Part I
Gender at Work

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Thinking through Work: Gender, Power and Space

The fabric of the advanced economies has been enlarged to encompass new sectors, new jobs, and new ways of working, ... taking shapes previously unimagined.
A. Sayer and R. Walker, 1992, p. 2

INTRODUCTION: ORGANISATION, SPACE AND CULTURE

In this chapter, I want to counterpose a number of sets of literatures to draw out some questions about the changing organisation and distribution of waged work, especially its feminisation, that will be explored in detail in different ways in the chapters that make up this book. As many analyses have made clear, there is an evident, empirically demonstrable, trend towards the 'feminisation' of work in contemporary Britain. In using this term, I intend to indicate a great deal more than the numerical increase in the numbers of women entering waged employment in the labour markets of Britain's towns and cities. I also want to encompass the shift to service sector employment, where the attributes of growing numbers of jobs and occupations are based, in the main, on those purportedly feminine attributes of serving and caring, as well as what organisational theorists and management consultants see as a trend towards the feminisation of management structures and practices with a growing emphasis on less hierarchical, more empathetic and cooperative styles of management. The popular as well as the academic literature in these areas includes praise for non-hierarchical structures, for empathy and caring in the workplace and a range of other essentialised feminine attributes. Indeed, so lyrical has a stream of this literature become about feminised attributes that women have been dubbed 'the new Japanese' of

organisational theory by one over-enthusiastic advocate (Helgasen, 1990). If these literatures are to be believed, if sheer numbers of women in the labour market are emphasised and the terms and conditions of many women's employment are ignored, it might seem that women are entering a new period of success and empowerment in the late twentieth century world of work. Some grounds for this optimism, as well as contradictory evidence, will be revealed in later chapters in the specific circumstances of merchant banking in the City of London.

The empirical evidence about the purported feminisation of organisations has been paralleled by a remarkable expansion in theoretically grounded studies of service-based economies. In a range of disciplines and from a range of perspectives, the changing nature of work and structure of organisations has been the focus of recent attention. A particularly noticeable trend in this work has been what we might term a 'cultural turn', in which the the perception of work and workplaces as active forces in the social construction of workers as embodied beings has become a prominent emphasis. Rather than seeing the workplace as a site which men and women as fixed and finished products enter to become labour power, the ways in which the workplace or the organisation play a key role in the constitution of subjects is becoming clear. It is this work that has been a major influence here, especially studies that have examined the gendering of organisations, the construction of work as emotional labour and the management of feeling and the significance of embodiment – of men and women as physical beings of different sizes, shapes, skin colours and sexual proclivities and preferences as well as gendered attributes – in workplace interactions. To this incisive and significant literature, I want to bring a specifically geographical imagination and suggest that the location and the physical construction of the workplace – its site and layout, the external appearance and the internal layout of its buildings and surrounding environment – also affects, as well as reflects, the social construction of work and workers and the relations of power, control and dominance that structure relations between them. Here a set of literatures from geography, architecture and urban sociology are useful. The link between these different literatures, between sociological and geographical imaginations, is the notion of performance, especially the new theoretical work on the body as a site of inscription and cultural analyses of the body. The social constructionist literature has, for several decades from Goffman (1961, 1963) onwards, fruitfully used the notion of the stage and performance as a way of understanding everyday behaviours and interactions, and this is mirrored in some of the earliest feminist writing about gender roles. More recently, feminist scholars have developed a psychoanalytically based notion of gender itself as a performance (Butler, 1990a, b). In the work on the built environment,

the physical structures of the workplace and the street, Sennett's (1977) classic examination of the decline of the public arena uses the concept of performance as a key to unlock changing attitudes to public and private spaces. His argument that the significance of the street was reduced by the fear of others and otherness has parallels too with the long tradition in feminist scholarship on woman as 'Other'. This work has fruitful links with analyses of organisational culture and with detailed explorations of the ways in which the body is inscribed by these cultures and by specific workplace practices.

A focus on the body as culturally inscribed but also as occupying a range of different spaces in the city, both inside and outside, public and private, is one way of bringing together different theoretical, disciplinary and methodological approaches. All these themes are an important part of developing an understanding of social behaviour in merchant banks. My aim, therefore, is to bring together approaches that are too often kept separate with their emphases on different spatial scales, be it the individual or the economy as a whole, or at an in between scale, the organisation. I want to show how individual behaviour at work, the social construction of gender divisions, the redevelopment of the built environment in the City of London and the restructuring of employment in contemporary industrial economies like Britain may be linked together and so better illuminate the wide-ranging social and economic changes in the nature, organisation and distribution of work in Britain. As Sassen (1996) has recently suggested, in a schematic outline of new ways of thinking about the economy of global cities, it is work in 'the analytic borderlands' that seems provocative in explaining the complex and changing structure of the economies of global cities. New work is needed, she has suggested, in 'several systems of representation, [each] with its own definitions, rules, boundaries, narratives, constructing a dialogue across each' (p. 184), and she believes, as I do, that 'theoretical work on the body . . . opens up new possibilities for analyses of the sort I am exploring here' (p. 185).

MEN'S JOBS, WOMEN'S JOBS: EMPLOYMENT CHANGE IN THE 1980S AND 1990S

As well as a book about money, this is a book about gender, power and space and the ways in which they are connected to each other and to the changing nature of waged work in contemporary Britain. Like other advanced industrial nations, the last decades of the twentieth century in Britain have been marked by a series of remarkable changes in the nature and location of waged work. So great has been the impact of these

changes that Pahl has suggested that waged work is the dominant but unresolved question at the end of the twentieth century: 'confusion and ambiguities about its meaning, nature and purpose in our lives are widespread' (Pahl, 1988, p. 1). The world as we thought we knew it has vanished. The post-war certainty about the nature of work, when it was assumed that full-time, waged employment for men was the norm, is now revealed as an exception, dominant only for three brief decades between 1945 and 1975 (Pahl, 1984). As in earlier centuries, it seems clear that waged work for growing numbers of people, perhaps even for a majority, was and will be discontinuous, interrupted and uncertain (Rifkin, 1996) – in short, a world of employment that has always been familiar to most women.

The remarkable series of changes that was set in motion in Great Britain, and indeed in other advanced industrial economies, from the mid 1960s onwards to their apotheosis in the late 1980s seems to have finally buried the belief in the permanency of work. In the 1980s, the nature and structure of waged work in these societies, its organisation and rewards, the types of tasks undertaken and the people who did them, as well as the places in which they laboured, changed irrevocably. The relative certainty of life-time employment, often for a single employer and frequently in the same place, that had faced men in the post-war decades was swept away in a rhetoric and reality of flexibility, restructuring, casualisation, polarisation and feminisation. The decline of manufacturing employment in western industrial economies that had been evident for two decades accelerated in the 1980s, and increasing numbers of people found themselves employed in the service economy in a range of occupations from selling haircuts to selling financial advice. These new jobs in the service sector – new only in the sense that they came to dominate these economies – were unevenly distributed across space and between the population. Old manufacturing heartlands suffered serious employment decline, whereas the sunbelt in the south and south west of the United States, and the golden arc or triangle joined by Bristol, London and Cambridge in Britain, increased their share of national employment and associated prosperity.

For a time Pahl's thesis about the changing nature of work seemed overly gloomy and, as the 1980s progressed, the huge expansion of employment in the service sector seemed to counter his pessimism. In the South East of England in particular, economic growth accelerated in the mid 1980s after a period of recession in the early years of that decade, and there was a widespread belief in the buoyant middle years of the decade that the expanding financial services sector heralded a new secure economic future for Britain. New forms of work based on the ownership, control, movement of and access to money led to the rise of

new types of well-paid, middle-class occupations which in combination were dubbed a 'new service class' or a new cultural class (Savage et al., 1992; Thrift, 1989; Urry, 1986). This was the group designated 'yuppies' in popular culture. While the term 'yuppy' was used, without doubt, to include professional workers in the financial services sector, the label 'new service class' tended to be used more restrictively to distinguish a group of workers in what might be referred to as the cultural industries – in marketing, advertising and public relations as well as TV and radio producers and presenters, magazine journalists, fashion writers, and arts administrators and performers. The helping professions – social workers, therapists etc. – are also often included in this new class fraction. This group of middle-class workers were identified as being of key significance in the socio-economic changes that seemed to be sweeping 1980s Britain. Their attitudes to work, it was argued, were different from both the old bourgeoisie and the old manufacturing-based working class. For this new middle class or cultural class, work was fun: indeed, the boundaries between work and leisure were increasingly difficult to define as the social relations of production and consumption merged into each other (Du Gay, 1996). Questions of style and performance, of the ownership and possession of a range of 'positional' goods – the Filofax, a Peugeot car, Gucci shoes, a gentrified flat or house in an inner area that was, in estate agents' parlance, 'rapidly improving' – all marked out these workers as a distinct class fraction (Thrift, 1989). This group, it was argued, were also the leaders in a shift towards an increasing emphasis on cultural production, on consumption and lifestyle, on images and the aestheticisation of life, that had become a significant feature of late modern capitalist societies (Featherstone, 1991a; Giddens, 1990, 1991). Working with the media, the new cultural class actively promoted the ideas of 'celebrity intellectuals' (Featherstone, 1991a, p. 45) who embraced the popular. Indeed, Bourdieu designated the class as a whole the 'new intellectuals' because of their adoption of a learning mode or attitude towards life (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 370). As well as ideas, this class was said to be 'fascinated by identity, presentation, appearance, lifestyle and the endless quest for new experiences' (Featherstone, 1991a, p. 44). It is also significant that a spatial referrent was attached to the group. Paralleling geographers' arguments about deterritorialisation, Featherstone suggested that the new cultural class had a 'frequent lack of anchoring in terms of a specific locale or community' (1991a, p. 44), although other theorists identified a specifically local impact of the group who were among the key actors in the gentrification of inner area housing markets in the global cities in which they worked (King, 1990a, 1993; Sassen, 1990). Many of the new cultural industries were also located in inner areas (Zukin, 1995), resulting in new political alliances, bringing together

'professional politicians, government administrators, local politicians, businessmen, financiers, dealers, investors, artists, intellectuals, educators, cultural intermediaries, and publics [and] has resulted in new interdependencies and strategies that have changed power balances and produced alliance between groups that may previously have perceived their interests as opposed' (Featherstone, 1991a, p. 47). As I shall show in later chapters, high-status workers in the financial services sector increasingly identify with this configuration in their attitudes to work and leisure, and in their aetheticisation of everyday life.

The remarkably uncritical tone in which the new cultural class is analysed by some, however, was challenged by the reassertion of the cold world of economics in the celebration of consumption. As Harvey (1989a) never ceased to argue, the 'postmodern' turn to consumption was little more than 'the cultural froth of late capitalism'. The mechanisms of class division and exploitation ground on slowly and surely below the surface, and the emphasis on aestheticisation and lifestyle merely disguised the insecurity of many of those employed in the new service industries. The bubble of service sector expansion burst at the end of the decade. In Britain and the US, between 1990 and 1992, there was recession and a 'shakeout' of service sector employment, and Pahl's next examination of work had a pessimistic title: *After Success* (Pahl, 1995). Financiers, dealers, lawyers and cultural workers alike were reminded of the harsh world of economic reality as unemployment rose and the housing market suffered an almost unparalleled crisis as real prices fell. Many of those who had bought into the gentrified lifestyle in inner areas or dockland conversions were stranded in negative equity as the value of their property fell below the loan secured to purchase it. A new literature about downsizing and shakeouts and the advantages of a less pressurised lifestyle – an individual's choice to downshift matching enforced corporate downsizing – began to replace the more outrageous of the 1980s texts that had celebrated the 'greed is good' ethos. But even in the boom years, the expansion in service sector employment had not brought prosperity for all. While many of the new jobs were highly paid, demanding increasingly well-qualified employees who were rewarded commensurately, the greatest expansion of employment had been in poorly paid, often casual and temporary work at the bottom end of the service sector – perhaps more accurately called 'servicing' rather than service occupations. In the 1980s, the fastest growing jobs in the US economy, for example, included retail assistants, nursing auxiliaries, care attendants in old people's homes, janitors, truck drivers, waitresses and waiters (Castells, 1989; Christopherson, 1989; Sassen, 1990). The list in Great Britain was similar (Handy, 1994; Lawless et al., 1996). The net result was a widening pay differential between the well paid and the poorest paid. For those in

the bottom decile of the income distribution, for example, the decade brought an absolute as well as a relative decline in their share of the total earnings from employment (Rowntree Foundation, 1995).

As well as growing income polarisation, the 1980s saw the continuation of a shift of employment from men to women which had begun with manufacturing decline in the 1960s. In the ten years after 1966, the net decline in manufacturing output led to significant job losses, of which 73 per cent were jobs previously held by men, but only 27 per cent by women. Over the same decade, the net increase in private sector services resulted in a 125 per cent increase in jobs for women, but a 44 per cent decrease in men's service employment (Dex, 1987). In the next 15 years, the loss from the manufacturing sector slowed down but the attrition of men's employment continued. Consequently, by the beginning of the 1990s, there were 3.5 million fewer men in waged employment than at the beginning of the 1960s and almost 3 million more women, although as women were more likely to work part-time, the total number of hours worked had fallen (McDowell, 1991; Walby, 1988).

These figures reflect a transformation in the labour market behaviour of women in Great Britain in the post-war era. In response to employment restructuring and to social changes from reliable contraception to new patterns of consumption (McDowell, 1989), more and more women entered the workforce. At the beginning of the 1990s, more than half of all women and almost 60 per cent of married women were economically active (Department of Employment, 1992b), compared to just over a third of all women and a fifth of married women in 1951. The time women spend out of the labour force is also becoming shorter, with 45 per cent of women returning to work and an additional 20 per cent looking for work within nine months of childbirth. While the overwhelming majority of women in paid work with young children still work part-time, an increasing proportion are returning to full-time employment after childbirth. The rate of return to full-time rather than part-time work rose from 5 to 15 per cent between 1971 and 1991 (McRae, 1991).

The feminisation of the labour market is not, however, an undifferentiated process. Just as work is becoming increasingly differentiated as a whole in its conditions and rewards, women as waged workers are also becoming increasingly differentiated (Crompton et al., 1996; McDowell, 1991; Phillips, 1989). Whereas a minority of well-educated women are able to enter and hold on to full-time work in professional occupations, the majority of women in waged work are in part-time jobs at the bottom end of the labour market. Thus, the proportion of women able to return to work after giving birth, for example, differs according to the type of work they do or are willing to accept. In comparison with other occupational groups, women professionals and associate professionals (the latter

group includes teachers, health and social workers and librarians) are more likely to return and most likely to return full-time. Many of these women are in public sector employment where provision for working mothers in the form of flexible working and part-time work is more usual. Women managers and administrators in the private sector, on the other hand, have a lower rate of return, partly reflecting restricted opportunities for part-time employment at this level (McRae, 1991). Women professionals, as a group, are less likely than either managers and administrators or secretarial and clerical workers to experience downward occupational mobility (Brannen, 1989; Dex, 1987).

These trends reinforce arguments based on the analysis of pay differentials which suggest that women are becoming increasingly differentiated as a workforce. Throughout the 1980s, a growing proportion of women gained educational qualifications and they are beginning to constitute a substantial proportion of those entering professional occupations. Young women improved their performance in school-leaving examinations throughout the 1980s, and as the 1990s began, there was almost no difference between the proportions of men and women aged 20–24 gaining degrees (11 and 10 per cent respectively), although considerable differences still exist in the subjects they study (Department of Employment,1992a; Government Statistical Service, 1992). Such is the evident success of women in school, university and professional examinations, that a crisis of male under-achievement has been recognised as the popular and academic press begins to investigate 'boys who fail' and young men with little hope of steady employment (Campbell, 1993; Wilkinson and Mulgan, 1995).

These trends in the education sector and in the labour market have resulted in a rising number of women gaining access to professional occupations – once the bastions of masculine privilege. In some cases women's representation in the professions has increased dramatically. Examples include law, banking, accountancy, pharmacy and medicine. In 1991, for example, almost half the new entrants to the legal profession in Great Britain were women, up from 19 per cent in 1975 (Crompton et al., 1990; Rice, 1991). In banking, women accounted for just 2 per cent of successful finalists in the Institute of Banking examinations in 1970, but by the early 1990s almost a third of the finalists were women. In 1975 only 7 per cent of new chartered accountants and 6 per cent of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants members were women, but a decade later these proportions had risen to 25 per cent and 36 per cent respectively (Crompton, 1992).

A comparison of women's occupational distributions in 1971 and 1991 from national Census data reveals significant increases in women's participation in many types of jobs. In these two decades, women increased

their representation in managerial occupations from less than 5 per cent to almost 11 per cent and also made inroads into professional occupations in general. In 1991, 15 per cent of all employed women were classified as professionals compared with 11 per cent in 1971 (Lindley and Wilson, 1993). However, there were also gains for men in professional categories; it seems that at least part of women's improved position was a result of the overall expansion of employment opportunities in these areas – many of them in the new middle-class occupations just outlined – rather than women taking jobs previously held by men.

Despite their growing presence in higher level jobs, few women make it to the top of the occupational hierarchies in the public or private sector. Although one in four junior managers in Britain was female at the start of the 1990s, at senior management levels the number of women remaining was down to one or two per 100 (Summers, 1991a). Less than 1 per cent of managing directors of large companies were women, and a similarly tiny proportion of directors of publicly quoted companies were women (Labour Research, 1992). Women are equally badly represented in the upper echelons of the public sector. They are, for example, almost completely absent at the highest level of the police force (the first woman chief constable was appointed in 1995) and the judiciary. As the '90s began, only one out of 14 regional health authorities was chaired by a woman; and just 7 per cent of top Civil Service posts, less than 2 per cent of local council chief executives, and only about 25 per cent of secondary school headships were filled by women (*Financial Times*, 1992; Goodhart, 1991; Summers, 1991b). Even in law and accountancy, which women have entered in considerable numbers in recent years, the number making it to the top is tiny. Women are approximately 12 per cent of partners in law firms, less than 2 per cent of the fellows of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and, as I began my work, less than 4 per cent of directors of the big four banks in Britain. As we see later, women's representation on the boards of merchant banks is remarkable only for their almost complete absence.

EXPLAINING ORGANISATIONAL AND WORKPLACE CHANGE

In the next part of this chapter, I want to shift from an empirical to a theoretical focus and examine the sets of theoretical literatures about work, organisational change and culture and gender divisions of labour that influenced this study of gendered patterns of recruitment, promotion and social interaction in the world of investment or merchant banking. I want to outline briefly the ways of thinking that have influenced me in

the years in which I have been preoccupied with questions about gender and power. I hope to show that, rather than taking a singular or disciplinary-specific approach, a more complete understanding of why certain types of people are successful merchant bankers can be gained by bringing together a range of different theoretical approaches to occupational segregation and labour market segmentation, the culture of workplaces – literatures about the body, about clothes and personal presentation, about success, organisational structures and the meaning of work, and about the impact that the built environment has on how men and women situate themselves in spaces and places.

In this work, I have adopted a geographic approach in the sense of moving through progressively finer spatial scales in an attempt to build up, or rather uncover, the processes behind empirically evident patterns of gender segregation in the City, in the financial services sector and within merchant banks. Thus, I move from the general to the particular throughout the book, ending up with the individual and his or her body, a spatial scale not generally considered by geographers but much more familiar to sociologists and psychologists. In any study of service sector work, however, in which so much depends on 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display' (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7), the scale of the body cannot be ignored. Because my aim is to understand the gendered organisation of the financial services sector – at least to the extent that merchant banks are representative organisations in this sector – my focus remains on the City and the firms within it. This is not a study of the role of the financial services sector *per se* in restructuring Britain's space economy. But this is not to imply that I have completely ignored the overall significance of the financial services sector or the specificities of merchant banking.

In a study of gendered management and employment practices in the insurance industry, Kerfoot and Knights (1994) argued that, for them, 'financial services are merely a site for empirical research rather than the intrinsic object of investigation' (p. 124). I began this study of merchant banks in the City of London with a somewhat similar belief – my concern was not with the economic niceties of fluctuating interest rates, nor with instruments of deregulation and re-regulation, not even with the successive scandals that affected so many City banks in the 1980s and 1990s, but rather with the everyday practices of the men and women who worked in City banks. But, of course, the two cannot be separated. The specificities of financial services as an industry, the particularities of the City in the early 1990s and the environment, attitudes and culture of each merchant bank affected the ways in which gender differences in recruitment policies and career opportunities worked out. What economic sociologists term 'embeddedness' and geographers 'location' can-

not and should not be ignored in the investigation of gender segregation at work. Looking back, I realise that even to think for a moment that place and specificity might not matter was foolish. Although the trend towards feminisation evident in the new service economy of the UK and other advanced industrial nations might be a general one, the ways in which it works out in different sectors and in different geographic locations are particular. Thus, this book is a detailed case study of the processes of gender segregation in three merchant banks which are distinguished as much by the differences in their workplace practices as by their similarities. Indeed, this recognition resulted in the dual notions of embeddedness and embodiment becoming important in my analysis.

The embeddedness of social and cultural institutions, firms and individual workplaces is now a key area of study in the new economic sociology or social economics (Granovetter, 1985; Gudeman, 1986; Zelizer, 1987; Zukin and DiMaggio, 1990), whereas Bourdieu (1984) used the term 'embodiment' to refer to similar processes at the scale of an organisation. In the main, however, in analyses of the ways in which national and local factors have influenced economic changes, geographers (Schoenberger, 1994; Storper, 1994; Thrift, 1994) have turned to the revitalised area of economic sociology, rather than to studies of organisational culture, not only to shed light on the location of industries and their position within national and local systems of political and financial regulation, but also to open up new questions about the cultural meaning of new products, new forms of workplace organisation and labour recruitment. Economic sociology focuses on issues of power, the social aspects of markets and business–government links, on social networks and the culture of organisations. It challenges conventional notions of rational economic actors, suggesting rather that economic action is embedded in the social context and the specific institutions within which it takes place. Like all social interactions, economic decisions are as much affected by tradition, historical precedent, class and gender interests and other social factors as by considerations of efficiency or profit. This is particularly evident in the world of merchant banking, in which networks of familial interests as well as the networks of social elites link directors of banks together and to directors of other British firms and the Conservative Party (Hutton, 1995b; Sampson, 1992; Scott, 1991; Stanworth and Giddens, 1974a, b).

Sets of common social assumptions and cultural understandings shape economic strategies and goals. As Zukin and DiMaggio (1990) have argued:

> culture sets limits to economic rationality: it proscribes or limits exchange in sacred objects and relations (e.g. human beings, body organisms or physical intimacy) or between ritually classified groups . . . culture, in the

> form of beliefs and ideologies, taken for granted assumptions, or formal rule systems also prescribes strategies of self-interested action . . . and defines the actors who may legitimately engage in them (e.g. self-interested individuals, families, classes, formal organisations, ethnic groups). Culture provides scripts for applying different strategies to different classes of exchange. Finally, norms and constitutive understandings regulate market exchange, causing persons to behave with institutionalised and culturally specific definitions of integrity even when they could get away with cheating. On the one hand, it constitutes the structures in which economic self interest is played out; on the other, it constrains the free play of market forces. (p. 17)

In the 1980s, one of the Conservative government's achievements was to reverse long-standing constraints, creating the circumstances for the spread of a new set of cultural assumptions in the City and in wider society. An ideology of individualism – that people are solely motivated by pecuniary gain – and the associated claims for the efficacy of deregulation in freeing the market from the stranglehold of the state and assuring economic efficiency and success gained the high ground. How these notions progressively infiltrated discourse and practice in a range of economic institutions is a major research challenge for economic sociologists and anthropologists. Merchant banking in particular, within the City as an institution, was one of the prime locations for the successful promulgation and diffusion of these new cultural assumptions; it therefore seemed an exemplary site for research. Of all the middle-class occupations in that new service or new cultural class that expanded in the 1980s, it was bankers who were characterised as the personification of the era: the apotheosis of individualistic, profit-oriented 'yuppies'.

Moving to a finer spatial scale of individual firms, rather than the environment of the City as a whole in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it is clear that changes in the nature of assumptions about ways of acting and interacting affected different institutions in different ways, in part dependent upon their earlier histories and cultures and the impact these had on how and which people were recruited in the expansionist years of the 1980s. Here, economic sociologists Zukin and DiMaggio suggested that the notion of scripts that structure different types of exchanges is useful for analysing behaviour within particular institutions. Their notion is close to earlier social interactionist and ethnomethodological approaches in sociology, and has a particular purchase on the ways in which everyday social interactions in the City are constructed to include and exclude different social actors. These scripts and strategies will be the focus of chapters 5 to 8 in part II, where the parallels between economic sociology and social interactionist approaches prove useful in understanding what happens in banks; but I shall also demonstrate, in

the empirical analyses presented there, the parallels with both these approaches and feminist analyses of the construction of gender as a performance.

While geographers and economists are as yet less familiar with an emphasis on the micro-social practices in the workplace and tend to ignore the significance of issues of power, desire and embodiment at work, it is interesting that Bourdieu (1984) used the terms 'embeddedness' and 'embodiment' interchangeably. In this way, he also seems to straddle a sociological focus on the possession of capital culture by embodied actors and the more recent work on the body which I shall discuss below. As Bourdieu argued, the possession of cultural capital by high-status employees is evidenced not only in their educational and professional credentials and in the types of goods and possessions that they choose to purchase, but also in 'the embodied states, as mode of speech, accent, style, beauty and so forth' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 243). Thus, I believe that it is crucial to connect the body, the individual and the organisation in attempting to understand the persistence of gender segregation.

GENDER SEGREGATION AT WORK

Before moving from the organisation to the body, however, I want to review briefly the history of approaches to the analysis of gender divisions of labour and occupational segregation by sex through to how the persistence of such a marked division in the labour market has been explained. Whether in times of economic stability or of marked change, such as those of the 1980s, it seems that women's concentration into a few sectors of the economy and certain types of occupations within them has remained a constant feature of the social division of labour (Crompton et al., 1996; Humphries and Rubery, 1995; Scott, 1994). In the face of this persistence, the unsexed worker, labour power unencumbered by a body or any other social attributes, has almost disappeared from all but the most blinkered of studies, as the lived experience of workers distinguished by, among other characteristics, their gender, ethnicity, age and family circumstances has become an important focus of research on work and organisations.

A growing body of work from the mid 1970s on women's exclusion from the workplace, gender segmentation, unequal power and low pay has demonstrated an evident continuity in patterns of gender segregation across time and space, illustrating how labour market institutions are significant loci of male power. Questions about gender relations at work, the social construction of gender identities in the workplace and the gendering of organisations themselves are now addressed in a range

of disciplines, including anthropology, labour economics, geography, economic history, management studies, politics, psychology and sociology, as well as from various interdisciplinary positions (Amsden, 1980; Arber and Gilbert, 1992; Collinson et al., 1990; Crompton et al., 1996; Crompton and Sanderson, 1990; Gallie, 1988; Humphries and Rubery, 1995; Knights and Willmott, 1986; Reskin and Hartmann, 1986; Walby, 1986). Researchers in these disciplines draw on a wide range of theoretical perspectives, from cultural studies and discourse theory to organisational analysis and business studies, from feminist and gender analysis to postmodern legal studies, and have adopted a variety of methodological approaches including analyses of secondary sources, both historical and from the contemporary period, and quantitative and qualitative surveys and case studies of particular industries and workplaces. The net result has been a huge and exciting flowering of research on the gendering of work, stimulated not only by the intense theoretical interdisciplinary cross-fertilisation but also by the material changes in the structure of work in advanced industrial societies.

In the 1970s and 1980s the dominant perspective was a version of what might be termed the 'division of labour' approach (Frobel et al., 1980; Massey, 1984, 1994) in which workers entered the labour market with their gender attributes firmly established. In both the advanced and newly industrialising countries, women were theorised as a reserve of cheap labour, attractive to newly mobile capital in search of higher rates of profit. While the 'division of labour' approach implicitly drew on feminist analyses of how women's domestic responsibilities were part of the explanation for their construction as a reserve army, less attention was paid to the reasons for women being drawn into a narrow range of occupations even as the labour market became increasingly feminised. Women's occupational segregation was noted rather than explained. Feminist scholars working within a broad Marxist church, however, explained these patterns through theories of patriarchy, whether conceptualised as a separate system that parallels capitalism, drawing on Marxist notions of exploitation, or as an inseparable part of the capitalist mode of production (Beechey, 1977; Hartmann, 1979; Vogel, 1983; Walby, 1986, 1991b). This stream of explicitly feminist work has the closest links with the divisions of labour school in geography. Other theorists in other disciplines have worked within alternative frameworks (Dex, 1985). Economists, for example, have variously drawn on human capital theory (Mincer, 1962; Zellner, 1975) and dual and segmented labour market theory (Baron and Norris, 1976; Craig et al., 1982; Rubery, 1988) to posit women's responsibility for domestic labour as the major reason for their relegation to lowly positions in the labour market.

As well as abstract theorising and aggregate-scale analyses of women's labour market position, since the mid 1970s there have also been a number of smaller scale, qualitative analyses of women's subordinate position in the labour market. In the 1980s, these case studies, mainly but not exclusively in the manufacturing sector, began to shed light on a wide and varied range of social practices on the 'shop floor' that act as obstacles to women's advancement (Bradley, 1989; Cockburn, 1983, 1991; Game and Pringle, 1984; Milkman, 1987; Pringle, 1989; Westwood, 1984). While most of these case studies have been undertaken by scholars outside geography, geographers did not neglect women's occupational segregation in local labour market studies either. Their contribution to the growing literature has, not surprisingly, focused mainly on spatial issues in labour market behaviour, especially the significance of women's restricted journey-to-work patterns in comparison with men's as an important factor in reproducing women's inferior labour market position (Hanson and Johnston, 1985; Johnston-Anumonwo, 1992; Villeneuve and Rose, 1988). Hanson and Pratt's (1995) work has been particularly influential in drawing attention to geographical issues, extending the understanding of the role of residential location and gender differences in job search behaviour in the maintenance of occupational sex segregation. They developed a concept of spatial containment, consequent upon women's domestic responsibilities, to explain gender differences.

A second step in the explanation of gender segregation in the labour market came with the recognition that occupations and workers themselves are socially constructed through a variety of practices to conform to a particular set of gender attributes. Occupations are not empty slots to be filled, nor do workers enter the labour market and the workplace with fixed and immoveable gender attributes. Instead these features are negotiated and contested at work. As Scott (1988) recognised:

> if we write the history of women's work by gathering data that describe the activities, needs, interests, and culture of 'women workers', we leave in place the naturalised contrast and reify a fixed categorical difference between women and men. We start the story, in other words, too late, by uncritically accepting a gendered category (the 'woman worker') that itself needs investigation because its meaning is relative to its history. (p. 47)

The same observation is applicable to occupations and, thus, the processes of occupational sex-typing – or better, stereotyping – began to be analysed.

Jobs are not gender neutral – rather they are created as appropriate for either men or women, and the set of social practices that constitute and maintain them is constructed so as to embody socially sanctioned but *variable* characteristics of masculinity and femininity. This association

seems self-evident in the analysis of classically 'masculine' occupations; consider, for example, the heroic struggle and camaraderie involved in heavy male manual labour (McDowell and Massey, 1984). The same belief now holds with respect to self-evidently female occupations such as secretarial work, but it is salutary to remember that the latter have changed their gender associations over the century (Bradley, 1989). Less obviously 'sexed' jobs and new occupations are struggled over and negotiated to establish their gender coding.

GENDERED ORGANISATIONS: SEXING AND RESEXING JOBS

In suggesting that the earlier studies of occupational segregation neglected the processes by which jobs become gendered, focusing on occupational segregation rather than occupational sex stereotyping, this is not to imply that the association of, for example, skill designation with gender or the embodiment of gender attributes in job definitions and workplace practices was ignored completely. This clearly is not so. There is a large body of work that has revealed how the supposedly natural attributes of femininity (be they docility, dexterity or 'caring') have been set up in opposition to masculine attributes in order to organise and reorganise labour processes and differentially reward workers on the basis of their gender (see, for example, Beechey, 1987; Beechey and Perkins, 1987; Cockburn, 1983; Crompton and Jones, 1984; Crompton and Sanderson, 1990; Milkman, 1987; Phillips and Taylor, 1980; Walby, 1986). But so far there has been less attention paid to the ways in which new jobs are stereotyped initially, and to the ways in which everyday social practices reaffirm or challenge these gender attributions over time. Formal organisational structures and informal workplace practices are not gender neutral but are saturated with gendered meanings and practices that construct both gendered subjectivities at work and different categories of work as congruent with particular gender identities. Interesting work is now being undertaken by sociologists (Leidner, 1993) and organisational theorists (Casey, 1995; Hearn and Parkin, 1987; Knights and Willmott, 1986) and increasingly by anthropologists interested in the multiple constructions of femininity and masculinity in different types of jobs and at different workplace sites (Wright, 1994). The ways in which 'resexing' jobs is a significant part or consequence of economic restructuring, often leading to loss of status, power or financial rewards, are also beginning to be investigated, linking the specificities of doing gender on the job to wider economic processes (Halford and Savage, 1995; Kerfoot and Knights, 1994; Morgan and Knights, 1991).

An important stimulus to my thinking about the construction and maintenance of gendered occupations in the financial services came from within organisation theory, especially from recent studies that have drawn attention to the ubiquity of sexuality in organisational processes and the ways in which it is related to the structures of power (Acker, 1990; Hearn and Parkin, 1987; Pringle, 1989). Within this literature, there has been a shift from what might be termed the 'gender-in-organisation model' – where organisations are seen as settings in which gendered actors behave, as gender-neutral places which affect men and women differently because of their different attributes – to theorising organisations themselves as embedded with gendered meanings and structured by the social relations of sexuality. In these studies, sexuality is defined as a socially constructed set of processes which includes patterns of desire, fantasy, pleasure and self-image. Hence, it is not restricted solely, nor indeed mainly, to sexual relations and the associated policy implications around the issue of sexual harassment. Rather the focus is on power and domination and the way in which assumptions about gender-appropriate behaviour and sexuality, as broadly defined, influence management practices, the organisational logic of job evaluations, promotion procedures and job specifications (Acker, 1990), and the everyday social relations between workers.

The growing recognition of the ways in which male sexuality structures organisational practices counters commonly held views that sexuality at work is a defining characteristic of *women* workers. As Acker (1990) has argued:

> their [organisations'] gendered nature is partly masked through obscuring the embodied nature of work. Abstract jobs and hierarchies [. . .] assume a disembodied and universal worker. This worker is actually a man: men's bodies, sexuality and relationships to procreation and waged work are subsumed in the image of the worker. Images of men's bodies and masculinity pervade organisational processes, marginalising women and contributing to the maintenance of gender segregation in organisations. (p. 139)

Part of the marginalisation is constructed through a particular discourse of sexuality that empowers men and positions women as subjects of masculine desire. Dominant notions of sexuality in contemporary western culture are based on a set of gendered power relations in which men's dominance over women is expressed and recreated. Images of hostility and domination, including fantasies of humiliation and revenge, have been shown to be a central part of masculine sexual identity. As Stoller (1979) has argued, a central element of the construction of sexuality in discourse, symbolism and social practice is an image of the phallus as 'aggressive, unfettered, unsympathetic, humiliating' (p. 74). Recent work on organisational structures in a range of industries has begun to demon-

strate the centrality of this image in everyday social relations and interactions in many workplaces. It is a particularly significant image in the world of merchant banking, as I shall demonstrate in part II.

The earliest explorations of how organisations are saturated with male power and masculinist values, however, tended to take the social construction of masculinity for granted, instead uncovering in careful detailed work alternative versions of femininity (Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1984). Although the centrality of a masculine model of employment, based on life-time, full-time and continuous employment, and the importance of waged work as a key element in the construction of a masculine identity were clear, the focus was on the ways in which these structures and assumptions exclude women rather than on the different ways in which alternative masculinities are constructed in the workplace. Pringle (1989), for example, in her study of the relationships between secretaries and bosses, noted that the association between masculinity and rationality allowed male sexuality to remain invisible yet dominant, positioning women as the inferior 'Other' at work, and yet she interviewed only women. In chapter 5, I draw on the vitality and insights of this approach to show how 'woman' is othered in the workplace. My focus will also be on women as a group, examining commonalities rather than differences between women. For a time, men will remain ungendered as the 'norm' against which women are found wanting.

The realisation that male embodiment and masculine sexuality must also be rendered visible and interrogated resulted in a significant shift in feminist analyses of the gendering of occupations. Men began to enter the analyses of feminist work and slowly more organisational sociology where the significance of gender previously had been ignored. But even so, as Scott (1994) has noted, 'The inclusion of men might seem obvious to many working in this field today, but we should remember that gender segregation is still popularly perceived as a "woman's problem"' (p. 3). Scott's book reports the results of the Social Change and Economic Life Initiative (SCELI), based on surveys carried out in the mid 1980s, and provides perhaps the first large-scale British comparison of men's and women's employment experiences.

If feminist scholars had tended to ignore men, with a few honourable exceptions including Cockburn's (1983) magnificent, path-breaking study of the print workers, male labour analysts had exhibited an even greater reluctance to take feminist analyses of gender relations seriously. According to Collinson and Hearn (1994), this resulted in an 'avoidance of theoretical and empirical analysis of men and masculinities, where analysis is reflexive and critique is turned upon ourselves' (p. 3). It was just too painful – and too threatening – for men to reveal the structures of power and oppression that maintain their privilege.

As Acker suggested, and Collinson and Hearn began to document, organisations reflect masculine values and power, permeating all aspects of the workplace in ways often taken for granted. Not only the formal structures of institutions, their recruitment, promotion and appraisal mechanisms and their working hours, but also informal structures of everyday interactions reinforce women's inferiority. Male power is implicitly reinforced in many of the micro-scale interactions in organisations: in workplace talk and jokes, for example, 'men see humour, teasing, camaraderie and strength . . . women often perceive crude, specifically masculine aggression, competition, harassment, intimidation and misogyny' (Collinson and Hearn, 1994, p. 3). There are numerous other ways in which particular workplace cultures in a range of occupations, in both the service and manufacturing sectors, appeal to 'highly masculine values of individualism, aggression, competition, sport and drinking' (Collinson and Hearn, 1994, p. 4).

The expansion of work about masculinity and organisations, about male power, masculine discourse and gendered social practices, is part of a wider move in feminist-influenced scholarship to understand the complexity of gendered subjectivities and the ways in which they are constructed in and vary between different sites – the home, the street and the workplace, for example. It coincided with attempts by feminists, particularly feminists of colour, to reveal the assumptions about 'woman' that lie behind the early feminist scholarship. Criticised for its implicit focus on a version of white, anglocentric and middle-class femininity, feminist scholars are increasingly working on the ways in which race, class and gender are mutually constituted. There has been a parallel rise of queer scholarship. Lesbian feminists, such as Butler (1990a, 1993), Fuss (1990) and Wittig (1992), have shown how the 'regulatory fiction' of heterosexuality (Rich, 1980; Rubin, 1975) reinforces a naturalised binary distinction between men and women. Similarly, in a remarkable growth of male gay scholarship from the mid 1980s, the construction and dominance of a hegemonic heterosexual masculinity which excludes other forms of masculinity has been revealed (Craig, 1992; Herdt, 1992; Kimmel, 1988; Metcalf and Humphries, 1985; Weeks, 1986).

In recent work on gender, therefore, in general as well as in the 'sociology of organisations' school, the notion of multiple masculinities has been developed to refer to the variety of forms of masculinity across space and time. There has been a rapid expansion of an exciting literature demonstrating the extent of historical and geographical variations (Gibson, 1994; Gilmore, 1990; Herzfeld, 1985; Kaufman, 1993; Klein, 1993; Mangan and Walvin, 1992; Messner, 1992; Nye, 1993; Roper and Tosh, 1991; Segal, 1990). Just as femininities are constructed in opposition to masculinity, so are alternative masculinities constructed in rela-

tion to a hegemonic version of masculinity (Connell, 1987; Donaldson, 1991, 1993). These masculinities are not fixed but shift over time; however in the same way that femininity is embedded within power relations, so too are versions of masculinity. Alternative or non-hegemonic masculinities are subordinate to the dominant version. Connell (1995) argued that new scholarship from history and anthropology has led to important research into the ways in which masculinities are produced as cultural forms. Institutional structures, individual agency and social struggles are involved in the production of hegemonic or exemplary versions of masculinity appropriate to a time and place. 'Definitions of masculinity are deeply enmeshed in the history of institutions and economic structures' (Connell, 1995, p. 29). To understand the diversity of forms and the transformations that occur, it is important to analyse masculinity in specific contexts and sets of organised social relations. Interesting work by, for example, Heward (1988) on a boys' public school in England in the inter-war period, by Grossberg (1990) on law firms in nineteenth century USA and the edited collection by anthropologists Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) began to reveal the ways in which institutional structures and social practices sustain particular versions of masculinity, excluding many men as well as women as a group. There are still surprisingly few recent studies, however, which directly compare men and women within the same organisation, even doing the same job, and which unravel the different ways in which non-hegemonic versions of femininity *and* masculinity are constricted and maintained as inferior. This is a reflection, of course, of the fact that so few men and women actually do the same job.

It is important, however, to undertake comparative work to uncover the ways in which versions of femininity and masculinity are constructed in particular social contexts and in different locations. As Giuffre and Williams (1994) have recognised, the sexualised workplace in contemporary Britain provides a context for the 'continued display and performance of heterosexuality' (p. 397). As I shall demonstrate, investment banks may be the site of the display and performance of multiple masculinities, but each revolves around hegemonic versions of a masculine heterosexuality. Cornwall and Lindisfarne have suggested that 'by looking in detail at everyday usage and the contexts in which people talk of masculinity, its complexity soon becomes apparent' (1994, p. 3). One of the aims of this study is to demonstrate something of this complexity and to show how, through language and everyday behaviour, certain types of heterosexual masculinity and particular versions of femininity are constructed in the different arenas of investment banking. This is the focus of chapters 6 to 8.

NORMALISING THE SELF

The focus on contructing the self at work led to a growing interest in the concept of 'normalisation' in Foucault's work. The narrow range of socially sanctioned gendered identities and ways of behaving are reinforced and policed through a set of structures that keep in place dominant and subordinate social relations. These structures or mechanisms include not only institutional force and sanctions from above but also self-surveillance and what Foucault termed 'capillary power'. This interest opened up a way to link analyses of institutional interests and power relations to micro-scale social practices (Foucault, 1979). Here the enormous expansion of interest in subjectivity and in the body by labour analysts and other social scientists is crucial.

New ways of thinking about theory, politics and the subject have developed in an interesting confrontation between feminism, postmodernism, and post-structuralism. Challenges to the supposed universalism of the rational subject of liberal theory have resulted in a new emphasis in a wide range of different disciplines on the positionality and situatedness of action and knowledge – concepts that are not unrelated to the notion of embeddedness in economic sociology. One of the central elements of these arguments is a challenge to the modernist confidence that individuality is grounded in a singular and unique subjectivity that is invariant. In contrast, it is now argued that the self is in a fragile process of construction throughout the life cycle and that a multiplicity of identities are constructed through the symbolic repertoires of everyday actions in institutional contexts (Chaney, 1993; Giddens, 1991, 1992; Lash and Friedman, 1992). In this sense, the significance of position or location has taken a new precedence in social theory. Further, 'these "positions" are not merely theoretical products, but fully embedded organizing principles of material practices and institutional arrangements, those matrices of power and discourse that produce me as a visible "subject"' (Butler, 1992, p. 9). Here then is a productive coincidence of the notions of embeddedness and embodiment.

The institutional arrangements and social practices within banks that produce subject positions are, of course, replete with taken-for-granted assumptions, many of which are inimical to women as well as class based, as I show later. A wide range of mechanisms are used to reproduce the culture of an organisation, including selective recruitment, training strategies, appraisal and promotion schemes as well as ensuring the adherence of agents or workers to organisational norms by subtle or less subtle means. Many of these strategies are examined in part II.

The theoretical focus on the body, sexualised performances and strat-

egies of surveillance parallels material changes in the nature of work in service sector occupations. One of the key features of service sector work, compared with manufacturing jobs, is that the labour power and embodied performance of workers is part of the product in a way that was not the case in the production of manufactured goods. Services that are exchanged, sold, purchased, used up, be they producer or consumer service products – a pedicure, a lecture or a piece of legal advice – cannot be separated from the workers who are producing and exchanging them. Service occupations revolve around personal relationships or interactions between service providers and consumers, in the main unmediated by a set of exchange professionals as is more usual in the exchange of manufactured goods. In service interactions, the body of the worker – be it the 'managed heart' of care professionals or flight attendants (Hochschild, 1983), the uniform service of the fast food joint or personalised but scripted service of more upmarket restaurants (Crang, 1994; Gabriel, 1988; Leidner, 1991, 1993), the smiling charm of a bank teller or the professional advice of a besuited male manager (Kerfoot and Knights, 1994) – all demand an embodied and visible performance. Special clothing or uniforms may be required for the performance of particular tasks, and prohibitions, for example of facial hair or jewellery, are common in order to produce a specific, usually explicitly heterosexual self-image, both for men and for women. Leidner (1991, 1993) has termed these types of service occupations 'interactive work', where workers' looks, personalities and emotions, as well as their physical and intellectual capacities, are involved, sometimes forcing them to manipulate their identities more self-consciously than workers in other kinds of jobs. Interactive jobs are not new. It is salutary to recall Fromm's astute recognition of their significant characteristics almost 50 years ago:

> in order to have success it is not sufficient to have the skill and equipment for performing a given task but that one must also be able to 'put across' one's personality in competition with many others shapes that attitude toward oneself . . . since success depends largely on how one sells one's personality, one experiences oneself simultaneously as the seller and as the commodity to be sold. (Fromm, 1949, p. 12)

What, is new, however, is their economic dominance in advanced industrial nations.

Many current interactive occupations, especially those which have been studied in detail, are 'women's' work in various guises, reliant on that hegemonic version of heterosexual femininity that emphasises docility, passivity, servicing and generous attention to customers' needs, constructing women as unsuitable for positions of power and control in the higher echelons of organisations or for the type of professional work

considered here. Where male subjects have been studied, the empirical focus remains on the bottom end of the service sector: restaurants are a particularly dominant location (Crang, 1994; Gabriel, 1988; Leidner, 1993). There have been almost no empirical studies of sexuality and the normalisation of bodies in professional service sector occupations, including the financial services sector, that expanded so rapidly in the 1980s, although Halford and Savage (1995) have examined retail banking and local authority administrative positions. In professional occupations, required bodily standards, acceptable clothing and a scripted performance in client/employee interactions are seldom made as explicit as they are in routine interactive service jobs. Instead, through a range of formal and informal procedures, including recruitment procedures and appraisal schemes, and through everyday social interactions between colleagues and between colleagues and clients, acceptable versions of professional workers are created, policed and maintained. But whether these occupations are professional or not, the importance of embodied performance is an increasing emphasis.

BODIES AT WORK

When I began this research, the texts on the body could be assembled on the corner of my desk. They now take up many shelves, although the specific focus on embodied performance in the workplace is a more recent focus of the expansion. The re-theorising of work as an embodied performance accords well with the realities of the restructured world of work with which this chapter began. One of the most significant aspects of the 1990s is the ways in which individuals' attachment to the labour force and to a particular job within it has changed. For increasing numbers of workers as we approach the end of the twentieth century, there is an expectation of a career that is discontinuous and interrupted, marked by successive contracts rather than the life-time tenure of a single occupation. Thus, as Petit (1995) has remarked, 'like actors, we will spend our working lives being hired and fired . . . with each new job demanding we take on a new part' (p. 5). Work, once regarded as a (relative) certainty and a central aspect of personal identity, especially for men, has itself become a fluid, multiple and uncertain performance.

Despite these uncertainties, however, and women's greater visibility in the workplace, the most dominant image that continues to structure the world of work in contemporary Britain is that it is a public arena, associated with men and masculinity. As feminist scholars have argued, in western enlightenment societies, embodied social structures, and the physical locations in which they take place, construct acceptable ways of

being and 'reasonable' behaviour on the basis of a set of binaries. As Bourdieu (1984) noted:

> The network of oppositions between high (sublime, elevated, pure) and low (vulgar, low, modest), spiritual and material, fine (refined, elegant) and coarse (heavy, fat, crude, brutal), light (subtle, lively, sharp, adroit) and heavy (slow, thick, blunt, laborious, clumsy), free and forced, broad and narrow, or in another dimension, between unique (rare, different, distinguished, exceptional, singular, novel) and common (ordinary, banal, common place, trivial, routine), brilliant (intelligent) and dull (obscure, grey, mediocre) is the matrix of all the commonplaces which find such ready acceptance because behind them lies the whole social order. (p. 468)

And, he continued, they 'derive their ideological strength from the fact that they refer back to the most fundamental oppositions between the dominant and the dominated, which is *inscribed in the division of labour*' (p. 469, my emphasis).

In contemporary western societies, therefore, these binaries structure the embodiment of waged labour. They act to define woman as inferior, separating her purportedly natural and private world from the public world of men (Benhabib and Cornell, 1987; Pateman and Grosz, 1986) which, as a public arena, is portrayed as being as distant from the natural world as it is possible to be. Abstract symbols of power, particularly money, are the markers of status and culture. Whereas the natural world is associated with animality, the cultural and cultured world of work is distinguished by its humanity. It is constructed as a rational, objective world in which behaviour and decisions are ruled by accepted and conventional norms. In modern industrial societies, the workplace is distinguished by its rational and bureaucratic social order, an arena supposedly unmarked by emotion or by personal characteristics or attributes, one that above all is associated with all that is culturally valued as masculine. Thus, women are literally out of place at work for, as many commentators have pointed out – some approvingly, others critically – woman is to nature as man is to culture. Women, like nature, are viewed as fecund and unreliable, part of the natural order of things, the body rather than the mind, and so unfit for the cool rationality of the public arena. This gendered distinction is not, however, unambiguous, as the widespread notion of women's 'civilising influence' (she who soothes the savage breast) makes clear. There is an important tradition in the social and biological sciences that regards the cultural world of humanity as a constraint on the natural world of animality. Thus, there is a link here between man's 'natural' aggression and dominance (which, as we shall see, is a significant metaphor on the trading floor) to the construction of male sexuality as rampant and unfettered. As Freud argued, the successful establish-

ment of social life requires prohibitions and taboos, the restraint of instinctual behaviour which, if incorrectly repressed, may lead to mental illness. Christianity has also been an important influence on the construction of the body as a fleshy evil that needs control as well as a vessel to worship. Thus, there is a love–hate relationship with the body and a set of dualistic contradictions between mind and body, body and soul, sexuality and civilisation, which are ambiguously gendered.

But women are out of place in the embodied social structures of the workplace precisely because they are unable to acquire the cultural markers associated with the attributes valued in the workplace, or perhaps to qualify this, those associated with the rational and bureaucratic workplace. As Young has pointed out, the idealisation of a particular notion of (dis)embodiment in the workplace means that 'women suffer workplace disadvantage . . . because many men regard women in inappropriate sexual terms and because women's clothes, comportment, voices and so on disrupt the disembodied ideal of masculinist bureaucracy' (Young, 1990a, p. 176). Embodiment is, in Young's view, one of five key elements which construct hierarchies of unequally placed groups in contemporary capitalist societies. She labelled the politics of embodiment 'cultural imperialism', drawing attention to the violence done to the self-image of those who deviate from the contemporary hegemonic version of an idealised body – not only male but also slim and light-skinned. This idealisation establishes as the 'Other' not only women but also people of colour and those who are not an approximation of the perfect shape or size. Young emphasised the significance of lived social experience in the maintenance of oppression through cultural imperialism, arguing that much of the oppressive experience of cultural imperialism occurs in mundane contexts of interaction – in the gestures, speech, tone of voice, movement and reactions of others. 'Pulses of attraction and aversion modulate all interactions, with specific consequences for experience of the body. When the dominant culture defines some groups as different, as the Other, the members of those groups are imprisoned in their bodies. Dominant discourse defines them in terms of bodily characteristics, and constructs those bodies as ugly, dirty, defiled, impure, contaminated or sick' (p. 123). The net result is what Young referred to as 'epidermalising the world' or the 'scaling of bodies'.

Tseelon (1995) suggested that women's embodiment is based on a number of paradoxes. Her work seems to usefully extend Young's notion of the scaling of bodies, at least in consideration of femininity. Four of her paradoxes were particularly helpful in thinking through the interviews I undertook with women bankers. The first is the modesty paradox in which the woman is constructed as seduction – to be ever punished for it. The second is the duplicity paradox: the woman is constructed as

artifice, and marginalised for lacking essence and authenticity. The third is the visibility paradox: the woman is constructed as spectacle while being culturally invisible. The final paradox is the beauty paradox: the woman embodies ugliness while signifying beauty. These paradoxes help to explain why women challenge the assumptions that construct an ideal worker as rational, unemotional, disembodied but authoritative.

It might be argued, however, that the cultural assumptions of late capitalist society have made the focus on the body and its appearance a more general one, rather than a specific 'female' concern. A large number of postmodern theorists of the body (among them Bauman, 1992; Featherstone et al., 1991; Shilling, 1993), or, as Giddens (1991) would prefer, sociologists of late modernity, have argued that in a consumer culture obsessed with appearance, the status of the body has been transformed from a fixed and natural given to a malleable cultural product, perhaps the last frontier of control in a world marked by uncertainty. Anxiety about the body and its control through punishing regimes of dietary and exercise management, sculpting and reshaping the body through exercise and surgery, as well as obsessive interests in clothing and other forms of bodily adornment, are no longer the sole preserve of women but are associated with a more general desire to construct a body-beautiful, to fashion and refashion personal identity (Bordo, 1993; Tseelon, 1995). The body matters increasingly for men and for women, although it is important to note that, as Tseelon emphasised, 'a concern with carrying off a performance does not necessarily imply a deep and abiding identification with that appearance' (p. 5). As I demonstrate later, this has resonances with Butler's theorisation of gender as a bodily performance or masquerade and also helps us to understand the unease that many of my respondents felt with their workplace personas.

But there is little doubt about the increasing centrality of the body at work at the end of the twentieth century. As Fiske (1993) has argued:

> The body is the primary site of social experience. It is where social life is turned into lived experience. To understand the body we have to know who controls it as it moves through the spaces and times of our daily routines, who shapes its sensuous experiences, its sexualities, its pleasures in eating and exercise, *who controls its performance at work*, its behaviour at home and school and also influences how it is dressed and made to appear in its function of presenting us to others. The body is the core of our social experience. (p. 57, my emphasis)

And, as Featherstone (1991b) has noted: 'the tendency towards narcissism, the negotiating, performing self is . . . most noticeable in the professional-managerial middle-class who have both the time and money to engage in lifestyle activities and the cultivation of the persona' (p. 192).

As I argued earlier, merchant bankers are a classic example of the newly dominant professional-managerial middle class and, as I show in chapters 6 to 8, bodily appearance at work is of predominant concern to both the men and the women among them. Featherstone unfortunately restricted his analysis of embodied performance to the realm of consumption and leisure and ignored the workplace. The social spaces inhabited by the middle-class performers he identified are the 'new shopping centres, the beach, the modern pub' (1991a, p. 192). However, in acquiring the time and money that facilitate new lifestyle activities, the professional-managerial class that he singled out are also likely to be involved in occupations that demand a performance by an aesthetically pleasing body. Thus, body image and maintenance is not solely a consumption-based or leisure activity but an integral part of workplace performance.

Indeed, in interactive service work, it has been suggested that the traditional separation of production and consumption that was characteristic in an era when manufacturing employment was dominant is no longer relevant. Thus, in a study of work and identity in the retail sector, Du Gay (1996) has argued that 'the inherently "social" nature of much of service work could involve a distinct change in the cultural relations of the workplace, and the production of novel, "hybrid", work-based subjects' (p. 4) in which, he suggested, 'new modes of organisational conduct have blurred the traditional differences between production and consumption' (p. 5). In the specific context of the rise of new types of work in the City of London, Budd and Whimster (1992) have argued along similar lines, suggesting that work in the City has become constructed as fun with the result that there is a growing 'interpenetration of previously separate spheres of life' (p. 3). In the final part of this chapter, I want to extend this line of argument, turning away from identity *per se*, however, to look at ways of thinking about the significance of the location of work and the built environment within which it takes place. While this chapter is restricted to theoretical approaches, in the next chapter I shall turn to material changes in the City's built environment in the Big Bang years.

THE PLACES AND SPACES OF WORK

Despite the incisiveness of these various sets of literatures about gender, work, power and organisations, they all seem to have a remarkable blindness to the significance of location. What is happening in the new forms of organisational structures and workplaces has been emphasised to the neglect of where new forms of behaviour occur. Yet, as geographers, urban theorists and semioticians have argued, workplace behaviour is

both shaped by and shapes the design of the workplace environment at the scale of the city itself, of spaces and localities within it and of individual buildings. The meanings given to different social behaviours, to the characteristics that distinguish femininity and masculinity, are grounded in and accordingly judged more or less appropriate to particular physical spaces.

Lash and Urry (1994) have argued that radical economic changes are paralleled by shifts in the location and structure of industrial spaces. The production and exchange of manufactured products in industrial economies resulted in the production of specialised industrial spaces, the manufacturing heartlands of the industrial nations. Similarly, the production and exchange of commodified signs – the cultural industries and advertising are their example, but financial products such as futures and derivatives are even clearer examples – result in the emergence of post-industrial spaces, even though the goods and services of the late twentieth century economy are less place-bound in the sense of being reliant on a spatially bound set of raw materials or a local market. As the delivery of services becomes more important and the quality of the interaction between producers and consumers becomes part of the product, the availability both of the right type of labour (often young and personable as well as highly educated for high-status services) and of the *location* of the interaction in an appropriate environment that reinforces the meaning of the commodified signs increases in importance. Indeed, in post-industrial economies, architecture and urban design themselves are a key part of cultural production, both of the products and of performing selves. 'The image-projecting and consciousness-transforming industries, all . . . contribute to the constitution, confirmation or reconstitution of human subjectivity and cultural identity' (King, 1990a, p. 398). It might be stretching the point to include merchant banking as part of the cultural industries, but, as I show in chapter 6, images of banking are now part of the entertainment industry which, in turn, affects the self-images of merchant bankers.

The significance of the built form in the social construction of place is now a key aspect of contemporary analyses of the production and selling of spectacular place images in capitalist societies (Harvey, 1989a; Kearns and Philo, 1993). In the 1990s, analyses of the production of the built environment have moved from a predominantly political economy perspective, concerned with the relations between capital, the state and class fractions, towards a set of theories drawn from urban architectural studies, art, film and literary criticism, and cultural studies. Perspectives drawn largely from the humanities have begun to complement or even replace the essentially structuralist analyses, although there have been notable attempts to hold together 'capital and culture' (Zukin, 1988). Drawing in particular on the work of Lefebvre (1991) and on a range of

social semioticians, including Saussure and Barthes (Duncan and Duncan, 1988), a group of social and cultural geographers as well as urban and cultural theorists (Barnes and Duncan, 1992; Duncan, 1990; Duncan and Ley, 1993; Gottdiener, 1995; Harvey, 1989a; King, 1990a, c, 1996; Shields, 1991, 1996; Zukin, 1992, 1995) have begun to theorise the city as a representation, reading the city as a text (Duncan, 1990) or a discursive construction, analysing the images and symbols that give meaning to urban living. City buildings, parks, open spaces, statues as well as urban novels, films, art and poetry have become as significant for current urban theorists as the class and ethnic movements were for earlier urban theorists. So dominant has this shift become that recent commentators have even suggested that the imaginary city is beginning to hide urban 'reality', arguing, for example, that 'the boundary between social reality and representations of that reality has collapsed' (Jacobs, 1993, p. 827). It might be argued, however, paralleling the dual changes in the materiality and approaches to work, that this refocusing also reflects changes in the material basis of city economies. As I briefly note in the introduction, cultural industries are increasingly dominating the economies of large cities (King, 1996; Robson, 1994; Sassen, 1990; Zukin, 1995). As well as the expansion of financial services in the 1980s and 1990s, global cities became important locations for cultural ventures, from museums and universities to the advertising industry. These industries are part of that 'aestheticisation' of urban life identified earlier, and Zukin (1995) has shown how, in New York at least, the physical reconstruction of urban spaces for workplace and leisure activities for the new middle class is part of the redefinition and reclaiming of inner-city areas. Through the form of the buildings themselves and the nature of interstitial spaces, as well as through mechanisms of physical surveillance and electronic control, undesirable or 'dangerous classes' are excluded.

Despite the apparent shift to emphasise representations, the best new work on urban landscapes is distinguished by its determination to link together the material production of the built environment, symbolic meanings and forms of representation and the sets of material and social practices facilitated or constrained by both physical and symbolic forms. Landscapes are, after all, but the concrete expression of a society, especially its institutions of class and power. Buildings 'represent, transmit and transform institutionally embedded power relations' (Zukin, 1991, p. 21). They are not only symbolic representations of discourse, ideologies and relations of power but also constitute and affect these same attitudes, beliefs, social relations and structures, and so the very distinction between representations and reality falls to the ground. As I argue later, in a parallel discussion of images in text and film rather than the built environment, the same distinction is also misleading. Representations of

fictional bankers influence the behaviour and attitudes of 'real' bankers, and vice versa.

While the relations of power and class have been emphasised in this new 'school' of urban scholarship, the way in which the built environment reflects and affects gender relations has been given relatively less attention, at least until the early '90s (Colomina, 1992; Bell and Valentine, 1995). The links between masculine power in city politics and the economy and its reflection in the built environment have, however, been noted. Lefebvre (1991) briefly commented on the 'phallic verticality' of business districts and Sassen noted the inscription of central area land use with the values of corporate culture. Drawing on Sennett (1992), she suggested that corporate culture is dominated by notions of precision and expertise, imposing its authority on the central area though high-rise corporate towers. 'The vertical grid of the corporate tower is imbued with the same neutrality and rationality attributed to the horizontal grid of American cities' (Sassen, 1996, p. 191). The neutrality and rationality she identified are the same characteristics that construct the female body as out of place in the workplace, as I have argued above. Rather surprisingly, Sassen did not explicitly connect the representation of corporate culture as neutral, rational, efficient, technologically advanced and authoritative with masculinity, but rather contrasted these corporate spaces and places with the more disordered use of urban space by small businesses, old manufacturing operations and ethnic enterprises. Neglecting the representation of woman and femininity as Other, she instead noted that 'the corporate economy evicts these other economies and workers from economic representation, and the corporate culture represents them as the other. It evicts other ways of being in the city and in the economy' (Sassen, 1996, p. 193). Like Allen and Pryke (1994), Sassen correctly recognised that the dominant representations and the physical spaces of corporate culture exclude the fact that many of the people working in corporate organisations by day are low-paid secretaries and messengers, and by night even more low-paid cleaners who inscribe the spaces with a wholly different culture of work. Here, gender as well as class differences deserve to be explored. But, further, as I demonstrate later, there are also important differences within corporate culture both between different sectors and industries and between their high-status 'corporate' workers.

In an interesting collection of essays (Colomina, 1992), several contributors established provocative but provisional links between sexuality and space. Wigley (1992), for example, drew attention to the ways in which the 'exclusion of sexuality is itself sexual' (p. 328). He took as an example the 'neutral' spaces of the university, 'an elaborate system of representation, a mechanism that sustains a system of spaces, an archi-

tecture, by masking the particular construction of sexuality that makes those spaces possible' (p. 328). In these neutral spaces from which sexuality is theoretically excluded, male dominance permits a degree of sexual harassment of women by men, of inferiors by superiors, that is doubly shocking in the spaces of work and learning. As I show later, this occurs to an extent in the 'rational' spaces of corporate finance, but I also demonstrate how other workplaces within merchant banks are inscribed with apparently transgressive behaviours, threatening the notional rationality of work. In the same collection, Grosz (1992) linked bodies to cities in an attempt to demonstrate how the sexual specificity of corporeality is, in part, a material consequence of a body's location. Her aim was to explore 'the ways in which the body is psychically, socially, sexually, and discursively or representationally produced, and the ways, in turn, bodies reinscribe and project themselves onto their sociocultural environment so that this environment both produces and reflects the form and interests of the body' (p. 242). She sketched in the links between the body and the body-politic in cities (see also Sennett, 1994) and discussed the ways in which residence in different parts of cities orients and organises family, sexual and social relations by dividing 'cultural life into public and private domains, [and by] geographically dividing and defining the particular social positions and locations occupied by individuals and groups . . . these spaces, divisions and interconnections are the roles and means by which bodies are individuated to become subjects' (Grosz, 1992, p. 250). As I show at the end of the next chapter, the layout of new corporate buildings in the financial sector, the public and private spaces they define, enclose and control, and their internal divisions of space construct some bodies as appropriate occupants and exclude others as inappropriate. Despite the collapse of space into time and the instantaneous transformation of information, even in this most global of industries, the location of work as a specific space in the city means that the sexed body still matters.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have set the scene in both a theoretical and an empirical sense, demonstrating women's entry into the labour force and the ways in which it has been explained. I have argued that the sociology and culture of work literatures, especially those that focus on the gendering of organisational structures and practices, may profitably be brought into juxtaposition with the literatures from urban studies, architecture, geography, cultural studies and urban sociology, which focus on the built environment not only as a container for the social practices and everyday

interactions in workplaces that sociologists and anthropologists have documented in increasing and fascinating detail, but also as an active influence on these behaviours. The city, and the City to which I turn in chapter 2, is a system of representations as well as the locus of material actions and structures. As geographers have claimed for so long and with increasing success, social and spatial processes are mutually constitutive. Where an event or activity takes place shapes its form, and vice versa. The built environment of the City, whether the spatial divisions of the Square Mile and its environs or individual buildings and the layout of workplaces – from the oak-panelled boardrooms and the old open spaces of the trading floors and exchanges to the newer electronic dealing rooms – conveys messages about embodied class and gender attributes. Into these spaces, with the expansion of the City in the mid 1980s, came growing numbers of new recruits. Before turning to a detailed examination of their social and gender characteristics, their career patterns and their hopes and fears about their working lives, in the next chapter I examine the main features of economic growth in the City in recent decades at two spatial scales. First, the major features of employment growth in the City of London are outlined, and second, moving into closer focus, I show how this growth and change has been reflected in the built environment of the Square Mile and its immediate vicinity. In chapters 3 and 4, I then turn to an investigation of the patterns of gender segregation in the 'new' City, and to the workplace histories of recent and less recent recruits. In these chapters, the women and men who work in merchant banks remain the disembodied individuals of conventional liberal analyses of waged work. In part II, they become corporeal subjects 'doing gender' in a variety of ways.