

THE SPINNER

THE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

College of Wooster

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LETTING LOOSE

This issue of the Spinner is a reflection by three senior women of their Wooster experience. As a part of the Wooster women's community we have been able to grow. We have also been able to see some of our limitations. In this issue, we are naming some of these limitations in hope that it will encourage other women to delve deeper and demand more for themselves. The views presented here are not necessarily those of all women in the WRC or on the Wooster campus. But then again, they might be.

In the four years that we've been at Wooster we have seen many positive changes: the Women's Studies program was started, there have been symposiums about women and several women speakers have been brought to campus. At the same time sexism has prevailed in many places. Women students are to frequently faced with sexist remarks and attitudes. Often the sexist attitudes and actions are so well disguised that it is difficult to name them when asked. Therefore, it is difficult to stop and correct them. Excuses are made to justify or cover-up what the individual departments or the entire college does not want to correct. As science majors we have been continuously exposed to these justifications and cover-ups. Isn't it about time for us to ask questions (and get answers) that will enable us to recognize and deal with these sexist attitudes?

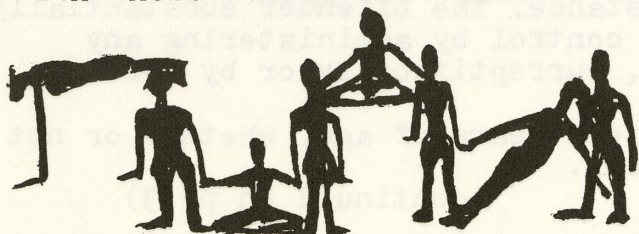
Rape!

An attitude is prevalent in all levels of our society from respected members of the college/university communities and the legal professions to the popular and the pornographic press. This attitude is the refusal to recognize that women are victims even when entrapped in the violent act of rape. One of the sources of mystification of rape is its association with sexual passion. The crime is reduced to a problem of a man's self-control ("He needed a woman") or a woman's intentions ("She really wanted it, She asked for it"). Rape is not the result of sexual desire. In actuality rape is an aggressive expression of hostility against women. Rape inter-relates sexuality with power in a political perspective. It is the logical result of women being told to be submissive to the dominant male.

As a result of 'rape fear' women are placed in a humiliating position. We are told not to walk the campus alone at night. And if for some important journey we need to face the dark of night, we should consult the campus male escort service. We are told to depend on men for our protection.

We are set up to be victims-- society perpetuates the myth of our defenselessness and essential passivity. We are told that "little girls don't fight", we are not given the physical fitness courses in schools that train us to use our bodies, and we advised that the best way to avoid attack is not to go out

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RAPE (continued from page 1)

at night without a man (e.g. the male protection racket). The result is our trained/ingrained incapacity to defend ourselves and to fight back. Like the women in ancient China whose feet were bound so that they could take only the smallest of steps, we are socialized to be cripples, to see our body in terms of beauty instead of strength.

We should prepare ourselves for violent encounters. The key to self-defense is both psychological and physical practice in sizing up the situation, in discovering our strengths and weaknesses and in being prepared to defend ourselves. There is no proof that an aggressive response to a rapist is more harmful to the victim than a passive response. Each of us needs to analyze our physical and mental capabilities and be prepared to react to a harmful situation.

The rape victim has limited alternatives of action. We can physically fight back or run away (self-defense knowledge and physical self-confidence become a necessity for this alternative). Or we can attempt to talk the rapist out of imposing physical harm.

A large portion of preparedness is avoiding the problem. We need safe streets/a safe campus. We need to take safety precautions. A few suggestions:

- dress sensibly (restrictive clothing could, indeed, prove restrictive)
- be mentally and physically prepared
- demand improved campus lighting (several dark areas exist near popular paths)
- we should be immediately informed in the case of any campus rape or attempted rape

and,

- the college should continue to send students suggestions of precautionary measures. However, women students should also be informed of what to do if rape occurs. We should know who to contact for support, a physical examination, etc.

WOMEN TAKE BACK THE NIGHT!

(Some of the ideas expressed are from Rape: The First Sourcebook for Woman, by New York Radical Feminists.)

(Note: This book is available at the Women's Resource Center library.)

OHIO LAWS PERTAINING TO SEXUAL ASSAULTS

2907.02 Rape; evidence

(A) No person shall engage in sexual conduct with another, not the spouse of the offender, when any of the following apply:

- (1) The offender purposely compels the other person to submit by force or threat of force.
- (2) For the purpose of preventing resistance, the offender substantially impairs the other person's judgment or control by administering any drug or intoxicant to the other person, surreptitiously or by force, threat of force, or deception.
- (3) The other person is less than thirteen years of age, whether or not the offender knows the age of such person.

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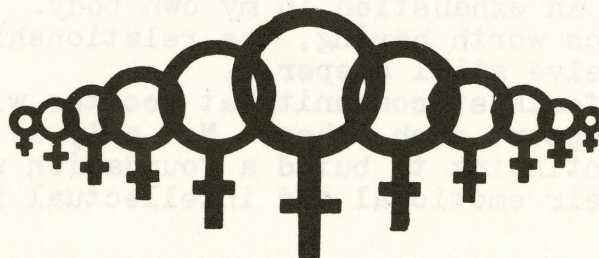
OHIO LAWS (continued from p. 2)

- (B) Whoever violates this section is guilty of rape, a felony of the first degree. If the offender under division (A)(3) of this section purposely compels the victim to submit by force or threat of force, whoever violates division (A)(3) of this section shall be imprisoned for life.
- (C) A victim need not prove physical resistance to the offender in prosecutions under this section.
- (D) Evidence of specific instances of the victim's sexual activity, opinion evidence of the victim's sexual activity and reputation evidence of the victim's sexual activity shall not be admitted under this section unless it involves evidence of the origin of semen, pregnancy, or disease, or the victim's past sexual activity with the offender, and only to the extent that the court finds that the evidence is material to a fact at issue in the case and that its inflammatory or prejudicial nature does not outweigh its probative value.
- Evidence of specific instances of the defendant's sexual activity, opinion evidence of the defendant's sexual activity, and reputation evidence of the defendant's sexual activity shall not be admitted under this section unless it involves evidence of the origin of semen, pregnancy, or disease, the defendant's past sexual activity with the victim, or is admissible against the defendant under section 2945.59 of the Revised Code, and only to the extent that the court finds that the evidence is material to a fact at issue in the case and that its inflammatory or prejudicial nature does not outweigh its probative value.
- (E) Prior to taking testimony or receiving evidence of any sexual activity of the victim or the defendant in a proceeding under this section, the court shall resolve the admissibility of the proposed evidence in a hearing in chambers, which shall be held at or before preliminary hearing and not less than three days before trial, or for good cause shown during the trial.
- (F) Upon approval by the court, the victim may be represented by counsel in any hearing in chambers or other proceeding to resolve the admissibility of evidence. If the victim is indigent or otherwise unable to obtain the services of counsel, the court may, upon request, appoint counsel to represent the victim without cost to the victim.

(Ohio Legislative Laws - Sex Offenses - 1975)

Do women want to be raped? Do we crave humiliation, degradation and violation of our bodily integrity? Do we psychologically need to be seized, taken, ravished and ravaged? Must a feminist deal with this preposterous question?

-Susan Brownmiller, 1975



AN OPEN LETTER TO DR. BAIRD

Dr. Baird:

I have recently taken a course entitled, "Images of Women and Men in Literature and Life" from the Visiting J. Garber Drushal Professor, Professor Florence Howe. When I heard at the beginning of this year that Ms. Howe was coming to the campus to teach a women's studies course, I was very enthusiastic and excited about taking a course from one of the leading women's studies scholars in the United States. After nine weeks in the course I find it necessary to express my disappointment and dissatisfaction with this experience. I also fear that students who have not taken other women's studies courses will have a mistaken and bad view of the women's studies program. The women's studies program at the College of Wooster is a rewarding experience for whoever participates in it. The classes are enthusiastically led by well-prepared professors who encourage much discussion. The high caliber of this program is evident when talking to any student or faculty member. Florence Howe's course, for which one can receive a women's studies credit, is poorly taught, unorganized, and does not provoke thought. Although Ms. Howe is an expert in the field of women's studies, this does not come through in her class. A few students in the class have expressed their contentment with the course, but the majority of the class found the experience very frustrating. The reading assignments are interesting and well chosen, yet lectures and discussions have only briefly covered the ideas presented by this material. Ms. Howe's attitude in class discourages discussion and challenge of ideas that are contrary to hers. The grading system also appears to be arbitrary and biased.

May I suggest that the next time an outside professor is requested for a visiting professorship that the school not rely simply on the reputation of that person. The person's qualifications as a professor as well as a scholar in his/her field should be considered. The money that is being spent on Ms. Howe's visit could have been better utilized within the women's studies program. I am confident that the women's studies program will continue to grow and expand in the coming years.

Sincerely,

The Editors

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YEAR-IN-REVIEW

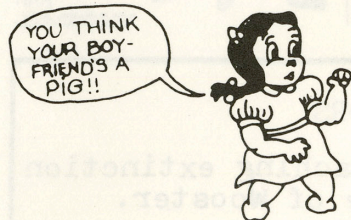
The Women's Resource Center has had a very active year. We have reached out and provided a space in which the Wooster community was able to explore ideas concerning feminism. Following is a list of activities that the Center sponsored during the year.

- Sept. 8, 1979 Presentation to a Freshperson's workshop on extra-curricular activities
Open House for Freshpersons
- Sept. 19, 1979 Open House for the entire campus
Discussion in Lowry Pit on Feminism and its place at the College of Wooster
- Oct. 3, 1979 Women's Resource Center Meeting - Film showing with discussion
- Oct. 17, 1979 Women's Resource Center Meeting - Presentation by Barb Withee of Every Women's House
- Oct. 24, 1979 Women's Resource Center Meeting - Presentation by Peg Estill of American Association of University Women
- Nov. 1, 1979 Film Showing - Free To Be You and Me
American Women! Portrait of Courage
- Nov. 4, 1979 Presentation in Lowry Pit by Every Women's House of Wife Abuse with discussion following
- Nov. 5, 1979 Film Showing - Killing Us Softly
Gertrude Stein
- Nov. 6, 1979 Mosaic of Talent - A coffee-house type talent show. Ten outstanding women with a special talent such as poetry reading, dance, classical and modern singing, and instrument playing were invited to perform.
- Nov. 13-14, 1979 Evaluation of the Women's Resource Center was done by Beth Reed, Coordinator of the GLCA women's studies programs.
- Nov. 14, 1979 Two members of the Spartacist League of Cleveland spoke on the Oppression of Iranian Women.
- Jan. 9, 1980 A representative from the Pre-term Abortion clinic in Cleveland spoke at a Women's Resource Center meeting.
- Jan. 27 - Feb. 2 Women's Week - An entire week of daily movies, lectures, and workshops pertaining to women. Some of the highlights were:
Lecture - Dr. B. Burnell - "Women in the Labor Force"
 Dr. P. Melvin - "Women in History"
Movie - Ain't Nobody's Business
Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman
Concert - Lori Jacobs in the Cage

YEAR IN REVIEW (continued from p.6)

- Feb. 14, 1980 Evening Convocation - Mary Daly - Feminist Theologian
- March 2, 1980 Reception for Florence Howe
- April 18-19, 1980 GLCA Student Women's Studies Conference. Six colleges participated in a two day student conference concerned with feminism, women etc. Some of the highlights were:
 Opening address - B. Binhammer - "Taking Ourselves Seriously"
 Paper Presentations - Biological Implications of Sex Women and Publicity
The Ways We Sing: Women Writing In America
Women in the Martial Arts
Lesbian Motherhood
 Programs and Lectures-Women and the Draft
Women's Health Care
Lesbianism and Homophobia
Feminist Theories
- April 30, 1980 Women's Resource Center meeting - Discussion of the women's studies program
- May 7, 1980 Women's Resource Center meeting - Discussion of homophobia
- May 14, 1980 Women's Resource Center meeting - General discussion reviewing the year

In addition to these planned activities, six issues of The Spinner were published and various members of the Women's Resource Center attended additional meetings with members of the college community or GLCA conferences. If anyone is interested or has questions about the Women's Resource Center next year, contact Denise Ahlquist.



MISOGYNISTS

I have a theory that the militants are overwrought and undersexed ladies...None of these goddam women have had a healthy orgasm in a long time.

-David Susskind

Biologically and temperamentally, I believe women were made to be concerned first and foremost with childcare, husband care, and home care.

-Norman Mailer

For me, women are only amusing, a hobby. No one spends too much time on a hobby.

-Henry Kissinger

On the weekend of May 9-12, four women from the College of Wooster attended a Chicago March and Rally for the Equal Rights Amendment. Twenty thousand people marched down Columbus Avenue near Lake Michigan and 100,000 people attended the rally in the afternoon. There were four hours of speeches. The speakers included Jean Stapleton, Marlo Thomas, Betty Friedan, Eleanor Smeal and Sonia Johnson. The students that attended were Karen Wilson, An June, Leanne Poteet, and Chris deVries.

If I die, don't send me flowers. Just send three more states.

-Liz Carpenter

Have you ever seen a man walk up to four women sitting together in a bar and say, "Hey, what are you doing here all alone?"

-Lily Tomlin, 1977

(As a matter of fact yes - this exact question was asked of three women in a town bar last week)

Our Struggle today is not to have a female Einstein get appointed as an assistant professor. It is for a woman schlemiel to get as quickly promoted as a male schlemiel.

-Bella Abzug, 1977

I do not refer to myself as a "housewife" for the reason that I did not marry a house.

-Wilma Scot Heide, 1973

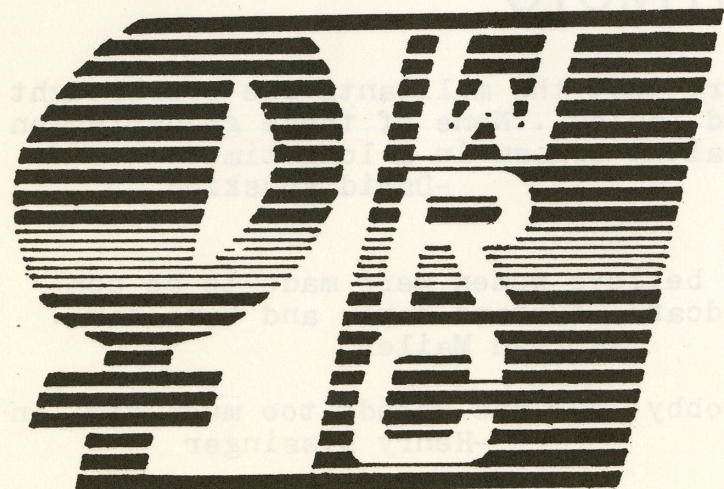
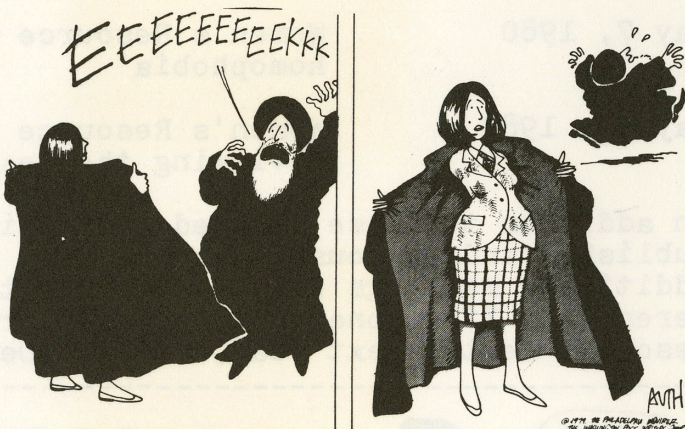
NO MATTER WHAT YOUR FIGHT, DON'T BE LADYLIKE! -Mother Jones, 1890

'Mother, what is a Feminist?
"A Feminist, my daughter,
is any woman now who cares
To think about her own affairs
As men don't think she oughter."

-Alice Duer Miller, 1915

LET IT ALL HANG OUT! WE ARE THE
WOMEN THAT MEN HAVE WARNED US
ABOUT!

-Robin Morgan, 1970



EDITORS
Quickly approaching extinction
at The College of Wooster.

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