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PARADOXES OF GENDER



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[Gethenians] do not see each other as men or women. This is almost impossible for our imagination to accept. What is the first question we ask about a newborn baby?

—Ursula Le Guin (1969, 94)

“NIGHT TO HIS DAY”: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

Talking about gender for most people is the equivalent of fish talking about water. Gender is so much the routine ground of everyday activities that questioning its taken-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions is like thinking about whether the sun will come up.¹ Gender is so pervasive that in our society we assume it is bred into our genes. Most people find it hard to believe that gender is constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social life, and is the texture and order of that social life. Yet gender, like culture, is a human production that depends on everyone constantly “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987).

And everyone “does gender” without thinking about it. Today, on the subway, I saw a well-dressed man with a year-old child in a stroller. Yesterday, on a bus, I saw a man with a tiny baby in a carrier on his chest. Seeing men taking care of small children in public is increasingly common—at least in New York City. But both men were quite obviously stared at—and smiled at, approvingly. Everyone was doing gender—the men who were changing the role of fathers and the other passengers, who were applauding them silently. But there was more gendering going on that probably fewer people noticed. The baby was wearing a white crocheted cap and white clothes. You couldn’t tell if it was a boy or a girl. The child in the stroller was wearing a dark blue T-shirt and dark print pants. As they started to leave the train, the father put a Yankee baseball cap on the child’s head. Ah, a boy, I thought. Then I noticed the gleam of tiny earrings in the child’s ears, and as they got off, I saw the little flowered sneakers and lace-trimmed socks. Not a boy after all. Gender done.

Gender is such a familiar part of daily life that it usually takes a deliberate

disruption of our expectations of how women and men are supposed to act to pay attention to how it is produced. Gender signs and signals are so ubiquitous that we usually fail to note them—unless they are missing or ambiguous. Then we are uncomfortable until we have successfully placed the other person in a gender status; otherwise, we feel socially dislocated. In our society, in addition to man and woman, the status can be *transvestite* (a person who dresses in opposite-gender clothes) and *transsexual* (a person who has had sex-change surgery). Transvestites and transsexuals carefully construct their gender status by dressing, speaking, walking, gesturing in the ways prescribed for women or men—whichever they want to be taken for—and so does any “normal” person.

For the individual, gender construction starts with assignment to a sex category on the basis of what the genitalia look like at birth.² Then babies are dressed or adorned in a way that displays the category because parents don't want to be constantly asked whether their baby is a girl or a boy. A sex category becomes a gender status through naming, dress, and the use of other gender markers. Once a child's gender is evident, others treat those in one gender differently from those in the other, and the children respond to the different treatment by feeling different and behaving differently. As soon as they can talk, they start to refer to themselves as members of their gender. Sex doesn't come into play again until puberty, but by that time, sexual feelings and desires and practices have been shaped by gendered norms and expectations. Adolescent boys and girls approach and avoid each other in an elaborately scripted and gendered mating dance. Parenting is gendered, with different expectations for mothers and for fathers, and people of different genders work at different kinds of jobs. The work adults do as mothers and fathers and as low-level workers and high-level bosses, shapes women's and men's life experiences, and these experiences produce different feelings, consciousness, relationships, skills—ways of being that we call feminine or masculine.³ All of these processes constitute the social construction of gender.

Gendered roles change—today fathers are taking care of little children, girls and boys are wearing unisex clothing and getting the same education, women and men are working at the same jobs. Although many traditional social groups are quite strict about maintaining gender differences, in other social groups they seem to be blurring. Then why the one-year-old's earrings? Why is it still so important to mark a child as a girl or a boy, to make sure she is not taken for a boy or he for a girl? What would happen if they were? They would, quite literally, have changed places in their social world.

To explain why gendering is done from birth, constantly and by everyone,

we have to look not only at the way individuals experience gender but at gender as a social institution. As a social institution, gender is one of the major ways that human beings organize their lives. Human society depends on a predictable division of labor, a designated allocation of scarce goods, assigned responsibility for children and others who cannot care for themselves, common values and their systematic transmission to new members, legitimate leadership, music, art, stories, games, and other symbolic productions. One way of choosing people for the different tasks of society is on the basis of their talents, motivations, and competence—their demonstrated achievements. The other way is on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity—assigned membership in a category of people. Although societies vary in the extent to which they use one or the other of these ways of allocating people to work and to carry out other responsibilities, every society uses gender and age grades. Every society classifies people as “girl and boy children,” “girls and boys ready to be married,” and “fully adult women and men,” constructs similarities among them and differences between them, and assigns them to different roles and responsibilities. Personality characteristics, feelings, motivations, and ambitions flow from these different life experiences so that the members of these different groups become different kinds of people. The process of gendering and its outcome are legitimated by religion, law, science, and the society's entire set of values.

In order to understand gender as a social institution, it is important to distinguish human action from animal behavior. Animals feed themselves and their young until their young can feed themselves. Humans have to produce not only food but shelter and clothing. They also, if the group is going to continue as a social group, have to teach the children how their particular group does these tasks. In the process, humans reproduce gender, family, kinship, and a division of labor—social institutions that do not exist among animals. Primate social groups have been referred to as families, and their mating patterns as monogamy, adultery, and harems. Primate behavior has been used to prove the universality of sex differences—as built into our evolutionary inheritance (Haraway 1978a). But animals' sex differences are not at all the same as humans' gender differences; animals' bonding is not kinship; animals' mating is not ordered by marriage; and animals' dominance hierarchies are not the equivalent of human stratification systems. Animals group on sex and age, relational categories that are physiologically, not socially, different. Humans create gender and age-group categories that are socially, and not necessarily physiologically, different.⁴

For animals, physiological maturity means being able to impregnate or

conceive; its markers are coming into heat (estrus) and sexual attraction. For humans, puberty means being available for marriage; it is marked by rites that demonstrate this marital eligibility. Although the onset of physiological puberty is signaled by secondary sex characteristics (menstruation, breast development, sperm ejaculation, pubic and underarm hair), the onset of social adulthood is ritualized by the coming-out party or desert walkabout or bar mitzvah or graduation from college or first successful hunt or dreaming or inheritance of property. Humans have rituals that mark the passage from childhood into puberty and puberty into full adult status, as well as for marriage, childbirth, and death; animals do not (van Gennep 1960). To the extent that infants and the dead are differentiated by whether they are male or female, there are different birth rituals for girls and boys, and different funeral rituals for men and women (Biersack 1984, 132–33). Rituals of puberty, marriage, and becoming a parent are gendered, creating a “woman,” a “man,” a “bride,” a “groom,” a “mother,” a “father.” Animals have no equivalents for these statuses.

Among animals, siblings mate and so do parents and children; humans have incest taboos and rules that encourage or forbid mating between members of different kin groups (Lévi-Strauss 1956, [1949] 1969). Any animal of the same species may feed another's young (or may not, depending on the species). Humans designate responsibility for particular children by kinship; humans frequently limit responsibility for children to the members of their kinship group or make them into members of their kinship group with adoption rituals.

Animals have dominance hierarchies based on size or on successful threat gestures and signals. These hierarchies are usually sexed, and in some species, moving to the top of the hierarchy physically changes the sex (Austad 1986). Humans have stratification patterns based on control of surplus food, ownership of property, legitimate demands on others' work and sexual services, enforced determinations of who marries whom, and approved use of violence. If a woman replaces a man at the top of a stratification hierarchy, her social status may be that of a man, but her sex does not change.

Mating, feeding, and nurturant behavior in animals is determined by instinct and imitative learning and ordered by physiological sex and age (Lancaster 1974). In humans, these behaviors are taught and symbolically reinforced and ordered by socially constructed gender and age grades. Social gender and age statuses sometimes ignore or override physiological sex and age completely. Male and female animals (unless they physiologically change) are not interchangeable; infant animals cannot take the place of adult animals.

Human females can become husbands and fathers, and human males can become wives and mothers, without sex-change surgery (Blackwood 1984). Human infants can reign as kings or queens.

Western society's values legitimate gendering by claiming that it all comes from physiology—female and male procreative differences. But gender and sex are not equivalent, and gender as a social construction does not flow automatically from genitalia and reproductive organs, the main physiological differences of females and males. In the construction of ascribed social statuses, physiological differences such as sex, stage of development, color of skin, and size are crude markers. They are not the source of the social statuses of gender, age grade, and race. Social statuses are carefully constructed through prescribed processes of teaching, learning, emulation, and enforcement. Whatever genes, hormones, and biological evolution contribute to human social institutions is materially as well as qualitatively transformed by social practices. Every social institution has a material base, but culture and social practices transform that base into something with qualitatively different patterns and constraints. The economy is much more than producing food and goods and distributing them to eaters and users; family and kinship are not the equivalent of having sex and procreating; morals and religions cannot be equated with the fears and ecstasies of the brain; language goes far beyond the sounds produced by tongue and larynx. No one eats “money” or “credit”; the concepts of “god” and “angels” are the subjects of theological disquisitions; not only words but objects, such as their flag, “speak” to the citizens of a country.

Similarly, gender cannot be equated with biological and physiological differences between human females and males. The building blocks of gender are *socially constructed statuses*. Western societies have only two genders, “man” and “woman.” Some societies have three genders—men, women, and *berdaches* or *hijras* or *xaniths*. Berdaches, hijras, and xaniths are biological males who behave, dress, work, and are treated in most respects as social women; they are therefore not men, nor are they female women; they are, in our language, “male women.”⁵ There are African and American Indian societies that have a gender status called *manly hearted women*—biological females who work, marry, and parent as men; their social status is “female men” (Amadiume 1987; Blackwood 1984). They do not have to behave or dress as men to have the social responsibilities and prerogatives of husbands and fathers; what makes them men is enough wealth to buy a wife.

Modern Western societies' *transsexuals* and *transvestites* are the nearest equivalent of these crossover genders, but they are not institutionalized as third genders (Bolin 1987). Transsexuals are biological males and females who

have sex-change operations to alter their genitalia. They do so in order to bring their physical anatomy in congruence with the way they want to live and with their own sense of gender identity. They do not become a third gender; they change genders. Transvestites are males who live as women and females who live as men but do not intend to have sex-change surgery. Their dress, appearance, and mannerisms fall within the range of what is expected from members of the opposite gender, so that they "pass." They also change genders, sometimes temporarily, some for most of their lives. Transvestite women have fought in wars as men soldiers as recently as the nineteenth century; some married women, and others went back to being women and married men once the war was over.⁶ Some were discovered when their wounds were treated; others not until they died. In order to work as a jazz musician, a man's occupation, Billy Tipton, a woman, lived most of her life as a man. She died recently at seventy-four, leaving a wife and three adopted sons for whom she was husband and father, and musicians with whom she had played and traveled, for whom she was "one of the boys" (*New York Times* 1989).⁷ There have been many other such occurrences of women passing as men to do more prestigious or lucrative men's work (Matthaei 1982, 192–93).⁸

Genders, therefore, are not attached to a biological substratum. Gender boundaries are breachable, and individual and socially organized shifts from one gender to another call attention to "cultural, social, or aesthetic dissonances" (Garber 1992, 16). These odd or deviant or third genders show us what we ordinarily take for granted—that people have to learn to be women and men. Men who cross-dress for performances or for pleasure often learn from women's magazines how to "do femininity" convincingly (Garber 1992, 41–51). Because transvestism is direct evidence of how gender is constructed, Marjorie Garber claims it has "extraordinary power . . . to disrupt, expose, and challenge, putting in question the very notion of the 'original' and of stable identity" (1992, 16).

Gender Bending

It is difficult to see how gender is constructed because we take it for granted that it's all biology, or hormones, or human nature. The differences between women and men seem to be self-evident, and we think they would occur no matter what society did. But in actuality, human females and males are physiologically more similar in appearance than are the two sexes of many species of animals and are more alike than different in traits and behavior (C. F. Epstein 1988). Without the deliberate use of gendered clothing, hairstyles, jewelry,

and cosmetics, women and men would look far more alike.⁹ Even societies that do not cover women's breasts have gender-identifying clothing, scarification, jewelry, and hairstyles.

The ease with which many transvestite women pass as men and transvestite men as women is corroborated by the common gender misidentification in Westernized societies of people in jeans, T-shirts, and sneakers. Men with long hair may be addressed as "miss," and women with short hair are often taken for men unless they offset the potential ambiguity with deliberate gender markers (Devor 1987, 1989). Jan Morris, in *Conundrum*, an autobiographical account of events just before and just after a sex-change operation, described how easy it was to shift back and forth from being a man to being a woman when testing how it would feel to change gender status. During this time, Morris still had a penis and wore more or less unisex clothing; the context alone made the man and the woman:

Sometimes the arena of my ambivalence was uncomfortably small. At the Travellers' Club, for example, I was obviously known as a man of sorts—women were only allowed on the premises at all during a few hours of the day, and even then were hidden away as far as possible in lesser rooms or alcoves. But I had another club, only a few hundred yards away, where I was known only as a woman, and often I went directly from one to the other, imperceptibly changing roles on the way—"Cheerio, sir," the porter would say at one club, and "Hello, madam," the porter would greet me at the other. (1975, 132)

Gender shifts are actually a common phenomenon in public roles as well. Queen Elizabeth II of England bore children, but when she went to Saudi Arabia on a state visit, she was considered an honorary man so that she could confer and dine with the men who were heads of a state that forbids unrelated men and women to have face-to-unveiled-face contact. In contemporary Egypt, lower-class women who run restaurants or shops dress in men's clothing and engage in unfeminine aggressive behavior, and middle-class educated women of professional or managerial status can take positions of authority (Rugh 1986, 131). In these situations, there is an important status change: These women are treated by the others in the situation as if they are men. From their own point of view, they are still women. From the social perspective, however, they are men.¹⁰

In many cultures, gender bending is prevalent in theater or dance—the Japanese kabuki are men actors who play both women and men; in Shakespeare's theater company, there were no actresses—Juliet and Lady Macbeth

were played by boys. Shakespeare's comedies are full of witty comments on gender shifts. Women characters frequently masquerade as young men, and other women characters fall in love with them; the boys playing these masquerading women, meanwhile, are acting out pining for the love of men characters.¹¹ In *As You Like It*, when Rosalind justifies her protective cross-dressing, Shakespeare also comments on manliness:

Were it not better,
Because that I am more than common tall,
That I did suit me all points like a man:
A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,
A boar-spear in my hand, and in my heart
Lie there what hidden women's fear there will,
We'll have a swashing and martial outside,
As many other mannish cowards have
That do outface it with their semblances. (I, i, 115–22)

Shakespeare's audience could appreciate the double subtext: Rosalind, a woman character, was a boy dressed in girl's clothing who then dressed as a boy; like bravery, masculinity and femininity can be put on and taken off with changes of costume and role (Howard 1988, 435).¹²

M Butterfly is a modern play of gender ambiguities, which David Hwang (1989) based on a real person. Shi Peipu, a male Chinese opera singer who sang women's roles, was a spy as a man and the lover as a woman of a Frenchman, Gallimard, a diplomat (Bernstein 1986). The relationship lasted twenty years, and Shi Peipu even pretended to be the mother of a child by Gallimard. "She" also pretended to be too shy to undress completely. As "Butterfly," Shi Peipu portrayed a fantasy Oriental woman who made the lover a "real man" (Kondo 1990b). In Gallimard's words, the fantasy was "of slender women in chong sams and kimonos who die for the love of unworthy foreign devils. Who are born and raised to be perfect women. Who take whatever punishment we give them, and bounce back, strengthened by love, unconditionally" (D. H. Hwang 1989, 91). When the fantasy woman betrayed him by turning out to be the more powerful "real man," Gallimard assumed the role of Butterfly and, dressed in a geisha's robes, killed himself: "because 'man' and 'woman' are oppositionally defined terms, reversals . . . are possible" (Kondo 1990b, 18).¹³

But despite the ease with which gender boundaries can be traversed in work, in social relationships, and in cultural productions, gender statuses remain. Transvestites and transsexuals do not challenge the social construction of gender. Their goal is to be feminine women and masculine men (Kando

1973). Those who do not want to change their anatomy but do want to change their gender behavior fare less well in establishing their social identity. The women Holly Devor called "gender blenders" wore their hair short, dressed in unisex pants, shirts, and comfortable shoes, and did not wear jewelry or makeup. They described their everyday dress as women's clothing: One said, "I wore jeans all the time, but I didn't wear men's clothes" (Devor 1989, 100). Their gender identity was women, but because they refused to "do femininity," they were constantly taken for men (1987, 1989, 107–42). Devor said of them: "The most common area of complaint was with public washrooms. They repeatedly spoke of the humiliation of being challenged or ejected from women's washrooms. Similarly, they found public change rooms to be dangerous territory and the buying of undergarments to be a difficult feat to accomplish" (1987, 29). In an ultimate ironic twist, some of these women said "they would feel like transvestites if they were to wear dresses, and two women said that they had been called transvestites when they had done so" (1987, 31). They resolved the ambiguity of their gender status by identifying as women in private and passing as men in public to avoid harassment on the street, to get men's jobs, and, if they were lesbians, to make it easier to display affection publicly with their lovers (Devor 1989, 107–42). Sometimes they even used men's bathrooms. When they had gender-neutral names, like Leslie, they could avoid the bureaucratic hassles that arose when they had to present their passports or other proof of identity, but because most had names associated with women, their appearance and their cards of identity were not conventionally congruent, and their gender status was in constant jeopardy.¹⁴ When they could, they found it easier to pass as men than to try to change the stereotyped notions of what women should look like.

Paradoxically, then, bending gender rules and passing between genders does not erode but rather preserves gender boundaries. In societies with only two genders, the gender dichotomy is not disturbed by transvestites, because others feel that a transvestite is only transitorily ambiguous—is "really a man or woman underneath." After sex-change surgery, transsexuals end up in a conventional gender status—a "man" or a "woman" with the appropriate genitals (Eichler 1989). When women dress as men for business reasons, they are indicating that in that situation, they want to be treated the way men are treated; when they dress as women, they want to be treated as women:

By their male dress, female entrepreneurs signal their desire to suspend the expectations of accepted feminine conduct without losing respect and reputation. By wearing what is "unattractive" they signify that they

are not intending to display their physical charms while engaging in public activity. Their loud, aggressive banter contrasts with the modest demeanor that attracts men. . . . Overt signalling of a suspension of the rules preserves normal conduct from eroding expectations. (Rugh 1986, 131)

For Individuals, Gender Means Sameness

Although the possible combinations of genitalia, body shapes, clothing, mannerisms, sexuality, and roles could produce infinite varieties in human beings, the social institution of gender depends on the production and maintenance of a limited number of gender statuses and of making the members of these statuses similar to each other. Individuals are born sexed but not gendered, and they have to be taught to be masculine or feminine.¹⁵ As Simone de Beauvoir said: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman . . . ; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature . . . which is described as feminine." (1952, 267).

Children learn to walk, talk, and gesture the way their social group says girls and boys should. Ray Birdwhistell, in his analysis of body motion as human communication, calls these learned gender displays *tertiary sex* characteristics and argues that they are needed to distinguish genders because humans are a weakly dimorphic species—their only sex markers are genitalia (1970, 39–46). Clothing, paradoxically, often hides the sex but displays the gender.

In early childhood, humans develop gendered personality structures and sexual orientations through their interactions with parents of the same and opposite gender. As adolescents, they conduct their sexual behavior according to gendered scripts. Schools, parents, peers, and the mass media guide young people into gendered work and family roles. As adults, they take on a gendered social status in their society's stratification system. Gender is thus both ascribed and achieved (West and Zimmerman 1987).

The achievement of gender was most dramatically revealed in a case of an accidental transsexual—a baby boy whose penis was destroyed in the course of a botched circumcision when he was seven months old (Money and Ehrhardt 1972, 118–23). The child's sex category was changed to "female," and a vagina was surgically constructed when the child was seventeen months old. The parents were advised that they could successfully raise the child, one of identical twins, as a girl. Physicians assured them that the child was too young to have formed a gender identity. Children's sense of which gender they belong to usually develops around the age of three, at the time that they start to group

objects and recognize that the people around them also fit into categories—big, little; pink-skinned, brown-skinned; boys, girls. Three has also been the age when children's appearance is ritually gendered, usually by cutting a boy's hair or dressing him in distinctively masculine clothing. In Victorian times, English boys wore dresses up to the age of three, when they were put into short pants (Garber 1992, 1–2).

The parents of the accidental transsexual bent over backward to feminize the child—and succeeded. Frilly dresses, hair ribbons, and jewelry created a pride in looks, neatness, and "daintiness." More significant, the child's dominance was also feminized:

The girl had many tomboyish traits, such as abundant physical energy, a high level of activity, stubbornness, and being often the dominant one in a girls' group. Her mother tried to modify her tomboyishness: ". . . I teach her to be more polite and quiet. I always wanted those virtues. I never did manage, but I'm going to try to manage them to—my daughter—to be more quiet and ladylike." From the beginning the girl had been the dominant twin. By the age of three, her dominance over her brother was, as her mother described it, that of a mother hen. The boy in turn took up for his sister, if anyone threatened her. (Money and Ehrhardt 1972, 122)

This child was not a tomboy because of male genes or hormones; according to her mother, she herself had also been a tomboy. What the mother had learned poorly while growing up as a "natural" female she insisted that her physically reconstructed son-daughter learn well. For both mother and child, the social construction of gender overrode any possibly inborn traits.

People go along with the imposition of gender norms because the weight of morality as well as immediate social pressure enforces them. Consider how many instructions for properly gendered behavior are packed into this mother's admonition to her daughter: "This is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and so to prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming" (Kincaid 1978).

Gender norms are inscribed in the way people move, gesture, and even eat. In one African society, men were supposed to eat with their "whole mouth, wholeheartedly, and not, like women, just with the lips, that is halfheartedly, with reservation and restraint" (Bourdieu [1980] 1990, 70). Men and women in this society learned to walk in ways that proclaimed their different positions in the society:

The manly man . . . stands up straight into the face of the person he approaches, or wishes to welcome. Ever on the alert, because ever threatened, he misses nothing of what happens around him. . . . Conversely, a well brought-up woman . . . is expected to walk with a slight stoop, avoiding every misplaced movement of her body, her head or her arms, looking down, keeping her eyes on the spot where she will next put her foot, especially if she happens to have to walk past the men's assembly. (70)

Many cultures go beyond clothing, gestures, and demeanor in gendering children. They inscribe gender directly into bodies. In traditional Chinese society, mothers bound their daughters' feet into three-inch stumps to enhance their sexual attractiveness. Jewish fathers circumcise their infant sons to show their covenant with God. Women in African societies remove the clitoris of prepubescent girls, scrape their labia, and make the lips grow together to preserve their chastity and ensure their marriageability. In Western societies, women augment their breast size with silicone and reconstruct their faces with cosmetic surgery to conform to cultural ideals of feminine beauty. Hanna Papanek (1990) notes that these practices reinforce the sense of superiority or inferiority in the adults who carry them out as well as in the children on whom they are done: The genitals of Jewish fathers and sons are physical and psychological evidence of their common dominant religious and familial status; the genitals of African mothers and daughters are physical and psychological evidence of their joint subordination.¹⁶

Sandra Bem (1981, 1983) argues that because gender is a powerful "schema" that orders the cognitive world, one must wage a constant, active battle for a child not to fall into typical gendered attitudes and behavior. In 1972, *Ms. Magazine* published Lois Gould's fantasy of how to raise a child free of gender-typing. The experiment calls for hiding the child's anatomy from all eyes except the parents' and treating the child as neither a girl nor a boy. The child, called X, gets to do all the things boys and girls do. The experiment is so successful that all the children in X's class at school want to look and behave like X. At the end of the story, the creators of the experiment are asked what will happen when X grows up. The scientists' answer is that by then it will be quite clear what X is, implying that its hormones will kick in and it will be revealed as a female or male. That ambiguous, and somewhat contradictory, ending lets Gould off the hook; neither she nor we have any idea what someone brought up totally androgynously would be like sexually or socially as an adult. The hormonal input will not create gender or sexuality but will only establish

secondary sex characteristics; breasts, beards, and menstruation alone do not produce social manhood or womanhood. Indeed, it is at puberty, when sex characteristics become evident, that most societies put pubescent children through their most important rites of passage, the rituals that officially mark them as fully gendered—that is, ready to marry and become adults.

Most parents create a gendered world for their newborn by naming, birth announcements, and dress. Children's relationships with same-gendered and different-gendered caretakers structure their self-identifications and personalities. Through cognitive development, children extract and apply to their own actions the appropriate behavior for those who belong in their own gender, as well as race, religion, ethnic group, and social class, rejecting what is not appropriate. If their social categories are highly valued, they value themselves highly; if their social categories are low status, they lose self-esteem (Chodorow 1974). Many feminist parents who want to raise androgynous children soon lose their children to the pull of gendered norms (T. Gordon 1990, 87–90). My son attended a carefully nonsexist elementary school, which didn't even have girls' and boys' bathrooms. When he was seven or eight years old, I attended a class play about "squares" and "circles" and their need for each other and noticed that all the girl squares and circles wore makeup, but none of the boy squares and circles did. I asked the teacher about it after the play, and she said, "Bobby said he was not going to wear makeup, and he is a powerful child, so none of the boys would either." In a long discussion about conformity, my son confronted me with the question of who the conformists were, the boys who followed their leader or the girls who listened to the woman teacher. In actuality, they both were, because they both followed same-gender leaders and acted in gender-appropriate ways. (Actors may wear makeup, but real boys don't.)

For human beings there is no essential femaleness or maleness, femininity or masculinity, womanhood or manhood, but once gender is ascribed, the social order constructs and holds individuals to strongly gendered norms and expectations. Individuals may vary on many of the components of gender and may shift genders temporarily or permanently, but they must fit into the limited number of gender statuses their society recognizes. In the process, they re-create their society's version of women and men: "If we do gender appropriately, we simultaneously sustain, reproduce, and render legitimate the institutional arrangements. . . . If we fail to do gender appropriately, we as individuals—not the institutional arrangements—may be called to account (for our character, motives, and predispositions)" (West and Zimmerman 1987, 146).

The gendered practices of everyday life reproduce a society's view of how women and men should act (Bourdieu [1980] 1990). Gendered social arrangements are justified by religion and cultural productions and backed by law, but the most powerful means of sustaining the moral hegemony of the dominant gender ideology is that the process is made invisible; any possible alternatives are virtually unthinkable (Foucault 1972; Gramsci 1971).¹⁷

For Society, Gender Means Difference

The pervasiveness of gender as a way of structuring social life demands that gender statuses be clearly differentiated. Varied talents, sexual preferences, identities, personalities, interests, and ways of interacting fragment the individual's bodily and social experiences. Nonetheless, these are organized in Western cultures into two and only two socially and legally recognized gender statuses, "man" and "woman."¹⁸ In the social construction of gender, it does not matter what men and women actually do; it does not even matter if they do exactly the same thing. The social institution of gender insists only that what they do is *perceived* as different.

If men and women are doing the same tasks, they are usually spatially segregated to maintain gender separation, and often the tasks are given different job titles as well, such as executive secretary and administrative assistant (Reskin 1988). If the differences between women and men begin to blur, society's "sameness taboo" goes into action (G. Rubin 1975, 178). At a rock and roll dance at West Point in 1976, the year women were admitted to the prestigious military academy for the first time, the school's administrators "were reportedly perturbed by the sight of mirror-image couples dancing in short hair and dress gray trousers," and a rule was established that women cadets could dance at these events only if they wore skirts (Barkalow and Raab 1990, 53).¹⁹ Women recruits in the U.S. Marine Corps are required to wear makeup—at a minimum, lipstick and eye shadow—and they have to take classes in makeup, hair care, poise, and etiquette. This feminization is part of a deliberate policy of making them clearly distinguishable from men Marines. Christine Williams quotes a twenty-five-year-old woman drill instructor as saying: "A lot of the recruits who come here don't wear makeup; they're tomboyish or athletic. A lot of them have the preconceived idea that going into the military means they can still be a tomboy. They don't realize that you are a *Woman Marine*" (1989, 76–77).²⁰

If gender differences were genetic, physiological, or hormonal, gender bending and gender ambiguity would occur only in hermaphrodites, who are

born with chromosomes and genitalia that are not clearly female or male. Since gender differences are socially constructed, all men and all women can enact the behavior of the other, because they know the other's social script: "Man" and "woman" are at once empty and overflowing categories. Empty because they have no ultimate, transcendental meaning. Overflowing because even when they appear to be fixed, they still contain within them alternative, denied, or suppressed definitions." (J. W. Scott 1988a, 49). Nonetheless, though individuals may be able to shift gender statuses, the gender boundaries have to hold, or the whole gendered social order will come crashing down.

Paradoxically, it is the social importance of gender statuses and their external markers—clothing, mannerisms, and spatial segregation—that makes gender bending or gender crossing possible—or even necessary. The social viability of differentiated gender statuses produces the need or desire to shift statuses. Without gender differentiation, transvestism and transsexuality would be meaningless. You couldn't dress in the opposite gender's clothing if all clothing were unisex. There would be no need to reconstruct genitalia to match identity if interests and life-styles were not gendered. There would be no need for women to pass as men to do certain kinds of work if jobs were not typed as "women's work" and "men's work." Women would not have to dress as men in public life in order to give orders or aggressively bargain with customers.

Gender boundaries are preserved when transsexuals create congruous autobiographies of always having felt like what they are now. The transvestite's story also "recuperates social and sexual norms" (Garber 1992, 69). In the transvestite's normalized narrative, he or she "is 'compelled' by social and economic forces to disguise himself or herself in order to get a job, escape repression, or gain artistic or political 'freedom'" (Garber 1992, 70). The "true identity," when revealed, causes amazement over how easily and successfully the person passed as a member of the opposite gender, not a suspicion that gender itself is something of a put-on.

Gender Ranking

Most societies rank genders according to prestige and power and construct them to be unequal, so that moving from one to another also means moving up or down the social scale. Among some North American Indian cultures, the hierarchy was male men, male women, female men, female women. Women produced significant durable goods (basketry, textiles, pottery, decorated leather goods), which could be traded. Women also controlled what they

produced and any profit or wealth they earned. Since women's occupational realm could lead to prosperity and prestige, it was fair game for young men—but only if they became women in gender status. Similarly, women in other societies who amassed a great deal of wealth were allowed to become men—"manly hearts." According to Harriet Whitehead (1981):

Both reactions reveal an unwillingness or inability to distinguish the sources of prestige—wealth, skill, personal efficacy (among other things)—from masculinity. Rather there is the innuendo that if a person performing female tasks can attain excellence, prosperity, or social power, it must be because that person is, at some level, a man. . . . A woman who could succeed at doing the things men did was honored as a man would be. . . . What seems to have been more disturbing to the culture—which means, for all intents and purposes, to the men—was the possibility that women, within their own department, might be onto a good thing. It was into this unsettling breach that the berdache institution was hurled. In their social aspect, women were complimented by the berdache's imitation. In their anatomic aspect, they were subtly insulted by his vaunted superiority. (108)

In American society, men-to-women transsexuals tend to earn less after surgery if they change occupations; women-to-men transsexuals tend to increase their income (Bolin 1988, 153–60; Brody 1979). Men who go into women's fields, like nursing, have less prestige than women who go into men's fields, like physics. Janice Raymond, a radical feminist, feels that transsexual men-to-women have advantages over female women because they were not socialized to be subordinate or oppressed throughout life. She says:

We know that we are women who are born with female chromosomes and anatomy, and that whether or not we were socialized to be so-called normal women, patriarchy has treated and will treat us like women. Transsexuals have not had this same history. No man can have the history of being born and located in this culture as a woman. He can have the history of *wishing* to be a woman and of *acting* like a woman, but this gender experience is that of a transsexual, not of a woman. Surgery may confer the artifacts of outward and inward female organs but it cannot confer the history of being born a woman in this society. (1979, 114)

Because women who become men rise in the world and men who become women fall, Elaine Showalter (1987) was very critical of the movie *Tootsie*, in

which Dustin Hoffman plays an actor who passes as a woman in order to be able to get work. "Dorothy" becomes a feminist "woman of the year" for standing up for women's rights not to be demeaned or sexually harassed. Showalter feels that the message of the movie is double-edged: "Dorothy's 'feminist' speeches . . . are less a response to the oppression of women than an instinctive situational male reaction to being treated like a woman. The implication is that women must be taught by men how to win their rights. . . . It says that feminist ideas are much less threatening when they come from a man" (123). Like Raymond, Showalter feels that being or having been a man gives a transsexual man-to-woman or a man cross-dressed as a woman a social advantage over those whose gender status was always "woman."²¹ The implication here is that there is an experiential superiority that doesn't disappear with the gender shift.

For one transsexual man-to-woman, however, the experience of living as a woman changed his/her whole personality. As James, Morris had been a soldier, foreign correspondent, and mountain climber; as Jan, Morris is a successful travel writer. But socially, James was far superior to Jan, and so Jan developed the "learned helplessness" that is supposed to characterize women in Western society:

We are told that the social gap between the sexes is narrowing, but I can only report that having, in the second half of the twentieth century, experienced life in both roles, there seems to me no aspect of existence, no moment of the day, no contact, no arrangement, no response, which is not different for men and for women. The very tone of voice in which I was now addressed, the very posture of the person next in the queue, the very feel in the air when I entered a room or sat at a restaurant table, constantly emphasized my change of status.

And if other's responses shifted, so did my own. The more I was treated as woman, the more woman I became. I adapted willy-nilly. If I was assumed to be incompetent at reversing cars, or opening bottles, oddly incompetent I found myself becoming. If a case was thought too heavy for me, inexplicably I found it so myself. . . . Women treated me with a frankness which, while it was one of the happiest discoveries of my metamorphosis, did imply membership of a camp, a faction, or at least a school of thought; so I found myself gravitating always towards the female, whether in sharing a railway compartment or supporting a political cause. Men treated me more and more as junior, . . . and so, addressed every day of my life as an inferior, involuntarily, month by

month I accepted the condition. I discovered that even now men prefer women to be less informed, less able, less talkative, and certainly less self-centered than they are themselves; so I generally obliged them. (1975, 165–66)²²

Components of Gender

By now, it should be clear that gender is not a unitary essence but has many components as a social institution and as an individual status.²³

As a social institution, gender is composed of:

- Gender statuses*, the socially recognized genders in a society and the norms and expectations for their enactment behaviorally, gesturally, linguistically, emotionally, and physically. How gender statuses are evaluated depends on historical development in any particular society.
- Gendered division of labor*, the assignment of productive and domestic work to members of different gender statuses. The work assigned to those of different gender statuses strengthens the society's evaluation of those statuses—the higher the status, the more prestigious and valued the work and the greater its rewards.
- Gendered kinship*, the family rights and responsibilities for each gender status. Kinship statuses reflect and reinforce the prestige and power differences of the different genders.
- Gendered sexual scripts*, the normative patterns of sexual desire and sexual behavior, as prescribed for the different gender statuses. Members of the dominant gender have more sexual prerogatives; members of a subordinate gender may be sexually exploited.
- Gendered personalities*, the combinations of traits patterned by gender norms of how members of different gender statuses are supposed to feel and behave. Social expectations of others in face-to-face interaction constantly bolster these norms.
- Gendered social control*, the formal and informal approval and reward of conforming behavior and the stigmatization, social isolation, punishment, and medical treatment of nonconforming behavior.
- Gender ideology*, the justification of gender statuses, particularly, their differential evaluation. The dominant ideology tends to suppress criticism by making these evaluations seem natural.
- Gender imagery*, the cultural representations of gender and embodiment of gender in symbolic language and artistic productions that reproduce

and legitimate gender statuses. Culture is one of the main supports of the dominant gender ideology.

For an individual, gender is composed of:

- Sex category* to which the infant is assigned at birth based on appearance of genitalia. With prenatal testing and sex-typing, categorization is prenatal. Sex category may be changed later through surgery or reinspection of ambiguous genitalia.
- Gender identity*, the individual's sense of gendered self as a worker and family member.
- Gendered marital and procreative status*, fulfillment or nonfulfillment of allowed or disallowed mating, impregnation, childbearing, kinship roles.
- Gendered sexual orientation*, socially and individually patterned sexual desires, feelings, practices, and identification.
- Gendered personality*, internalized patterns of socially normative emotions as organized by family structure and parenting.
- Gendered processes*, the social practices of learning, being taught, picking up cues, enacting behavior already learned to be gender-appropriate (or inappropriate, if rebelling, testing), developing a gender identity, "doing gender" as a member of a gender status in relationships with gendered others, acting deferent or dominant.
- Gender beliefs*, incorporation of or resistance to gender ideology.
- Gender display*, presentation of self as a certain kind of gendered person through dress, cosmetics, adornments, and permanent and reversible body markers.

For an individual, all the social components are supposed to be consistent and congruent with perceived physiology. The actual combination of genes and genitalia, prenatal, adolescent, and adult hormonal input, and procreative capacity may or may not be congruous with each other and with sex-category assignment, gender identity, gendered sexual orientation and procreative status, gender display, personality, and work and family roles. At any one time, an individual's identity is a combination of the major ascribed statuses of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and social class, and the individual's achieved statuses, such as education level, occupation or profession, marital status, parenthood, prestige, authority, and wealth. The ascribed statuses substantially limit or create opportunities for individual achievements and also diminish or enhance the luster of those achievements.

Gender as Process, Stratification, and Structure

As a social institution, gender is a process of creating distinguishable social statuses for the assignment of rights and responsibilities. As part of a stratification system that ranks these statuses unequally, gender is a major building block in the social structures built on these unequal statuses.

As a *process*, gender creates the social differences that define "woman" and "man." In social interaction throughout their lives, individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react in expected ways, and thus simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order: "The very injunction to be a given gender takes place through discursive routes: to be a good mother, to be a heterosexually desirable object, to be a fit worker, in sum, to signify a multiplicity of guarantees in response to a variety of different demands all at once" (J. Butler 1990, 145). Members of a social group neither make up gender as they go along nor exactly replicate in rote fashion what was done before. In almost every encounter, human beings produce gender, behaving in the ways they learned were appropriate for their gender status, or resisting or rebelling against these norms. Resistance and rebellion have altered gender norms, but so far they have rarely eroded the statuses.

Gendered patterns of interaction acquire additional layers of gendered sexuality, parenting, and work behaviors in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Gendered norms and expectations are enforced through informal sanctions of gender-inappropriate behavior by peers and by formal punishment or threat of punishment by those in authority should behavior deviate too far from socially imposed standards for women and men.

Everyday gendered interactions build gender into the family, the work process, and other organizations and institutions, which in turn reinforce gender expectations for individuals.²⁴ Because gender is a process, there is room not only for modification and variation by individuals and small groups but also for institutionalized change (J. W. Scott 1988a, 7).

As part of a *stratification* system, gender ranks men above women of the same race and class. Women and men could be different but equal. In practice, the process of creating difference depends to a great extent on differential evaluation. As Nancy Jay (1981) says: "That which is defined, separated out, isolated from all else is A and pure. Not-A is necessarily impure, a random catchall, to which nothing is external except A and the principle of order that separates it from Not-A" (45). From the individual's point of view, whichever gender is A, the other is Not-A; gender boundaries tell the individual who is like him or her, and all the rest are unlike. From society's point of view,

"NIGHT TO HIS DAY"

however, one gender is usually the touchstone, the normal, the dominant, and the other is different, deviant, and subordinate. In Western society, "man" is A, "wo-man" is Not-A. (Consider what a society would be like where woman was A and man Not-A.)

The further dichotomization by race and class constructs the gradations of a heterogeneous society's stratification scheme. Thus, in the United States, white is A, African American is Not-A; middle class is A, working class is Not-A, and "African-American women occupy a position whereby the inferior half of a series of these dichotomies converge" (P. H. Collins 1990, 70). The dominant categories are the hegemonic ideals, taken so for granted as the way things should be that white is not ordinarily thought of as a race, middle class as a class, or men as a gender. The characteristics of these categories define the Other as that which lacks the valuable qualities the dominants exhibit.

In a gender-stratified society, what men do is usually valued more highly than what women do because men do it, even when their activities are very similar or the same. In different regions of southern India, for example, harvesting rice is men's work, shared work, or women's work: "Wherever a task is done by women it is considered easy, and where it is done by [men] it is considered difficult" (Mencher 1988, 104). A gathering and hunting society's survival usually depends on the nuts, grubs, and small animals brought in by the women's foraging trips, but when the men's hunt is successful, it is the occasion for a celebration. Conversely, because they are the superior group, white men do not have to do the "dirty work," such as housework; the most inferior group does it, usually poor women of color (Palmer 1989).

Freudian psychoanalytic theory claims that boys must reject their mothers and deny the feminine in themselves in order to become men: "For boys the major goal is the achievement of personal masculine identification with their father and sense of secure masculine self, achieved through superego formation and disparagement of women" (Chodorow 1978, 165). Masculinity may be the outcome of boys' intrapsychic struggles to separate their identity from that of their mothers, but the proofs of masculinity are culturally shaped and usually ritualistic and symbolic (Gilmore 1990).

The Marxist feminist explanation for gender inequality is that by demeaning women's abilities and keeping them from learning valuable technological skills, bosses preserve them as a cheap and exploitable reserve army of labor. Unionized men who could be easily replaced by women collude in this process because it allows them to monopolize the better paid, more interesting, and more autonomous jobs: "Two factors emerge as helping men maintain their separation from women and their control of technological occupations. One is

the active gendering of jobs and people. The second is the continual creation of sub-divisions in the work processes, and levels in work hierarchies, into which men can move in order to keep their distance from women" (Cockburn 1985, 13).

Societies vary in the extent of the inequality in social status of their women and men members, but where there is inequality, the status "woman" (and its attendant behavior and role allocations) is usually held in lesser esteem than the status "man." Since gender is also intertwined with a society's other constructed statuses of differential evaluation—race, religion, occupation, class, country of origin, and so on—men and women members of the favored groups command more power, more prestige, and more property than the members of the disfavored groups. Within many social groups, however, men are advantaged over women. The more economic resources, such as education and job opportunities, are available to a group, the more they tend to be monopolized by men. In poorer groups that have few resources (such as working-class African Americans in the United States), women and men are more nearly equal, and the women may even outstrip the men in education and occupational status (Almquist 1987).

As a *structure*, gender divides work in the home and in economic production, legitimates those in authority, and organizes sexuality and emotional life (Connell 1987, 91–142). As primary parents, women significantly influence children's psychological development and emotional attachments, in the process reproducing gender. Emergent sexuality is shaped by heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and sadomasochistic patterns that are gendered—different for girls and boys, and for women and men—so that sexual statuses reflect gender statuses.

When gender is a major component of structured inequality, the devalued genders have less power, prestige, and economic rewards than the valued genders. In countries that discourage gender discrimination, many major roles are still gendered; women still do most of the domestic labor and child rearing, even while doing full-time paid work; women and men are segregated on the job and each does work considered "appropriate"; women's work is usually paid less than men's work. Men dominate the positions of authority and leadership in government, the military, and the law; cultural productions, religions, and sports reflect men's interests.

In societies that create the greatest gender difference, such as Saudi Arabia, women are kept out of sight behind walls or veils, have no civil rights, and often create a cultural and emotional world of their own (Bernard 1981).

But even in societies with less rigid gender boundaries, women and men spend much of their time with people of their own gender because of the way work and family are organized. This spatial separation of women and men reinforces gendered differentness, identity, and ways of thinking and behaving (Coser 1986).

Gender inequality—the devaluation of "women" and the social domination of "men"—has social functions and a social history. It is not the result of sex, procreation, physiology, anatomy, hormones, or genetic predispositions. It is produced and maintained by identifiable social processes and built into the general social structure and individual identities deliberately and purposefully. The social order as we know it in Western societies is organized around racial, ethnic, class, and gender inequality. I contend, therefore, that the continuing purpose of gender as a modern social institution is to construct women as a group to be the subordinates of men as a group. The life of everyone placed in the status "woman" is "night to his day—that has forever been the fantasy. Black to his white. Shut out of his system's space, she is the repressed that ensures the system's functioning" (Cixous and Clément [1975] 1986, 67).

The Paradox of Human Nature

To say that sex, sexuality, and gender are all socially constructed is not to minimize their social power. These categorical imperatives govern our lives in the most profound and pervasive ways, through the social experiences and social practices of what Dorothy Smith calls the "everyday/everynight world" (1990, 31–57). The paradox of human nature is that it is *always* a manifestation of cultural meanings, social relationships, and power politics; "not biology, but culture, becomes destiny" (J. Butler 1990, 8). Gendered people emerge not from physiology or sexual orientation but from the exigencies of the social order, mostly, from the need for a reliable division of the work of food production and the social (not physical) reproduction of new members. The moral imperatives of religion and cultural representations guard the boundary lines among genders and ensure that what is demanded, what is permitted, and what is tabooed for the people in each gender is well known and followed by most (C. Davies 1982). Political power, control of scarce resources, and, if necessary, violence uphold the gendered social order in the face of resistance and rebellion. Most people, however, voluntarily go along with their society's prescriptions for those of their gender status, because the norms and expectations get built into their sense of worth and identity as a

certain kind of human being, and because they believe their society's way is the natural way. These beliefs emerge from the imagery that pervades the way we think, the way we see and hear and speak, the way we fantasy, and the way we feel.

There is no core or bedrock human nature below these endlessly looping processes of the social production of sex and gender, self and other, identity and psyche, each of which is a "complex cultural construction" (J. Butler 1990, 36). *For humans, the social is the natural*. Therefore, "in its feminist senses, gender cannot mean simply the cultural appropriation of biological sexual difference. Sexual difference is itself a fundamental—and scientifically contested—construction. Both 'sex' and 'gender' are woven of multiple, asymmetrical strands of difference, charged with multifaceted dramatic narratives of domination and struggle" (Haraway 1990, 140).

What would happen . . . if suddenly, magically, men could menstruate and women could not? . . . The answer is clear—menstruation would become an enviable, boast-worthy, masculine event.

—Gloria Steinem (1978a, 110)

BELIEVING IS SEEING: BIOLOGY AS IDEOLOGY

Freud claimed that anatomy is destiny, but Aristotle believed that destiny was determined by one's place in the social order, not only as a man or a woman but as a free man or a slave. Until the eighteenth century, Western philosophers and scientists believed that there was one sex and that women's internal genitals were the inverse of men's external genitalia (Dean-Jones 1991; Laqueur 1990a). And so, what they saw was that the womb and vagina were the penis and scrotum turned inside out: "The more Renaissance anatomists dissected, looked into, and visually represented the female body, the more powerfully and convincingly they saw it to be a version of the male's" (Laqueur 1990a, 70).¹

Current Western thinking sees women and men as so different physically as to sometimes seem two species. The bodies, which have been mapped inside and out for hundreds of years, have not changed. What has changed are the justifications for gender inequality. When the social position of all human beings was believed to be set by natural law or was considered God-given, women and men of different classes had their assigned places. When scientists began to question the divine basis of social order and replaced faith with empirical knowledge, they now saw that women were very different from men in that they had wombs and menstruated. Such anatomical differences had to destine them for an entirely different social life than men.

In actuality, the basic bodily material *is* the same for females and males; except for procreative hormones and organs, female and male human beings have similar bodies (Naftolin and Butz 1981). Furthermore, as has been known since the middle of the nineteenth century, male and female genitalia develop

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you're proposing your interpretation of the universe, and for that you need to have the recognition of your colleagues. You must assert that this is a good idea, the right interpretation, and that *you* thought of it, because all three of those things have to be accepted by your colleagues. It doesn't do your career any good to have the theory accepted, without anyone giving you the credit.

—Harriet Zuckerman, Jonathan R. Cole, and John T. Bruer (1991, 103)

GUARDING THE GATES: THE MICROPOLITICS OF GENDER

Twenty-five years ago, Muriel F. Siebert bought a seat on the New York Stock Exchange, the first woman to be permitted to do so. In 1992, receiving an award for her accomplishments, she said bluntly that despite the numbers of women coming into high finance, the professions, and government, the arenas of power are still overwhelmingly dominated by men (Henriques 1992). The numbers bear her out.

In 1980 in the United States, only two women were chief executive officers of the largest corporations, the Fortune 500. They were Katherine Graham, chief executive of the Washington Post Company, and Marion O. Sandler, co-chief executive of Golden West Financial Corporation, in Oakland, California. In 1985, there were three: Graham, Sandler, and Elisabeth Claiborne of the Liz Claiborne clothing company. In 1990, there were also three: Graham, Sandler, and Linda Wachner of the Warnaco Group, Inc., New York. In 1992, Charlotte Beers became chief executive of Ogilvie & Mather Worldwide, the fifth largest international advertising agency, with billings of \$5.4 billion, making her the world's highest ranking woman executive in that field (Elliott 1992). Linda Wachner (earning \$3.1 million in 1991) was the first woman in *Fortune's* "roster of exorbitantly paid executives" (Strom 1992). Thus, in the past decade, in the United States, where women composed between 42.4 and 45.4 percent of the work force, and numbered between 42.1 and 53.5 million, a total of five women were heads of the largest corporations (Marsh 1991).¹ When *Fortune* culled the lists of the highest paid officers and directors of 799 U.S. industrial and service companies, out of 4,012 it found 19 women, or less than one-half of 1 percent (Fierman 1990).

The belief that upward mobility and leadership positions would automatically follow if women increased their numbers in the workplace greatly underestimated the social processes that get some people onto the fast track and systematically derail others. These processes are used by those at the top to ensure that those coming up will be as similar as possible to themselves so that their values and ideas about how things should be done will be perpetuated. The markers of homogeneity are gender, race, religion, ethnicity, education, and social background. The few heterogeneous "tokens" who make it past the gatekeepers first must prove their similarity to the elite in outlook and behavior. The numbers at the bottom in any field have little relation to the numbers at the top, where power politics is played and social policies are shaped.

The gender segregation so evident in the modern work world is exacerbated at the top echelons of business, the professions, and politics by gendered concepts of authority and leadership potential. Women are seen as legitimate leaders only in areas considered of direct concern to women, usually health, education, and welfare. Women's accomplishments in men's fields tend to be invisible or denigrated by the men in the field, and so women rarely achieve the stature to be considered leaders in science or space, for example.² The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration put twenty-five women pilots through rigorous physical and psychological testing from 1959 to 1961. Thirteen demonstrated "exceptional suitability" for space flight, but neither they nor seventeen women with advanced science degrees were chosen to be astronauts or space scientists, even though the Russians had sent Valentina Tereshkova into space in 1963 (McCullough 1973). As Gloria Steinem said, recalling these invisible women almost twenty years later, women's demonstrating they have the "right stuff" turns into the "wrong stuff" without the approval of the men in charge (1992).

When a leader is chosen among colleagues, women are often overlooked by the men of the group, and there are usually too few women to support one another. Even where women are the majority of workers, men tend to be favored for positions of authority because women and men will accept men leaders as representing their general interests but will see women as representing only women's interests (Izraeli 1984). As a result, men in occupations where most of the workers are women, such as nursing and social work, tend to be overrepresented in high-level administrative positions, and women in occupations where most of the workers are men rarely reach the top ranks (C. L. Williams 1989, 95-98; Zunz 1991).

When men choose a woman for a position of power and prestige, she is

often considered "on probation." For example, an Israeli woman physician who was made head of a prestigious department of obstetrics and gynecology where she was the only woman told me that a year later, the men colleagues who had chosen her told her that they were now enormously relieved. She had not made any serious mistakes, so their decision to choose her as head of the department was validated. She was furious that they had felt she had to prove herself; she had been their colleague and friend for seventeen years, and they surely should have known her worth and her leadership capabilities. At that point, she said, she realized that her men colleagues had never really considered her "one of them."³

The Glass Ceiling

The pervasive phenomenon of women going just so far and no further in their occupations and professions has come to be known as the *glass ceiling*. This concept assumes that women have the motivation, ambition, and capacity for positions of power and prestige, but invisible barriers keep them from reaching the top. They can see their goal, but they bump their heads on a ceiling that is both hidden and impenetrable. The U.S. Department of Labor defines the glass ceiling as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management level positions" (L. Martin 1991, 1).

A recent study of the pipelines to power in large-scale corporations conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor found that the glass ceiling was lower than previously thought—in middle management. Members of disadvantaged groups were even less likely than white women to be promoted to top positions, and the upper rungs were "nearly impenetrable" for women of color (L. Martin 1991). A random sample of ninety-four reviews of personnel in corporate headquarters found that of 147,179 employees, 37.2 percent were women and 15.5 percent were minorities. Of these employees, 31,184 were in all levels of management, from clerical supervisor to chief executive officer; 16.9 percent were women and 6 percent were minorities. Of 4,491 managers at the level of assistant vice president and higher, 6.6 percent were women and 2.6 percent were minorities. Thus, in this survey, the higher the corporate position, the smaller the proportion of women; if the numbers of women in the top ranks had been proportional with the number of women in the lower ranks, over a third of the vice presidents, presidents, and executive officers would have been women. There was no separate breakdown of

these figures for women of color, but another report cited by the Labor Department indicated that they make up 3.3 percent of the women corporate officers, who make up only 1 to 2 percent of all corporate officers.

Karen Fulbright's (1987) interviews with twenty-five African-American women managers found fifteen who had reached the level of vice president, department head, or division director in oil, automobile manufacturing, telecommunications, and banking, or had moved rapidly up the hierarchy. The factors in their upward mobility were long tenure, a rapidly growing company, or a Black-owned or operated company. The others had experienced blocked mobility, despite positioning themselves on career tracks that were known to be the routes to the top.

Similar attrition in the numbers of women at the top has been found in public-sector jobs in the United States. As of 1990, 43.5 percent of the employees in lower-level jobs were women, but they were only 31.3 percent of the department heads, division chiefs, deputies, and examiners in state and local government agencies (*New York Times* 1992a). African-American women were 9.8 percent of the workers at lower levels, 5.1 percent at the top levels.

The ways that most people move up in their careers are through *networking* (finding out about job opportunities through word-of-mouth and being recommended by someone already there), *mentoring* (being coached through the informal norms of the workplace), and *sponsorship* (being helped to advance by a senior colleague). In civil service bureaucracies, where promotion depends on passing a test or getting an additional credential, those who receive encouragement and advice from senior members of the organization tend to take the qualifying tests or obtain the requisite training (Poll 1978). In the sciences, research productivity depends to a significant degree on where you work, whom you work with, and what resources are available to you.⁴ All these processes of advancement depend on the support of colleagues and superiors, which means that in a workplace where men outnumber women and whites outnumber any other racial ethnic group, white women and women and men of disadvantaged racial ethnic groups have to be helped by white men if they are to be helped at all.

An in-depth study of nine Fortune 500 companies with a broad range of products and services located in different parts of the country found that despite differences in organizational structure, corporate culture, and personnel policies, the same practices results in a glass ceiling for women, especially women of color (L. Martin 1991, 4–5). These practices were recruitment policies for upper-management levels that depended on word-of-mouth networking and employee referrals. When “head hunters” were used, they were

not instructed to look for women and men of social groups underrepresented at managerial levels. The few white women and women and men of color who were already hired were not given the opportunity to build up their credentials or enhance their careers by assignment to corporate committees, task forces, and special projects. These are traditional avenues of advancement, since they bring junior members into contact with senior members of the organization and give them visibility and the chance to show what they can do. There was no monitoring of evaluation or compensation systems that determine salaries, bonuses, incentives, or perks to make sure that white women and women and men of color were getting their fair share. In general, “monitoring for equal access and opportunity, especially as managers move up the corporate ladder to senior management levels where important decisions are made, was almost never considered a corporate responsibility or part of the planning for developmental programs and policies” (L. Martin 1991, 4). In short, none of the white men in senior management saw it as their responsibility to sponsor white women or women and men of color to be their replacements when they retired.

Men in traditional women's occupations report the opposite phenomenon. Their minority status turns out to be a career advantage. Christine Williams's study of seventy-six men and twenty-three women in nursing, teaching, librarianship, and social work in the United States, whom she interviewed from 1985 to 1991, found that the men were tracked into the more prestigious, better-paying specialties within the occupation, and urged by their mentors, mostly other men, to move into positions of authority. Most of these men were white, so they were the most advantaged workers.⁵ For them not to move up to supervisory and administrative positions was considered inappropriate. As a result, they were on a “glass escalator,” Williams says: “Often, despite their intentions, they face invisible pressures to move up in their professions. As if on a moving escalator, they must work to stay in place” (1992, 256). But they sometimes faced a glass ceiling at higher levels. The affirmative action policies of many institutions make the women deans and heads of departments in the women's areas too visible for them to be replaced by men (257).

Although these processes may seem benign, the imbalance of lower-level workers with disadvantaged social characteristics compared to upper-level workers with advantaged social characteristics implies a deliberate, though unstated, policy of hostility and resistance that deepens with each additional mark of disadvantage. Kimberlé Crenshaw presents a graphic analysis of who can make it through the glass ceiling:

Imagine a basement which contains all people who are disadvantaged on the basis of race, sex, class, sexual preference, age and/or physical ability. These people are stacked—feet standing on shoulders—with those on the bottom being disadvantaged by the full array of factors, up to the very top, where the heads of all those disadvantaged by a single factor brush up against the ceiling. . . . A hatch is developed through which those placed immediately below can crawl. Yet this hatch is generally available only to those who—due to the singularity of their burden and their otherwise privileged position relative to those below—are in the position to crawl through. Those who are multiply-burdened are generally left below. (1991, 65)

Bands of Brothers

Parallel to the formal organization of a large, modern workplace, which is structured as a task-related, bureaucratic hierarchy, is the informal organization, which is based on trust, loyalty, and reciprocal favors (Lorber [1979] 1989a). Because the unspoken rules are often as significant to the way business is conducted as the written rules, colleagues want to work with people who know what goes without saying: "In order that men [*sic*] may communicate freely and confidentially, they must be able to take a good deal of each other's sentiments for granted. They must feel easy about their silences as well as about their utterances. These factors conspire to make colleagues, with a large body of unspoken understandings, uncomfortable in the presence of what they consider odd kinds of fellows" (Hughes 1971, 146).

Personal discretion and reliability are particularly necessary for those in positions of authority because of the uncertainties they face (Kanter 1977a, 47–68). According to Dianne Feinstein, former mayor of San Francisco who was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992, women have to bend over backward to prove not only their competence but their trustworthiness:

Women have to prove themselves effective and credible time and time again. Experience has taught me that the keys to a woman's effectiveness in public office are to be "trustable": to give directions clearly and to follow up, to verify every statement for accuracy, to guard her integrity carefully, and to observe the public's trust one hundred percent. Most important, she must be a team player and build relationships with her colleagues that are based on integrity and respect. (Cantor and Bernway 1992, xv)

Almost twenty years ago, Margaret Hennig and Anne Jardim predicted that conscientious and hard-working women would find it difficult to get out of middle management because their performance was geared to formal training and bureaucratic responsibilities. They felt that if women knew that senior management relies on informal networking, gathering extensive sources of knowledge from areas other than one's own, planning, policy-making, and delegating responsibility to reliable subordinates, they would be able to move up corporate career ladders (1976, 55–68).⁶ Career mobility, however, does not depend only on competent performance and other efforts by the ambitious individual. To move up, a young person's worth has to be recognized and encouraged by those in the upper echelons. Promising young men of the right social characteristics are groomed for senior management by "godfathers" or "rabbis"—sponsors who take them under their wing and see to it that they learn the informal organizational rules for getting ahead. Promising young women are left to fend for themselves (Lorber 1981).

Brotherly trust among men who are business associates goes back to the nineteenth century. Before the creation of the impersonal corporation, each partner in an enterprise was personally responsible for raising capital and making a profit. Credit depended on personal trustworthiness; bankruptcy was a personal tragedy (Davidoff and Hall 1987, 198–228; Silver 1990). In these transactions, the active players were all men. Women were passive partners; their money was used by kinsmen and men friends who acted as trustees. In order to cement the brotherly bonds among men who were in business together, women were encouraged to marry cousins or their brothers' partners; two sisters often married two brothers, or a brother and sister married a sister and brother: "Free choice marriage controlled in this way provided a form of security in binding together members of the middle class in local, regional and national networks, a guarantee of congenial views as well as trustworthiness in economic and financial affairs" (Davidoff and Hall 1987, 221).⁷

In twentieth-century businesses, professions, and politics, trust and loyalty are built not through kin ties (which is considered nepotism) but through *homosociality*—the bonding of men of the same race, religion, and social-class background (Lipman-Blumen 1976). These men have the economic, political, professional, and social resources to do each other favors. Women with the same social characteristics may be included in men's circles when they have equivalent wealth, power, and social position (C. F. Epstein 1981, 265–302; Lorber 1984, 57–63). Most men and women, however, relate to each other socially only in familial or sexual roles (G. Moore 1990).

Homosociality starts early. In childhood play, boys separate themselves from girls and become contemptuous of girls' activities in their efforts to keep themselves apart.⁸ This segregation, attributed to boys' needs to establish their masculinity, makes friendship between girls and boys difficult because it is discouraged by same-gender peers. Gender grouping is not perfect in mixed-gender schools but is broached by social class and racial ethnic cross-currents and sometimes by the organizing activities of teachers (Thorne 1990).⁹ In adulthood, whenever men and women come together as equals, in coed schools and workplaces that are not gender-segregated, cross-gender friendships are undermined by intimations of sexual attraction (O'Meara 1989). One study of white middle-class young adults found that the women preferred same-gender friendships more than the men did because the men were more interested in them sexually than as companions (S. M. Rose 1985). The men invested more time and attention in their friendships with men than they did in their friendships with women, while the women gave as much emotional support to their men friends as they did to their women friends. Letty Cottin Pogrebin (1987, 311–40) feels that the main reason that women and men are rarely intimate friends is that they are rarely true equals.

Many working women are expected as part of their job to smile, be cordial, sympathetic, agreeable, and a bit sexy.¹⁰ Men workers are supposed to display masculine emotions—coolness under fire, rationality, and objectivity, which are part of the performance of power (Sattel 1976). The qualities men want in women in the workplace as well as in the home—sympathy, looking out for the other person, understanding the nuances and cues of behavior, caretaking, flattering them sexually—keep women out of the top ranks of business, government, and the professions. Such qualities are gender-marked as “womanly”; they are also subordinating (Ridgeway and Johnson 1990).

Much of men's workplace small talk is about sports or sex. Replaying the weekend's games gives men the chance to compete and win vicariously (Kemper 1990, 167–206). Sexist jokes establish the boundaries of exclusion, and if the men are of the same race or religion, so do racist and anti-Semitic or anti-Catholic jokes. Sexist joking also keeps men from revealing their emotional bonds with each other and deflects their anger from their bosses onto women.¹¹ Women who can talk and joke like men may be allowed entry into the men's brotherhood, as honorary men, but then they cannot protest against sexism and sexual harassment, even if they themselves are the victims.¹²

Although men or women may be “odd fellows” in their workplace or job, the pressures of being a woman in a man's job and a man in a woman's job are quite different. Men nurses can talk cars and sports with men physicians. In

doing so, they affiliate with a higher status group, affirm their masculinity, and gain a benefit from these informal contacts in more favorable evaluations of their work. Men physicians' status is too high to be compromised by chatting with men nurses (or flirting with women nurses). Men who are openly homosexual, however, may face discrimination from men supervisors (C. L. Williams 1992, 259). Women physicians socialize with women medical students, interns, and residents, but not with women nurses.¹³ Women physicians' status is more tenuous, and they end up in a bind. They need to get along with the women nurses so that their work proceeds efficiently, yet they lose status if they bond with a lower-status group as women. Women physicians need to build colleague relationships with the men physicians who are their peers, but these men may not treat them as equals. They also need to seek sponsors among senior men who can help them advance their careers, but these men may not want them as protégées.

Because men know the power of homosocial bonding, they are discomfited when women do the same thing and often accuse such women of lesbianism, particularly because women's attentions are turned to each other and not to them. As Carol Barkalow said of the military:

They often appear to possess an irrational fear of women's groups, believing that, in their midst, men will be plotted against, or perhaps worst of all, rendered somehow unnecessary. If women soldiers do try to develop a professional support network among themselves, they are faced with the dilemma that something as simple as two women officers having lunch together more than once might spark rumors of lesbianism—a potentially lethal charge, since even rumored homosexuality can damage an officer's career. (1990, 167–68)¹⁴

Women officers who want to bond without innuendoes of homosexuality often turn to sports, which is as legitimate a place to build trust and loyalty among women as it is among men.¹⁵

For the most part, as colleagues, friends, and wives, women are relegated to acting as audience or sex objects for men. According to Kathryn Ann Farr (1988), who studied a group of upper-class white men whose bonding preserved their race and class as well as their gender privileges, wives and girlfriends were needed to serve as foils for the men's exclusive sociability. The women listened as the men talked about their exploits. When the men went off on an escapade, their women warned them against getting into too much trouble, prepared food for them, and stayed behind. The men defined the boundaries of their homosocial world by excluding women, just as they main-

tained its racial and class exclusivity by keeping out the "wrong" kind of men. The irony is that they built their superior status in a direct and immediate way by denying their own wives and girlfriends the privileges of their race and class. In this way, the domination of men over women in their own social group is sustained, and the women collude in the process:

These men do not view themselves as sexist, and they do not appear to be viewed by the women *with whom they interact* as sexist. In their choice of wives and girlfriends, the majority of these men seem to value independent and intelligent women. Yet their socialization into a male-dominated environment and a culture in which male sociability is highly valued causes them to think and act in ways that conflict with their intellectual assessments of the worth of and the value of social relationships with women. (Farr 1988, 269)¹⁶

By excluding women who share their social characteristics from their social space, these men never have to treat women as equals or as serious competitors for positions of power.¹⁷

The "Mommy Track"

If they could not exclude women completely or relegate them to subordinate positions, men have reduced competition and encouraged turnover by refusing to hire married women or mothers and by encouraging women employees who get married or have children to quit. Marriage bars were used against women schoolteachers, stewardesses, and other occupations in the United States well into the twentieth century and are still used today in other countries (Brinton 1989; Goldin 1990, 160–84). When the marriage bar fell out of use in the United States in the late 1950s, partly because there was a dearth of young single women workers, it was replaced by what Claudia Goldin calls "the pregnancy bar" (1990, 176). The ideology that children need full-time mothering produced turnover not at marriage but at first pregnancy.

Discriminating against women workers and job applicants who are married, pregnant, or mothers is now illegal in the United States; informally, however, these practices have been replaced by a tacit or openly acknowledged "mommy track." Ostensibly intended to make it easier for married women with children to continue managerial and professional jobs, the "mommy track" offers flexible working hours and generous maternity leave to women but not men in dual-career marriages to ameliorate the pressures of family and work (Rodgers and Rodgers 1989). But women are penalized for taking ad-

vantage of these policies, because once they do, their commitment to achieving top-level positions is called into question (Kingson 1988). The secondary result and, I would argue, latent function of these "mommy tracks" is to derail women who were on fast tracks to the top. As Alice Kessler-Harris says: "To induce women to take jobs while simultaneously restraining their ambition to rise in them required a series of socially accepted constraints on work roles. Unspoken social prescription—a tacit understanding about the primacy of home roles—remained the most forceful influence. This is most apparent in professional jobs where the potential for ambition was greatest" (1982, 231).

Until quite recently in many Westernized countries, the more prestigious professions, such as medicine, law, and the sciences, and the upper-level managerial sector of business were thoroughly dominated by men.¹⁸ Men were easily able to keep women out because they were gatekeepers in several ways: They determined admissions to professional and managerial training schools; they controlled recruitment to and from such schools; and they determined promotion policies. With the advent of affirmative action in the United States, many women have become doctors, lawyers, scientists, and administrators, and they have become formidable competition for men. The "mommy track" keeps women professionals and managers in lower-paid, lower-prestige ranks. This exclusion from top-level positions is considered legitimate because they are mothers. The assumption is that women could not possibly handle the responsibility of leadership and the responsibility for their children's welfare at the same time, but they are never given the chance to try (Covin and Brush 1991). It is also taken for granted that mothers, never fathers, will supervise their children's day-to-day care.¹⁹ "Mommy tracks" thus reinforce and legitimate the structural glass ceiling, the processes of exclusion, and the justifying stereotypes.

Paradoxically, "mommy tracks" are not the way most married women professionals and executives with children organize their careers. Such women order their lives so they can be productive.²⁰ Jonathan Cole and Harriet Zuckerman's interviews with seventy-three women and forty-seven men scientists, eminent and rank and file, who received their doctorates between 1920 and 1979 found little difference in the rates and patterns of publication of the men and women, the married and single women, and the childless women and those with children (1991). A woman with an endowed chair in a major department of behavioral science was married four times, divorced three times, and had four children by three different husbands, but the largest dip in her publication rate came in a year when there were no changes in her personal life (167). The rate of publication for all these scientists depended on stage of

career, extent of collaboration, and the completion of projects. The women they interviewed were successful scientists as well as wives and mothers not because of a "mommy track" but because they carefully timed both marriage and childbearing, had child care and household help, and cut out leisure-time activities that had no professional payoff.²¹

When women put their families before their careers, they are often responding to a generalized cultural mandate that is mediated through direct pressures from their husbands at home and other women's husbands in the workplace (Cockburn 1991). These men, according to Mirra Komarovsky, have inconsistent ideas about their women peers:

Some of the revealed inconsistencies are: . . . the right of an able woman to a career of her choice; the admiration for women who measure up in terms of the dominant values of our society; the lure but also the threat that such women present; the low status attached to housewifery but the conviction that there is no substitute for the mother's care of young children; the deeply internalized norm of male occupational superiority pitted against the principle of equal opportunity irrespective of sex. (1976, 37)

These inconsistencies are resolved by rewarding men's efforts to move up in their careers but not rewarding women's efforts, and both rewarding and punishing women for taking care of their families—rewarding them as women and punishing them as professionals, managers, and politicians. Should any woman not make the appropriate "choice" to put her family before her career, both she and her husband often face subtle and not-so-subtle harassment from their men colleagues. African-American women and men may have more egalitarian norms and expectations about women's ambitions, but these women face discrimination from white men on two counts and may be competing with African-American men for the same few "minority" positions (Fulbright 1987). Women may feel it is their choice to stay home with their small children and to limit their career commitments, but their choices are constrained by real and direct social pressures (Gerson 1985; Komarovsky 1985, 225–68).

The Salieri Phenomenon and the Matthew Effect

What happens when women can't be excluded from the workplace and don't choose to put family before career, but instead become men's competitors?

The unspoken practices of the informal organization of work make women particularly vulnerable to the covert undercutting I have called the *Salieri phenomenon*, after the highly placed composer who allegedly sabotaged Mozart's career (Lorber 1984, 8–10). In Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, Salieri never openly criticizes Mozart to the emperor who employs both of them; he simply fails to recommend him enthusiastically. Salieri also suggests that Mozart be paid much less than the musician he is replacing. Mozart later thanks Salieri for his help in getting a position; he blames the emperor for the low salary (P. Shaffer 1980, 71–72). Salieri's damning with faint praise is one way women are undermined by their men colleagues and bosses, often without being aware of it.

Nijole Benokraitis and Joe Feagin (1986) describe other ways men subtly undercut women: *condescending chivalry*, where a boss protects a woman employee from what could be useful criticism; *supportive discouragement*, where a woman is not encouraged to compete for a challenging position because she might not make it; *friendly harassment*, such as being joshed in public when visibly pregnant or dressed for a social occasion; *subjective objectification*, or being grouped with "all women"; *radiant devaluation*, when a woman is given extravagant praise for doing what is considered routine when men do it—the "dancing dog" effect; *liberated sexism*, such as inviting a woman for an after-work drink but not letting her pay for a round; *benevolent exploitation*, where a woman is given all the detail work so she can learn the job, but a man takes credit for the final product; *considerate domination*, such as deciding what responsibilities a married woman can and cannot handle, instead of letting her determine how she wants to organize her time; and *collegial exclusion*, thoughtlessly scheduling networking meetings for times women are likely to have family responsibilities. These practices undermine a woman's reputation for competence in the eyes of others and her abilities in her own eyes, making it less likely that she will be visible to gatekeepers or considered a legitimate competitor for a position of power.

Once out of the fast track for advancement, it is very difficult to accrue the necessary resources to perform valued professional activities. Those who have access to personnel, work space, and money have the opportunity to do the kind of work that increases their reputation, brings the approval of superiors, and garners additional rewards and promotions. The circular proliferation of prestige, resources, and power is the *Matthew effect*. As attributed to Christ in the Gospel according to Matthew, those who have faith become more and more favored and those who do not sink lower and lower: "For whosoever

hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." (Bible, King James version, 25:29).

The Matthew effect in science was first described by Robert Merton (1968) and Harriet Zuckerman (1977) to explain the "halo" that winning the Nobel Prize confers. The process of accumulating advantages in science, however, starts with the scientist's working at a prestigious university or laboratory that encourages the kind of research and productivity that wins Nobel Prizes.²² Women scientists are disadvantaged by positions that give them fewer resources and less encouragement to do high-quality work and by a lesser payoff for their achievements in recognition, rewards, and additional resources. Citations of published papers by others in a field are a form of visibility that adds to the researcher's or scholar's reputation (Astin 1991). According to Marianne Ferber (1986, 1988), women tend to cite other women more than men cite women, and the fewer women in a field, the greater the citations gap. As a result of the accumulation of disadvantages, women often have stop-and-go careers that may start out well, but then founder (Lorber and Ecker 1983).²³

Two brilliant twentieth-century women scientists who were loners had totally different fates that had little to do with the value of their scientific work. One of them, Rosalind Franklin, was a well-born Jewish woman scientist who launched a productive career in England in the 1950s. Her crucial contribution to the discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA was minimally acknowledged in the initial announcement by James Watson and Francis Crick in 1953.²⁴ She herself was denigrated by Watson in his widely read book, *The Double Helix* (1968). His description of her and her work is a classic example of the Salieri phenomenon: "Rosy . . . spoke to an audience of about fifteen in a quick, nervous style. . . . There was not a trace of warmth or frivolity in her words. And yet I could not regard her as totally uninteresting. Momentarily I wondered how she would look if she took off her glasses and did something novel with her hair. Then, however, my main concern was her description of the crystalline X-ray diffraction pattern" (68–69).²⁵ What Franklin was describing was nothing less than a clear X-ray picture of the DNA molecule that actually showed its helical structure! Watson paid little attention to what she had reported for over a year. Working alone, Franklin tried to envisage the three-dimensional structure her photographs of DNA suggested; she alternately played with and rejected a helical model. Watson subsequently was shown her best picture without her knowledge by the man who ran the laboratory she

worked in, Maurice Wilkins; to Watson, "the pattern shouted helix" (Judson 1979, 135).

Wilkins could have been the collaborator Franklin needed to help her make an inductive leap, but according to Franklin's biographer, they "hated one another at sight. . . . Only too evidently the antipathy was instant and mutual" (Sayre 1975, 95). Horace Freeland Judson calls the conflict between Wilkins and Franklin "one of the great personal quarrels in the history of science" (1979, 101), noting but underplaying the gendered overtones. Wilkins insisted he hired Franklin to do the X-ray diffractions on DNA; Franklin's friends insisted that she thought she had been given control of the project and "was profoundly angered" by being treated as an assistant rather than a colleague by Wilkins (148).²⁶ At thirty-one, she was eight years older than Watson and a little younger but "much further along professionally than Crick" (148). Yet Wilkins, Watson, and Crick regularly corresponded, conversed, and ate together (159); Franklin's only associate was a graduate student, and as a woman, "she was denied the fellowship of the luncheon club organized by the senior common room" at King's College, London, where her laboratory was located (148).

Franklin died of cancer in 1958, at the age of thirty-seven; Watson, Crick, and Wilkins were awarded the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine in 1962. Only in a contrite epilogue to his book, published in 1968, did Watson pay tribute to Franklin:

The X-ray work she did at King's is increasingly regarded as superb. . . . We both came to appreciate greatly her personal honesty and generosity, realizing years too late the struggles that the intelligent woman faces to be accepted by a scientific world which often regards women as mere diversions from serious thinking. Rosalind's exemplary courage and integrity were apparent to all when, knowing she was mortally ill, she did not complain but continued working on a high level until a few weeks before her death. (225–26)²⁷

Another woman scientist, also a loner but luckier because she lived to see her work rewarded with science's highest honor, was Barbara McClintock. She published a landmark paper in 1931 that established the chromosomal basis of genetics and, in 1945, was elected president of the Genetics Society. In the 1950s, the field became dominated by the Watson-Crick model of genetics, in which DNA produces RNA, and RNA produces protein. The research that McClintock published in that decade, which showed that the process was not

so straightforward and that genes could "jump," or transpose, was ignored: "In spite of the fact that she had long since established her reputation as an impeccable investigator, few listened, and fewer understood. She was described as 'obscure,' even 'mad'" (Keller 1983, 10).

In 1960, McClintock described the parallels between her own work and that of other scientists, but these scientists did not reciprocate and cite her work. Except for two other women scientists, she was ignored at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory where she had worked since 1941 (Watson became director in 1968), but she had nowhere else to go. McClintock lived long enough to see "startling new developments in biology that echo many of the findings she described as long as thirty years ago" (Keller 1983, x), and she was awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1983, when she was eighty-one years old. She died on September 2, 1992, at the age of ninety, her work "widely celebrated as prescient" (Kolata 1992b).

The Salieri phenomenon and the Matthew effect are two sides of the same coin. Those who benefit from the Matthew effect receive acknowledgments from their colleagues for good work, which builds their reputation and brings them financial and professional rewards. The work of those subjected to the Salieri phenomenon is not recognized; they do not get credit for good performance, and their careers are stymied. But reputations must be constantly maintained; even those who have built up social credit can lose it, and reversals of fortune are not uncommon. Because women do not have a protective "status shield," they are easy targets for jealous, threatened, or hostile Salieris. Certainly, not all women are future Mozarts, but even those who are may never be heard.²⁸

Inner Circles, Friendly Colleagues, and Tokens

The discriminatory aspects of the sorting and tracking that occur in every occupation and profession with long career ladders are obscured because colleagues who are not considered for the top jobs are not fired. They simply fail to make it into the inner circle. Colleagues are organized, informally, into three concentric circles—*inner circles*, *friendly colleagues*, and *isolated loners*.²⁹ Power is concentrated and policy is made in inner circles, which are usually homogeneous on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, social class, and education or training. Friendly colleagues usually have some, but not all, of the social characteristics members of the inner circle have. Although they are not totally excluded from the informal colleague network, they are rarely groomed to be part of the inner circle. Women with excellent credentials and work perfor-

mance in occupations and professions dominated by men tend to end up with friendly colleagues if they are of the same race and social class as the men of the inner circle and do similar kinds of work; otherwise, they become loners. Women professionals have formed their own separate colleague groups or professional networks, but many ambitious women do not want to be professionally segregated. They often try to fit in with the men or work on their own and hope that their worth will eventually be recognized by the gatekeepers of their profession or occupation.

Although inner circles tend to be homogeneous on gender, religion, race, ethnicity, education, and class background, a few people with different social characteristics may be accepted if they have a respected sponsor and demonstrate that in all other ways, they are just like the others. They are the true "tokens" (J. L. Laws 1975). They are actively discouraged from bringing more of their kind into the inner circle or from competing for the very top positions in the organization. Tokens usually are eager to fit in and not embarrass their sponsor, so they do not challenge these restrictions or the views, values, or work practices of the inner circle. Indeed, they may outdo the others in upholding the prevailing perspectives and exclusionary practices. That is why token women tend to be "one of the boys."

In order to get support from senior men, a senior woman may end up in the paradoxical position of making a stand for women by proving she is just like a man. A woman physician I interviewed was passed over by one set of gatekeepers in favor of her younger brother for the top position in a hospital department. She went over their heads to more powerful men, who vouched for her "manliness." She said:

I do give a hoot about titles and I'm enough of a feminist not to let them promote my brother over me. I have put in many years more of service, and I'm a far better dermatologist than my brother. They tried to do this to me because I'm a woman. Those, excuse the French, assholes, said to me, "Do you mind us promoting your brother over you? He needs the honor." And I said, "For the sake of the women who follow after me, I mind." . . . And they said, "Well, if you come to our meetings, we can't tell dirty jokes, and we can't take off our shoes." I said, "Bull to that one. I know just as many dirty jokes as you do, and I always take off my shoes." All the board of trustees laughed like hell when they heard about it. They all said, "For God's sake, promote her." Most of them were patients of mine anyway. It's a stupid thing to say to a woman doctor. I don't care for me, but I want to make sure that the

next generation gets a fair shake and doesn't get it in the eye. (Lorber 1984, 61-62)

Unfortunately, token junior women cannot afford to be so outspoken.

In 1977, Rosabeth Moss Kanter predicted that as the number of work-group peers with different characteristics significantly increased, they would lose their token status and characteristics and be better integrated into the group.³⁰ They would be able to express individual differences and sponsor others with similar social characteristics for leadership positions. When they became almost half of the group, they could become a recognized subgroup, with alternative views and work practices and their own inner circles. Subsequent research on what came to be called the "Kanter hypothesis" showed that as the numbers of women approach 15 percent, paradoxically, they are *more* not less isolated, as she had predicted. They are cut off from organizational information flows, are not able to acquire the loyal subordinates that leaders depend on, and are not central in the organizational structure (Olson and Miller 1983; South et al. 1982a, 1982b). Because they lack the protection of a sponsor that tokens have, they may be subject to open and covert harassment. When the occupation is symbolically masculine, such as police work or the military, additional numbers of women rarely break down the interactional barriers, and they continue to be loners.³¹ Being few in number, therefore, may result in a more favorable position than a more balanced gender mix, since an increase may be seen as a threat to those in the majority (Toren and Kraus 1987; Wharton and Baron 1987).

Why are men professionals and managers reluctant to allow substantial numbers of women into elite inner circles or to support the ambitions of more than a select safe few for leadership positions? Competition is one reason. Yet other men are competitors, too. Catholic and Jewish men physicians, once also subject to discriminatory quotas in American medical schools, are more successfully integrated than women into the prestigious ranks of the medical profession. It could be that men feel their profession will "tip" and become feminized if too many women are in high-paid, high-prestige, and high-power positions (Lorber 1991). Just as one group seems to fear the neighborhood will go downhill when too many of a devalued group move in, men professionals may be afraid that if too many women become leaders, their profession will become women's work, and the men in it will lose prestige, income, and their control over resources (Blum and Smith 1988; Reskin 1988).

People from subordinate social groups do not become half of the work group unless the occupation, profession, or job specialty loses its prestige and power (Carter and Carter 1981). The leaders, however, tend to stay on and

continue to choose successors to the top positions who are like themselves, not like the new people who outnumber them. The men in colleague groups of mostly women and the whites in groups of mostly people of color (at least in the United States) tend to remain the supervisors and administrators. As administrators, dominant white men need to keep productivity high and costs low. If the members of formerly excluded groups can be relegated to the necessary lower-paid and less prestigious jobs (such as primary care in medicine), administrators can keep costs down and use the increasing numbers of white women and women and men of color who are highly trained professionals and managers without disturbing the status quo.³²

Gender and Authority

Are men so much more acceptable in positions of authority because women "do power" differently? There tend to be two models of women's leadership styles: women are exactly like men, and women are different, but equally competent (Adler and Israeli 1988a).³³ How women or men act does not give the whole picture; women's and men's leadership styles are socially constructed in interaction and heavily influenced by the situational context and how others perceive them. If women in positions of authority tend to be more accessible, to grant more autonomy, but also to be more demanding of subordinates to perform well, the reason may be that they are in weaker positions in the organization and have fewer resources.³⁴ They need subordinates' help but may be unable to reward them with raises or other perks. As a result, they ask more of subordinates but are also more likely to give concessions to those who are loyal to them, which may be perceived as contradictory behavior.

Authority in a woman is granted in a woman-dominated situation, such as nursing, but questioned where authority is defined as a masculine trait, such as in police work or the military.³⁵ In 1986, 10.4 percent of all uniformed U.S. Army personnel were women, but they have been underrepresented in the higher ranks. In 1988, there were nine women who were one-star generals in the U.S. military, 1.2 percent of the total, and none of higher rank. Women constituted 2 percent of the colonels, 3.5 percent of the lieutenant colonels, and 7.1 percent of other officer ranks (Barkalow and Raab 1990, 280-81). In 1991, a woman, Midshipman Julianne Gallina, was chosen the U.S. Naval Academy's brigade commander, student leader of 4,300 midshipmen. Ironically, her appointment came six months after a survey found that a "considerable segment" of students, faculty, and staff believed women had no place in the Naval Academy (New York Times 1991b).

A woman leader is expected to be empathic, considerate of other's feel-

ings, and attuned to the personal (Lorber 1985). If she is not, she is likely to be called "abrasive." As the editor of the prestigious *Harvard Business Review*, Rosabeth Moss Kanter has been publicly faulted for her confrontational management style by her associates, even though her predecessor, a man, had similar problems in his first year (A. L. Cowan 1991). Her high status as a Harvard Business School professor, corporate consultant, and author of internationally known books on management did not protect her from open criticism by her colleagues.

On the other hand, a more conciliatory style may be criticized by men and women colleagues as insufficiently authoritative. Despite the increase in women managers in the past twenty years, men and women at all career stages, including undergraduate and graduate business students, stereotype the good manager as "masculine" (Powell 1988, 145–50). Nonetheless, there are situations where a nonconfrontational approach is highly appropriate. In medicine and police work, quintessential masculine professions in American society, being able to listen and take the role of the other person may be more productive than a distancing, authoritative stance in eliciting information or deflecting conflict (S. E. Martin 1980; West 1984, 51–70). Conciliation and using the other person's views can be threatening to men in police work who have learned to rely on physical force and to men doctors for whom medical expertise is the ultimate authority.

If the goal for women in men-dominated situations is to be treated as if they were men, they are in a double bind, and so are the men (Chase 1988). If the women act like men, they challenge men's "natural" right to positions of power. If the women act like women, they don't belong in a situation where they have to take charge (that is, act like a man). As Susan Ehrlich Martin says of policewomen on patrol: "The more a female partner acts like a police officer, the less she behaves like a woman. On the other hand, the more she behaves like a woman, the less protection she provides, the less adequate she is as a partner—although such behavior preserves the man's sense of masculinity. The way out of the bind is simple: keep women out of patrol work" (1980, 93–94).³⁶

Producing "Face"

All these processes of legitimation and validation that build the reputations of stature and ability needed by a competitor for a position of power and prestige take place in face-to-face interaction.³⁷ In everyday encounters, people present themselves the way they would like to be responded to—as powerful

leaders, cooperative colleagues, deferential underlings, more or less intimate friends, possible sexual partners. The ways people dress, gesture, talk, act, and even show emotion produce social identities, consciously or unconsciously crafted for different arenas and a variety of occasions.³⁸ Ritual behavior, such as bows and handshakes, and the rules of protocol—who goes through a door first, who sits where, who calls whom by their first name—reproduce status hierarchy or create status equality. Ordinary conversations become covert battlegrounds: Who talks more, who interrupts, whose interests are discussed, who gets sustained attention or short shrift, all indicate who has the social upper hand.³⁹ Whom one walks with or stands with—or puts space between—demonstrates affiliation, hostility, or respect, as does eye contact, touching, and other forms of "body politics."⁴⁰ These "face" productions are such delicate balances of power and deference that they can easily be disrupted by rudeness or embarrassment (Goffman 1967, 97–112; Scheff 1988). Secret stigmas, such as deviant behavior in the past or present, or even by members of one's family or by intimate friends, can contaminate a seemingly upright identity if revealed (Goffman 1963a). In face-to-face interaction, accidental attributes, such as beauty or height, may add to social status, and obvious physical deformities often detract from it.⁴¹

These presentations of self take place in social contexts, and the responses of others validate, neutralize, deny, or subvert them. Status signals, whether they are verbal or nonverbal, practical or symbolic, can be understood only in the social context and only by people who have learned their meaning (Hodge and Kress 1988). You need to know the symbolic language of everyday social interaction to be able to tell who is the boss and who is the employee, who are friends and who are enemies. Signals can be manipulated to shore up or subvert the status quo, or they can be used deliberately in open resistance or rebellion.

These status productions are part of "doing gender" (or of doing race, ethnicity, religion, or social class). In doing gender, as West and Zimmerman point out, "men are also doing dominance and women are doing deference" (1987, 146). That is, in face-to-face interaction, what is being produced, reinforced, or resisted is the society's whole system of social stratification. This system endows women and men, people of different racial ethnic groups and religions, and those with greater or lesser economic resources with different social worth. Everyday interaction reenacts these power and prestige differences because people with different status characteristics are seen as legitimately superior or inferior by the others in the situation. When people are evaluated highly, the others take what they have to say seriously, follow

their suggestions, and defer to their judgment. Those who have low status in the eyes of the others are not listened to, their advice is ignored, and their bids for leadership are simply not acknowledged. Status superiors are granted the benefit of the doubt if they make a mistake; status inferiors have to prove their competence over and over again.

The pattern of structured power and prestige in face-to-face interaction replicates the ranking of social characteristics in the larger society because people are seen not as individuals but as representatives of their race, religion, gender, education, occupation, and so on. If everyone in a group has the same social characteristics, then natural leaders and followers emerge; in a group of friends, there is usually one person who is the ringleader. But when the social characteristics of people in a group differ, the social characteristics have more salience than personal characteristics—the woman who leads other women follows when men are present. The solo man does not dominate in a group of women, but he is listened to more than the solo woman is in a group of men (Johnson and Schulman 1989). The size of the group, its status mix, endurance, and purpose determine its structure of power and prestige, but the patterns are constant: Status superiors lead because others feel they have the right to lead; they don't have superior status because they lead. Most of the time, the building up and tearing down of "face" goes unnoticed, but conflicts and confrontations reveal that the vital subtext is the social production of prestige and power (Morrill 1991).

Producing Power

The week I started to write this chapter was the week of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on Professor Anita Hill's allegations of sexual harassment by Judge Clarence Thomas, nominee to the Supreme Court. These encounters dramatized status production and destruction, and the interplay of race, class, and gender with evaluations of performance and social worth. They laid bare the social processes of upward mobility, and how these differ for women and men of the same race. "The scalding contest was not only about race and sex, and women and men. It was about power, and who knows how to use it more effectively" (Dowd 1991c).⁴²

Both Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill are African Americans who were born into poverty and segregation, and both received their law degrees from Yale University, one of the most prestigious law schools in the United States, during a time of nationally approved and implemented affirmative action. They met when they worked together in the administration of President

Ronald Reagan. Judge Thomas, then thirty-three years old, was at the Department of Education and then head of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), the body set up to implement the civil rights laws against discrimination. Professor Hill, then twenty-five years old, worked for Judge Thomas in both organizations for several years.

Professor Hill contended that on and off during this time, at both workplaces, she had been subject to Judge Thomas's repeated requests for dates, as well as descriptions of the sexual acts in pornographic movies he had seen, the size of the breasts and penises of the actors in those movies, the size of his own penis, and his own sexual prowess. She had told few people of the incidents—two women friends, a man she was dating who lived in another city, and the dean at a school considering her for an appointment six or seven years later. They testified before the Judiciary Committee that she had been very upset and uncomfortable talking about it, although she had offered none of the graphic details that she was asked to make public at the reconvened hearings.

Judge Thomas denied the allegations categorically and made his own charges that he was the victim of a particularly ugly brand of racism, the stereotyping of African-American men as nothing more than sexual animals. He called it a "high-tech lynching," but it was Anita Hill who was verbally lynched by the senators who supported Judge Thomas. The judge's supporters on the Judiciary Committee accused Professor Hill of being a vindictive scorned woman, the tool of anti-Thomas political interests, a fantasizer, and a schizophrenic. The members of the Judiciary Committee who were against confirming Judge Thomas were circumspect when they questioned him, and rambling and disjointed with his witnesses. They did not ask him anything about what was rumored to be his well-known interest in pornography. They called no experts to testify on sexual harassment, its effects, or common responses, but listened respectfully to the rambling, self-serving account of a man who had met Anita Hill at a large party.

Professor Hill's accusation of sexual harassment by Judge Thomas was called into question because she had followed him from the Department of Education to the EEOC and had kept in touch with him professionally after she left the EEOC for a teaching position, once asking him for a needed reference, once to come to her campus as a speaker, and at other times requesting help for others or materials for seminars and grants. She had telephoned him about ten to fifteen times in the decade after she left Washington, D.C. When he came to speak at the school where she had her first teaching job, she participated in the social events around his visit and drove him to the airport. A witness to their interaction said it was very friendly and relaxed.

Judge Thomas's supporters on the Judiciary Committee said over and over that they could not understand why Anita Hill had followed him from one organization to another after he had harassed her. She said that for several months before he took the new position, he had not engaged in lewd talk or pressured her for dates, as he had started seeing someone seriously. After they both moved to EEOC, she said he harassed her again. His relationship had not worked out, and he was also going through a divorce. Pro-Thomas members of the committee also said they could not understand why she had maintained a cordial professional relationship with him in the ensuing years. One of Professor Hill's witnesses tried to explain why by talking about her own experience, which included "touching," and said that as a Black woman you learn to "grit your teeth and bear it" so that you can get to a position where you do not need the support of your harasser any longer.

Professor Hill said she had followed Thomas to EEOC because she was afraid she could not otherwise find employment commensurate with her credentials and abilities. She had been a corporate lawyer and did not want to return to that sector of law. Although this motivation for continuing a relationship with someone she said had subjected her to disgusting talk was challenged by witnesses for Judge Thomas, the evidence of her career path bears out her restricted opportunities. At the time of the alleged incidents, Professor Hill was an African-American woman professional in her twenties, a graduate of a highly prestigious law school, just beginning her career. The position she went to after she left EEOC was with Oral Roberts University, a small low-status school (now defunct).⁴³ Judge Thomas was an African-American man in his thirties, appointed by the president to direct a large federal agency. He was being groomed for further appointments in Republican circles and was described by one witness as "a rising star." Professor Hill's continued reliance on Judge Thomas for reference letters, speaking engagements, positions for others, and materials on civil rights enhanced her career and standing at her workplace and in the profession. Despite a high level of professional activities, such as research and attendance at conventions of the American Bar Association, she could not afford to alienate an important professional contact.

The women who testified for Judge Thomas lauded him for his respect for women and the help he gave them; except for one, none was a professional. They called Anita Hill "stridently aggressive," "arrogant," "opinionated," "hard," "tough," "ambitious," and "aloof." They suggested that her motivation was that she resented not being his main assistant at EEOC, as she had been at the Department of Education, or that she "had a crush on him" and was scorned.

As a professional woman, Professor Hill realized too late that Clarence Thomas was more interested in her sexually than professionally and was not going to be helpful in advancing her career at EEOC. She said that he had said when she left EEOC that if she ever talked about what he had done, it would ruin his career. She did not talk about it publicly, and in turn, he filled any request from her. She had nothing to gain by going public when she finally did so, and she said she would not have done so had she not been approached by staff of the Judiciary Committee, who had been told of rumors that Judge Thomas had been involved in sexual harassment at EEOC.

The Judiciary Committee was made up of fourteen upper-middle-class white men. The Senate, which had to vote to confirm the nomination, consisted of ninety-eight men, almost all white, and two white women. More of the senators (including the Republican woman) and, according to polls, more of the American people, believed him than her (Kolbert 1991b). After a weekend of testimony by Professor Hill and Judge Thomas and witnesses for and against her and for him, and a day of debate in the full Senate, on October 16, 1991, he was confirmed, 52-48, to a lifetime term on the Supreme Court. Professor Hill went back to her teaching job, with applause from her colleagues and students and later awards from professional women's groups.⁴⁴

Sexual Harassment as Discrimination

Barbara Gutek (1985) found that 67.2 percent of 393 men would be flattered if asked to have sex by a woman coworker, but 62.8 percent of 814 women would be insulted by a sexual invitation from a male colleague (table 1, p. 96). Demands for sexual relations by superiors as the cost of keeping a job or advancing in it is quid pro quo, a long-standing ugly phenomenon of work life for heterosexual and lesbian women of all classes and races, and also for many women college and graduate students.⁴⁵ Most people understand the unfairness when someone who needs a job or a grade is subject to unwanted sexual advances, verbal or physical. But sexual talk, gestures, and other behavior inappropriate to a work environment or to a professional or student-teacher relationship also constitute discrimination against the targets. This concept of sexual harassment as discrimination, first advanced by Catharine MacKinnon (1979), was promulgated in EEOC guidelines in 1980 but was not upheld in the courts in this or other countries until the late 1980s (Lewin 1991a; Weisman 1989).

The concept of harassment as discrimination emerged in the United States when white women and women and men of color were hired in workplaces

and accepted in training institutions from which they had been excluded. Women in blue-collar jobs tend to come up against sexual harassment and other forms of interpersonal resistance when they successfully break into white men's work worlds, especially when they are women of color and have low-status jobs (Gruber and Bjorn 1982). The intent of such harassment is to make work life so unpleasant that the woman will quit. Women who enter formerly all-men managerial or professional schools or workplaces are likely to be subject to sexual innuendoes or remarks about their physical appearance, which are aimed at undercutting their poise and work performance. The aim is to induce them to shrink from visibility and assertiveness, the hallmarks of the person who becomes a leader in a field.

Only recently, and only in a very few instances, have formal complaints or grievances been filed and lawsuits instituted over persistent episodes of sexual harassment of women or of homosexual men. The reason for not making the incidents public is that the accuser is often not supported by colleagues or bosses, and in many cases, the harasser is the boss (Schneider 1991). When the incidents, such as embarrassing sexual remarks or jokes at meetings, are between peers, they are frequently condoned or at least not halted or criticized by those present. Neither senior men nor women are likely to put a stop to such incidents while they are happening or to chastise the harasser and offer support to the person harassed in private afterward. These "microinequities" are not considered serious enough for a lawsuit, but "in the daily lives of working women, it is precisely these small, taken-for-granted comments, jokes, and physical acts, each individually unlikely to force a woman to initiate administrative action, that may accumulate in the long-term feeling and experience of harassment" (Schneider 1985, 104).⁴⁶

Recently, feminists have begun to speak of a continuum that runs from *gender harassment*, which is inappropriately calling attention to women's or men's bodies, sexuality, and marital status, to *sexual harassment*, which is turning a professional, work or student-teacher relationship into a sexual relationship *that is not wanted by one of the people involved and that is coercive because the initiator has some power over the other person*.⁴⁷ The defining criterion for gender harassment is that the person's gender or sexual persuasion is used to comment on the individual's capabilities or career commitment. The defining criterion for sexual harassment is that the behavior is *inappropriate* for the situation; what should be a gender-neutral situation is turned into an *unwanted* sexual situation, and the initiator or instigator has *power*, which makes it difficult for those subject to the harassment to protest, leave, complain to others, or take action without jeopardy to their own status. The immediate

reaction to gender and sexual harassment is likely to be discomfort, anger, feelings of powerlessness, inability to work, or feeling demeaned. These feelings may be suppressed if the person feels he or she has no choice but to continue in the situation or relationship.

Even senior women have faced such continued harassment. Several months before Anita Hill's allegations, a woman neurosurgeon, Dr. Frances K. Conley, a fifty-year-old full professor at Stanford Medical School and head of the Faculty Senate, resigned after sixteen years on the faculty.⁴⁸ She said she had been subject to continuous verbal sabotage of her professional status, such as comments on her breasts at meetings and being called "honey" in front of patients. Dr. Conley was the only woman faculty member in neurosurgery and one of two full professors in the department. The other, the acting head of neurosurgery, was going to be made chair of the department. He was the man she said was constantly insulting to her and to other women. Her women colleagues and the women medical students reported the long-standing practice of men physicians' use of pictures of naked women in lectures. If women complained or argued, they were labeled "premenstrual." Women medical students have always been subject to sexist practices, but women now constitute almost 40 percent of the classes in the United States. Rather than abating, gender and sexual harassment as a means of curbing the ambitions of women has persisted as the number of women in medicine has increased.⁴⁹

"Speak-out" sessions reveal many incidents of gender and sexual harassment and how situations are differently perceived by women and by men. Neither type of harassment is likely to diminish using only formal methods of complaint and censure because both are so pervasive at every level in every workplace where women and men work together. The best remedy is clear indication from senior men, in a public setting, that *all* women employees, trainees, and students are to be treated *neutrally*—which does not mean coldly and distantly, but in a cordial, friendly, but not sexual manner. Most people do know the difference; they make such distinctions all the time in relating to their friends' spouses, for instance.

It takes a very well-established woman to stand up for her professional status successfully, and she needs the support of senior men. Dr. Conley finally agreed to return to the Stanford Medical School faculty because the administration appointed a task force on discrimination and also set up committees to review claims of sexual harassment. A follow-up interview showed that her actions paid off. Mary Roth Walsh (1992) reported that Conley has become the Anita Hill of American medicine, giving speeches all over the country and garnering awards from feminist organizations. Dr. Gerald Silverberg, the chair

who had harassed Conley and many other women who were prepared to testify against him, resigned, made a formal apology, and was attending gender sensitivity classes and counseling sessions!

Women who live on the economic margins and women at the beginning of their careers cannot be expected to counter the constant sexist commentary that men use to guard the boundaries of what they feel is their turf. Nor can sympathetic men in similar positions. Not much support can be expected from senior men, who often engage in gender and sexual harassment themselves. So it is up to senior women to use whatever power they have for social change. They can no longer remain silent: "Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement" (Cixous 1976, 875).⁵⁰

Oh, liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name.

—*Madame Manon Roland* (L. Kelly 1987, 121)

THE VISIBLE HAND: GENDER AND THE STATE

During the 1980s, while Margaret Thatcher was prime minister of Great Britain, the lord mayor of London was also a woman. With Elizabeth II as queen, that was a remarkable concentration of women leaders in a modern society, but it didn't make England a matriarchy. Parliament as well as other government institutions were dominated by men, and Thatcher's régime showed that a woman head of state is no guarantee of support for women's rights. Her government reduced child-care provisions, maternity benefits, and work rights for women (Gelb 1989, 59).

Women's civil status has fluctuated in Western societies; it has not improved with the rise of the modern state or the spread of Western ideas of individual liberty. Paradoxically, as states become more democratic, elite women lose power, but middle-class and poor women do not gain. There were periods in ancient Greece and Rome and in medieval Islamic and European societies when elite women had a higher status than upper-class women did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England, France, and the United States.¹ Women who are part of a landowning aristocracy derive power from their family's status. They often have inheritance rights or act as agents and managers so that the extended family's property can be kept intact. Women lost the right to inherit and control property in ancient Greece and Rome when entrepreneurial nuclear families supplanted landowning extended families as the main production units (Arthur 1977). The European Renaissance, by elevating the individual over the family, similarly reduced the power of aristocratic women members of families that had owned great tracts of land, since they had often substituted for their kinsmen in the feudal period (Coontz and Henderson 1986; J. Kelly 1984).