

highly recommend her book, both its reading and its application, to those engaged in the debates over pornography and to those of us who have largely ignored the debates up until now.

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Women in the Administrative Revolution. Graham S. Lowe, *University of Toronto Press, 1987.*

Graham Lowe's book *Women and the Administrative Revolution* provides a comprehensive examination of the forces which converged during the early 1900s to change clerical work from a predominately male to a predominately female vocation. Through a detailed analysis of historical events and contextual factors, Lowe sheds new light on our understanding of the emergence of female job ghettos.

The strength of this publication lies in the breadth of theoretical and empirical discussion. Because there is no implicit or explicit mandate to fit all findings into a predetermined thesis, the author is able to uncover many important and interesting insights which had hitherto been brushed over by other scholars. Unfortunately, this same thoroughness often makes Lowe's arguments difficult to follow. For this reason, *Women and the Administrative Revolution* is not suitable as an introductory text for those who have no previous exposure to the basic historical developments in women's work.

Pertinent theoretical perspectives are combined with empirical information from census statistics and firm records to examine the feminization of clerical work in Canada. Discussions of historical events, unique firm characteristics, and international comparisons with the United States and Britain, are used to better understand the emergence of clerical work as "women's work." The influences of four main forces can be followed throughout the book:

- the development of large-scale centralized bureaucracies;
- the drive for mechanization, rationalization, and control in the office;
- wartime labour shortages; and
- patriarchal attitudes.

The Development of Large-Scale Centralized Bureaucracies

The appearance of Corporate Capitalism forms the underlying impetus for all Lowe's arguments. Following the lead of C. Wright Mills, Lowe explores the increasing ratio of administrative to production workers which occurred in Canada between the turn of the century and the start of the depression. The shift from small autonomous firms to large-scale bureaucracies was accompanied by an increased demand for office workers to assist in the regulation and control of the expanding workforces.

The Drive for Mechanization, Rationalization, and Control in the Office

As the office wage bill consumed greater and greater proportions of operating expenditures, cost savings were sought through measures aimed at enhancing the productivity of clerical staff. As a carry-over from the factory floor, scientific management principles were used to analyze and fragment clerical tasks. The male generalist of the 1800s became the female specialist of the 1900s.

Although Lowe is careful to point out the drudgery experienced by some nineteenth-century clerks and the more positive working conditions of twentieth-century clerks, his basic thesis is that clerical work in general became less interesting and rewarding precisely when women were welcomed into the field. Scientific management was used to control and strive for maximum productivity from each individual worker. While a few women became personal secretaries and were assigned a variety of job duties, most of the new female clerical workers performed monotonous tasks which were subject to precise output measurements.

Unlike other authors who have taken a narrow deterministic view of technological change, Lowe places the introduction of office equipment, such as typewriters and adding machines, in the context of other managerial initiatives. Mechanization was used in conjunction with scientific management principles to create specialized jobs which could be easily monitored and controlled.

By the 1920s it was rare to find a large office without mechanized systems of accounting and recordkeeping. The most striking changes often occurred in the centralized accounting departments. It was here that rows of routine clerks mechanically transformed mountains of statistics into concise measures of productivity, costs and profits. (p. 127)

Wartime Labour Shortage

The labour shortage which occurred during the war served to speed the feminization process. Many men were unavailable for work precisely when the shift to Corporate Capitalism created increased demands for clerical staff. Women provided a readily available source of relatively well-educated workers.

Patriarchal Attitudes

Having discussed the economic forces which prevailed, Lowe goes on to examine the social climate which also influenced the movement of women in a hitherto male-dominated profession. The war effort made it respectable for women to work outside the home and clerical employment evolved in such a way that it became defined as suitable for women. As a consequence of mechanization and scientific management, clerks were no longer given the opportunity to develop or exhibit the skills necessary for movement into management. Thus, it was acceptable for women to perform these dead-end jobs while men were selected for positions which offered a training ground for more lofty endeavours. Resistance to female office workers was minimal because this new type of clerical work did not threaten "men's jobs." The words of William Henry Leffingwell, North America's leading exponent of scientific office management, precisely depict the new definition of clerical work as "women's work" which arose during the early 1900s.

A woman is to be preferred for the secretarial position, for she is not averse to doing minor tasks, work involving the handling of petty details, which would irk and irritate ambitious young men, who usually feel that the work they are doing is of no importance if it can be performed by some person with a lower salary. (p. 76)

Social definitions were brought in line with labour demands and occupational gender segregation became entrenched.

Although it is possible to identify four primary factors which interacted to bring about pronounced changes in the nature and structure of clerical work in the 1900s, there were many irregularities in the effects across industries, firms and occupational groups. Some firms were quick to adopt new female workers whereas others clung to old patriarchal attitudes. The banking industry in particular resisted the entry of female office workers and went so far as to request that male clerks be exempt from conscription on the basis of their special qualifications and vital role in the economy (p. 68). Even within the clerical field, sharp

contrasts could be drawn between female stenography and other more demanding clerical positions which continued to be filled by men.

Lowe's critique of the Neo-marxist position illustrates that the decline in the relative wage of clerks was as much due to the lowering of status initiated by the influx of female workers, as it was to more traditionally understood proletarianization. Generalizations based on aggregate salary data miss the essential contribution of the feminization process and the influences of particular firm and industry characteristics.

Through his dedication to detail, Lowe has provided an insightful reappraisal of the many conditions which coincided to change the very essence of clerical work. Even though other authors have discussed the general downward mobility of office workers, a thorough examination of relevant historical events was needed to uncover the underlying complexities of this process of change.

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Each in Her Own Way: Five Women Leaders of the Developing World. Marion Fennelly Levy, *Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988, Pp. 181.*

The purpose, style and content of *Each in Her Own Way: Five Women Leaders of the Developing World* are a tribute to feminist observation and action. The inspiration for the book arose out of Marion Fennelly Levy's appreciation for the work that women do. Conscious that women's contributions to society remain largely invisible in the records of world history, Levy embraced the goal of documenting the work and spirit of five women who, in her evaluation, are extraordinary leaders in the field of the Third World development.

Ranging in length from 27 to 34 pages, each of the five biographies unite Levy's observations, research and analysis with the women's own words. Levy's effective use of quotations from her interviews with the women and from material they have written provides the reader both with a direct link to each of the women's insights and ideas, and with a rare opportunity to contact the depth of their experiences and emotions as captured in the women's analogies, metaphors and song.

In five diverse geographical, political, social, and economic contexts, Levy's work highlights the interplay of