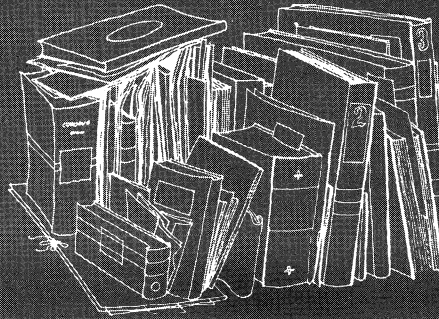


# Book Reviews



## PREVIEW

*The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, Leah Cohen and Connie Backhouse, Toronto, Macmillan, 1979.

It's a very sexual job, and that's how you make most of your tips. That means you have to smile through abusive remarks made by the customer. You have to take a lot of hassles, everything from comments to being propositioned outright.

So said Rosalie Adams, a veteran waitress who worked in anything from a greasy spoon to an elegant dining room. She has lost a series of waitressing jobs because she refused to allow customers, employers, or co-workers to sexually abuse her. Her story is one of seven in-depth case studies undertaken by Leah Cohen and Connie Backhouse in *The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women* (to be released by Macmillan in the spring, 1979).

The authors interviewed a wide range of working women only to discover that sexual harassment is a rampant feature of the work-place. Sexual harassment, they found, affects all working women, regardless of their age, appearance, occupational status, or social class. It manifests itself both physically and psychologically, running the gamut from leering, pinching, hugging, grabbing, and pawing to outright propositions for sexual favours. The harasser could be any man — a supervisor, a boss, a client, or a co-worker. Sexual harassment is not an expression of physical desire, but rather the exercise of male power over a female subordinate. In fact, sexual harassment is the most serious occupational hazard confronting working women.

*The Secret Oppression* will be the first Canadian book to address the subject of sexual harassment. The authors, a political scientist and a lawyer respectively, interviewed hundreds of working women and a cross-section of managers, personnel directors, union representatives, policemen, crown attorneys, government officials, and representatives of both the Canadian and the American women's movement. Their book focuses on what sexual harassment is; what it costs the victims; how it has affected working women throughout history; how management, personnel, and unions respond to sexual harassment (or fail to); and what legal ramifications exist.

Serious attention is given to a range of solutions. The book explores what tactics women use, successfully and unsuccessfully, to prevent sexual harassment and to deal with it when it arises.

A ten-point plan is provided for both management and unions who are concerned enough to want to minimize sexual harassment in their organizations. The question of the need for new legislation is considered, and the deeper, underlying societal problems which give rise to sexual harassment are examined.

Until very recently sexual harassment has been a closet issue. It is a sub-issue of rape, just one other expression of the coercive sexuality which saturates the total context of women's lives. The first step towards the elimination of sexual harassment involves an open, public dialogue. *The Secret Oppression* is an attempt to begin this process.

Leah Cohen, the co-author of *The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, is available for workshops. The workshop is designed to provide participants with an overview of what sexual harassment is; how it manifests itself; and what it costs the victims. Included is an analysis of personal, legal, organizational, and societal solutions.

The fee per day is \$250.

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*Games Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women*, Betty Lehan Harragan, New York, Rawson Associates, 1977 (distributed by McClelland and Stewart), pp. 300, hardcover, \$14.50, paperback (Warner Paperback Library) \$2.50.

*The Managerial Woman*, Margaret Hennig and Anne Jardim, New York, Pocket Books, 1977, pp. 221, paperback \$2.75.

Linda Fischer

For any woman who works outside the home or who relates to people who do, these two books can contribute significantly to her understanding of what is happening out there. While both books are directed at managerial women whose aim it is

to rise as far as possible in the corporate hierarchy, one does not have to buy that philosophy to obtain insights from the information. Women in education, academia, and the arts will also profit.

At one point Harragan contrasts her approach with that of the usual self-help workshop for aspiring managerial women. In the workshops women turn the microscope on themselves. They examine their motives and talents and plot a career path. Harragan turns a telescope on the corporate world so that women may plot their career paths. To a degree, this contrast can serve to characterize the difference between these two books.

Hennig and Jardim come from an academic setting and by interviewing corporate women were able to synthesize the factors that led to their success. Many of these women had close relations with their fathers and had much opportunity to learn about business while young. Although many of these women did not have much family life in their early careers, by their mid-thirties they began to devote more time to their personal and emotional needs. Hennig and Jardim recognize the limitations of such a model for most of us. Part III of their book outlines actions and paths women can take and is full of much useful information.

Many of the same observations are made by Harragan in a very different manner in *Games*. . . . The male corporate world is characterized as a series of little boys' games modelled after the military and team sports, especially football. The details that Harragan provides are fascinating. One point she makes forcefully is that the presence of women in corporate hierarchies is threatening to men because women are unknowns. It is not what you do that makes you unwelcome, it is that you might not know the rules and might upset their delicately balanced power structure. If you have ever publicly criticized your boss or considered going over your immediate superior's head because he or she was incompetent, then you do not know the simplest rules, and you had better consult these books. If you only have time for one, make it *Games Mother Never Taught You*.

In my informal survey of professional or managerial women and men, very few women had the knowledge and perspective of their work situations that these books afford, and not a single man found anything new in my descriptions. All of the women who have read these books have reported dramatic insights into their work situations and have significantly improved their batting averages.

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*Men and Women of the Corporation*, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, New York, Basic Books, 1977, pp. 303, hardcover \$17.75.

Betty Campbell

As Rosabeth Moss Kanter points out in the opening chapter of her recently published book *Men and Women of the Corporation*: 'The title of William H. Whyte's 1956 bestseller, *The Organization Man*, did not reflect an unwitting failure to use a better generic term for all humanity: there were then and still are so few women in management that the Organization Man meant exactly what it said.'

Essentially, Whyte's book dealt with a new attitude among managers. A child of the business boom of the fifties, the Organization Man placed his career bets and total dependence on the beneficence of the corporation that employed him. He felt they had a common interest, and that what was good for the company was good for the employee.

Many influences hastened the demise of the Organization Man. Student upheaval, anti-war demonstrations, the women's liberation movement, and finally, the recession of the late Sixties, delivered the final death blow. The Organization Man discovered that the corporation ceased to be benign and paternalistic when that behaviour proved uneconomical.

Around 1970, a new type of business executive appeared whom Auren Uris dubbed 'Self Actualizing Man'. In his how-to-do-it book on enriching your working and personal life, *Thank God It's Monday*, Uris traces the changing aspects of the quality of working life within the corporate structure. While Organization Man seems in retrospect a creature spawned by the spirit of fat-cat-ism, Self Actualizing Man personified realism and enlightened self-interest. He looked beyond material comforts, sought personal fulfilment in his work, and felt little loyalty to the corporation.

This is very vague! Careers and personal lives seldom exist harmoniously. The working experience was often felt to be disappointing and frustrating and there was basic conflict between the attainment of personal goals and the reality of the job. Similarly the corporate structure was emerging as rigid, autocratic, and oppressive to all those who worked within it — except for a small élite power group at the top.

Traditionally, writers have viewed the corporation as a totally male domain. Rereading these critiques from the vantage point of 1978 consciousness level, it is startling to realize how very recently the presence of women has been recognized.

Kanter, unlike previous writers, includes in her study *Men and Women of the Corporation* the diagnosis of the unequal treatment of women by corporations, and demonstrates that this structure actually impedes everyone. Her book is no feminist tract, but it does deal in depth with the inferior status of women particularly in the better professional jobs. She views the corporate structure as too rigid to accommodate the extensive degree of change needed to achieve equality for women.

As associate professor of sociology at Yale, Kanter bases her book on a study of an unidentified large manufacturing corporation where she worked as consultant, researcher, and observer.

From her privileged position, Kanter is able to analyse the roles that are formative in the behavioural pattern of everyone from the most menial clerical worker to the highest-paid management executive. With respect to the non-exempt employees, most particularly secretaries, she graphs their limited advancement possibilities and reveals the necessity for a member of a secretarial pool to attach herself as a personal secretary to someone in management who is 'going somewhere'. The career of the average secretary is almost entirely predicated on the career of the person she is working for. Yet in analysing the problems of the secretarial force as a whole one comes to realize that lack of recognition is a paramount problem as common to the executive secretary as it is to the blue-collar worker. As Kanter succinctly points out, 'Neither persons nor organizations get "credit" doing the mandatory or the expected.'

Kanter also exposes the ultra-conservatism extant at the management level, which dictates everything from attitudes to dress code. The constant overlap of office life and private life allows for a minimum of personal freedom, to the point where a man's career can actually be damaged by the activities or opinions expressed by his wife in the corporate-social milieu. For this reason Kanter includes a chapter on the wives of the executive set, considering them in their various capacities as hostess, socializer, or even occasional office help, as true women of the corporation — whether they are on the payroll or not.

With respect to the women who actually do achieve a degree