SAVING THE MALES
The Sociological Implications of the Virginia Military Institute and the Citadel

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It is still dark and the courtyard at the center of the barracks is as quiet as the surrounding foothills of the Shenandoah Valley, dark and frost-covered. The late October air is cold and crisp. Dressed in a suit and tie, I am hovering under a balcony for warmth. "What the hell am I doing here?" I ask myself.

Suddenly, a siren goes off and a group of men start running along the top floor (called a stoop) of the courtyard. Doors fly open and nearly 300 young bleary-faced men come stumbling out of their rooms, all dressed in yellow sweatshirts and sweatpants. They snap to attention and then race down the stairs into the courtyard around which all the barracks are built.

There they are met by about 40 or 50 guys in uniform who instantly start berating them, screaming, nose-to-nose, hollering what appear to be commands. The young men start with calisthenics—push-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks, running in place with their arms over their heads, squat thrusts—whatever the uniformed men demand of them. While they huff and puff in the chilly predawn light, the uniformed cadre stands over them, belittling them, calling them "skirts," "wimps," "wusses."

Near me, a young, heavy-set guy is straining to do his 40th push-up. His cadre is kneeling over his back, screaming directly in his ear, "What's wrong with you,

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I am deeply honored to have been selected as the 1999 Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) Feminist Lecturer. Selecting me illustrates what to me is a central tenet of feminist sociology: that feminism, the support for women's equality, is a position that can be embraced by both men and women. I hope I can live up to that promise. For their belief in me, I am grateful to Eleanor Miller and the SWS Feminist Lecturer selection committee. Several people helped me think about the issues discussed here, including Amy Aronson, Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, Susan Faludi, Nancy Levit, Lillian Rubin, and Val Vojdik. My collaborators on the research on women at West Point, Diane Diamond and Kirby Schroeder, also have provided helpful advice. I thank Christine Bose for helping me shape the manuscript for publication. This article is dedicated to Michael Maurer and the pleasures of mutual mentorship.

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skirt? There are women who can do more push-ups than you. When I was in the army, there was a woman who could do 100 push-ups. You can’t even do 50.”

Behind me, a young man is running in place—arms down, arms out, arms overhead—while his cadre is nose-to-nose with him, screaming at the top of his lungs, with no effort to keep from spitting into the face of his young charge.

After 45 minutes of this grueling pace, a bell goes off, the cadre disappears, and the young men stagger back upstairs to shower and prepare for their day. It is now 5:30 A.M. Welcome to college.

If this does not exactly sound like freshman orientation at your university, it is because what I have described is a very different kind of collegiate experience. I am describing my observations of the “rat line” at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington, Virginia. At the same moment, a similar scene is enacted in Charleston, South Carolina, at the Citadel. It was at those two schools that the most recent battles over gender discrimination have been fought, cases that were among our nation’s most important legal cases for women’s equality, the Brown v. Board of Education of gender discrimination.

These cases began in 1990, when the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice filed a suit against the state of Virginia and the VMI, an all-male, state-supported, military-type educational institution, for possible violation of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, which grants all citizens equal protection under the law. The suit claimed that VMI’s all-male admission policy violated women’s equal protection, and the U.S. government demanded that VMI become coeducational. VMI denied this charge and claimed that its unique educational methodology served vital state interests.

A year later, a young high school student in South Carolina named Shannon Faulkner applied and was admitted to the Citadel, after removing identification on her high school records that she was a woman. (Because the Citadel had previously been an all-male institution, there was no place on its application form that asked the applicant’s sex.) When she was subsequently rejected because of gender, she brought suit against that institution, also a state-supported, all-male, military-type institution. Her individual case, brought forward by the American Civil Liberties Union’s (ACLU’s) section on women’s rights and their pro bono litigators, was joined by the United States as plaintiff-intervener in a potential civil-rights violation.

Thus were the cases of VMI and the Citadel begun. I was invited by the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department to participate in those cases as an expert witness, the expert on “masculinity” if you will. I testified in the remedial phases of both VMI and Citadel trials, which entailed site observations at all the schools involved; part of that testimony appeared as a footnote in Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s Supreme Court opinion in the case.

On the surface, these cases were obviously about the constitutionally protected rights of women to equal educational opportunity. Both the government and Shannon Faulkner’s attorneys argued that such violations had occurred; VMI and the Citadel denied they had violated women’s equal protection, claiming that, unlike
race-based discrimination, their admission standards passed the criteria set forward by the Supreme Court that permitted discrimination against women.

I believe that such a reading of these cases—being about women's educational opportunity—only partially comprehends them. While such issues were certainly prominent in the court proceedings, and were the basis on which the legal decisions were rendered, I also want to suggest that there was a hidden subtext to these cases, a subtext that had less to do with women's educational opportunities and more to do with the making of men. In fact, the transparency of the claims made by VMI and the Citadel, refuted by both expert testimony and the legal opinions rendered in the case, allows us to see through this surface text about discrimination against women. VMI and the Citadel were, as they have always been, about men—or, more accurately, about masculinity. I will argue that these cases provide a unique meditation on the meaning of masculinity in the contemporary United States. In the words of the title of this article—the slogan that appeared on bumper stickers and buttons all over Charleston during the Citadel trial and that became the unofficial motto of the campaign to exclude women—the case may have originated as a question of equal rights for women but to the institutions involved it was really about "saving the males."

In this article, I want to explore those decisions and suggest the relevance to sociologists, particularly sociologists of gender. To do that, I will focus on what these cases say about women, about men, about their questioning of the appropriateness of single-sex education, about gendered institutions, and about the relationship of difference and sameness to gender equality.

**DISCRIMINATION, DIFFERENCE, AND SAMENESS**

First, I will present a bit of theoretical background to help situate the discussion about gender discrimination. America's founding political theories were preoccupied with the relationship between difference and sameness, equality and inequality. It was, for example, a Lockean assumption that different talents, different motivations, and different abilities would lead to different, that is, unequal, economic and social outcomes. This is, of course, a bedrock principle of meritocracy. The harder you work, the more able you are, the higher you will rise. The inequalities at the end of the road are the natural outcomes of our differences.

By contrast, equality has always been confused with sameness. Historically, this was one of the Cold War's ideological weapons against Communism—to play on the fear that economic equality would mean that we would all look, talk, and dress alike; act exactly the same as everyone else; and perhaps most important, think the same things. Images of socialist societies always included large groups of indistinguishable people, often chanting or marching together; their message was that equality spelled the death of the individual. Similarly, antifeminists have historically played on fears of androgyny, which was imagined as either gender inversion
(masculinized women and feminized men) or a blending of masculinity and femininity into some rather unappealing amorphous mush, to maintain traditional gender inequalities. In America, we believe that difference leads to inequality and equality means sameness.

This is expressed in our legal system with the twin foundations of equal protection. There are two ways you can discriminate in law: You can treat those who are the same as if they were different and you can treat those who are different as if they were the same.

To treat alikes as unalike—treating sameness differently—is the basis for most sex and race discrimination cases in the workplace or higher education. This is the basis for *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 striking down separate but equal as a way to maintain racial segregation. Separate cannot be equal. You cannot treat people who are the same—Blacks and whites—as if they were different.

In addition, you cannot treat unalikes as alike, treat different people the same. In a Supreme Court opinion in 1971, Justice Potter Stewart wrote, “The grossest discrimination can lie in treating things that are different as though they were exactly alike” (*Jenness v. Fortson* 403 U.S. [1971], 431, 442). In sexual harassment cases, for example, the traditional standard of harassment—Would a reasonable person find the behavior objectionable?—has been replaced by a “reasonable woman standard” (*Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc.* 510 U.S. 17 [1993], 22). Recognizing that there are some differences between women and men, the question has become not whether some abstract person would find it objectionable but whether a woman would find it so. We cannot treat people as if personal background or social characteristics were inconsequential. (This often has been a basis for the sociological critique of American jurisprudence—it decontextualizes individuals from their social and historical roots.) Discrimination is ignoring sameness when it is salient and ignoring difference when it is salient.

There are significant differences between gender discrimination and race discrimination as a matter of law. Race discrimination receives what the courts call “strict” scrutiny, that is, it is never justifiable under any circumstances because, legally, Blacks and whites are the same. Gender discrimination receives what is called “intermediate” scrutiny—it is usually wrong but you can discriminate only under some very well-defined circumstances. Such discrimination has to (1) be based on real differences between the sexes, not on stereotypes; (2) serve a legitimate state interest; and (3) be functionally and directly related to the qualifications for the job, the so-called bona fide occupational qualification, or BFOQ.

So, for example, the Hooters restaurant chain successfully defended its all-female waitstaff policy by claiming that “sex appeal” defined by large breasts was a BFOQ and that since only women possessed that BFOQ (or, I suppose, grammatically, those BFOQs) they could exclude men. By contrast, fire and police departments have been unsuccessful in arguing that there were any nonstereotypical differences that would make it impossible for some women to serve as police officers or fire fighters. Those issues of sameness and difference were very much in play in
the VMI and Citadel cases, and the relationship of equality to both sameness and difference continue to reverberate through those institutions. To see that, it would be helpful to have some historical background on the cases.

THE HISTORICAL CONVERGENCE OF THE VMI AND CITADEL CASES

VMI and the Citadel are not your typical educational institutions (Manegold 2000). Both provide a disciplined military atmosphere, although fewer than 15 percent of all graduating cadets pursue a career in the military. VMI and the Citadel are total institutions in which academic study, residential life (the barracks), and military training are all integrated into a closed system into which cadets are immersed from the moment they set foot on campus. Both use an educational methodology typical of a total institution; known as the "adversative method," the method deliberately introduces emotional and psychological stress to create "doubt about previous beliefs and experiences in order to create a mindset conducive to the values VMI attempts to impart," according to a 1986 institutional self-study at VMI (cited in United States v. Virginia 766 F. Supp. [W.D. Va 1991], 1421, hereafter VMI I). Each cadet is systematically stripped of his individual identity and then slowly and deliberately rebuilt in the corporate mold.

For first year students, known as "rats" at VMI and "knobs" at the Citadel, the process entails a total shock to the system of beliefs. Heads are shaved (thus the nickname knobs); seemingly random and nonsensical orders are given and unquestioningly are carried out; and subordination to a training cadre of second year students is relentless, merciless, and brutal. The rat line at VMI has been compared with Marine Corps boot camp in terms of the physical rigor and the mental stress of the experience. The brutality of the adversative system implants a deeply felt bonding among the men; solidarity among cadets is intense and loyalty of alumni is fierce. (This experience has even been explored in film. Pat Conroy's novel about his experiences at the Citadel, The Lords of Discipline [1986], offers a devastatingly critical view of the brutalities of male bonding. On the other side of the ledger, long before he played the role of president, Ronald Reagan starred in a film about VMI called Brother Rat [1938].)

This singular and unique educational methodology—and its appropriateness for women (but not its appropriateness for men)—was a central element in the legal cases. The VMI and Citadel cases proceeded separately on parallel tracks. Yet, each moment in one case had enormous ramifications for the other. Each was heard in separate district courts—VMI in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia in Roanoke and Citadel in the district court in Charleston—but both appeals were heard in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond. Eventually, only VMI was appealed to the Supreme Court.
In the liability phase of the case, the question before the court was whether VMI violated the 14th Amendment by excluding women from a state-supported institution. In that phase (VMI I), Judge Jackson Kiser ruled in favor of VMI. His opinion claimed that the record showed that

single gender education at the undergraduate level is beneficial to both males and females [and that] key elements of the adversative VMI educational system, with its focus on barracks life, would be fundamentally altered and the distinctive ends of the system would be thwarted, if VMI were forced to admit females and to make changes necessary to accommodate their needs and interests. (VMI I, 1413)

Kiser argued that VMI met the three standards of intermediate scrutiny: (1) The exclusion of women was directly related to its mission, (2) it served a legitimate state purpose, and (3) it was based on real differences between the sexes. (VMI had argued that the state interest served by its exclusion of women was “diversity” in higher education in Virginia, offering one of several Orwellian moments in which the language of feminism or multiculturalism was used to perpetuate discrimination.) He further observed a Catch-22 in the Justice Department suit—to admit women to VMI would so alter the structure of the education that their very admission would transform the school into another institution; thus, their very entry would prevent them from getting the education they sought; and thus, by seeking equality as same-ness, the women would get difference.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit reversed that decision and found that VMI’s and the Citadel’s admission policies did, in fact, discriminate against women. The Circuit Court offered VMI several avenues by which it might remedy that discrimination: VMI could close, go private, admit women, or finance a program that would provide for women the same educational benefits that men receive at VMI. It was this last course that both VMI and the Citadel chose; the schools proposed to fund parallel programs in women’s leadership at neighboring women’s colleges. VMI would help develop the Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership (VWIL) at nearby Mary Baldwin College, whereas the Citadel proposed a South Carolina Institute for Leadership (SCIL) at Converse College, both small, private, all-women’s colleges. While VMI would continue to use its adversative method of total immersion into rigid hierarchies, VWIL was to be a more nurturing and supportive educational atmosphere; each school would thus use the educational methodology most “appropriate” for the gender of its students (VMI 852 Fed. Supp. [1994], 484, hereafter VMI III). This was not to be a case of separate but equal, the schools claimed, but one of distinct but superior.

Several expert witnesses supported VMI’s position, including sociologist David Riesman, who argued that VMI’s adversative method would be “inappropriate” for women, and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, who offered vigorous, if irrelevant, testimony that VWIL would offer poor and minority students an opportunity to receive a Mary Baldwin education to which they would have otherwise been excluded for financial reasons. Against this position, the Justice Department’s expert witnesses, such as
Carol Jacklin, Alexander Astin, and myself, suggested that VMI’s contentions were based on stereotypes of what types of educational methodologies were appropriate to all women and that VMI’s arguments were the same ones used historically to justify women’s exclusion from entry into the public sphere for a century. VWIL’s relationship to VMI was akin to a fictive program that one might imagine having been proposed for Vassar that was designed to keep West Point all male.

Again, the district court judge bought VMI’s argument. Judge Jackson Kiser ruled in favor of VMI’s remedy of the VWIL program, claiming that VMI and VWIL were each appropriate for the gender they were to serve. But they were equivalent, he argued. “If VMI marches to the beat of a drum, then Mary Baldwin marches to the melody of a fife and when the march is over, both will have arrived at the same destination” (VMI III, 484), he wrote in his opinion—a rhetorical flourish that led the New York Times to write in an editorial on 9 May, 1994, that “Judge Kiser Misses the Beat Again.”

Hearing the Citadel case, the second district court judge, C. Weston Houck in Charleston, South Carolina, was not as easily persuaded. He ordered the school to admit Faulkner to its Corps of Cadets. The Supreme Court agreed. Eight justices heard the VMI case in January 1996. (Justice Clarence Thomas recused himself since his son, Jamal, was a cadet at VMI.) In its decision that June, the Court found, by a seven-to-one majority, that VWIL was but a “pale shadow of VMI” (VMI 116 S. Ct., 2285, hereafter VMI V). Three months later, on 21 September 1996, the VMI Board of Visitors voted nine to eight to admit women into the Corps of Cadets.

VMI’s decision was preceded by the announcement that the Citadel would become coeducational, a decision reached within two days of the Supreme Court ruling on 26 June. Thus, finally, did the last obstacles toward women's full equal educational opportunity tumble. In a case that many had regarded as women's equivalent of Brown v. Board of Education, women were now able to attend any state-supported educational institution in America.

WHAT WERE THE ARGUMENTS USED TO EXCLUDE WOMEN?

To argue, as VMI and the Citadel did, that their unique educational methodology was particularly suited to the educational needs of men and that their parallel programs would be more appropriate for women raises significant questions for sociologists of gender. What types of arguments were brought to support the educational separation of the sexes? How do we assess those arguments? and finally, What are the political and legal implications of these cases for students of gender relations and the law?

Stated most concisely, VMI argued that women simply could not do what the men did, that the adversative educational methodology was simply inappropriate for women. Throughout the case, VMI returned to assertions of natural and
intractable gender differences as the basis for gender discrimination. The adversative model, they argued, is only effective for males. The rat line, the barracks lifestyle, the rigorous honor code—these were simply too much for women’s purportedly fragile constitutions to bear. Women, the school claimed, could not cut it. They were “not capable of the ferocity requisite to make the program work.” They are “physically weaker . . . more emotional, and cannot take stress as well as men.” The school cited more than 100 physical differences that resulted in a “natural hierarchy” between women and men, with men, of course, at the top. If admitted, VMI averred, female cadets would “break down crying” and suffer “psychological trauma” from the rigors of the system (VMI I, 1435; VMI V, Brief for Petitioner, 2264; see also Epstein 1997b, 108; Vojdik 1997, 85).

Such arguments joined a long history of using putative sex differences as the basis for discrimination. In the nineteenth century, women had been excluded from educational institutions, the workplace, and the voting booth because they did not have the physical constitution or mental toughness to handle it. In what was the best-selling book on higher education of the entire century, Sex in Education (1873), Edward C. Clarke, Harvard’s first professor of education, predicted that if women went to college their brains would grow heavier and their wombs would atrophy. (His evidence for this? By misreading correlation for cause, Clarke pointed out that college-educated women had fewer children than non-college-educated women. He also noted that 42 percent of the women in Boston-area mental hospitals had college degrees, while only 16 percent of male patients had degrees. If college did not shrink their wombs, perhaps it made them insane! Today, of course, we might more parsimoniously interpret these findings as the result of both expanding opportunities and frustrated ambition, not shrinking wombs.) Perhaps the most eloquent expression of this position, though, comes from our own era. Opposing women’s participation in the military, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, noted, “If combat means living in a ditch, females have a biological problem staying in a ditch for 30 days because they get infections. Males are biologically driven to go out and hunt giraffes” (cited in Messner 1998, 27).

Since discrimination is justified on the basis of difference, all VMI had to do was demonstrate those differences. Toward that end, they attempted to use feminist theorists to buttress their claims, co-opting arguments by Carol Gilligan, Deborah Tannen, and others who claimed that women responded better to more nurturing and supportive educational methodologies. (It was one of the more pointed ironies to hear lawyers defending these two bastions of Southern, white, chivalric masculinity invoke what they saw as feminist essentialism in their schools’ defense.) According to the Citadel’s lawyers, men “tend to need an environment of adversativeness or ritual combat in which the teacher is a disciplinarian and a worthy competitor,” whereas women “tend to thrive in a cooperative atmosphere in which the teacher is emotionally connected with the students” (Faulkner v. Jones 858 F. Supp. 552 [1994], 1434). The Citadel even asked Gilligan to testify for them, to which she responded with an amicus brief filed on behalf of Shannon Faulkner.
In this case, the mean differences between women and men were applied to all women and men, which is, of course, the essence of stereotypical thinking. It is stereotyping to think that just because most members of a group share a characteristic that all members of the group share that characteristic. And while it may be true that most women prefer such a supportive and nurturing educational environment, so too, actually, do most men. The rigors of the adversative system are attractive to only a small number of men to begin with, and probably to an even smaller number of women.

SAVING THE MALES

The Citadel took a slightly different—and far more revealing—tack to thwart Shannon Faulkner’s effort to enroll. After all, here was a woman who did seek the adversative educational methodology offered by the Citadel. At VMI, there was no live plaintiff who wanted to go there at the time of the first court hearings. While the Citadel agreed that women could do everything required of the male cadets, as women had been doing at West Point and the other service academies since 1976, and even agreed that there might be some women who would want to do it, the entry of women, they argued, would destroy the mystical bonding experience among the male cadets.

Women’s presence would “dilute” the testosterone-rich atmosphere, pollute it. One of the Citadel’s expert witnesses, Major General Josiah Bunting III, himself a VMI graduate and former Rhodes scholar who is now superintendent at VMI, suggested that women would be “a toxic kind of virus” that would destroy the Citadel. “Adolescent males benefit from being able to focus exclusively on the task at hand, without the intrusion of any sexual tension,” he claimed (cited in Vojdik 1997, 108). The question of women’s admission to an all-male school had become a defensive struggle for men to preserve a pristine, homosocial institution. The school’s supporters sold light blue (the school color) buttons and bumper stickers that read “Save the Males,” as if one woman represented a deadly threat to an entire gender. Other slogans that appeared on t-shirts and bumper stickers after Faulkner’s admission included “Citadel—1,952 Bulldogs and one Bitch” and “Save the Males, Shave the Whale.”

This argument, too, replayed earlier debates. At the turn of the century, opponents to coeducation argued that women’s presence would dilute the rigor of the curriculum and, more important, feminize the boys. Psychologist G. Stanley Hall, whose 1904 book Adolescence named and defined that transitional period of life, predicted that if they were educated together, boys and girls would “lose the mystic attraction of the other sex” and that, therefore feminized, the boys would become gay. This claim that heterosociality—coeducation—produces homosexuality is, of course, utterly disproved by the evidence. In fact, what Kinsey found in 1948 was
that most of the 39 percent of men who had had at least one homosexual experience
to orgasm had such an experience in a homosocial setting—single-sex summer
camp, single-sex college, religious institution, or the military.

Is masculinity that fragile that one woman can tear down an institution with such
a celebrated 150-year history? Actually, the Citadel was already far from a homo-
socially pure institution. There already were significant numbers of women there.
They cooked and served the food, cleaned the buildings, and taught classes as pro-
fessors. Some women also attended classes. Prior to the legal cases, all veterans,
women and men alike, were allowed to enroll at the school. There were also many
women graduate students. The only thing women were not at the Citadel was
acadets. It became clear, then, that the threat posed by women is not posed simply by
their presence but by their equality. “Somehow when integration supports men’s
super-ordinate status there is no objection,” notes Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, who was
also asked to be an expert in the last phases of the Citadel trial. “Men cheerfully per-
mit women into their workplaces when they are secretaries to their manager roles,
nurses to their doctor roles” (Epstein 1997a, 206).

Even in their physical absence as cadets, women were rhetorically and symboli-
cally omnipresent in the minds of the male cadets. Rats and knobs were constantly
referred to with slang terms for women in general and women’s genitals in particu-
lar. In fact, the absence of real women ensured the men that they had a constant
symbolic other against which they were measuring themselves. “At least women
couldn’t do what I’m doing, I must be a man,” they might be able to say to them-
selves. Women’s exclusion seemed to be necessary for men to feel confident about
their masculinity.

And saving the males did not mean all males. Assertions of categorical differ-
ence between women and men almost invariably accompany efforts to minimize
the differences among men and among women. Any meditation about masculinity
at VMI must bear in mind that of the variety of masculinities available to men, only
the hegemonic version was to be reproduced. About one-fifth of all rats and knobs
drop out during the first three weeks of their first year, and their names are not to be
spoken again. Both schools vigorously deny that there are any gay men there,
although Susan Faludi’s article “The Naked Citadel” (1994) and one of my former
students, a former southern belle who said she “covered” for several gay cadets at
various proms, testify otherwise. At the Citadel, I noticed a pamphlet on the coffee
table in the counselor’s office: “So You Think You Might Be Gay,” it read. The
counselor assured me that this was not for cadets but for graduate students. How-
ever, there is a counseling group for guys who feel they are not living up to the requi-
site standards of masculinity and feel themselves too wimpy and feminine. It is
called the “it group.” Perhaps some males are not to be saved.

Thus, while VMI and the Citadel appear on the surface to be about men’s natural
superiority over women, they are, underneath, about precisely its opposite—the
fragility of that hierarchy, the vulnerability to pollution and dilution, and the terror
of emasculation that would be attendant on equality of opportunity.
LEARNING FROM WEST POINT

If the experiences at the U.S. military academies are any indication, they need not have been so concerned. Over the past three years, two graduate students and I have been investigating these issues with different cohorts of cadets at the U.S. Military Academy (West Point), which first admitted women in 1976 under Congressional mandate, and Norwich University, a private, military college that voluntarily began to admit women in 1974. We have conducted interviews with virtually all the women in the first cohorts and a sample of women from a cohort from the late 1980s and the current cohort. This research tells us a lot, I think, about what women’s experiences will be like at VMI and the Citadel.

For one thing, we found that the women and men did not differ significantly in their motivations for going to these military schools. Women said they wanted to place themselves “under stressful conditions, overcome obstacles, and succeed” (WP, I-2). Current female cadets summarized their cohort’s motivations as follows: “I wanted to be in a place where I could live to the extreme,” a West Point student said (WP II-6). “I like running around in the mud and doing that sort of stuff,” a Norwich sophomore added (N III-8). “I wanted discipline and I wanted a military lifestyle,” one 22-year-old engineering major at West Point commented (cited in Schmitt 1997, 26).

But the experiences of the women and men diverged sharply once they arrived. Reliance on ideas of natural, biologically based sex differences placed women entering military education with the same dilemma as the women who have successfully entered every field of endeavor that was a traditional homosocial preserve of men—from the business world to medicine to law to the university: Women who seek military education cannot be real women. Military service is seen as gender conforming for men and gender nonconforming for women. In a sense, the phrase “woman cadet” was an oxymoron—one could not be both a woman and a cadet at the same time. Thus, women were trapped in a paradox: To the extent that they are successful cadets, women cannot be successful women; to the extent that they are successful women, they cannot be successful cadets. Either women are unsuccessful cadets or unsuccessful women; they cannot be both, and either way they lose.

Stereotypic assumptions about women were prevalent in the first years of coeducation at West Point. Like all tokens in institutions, they felt invisible as individuals yet hypervisible as members of their group. And they felt isolated from the others in their situation. “Obviously you stood out like a sore thumb,” one female cadet from the first class at West Point commented. “You got longer hair and you got boobs. You’re gonna’ stick out” (WP, I-1). Another commented that “one minute we were supposed to do bayonet training. . . . You’re screaming and yelling and you’re in camouflage. And then the next half hour you’re cleaned up. . . . But what’s the real woman, what’s the real girl?” (WP, I-4).

And, of course, the military academies were concerned about the pollution of the homosocially pristine atmosphere, the dilution of the experience. Air Force Academy Superintendent Lt. Gen. Albert P. Clark argued that
the environment of the Air Force Academy is designed around these stark realities [of combat]. The cadet’s day is filled with constant pressure. His life is filled with competition, combative and contact sports, rugged field training, use of weapons, flying and parachuting, strict discipline and demands to perform to the limit of endurance mentally, physically, and emotionally. It is this type of training that brings victory in battle. It is my considered judgment that the introduction of female cadets will inevitably erode this vital atmosphere. (cited in Holm 1982, 307)

Army secretary Howard Callaway agreed, “Admitting women to West Point will irrevocably change the Academy. The Spartan atmosphere—which is so important to producing the final product [combat leaders]—would surely be diluted” (cited in Holm 1982, 308).

As tokens in a gendered institution, women cadets were constantly negotiating sameness and difference with each other, with male cadets, with faculty and staff, and with themselves. When they stressed sameness, they were seen as different; when they stressed difference, they were treated the same. Since so much was at stake, and both so fragile and fluid and so constantly scrutinized, the women were constantly “doing gender,” negotiating publicly the meanings of femininity. What is typically left for backstage preparations had taken a very visible center stage.

We observed four gender strategies, ways of doing gender, adopted by the first cohorts of women at West Point and Norwich. One strategy, which we call emphatic sameness, involved downplaying gender identity as women in favor of being seen as cadets. To the extent that they were not seen as women, they could be seen as successful cadets. As one West Point graduate told us, “Once I was accepted as ‘not one of those women’ then I was O.K.” (WP I-4). Empathic sameness requires downplaying solidarity. They rarely appeared in public in groups of more than two, a strategy which seems to have developed in response to comments made by faculty, students, and administrators. “Literally, my class, we stayed away from other women,” one graduate said. “You didn’t want to have more than two women together at one time, then somebody would make a comment” (WP I-1). “A group of women together was always seen as a cabal,” one of West Point’s first female cadets wrote (Barkalow 1990, 138). When some of the female cadets tried to initiate group lunches, the men would make derisive comments, as did one male instructor who said, “So what’s going on? You plotting the revolution?” as he walked by.

A second gender strategy, strategic overcompensation, was developed because more than three-fourths of the women we interviewed believed that they had to work twice as hard to remain equal to the men. “You’re put in a fishbowl here cause there’s so few women in comparison to guys,” one woman commented. “I think that maybe you do have to be a little bit tougher just because you are in the minority” (WP II-4).

Third, since formal networking was suspect and the first cohorts did not have upper-class women as mentors and role models, the first cohorts developed informal networks of support. “We really needed contact with women officers. We needed their experience, their advice, and their example,” one cadet said. “We needed to be
able to talk to them without suspicion or fear. We needed their empathy and their concern. We needed to be brought up the way men at the Academy had been brought up by their own for almost 200 years” (Barkalow 1990, 96). One woman made friends with one of the officer’s wives.

Finally, the first cohort of women cadets negotiated their contradictory experiences of femininity through strategic deployment of gendered display. Often, they asserted traditional femininity in social situations while they downplayed it in professional situations. Such minimizing and maximizing of gender difference, depending on the situation, is probably only an exaggerated version of what women do in virtually all public domains in which their participation is gender nonconforming, from the legal and medical professions to institutions of higher learning and Wall Street investment houses.

Unfortunately, the military response was not nearly as subtle and differentiated as was the women’s (see Greene and Wilson 1981). Concerned that military training would masculinize its women cadets, the institution responded initially by exacerbating the problem. The United States Military Academy (USMA; i.e., West Point) offered its first women a class in how to apply and wear makeup (WP, I-4). They produced a press release in 1979 to reassure the public that their cadets had not become masculinized. Its first two sentences read, “Female cadets here adopt traditional masculine personality traits to be accepted as leaders. They also want both marriage and a full time military career” (cited in Rogan 1981, 201).

Institutional factors play a considerable role in the successful integration of women. Since tokenism is, in part, a function of proportions, not entirely of intention, the numbers of entering women will have a significant impact on their experiences. There were 81 women in the first coed class at the Naval Academy, 119 at West Point, and 157 at the Air Force Academy. The Citadel voluntarily admitted 6 women for its first coeducational entering class—1 percent of the entire class of 600 cadets. Without a critical mass of women, tokenism was far more pervasive and the women were somewhat less than fully welcomed. Two dropped out and sued the school for hazing violations. Less easily measured but equally important are the institutional measures, such as diversity training and a clear and enforced zero-tolerance policy on harassment, that would ensure women’s successful integration.

Much of the women’s strategic maneuvering to reconcile being women and cadets was rhetorical. In the tortured, twisted, and often incoherent narratives offered by both first-cohort graduates and contemporary students, one hears most clearly and poignantly these efforts. One woman said, for example,

I mean there’s always going to be differences because there’s differences between men and women. I hope I’m different from the guys. You know, I still like to be a woman, as well as a cadet. Especially outside. At the same time, you know, when I’m at school I don’t want to get treated any different because I’m still a professional. I do the same things, so I don’t want to get treated any different in that way. (WP, II-3)
EQUALITY, SAMENESS, AND DIFFERENCE

So, does equality mean sameness? Does equal treatment mean the same treatment? Many of the women who entered VMI and the Citadel think so. "If I thought VMI was going to change the fundamental things, I wouldn't have come here," an 18-year-old woman "rat" said. "I wanted the same experience that other Rats have gotten. I certainly didn't want a watered-down Ratline" (cited in Abrams 1998, B7).

And most Americans would agree with that renowned gender theorist, actress Demi Moore, who gave its most emphatic answer in the movie G. I. Jane (1997). In the film, Moore refuses the women's standards and tests, separate barracks, and latrines; she wants the real deal. And so, after we watch the country's highest paid film actress shave her own head, and after she has been bloodied and brutally and savagely beaten with her hands tied behind her back, her Master Chief training officer asks if she has had enough, if she is ready to quit, if she gives up. Her response? Moore shouts—and here I quote a text—"Suck my dick!"—which, of course, he cannot do, and not just because he is heterosexual.

Of course, Moore does not possess a penis, but at that moment she possesses something far more valuable. Standing tall and erect, bloodied but unbowed, joining a long line of American male warrior heroes, Moore possesses the phallus—the signifier if not the thing signified.

On the other hand, in a gendered institution, does not treating differently situated individuals the same constitute another form of discrimination? In the Citadel case, the District Court judge held a special court session to determine whether the Citadel should be allowed to shave Shannon Faulkner's head the same way as they shave other knobs. Josiah Bunting III argued that it "would be demeaning to women to cut them slack" (Levit 1998, 95). On the other hand, I offered sociological testimony that to shave her head would be an additional form of discrimination. I suggested that, as Charles Moskos writes, "unisex standards are just a covert way to get women out" (Levit 1998, 95). I argued that "Shannon would become not only the cadet who doesn't look like a cadet but also, then, a woman who doesn't look like a woman." (The judge did not buy it and he ordered that the Citadel could shave her head. The school, however, decided that West Point's model of short hair would be acceptable.)

Let me give you one final example of how the failure to acknowledge difference—treating unalikes alike—is also a form of discrimination. One of the more ironic moments in recent sports history concerns a little girl who was a catcher on her central Florida Little League team. The league officials would not let her play because she did not wear a protective cup and the league rules, ungendered as they are, require, and I quote, that "all catchers must wear a protective cup." So, since she did not wear one, she could not play. She went to court. She lost. (So she wore it on her knee.) As one of the first cohorts of women at West Point said to my researchers, "They don't seem to understand that equality does not mean we all have to be the same" (WP-I-6).
ARE SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS BETTER FOR WOMEN?

Another sociological question prompted by the VMI legislation concerns single-sex schools in general. Can separate not only be equal but better? VMI claimed, after all, that research had demonstrated that single-sex schools were better for both women and men. The district court agreed, holding that “substantial educational benefits flow from a single-gender environment, be it male or female, that cannot be replicated in a coeducational setting” (VMI I 766 F. Supp. 1407, 1426 [W. D. Va. 1991] vacated 976 F2d. 890 [4th Cir 1992]). As they put it, “if VMI goes, there goes Wellesley.” While that argument may be disingenuous and self-serving, it does highlight what appeared to be a case of feminist hypocrisy. The same year, 1990, that the United States first brought its case against VMI, the board of trustees at Mills College, a small, private, all-women, liberal arts college in Oakland, California, voted to admit men, in part to ensure the school’s financial survival. And in 1994, as VMI and Citadel were in their remedial phase, the regents at Texas Women’s University (TWU) decided to admit men. Similar to the men at VMI, the women students were outraged and alumnae threatened to withdraw their support. Their protests made front-page news. Students were photographed weeping over the decision to become a coeducational school. Women at TWU carried signs that read “Better Dead than Coed” and “Raped by the Regents.” “We’re not anti-man,” one TWU student told a reporter. “We’re for preserving this university’s 91 years of tradition.” (Sound familiar?) Feminist women cheered when the Mills trustees reversed themselves and decided to keep the school all female.

And yet, did not those same women cheer when VMI was forced to admit women? At Mills, feminist women supported single-sex education; at VMI and the Citadel, feminists opposed it. Is what is good for the goose not good for the gander? Can feminists have it both ways? Or is there a difference between single-sex schools for women and single-sex schools for men?

Some earlier research found that single-sex colleges still held significant benefits for women. A study by Elizabeth Tidball in 1973 looked at the educational backgrounds of women listed in Who’s Who of American Women and concluded that women’s colleges with large numbers of women faculty provided the most beneficial environment for educating women (Tidball 1973). Subsequent research by Tidball and her associates found similar results in studies of women in medical schools and law schools and of women who earned doctorates in the natural sciences (see Tidball 1980).

Although it was true that most of the women listed in those volumes from the 1960s and before had gone to Vassar, Radcliffe, Bryn Mawr, Smith, and the other Seven Sister colleges, Tidball’s study had several serious flaws. Her data came from the 1960s, before any formerly all-male Ivy League and other prestigious all-male schools were opened to women, and the actual number of women in the study was so small as to defy efforts at generalization. Second, there were far more women’s colleges at the time—nearly 300 in 1960 compared with just 84 in 1990. Third,
women's colleges tended to be much smaller—and therefore more intellectually challenging and emotionally supportive—than were the coeducational schools. (Can one really compare educational outcomes of Vassar or Bryn Mawr with University of Minnesota or Michigan without controlling for size?) Finally, many of the women listed in Who's Who were there because of the accomplishments of their fathers or their husbands. They were not accomplished in their own right but only in their connection to a man, which could not have been the result of attending an all-women’s college. (For example, until the 1980s, most women who were in the U.S. Senate, House of Representatives, or were governors of states were the daughters or widows of men who had held those offices [see Epstein 1991].)

Perhaps the most glaring error in Tidball’s research was that she assumed that it was attendance at the single-sex college that led to wealth and fame. However, most of the women who attended such prestigious colleges were already wealthy and had likely gone to single-sex boarding schools (or at least private preparatory schools). As one critic put it, these were women who “came from privileged backgrounds, had tremendous resources, and . . . were going to succeed no matter where they went. Yet these studies did not control for socio-economic status” (Willinger 1994, 253). What Tidball had perhaps inadvertently measured was not the effect of single-sex schools on women’s achievement but the correlation between social class and attendance at all-female colleges. Here was a reported gender difference that turned out not to be a gender difference at all. In fact, class turns out to be the better predictor of women’s achievement than whether their college was single-sex or coeducational. Subsequent research found that coeducational colleges produced a higher percentage of women earning bachelor’s degrees in the sciences, engineering, and mathematics (see Crosby et al. 1994; see also Epstein 1997a, 1997b). Ultimately, as two educational researchers summarized it, there is “little to indicate that attending a women’s college has more than a trivial net influence on women’s postcollege educational, occupational, and economic attainments” (Stoecker and Pascarella 1991, 403).

There also has been some evidence that men’s achievement was improved by attending a single-sex college. Again, many of these supposed gains in achievement vanished when social class and boys’ secondary school experiences were added to the equation. In fact, when one discusses gender equality, the outcome of attending an all-male college, according to sociologist David Riesman, were “usually unfortunate. Stag undergraduate institutions are prone to a kind of excess” (Jencks and Riesman 1977, 298). Another study found that graduates of boys’ schools were less likely to show concerns for social justice (Lee and Marks 1990, 585). While Jencks and Riesman “do not find the arguments against women’s colleges as persuasive as the arguments against men’s colleges,” they conclude,

The all male-college would be relatively easy to defend if it emerged from a world in which women were established as fully equal to men. But it does not. It is therefore likely to be a willing or unwitting device for preserving tacit assumptions of male superiority—assumptions for which women must eventually pay. So, indeed, must
men... [who] pay a price for arrogance vis-à-vis women. Since they almost always commit a part of their lives into a woman's hands anyway, their tendency to crush these women means crushing a part of themselves. This may not hurt them as much as it hurts the woman involved, but it does cost something. Thus, while we are not against segregation of the sexes under all circumstances, we are against it when it helps preserve sexual arrogance. (Jencks and Riesman 1977, 298, 300)

In short, what women may learn at all-women's colleges is that they can do anything that men can do. By contrast, what men learn is that they (women) cannot do what they (the men) do. In this way, women's colleges may constitute a challenge to gender inequality, whereas men's colleges reproduce that inequality.

Consider an analogy with race. One might justify the continued existence of historically all-Black colleges on the grounds that such schools challenge racist ideas that Black students could not achieve academically and provide a place where Black students were free of everyday racism and thus free to become serious students. But one would have a more difficult time justifying maintaining an all-white college, which would, by its existence, reproduce racist inequality. Such a place would be more like "David Duke University" than Duke University. Returning to gender, as psychologist Carol Tavris (1992, 127) concludes, "there is a legitimate place for all-women's schools if they give young women a stronger shot at achieving self-confidence, intellectual security, and professional competence in the workplace." On the other hand, since coeducation is based "on the premise that there are few genuine differences between men and women, and that people should be educated as individuals, rather than as members of a gender," the question is "not whether to become coeducational, but rather when and how to undertake the process" (Tavris 1992, 127; see also Priest, Vitters, and Prince 1978, 590).

Single-sex education for men often perpetuates detrimental attitudes and stereotypes about women, producing, as one expert put it, "men who feel that they are superior to women" (Epstein 1997a, 101). At the same time, single-sex schools for women may reinforce the idea that "by nature or situation girls and young women cannot become successful or learn well in coeducational institutions" (Epstein 1998, 191). Even when supported by feminist women, the idea that women cannot compete equally with men in the same arena, that they need special treatment, signals an abandonment of hope, the inability or unwillingness to make the creation of equal and safe schools a national priority. "Since we cannot do that," we seem to be telling girls, "we'll do the next best thing—separate you from those nasty boys who will only make your lives a living hell." Law professor Nancy Levit (1999, 525) considers this "acceptance of boys' behaviors of domination" one of the most disturbing consequences of the campaigns for single-sex education. "The single-sex remedy harkens back to a protectionist model of putting girls in a safe place, away from the male terrors," writes Levit. "Separation flatly ignores the problem of how males and females are going to learn how to behave among one another."

Such proposals also seem to be based on faulty understandings of the differences between women and men, the belief in an unbridgeable chasm between "them" and "us" based on different styles of learning; qualities of mind; structures of brains;
and ways of knowing, talking, or caring. John Dewey, perhaps America’s greatest theorist of education and a fierce supporter of women’s equal rights, was infuriated at the contempt for women suggested by such programs. Dewey scoffed at “‘female botany,’ ‘female algebra,’ and for all I know a ‘female multiplication table,’” he wrote in 1911. “Upon no subject has there been so much dogmatic assertion based on so little scientific evidence, as upon male and female types of mind.” Coeducation, Dewey argued, was beneficial to women, opening up opportunities previously unattainable. And, what’s more, coeducation is beneficial to men. “Boys learn gentleness, unselfishness, courtesy; their natural vigor finds helpful channels of expression instead of wasting itself in lawless boisterousness,” he wrote (Dewey 1911, 60).

Indeed, the historical evidence from West Point and Norwich suggests the benefits for both women and men and illustrates the sociological axiom that opportunity creates demand. At West Point, predicted drops in applications among men did not occur. In fact, when women were admitted to Norwich, for example, applications from men went up, as did alumni support.

After shaky starts, there were 23 women among the 384 cadets who entered their first year at VMI in 1998; 20 women attend the Citadel. After undergoing the grueling training of the rat line, both male and female cadets were surprised that the standards were not lowered and the treatment of the women and men was the same. “I’ll be the first to admit I was not supportive of women coming to VMI,” one male cadet commented.

I felt that I would be getting a different VMI than the alumni had gotten before me. I didn’t want that. It wasn’t until October that I realized that it hadn’t changed. VMI is about the honor code . . . the alumni network . . . the (mentoring) system, the big brother. It’s about respecting those who have gone before you. If anyone tells you that VMI itself has changed, then they don’t know what VMI is all about. (cited in Henry 1998, 8D)

A young, female cadet at the Citadel asked for no special treatment and got none. “You have to realize, for five or six people to crowd really close to your face, screaming, yelling, spraying spit all over you, calling you stupid, calling you a moron—that’s normal,” she said. “That’s the harshness of the system here. But it’s just the system.” Sixty-four women applied to join the class that entered in fall 1999, a 3 percent increase over the previous year; the fall 2000 class will see about 5 percent more than that. There also has been an increase each year in applications from men (Gorman 1998, 90).

CONCLUSION

Once again, coeducation has disproved the stereotypes about women’s inability to perform as well as men and also has disproved the stereotypes about a man’s unwillingness or inability to perform adequately with a woman next to him. These twin successes raise the final comments I would like to make.
Women have succeeded in every single institution from which they had been historically excluded. Despite the dire predictions about what would happen to the women, to the men, and to the institutions themselves, women have proved that they can do it and that they want to do it for roughly the same reasons as the men. As I testified in the VMI case, I can think of no institutions where, after entering, women have said, “You know what? They were right all along. This isn’t for us. Let’s go home.”

What this suggests, of course, is that gender identity is often not a good predictor of a person’s motivation or talents. The gender of institutions does more to shape the behaviors of the people in them than the gendered identities of individuals who populate them. At VMI, as at West Point, both women and men “do” masculinity and appear to do it pretty equally well. Similarly, as the research on single fathers by Barbara Risman pointed out, in domestic life, single mothers and single fathers “do” mothering equally well (see Risman 1991, 1999).

That institutions are as gendered as the individuals who inhabit them leads to certain binds for tokens, for gender nonconformists. The dilemma in which women found themselves at West Point—that they cannot be both successful women and successful cadets at the same time—means that at the practical level, institutional mechanisms have to be developed to enable them to negotiate this paradox. At VMI—but not at the Citadel—the first cohorts of women cadets actually did not have to go it alone; the school had invited several upper-class women cadets from Norwich as exchange students for a semester or a year to act as role models and mentors to the first-year rats. The institution responded to the isolation and stereotypic assumptions that would accompany any token with an institutional arrangement that did not even upset their equation of equality and sameness.

But more, this equation also must be questioned, as we would, typically, from a sociological perspective. What a sociological perspective suggests, I think, is that the equality = sameness and difference = inequality dynamic is ill equipped to fully embrace the social dynamics of race, class, or gender.

Assertions of categorical sex difference create the possibilities that those putative differences can be used to justify discrimination against women. Because they exaggerate mean differences between the genders, they efface or obscure the far greater—and far more interesting—differences among women and among men. If VMI taught me anything, it is the dangers and potential disaster that may await proponents of difference feminism.

On the other hand, a liberal, egalitarian feminism, one that is based on the different abilities of individuals regardless of gender, also may be misguided. The notion that any individual can accomplish what he or she wants to, and ought not be handicapped by gender stereotypes, while true enough, also ignores the way in which these actors act in gendered institutions. In a sense, the gender of the institution is effaced, normalized. At VMI and the Citadel, it was assumed that the adversative method was a time-honored tradition that was effective and meritorious. As a result, the only question was whether women could be as violent as men, whether they could take the pressure without breaking down. The question of educational
methodology, the question of the gendered institution, could not be raised. "There is almost something chemical about this place in its attraction for a certain kind of kid," Superintendent Josiah Bunting III explained about VMI. "They want to test themselves in ways that elude conventional measurements. They want to be tested, in short, to see if they measure up to being a 'real' man or woman" (cited in Abrams 1998, B7). When the task force, chaired by the dean of Mary Baldwin College, where VVIL was to be housed, claimed that "a military model and, especially VMI's adversative method, would be wholly inappropriate for educating and training most women for leadership roles," it was impossible to offer testimony that such an educational methodology also was inappropriate for most men (U.S. v. Virginia 852 F. Supp. 471, 476 W.D. Va. [1994]). In such a construction, the institution's ability to provide such a test is unchallenged and unquestioned, although no educator of any stature would recommend the adversative method for men, let alone for women.

Perhaps there is one more lesson to be taken from the research on West Point and Norwich, where male and female cadets seem to have stumbled, inadvertently, on a cooperative strategy to accommodate gender difference within a context of the most rigidly hierarchical lines of authority and the absolute equality of all within the same rank. They are becoming family. "It's cooling here now," one current, female, West Point cadet observed. "There were real passions, but now we're like brothers and sisters. You can feel good about somebody and have it be friends" (WP-III-9).

In our interviews, female cadets used family as a metaphor to describe what was good about their relations with male cadets. "The guys seem to look at the women as their little sisters," one current, Norwich, female cadet commented (N-III-5). And it appears that some of the men, at least, agree. "It's almost like being brothers and sisters," a male cadet added.

At the Citadel, the family has become more than just a metaphor for the way differences can be accommodated within a hierarchy that also stresses equality. Mike Mentalvos, one of the Citadel's most decorated cadets, resigned from the school when his younger sister, Jenny, resigned after being sexually harassed in November 1997. The school's superintendent, appointed to steady an institution listing from so much adverse publicity, was Major General J. Emery Mace, the father of Nancy Mace, one of the first two women to graduate.

The family as political metaphor, of course, has a long history. For centuries, it provided the analogy for patriarchal political rule, theocratic domination, and misogynist familial life. But that family was always defined as the relations between father and "others," either wives or children. (At best, the more democratic family proposed relatively equal parents and their children.) As the father ruled the family, so too did the king. But the family also contains an alternative reading. Even within the structure of authority and hierarchy that is the relationship between parents and children, there is also the relationship among siblings, between brothers and sisters, each valued for his or her individuality, distinctiveness, difference, and yet each an irreplaceable part of the family, equally valued and equally loved. (Imperfect taboos to the side, brothers do not typically torture, rape, and harass their
own sisters, and parents do not abuse their authority by permitting one child to lord over the others.)

On many campuses, this is the model promised but not delivered by fraternities and sororities, a model of familial equality among brothers and sisters that allows for the expression of individual differences among members of the group. And though the expression of those individual differences neither pollutes nor dilutes the purity of the stream from which familial sentiments spring, those sentiments are still based on fundamental, categorical, and often stereotypic assertions of difference between the members of the group and the rest of the school.

Consider, finally, an analogy from the field of metallurgy. If you want to make a metal stronger, you do not add more of the same metal. You add a different metal. You make an alloy. Alloys are stronger and more resilient than either metal could be on its own. So too, at VMI and the Citadel, in every arena from which women have historically been excluded. Integrating and embracing difference makes the institution stronger, more resilient. In a context of equality, the assumed differences between women and men will be revealed as stereotypes that help neither women nor men nor the institutions in which we find ourselves. We are neither Martians nor Venutians but Earthlings.

Today, I believe we are finding that only in the context of equality can the real differences—the vast array of different talents and interests among women and among men—finally flourish. It is a struggle to be taken together, by both women and men. The great British philosopher John Stuart Mill wrote that women will never achieve equality until some men “within the citadel of privilege” ([1869] 1997, 31) joined them in the struggle. This is equally true today: Gender equality is the only possible route, it seems to me, to “save the males.”

NOTES

1. There is still considerable disagreement about this in the courts. Some cases have used the “reasonable woman” standard, most notably Steiner v. Showboat Operating Co. (25 F. 3d 1459, 9th Cir. [1994]), Burns v. McGregor Elec. Indus., Inc. (989 F. 2d 959, 965, 8th Cir. [1993]), Andrews v. City of Philadelphia (895 F 2d. 1469, 1486 3d Cir. [1990]), and Yates v. Avco Corp. (819 F.2d 630, 6th Cir. [1987]). Other decisions upheld the “reasonable person” standard, including DeAngelis v. El Paso Mun. Police Officers Association (51 F. 3d 591, 5th Cir. [1995]), Bacon v. Art Institute of Chicago (6 F. Supp. 2d 762, 766, N. D. Ill [1998]), Brooms v. Regal Tube Co. (881 F 2d 412, 418, 17th Cir. [1989]), and Radke v. Everett (301 N. W. 2d 155, 166, Mich. [1993]). I am grateful to Nancy Levit for providing these cases.

2. As someone who began his college career at an all-male college and later transferred to a formerly all-female college that began to admit men, I could readily testify that men at the single-sex school were far more distracted by the absence of women than were the men at the coeducational school by their presence! With no women around, most of the young men could not stop thinking about them!

3. Interviews with cadets at West Point (WP) and Norwich (N) are identified by cohort and interview number. Cohorts included 1976-1978 (I), 1984-1986 (II), and current cadets (III).

4. I am grateful to Nancy Levit for reminding me of this important issue.

5. Despite his own findings (see Riesman 1991), Riesman supported the continuation of Virginia Military Institute’s (VMI’s) and the Citadel’s single-sex policy.
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