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This chapter looks at education of college men in a single-sex learning environment from the perspective of a woman's college.

A Women's College Perspective on the Education of College Men

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The education of college men assumes special significance in the context of single-sex male institutions. The rarity of these institutions furnishes a unique opportunity to look at what works for men, but when these institutions are also in partnerships with women's colleges there is an opportunity to look at what works for educating men and women together. This chapter analyzes the education of college men at Morehouse from the perspective of Spelman, a women's college. It also addresses the question of preparing the young male leaders of tomorrow: what has women's studies got to do with it?

Morehouse and Spelman (Cynthia Neal Spence)

Morehouse College was founded in 1867 in Augusta, Georgia, just two years after the end of the Civil War. The history of the founding of Morehouse College is not remarkably different from the founding of other historically black institutions of higher education, except that the institution was founded as a single-sex institution for men. Fourteen years after the founding of Morehouse College, Spelman College was founded in 1881. These two institutions' shared missions, close physical proximity, and history of formal and informal professional and personal alliances suggest that the two offer environments that are complementary. The interactions among faculty, staff, and students might suggest that some common themes shape and frame the educational experiences of the young men and women who matriculate at these two institutions.¹ One shared emphasis has historically

been on the “uplift of the race.” This emphasis on racial uplift was more apparent within the culture of Morehouse College because of its status as a male institution. The goal of “race men” is inextricably linked to the discourse on leadership development of the Morehouse Man. Both Spelman and Morehouse have emphasized the need for their graduates to participate as change agents and leaders for their communities. Spelman College continues to introduce varied models of the “Spelman Woman.”²

To understand how Morehouse College views its historical and current mission, one must understand the intentionality associated with distinguishing the Morehouse Man from other men, particularly men of African descent. Past and present presidents of Morehouse College have alluded to the unique opportunities presented by leading an institution with a primary mission of educating men of African American and African descent. This captive audience would be prepared to rise above the masses and take their rightful places of leadership. In some ways, Morehouse College and Spelman College are viewed by many as the personification of W.E.B. Du Bois’s notion of the “talented tenth.” Both institutions have historically boasted that they enrolled the best and the brightest of the African American communities across this country. This was particularly true prior to desegregation, because of the limited higher education options for African American students. These themes of racial uplift and development of the talented tenth continue to frame much of the formal and informal curricular and cocurricular discussion about how to best prepare these students for the world that awaits them beyond the baccalaureate degree.

This chapter examines the education of Morehouse men to answer a more general question about the prevailing ideological perspectives that shape the education of men. A secondary question is how such dominant frameworks prepare men for personal and professional growth in diverse environments that require sensitivity as well as respect and appreciation for differences on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, privilege, and other human characteristics that distinguish one from another. From a women’s college perspective, a particular focus is how the education of men in a single-sex environment parallels the education of women in a single-sex environment. In this case the focus is on how a Spelman educational paradigm might frame questions about the core of the educational experience of Morehouse men.

Frances A. Maher and Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault (2001) examine the dynamics of classroom pedagogy in their text *The Feminist Classroom*. Of particular interest to the authors was how classroom dynamics change or evolve when the pedagogy is woman-centered and taught from a feminist perspective. It is acknowledged that women-centered discourses do not necessarily employ feminist theoretical perspectives. For purposes of this research, the questions become, How do classroom dynamics change or evolve when the pedagogy is male-centered? Or should one assume that the

opposite of a woman-centered or feminist classroom is one that is framed by notions of masculinity?³

These questions force an analysis of how the student body shapes and informs the curricular and cocurricular experiences of faculty, students, and staff at single-sex institutions. Does the fact that an institution is all-male presume that “men’s studies” does (or should) frame academic discourse?

In *Manhood in America* (1996) Michael Kimmel speaks to the reality that in the absence of women’s studies one does not necessarily have a counter correlate of men’s studies. Although the text and the subject matter may be dominated by male presence, it does not necessarily result in a pedagogy that is comparable to a feminist or woman-centered pedagogy. Just as a woman-centered pedagogy may not be necessarily feminist, a male-centered pedagogy may not necessarily be based on men’s studies. A pedagogy framed by men’s studies focuses on the experiences of being men. Emphasis is placed on how diverse conceptions and social constructions of manhood have informed the text and the experiences of men.

Literature on Morehouse College speaks explicitly about the Morehouse Man as if there is an identifiable construct that neatly fits this description. Like Spelman College, the Spelman Woman construct becomes an idealized monolithic image of womanhood.

Is it possible to educate men to become world leaders without focusing specifically on the diversity of male images that they themselves represent and how these images are reflected in the larger society? What has long been assumed by women’s colleges is that in order to empower and prepare women to assume positions of leadership and self-direction in the public and private spheres, they must not only be exposed to images of women’s empowerment but also gain greater understanding of themselves and how various social constructions of gender have defined and restricted their roles in society and continue to do so. Thus, from a women’s college perspective it is assumed that an education grounded in engaging male students in similar discursive exercises would be an analogous and necessary experience.

As Morehouse College continues to prepare its students for their “rightful place” in society, it is engaging in a review of the current core curriculum. The standard liberal arts curriculum places special emphasis on racial and cultural diversity. The core curriculum has been paired with a student development model that frames the curricular and cocurricular experience of Morehouse students. The development of intellectual competencies in the liberal arts through the core curricular experience and the major experience is framed by an expectation that the curricular programs will “empower students by fostering high expectations and habits for independent learning.”

Willis Sheftall, Morehouse College provost, shared in a recent interview that the college has recognized a need to more intentionally address issues of masculinity and self-definition through curricular and cocurricular

experiences. Sheftall candidly acknowledged that because male domination has been a dominant paradigm in society, the concept of “maleness” as a separate issue has not been adequately addressed by Morehouse College. This recognition is not surprising given that society has not felt a need to interrogate maleness as a gender construct in the same ways that femaleness has been the subject of analysis and, more recently, deconstruction and reconstruction.

Morehouse College will begin to focus more on engaging young men in curricular and cocurricular experiences that examine maleness as a social construct that can be represented in varied ways.⁴ Many feminist scholars would argue that predominant social constructions of gender have not acknowledged or allowed representation of diverse models of womanhood or manhood. Monolithic conceptions of masculinity and femininity that favor traditional notions of what it means to be a man and a woman have shaped and framed socialization experiences of males and females. These binary conceptions of gender have allowed little room for within-group difference. Such narrow constructions of masculinity often foster and nurture attitudes and behaviors that are homophobic or hypermasculine. Morehouse College’s strategic attentiveness to the development of broader conceptions and demonstrations of the performance of masculinity will engage students in curricular and cocurricular activities that should permit multitextured analysis of the social construction of masculinity.

A women’s college perspective strongly supports creation of safe spaces for men to discuss and express how societal and institutional notions of manhood can in some instances encourage quite negative manifestations of masculinity. This subtext is fueled by the reality that homosocial environments sometimes breed unhealthy expressions of masculinity.⁵ Kimmell asserts that “masculinity defined through homosocial interaction contains many parts, including the camaraderie, fellowship, and intimacy often celebrated in male culture. It also includes homophobia” (1996, p. 8). Kimmel explains that his definition of homophobia is not just an irrational fear of homosexuals or the fear of being perceived as gay. Homophobia, according to Kimmel, also includes a fear that other men will suggest that one does not measure up to some known and accepted concept or standard of a “real man” (p. 8).

It is suggested that men’s colleges might want to rethink how they conceptualize the curriculum and cocurriculum for male students. If women’s colleges both empower women students (preparing them to assume positions of leadership and self-direction) and give them greater understanding of themselves and how various social constructions of gender have defined and restricted their roles in society and continue to do so, then it is not enough for men’s colleges to just empower male students (similarly preparing them to assume positions of leadership) without also affording them the same kind of greater understanding of themselves and social constructions of gender. This is the challenge for men’s institutions.

Although Morehouse College has not adopted a men's studies concentration as some other institutions have, the development of courses with specific focuses on men's studies is not discouraged. Such a curricular focus would offer, in a male-centered environment, an opportunity to examine and interrogate their concepts of masculinity and the multifaceted reality of men's lives and experiences. Classroom discussions would and should foster open dialogue and debate around conceptions of masculinity. Such a curriculum would perhaps do what the work of Rudolph Byrd and Beverly Guy-Sheftall (2001) does in their edited volume *Traps: African American Men on Gender and Sexuality* to expose the writings of African American male literary and political leaders on the subject of gender and sexuality. This text offers a broad view of the writings and thoughts of such men as W.E.B. Du Bois, Frederick Douglass, and Benjamin E. Mays, great men who are justifiably elevated to role model and mentor status for Morehouse men. These men were progressive about the performance of masculinity, as well as holding prowoman and profeminist views.⁶ Revered leaders, they acknowledged that leadership takes many forms and that it must recognize and embrace the value of differing perspectives and approaches to leadership.

The historical and contemporary story of Morehouse College is full of references to the development of African American male leaders. In early years, this development focused on preparing leaders for local and national communities. In 2004, it is rare to hear such a limited geographical scope for Morehouse men; the expectation is that they will be prepared to take the mantle of leadership in the world community.

In a recent interview with Walter Fluker, director of the Morehouse College Leadership Institute, it was clear that his emphasis on leadership development and training follows a more progressive nontraditional leadership model that focuses on developing the outer and inner core of the leader. This model recognizes that different characteristics are required for the role of the twenty-first-century leader in a diverse society. Traditional leadership programs within and outside of the higher education community often focus more on visible signs of leadership such as personal presentation skills, including public speaking and personal deportment, problem solving, and argumentation. These visible skills have been emphasized as a way to ensure that a Morehouse man's presence is always known.

Mona Phillips, professor of sociology at Spelman College, speaks specifically to her observation that Morehouse men quite comfortably gravitate to the center of the discourse or public arena.⁷ Her assessment is that this reality is fueled by an institutional discourse that suggests that "Morehouse men" should always assume center stage. A much quoted quip is that "you can always tell a Morehouse Man, but you can't tell him much." This speaks to the notion or perception of the Morehouse Man always asserting himself as the authority in any given situation.

One must be able to contextualize the need to project this image within the sociohistorical context of the experiences of African American males.

Such an emphasis on empowerment within this male institution is grounded by the reality of institutionalized disenfranchisement of African American males in various sectors of society. Discussion of historical disenfranchisement of African Americans is often male-centered.

Phillips suggests that emphasis should also be placed on the need for males to decenter themselves and develop better listening and reflection skills. In contrast, she acknowledges that women students must be encouraged to find their voices, move to the center and away from the margins, and take their rightful place as leaders. Perhaps the reality is that both institutions emphasize that their students need to gravitate to the center because societal constructs that are gendered and racialized do not naturally acknowledge the presence of African American leadership that does not conform to white male patriarchal structures. Race and gender inform faculty and staff at the women's and men's institutions in ways that often suggest that a hierarchy must always be the norm. Sometimes male leadership models in this context become contorted and do not acknowledge that both male and female leaders can coexist in environments that readily accept and respect the contributions of both genders. The particular situation of Morehouse and Spelman Colleges is unique in that their social location as historically black institutions informs the need for leadership development in some ways that might not exist at historically white institutions.

Historically, the preparation of the Morehouse Man has called upon delivery of a certain select skill set that enables him to assume his rightful place of leadership within both the public and private spheres. One should not minimize the significance of this level of preparation. However, overemphasis on the outward signs of leadership may create a vessel without the necessary substance to sustain its survival. Fluker speaks specifically to what he characterizes as the need to focus on the "inner life of the leader." This focus reflects attention to what he calls "soft skills." Skills that introduce values such as integrity, ethical decision making, empathy, humility, and moral reasoning are quite intentionally and strategically inserted into the leadership development curriculum under Fluker's direction. He acknowledged that an emphasis on developing soft skills might have initially been perceived as antithetical to the model of leadership espoused for Morehouse men. The "Man" in Morehouse is not to be publicly perceived as soft. Carol Gilligan's "different voice" theory (1982) suggests that these characteristics are seen as "feminine" traits. The public perception of Morehouse has not lent itself to the reality that just as there are diverse leadership models, there are diverse skills that must be considered as we prepare for leadership in the twenty-first century.

What is clear from this limited analysis is that one of the prevailing ideologies shaping the education of men at Morehouse College focuses on cultivation of the Morehouse Man as a leader in all arenas. This leadership emphasis continues to be framed by an agenda of "racial uplift." Classroom and outside experiences are framed by this intention to equip students with

the necessary skills to succeed as leaders. Certainly a single chapter does not afford an opportunity to fully engage this topic of the education of males; the complexities around such a provocative topic cannot be fully exposed and investigated. To suggest that there is even one woman's college perspective does not do justice to such a multitextured analysis. From a woman's college perspective, it is important that the messages communicated to Morehouse men include the reality that the unique position of a single-sex male institution poses an exceptional opportunity to create various positive narratives on masculinity and male leadership. The single-narrative approach is limiting to the institution and to the students who matriculate. The models of leadership that include a mixture of traditional notions of public leadership and nontraditional notions associated with the concept of ethical leadership are critical to the survival of all those called upon to lead. The insidious nature of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and ability (among other personal and social identifiers) continues to require all institutions of higher education to focus more specifically on issues of difference and diversity within and outside of group membership.

Preparing the Young Male Leaders of Tomorrow: What Has Women's Studies Got to Do with It? (Manju Parikh)

Not unlike the relationship of Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict are two distinct liberal arts institutions with a uniquely defined coordinate relationship. The two residential campuses are five miles apart, but their curriculum and academic departments are joint and students can take classes on either campus, with buses regularly transporting the students to and fro.

In 1994 the faculty at the two institutions decided to establish a new minor in women's studies because they felt there was a need for a more comprehensive and systemic study of gender. A few male colleagues advocated a parallel men's studies program, which would help introduce gender study of men and masculinities. However, there were not enough courses for this separate minor; a compromise solution was a joint gender and women's studies minor with the understanding that in the future more men's studies courses will be developed and added to the program.

In these ten years, the minor has grown considerably, resulting in a significant enrichment of the liberal arts curriculum. Most remarkable has been the promotion of gender awareness through extracurricular programming in partnership with the Office of Student Development on the two campuses, cemented by the Learning Communities Initiative.

As may be expected, development of the minor has been accompanied with certain difficult dilemmas and tensions. In the early years, the minor not only emphasized the cultural and social construction of gender but also

privileged women's gender development. For example, the catalog described the Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies course in this way: "the course explores the social construction of gender, and how race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation construct women's experiences and identities. Students will read a variety of feminist scholarship, as well as explore current debates within the discipline."

Thus the introductory course was designed to enhance gender awareness of women students through a critical examination of a variety of societal norms and historical practices institutionalizing women's oppression. However, others who wanted the introductory course to be more inclusive (that is, deal with biological construction of gender differences as well as the gendered socialization of men) felt frustrated by the exclusion of their viewpoints.

Such tensions are real and reflect the likely challenges to be faced by any joint program. For the advocates of women's studies, creation of the GWST minor was a long-awaited acknowledgment of the feminist critique of the curriculum. The new minor would finally allow them to reorient the curriculum, enabling a focus on women's experiences, concerns, and contributions. From their point of view, it was unreasonable to expect the Introductory Gender and Women's Studies course to focus extensively on men's issues, although they were prepared to support new men's studies courses dealing with men's concerns in the GWST minor. However, men's studies courses did not attract enough students, which caused friction with enrollment-sensitive administrators. The dilemma of inclusion of men's gender concerns in women's studies courses has remained a thorny issue.

It is important to acknowledge that in the intervening ten years the orientation of the GWST minor has changed considerably. A new introductory course called Studies in Masculinities has been designed and offered a few times.

The description of the GWST minor was also revised to be more inclusive, acknowledging "a pluralism of theoretical approaches, emphasizing the intersections between gender, sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, and nationality." Furthermore, a spring 2002 workshop on Integrating Men's Studies into Women's Studies courses, with Chris Kilmartin, and a summer workshop in August 2002 offered valuable support for several introductory courses.

After the workshop, a steering committee established several new guidelines accepting that all "GWST Intro courses will address the *gender concerns of both women and men*" (emphasis added), and that the intro courses would include information about the U.S. women's movements, including those of minority women, and information on ways in which the men's movement and GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) movement are theoretically and historically related to the women's movement and how they operate independently now.

A review of the syllabi of the GWST intro courses since fall 2002 reflects the integration of the materials from men's studies, women's studies, and

GLBT studies, but the underlying disagreements remain; the dialogue about different focuses and interests appears to continue. Many women's studies advocates, who genuinely support redefinition of traditional masculinity through the new gender study of men, still feel reluctant to embrace and share the burden of promoting male gender awareness and mentoring in women's studies courses. This task, from their perspective, would be best handled by male colleagues in men's studies courses.

I count myself among the advocates of women's studies; however, I favor integrating research from men's studies into women's studies courses. My advocacy stems from practical considerations, a theoretical critique against essentialist feminism, my philosophical values, and political and strategic concerns. I also speak from the direct experience of having taught the Intro to Gender and Women's Studies in an integrated format with Charles Thornbury in fall 2000, when our students repeatedly expressed their appreciation of the inclusive curriculum.

Why do I favor such integration? First, it helps to reach, and connect with, both women and men in our classes. Analysis of student enrollment data of GWST 101, Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies, shows a persistent trend of majority women and a small minority of men students. Even the other introductory course, GWST 103, Studies in Masculinity, attracted more women than men students. The majority of the GWST elective courses also show the same pattern of greater enrollment of women than men.

It has been suggested that instead of perceiving men who are enrolled in the Introduction to Women's Studies classes as a barrier to creation of an exclusive "women's space," one might welcome their presence as "an educational opportunity [as opposed to a burden] for positive feminist engagement" (Hughes, 1999, p. 75). If the intro class instructor wishes to encourage men to engage with feminism productively, then the instructor would need to treat the men as active "members of the class by forming coalition out of something that everyone can participate in, i.e., the critique of dismantling [all kinds of] privilege" (p. 84).

In the 1980s, women of color (African American, Hispanic, and Asian as well as Third World feminists) seriously challenged the "universalist" and "essentialist" theoretical assumptions of U.S. feminism, which were in fact based on the experiences of white middle-class women (Boca Zinn and Dill, 1966). However, if the feminist goal is to oppose all systems of domination (that is, on the basis of gender, race, class, sexuality, or any other form of privilege), then it might be better to adopt a teaching method more inclusive of women's varied experiences and rethink the essentialist pedagogical approach, even vis-à-vis men (Hughes, 1999).

Another way to reflect on the issue is to ask whether it is necessary to "essentialize" men to build solidarity against the gendered oppression of women. For me, there are some ethical and philosophical considerations involved here. Imagine a class where the theme of the discussion is violence against women. The discussion involves acknowledgment of widespread

violence experienced by women worldwide; it involves acknowledging that men commit 90 percent of these violent acts. However, in this context an important caveat also needs to be mentioned: although “aggression is deeply embedded within traditional masculinity, it is important to remember that *most men are not violent*” (Kilmartin, 2000, p. 239; emphasis added). Is it fair to brush with one stroke all members of a group for acts committed by a small minority? On an ethical basis, most of us would object to a stereotyped remark about predatory sexual conduct of men from a racial minority, but this same ethical principle is not recalled when generalizations are made about the behavior of all men.

Currently many profeminist men are engaged in a serious reflection of their responsibility for the aggression and discrimination experienced by women in society, by arguing that “men should acknowledge the way in which their identity is tied to patriarchy. . . . [and to advocate] a feminist-based male identity politics. . . . not just for improving men’s lives but [also] changing structures of power to end the oppression of women and children as well as to aid resistance to other forms of oppression in the culture” (Jensen, 1998, p. 32).

Another possible way for feminists to deal with this issue is to recast their argument and appeal to men as morally and ethically guided beings who should support the agenda of ending women’s oppression. Instead of assuming their opposition, we might win allies in the struggle (Johnson, 1997, 2003). Many scholars in men’s studies are deeply engaged in redefining traditional masculinity. This is one agenda that would be mutually beneficial; therefore it is very much in women’s interest to support it.

Finally, let me address the political aspect of the issue, which connects the last strand in my argument for integrating men’s studies into the women’s studies curriculum. At a time in our history when, in a concerted plan to resurrect hegemonic masculinity, young men are being wooed by right-wing narratives of “victimhood” through attacks on affirmative action by mischaracterizing the project for racial and gender equality, can women afford to miss the opportunity to seek the “hearts and minds” of these young men for the agenda of gender justice? If the goal is to achieve more progress in the next few decades, then men must be equally engaged in the struggle for gender justice—in other words, play a vital role as strategic allies. In sum, to cement our shared interests, I advocate that men’s studies be incorporated into the women’s studies curriculum. If we integrate the curriculum, more young men will be inclined to take these courses and gain a better awareness of their own gendered selves and of gender-based oppression. This knowledge can only lead to making such young men better leaders, colleagues, and partners in the future.

Notes

1. Spelman and Morehouse Colleges are members of the Atlanta University Center Complex. Spelman College enrolls approximately two thousand students, and Morehouse College approximately three thousand. The physical proximity of the two

institutions (literally within a city block of each other) results in significant exchange among students in classes, student organizations, and social events.

2. A soon to be published text by Harry Lefever, professor of sociology, focuses on the role of Spelman women in the civil rights movement. A recent publication by Cynthia Griggs Fleming (1998) on the life of Spelman alumna Ruby Doris Smith, entitled *Soon We Will Not Cry*, is another example of Spelman women being identified as active agents of social change for the uplift of the race.

3. One common theme among women's colleges is placing women at the center of disciplinary inquiry. Although not all pedagogy would necessarily be considered feminist pedagogy, women's empowerment and representation in all arenas is consistently emphasized. At Spelman College the context is further expanded to focus on the lives of women of color. Various representations of women are presented. Leadership models are often framed by a discussion of servant leadership denoting the expectation that leaders become a part of their community through service and active engagement with members of the community.

4. Sheftall shared a copy of the Morehouse College "Student Development Model and the General Education Program at Morehouse College: Goals, Student Learning Outcomes, and Outcome Indicators"; draft, Nov. 24, 2003.

5. The relationships between Spelman College and Morehouse College have been overwhelmingly positive; however, incidents of intimate interpersonal violence have been characteristic of some relationships between Morehouse men and Spelman women. In addition, the presence of homophobia on both campuses continues to concern faculty, staff, and administrators. The nature of single-sex institutions often fuels greater need, particularly among men, to "overexaggerate their masculinity—hypermasculinity, in order not to be considered gay." During the 2002–03 academic year, a tragic incident of aggravated assault occurred when one Morehouse man believed that a male he suspected of being gay was subjecting him to an unprovoked flirtation. The Morehouse student was subsequently expelled, tried, and convicted on a charge of aggravated assault and sentenced to ten years in prison. Both the perpetrator and victim will never be the same.

6. *Traps* introduces the reader to the speeches of Frederick Douglass on the imperative of women's right to vote. He is specifically quoted as stating that men should be willing to recognize that women have the same rights as men and that men should not assume positions of obstruction (Byrd and Guy-Sheftall, 2001). The work of W.E.B. Du Bois is also cited, with particular attention to his belief that the uplift of women was as significant as the need to address the issues presented by the problem of the twentieth century being that of the color line. In the "Damnation of Women," Du Bois states that "the uplift of women is, next to the problem of the color line and the peace movement, our greatest modern cause" (Byrd and Guy-Sheftall, 2001, p. 67). Throughout the selected writing of Benjamin Elijah Mays are many of his references that do not support acceptance of stereotypical models of masculinity based on aggressive or hypermasculine behavior.

7. Phillips is quoted extensively in Maher and Tetreault's *The Feminist Classroom* (2001). Phillips speaks specifically about how a feminist perspective guides her teaching and nonteaching interactions with students.

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