

and the changes in consumption in the inter-war period, emphasizing the ideological construction of the 'ideal' home and the ways in which class relations intervened, both in relation to consumer power and in the ways in which the 'ideal' home was appropriated by working-class and middle-class women. This had a bearing also upon the fate of domestic service which increased as an employment area for women in the early thirties and then began a decline which was hastened, in part, by the resistance of working-class women to enter this type of employment when factory work offered better wages, more time off and more 'mates'.

Feminists have long debated the causes of women's subordination in production relations but, as Miriam

Glucksmann's work makes clear, the reasons for this subordination are complex and cannot be simply read off from a general notion of 'patriarchal relations' or simply re-described via notions of the dual labour market. Equally, Marxist analysis, while providing a basis for understanding changes in capitalist accumulation and industrial production, cannot, of itself, provide answers to the specificities of the role of gendered labour power in these processes. Instead, what is required, to further our understanding of how we arrived at the position we are in now, is precisely the fine, carefully researched and analytically astute work demonstrated in the volume *Women Assemble*.

Sallie Westwood

Men's Work, Women's Work

Harriet Bradley

Polity Press: Cambridge 1989
 ISBN 0 7456 01626 Pbk £10.95
 ISBN 0 7456 01618 Hbk £39.50

Secretaries Talk: Sexuality, Power and Work

Rosemary Pringle

Verso: London 1989,
 ISBN 0 86091 950 1 Pbk £9.95
 ISBN 0 86091 234 5 Hbk £29.95

Gendered Jobs and Social Change

Rosemary Crompton and Kay Sanderson

Unwin Hyman: London 1990
 ISBN 0 04 445596 8 Pbk £9.95
 ISBN 0 04 445597 6 Hbk £25.00

Office Automation: Labour Process and Women's Work in Britain

Juliet Webster

Harvester: Brighton 1989
 ISBN 0 7456 0162 6 Pbk £9.95
 ISBN 0 7456 0161 8 Hbk £35.00

Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and Co-operation in the Nursing Profession 1890-1950

Darlene Clark Hine

Indiana University Press: Bloomington & Indianapolis 1989
 ISBN 0 253 20529 8 Pbk \$12.95
 ISBN 0 253 32773 3 Hbk \$35.00

Feminist research has now produced many accounts of women's paid work. Whilst coming from diverse theoretical perspectives, there is a common portrayal of the conditions and terms of women's employment. The majority of working women are to be found working in low-paid, low-status jobs which are generally constructed as being 'women's jobs'. Even professional women, who enjoy some relative privilege, can be seen to be marginalized and excluded from organizational decision-making and power. Gender is clearly one, very much alive, dynamic social process within the organization of work which structures women as a subordinate workforce. As we reflect, often bruised and beleaguered, on several years of workplace Equal

Opportunities policies, it is apparent that strategies designed to overcome gender segregation have not done so. The bridges between us, especially as black and white women, still have to be built; the intricate mesh of power relations, that keep us in our place, have scarcely been touched. Five recent books, all very different in their approach, address these ongoing issues.

Men's Work, Women's Work and Gendered Jobs and Social Change are two books aimed firmly at the women's studies market. Harriet Bradley takes a wide historical and sociological sweep to analyse why it is that men have different jobs. She argues that gender ideologies rooted in Victorian ideologies of domesticity and separate spheres for men and women are carried over into the sphere of production to divide and exploit women and men at work. Rosemary Crompton's and Kay Sanderson's book sets out to demonstrate that established sociological concepts such as a class and social stratification, the labour process, dual labour markets and so on may be developed to analyse gender segregation in employment. They argue that the problem has been the social sciences' neglect of gender relations, not that existing concepts cannot be developed to encompass feminist work. Case studies on gender segregation in the hotel and catering industry, building societies, pharmacy and accounting, are used to illustrate their theoretical perspective. Neither of these books may set the world alight, but both provide good, comprehensive overviews of the current debates on gendered job segregation.

Darlene Clark Hine's *Black Women in White* is a moving, optimistic and inspiring account of black nurses' struggle, between 1890–1950, to establish their place within the nursing profession in the United States. Nursing was one of the few avenues of occupational mobility open to black women in this

period, but this is no ordinary account of enhanced employment opportunity. Black nurses provided a vital health-care service for both rural and urban black communities who were barred or segregated from white hospitals. The cause of black nurses became the cause of the black communities throughout the United States. It is a history of struggle against racism and sexism, against the male medical profession which established its professional autonomy and control of medical practice at the expense of nurses, against the actions of white nurses whose own battle to establish their professional status included the exclusion of black women. The history of the emergence of the trained black nurse is one of black women who were 'determined to raise hell to get what they wanted'. Denied access to white nursing schools, black nurses created their own autonomous training and professional development. Of necessity, they were forced into challenging and confronting the racism of the profession with which they sought acceptance and integration.

In 1950 black nurses were finally integrated into the American Nurses Association, separate professional development came to an end and the National Association of Coloured Graduate Nurses (NACGN) was disbanded. Whilst this was a key landmark in black nurses' struggle for recognition and integration, it has not meant the end of black nurses' marginalization within the profession. As in the UK, a two-tier system of training has existed and many black American nurses are channelled into associate nursing degrees which has continued to structure them into a subordinate role in the profession. In 1971, a group of black nurses formed the National Black Nurses' Association in response to a felt need for autonomous organization and support.

This is an exceptionally well-

researched, well-documented book. It has at its core an analysis of race which is so often absent from accounts of women's work; it documents a history of black women as agents of change. It makes plain that sectional gain, made at the expense of others, is no battle won.

There are two new books on women's office work. *Office Automation* by Juliet Webster sets out to examine the impact of the micro-electronics technology on women's secretarial and clerical work. Will the word processor liberate women from routine work or will it lead to the further deskilling of women's work? Rosemary Pringle's book *Secretaries Talk* also considers the impact of technology but, above all, she is concerned to examine how male power constructs the meaning of what it is to be a secretary, and this reviewer found herself sloping off to bed earlier and earlier, to read yet another gripping chapter under the bedclothes. It pushes further our understanding of gender relations at work; it opens up for perusal men's strategies for maintaining their power in the workplace. Of late there has been a growing interest in gender relations in the workplace informed, amongst other things, by both black and white feminists' experience of Equal Opportunities work. It is that daily experience of working in white male organizational hierarchies that does your head in and reminds you that there is a struggle going on.

Secretaries Talk is a study of secretaries, the very epitome of 'women's work'. It is based on a series of interviews with secretaries (mostly women) and their bosses (mostly men), where each is ques-

tioned on their perspective of the secretary/boss relationship. It is also a fascinating study of power. Power is situational and relational and men's superior position in organizations is achieved in relation to women's subordinate one. Men's ability to maintain their power, to maintain their superior position within hierarchical organizations, is crucially dependent on their ability to maintain women in their place. Gender relations, Rosemary Pringle argues, are power relations and she sets about illustrating the repertoire of strategies and discourses that men use to maintain their power over women. Women secretaries are not without power, and they, too, deploy a range of strategies for resistance, but the struggle is not an equal one, women enter into the arena as unequal combatants.

What makes a secretary is not defined by tasks alone. Men trivialize and undervalue women's secretarial skills and knowledge; whether women are seen as 'office wives', 'sexy secretaries' or 'career women', it is clear that women's work is sexualized and that sexuality and femininity are key to constructing the place where women 'belong'. This book helps us understand why Equal Opportunities policies do not work, why they have not begun to dismantle organizational hierarchies or male power. Feminist research has rightly been concerned to give expression to women's experiences of paid employment but it now seems time to put the spotlight on men's behaviour, on men's strategies for maintaining their power.

Angela Coyle