NEG/NJML Return the MISCARRIAGE IN THE WILLIAMS WOMB: WOMEN AT WILLIAMS (An Independent Paper for Psychology 11) (Dr. Warren) by Thomasin Berry '73 Cecily Ellrodt '73 WILLIAMS COLLEGE Williamstown, Massachusetts February 1, 1973

One evening last December a small group of senior women started reminiscing over their experiences of the past two years. We realized that a certain standard set of frustrations, confusions, difficult encounters, had accompanied Williams' so-called "Transition to Coeducation." It is often impossible to get a perspective on an experience until it is past. And so, with many exciting and trying events behind, two of us decided to attempt an analysis of Williams' metamorphosis from an all male school to a heterosexual one. We decided to try to characterize the changes—academic, social, cultural—that have occurred at Willimas. We were granted an independent project under the auspices of Psychology 11, the project studying "Psychology and the Environment: The Effects of Environmental Constraints on the Individual." Our theme: the effects of the Williams environment on women and the effects of women on Williams.

In order to establish a frame of reference from which to focus on several particular issues, we read Janet Lever's and Pepper Schwarts's Women at Yale and Dorothy McGuigan's A Dangerous Experiment, the story of the University of Michigan's transition to coeducation in 1870, an event exactly one hundred years prior to Williams'. We then studied the report by the Committee on Coordinate

Education that appeared in the Williams Alumni Review, and Dean Nancy McIntire's discussion in the same magazine entitled "The Rationale of Educating Women at Williams".

Two women working on their doctorates in Sociology wrote

Women at Yale during the first year of the institution's move into
heterosexual education. They discussed the problems of Yale's
alteration - the unity and closedness of the all male college
system, the road-tripping syndrome, and the development, with the
entrance of women, of what they characterized as an "approach-avoidance system". They noted that the women felt conspicuous, "like a
guest", and that problems arose with respect to the development of
male-female friendships. It was necessary to revise the established
notions of sexual role playing and dating patterns when women were
in residence at the old blue institution. We discovered many of
these problems occurred in semi-diluted form on the Williams campus.
And as one administrator said, "Williams is not so compulsively
male as Yale", so the problems at Williams may be less acutely
perpetuated.

Dorothy McGuigan's <u>A Dangerous Experiment</u> further enlightened the issue of coeducation by placing it in its American, historical framework. She cited the ancient president of Yale, Mr. Woolsey, who, in response to the question of higher education for women, remarked, "Of what use are degrees to be to girls I don't see, unless they addict themselves to professional life." ¹ Clearly, basic

philosophical and political issues, better deemed prejudices, were central to the issue of female education. The President of Clarke University and a professor at Harvard both publicly condemned the coeducational movement because of the supposed effects of liberal learning upon the mental and physical health of female students. In fact, in his book Sex and Education (1873) Dr. Clarke of Harvard asserts:

If these causes (joint education of the sexes) should continue for the next half-century and increase in the same ratio as they have for the last fifty years, it requires no prophet to foretell that the wives who are mothers in our republic must be drawn from trans-Atlantic homes.

Clarke's notion of the fitness of the female for childbearing, for an education in the less mind using arts of cooking, cleaning, and crochetting, was widespread. Despite his objections, Vassar (1861), Smith (1871), Mount Holyoke (1837), and Wellesley (1870) asserted the validity of female single-sex college education. And rather than integrate the educational system entirely, Harvard and Brown created Radcliffe and Pembroke in 1879 and 1891 respectively. In the

Notwithstanding the coeducational furor, Michigan, Cornell, Wisconsin, Oberlin and Wesleyan opened their doors to women. Ms. McGuigan writes, "The words 'coeducation' and 'coed' entered the English vocabulary during the 1850's... and in the student Chronicle in 1881 called the word 'coed' a synonym of ignominy'." Interestingly, the word 'coed' still maintains its negative connotations some

one hundred years later.

A new anti-feminist movement developed in the early twentieth century that culminated in the establishment of quotas upon female applicants, and even so strong a reaction as that of Wesleyan that denied entrance to women after many years of coeducation. Not only was there an educational fear of the enormous increase in the female college population, but there was also a growing concern over the declining numbers of men in the literature and classics departments. It was thought that the high percentage of women in these fields discouraged men from majoring in these areas. Women were to be educated; but they were to be an intellectual minority. This female trend in the humanities, several enlightened individuals argued, was a product of the American job market. Women were accepted as teachers, but found the job fields of law, medicine and engineering nearly impenetrable.

A second widespread fear was that of population decline. Statistically, women with college degrees married later and, consequently, produced fewer children, if any. The use of any sort of birth control was condemned by Teddy Roosevelt as "frightful and fundamental immorality." McGuigan noted that the old President believed that "the old American stock" would be committing "racial suicide".

And so, female education in America was denounced on nationalistic grounds while being reinforced by myths of women's mental and physical limitations.

On a more philosophical level, the question of woman's relation to man, to society, "her place", has been expounded upon since a Biblical writer, to female misfortune, invented the myth of Adam and Eve. Matina Horner, in her article on female motivation and competition, uses a quotation from Honore de Balzac. He epitomizes the anti-female-intellectuality of the western intellectual tradition. Balzac writes,

A woman who is guided by the head and not the heart is a social pestilence: she has all the defects of a passionate and affectionate woman, with none of her compensations; she is without pity, without love, without virtue, without sex.

But it is assumed that a man guided by the heart is a social asset. With the variety of anti-female attitudes ranging from the Bible to Luther, Clarke, Balzac, Mailer, it is sometimes surprising to find that women haved inched their way so far forward.

One strong area of advancement is that of educational policy change—the decision made by the top male colleges in the country to open their doors to women. It comes as little surprise that problems of personal interrelation, role definition, of social adjustment, have arisen. For with any drastic social change, as Toffler insists, comes cultural shock. And even in the ivory towers of intellectual life, of cultural neutrality, problems of reconciliation between old and new notions of man and women, have been and are occurring.

But first it is interesting to look at Williams' report by

the Committee on Coordinate Education—to analyze the college's philosophical and pragmatic reasons for entering into coeducation. It certainly seemed that societal changes—including the Women's Liberation Movement—have helped move the goals of educating women beyond those proposed by Adlai Stevenson at the Smith graduation in 1955. He defined woman's "political task" as one by which to "influence man and boy" through "the humble role of housewife."

Women would not be at Williams if the institution believed that this was its educational goal.

For Williams is a career, or professionally oriented, conservative, liberal arts institution. The Committee that wrote the prospectus, in turn, seems diplomatically and warmly conservative and sexist. It has taken for granted the typical stereotypes of women.

The Committee assumed, and wrongly, that females would perform in a markedly different manner at Williams. Their career interests, course choices, extracurricular activities would complement those of the Williams male.

The Committee first commented on the "curricular implications" of coeducation. They stated,

The present growth of range and diversity in the college community would be reinforced by the inclusion of women. This conclusion is based not merely on different study choices which women would elect. . .modern men and women together form a community which is stronger in its variousness.

Ms. McIntire discussed this issue in her article, "The Rationale for Educating Women at Williams." (Fall, 1971, Williams Alumni Review).

She noted that women have not chosen "different study choices"; they have not filled out the language or humanities areas to the same extent to which it was assumed. One administrator we interviewed remarked, "The girls here aren't stupid; they are finding and chosing the best departments on campus, just like the guys."

Included under the second argument, the economics of coeducation, the committee restated,

Women will tend to strengthen the enrollment in a number of departments that are presently undersubscribed. . . This improved distribution among departments will have a positive effect on faculty morale, on the efficient use of faculty manpower, 7

It seems that the role of the female as "morale booster", as the second half--in marriage or in curricular complementarity--is a notion that needs serious re-evaluation. As we discovered in our interviews, the myth of women's effect upon the intellectual part of the community proved not to be in keeping with the reality of female performance and course choice on this campus.

A second area of discussion in the Committee Report focused on the notion of what they considered to be female expectations of a liberal education. They wrote,

As undergraduate students, women tend to be less vocational than men in their expectations of the liberal arts, and their perspectives thus provide an important reinforcement of the fundamental liberal arts character of our program. The sub-committee was convinced that the tone of the liberal arts community and the structure of its curriculum would be improved by the inclusion of women.

Here again, it is assumed that women's educational interests are different

from men's. They asserted that women set a different "tone", a tone that neither of us, in any interview, could pinipoint. It is understandable, in light of the past twenty-five years of "female performance", to observe that a large percentage of women never entered the professional world. But with the social changes in the United States, women's roles are also rapidly changing. In fact, many faculty members and students attributed a part of grade inflation and an increase in the competitive spirit to the presence of women on campus. It seems, then, that women, may in fact, be reinforcing the professional, not liberal arts, orientation of this community.

The Committee further stated, as Nancy McIntire noted, "that women will add substantially to the co-curricular life of the college, especially in music, drama, and the arts." They further remarked upon the widespread trend towards coeducation that might effect their applicant pool. The Committee's fifth reason revolved around the question of the social atmosphere at Williams. The Committee wrote,

The general atmosphere of the campus, including the social life of the students, would be improved by the inclusion of women at Williams. . . there is an increasing student desire for a more casual and less artificial relationship with women that could come about if men and women are educated together in the same community.

✓ And so women shall meet social needs as well as academic ones in the Williams community.

Nancy McIntire succinctly pinpoints the problem of the prospectus.

She writes,

If the myths about the affect of women on the academic life of the College can be dispelled, presumably women will still be expected to civilize the campus, participate in the arts in particular, add to the social life of the community, and because statistics indicate more men wish coeducational schools, enable Williams to continue to attract high quality applicants. 11

In our interviews, we have yet to meet one woman who feels she has boosted "faculty morale", while singing in the choir, performing in the symphony, and on the sly improving, or civilizing, the community and driving away the artificiality of past male-female relationships.

The one issue that seemed most underplayed in the report by the Committee on Coordinate Education is just that one which Ms.

McIntire properly focused on. She states,

Women should be admitted to Williams because Williams is an institution which recognizes that the College offers an educational experience of great value which has been denied to women in the past. . There has often been too little attention given to the concept that qualified women deserve a chance at a Williams education, and that a college which values individual growth and achievement can no longer ignore such a significant number of talented people. 12

But women, on the undergraduate level, are seldom looked at as talented people; they are the "co-eds", the second educated half that is often stereotyped while simultaneously praised and defamed.

But as Pepper Schwartz and Janet Lever commented,

Coeducation does not guarantee that people will look at each other as people and not have their vision distorted by traditional sex roles. . . Coeducation does, however, give people an arena and thus a potential for dealing with each other in a way that is missing in monosexual environments. 13

It is that "arena" which we attempted to explore in this Winter Study Project.

We reviewed many methods of research prior to choosing the one we hoped would best fulfill our goals. Considering the short amount of time and manpower we had, and the broad scope of our subject, we chose to interview individuals with varying viewpoints and backgrounds. The interviews took the form
of informal discussions based on a set of questions which approached the subject's
attitudes about coeducation in a straightforward manner. We realized that this
research technique allowed for the subject's conscious or unconscious manipulation
of his or her presentation, yet there were many factors which overcame this
drawback.

First, the informal nature of the discussions made the subjects relaxed. Because they did not feel as though they were being 'tested' or 'rated', they were, in general, honest about their responses. This honesty can be judged only in terms of the consistency which we noted between their daily behavior in the college community and their responses. Our subjective analysis showed very high consistency, indicating the reliability of our testing procedure. Second, the discussion method provided an unexpected benefit, characterized by the exchange of information between the interviewers and the subjects. In fact, we feel that this may have been one of the most educational aspects of our project. Although Williams prides itself with the openness of its community, we found a closedness within the campus also. Many people we spoke to during the month were hungry for information about women and the lives of women on campus. Even after three years of coeducation we met some groups (predominantly men from all male residential houses) who did not know women on campus, and who were intimidated by the strange new animals in their classes. With some of these groups, our interviews became the forum for an exchange of information, and we hoped that this was as educational for those we spoke to as it was for ouselves. This factor alone warrented the use of less scientific approach, we feel.

As well as stressing the subjective nature of our research technique, it is important to note that we did not have a random sample of students at Williams. Our results and generalization are based on interviews with 71 students, representing different groups with different interests, backgrounds and living conditions. However, these students were not randomly selected from the community. The variables which we felt were important indicators of their grouping were: sex, class, race, transfer or non-tansfer status, coed or noncoed housing, and coed or non-coed secondary schooling. (See Appendix) From thèse variables we formulated groups of freshman women, freshman men, upperclass men, transfer women, and sophomore women and men. The upperclass men and women were from both coed and non-coed residential houses. Although the freshman were from officially coed houses in the Freshman Quad, they listed their residential houses as non-coed since each entryway seemed to service a separate house unity. We interviewed students from a variety of houses, which included Dennett, Prospect, Bryant, Goodrich, Mark Hopkins, Williams and Sage Halls, Carter, Bascom and Dowdy. Groups of three to twelve students were interviewed together, with the mean being six per group. Most interviews lasted an hour and a half, and all were tape recorded.

The nineteen questions we asked students can be divided into four catagories.

Four questions centered on the students own general college experience and covered areas such as expectations versus initial impressions of the school as a whole.

1. Why did you apply to Williams?

2. Did you have any particular social or academic expectations?

3. What were your initial impressions of the college - how would you characterize the atmosphere.

4. What do you like least about the college?

The coeducational academic experience was the focal point of the second catagory.

^{5.} How do you feel about coeducational classrooms - what were your initial reactions?

^{6.} Do you feel that there is a difference between male and female viewpoints?

^{7.} Do you feel men and women approach their work differently?

^{8.} How do you feel about female professors?

. 151 -12-The next four questions dealt with social life. 9. Do you feel you can have as close a friendship with a member of the opposite sex as you can with a member of your own sex? 10. Do you have any reservations about dating people at Williams? 11. How do you feel about dating someone in your own house? 12. Do you feel you have cultivated any particular notions of role playing because of being a member of a sexual minority or majority? Questions 13-19 centered on the larger issues of underlying prejudices, and these were approached in the following manner. 13. How do you define masculinity? 14. How do you define femininity? 15. Define your ideal man or woman. 16. How do you define women's liberation? 17. What do you consider to be the obligations of your spouse? 18. Do you think there is a stereotype of a Williams Man or Williams Woman? 19. How do you view your future plans? Because of the informal nature of the discussions, not all questions were necessarily asked of all students during an interview. Answers or discussion points were volunteered by the subjects, so each student did not necessarily have to speak at all during the session. Because we felt that administrators, faculty, and admissions officers could contribute much insight into the transition to coeducation, we decided to interview representatives of each of these groups. These interviews could, again, be entitled discussions since the questions asked were used mostly to focus on discussion points. Faculty members discussed coeducation in groups of six to ten, while admissions officers and administrators were interviewed individually. Length of interviews ranged from one-half hour to one and one-half hours. The faculty groups were tape recorded, while individual interviews were not. The departments of Russian, Biology, German, Psychology, History, Philosophy, Chemistry, English, Classics, and Dance were represented. In the Admissions Office we spoke to Mr. Mason, Ms. Sato, and Mr. Copeland. Deans McIntire and Grabois, and President Sawyer kindly shared with us some of their reflections on the subject of coeducation. We wish to thank all of these people who generously took time out of busy schedules to speak to us.

"Williams has girls?", was the response of one freshman male when asked how he felt about females on campus. Although he was joking, he was expressing a true attitude which we found prevalent in many groups on campus: that women are not fully integrated members of the Williams College community. The most striking problem that we noted in interviews with freshman men and woen was that the two groups do not know or understand each other. There was no doubt for the women that Williams had men, but even they expressed doubts that Williams did, in fact, have women.

Many upperclassmen identified the root of sexism within their classes as due to the fact that men and women did not live through the "freshman experience" together. Most perceived the freshman class as a tightly knit group, where male and female knew and understood each other, and where sexual prejudices were worked out as a natural part of freshman orientation. In our interviews, few of these perceptions were substantiated.

The freshman women we spoke to were very self confident about their positions at Williams, and they tended to blame the men and the 'system' for the problems they had encountered. They identified the ratio of male to female students as being the largest problem for social intercourse. "No matter what way you look at it, when you're talking about coeducation, the more coed Williams gets, the healthier it'll be," said one freshman woman. They spoke of being the "token female" who is considered a member of the "precocious minority" on campus. All the freshman women we spoke to, with the exception of one, felt that the present tense atmosphere would not change until a one to one ratio was established.

Academically, there appeared to be few problems due to coeducation for freshmen. None of the women expressed intimidation in the classroom due to their sex. They felt that they were treated as non-gendre students within the confines of the classroom. However, most felt that the classroom was one of the few

arenas where they were treated as equals.

In contrast to the academic situation, the life outside the classroom was full of sexual myths and prejudices on the part of both sexes. Freshman women perceived the freshman men as unfairly stereotyping them, and they resented these stereotypes. "They think girls came here because they wanted attention," "They think we've got a good thing going." Our interviews with freshman men showed that many of these perceptions were accurate. "Girls enjoy being a minority here," freshman men said. "They enjoy it. God they love it. They're very much aware of the fact that they have the social advantage. They play it for all it's worth." Both men and women had close friends of the opposite sex, but felt that the serious problems in social interaction occurred in more involved relationships.

"Dating" virtually does not exist on the Williams campus. Bisexual social units consist of groups of friends or couples involved in steady, contractual relationships. There are few interim stages. We can only speculate as to the causes, but we feel that this situation may be derived from difficulties in role definition which many students felt. Both men and women expressed dissatisfaction with the 'group system' because, they said, the two to one ratio of men to women carried over into the groups. "The situation is very much imbalanced," one freshman man said. There was little privacy, and no way to establish more serious relationships within groups. Basically, the groups were too groupy, the couples too exclusive. Of serious relationships, one girl commented, "It's very hard to keep the oneness with the everybodiness," and "It's like being married, but not having the common base...it's a very tense situation." Both men and women felt that due to the small size of the community, casual dating soon became labeled in terms defined by the community, not the couple. Freshman men solved this by perpetuating the solutions of their fathers in the proverbial road-trip.

The freshman men we spoke to averaged three road-trips this fall, and said that they would leave campus for Smith, Vassar and Skidmore more often if transportation were easily accessible. Freshman women reacted against the social dilemna by keeping to themselves.

Interestingly, all the freshman women we interviewed wanted all-female housing next year. In an all-female house "it's not as if you're conforming to an all-male environment," one girl commented. "I feel threatened by having guys all around all the time," said another. To a third, coed residential houses connoted "a pinch and a dash here and there", and being the "token female on a floor". "There's no reason why you should sacrifice your own comfort for them," said another in response to the attitude that through coeducational living more healthy relationships might be formulated. Just as men had stereotyped the women ("90% of the intraverts and weird girls live over there across the Quad", said one man), the freshman women had stereotypes of men, whom they feared being placed next to in a coed residential house. "There are some pretty studly wudlies in the freshman class who were that way before they came here, and I can't change them now," said one girl. "I just think that it's very hard to hear all these things that guys have been saying and doing, and all of a sudden things are supposed to be natural. You have to pretend it's really natural for me to walk down here in my bathrobe, and it's really natural for me to think that he's not thinking something that would really offend me," explained one woman about her fear of coed living.

All the freshman when we spoke with wanted coed houses with the exception of one, who felt that his privacy (which he defined as being able to walk around in his underwear) would be inhibited under coed living conditions. The men we spoke to saw women as their intellectual equals, and were very conscious of and sympathetic to equal rights and equal opportunities for women. Any comment

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which could be interpreted as discriminatory was preceeded by "I know this sounds sexist, but..." They all seemed very aware of any potentially sexist views, and most were trying to deal with them openly. They perceived the women on campus as being self sufficient and highly independent, and this hampered relaxed relationships, they felt. There perceptions seemed justified, as far as our interviews could reveal. All the women in the freshman class with whom we spoke expressed definite career goals, and a determined attitude toward their future. They liked their independence, and relied on women rather than men to fulfill their needs for security in interpersonal relationships.

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"I don't want girls in the house if they are gonna be dogs. But, if
they're good looking chicks, that's another story!" "What if they won't ball?
Keep coeds out of Carter." Carter, "the last hold out against coeds". The all
male houses at Williams have been stereotyped as rapidly in the past three years
as have the women. The vocabulary is bevo-demo, intermurals, jocks, male

comraderie, house unity, tradition. Williams attempts to achieve a heterogeneity,
and that heterogeneity remains one of the most positive reasons for admitting
women. But, their supposed variousness, the assumption about women, have sometimes resulted in the viewing of the female community as a negative, an inhibiting,
force.

What seems most prevalent in the all male houses, is a notion of the "male comraderie" or house tradition. It was feared that women would dilute these "positive" elements. One remarked, "The girls in _____ didn't contribute to the house unity last year." Another complained, "Some girls just use their rooms for storage; they shouldn't be taking up room in the house." For the men in all male houses, there is a frame of reference, a set of rules. And women in residence are not social equals.

One aspect of some house unity is the issue of coeducation. The obscene signs out Carter House windows were "funny", "God, just a joke," to them. All men in one interview chuckled knowingly as a fellow male responded to the question of coed classes with a wry, "I like girls in my classes as long as they are good looking." One male observed, "If I went to a party or something with a coed, I'd never take her back to my room... I'd get flack for dating a coed." "Coed", the 'synonym for ignominy; still defies redefinition some one hundred years after the word's creation.

The issue that emerged with women on campus was the social one. Dating a girl on campus proved more difficult than importing on weekends. "It's harder to control," said one male. Another remarked, "It's a pain in the neck to go

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out with a Williams girl... You have to look at them over the breakfast table in the morning." Men complained about lack of privacy as well as social tensions. "This place is like Peyton Place; everybody knows what everybody else is doing." Nearly three years of women at Williams have not always brought about revisions in roles or notions of the opposite sex.

The prospectus, as noted earlier, ascertained that "the general atmosphere of the campus, including the social life of the students, would be improved by the inclusion of women." Not everyone is able to approach male and female interaction as positively as one woman in Dennett House did. She said, "dating on campus is more healthy because it makes us more aware of ourselves and other people, more cautious, more sensitive." Stereotypes of women are reinforced to some extent by their absence from these houses. Yet, it seems unfair to the women, as well as the men, to insist upon full scale and absolute coeducational living across the campus. Williams would be denying its men and women the right to a particular lifestyle, to individual privacy, by insisting that all large residential houses on campus be coed. One professor noted that the administration feared fraternities like the fifties feared Communism. If so, then the all female houses could also be considered potential cliques, though it is recognized that the women in small housed eat in coordinate dining halls.

Many men commented upon the fact that they knew few women on campus, that they wished "coeds" were associated with the houses for meals, and perhaps social activities. It can be argued that they want women "on their own terms". Yet, the dining hall is often times more neutral than the classroom. The re, one commented, "The coeds are screwing us," (with response to grade inflation and competition). Human relationships take time to cultivate, they cannot be forced upon individuals. As long as some of the males on campus find total enjoyment, or feel they do, in their male comraderie, and intermurals, and beevos, and momens and nudes on ledges and walking around the Quad, there shall not be an improved tone on campus. If the Administration would have women

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associated with the two remaining all male houses on campus, perhaps many of the negative notions of women, and insensitivities towards the members of the opposite sex could be dispelled. Role revision is a slow and not always sure process, even at a place "so selective" as Williams.

Sundy Sundy Senior women, both those who had stumbled into the first year of coeducation and those who had transferred after two years at another school, shared common experiences. These experiences had colored their viewpoints and approaches to men and their own educations. Many had had very negative experiences, which left them a bit bitter and very resolved not to be 'stepped on' in the future. Others felt an obligation to educate men at Williams as much as to be educated themselves.

Some experiences were mildly unpleasant, others severely psychologically and attitudinally damaging. Most of these experiences took place in the dormitory, not in the classroom. "There was the night a group of drunk males urinated on the walls of our livingroom," two recalled. The "Coed Go Home" t-shir, ts, the motion at a house meeting to vote women out of Mark Hopkins, the obcene paraphinalia left in mailboxes, the girl punched in the face while returning from the library by an anonymous male student who muttered "Damn Coeds" as he ran off into the night: all these reeked of guerilla warfare for some. But as one woman put it, "We were not all as horriblized as all that." For some, their only resentment was over being approached constantly as mother, sister, seamstress, cook and never as just plain human being.

The first women on campus experienced sexism in the classroom which appears to have faded over the past three years. "The first time I made a comment in class everything stopped. The professor and male students all sat there in embarrassed silence for about one minute. Then the professor picked up the discussion on some totally different point, as if I'd never said a thing, as if they all wanted to forget the awful thing which had happened," said one girl chuckling over the scene in retrospect, but she added seriously, "I never opened my mouth in that class again." The burden of making the difficult transition to coeducation was put on a few female students who found it a

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difficult task to coordinate with their personal happiness at times. "I think 90% of the women here were seeing Gene Talbot (school psychologist) that first year", ventured one of the 45 originals. After having been often asked for the female viewpoint in a class, most women expressed doubt that there was such a thing. They were confused and offended often by being treated as representatives of half the population of the United States. All agreed that things had improved drastically within the classroom over the past three years.

Whether or not things had progressed at all in the non-academic realm was dubious for many upperclass women. Trying to identify why caused much debate in many of our interviews. A group of women in all-female housing concluded that the lack of role definition was the explanation for continuing unpleasant experiences. They liked an all-female house because "it's easier to know your role in an all-female house. If a guy comes to the house you know it's because you are a little bit special, afterall he had to walk all the way down." And within the house "you were you". They felt that if your roles were strictly defined, things were easier. Speaking of a friend who was engaged over the summer they said, "This year she has a label so she never has to define it. They know they are just friends, so she never has to sit down and have That conversation."

Some women who had lived in coed houses and/or had been here from the ouset were slightly less willing to blame the elusive idea of 'role definition' for sexism on campus. These women tended to place the blame on one sourse! men. Some thought it was all in jest, and dismissed the rude actions as the playful priks of boys. Others condemned the acts as blatant, where cusable sexism. "They think we are lower forms of life than dogs," said one bitter woman. Many of the 'old guard' agreed that they had used the negative elements of their educational experience to strengthen positive qualities in themselves. After having dealt with men and sexist attitudes on campus, they felt that they were far better

prepared to handle men in the professional or business world.

The complaint almost all women shared about their personal lives was
the lack of female companionship. "There's no way for girls to get to know
girls on this campus," "I was very lonely that first year even though I had many
male friends," said another, "There's just something about a friendship with another girl that is missing with guys." Some women turned to all-female houses
as a solution, and although they expressed less lonliness than women in coed
houses, they still felt isolated from other girls on campus. So, the women in
the first year of coeducation were caught in a bind. They turned away from
men who offended them, but had no one else to turn to. Many turned into themselves
for security, and toward their studies as an outlet for aggressive energies.
Today, most are very grateful for the experience of those trying days because
the battles they have fought have left them highly independent and self-sufficient.
To many these emerging qualities are worth the battle-scars.

tive" to the campus. But the momenta situation did not seem to be eased by the supposed solidarity of their race. They surfered the same exist projudices of the same white common transfers, while he same ding, attemption to adjust to a difficult and attempt

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arrived for Pre-Freshess Weekends. One woman reminisced. "The firs

time I was up here it was unbe levably beautiful. . . the weekend

was niterly familiarle. . 110 bloods and we were sure of the same

the warmth and friendliness of the popula -- the mountains, trees, and

Black women will be able to add much to the Black community. We would not only create another pillar on which the Black community could rest, but also present to a much greater degree the views of the community. With Black women here, the Black community would become whole. I am not saying that the Black female should be stronger than the Black male at Williams, on the contrary, I am saying that the Black female will add a different perspective to the "Williams Experience", enhancing it for the brothers, and together the brothers and sisters will be able to accomplish many things through a more complete Black society.

For as the administration viewed the coming of women as a morale boosting, atmosphere improving force, so in turn they approached the subject of Black women with a similar attitude. The Admissions office's pamphlet, Black Williams, from which the above quote was taken, presents the Williams Experience in a far brighter light than most Blacks felt existed. The Black women were expected to unite the Black community, add that proverbial "different perspective" to the campus. But the women's situation did not seem to be eased by the supposed solidarity of their race. They suffered the same sexist prejudices of the earlier white women transfers, while at the same time, attempting to adjust to a difficult and strange, white, intellectual and social environment.

They recalled their first impressions of Williams when they arrived for Pre-Freshman Weekends. One woman reminisced, "The first time I was up here it was unbelievably beautiful. . . the weekend was utterly fantastic. . . it snowed and we were snowed." The Black women's decision to come to Williams was influenced, in part, by the warmth and friendliness of the people—the mountains, trees, and

snow contributed to the first Great Impressions.

When asked their reasons for applying to Williams, one woman commented, "I wanted to be a pioneer woman," another, "The reputation, I had ambitions about the premed program . . . good faculty ratio." Their interests in a Williams education paralleled the career orientation of the white women.

But socially, their situation seemed more acute than ours. The first year of transfer women at Williams (1970-71) only two black women were in residence on a campus with sixty black men; and neither were told of the absurd ratio, five times worse than the 1:12 ratio of women to men in the white community.

The second year of coeducation brought sixteen black women to campus. They seemed to resent the assumptions made about their presence—that they, as a group, would unify the Afro-American Society, now called the Black Student Union. And interestingly, they experienced the frustrations and social difficulties of the community because of the roadtripping syndrome. The Black men would use the Afro-Am cars to madtrip to Smith and Holyoke, leaving the Black women to contemplate their "different perspective" with one another. And when nine Black women, over half the Black female population on campus, roadtripped to Dartmouth one weekend, the social doublestandard emerged. One Black male commented, "We know what you went up there to get, and you can get that on this campus," and, "I know what I think of any woman who pulled something like that." The

in the community was not greatly improved.

The Black women are their own individuals; many came with strong interests in the pre-med program, one of the toughest concentrations on campus. Neither their high schools nor the summer program could correctly prepare them for the "intellectual shock" that followed. With intellectual and social frustration came an understandable disillusionment.

A further problem was the housing of Blacks who are now "spread all over campus". And interestingly, they noted that their names were not placed in the great computer pool for housing accomodations.

One remarked, "now they"re trying to salt and pepper the campus."

But the most crucial issue for them is their blackness. One woman asserted, "Williams is a microcosm—the racism that is in the streets at home is here at Williams." It is difficult to be a "pillar" in a white environment where academic pressures are paramount, social tensions are between the races and the sexes. As one woman so well put it, "I see my problem here primarily as Black with a capital B and woman with a small(W." To some of the old guard women, the combination of these two factors seems almost overwhelming.

When one faculty member was asked his impression of the Williams community when he arrived over ten years ago, he replied, "I came in the strictly monastic years. I had a difficult time adjusting and I was horrified. My reaction was strictly negative."
While few professors found the all-maleness of Williams a problem, all we interviewed felt coeducation had positively affected their classroom experiences. And if "faculty morale" was boosted, it certainly had little or nothing to do with the Coordinating Committee's naïve reasonings: the addition of a female viewpoint and the fattening of the smaller departments.

Several faculty members did have expectations of what the women would "be like". One professor commented, "I thought Williams was as straight as hell...and I thought there would be a kind of Smithification of this place." He added that he had found himself wrong. Another noted that he had assumed the women would prove more passive and less original in the classroom. "Both of these assumptions turned out to be flatly wrong, directly opposite," he asserted. Another remarked, "I thought coeducation would loosen things up . . .but coeducation brought along problems of its own." He commented upon "our fantasy that coeducation was going to solve any and all problems that Williams might have." Williams women may have created a new type of social problem, but academically speaking, the faculty proved enthusiastic and receptive.

With regard to classroom performance one professor noted,

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"Women here are far less slavishly adherent to what their instructors say than the kind of women at Smith." Another spoke of the women as "relaxed, competent, aggressive, outspoken, interesting people. They work harder, they're a little brighter to begin with." Their was some division as to whether the upperclass women or underclass females seemed more intellectually challenging. In rebuttal to one faculty member's favoring of the upperclass women, one remarked that his Freshman females were, "tough, yell and scream, and won't take any crap."

When asked whether anyone had discovered a female viewpoint in their classroom experience as suggested by the Committee report, one faculty member mused, "yeah, that (the report) was sexist."

Another added, "I was told I'd be knee deep in Classics students, which I wasn't." They agreed that the women could not be said to contribute a new perspective, except, perhaps, with respect to a topic regarding sex. One professor noted that a Black's comments on political or social issues were oftentimes, "broadening, sometimes challenging, which is something I've never had from women here.", He later added that 97% of all students from Williams come from homes with station wagons—his own personal statistic. His attitude was reinforced by another faculty member who stated that any of the women here could be sisters to any of the men on the campus.

What women "do" in a Williams classroom, most felt, was become active participants. They participate in class discussions,

come to class well prepared. Another added, "They have raised the average and also the standard deviation." It is dubious whether the women at Williams, as the Committee report assumed, are less vocationally oriented than the men. Perhaps their hardworkingness" is a neutral outlet for the social pressures and demands of this community. What seems most valid to say about the academic life of women at Williams is that they are contributing as "talented people". The very nature of this self-selective, career oriented community, makes it nearly impossible for Suzy-Creamcheese-homemakers to function academically and socially on this campus. The women here are, by in large, interested in law school, medical school, graduate programs, "B" school. The prospectus prepared by the Committee on Coordinate Education is in need of sincere reevaluation. And we feel that the Committee should be happy and proud to admit it.

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The Williams Womb has had its series of miscarriages in the past three years. But in the process it is helping many men and women develop their sensitivities towards one another, gain a mutual respect and understanding, a sense of commonalities, not just "the differences". It appears that a great deal of the "negativism" on campus is a product of unfulfilled expectations of what coeducation would mean--personally, socially, and academically. And even at a place as small as Williams, individuals are free to live their days without having to encounter members of the opposite sex. It is easy to maintain false impressions, to compartmentalize people into "magic little boxes". It is the breaking of those traditional boxes that results in many of the dilemna-causing experiences of coeducation. The women are not donating a new perspective, nor are they tempering the career orientation or boosting faculty morale. They are feared, respected, enjoyed, condemned as women, as coeds, as females, not as a talented group of individuals. And perhaps, with the gradual changes in the American culture, at some point in time, no one will think of talking about "Women at Williams", and coeducation will no longer be a synonym of ignominy.

FOOTNOTES

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- 1. Dorothy McGuigan, A Dangerous Experiment, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1970, p. 20.
- 2. Ibid., p. 56.
- 3. Ibid., p. 39.
- 4. Ibid., p. 101.
- 5. "The Text of the Presidents Coeducation Recommendation", Amherst Student, no. 15, October 30, 1972, p. 7.
- 6. Williams Alumni Review, Summer, 1969, p. 5.
- 7. Ibid., p.6.
- 8. Ibid., p. 5.
- 9. Ibid., p. 6.
- 10. Ibid., p. 6.
- 11. Nancy McIntire, Williams Alumni Review, Fall, 1971, p. 30.
- 12. Ibid., p. 30.
- 13. Janet Lever, Pepper Schwartz, Women at Yale, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1971, p. 262.

APPENDIX

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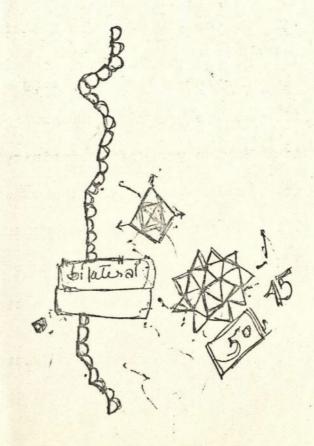
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- 1. Why did you apply to Williams?
- 2. Did you have any particular social or academic expectations?
- 3. What were your initial impressions of the college--how would you characterize the atmosphere?
- 4. What do you like least about the college?
- 5. How do you feel about coeducational classrooms--what were your initial reactions if you had not experienced them previously?
- 6. Do you feel there is a difference between males and females viewpoints?
- 7. Do you feel there is a difference between male and female approaches to academic work?
- 8. How do you feel about female professors?
- 9. Do you feel you can have a close relationship with a member of the opposite sex?
- 10. Do you have any reservations about dating people at Williams?
- 11. How do you feel about dating someone in your own house?
- 12. Do you feel you have cultivated any particular notions of role playing beacuse of being a member of a sexual minority or majority?
- 13. How do you define masculinity?
- 14. How do you define feminity?
- 15. Define your ideal man or woman?
- 16. How would you define women's liberation?
- 17. What do you consider to be the obligations of your spouse?
- 18. Do you think there is a sterotype of a Williams Man or a Williams Woman?
- 19. How do you view your future plans?

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PSYCHOLOGY 11 INDEPENDENT PROJECT

1.	What is your sex?
2.	Did you attend a public or private high school?
3.	Was it coed or non-coed?
4.	Do you live in a co-ed or non co-ed house?
5.	Do you date a Williams student?
6.	Member of the Class of 19
7.	Are you a transfer student ?
8.	How many years have you attended Williams?

The student groups interviewed were:

7- black - female