fact that they had been one group amongst many.

A couple of people thought they said quite enough.

M   "The instrumental agenda is to push out the economic and environmental limits that currently constrain the global system and so the empowerment from the Centre is probably the only way to cope with a world of ten billion. I think that was the instrumental side that launched the discussion in the first place." Essentially he said 'Stop this childish nonsense. There are very serious problems to be addressed. That's where we started from and they haven't been dealt with.'

W2   "I'm getting the instrumental sense that we should not take much more time." She was now clearly uncomfortable with her group's performance and by referring to herself as 'instrumental' moved to divorce herself from it.

A member of the audience then asked a question of the group which involved their discussion of the 'immune system' that the old paradigm constructs around itself to prevent change. The example used was that of the new legislation of equal pay for work of equal value. The problem he observed is that the application of this principle in workplaces is going to be based on job evaluation which can be done either narrowly, or more broadly. Defining jobs more narrowly will be a manifestation of this immune response which in fact will prevent shifts towards the new paradigm. How will those sorts of problems be addressed? They are going to be a very real social agenda item if the process of evaluation moves away from multi-skilling.

He therefore, also reminded them of the very serious realities in which he was involved and challenged them to start dealing with them. There was no answer from the group so H from the Organisation group responded.

He agreed that that sort of legislation does not appear to accomplish all the things society wants of it but it sets a framework within which people are allowed to go on further development. Without such a legal framework, action can become a useless struggle. While processes are essentially what change is all about, you need to secure them every now and again with structures.

Having been given a lead, W1 attempted to make a further point but H clarified a little theory for her in terms of organisational design and its effects. J from the P and M group then remembered that they had come up with the thought that what they needed was AIDS, to deal with the old paradigm and its immune system. These aids will be enabling frameworks and supports for change.

There were then some jokes about "don't kill us all off too quickly", "we still need the old paradigm, look where it's got us – here, sitting around tables enjoying the best life in the

world. Under design principle 1, we got to the point where we can discuss design principle 2." J tried to impress us with the seriousness of their points about AIDS as aids, but it didn't work. H. "the analogy is getting away from me."

B suggested we move to the report of the Organisation group.

H began the report by contrasting their group with the P and M group. "We have been very good and produced our one page, which is two pages, and a paragraph on empowerment." It was a totally work-orientated report. (see Final reports) and accepted as such with discussion concise and relevant. We then proceeded to the report from the Democrats of 203. This was similarly a work report but the spokesman couldn't resist the temptation to have a few jabs at sundry others like the P and M's. He mentioned specifically that we are of use only as long as we have insights and concepts to provide to others but that it was sometimes difficult to get to grips with the concepts and methods of socio-technical design, not in Scandinavia but certainly in North America. But nevertheless, it is necessary to do it. In his point about the necessity of an historical context he was openly criticising those participants who had obviously not done any homework in relation to this event and who had valued opinions above data. He saw it in part as a problem of language but also one of North American culture.

At this point B was attempting to hurry the process along although it was clear that there was a high degree of interest in the question of North American culture and its influence on the field (see chapter 2). Time was now 10.55 am and B's prejudices were showing. *Most of the previous two hours had been consumed by the Processes and Methods group report* and the reports from the working groups were thus severely constrained. The spokesman for the fourth group, the 'governance group' began by asking 'How much time do we have?'' Francisco, the spokesman, then completed the trio by also pointing out that their process was *not* that of the P and M group. Again it was an excellent report reflecting the genuine working mode.

The management of time is always an excellent index of the progress of a meeting. This one really was extraordinarily imbalanced. Table   provides a rough picture of the distortion.

Table Time Spent on Direct Work on Friday Morning (in minutes)						
	Reporting Time		*Discussion Time*		*Inclusive*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Process and Methods Group	11	19.7	41	80.4	52	46.0
Organisation Group	16	25.8	2	3.9	18	15.9
Democrats of 203	18	29.0	8	15.9	26	23.0
Democrats of 207	17	27.4	0	0.0	17	15.0
	62	99.9	51	100.0	113	99.9

Of the total time spent in this first plenary only 54% was directed towards the substantive reports. Of these 113 minutes, 46% involved the P and M group. This was because only 51

minutes were allowed for immediate discussion of the reports and the P and M group had been permitted 80% of that time.

After rushing through the last three reports, we then spent another hour and a half with the group assumption. There is little by way of coherent dialogue that could possibly be justified as content, and remember, it was supposed to finish at midday.

B thanked the Democrats of 207 (governance) and then offered his summary of the four reports. *There was no invitation for questions to the group or comments on their report*. As part of his summary he made special mention of the P and M report. "Certainly for me, I look at that diagram very personally and I realise that I have to learn from the youth and the woman within me, about experiences that I may have forgotten, in order to become more liberated and break out." He then asked us how we wanted to handle the reports? Consolidate them? So began the final phase.

It actually began well and co-operatively. The two 'democracy' groups were seen collectively as providing guidelines, not only for a democratic social science or research function, but also an ethical one. This could be expressed as a goal or guiding principle for everything we do, underlying our whole approach. Democracy had been defined by Benne as a moral process for the resolution of conflict in a pluralistic society. This sums up much of our approach; stating what we believe in but not prescribing a general theory for everyone. Similarly, social science has been described as a moral science of action and not an empirical science of behaviour. It was, therefore, proposed that the reports of the democracy groups be merged but the question was how? The two groups could be sent off to do it now. The overview given by Francisco could serve as a preamble for the total report. That also was seen as a good point.

Then suddenly, while the whole conference was working together across groups and factions, B re-raised the question of whether we wanted to consolidate the reports. "I just want to raise this as a question, but do we wish to consolidate now or do we wish to talk about the future of what it is we have. Because if we do consolidate now, I just have a sense that we may be forcing it in order *to achieve a task, which may not be the most appropriate one, given where we're at right now*. I just raise this as a question."

But where we were was showing that we could work together and what was the difference between talking about a possible first step at consolidation and talking about the future of our products? We were achieving a task (the task) which was to get the *conference working*. If it was to prove, further down the track, that we couldn't find a total consolidation, then obviously, that would show up in its good time. B's intervention was designed to cut the constructive work off at the ankles. For him, the most appropriate task was to maintain fight/flight. He did.

Fred came in with a compromise. "Can we take it as the wish of the meeting that the two democracy reports be put together by a drafting committee and we can get on with the major problem you suggested.' He didn't want to lose what little progress had already been achieved. But everybody knew what the major problem was and some didn't want any more to do with it. Neither part of Fred's suggestion was mentioned or, thereby, agreed. We were back into flight as B had intended and we *had* lost that little bit. After quite a period of silence came a suggestion that we brainstorm the action steps we had discussed yesterday. Then another, "Personally I don't support consolidating because I don't see how we could do it in the time we have left, and also I think that what H is suggesting is probably more fruitful." He thought it would be fruitless trying to resolve the problem with the P and M group. Another constructive start had come to nothing.

B   "What we *will* be able to do at the end of the meeting is duplicate whatever we have and it will be achievable." He was announcing that he did not want any further efforts at creative linkages. The final outcome was to be separate bits and pieces. It looked as if it was cut and dried; finished. Then came a surprise from a very quiet little voice we hadn't heard all morning.

Eric. "I want to make my plea for any further work that it's possible to do on the reports of democracy. I've been haunted for years by the growing discrepancy between what I call mini-democracy which has come out of the work-place, etc., and the macro-political systems. The former has hardly impinged on the latter. But one's got the beginnings of a check list here in these reports and anything we can do to put these things together would be worth its weight in platinum – that's somewhat above gold. If we can make any progress – unless we can solve some of the macro-political problems, I doubt that we'll have the conditions to move forward on most of the fronts we want to move forward on." Eric recognised a precious metal when he saw one and he, like Fred, didn't want to lose the fragment that had been found. *AND* after all, Emery-Trist should know how precarious the prospecting life is.

LONG SILENCE.

Eric had the desired effect. This was also O's first contribution of the morning – he also had been waiting for an opportunity to do something constructive.

O   "Now that we have seen all of the reports, we have more of an *overview* and we can give some suggestions as to which parts could be moved to another part, or what could be added here or there *because it should be a common product*. We can all see certain strong and weak points in the work of other groups. My suggestion would be to add some further information and ideas as to why we are *staying together*. It is easier to do that now than it was to comment on each report as it came because now we have the *total picture* and just to indicate what that could be: the Organisation report could be divided into two parts. They were saying something about small business and the public sector. But they have more general points which apply to all kinds of organisations. So we could restructure that and add a few things. If you look at the first report on process then you could add a couple of things which I think are *instrumental* in terms of helping those processes and one of them would be the Participative Design (Workshop) which is relatively well known and relatively well-developed. Another thing, of course, would be the Search Conference. Both of those are part of the process thing and we could probably add some others."

But he had actually gone further than Eric and was reviving the possibility that with a little creative good will, we could recover something also from the P and M group and stay together as a whole. He reminded us that today, there is a cure for leprosy. It was a magnificent, highly competent attempt to pull it all together at the last moment. There were concrete suggestions as well as good intentions. B realised he couldn't stay out of step with both Eric and O and capitulated. "Could we just spend a few minutes on this linking process and then get into action steps?" H   "If we're going to do it, we should at least get all the sheets up on the wall so we can see them." B had capitulated but reluctantly, and H, who had been working for work all through was going to make sure it had every chance.

Some minutes were then spent in re-arranging the wall paper and some people ducked out to get coffee. Who knows who said what to whom. B resumed: "We are now trying to consolidate, looking for linkages, of metaphor and meaning, connecting links, and P has a very interesting one." It was a particularly valuable contribution but it was also a discontinuity from the new thread of hope resurrected by Eric and O.

P   "It struck me as the group 1 (P and M) was presenting, the use of the term 'escapee',

and it kept recurring *all the way through the presentations*; being on the inside/outside, or thinking of the world as a Mobius Strip. And it occurred to me that when Eric asked for the connection between democracy in the work-place and the larger democracy that the distinction, whether it's intentional or not, between us as 'escapers' or 'escapees'. It's a potentially useful way of looking at *the kind of interventions we might make*. The implication of the word 'escapee' is that the process of escape is simply far more than that of getting out of what you are in. It also involves what it is that you have gotten to, once you get there. It also potentially involves the escaper becoming the escapee but there are others out there who are also the beneficiaries of, or who are at least, affected by the escape. And they are also the escapees. It's that sort of distinction which might help focus on the inside/outside question."

Eric. "May I add a word P because you made me reflect back to a very intensive experience my colleagues and I had at the end of the war with some prisoners of war. The important thing between success and failure was not the act of escaping, it was the ability to manufacture *an identity for yourself which stood up in your journey across enemy territory*. The manufacture of these identities was an extremely difficult problem. That was where *the real work* had to be done.

P   "And that was the work of becoming an escapee, not just an escaper."

Eric. "Yes. You had escaped but then you had to maintain yourself as an escaper through a process which tested the guts out of you." B. "Or else you would be in another prison." Eric. "Or you would be in another prison, very quickly."

All else aside for a moment, it was the most perfect, mature answer to the problems encountered in this conference, the challenge of the younger generation for leadership and the fight/flight it had engendered. 'Is there life after breaking out? If so, what or who are you going to be, and how are you going to achieve this?' Posed another way it becomes: 'Is there life after fight/flight? And in reference to the P and M group particularly, 'What have you done by way of constructive work that will give you a new identity?' Note also P's reference to the others out there who may also be the beneficiaries of your escape – 'have you really thought about what you will be doing for them?' Just simply a fantastically insightful contribution hat we could all take home and ponder. It was an example of the non-retributive behaviour that the governance group had recommended but more than this, given all the group assumptional flights of fancy to which we had *all* been subjected, it was a nice conclusion to the conference as a whole. Winning or losing in this conference was unimportant compared with the real work that had to be done outside. That's where the real test is and if you fail that one by failing to build an identity based on the realities of interdependence, you will be in solitary for the rest of your natural.

That should have been it. Anything further could only detract from the wisdom communicated by these two, and of course it did. (I often contemplate running courses in the ability not to communicate).

E, who had also been relatively silent for the morning suggested we go back to the heart of the fight by examining the links between what was on the sheets and what had been going on in the room "as there's a big gap there". It couldn't have been a more inappropriate intervention given the efforts that had been made to close the thing down decently, and also given the time. We were already into overtime and people were starting to leave. Those realities were also being ignored. The group assumption ploughed on.

E   "We don't live up to what we say we want. And I think we should examine why." He wasn't alone. X. "Do you want to elaborate on that?" E. "The ways we were using were not those we were deciding that other people should use. I think we should examine what

that really means. Why cannot we live up to our expectations of ourselves."

H   "I don't understand. I thought we did." (He had, and the Organisation group which included E had).

E   "You thought the meeting was run according to that set of criteria?"

H   "That's our ideal state we're setting out. Somewhere between striving for those ideals and we were striving as well as we could…"

E   "I'm not denying that. I'm saying that there is a gap and I'm trying to figure out why."

"Because we haven't grown up yet."

"Because we're not ideal."

"We didn't get to bed early enough, that's all."

"Or stay up late enough."

"Somebody ought to empower him."

Once again, E had been told to shut up or grow up or both. It was getting silly and as that can also push flight into fight, I once again attempted to cut through it. I didn't do it particularly well or clearly.

ME.   "I think it's got very much to do with what the last group said and that is that you have to be very conscious of the fact that we are designing perfect organisations for imperfect people. We can design the perfect organisation but then, they're not our organisations. Ultimately, those organisations are sets of people. We've always had this tolerance of diversity, but we're saying this is not enough; what we need, is the *inclusion* of diversity. If you take that seriously, then inevitably, you will have imperfections as everybody's different. The whole thing is never going to conform to any single person's expectations of it."

R   "But maybe the problem is there because we have started with the assumption that everybody is imperfect, and that there is imperfection."

Q bought it back to the task: "Maybe an interesting task might be to take the group's suggestion and choose a drafting committee by lot."

R   "And then what?"

Q   "Then that drafting committee would join some of the various presentations and try to produce a draft of a manifesto of reasonable length."

B   "The manifesto was Fred's expectation, it doesn't necessarily have to be all of ours. Do you want a final draft manifesto before we leave?"

X   "Yes and no." (Something else I can't get.)

B   "OK Q, I'm taking it and I'm testing it out. Do you want a draft manifesto before we leave?"

J   "We don't want a draft now, but it would be useful to have a process for developing one."

The conference was clearly refusing to make a decision. And well as yes and no, we had a suggestion to defer it. But B's mention of Fred had been an unmistakable reminder that we weren't here to work but to fight. H recognised the dynamic again immediately.

H   "this is real in that there was not enough time, and never will be; we never had enough time to meet in the groups and plenary, and there will never be. I came to academia

nine years ago looking for an ivory tower and I've never found it. I think in Paradigm 2 that it will always be imperfect, compromising. But where we must always aim for ideals is in the ethical parts and as S said, in the statements of what kind of a society we want as well as we can approximate it today, and of course, as we approach it, our visions will change accordingly.'

H did a much better job than I had done above, of asking that we not fly away from reality. While we must aim for ideals and perfection, we will never attain them; but that isn't a good enough reason for not trying. It was a direct request that we work, make a decision, now, and Fred reading it accurately, went straight to the core.

Fred. "I think that if we get a drafting committee, small, obviously have to be Toronto-based, the thing we need to do is make certain that a copy of the raw material goes to all members of this conference so that when they get the drafting committee's report they can compare it with that to make certain the bludgers haven't done a swifty."

B supported this move. "And obviously there would be room for comments before the draft becomes more than a draft." Going well and getting better. Eric threw this weight behind the work culture and was very explicit about it.

Eric. "In the larger world, some kind of product will be expected of us. I took Fred's line yesterday that coming out with a report would be one way of satisfying our relationship with the wider world. I still feel that is so, however imperfect the draft is. Some of the things that were said in Francisco's group – there were a number of ideas there, which if they were agreed on by most people here – they contain some very effective steps of how to move into the desirable future that is largely wanted here. There are very few instances of any suggestions of how to get from here to there and I believe we should try and produce a few. It doesn't matter if they are not entirely consistent, imperfect, it's a first shot."

B   "Francisco's opening statement, somebody remarked, could have served as the opening statement for all the statements. That's what you had in mind?"

Eric "That's the preamble but I wanted to go beyond that with some things that can be used for filling the gap between the micro- and macro- democracies, those regulating larger systems, involving larger numbers of people in those processes. I think we have something to say about that." We were definitely moving towards a conference product when it all started to go wrong again and it was partly my fault.

H   "Just a point of information, I thought, maybe I'm confused, but I thought you (ME) were doing that." ME "I thought I was too but that's not mutually exclusive from having a group of people who really try and draft… (So far, so good)… a one-pager or a two-pager." It was a dreadful mistake but I didn't realise it until later when I did it again. A meant an overall report with a one or two page introduction but those stupid words were to open the way for all sorts of objections and another opportunity for flight. Maybe I was more in the grip of the dynamic than I knew. I blew it, and from then on it was really downhill all the way.

B   "What this now says we have to do, is just go back a little step, now that we've heard all this, the tenor of this discussion. Does this work provide a satisfactory basis for further work?" Those words carried the implication that a lot more work would need to be done which wasn't the case. The question should never have needed to be asked. Given that the work culture was still so fragile, discussion about the decision, the task, went off the boil. A fairly lengthy statement was made about the various types of education, of children and adults, that must form the way of getting from here to there, which while a constructive statement in its own right, did not relate to the question of a report.

O re-iterated his points for re-organising and restructuring the overall report which was a step in the right direction but B intervened again.

B   "So, I just want to, before we move on, because I think we should spend a little time on the action steps that would fill in what you mean, Eric. Were you talking about action steps?" Eric. "Yes." This was a brilliant move on B's behalf. Look what he accomplished with these few words. A decision about a report would have to be the first and foremost action step we could take and we hadn't taken it. But B simultaneously denied it was an action step, asked for action steps, and because of the multi-layered meanings obtained permission from Eric to proceed in his (B's) way because Eric was clearly in favour of a report as the next action step.

But then B overdid it because he added "And that's where H wanted to go." But H was on the ball and he wasn't about to be used in this ploy. He responded: "But I'm confused about where we go. I assumed there was a process in place – that Merrelyn was going to try and take a first pass at putting some of this together and get it back out to us and we were going to get a chance to input on that, so anything else here was just extra for Merrelyn to carry away. If there's another level which suggests there should be another committee, that's fine. But I didn't understand what you were talking about." He had cut through B's suggestion that we don't decide about the report, and brought it straight back to the matter at hand. We were back on track after that smart piece of resistance.

Q suggested that there was "a difference between recording proceedings and integrating ideas into coherent statements." He was still arguing for an overall report to be decided upon and finalised as soon as possible. E ignored him. "I think you're quite right H, and this *is* Merrelyn's responsibility. If she wants to get a few people together over the weekend to help, that's fine." ME. "What am I supposed to be doing over the weekend?" It was good for a laugh and actually, totally spontaneous. I had responded intuitively to the implication that the responsibility for the conference decision was now mine, and I wasn't having that.

B became contrite and threw a rope bridge across to Fred and myself. "I am only trying to link in with what Fred had to say, with your task, and their not being mutually exclusive, and what Fred said about the small group getting together and working with this." I gave him the benefit of the doubt by agreeing that I had entered into a contractual relationship to provide a report of both content and process, but that was going to be a very big job and did not preclude the conference attempting to pull out commonalities between all the reports and weld them together. But my mistake was now coming home to roost.

E   "But the way I understand what's happened here is that we cannot put it into one page and the one page derives from the *grand theory thing* and it won't be able to assume the variety in the reports." ME. "I'm not talking about the grand theory. I'm saying that there are some things at a different level which really are commonalities which come out of those four group reports. I think we started to do that with that new stuff over there. That's all." The material to which I was referring included the 'escaper/escapee' discussion which had been noted and the following statement which had been put up while the sheets were being re-arranged: "A key objective is the inclusion of the child-man-woman parts of ourselves in a vision of the future – and the inclusion/understanding of different cultures." It seemed at the time like a reasonable start at preparing a brief introduction to the detailed group reports of the conference. I obviously have a lot to learn about expressing my intentions more clearly. But E showed the factions were still there and was eliciting support from the Democrats of 203.

O then suggested that there may be three levels of reporting; mine, which was the larger

task of process and content; a second, which was the group reports on the board; and a structure for them which was emerging, one which included a statement of the crisis we perceived." And Eric broke in here bolster this point. "I felt in the process of the group this morning that there was *a loss of the sense of crisis* and I would very much like to support what you've just said. *We have an urgent message to give*." There were murmurs of assent. Yes, there could be five to ten points about that. Eric did not want to see any more flight, we wanted a decision about a report *now*.

O   "Then there could be a third level of reporting which is really difficult to get into *one page*, but if you do it under the conditions that there is a wider document, it couldn't be *too dangerous*. If you can refer back to larger documents it should be *possible to agree* on even that document. I'm not sure what the process would be. Maybe working on the three simultaneously." O let me know I had made a mistake but that it may still be possible to negotiate an outcome without seriously invoking the group assumption.

Francisco. "There's something bothering me about writing reports and the (linear) way we are doing it. We agree that there is no way we can put together all this richness but we're trying to describe what we have done and we're trying to move to Paradigm 2 with the language and the tools of Paradigm 1. What else can we do? Can we have a report that begins in three different times, ends up in the middle, goes around giving the richness and at the same time conveys the meaning. Something else could be done? A film, cartoon perhaps, three or four drawings, I don't know. But it would bother me if the only product of something as rich as this, after the introduction Eric gave of the other meeting, thirty six years ago, together with our own feeling – let us see whether we can set some marks for ourselves in reporting the ways in which complicated, difficult, non-consistent processes happen. Can we convey that in the way we present?"

Apart from putting my foot in it, there *was* something else. And it was a combination of the dynamic and the fact that I was identified with one side of the fight. Francisco was still trying to assert that there could be something beyond Fred's analysis, his dominance, and therefore his report, his manifesto. Life was richer than that, there were other ways. I had interjected in the middle of this statement "What do you think you're going to get?" meaning that they were going to get something that did end up in the middle. Quick as a flash Francisco had parried. "I have read your reports: They're too logical." He simply said 'I know you, your work, your connections, and what you will do. I want something else.' The same dimension of knocking the conceptual, logical framework remained. I may have been chosen by the design committee to write a report but I certainly hadn't been chosen by the conference. But at the end Francisco did invite me to join them. There's absolutely no doubt that both sides were absolutely convinced of the rightness of their stances. Gareth Morgan was really only the first replaceable part sent in as cannon fodder to ensure that the battle would be memorable.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, there were other developments. B invited T to participate. T. "I have a bureaucratic question. It's not all that clear to me what kind of a product we are discussing. As far as I am able to see, we have discussed in groups and we have heard various group reports which have been very interesting, but I, at least, do not share, by necessity, the views which are presented by the other groups. But now we are talking about putting this stuff together and putting in some additions, so that it will emerge that there was a meeting in Orillia and they all agreed on this. We may have agreed on ten percent, and in my case, I enjoy listening to these reports of group dynamics but given the type of arguments we have used in Scandinavia pertaining to the 'psychologising' of changes in working life, of course, it will be difficult for us if it came out that we endorsed a broad statement of that

nature. I have to have reservations and it must appear clearly who has said what here at Orillia. We must not be forced to share points which we really do not share. I'm sorry to say it but… that's how it is."

T really summarised the process and the dynamic. There really hadn't been a 'working conference'. The best we had been able to achieve was some working groups. Don't pretend it has been otherwise. In addition, his work at home was too important to have it even further contaminated or diluted by his endorsement of the P and M group, and he could not therefore, put his name on an overall report. It was good and straight and finally put the knocker on any further attempts to produce Fred's manifesto.

With all the humming and harring and the mistakes, the battle for work had been lost. It was the clearest statement from this event that we were left with a divided field. It was now 11.57 am and we had actually finished on time. Fight/flight had won the day. No number of cartoons or pictures were going to paper over the fact that we were not going to pull ourselves together in this event. Perhaps Fred had been right. Perhaps it was too early. With exceptions, the North Americans were simply not aware of the crisis, or the history of the field or didn't want to know. All the various dimensions came together here. But this was the real end. The battle was over. The 'dark side of ourselves' had won the field. But there were some survivors. Their story follows for those that are interested.

The Battle Over, the War Continues

H made the point that we had to know who it was being written for: that would influence its form. He was still in there but B let him know that he, too, was pulling out.

B   "From my viewpoint, *the trap is so big* that *I can't possibly get out of it* because this is *the work of the conference* and now it *is going to be transformed* and transmuted into another form which is *not*, in my sense, part of my mission. My mission was to get you here and say, 'is this a reasonable product, a reasonable outcome for the length of time we've spent together, knowing that there would be a report?' The public report is another matter. It *takes on a life of its own* and I have to say '*I can't cope* with the paradoxes and the difficulties that are contained in that.' *I'm not trying to wash my hands* of it but I don't know what the answer is, and maybe we have to come up with more than one report."

R   "There are probably ten ways of coming up with a synthesis of all this and if we try to force one, then *one group will be happy and the other group won't be happy*. Maybe where we should go is to make sure that all the differences will be there, will be expressed. And there could be a written synthesis as well as the other forms probably, because, if you remember the group who decided to write one thing with the economy in black became a point of reference. So in the report, the same could happen."

Despite B's protestations, he *was* washing his hands of it. What did he actually say? 'I have fallen into a crevasse which I can't possibly climb out of. So it's goodbye. I have done as much as I could but I also. Can take no further responsibility. What happens with this stuff now is Merrelyn's responsibility and I'm glad to hear it's her and not me. The work of the conference has been to install a new leadership but she will not tell you that in the report. She has to resolve all the paradoxes and difficulties that we've produced and I bet she can't do it in one report. OR, maybe hers will reflect only one side so that we'll have to write our own anyway. Each side will have to write their own version.'

But R also knew there were two sides and he could see a way through it. He gave me a big clue. Just make sure all the differences are expressed and all the pictures are there. B's

mention of the 'length of time' also made the wheels go clickety clack in the direction of writing a report which demonstrated just how we had spent most of our time. And that of course, is what you are reading. With a little help from my friends…

Eric "It seems to me correct, that we make a distinction, that we take the report for us which contains our process, that is, as it were, solipsistic in terms of the outside world and we take a public report. It would seem to me that it would be breaking a convention if we were to produce something inconsistent along the lines that you (R) are suggesting; *that we allow the differences to appear*, that there's no one way into the future, no direct arrow. There are *probes* which have come out of here which *show common ground and differences* and *all that is valuable*. In fact, doing that would be a very strong message to come from this group." R. "And maybe that's the strongest message we can think of."

Eric again was even-handed. He mentioned Gareth's 'probes' but noted that despite it all, there was common ground and that it was valuable to know of this and where the differences lay. (In writing this report I have disagreed with him about the solipsistic nature of the process report. Thinking about this, I have come to the conclusion that it is another piece of the jigsaw of demystification of knowledge that others become aware, that we, like all other mortals, suffer and endure the identical forces and dynamics of human transactions. Why should they not know of what really went on at Orillia? These things happen, even to those who have fancy titles and privileges.)

B, who was supposed to be at the bottom of a crevasse, then saw another escape route. "Then I have a sense of another obligation – I don't want us to forget that Labour Canada has some expectations out of this. But again, I'm really not aware of them and I can't take this any further at this point." It was again in the self-interests of denial of any good work and again he was disappointed.

Labour Canada in the person of U replied: "Well, I guess the fairest thing for me to say is that I'm quite happy with what I've seen here this morning and all of the things which have been put up on the wall, and if Merrelyn is capturing a lot of that, that is OK. I rather like the idea that there be a small working group to put some of this together… and *to make some coherent statements*. Beyond that, what Labour Canada wants is essentially to know *what your wisdom is* around some of these issues. Without the appropriate kinds of inputs, from people who are both citizens and members of a specialised science, then the likelihood is that government action could have consequences, such as we pointed out in the equal pay situation, that were not foreseen by those legislators when they drafted the legislation. That essentially is what Labour Canada is looking for. Your wisdoms will be thrown into the pot with a whole heap of other wisdoms so that out of that *will grow something which is meaningful* by way of government action or role in the furtherance of Paradigm 2. So I'm quite happy with what I see B. and I would like to see some coherent statements put together. But that's for my audience and not necessarily for this audience." B. "that's very helpful, I think."

U had backed work all the way, and whatever could be done by way of putting it together, and making it readable was fine by him. Labour Canada wanted the new ideas and creative proposals that could come from a group of people whose job it was to consider the future and advise on realistic, constructive moves. He also told B that *he* would like to see an overall conference statement. B was still stuck down the icy crevasse. The sponsors too, were in favour of pulling it together – they didn't care about our internal fights. And not unexpectedly, he was again supported by Eric who reminded us again that the original discoveries had come from work-places, that people had to work, but from this base have grown much wider concepts, such as those of empowerment and democracy. The original

concept has broken its boundaries already. It's become a much wider movement. "I think it's a fact that the start, concretely, in the real world was made in the workplace and that it has to go on there. It's important that Labour Canada keeps up its support of this kind of work."

U replied that there was something of a problem because QWL programs are regarded as 'soft' programs, not like transfer payments between provinces which have a somewhat hard edge. The results don't show up for thirty years or more. It s a bit like the diagram with the dark side of economics (from the P and M group) – there is a search for ways to cut the cost of government and soft programs become very vulnerable. The kinds of things coming out of this conference send a different kind of message about the value and results of those programs.

It was all too much for Fred: he had listened to enough irreality and flight. Like T, he didn't want his work being mixed in with sensitivity training so he burst into fight. "It is only in North America that we've been about for the last forty years appears to be a 'soft' program and you deliberately make it appear soft because you refer to it as 'quality of work life'." Where I come from we call it 'Democratisation of work' and when you put it that way, it ain't 'soft'. It is 'hard'. And it's the only answer you've got to productivity and if you can get out of that black cloud without getting better productivity you're a better man than me Gunga Din."

H was clearly delighted with this move. "It's the first time the word has come up in the whole session Fred." At least a return to reality! U was of the same mind. "You're talking about the essential characteristics of the Canadian character." Fred. "I was thinking of your neighbours, your cousins, your southern cousins, man." It was a nice little interlude, almost an oasis in the pretty flat bare period.

Do you reader, get the feeling that this is really dragging on? I do.

Discussion was re-opened on the subject of different types of reports, as memory joggers, as particular interest to the Canadians later that day (A meeting had been scheduled for 2.00 pm for the Canadian to consider Human Futures in their own national context) and as the basis for story telling. And, of course, the stories may be different, will clearly be different. The decision not make a decision had been made long ago but it has obviously created one huge 'zeigarnik' (unfinished business) – they simply couldn't stay away from it.

Eric returned to U's point about the results of our work not showing up for thirty years or so. 'Governments are notorious for getting bogged down in the short run and if we are to have any chance of bringing about our desirable futures and inventing all the things which need to be invented we must promote political processes which can begin to work in the long run. That too is a powerful message which can come from this conference'. Eric would have like a little longer stop over at the oasis.

H "Can I just check where we are?" B "I'm just going to check where we are. *Where we are* is in the *process of dissolving the process that has been going on* for two and a half days. *The Canadian group* will meet this afternoon. Before we let this meld into the world we will be rejoining – I purposefully do not refer to it as the real world because the real world is within us – but I just want to make sure that anybody who wants to contribute at this point as we start to dissolve, has that chance."

This was also a nifty interchange. H, concerned about the time (it was now 12.20 pm), about the fact that people were already leaving, and the process; the fact that no decision about the report had been made, assumed the managerial function. B was not to be usurped but in snatching back the managerial crown he did not ask, he told, and one of the messages

was that it's quite normal for a group to dissolve or go into flight at the end of such a conference.   (It has happened before, but it's hardly the norm.) Secondly, he re-affirmed that the flight was real but that reality consisted of flight. This again was Gareth's 'socially constructed reality'. Then finally to deny that a large group or conference had, or could do any work as a group, he asked for discreet *individual* contributions.

(For me, the observer and writer, it's becoming extremely boring to say that the dominant group assumption was alive, well and kicking).

B asked around some two or three people for contributions but there were no takers. But he didn't leave much time before he said "In that case". There was a late entry and that was O who picked up on the mention of the Canadian group. (I have noted above that there was another polite and muted dimension of dissatisfaction or 'North American vs the rest', underlying the event, and we had seen several instances of it. Fred's contrasts of Australia's 'hard' way, making it stick, and the reputation of 'softness' in North America could be interpreted in this sense also, and it is probably not surprising that O is a Norwegian, another elder of the tribe, who helped pioneer the first risky and difficult experiments in making organisational change stick fast at the national level. He was extremely polite.)

O   "I think this is obviously a primary product for the Canadians, but I think that one should also note that it could be of interest also to other groups. If you look at those participating in this conference, it is really *the periphery of the centre* of development in this area of industrial civilisation, some scattered points, yes. Maybe the results and what we can use could be different, so I'll just raise this question…"

B "That's *the conflict again*. I regard this just as the *product of us all* and this is an *international, global viewpoint*. What the Canadian group chooses to do with this material is up to them and I give them *my blessing* for whatever pattern leads up there. But this is *our product* and it's *the product of this group*."

O had tried to say, like T before him, that a lot of people here didn't know very much about the field at all and B responded by saying "you're starting the fight again. You are just as responsible for the conference product as anybody. We've got a fair selection of outsiders here but the Canadians paid for it and therefore, they are entitled to use it in any way they see fit. It brought an immediate response from Eric who didn't at all like what he had just heard.

Eric "I would not give my blessing to the Canadian group if they introvert all this material. I've had some doubt this morning about the validity of the Canadian meeting here, but I do feel that any Canadian group who meets should be world-directed. It should be looking at the properties of this society which are relevant to this creation of a planetary future, for the world in the widest sense, and the contribution that this country can make."

B "Yes, but they will have to do that to discover their capabilities of making a contribution to the wider scene. Otherwise, I am very much on the side of the internationalists." It was another slap in the eye for the narrow, self centred, 'fiddle while Rome burns' view that had dominated the conference, and Eric had finally declared his Canadian flock sufficiently grown up to fend for and defend themselves.

The divisions were now so clear that E came in to emphasise the point made earlier by R. The differences should be made clear in the report. E mentioned Fred's point about our work being regarded as 'hard' in Australia and T's in Norway, "Not in an apologetic manner but as an intrinsic 'good' part of the result."

B "Conflict is an essential part of the human condition, and you have to deal with it constructively, *not hide it*." E "Most reports white wash that." ME "*There will be no white*

wash."

B's statement is important here at two levels. First, more and more we can see that B holds the view that the group assumptions are inevitable in such a conference, as above, and this opinion must have coloured his approach to process management. The second point is therefore related because B had neither hidden conflict nor dealt with it. He had positively encouraged it by taking sides. On several occasions as we have seen, he had intervened to prevent fight/flight being replaced by the work group so this report is, as requested, no white wash.

There was then some discussion amongst the younger generation but H intervened and said "I think it is important that we didn't synthesise." Lots of yeses. H "We didn't spend the time to do that and it would be absolutely dishonest to pretend we did. But I would like to spend some time now finding out where we are as there seems to be agreement that we can produce four independent reports." Spot on. That's where we are. H then went on to outline a heap of possibilities. "We have some places that we can agree on, let is work on a mechanism for the differences." But again the dynamic intervened with a question about the purpose of the Canadian meeting. B said it was no business of this meeting, and correctly so. Then there was a question about whose responsibility it was to translate the butcher's paper into writing. Again, it was confirmed that I was mine.

B asked H to restate his question. He was still trying to work. What sorts of groups do we need to produce what sorts of outcomes? What outcome did they want? Fred made his point again that four people living in Toronto ought to pull a coherent statement together in legible English, not distorting the meaning of any of those statements, and shoot it around for comment and evaluation. (It's a very common procedure.)

There was discussion which was substantially in favour of a well-written prose statement from each group. B and H got into a fight about whether the group reports were prose, which most of them *obviously* were not, and A supported the minimal step of turning them into readable legible prose. So there was a chance that they would be read. I had gotten just about all the clues I needed about what could be an optimal report when B interrupted again. "It's over to *others*. The raw material is here. How it is transformed is not something for which I wish to have any responsibility beyond an advisory one, if I'm asked, and I don't think it's part of the process, it's part of the output. And I think it's going to adopt multiple forms. I don't think we know the answer."

H "Yeah, but I don't want to see us leave without having that done." W1 "Is there anyone who is willing to do it?" And then the debate really raged.

W1's question is interesting because she was a member of the York Committee who invited me to be the reporter. It was a vote of no confidence in me following B's sentiment that we may have to produce two reports – the 'us and them's reports, and his continued disavowal of responsibility for an outcome which clearly *was* part of the process.

A   "Look we agreed here last night that everybody was going to produce a prose statement. Why don't we get the groups who haven't done it, to do it." H "if this is what we're talking about, and I have to draw a picture; then there are four reports, or attempts at representations and if there's going to be an attempt to draw out what's common about this, I'm willing to be one of four (or whatever) people in Toronto that does that." R "But what I said is that I doubt that we can have just one overall report. I suggest we have more than one." W1 "We *have* more than one." H "I was responding now only to *Fred's last request*." Gabble gabble. H's 'joke' about 'Fred's last request' was an admission that he was prepared to battle on to the last man but he knew it was all over. Fred had invested heavily in

this as a major event with a significant impact on the future of the field, and H knew he wasn't going to get it. The idea was as good as dead.

Apart from the 'joke' there was a great deal of excitement. Many people were talking at once. Fred "But our group did that top block, the introduction, H." B "That was Francisco's introduction." Fred "Yes, we did that as a preamble because we were too frightened to do our own work." Laughs – it was both true because of the fight and not true because it was such a powerful report. H "Did you ask the other three groups of use whether we accepted your preamble? I didn't know it was a preamble to what our group talked about." Fred "Francisco took it on his own shoulders like an Inca." See what happens when fight breaks out – even allies fall out. Here H told Fred that he had messed it up too and Fred blamed his sparring partner.

Could we or could we not have a conference report? Everything about it typified the dynamic fight/flight.

ME "Well alright, the question for me is there anybody who objects to that first statements. The Crisis and Promise report, being used in that way?" Somebody said they hadn't seen it so it was pointed out. Bang, bang, bang. Fred banged the sheets against the wall "There you are, and then we got round to doing our own work" It was done good humouredly, but the intention was unmistakable.

R   "There are things here which are important and they are not there." Fred "Well take a pen and put them up there." R "Right, but that's the problem of reconciling the four reports into one – when you haven't time to discuss it." Of course there had been tons of time to discuss it, but that time had been consumed by the prior question of whether we should fraternise with the enemy.

H got back on the track. "OK Fred, you're saying that isn't any kind of synthesis, it's simply a preamble statement for four separate reports. I can live with that." There were sounds of assent from others, including the P and M group. Fred then went on to describe the order of the reports; Francisco's preamble, then the two democracy reports, organization then process and methods. And this is the way you will find it at the front of this document as there was no dissent from this formulation.

Then as this appeared to be finalised (again?). "This may be a paradigm 1 intervention, but can I say from looking at what's going on around here that the governance statements are the warp and the organisational statements are the weft: the *coherent statements* can only be the pattern that emerges and that *essentially* is all *we're looking for*. All the rest is just simple dialectic." B "And that is why we had *Merrelyn in attendance throughout*, in order to *provide* that weft, the *coherence*, because *we know that we can't do it here*."

There's no doubt about the endurance of the long distance runners. U was also determined that as little as possible be lost and he moved to make sure that there would be such a statement up front. Again he said 'Forget your processes and your fights – we just need the results of your work. And once again B lumbered me with it – the conference can't do it – that's her job. I was the excuse for the fact that the conference hadn't worked and fight/flight had won.

H   "What U is making clear is that he word empowerment which has driven the whole thing isn't in that opening statement." B "And the thing should have pictures anyway" ME "I have already contracted a photographer." Good for you.

Eric I just want to say that there should be four reports and a 'something else' which shows the common ground but admits that it is an incomplete task. The rest of the world need s to

know what we have done here and it's not a synthesis because that is paradigm 1, and the most important thing we can show is that we're breaking paradigm 1. It's important to show our differences and that we are leaving something incomplete, so there is plenty of space for others to go on with it. But we're giving them a start, a set of initial conditions from which other can develop."

B "And owning up to our own shadow selves, dark sides, which is that fundamentally we would like to have completion because we still have a lot of paradigm 1 in us and we would like to have that task done but we realise that it's not going to be done in the way that we intellectually like to see it". Eric "I think if we say that, it will have an impact because this isn't what is supposed to be said." Own up".

Eric said that here had been some work done (common ground) but not enough of it (incomplete). He also reminded us of one of the reasons why the work was insufficient, i.e. the fight about synthesis or no. It was not the root cause as I have shown, but it was the presenting symptom on Wednesday night. B admitted it was all true. We must own up to our nasty, dark little group assumptional selves and admit that we haven't done much by the way of conceptual work. Eric could also see an advantage as well as a virtue in admitting that even social scientists were human and B agreed that we would have to own up. And so we are!

O then went back to the way the four reports could be presented as a whole product. He suggested that the final reports be introduced by the diagram and thinking around empowerment, the model that had driven the group formation and the various work. H immediately saw an opening for a more task oriented venture for the closing minute – who should the report go to? H "An incomplete going out to? ME "incomplete people".

Sorry I couldn't resist it. The conference was incomplete and we were incomplete because we had failed to overcome the dynamic and now had to live with the unfinished business and our failure.

There was then another extremely messy and unresolved discussion about the markets for the various reports. I was getting pretty sick of it too an as there was a contract out for me to write a report, I said "There's no way I can write a report of this conference that is not going to include the conflict, the inconsistencies and the incompleteness. This isn't the end of the world folks, be realistic.

H's intervention was far too conclusive for the inconclusive people. W1 "I just want to pick up on J's point that another level of this is our individual story telling. The incomplete total story is one thing. There is also another whole bunch of us who at a personal level can tell our stories when we leave here, which is another way of reporting. After some confusion W1 confirmed that she meant orally "next week", I will be telling the story in my way and integrate it into my world". Others supported her in the concept that we would all be doing that in our own ways.

B "It is 12.30, I don't think we can take it any longer. We have to look out for the transitional object or it may turn back into Linus' blanket. He was reconnecting himself with Hans. H "But by doing that, we've made a decision which I didn't think we had made, and that there are going to be only two written outputs" (or one). The discussion was messy and incoherent. Then B "I envisage multiple outputs." H "I envisage a meeting where everybody wants to lay these problems on the table." B had grasped this temporarily appropriate moment to ensure that flight would stay in the ascendant by closing the meeting down and H knew exactly what B was doing and challenged him directly on this point. In effect he accused B of managing in the interest of the group assumption and trying to cover it up. Eric

played peace maker.

Eric "We don't know what our reports are going to be. Merrelyn will experience whatever she experiences. She may have recommendations to make. But I feel we can get somewhere with the incomplete guide to the future. So what is the first edition? It is Merrelyn's.

Fred "No not in regard to the product. I can tell you, seeing as how you can't make up your minds, that the mob that met last Sunday night are going to meet again by Wednesday evening. There is going to be a prose statement of what is up there and it will not distort any things which are on those sheets. So there you are. You can knock it off now".

Fred was as angry as H. He wasn't going to be beaten out of meeting his expectations of the conference by a pile of "wimps". The job would be done. It wasn't, because later that day, on the way back to Toronto, exhaustion and depression set in. There was a gradual realisation of what it really did mean for the field, and that was enough to depress anybody. If this was the younger generation at their best, then where was the hope for the future?

General discussion broke out. J "It sounds like it is the responsibility of each group to bring a prose statement." He offered to do that for the P and M group and he did deliver. B "And now it's 12.30 and we are not making much substantive progress now, which is the way it should be. These things should just tail off with a sense of incompleteness. H "You've just justified all of our actions, that's fine." B "I believe very strongly that we should not go out in a great euphoric stance of having set the world on fire.."

H wasn't taking his bat home either. He also didn't believe in B's theory of the inevitability of fight/flight and he could see exactly how it had been used. But B was in the driver's seat and he had no intention of being bothered by a couple of flying insects. The bees may buzz but the honey pot remains stolen. B reflected directly Gareth's scepticism about the value of our work and his admonition not to take ourselves seriously. At the end, the beginning was still in place. 'Virgo intactus'.

There were a couple of logistic details and then B was thanked for agreeing to be "dean ring master, whatever role you played in chairing this conference". B Considering all the hazards, the traps and potential problems, you have been a wonderful group to work with. To work with so many experienced people and thank you for making this all possible."

The thanks given to B reflected accurately his role. He has played Dean, ring master and also like a good ring master, he had climbed in with the lions in order to keep the show lively. His response was an honest one. He had enjoyed it.

An Inconclusive Conclusion

So that my friends is the 'no pretend', no whitewash, story of our incomplete little journey into the universe of work, conflict and inconclusiveness. It is also the story of why this report is written as it is. I believe it reflects the instructions I was given at the time.

For human futures and the future of action research what can I say? There has to be a question mark left over that. While work and creativity lost 'The Battle for Orillia', there are plenty of others it does not lose. Perhaps, before the next round, there may need to be a strengthening or rearranging of regional groupings which encourages more diffusion of the progress on the board and also inhibit those forces, which as mentioned in one group's expectations, muddy the water and cause confusion in those who are searching for the best approach to making the changes they wish to make. This was a major battle but it was not fought on the home territories of the tradition as O pointed out.

There will be others and as 'work' actually put up as good a showing as it did here, says something about the initiation of these future events, their structure and their function. There are lots of lessons to be learnt from 'The Battle for Orillia' and one of my hopes is that this report is sufficiently interesting and readable that some of these may be absorbed by those who would continue to push on in the great tradition we came to Orillia to honour – the tradition to which Eric Trist of the Tavistock gave such a powerful thrust despite the setback when they met with the North Americans at Gerrards Cross, 1949.

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