

THE SPINNER

THE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER
College of Wooster

Vol. II. No. III. January 1980

SOME THOUGHTS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

The recent incidents on campus have prompted a renewed concern for the safety and well-being of the women in our community. We have been fortunate that the assaults have not been as serious as they could be; but it is apparent that stricter security measures are needed. The recently implemented escort system, increased patrolling by campus security officers, and greater emphasis on locking room and residence hall doors are some responses to that need. I urge all men and women to take part in these precautionary measures, for they can help ensure a safer campus.

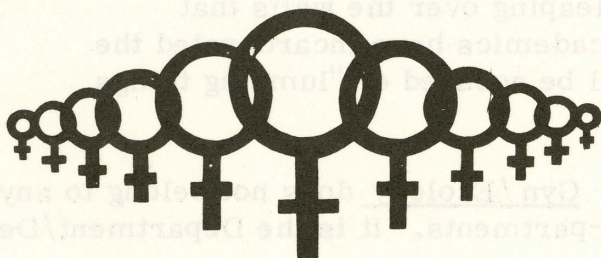
To effectively combat violence against women, however, we must do more than provide for better security; we must examine the causes for sexual violence and address our efforts to changing the norms which allow sexual assault to happen. Sexual assault is an inevitable part of a social system which oppresses and denigrates women.

Most women have been subject to one form of sexual harassment or another - from snide catcalls on the street; to sexist comments in the classroom or in the office; to sexual assault or rape. The severity of these actions varies, but the motivation behind all of them is the same.

Sexual assault is not motivated by sexual desire - it is prompted by the attacker's desire to dominate and degrade. Because women are perceived as inferior and powerless, an attacker feels he can safely direct his aggression toward them. Women in our culture are still viewed as male property; they are regarded as weaker, less intelligent, and more devious. As long as these notions prevail, women will be the targets for sexual violence. To eliminate sexual violence, then, we must start to change the attitudes which society has toward women.

The increased security measures on campus will be helpful, but there is more that we can do at Wooster to stem the tide of violence against women. It is our duty as members of a caring, concerned community to assert ourselves whenever sexist comments are made and to challenge the sexist attitudes among men and women which promote the existing social norms and condone sexual violence.

Diane Kroll



WEAVING COSMIC TAPESTRIES IN HER OWN TIME/SPACE:
INTRODUCING MARY DALY

A year ago in these pages I wrote of the colloquy of women's voices which for more than a decade has been rising in harmony and counterpoint to speak of previously unarticulated aspects of women's lives. One of these voices belongs to Mary Daly, a philosopher, theologian and teacher of Feminist Ethics, who will lecture in Mateer Auditorium on February 14, at 8:15 p. m. A graduate of the College of St. Rose in Albany, New York, Mary Daly earned her M.A. at The Catholic University of America and a Ph.D. in religion from the School of Theology of St. Mary's College at Notre Dame. She also holds the Dr. Theology and a Ph.D. in philosophy, both from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Daly has taught philosophy and theology for more than 20 years and has been on the faculty of Boston College since 1966.

No one would deny that as a writer grows in her commitment to feminism, she experiences a transformation not only in her thought but also in her speaking voice. Few writers, however, have been as wholly transformed as Mary Daly. Each of her books -- The Church and the Second Sex (1968), Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation (1973), and Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism (1978) -- exemplifies impeccable research and provocative critical thinking. But the studied academic voice of the first volume has no place in the more recent works, which are dominated by a witty, sometimes strident and always radical voice often difficult to hear. Indeed, of all the feminists writing today, none seems to me to present a more intense challenge to the academy and to all of patriarchal culture than Mary Daly.

Describing her work as anti-academic but not anti-intellectual, Daly urges women to be present to themselves and to each other in a common journey whose purpose is to "dis-cover the mystery of our [own] history, and find out how it is interwoven with the lives of other women." She brings to her task a deep commitment to ludic cerebration, in the course of which she jettisons the "Methadology" of traditional academic disciplines and contrives new methods and a new mode of discourse. Thus much of Gyn/Ecology sparkles with puns, new words and verbal games which both delight and confound us. Early in the book, Daly warns her reader:

Since Gyn/Ecology spins around, past, and through the established fields, opening the coffers/coffins in which "knowledge" has been stored, re-stored, re-covered, its meaning will be hidden from the Grave Keepers of tradition. Since it seeks out the threads of connectedness within artificially separated/segmented reality, striving "to put the severed parts together," specious specialists will decry its "negativity" and "failure to present the whole picture." Since it Spins among fields, leaping over the walls that separate the halls in which academics have incarcerated the "bodies of knowledge," it will be accused of "lumping things together."

But, as Daly goes on to point out, ". . . Gyn/Ecology does not belong to any of their de-partments. It departs from their de-partments. It is the Department/Departure of Spinning."

Gyn/Ecology is a Voyage in three Passages. In the first, Daly "breaks through the barriers of obsolete myths which block vision", reducing to absurdity the Deadly Deceptions of our cultural inheritance. The Second Passage is devoted to an intensive analysis of "the Sado-Ritual Syndrome: the Re-enactment of Goddess Murder." Here, in excruciating detail, Daly reviews the history of atrocities committed against women, and focuses on five in particular: the Indian practice of Suttee, or widow burning; Chinese footbinding; African genital mutilation; European witch burning; and American gynecology (a term which Daly applies to all areas of the medical profession, including psychiatry and psychotherapy, which treat the diseases and hygiene of women's bodies and minds). Although Daly is certainly not the first feminist to study these practices, her synthesis of previous scholarship is extraordinary powerful, and one emerges from the Second Passage exhausted. (Let me add, by the way, that I share with Susan Griffin a certain scepticism about Daly's attack on the American medical establishment: the "atrocities" she cites require careful scrutiny.)

Commenting on the Second Passage, the critic Susan Leigh Star has observed:

In writing about atrocity, one runs a double-edged risk: that the information will either anesthetize, through the sheer numbing horror of the facts, by repetition; or that the information will be aestheticized, that is, be presented so "artistically" that one actually forgets that one is reading about/looking at human misery.

In Star's judgement, Daly avoids both extremes by "presenting hope without erasing horror," by setting forth a profound vision of healing/creation in which women spin new truths and convert "subvival" into "survival." This is the terrain of the Third Passage, "Gyn/Ecology: Spinning New Time/Space." And it is of this healing vision that Daly has chosen to speak when she lectures at Wooster.

The Voyager who chooses to survive must engage in a three-fold process: Spooking, Sparking and Spinning. In Spooking, she exorcises old, destructive ways of thinking and being. Commencing to Spark, she shares with other Voyagers her insights, hopes and dreams of a common language. Finally, in an atmosphere of mutual trust and in-spiration, Voyagers Spin their tapestries woven in ludic cerebration. Voyagers Spinning transform work into play, and Gyn/Ecology ends with a vision of ecstasy:

In the beginning was not the word. In the beginning is the hearing. Spinsters spin deeper into the listening deep. We can spin only what we hear, because we hear, and as well as we hear. We can weave and unweave, knot and unknot only because we hear, what we hear and as well as we hear. Spinning is celebration/cerebration. Spinsters Spin all ways, always. Gyn/Ecology is Un-Creation; Gyn/Ecology is Creation.

Nothing I have said can capture the resonance of Daly's anger or the range of her vision. For those who hear poetry more keenly than prose, these lines by Adrienne Rich may be illuminating:

There are words I cannot choose again:
Humanism, androgyny

Such words have no shame in them, no diffidence
before the raging stoic grandmothers:

their glint is too shallow, like a dye
that does not permeate

fibers of actual life
as we live it, now. . . .

My heart is moved by all I cannot save:
so much has been destroyed

I have to cast my lot with those
who age after age, perversely,

with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.

(from "Natural Resources"
The Dream of a Common Language)

Mary Daly has chosen to reconstitute her world on the boundary and advocates a degree of separatism which many feminists would be unwilling to support. But as we listen to her words on February 14, I hope we will all remember that the academy exists to nurture an infinite variety of views and that it is no great privilege to yield to the anaesthesia of received opinion.

Mary Daly's visit is co-sponsored by the Women's Resource Center, the Cultural Events Committee and the Student Activities Board. Following her Thursday evening lecture there will be a Pit Stop in Lowry Center, and on Friday, February 15, Daly will be a guest in Joanne Frye's Women's Studies class.

Deborah Hilty

THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER WOMEN'S CALENDAR

CONVOCATIONS

- Feb. 13 - Molly Haskell - The Way Women are Portrayed in Films. 8:00 PM. Mateer.
Feb. 14 - Mary Daly - Gyn/Ecology - Spinning New Time and Space. 8:15 PM. Mateer.
Feb. 27 - Thalia Gouma-Peterson - The Art and Life of Alice Neel. 10:00 AM. Mateer.

WOMEN'S TABLE

- Feb. 1 - Women's Resource Center - Women's Week. Noon.
Feb. 22 - Diane Kroll on the Social Life at Wooster. Noon.
Feb. 29 - Margaret deVries on Women in the Economy. Noon.
March 7 - Informal--plans for next quarter. Noon.

THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER WOMEN'S CALENDAR

The Women's Resource Center is attempting to compile a monthly calendar of all campus events that pertain to women. Following is the calendar for the month of February. If any organization is planning something that deals with women, please let the Women's Resource Center know about this event.

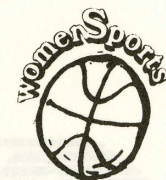
Women's Week is a week long celebration of womanhood beginning January 27 and ending February 1. The activities include movies, lecturers, workshops, and a concert. Please plan to join us for some of these events.

WOMEN'S WEEK

- Sun. Jan. 27 4:00 PM - Lecture - Women in Science - Room 119, Lowry
 4:30 PM - Movie - "Yudie" - Lowry Pit
 7:00 PM - Movie - "Union Maids" - Mateer
- Mon. Jan. 28 4:00 PM - Lecture - Women in the Labor Force - Room 119, Lowry
 4:30 PM - Movie - "Like A Rose" - Lowry Pit
 7:00 PM - Movie - "Ain't Nobody's Business" - Mateer
 8:00 PM - Workshop - Women's Health - Compton Lounge
- Tues. Jan. 29 4:00 PM - Lecture - Women in Religion - Room 119, Lowry
 4:30 PM - Movie - "Women's Answer" and "Woman: Who is Me?"
 Lowry Pit
 7:00 PM - Movie - "Antonia: Portrait of a Woman" and "Woman to
 Woman" - Library Preview Room
 8:00 PM - Workshop - Rape - Douglass Lounge
- Wed. Jan. 30 4:00 PM - Lecture - Women in History - Room 118, Lowry
 4:30 PM - Movie - "Killing Us Softly" - Lowry Pit
 7:00 PM - Movie - "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" Mateer
 8:00 PM - Workshop - Women's Athletic Association Event
- Thurs. Jan. 31 4:30 PM - Movie - "Men's Lives" - Lowry Pit
 7:00 PM - Movie - "Kypseli: A Divided Reality" - Mateer
 8:00 PM - Workshop - Women from Various Cultures - Babcock
- Fri. Feb. 1 Noon - Women's Table
 9:00 PM - Concert - Lori Jacobs - The Cage

SPORTS

- Feb. 2 - Varsity Basketball vs. Cleveland State - 2:00 PM
 Feb. 5 - Varsity Basketball vs. Ohio Wesleyan - Away
 Feb. 9 - Varsity Basketball vs. Defiance - 1:00 PM
 Feb. 12 - Varsity Basketball vs. Akron - 7:00 PM
 Feb. 16 - Varsity Basketball vs. Denison - 2:00 PM
 Feb. 19 - Varsity Basketball Satellite Tournament - Away
 Feb. 21 - Varsity Basketball Satellite Tournament - Away
 Feb. 23 - Varsity Basketball Satellite Tournament - Home
 Feb. 28 - March 1 - Varsity Basketball State Tournament - Away



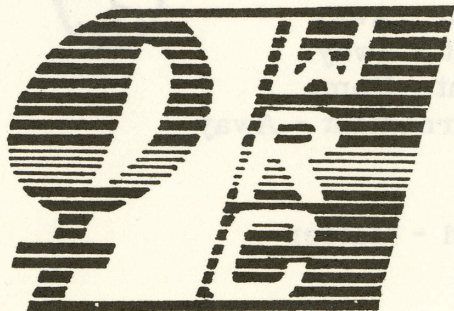
MOVIES

- Feb. 6 - "An Unmarried Women" - 7 and 9:30 PM - Mateer
 Feb. 11 - "Norma Rae" - 7 and 9:30 PM - Mateer

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SOME REASONS WHY THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT SHOULD BE RATIFIED...

- * The Equal Rights Amendment will act as an impetus for Congress and each state to revise their laws and eliminate those which discriminate on the basis of sex. Without it the process would be far too slow and haphazard to be acceptable, especially in light of the fact that the ERA was first introduced 50 years ago.
- * Equal opportunity in education will be assured. The ERA will prohibit restriction of public schools to one sex and it would prohibit public institutions from requiring higher admission standards for women.
- * The ERA would prohibit discrimination by Government as an employer on all levels, including school boards. It would require equal pay for equal work only for Government employees.
- * Social Security benefits will be available to men and women on an equal basis. The ERA would require changes to permit a man to draw on his wife's Social Security just as any wife now draws on her husband's account.
- * Special restrictions on property rights of married women would be invalidated under the ERA. Married women could engage in business as freely as men and manage their separate property such as inheritance and earnings.
- * In those states where alimony is limited to women, under the ERA, men will become eligible under the same circumstances as women.
- * The ERA can enhance the status of women as housewives and mothers as freedom to choose will reinforce the significant contribution of this way of life.
- * Under the ERA, women would be allowed to volunteer for military service on the same basis as men, and would be entitled to all corresponding benefits from such service. Women would also be subject to jury duty under the same circumstances as men. Men and women with children in their personal care could be excused from this obligation.



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Published monthly by the Women of the Resource Center. The Center is located in the basement of Lowry.

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