

**The Progress of
Women in Educational
Institutions:**

The Saturn's Rings Phenomenon

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December, 1973

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M.I.T. *

This paper describes the minutiae of sexism in large educational institutions. These minutiae are usually not actionable; most are such petty incidents that they may not even be identified, much less protested. They are however important, like the dust and ice in Saturn's rings, because, taken together, they constitute formidable barriers. As Saturn is partially obscured by its rings, so are good jobs partially obscured for women by "grains of sand": the minutiae of sexism. Saturn's Rings phenomena are briefly discussed in this paper and then a case study is introduced in an effort to illustrate the cumulative effect of many small events.

* The examples of sexism recounted in this study are all real incidents in the lives of women in educational institutions in New England in 1973. The composite situation described at the end of the study is not meant to reflect life at any one institution, although all the incidents are reported relatively frequently by women around New England. (The author is a kind of ombuds-person at MIT and hears from women all over the area.)

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Why is Progress So Slow for Women in Educational Institutions?

As we design the 1970's and 1980's, one of the questions we face in educational institutions is "why is it so difficult to provide equal opportunity for all?" An administrator cannot fail to see the statistics.

In the last few years in this country wage gaps have widened between men and women at most educational levels. Only one or two percent of top-policy making positions are held by educational administrators who are women. Painfully few tenured positions are held by women. Painstakingly we authorize salary equity reviews, running five or six regression equations using different criteria - how can we find the salaries of women faculty catching up? We study the analysis of administrative promotions throughout the institution. If we are beginning to succeed we find our women only a few years older than the men, at promotion. If we are beginning to succeed we find that the promoted women are supervising only a few more employees than the men, that only three-quarters of the promoted women had superior educational qualifications. If we are succeeding particularly well we find the wage gap has narrowed, instead of widening, between men and women who are promoted.

But why is affirmative action so slow? Much can be made of high unemployment levels, of budget cutbacks, shifts in demand away from education. There are also other problems. Many women do not want top jobs, (although they want recognition for what they do).

Many men will actively fight the law of the land and try to keep women out of top jobs. Some women still are so ambivalent that they fail to do good work. All these points are important and need thoughtful consideration.

Saturn's Rings: The Minutiae of Sexism

In my job I find also another factor at work - a problem which does not lend itself to legal redress or even to improvement in time of economic promise, and which occurs with frequency at the best and most humane of institutions. The minutiae of sexism appear to me a major problem for women in educational institutions. The problem is formidable not least because of the pettiness of the individual events involved, and formidable because there are no individual solutions. Saturn's rings, if one lived inside them, would appear as random encounters with dust and ice. Perhaps the dust and ice would even appear so scattered as not always to deserve defense against them. But the objective eye which observes from a distance will see that many grains of sand taken together obscure the planet, and create formidable barriers ...

A Typology of Sexism

Dozens of complaints from men and women come into my office every week. One can make a rough typology of the women's complaints about sexism - working categories which help in deciding what to do. As I think of my job I think of four major categories of sexism:

- 1) Illegal acts of a sexist nature.
- 2) Unconscious slights against women, including the "invisibility" problem.
- 3) Conscious sexism, including harassment, exploitation, provision of poor service to women.
- 4) Psychiatric problems, manifested in sexist behavior, with direct and indirect effects.

Of course these categories overlap in many ways but in general they describe somewhat different problems. Of these, problems in the first category appear to be comparatively rare. In my institution they are not critically important once they have been identified; the administration gives short shrift to illegal discrimination. Problems in the other three categories are however more important in my opinion and it is these I have called Saturn's rings.

Invisibility, harassment and sexist psychiatric problems affect women in educational institutions in many ways. They directly injure professional women, although sometimes very subtly and sometimes without their being very aware of it. They injure all other women around the professional - tilting the atmosphere and creating additional concerns for faculty and administrators to handle. They create barriers that require additional energy to cross, especially for students, and women who start out in entry positions. In addition I believe that in the long-run, such difficulties tend to deprive women of the women mentors, women colleagues and male mentors who would otherwise have been available.

Invisibility And Other Unconscious Sights

A woman may become aware of her invisibility only slowly because it only happens now and then and is hard to identify. We say she is invisible when her name is mysteriously missing from a list. Hers are the announcements and invitations which fail to come, the reservations which were not made, the pages which were not typed, the vacations which were not planned by her boss. It is her work which by mistake was not properly acknowledged, not reviewed, not responded to, not published, her opinion which is not asked for. Women are not alone in being invisible; perhaps the most poignant writing on this subject comes from a distinguished work on racism:

"I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids-and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination- indeed, everything and anything except me.

"Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a bio-chemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality."*

Invisibility and other unconscious slights are difficult to identify.

If it is only you who are addressed by your first name, are you sure it's sexism? How can you be sure your paper was not turned down because it was poor? Is your office space more noisy only by accident? Even if you

* Ellison, Ralph, Invisible Man, The New American Library, Inc., 1952, page 7.

are sure there was a slight, what is to be done? Imagine you are the only top administrator whose office is not in the main building; you have been given space in the Home Economics Building. Can you protest when you don't believe an insult was intended - and besides there isn't very much space? (And what does one do with unintended insults that are still insulting?) Imagine that a woman professional who was supposed to do a job for a certain department copped out, and now the department somehow simply doesn't consider contracting the job to another woman, even though the subject matter directly concerns women. Do you describe to them what you think is going on?

Conscious Sexism, Including Harassment, Exploitation, Provision of Poor Service to Women

Harassment is not ordinarily actionable. It is the department head who says "if she is given tenure, I will see that she is so miserable that she goes." It is the teacher who refuses to learn a young woman's name or calls her by the name of another blonde, or by his own cute nickname for her. It is the professor who systematically humiliates his female students about their appearance or the department head who loads on extra work to prove a woman can't succeed in that job or because he knows she will not refuse.

If you gently ask a man about harassment, many men will say "But I harass everyone." I believe such a person differentially threatens female staff and students. First, because the "general" harassment often takes specifically sexist form when applied to women: "My God, your analysis sounds just like a housewife!" Second, because most women in this society are socialized more than men to respond to disapproval with excessive dismay,

and loss of self-esteem. Third, in a traditionally male environment there will be so many more men than women that harassing behavior which is sexist, but very common, is less likely to be identified and stopped. Such behavior is in fact very likely to be generally supported, like the telling of dirty jokes to embarrass or get rid of women in a laboratory. In addition, because women are so few, they are very obvious; they cannot be inconspicuously mediocre and are convenient scape goats when there is trouble. And finally, in traditionally male environments, we know from the work of Astin, Bailyn and others, that women have a particular need for male mentors and supportive male colleagues.

(There is nothing odd about this. I believe that men in traditionally female environments, like child care centers, also thrive better with female mentors and supportive female colleagues.) Considering all these points together I believe that men who "just harass everybody" in fact create a particular injustice for the women around them.

Conscious exploitation and poor service are frequent. They are not always malicious, just damaging. Such behavior is "conscious" or nearly conscious in the sense that, once pointed out, the person involved will at once recognize the error. Take the Vice-president of a college who basically knows his or her secretary is doing the work of an Assistant to the Vice-president. Would the secretary receive a major promotion if she were a man? Take the foreign student who is the only student on her large research team who is not eligible for Work-Study money and who therefore is not paid. Would the professor make some other arrangement for her if she were a man? A man and a woman come in to similar jobs in a school system. He makes a major fuss about fringe benefits and a rug for his office. She is well-socialized and makes no fuss.

Will she be given the same fringe benefits and rug? A professor has a student who needs some data. Will she work as hard to get data for a woman student as for a man?

Conscious exploitation can be particularly difficult to address where women are being exploited as a class, especially if the exploitation is socially acceptable. Perhaps the most frequent examples occur with respect to pornography. Consider the case of the seminar invitation showing a woman with swaying breasts under water; or the frequent use of pornographic materials and illustrations in medical school and science classes. Poor service also affects women as a class. Probably the most pervasive example has to do with our use of language. For instance, consider the widespread disinclination to change the use of the generic "man" in speech - "Come to the lecture on Technology and Man!" - despite growing research evidence that use of the generic "man" in fact influences our behavior, in ways that leave women out.

Psychiatric Problems Manifested in Sexist Behavior

Clearly invisibility, harassment, exploitation and poor service lie on a continuum, shading into one another. At the most anguishing end, the continuum shades into psychiatric problems which in my opinion differentially affect women. Obviously educational institutions have people with psychiatric problems; these problems involve and impinge upon both men and women. But I believe that many of the psychiatric problems of men affect women more than men and it is for the same reasons that I believe "general" harassment hits women harder than men. A very hostile and aggressive man may paw, pinch

and lean against women as he will not do with men; (rape of women is thought to be at least ten times more frequent than rape of men.) Realistic fear of such offense will often constrain women as they consider night-time jobs at good pay or staying late at the office. And one finds men who deliberately use such fears to keep women out of good jobs. As with lesser harassments I believe many women are differentially sensitive to male rage (and depression) with consonant loss of self-confidence. Consider the case of the professor who berated a seventeen-year-old student who came to her first class accompanied by a male student she'd just met. "Young woman," he thundered, "you are seducing him already! Young man, nothing in skirts deserves the attention you should be giving your studies!" I suspect this young woman was probably worse affected than if the situation had been reversed. Had a woman professor thus berated unknown first year students I think she might just have been thought an old witch.

At the very least, to the extent that we are all peculiarly sensitive to psychiatric disorders in the opposite sex, women in traditionally male environments will be differentially affected. This is true simply because there are more men than women in these institutions. Women are therefore more likely to experience psychiatric illness from the opposite sex and are more likely to experience such illness from people with power. Some of these problems spill over onto normal male-female relationships as well. Because some men importune women and betray wives, and because some women are seductive and betray husbands, other men find it difficult to take on women protegees, and other women find it difficult to seek a male mentor or even to seek advice in the same way men do. In the same way, because some men are pathologically afraid of

competition from women - to the extent of serious impotence, pathological denial or aggression - other men may become abnormally sensitive to "normal" competitive behavior in women. They may for example prevent girls from joint athletics with boys or countenance unequal athletic facilities for college women. Because some women are unreasonably disturbed by competition between men and women, they will withdraw from a job ladder or discourage their daughters from positions of influence.

Thus I include psychiatric problems with sexist manifestations into the minutiae of sexism which tilt the atmosphere against women in educational institutions. Although some psychiatric problems are of course major and actionable matters, most sexist psychiatric difficulties simply add to the day-to-day minutiae. Men who expose themselves, who won't take no from an intended date, who threaten and harass obscenely by telephone, who pick on handicapped women, who lie repeatedly to women, who go into rages or withdrawal on apparently little provocation, or who try to arouse a woman's guilt or worry about her care for her family or her femininity, rarely get to court. And most would not be better off if they got to court. They are simply sick in ways which I believe affect women more than men in educational institutions.

The Effects of the Minutiae of Sexism

Any comprehensive paper on this subject should look at the matter in broader perspective. What of the minutiae of racism, in some ways similar in form and origin and which affect at least a fifth of women in paid employment in addition to sexism? What of the general depersonalization of work relations

over 200 years of American history? In the course of my work at this job I have come to see almost as many men as women; men also are slighted and ignored and treated in an inhuman fashion. What of the more specific difficulties which are always introduced in power relationships between unequals; how much of petty sexism is really just caused by women being at the bottom of the hierarchy? What about sexism in women which affects both men and women? And finally, what about effects on men as well as women? What happens to men who look at other human beings without seeing them, who harass and exploit and render poor service, or who vent certain kinds of illness differentially on women? All of these questions need sober and serious study and we are just beginning to ask the questions as they relate to the condition of women in educational institutions.

The Effects on Women

With respect particularly to women, I believe that the minutiae of sexism constitute a special problem for reasons which apply to all women some of the time, and to some women all of the time:

1) Invisibility and treatment only as a "female" arouse self-doubt in women, and sometimes an inability to cope, either as a woman or as a professional. They also interfere with women being seen as promotable. Finally, the treatment of any woman as "just a female" injures all women because they are also female. Thus a sexist slight to a secretary will also injure students and administrators who are female, by the process of (unintended) role-modelling, if the slight was in public, and by reinforcing poor habits in the offender.

2) The forms of sexism and sex-role stereotyping are so specific to each sex that each sex doesn't know what the other faces. This means women are in some ways isolated from men by their experience, as men are also isolated from the experience of women. Communications are always slow and difficult in such circumstances.

3) Many women in educational institutions need to spend disproportionate time and soul on the problems of other women that may not otherwise be attended to. Moreover nurturant behavior is so rare in paid employment, and sufficiently sex-stereotyped, that our rare women faculty and administrators often need to spend a disproportionate amount of time taking care of men as well as women. Few begrudge this time but it constitutes an extra work-load for many women.

4) Women need either to cope with slights against themselves or develop a considerable shield - a "denial" of such experience - both of which processes take energy.

5) Direct exploitation of individuals may mean that that promotion is postponed or denied. Where promotion has been postponed or denied to a woman who was competitively qualified for an available position, she has obviously been wronged. She may also have her time so taken up with routine work that she has no chance to prepare for advancement in the traditional way.

6) Self-doubt, some isolation from men, the need to cope with slights, and exploitation, make it harder to have good judgment about other humans, and contribute to errors ranging from paranoia against men to an inability to hear slights against other women.

What Should Be Done about the Minutiae of Sexism?

I believe that the Saturn's Rings phenomena described in this paper are complex and deeply rooted in our lives. Our first need is to recognize and understand what is going on, in the individual instance and in wider perspective. Easier said than done ... To identify and understand each petty occurrence is wearying and difficult; an understanding of the vested interests involved takes thoughtful, prolonged, and compassionate study.

Women must themselves learn to recognize and analyze the tilted atmosphere - and cope with it. Since denial is often easier, this requirement is not lightly made. The requirement is also in some cosmic way unjust; to require the victim to begin redress of grievance itself constitutes "unequal opportunity." But I think there is no choice.

Coping well with the tilted atmosphere means many things. It means learning to discriminate between behavior from others which is supportive and behavior which is not. It means making visible the invisible, refusing to accept conscious slights, finding medical help for people who need it. It means building support among men and women for each other. This is most effectively done by communicating and fostering those areas where men and women stand to gain by getting rid of sexism. I believe these areas are many.

To encourage men to support and take care of other people clearly benefits everyone, including the men themselves who may uncover delightful capabilities that have been long suppressed. "Seeing" all humans appropriately, regardless of sex and race, means at least doubling the talents available for all tasks. Analysis of harassment nearly always permits a closer consideration of the

reasons why people harass in the first place. Encouraging men and women to provide good service to all humans, regardless of race and sex, breeds further excellence by example - and in just those areas we believe that "education" should be about in the first place. And for women to do these things is particularly important. The experience of standing up for oneself and of taking responsibility for oneself is critical for women, many of whom have been dependent for too long. So I believe there is much to gain by noticing and analyzing and dealing with the minutiae of sexism.

This paper presented the point of view that equal progress for women in educational institutions is very slow and that one reason for this slowness lies in forms of discrimination that lie outside legal redress. These forms, the minutiae of sexism, constitute barriers to advancement for women in the same way that individual grains of sand taken together in Saturn's rings obscure that planet. Invisibility, harassment, exploitation, poor service and deep seated psychological problems of a sexist nature all create special difficulties for women in educational institutions. These patterns must be recognized and seen in perspective in order to cope with them well. In an effort to illustrate the cumulative nature of the subject, this paper concludes with a case study, some experiences of an imaginary Margaret McIntyre, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Worcestershire University. (The incidents recounted are all real incidents in the lives of women in educational institutions in New England in 1973.)

1973

Saturn's Rings: Grains of Sand and Bits of Ice

(A case study)

Margaret McIntyre came early into the office to call a would-be transfer student she'd been trying hard to get long-distance. "This is Dr. Margaret McIntyre" she said to the operator, "person-to-person to Everett Snow." "Margaret McIntyre with a call for Dr. Snow," said the operator to the student's roommate. As she waited, she thumbed through the day's mail.

Dr. M. P. McIntyre
Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences
Worcestershire University ...

Dear Sir:

We believe that a man in your distinguished position ...

She dropped the form letter into her waste basket. Another letter inviting "graduate students and their wives" to a picnic. Alas - what of all the graduate students and their husbands? A note from the Women's Association that they'd been told the year's budget could not handle lockers needed for the newly-formed women's crew. Women would have to dress in their rooms, race 1/2 mile to the rapidly chilling riverbank, work out, and then run back to change before classes. Or else use the men's lockers - but that just isn't thinkable. "Those poor kids," she thought. "Already they can't use the pool in prime hours, play mixed squash, get to the trainer's quarters through the men's locker room. And somehow we need to find money for new women's bathing suits; the men have them." Margaret leafed through a new issue of her professional journal wishing she had time to keep up. An ad leapt out at her: a full-page nude with

a caption "Product X doesn't lie down under pressure." Another caught her eye - a picture of a naked woman wearing a Viking helmet and holding a shield over her torso with the caption "protection for vital parts." A familiar ripple of hurt rolled over her, mixed with anger. Time spent writing protests was time away from keeping up with her academic duties. Yet someone needed to point out that science and engineering journals would be improved by pictures of professional women, rather than ... well, what would be the word? ... "prostituted women," she whispered softly to herself.

Everett Snow's roommate seemed to have forgotten the call. After 10 minutes Margaret hung up. Nearly nine o'clock. If she was to get to her first meeting on time she'd have to hurry the several minutes it took to get to the nearest women's room in this formerly male institution. Funny. She'd just accepted this small annoyance. Until that group of students in physics complained of five-hour exams on the third floor of Stotter Hall, where the only women's room was three flights and two long halls away, and they weren't permitted to use the nearby men's rooms ...

Margaret pulled her stockings up smooth. This morning had been windy and the offices were at 62^o; she wished she dared wear a warm pants-suit. But the meeting with the trustees was important to everyone. No use setting the old Chairman to wondering about her sex-life. He had seemed so relieved that she was married and had children, when he interviewed her. There and then she'd instructed herself to stay in skirts. Let's see, drop by Vice President Browne's office to see his assistant Merrillee Werth, for the meeting's agenda.

As she came in, Dean Jones poked his head in. "Hello, Merrillee Browne!" and then, "Wow!" He stopped, staring at Merrillee's legs. "I haven't seen you in a skirt before," he faltered, continuing to stare as he backed out, half pretending to leer, half-leering. The door closed. Merrillee turned speechless to Margaret. "I've asked him over and over to call me by my own name," said Merrillee, "and, dammit, I wear skirts a lot, just haven't done for several weeks since the weather turned cold. And what business is it of his?" Margaret knew the young women's feminism and shook her head in sympathy. She noticed a new name plate on Merrillee's desk - Mrs. Werth. "Merrillee? - Not Ms. Werth?" Merrillee shook her head. "Mr. Browne had it made for me. I blocked out the "r" but he got very angry. Hey, here's the agenda. I'll be to the meeting in a moment."

Margaret hastened to the meeting room, already full of trustees, many of them new. She felt a twinge of anger that the new trustees were all men but to whom could one complain? They'd graciously thanked her for all her recommendations ... She glanced around, curious to meet Nobel Laureate Platz who had just been named, and surely that was his famous face right by the door? Platz turned to her as she came in. "Oh good" he said, "Now we'll get some coffee." She paused and took a breath, ignore it? get some coffee? Just then Robert Browne came in with Merrillee Werth and began introductions. "Dr. Platz," he said, "Dean Smythe, Professor Cabot, Dr. Lyman, Dr. Margaret McIntyre." "Oh and Merrillee. You know all the others." Margaret just looked at Merrillee. She wondered how she could bring up the matter of names. It was especially difficult because she liked and admired

Robert Browne and knew that he was making huge efforts to support equal opportunity for women and minorities.

The meeting progressed. After an hour on academic policy, Platz turned to Margaret. "Before we finish, Dr. McIntyre, do you want to add the woman's point of view?" She shook her head wincing inside at "the woman's point of view." Be quiet, she told herself, be polite, the next issue was more important; she had to present the need for a woman gynecologist. But oops, what was that? After all, she decided to speak out on the academic policy problem - there was a serious budget implication the newer men had not known of. There was a pause for her to speak ... then the men's conversation swirled on without acknowledging her point. Just as she wondered if she'd have to raise it again, Browne summarized the discussion and said "But gentlemen we must in fact consider the vital budgetary implications that Cabot mentioned." Margaret felt her familiar sense of the surreal as she wondered about Cabot sitting silently next to her. Did he notice that her budget point had been attributed to him? She was real, she reminded herself. Just now and then invisible.

She presented the need for a woman OB-GYN specialist. Student complaints... the young woman with infection following an IUD perforation who was told she couldn't leave the infirmary for the evening "because she was not yet ready to go out and screw." The men looked puzzled and concerned. "But if she had a VD infection, surely she was not ready to have relations?" asked Dr. Wright. Margaret drew breath. How to explain that the student had wanted to go to the Library ... and that there seemed to

have been too many IUD perforations ... and that it was not VD, and that the women just wanted a woman gynecologist, who by the way, might speak to them without the rough familiarity of the man now there.

At the end of the meeting the men hastened off to the Faculty Club grouping themselves into lunch companions. Margaret returned to her office feeling both left out and glad to be alone. She was not up to the flirting of Dean Smythe for one thing. Ever since their turfs had begun to collide a little she had remarked an increasing tendency for him to sexualize their relationship. Worse yet, she easily identified in herself a reciprocal tendency to re-establish ordinary male-female dominance patterns whenever she found herself in competitive situations with men. She knew she found it easy to flirt with Smythe and was annoyed with herself. This was after all a remarkably good institution for women professionals and she had an obligation to keep her mind on her job and do it really well.

A shy woman poked her head in. "I'm Linda" she began, and stopped. Margaret was used to the occasional anonymous caller, and nodded warmly to the chair beside her. Secretaries, programmers, waitresses - all the women in the university sought her out. Over the following hour Linda's story tumbled out. She had been a secretary here for many years. In the neighboring library worked a computer specialist whose work often brought him past her cubicle. He was exposing himself, she had once complained to his supervisor, it had stopped, then started again in 1960. "This has been going on since 1960?" Yes, and she had finally come to the Dean of

Arts and Sciences because now the man was getting bolder and Linda was afraid to go to a male administrator and there were no other female administrators.

Later on in the Medical office, talking with the chief psychiatrist on Linda's case, Margaret was assured they would call in the computer man. "But remember, it's probably just her fantasy. After all, since 1960 ... wouldn't the woman have done something about this?" Margaret mused on this question. Was it that the doctor couldn't handle aggression against women or that once again a woman had failed to stand up for her rights? Or both? Or maybe the doctor was wisely seeing both sides? Or maybe the woman had known nothing would be done?

It was easy to believe any or all of these explanations. Margaret remembered the Self-Defense Handbook just distributed by campus police to the women. The police were exceptionally good here; the booklet wasn't really bad. Yet it was illustrated with diagrams of smiling women considering the rise in crime statistics; it abjured women against "provoking rape" by wearing "conspicuous clothing in dark areas" - what man got raped for wearing conspicuous clothing in dark areas? It recommended shouting and scratching - kicking a rapist in the groin with intent to injure was not included in this polite booklet. She reminded herself that many men have a hard time dealing with aggression against women.

But, she thought, what about Linda? An hour later, with a call from Psychiatry confirming Linda's story, Margaret wondered again about the

extent to which women will simply take abuse. If Linda had stated her feelings earlier, would someone have listened? Musing, she opened a letter from Mary White, yet another secretary who had come in about dealing with a man, in this case her boss. She sighed over this latest letter, remembering the first two:

Letter One

This morning I gently asked my boss how he would feel if I said that I would like to be addressed as Miss White by those whom I feel I must call by their title and last name - that he had never invited me to call him by his first name and I had not felt I could request it - (polite silence) - that I had come to realize I felt hurt and demeaned - (oh?) - and would he mind if I tried to be called Miss White by the faculty with whom I deal.

Letter Two

The gist of his answer: no, I don't mind, but I really think there's going to be difficulty with this - we have so many cultures meeting here among the group, that some people may resist this. He agreed I have the right to feel this way, and to try to amend it, but he did not offer or agree to do anything about it himself.

Letter Three

... it (the request) apparently had a zero, even negative, effect, because he has been very clearly calling me Mary ever since. My feeling is that he was mightily embarrassed, and therefore somewhat angry - and that if I press it further I will be penalized if not eased out. I am reluctant to press. And, as I think I mentioned, this is a very complex person who I don't think means to hurt.

As she put the letters away, Margaret realized that many women do try to change matters, but often without results.

What was she to do with the grains of sand? Painters propositioning students, employment agency people "accidentally" ignoring her requests for part-time help, the alumni up in arms about the increase in numbers of women students. She winced thinking of the alumni - and the alumnae. The alumni office was upset at the thought of more women students because alumni give more money than alumnae. A problem worth considering all right. But she wasn't sure she yet knew the dimensions of the problem since she'd just learned that wives' gifts were always registered in their husband's names, and many of the women graduates had married men graduates.

She considered again her last week. A woman protesting that only men could participate in the diet experiments - once again the medical "norms" would be male medical norms. Three students came in alleging that women were graded lower than men by a professor in the Divinity School. How would she sort out that one? Grading examinations identified by number would be hard to sell to the faculty she thought ... and would further impersonalize the school.

Was she spending too much time thinking about all this? Maybe it was hopeless anyway. She remembered the professor with whom she spent two hours of her finest tact, who left after graciously discussing his recent behavior with women students saying, "But it is a man's world - they might as well get used to it." The nearby university president who said to her last night at dinner, "But university finances are stretched beyond belief and we can get

faculty wives as assistant professors without having to pay them as much as we pay breadwinners. Should we just go with the market?"

You can't fight on everything she said to herself. As a younger woman she had thought she had just ignored all this. Competence will make its own way she had thought and we all have plenty of serious professional work, without taking on petty things. I want to be a first-class Dean, not a first-class woman Dean, with the "woman's point of view." If I'm not careful, soon I'll just be inventing slights when none are meant. On the other hand ...