

*Mary Daly*

**Wanderlust/Wonderlust: Re: membering the Elemental Powers of Women**

I often begin with what has seemed a rather silly question, like “Are there any feminists in the audience?” I also wonder seriously whether there are any Revolting Nags, Harpies, Spinsters. I think I see some here! At any rate I see this coming together—this speaking, as an invitation to you and to myself to an Otherworld Journey—Other with a capital O—meaning to a world Other than patriarchy, which nevertheless is on the boundaries of patriarchy. The invocation of this Other reality is an invitation to the country of the strange. For the strange is the homeland of women who identify as women and wild women are strange. I would like also to conjure tonight the Elemental spirits of women and all wild natures. Such conjuring conjoins women with ourselves and our sisters the earth, air, fire, water. I would hope that in this conjuring we consciously connect ourselves with the rhythms of the farthest stars and of our own sun and moon, mending our broken ties with the Witch within ourselves who spins and weaves tapestries of Elemental creation.

We’re coming together in the 1980’s—1984 to be precise—a period of extreme danger for women and for our sister the earth and all her creatures, all of whom are targeted by the maniacal fathers, sons and holy ghosts, for extinction by nuclear holocaust or failing that by chemical contamination, by escalated ordinary violence, by man-made hunger and disease that proliferate in a climate of deception and mind-rot. Within the context of this decade’s horrors women face in our daily lives forces whose intent is to mangle, strangle, tame and turn us against our own purposes and part of that now is designated by the simple word *backlash*. Yet at this very time, somehow living, longing, through, above, before, beyond it thousands, thousands, legions of women struggle to re-member ourSelves in our history, to sustain and intensify a biophilic, that is life-loving consciousness. For having

known the intense joy of woman-identified bonding and creation we can never turn back.

There is an obstacle—there are many obstacles and among my names for it, of course, besides patriarchy, are phallocracy, penocracy, and you can also call it the sadosociety. It seems to me that our situation is somewhat as follows: that the Foreground is possessed. The deep Background of wild nature, of the natures in women and all life-loving being is there to be discovered. There is indeed going on now—in an intensified way—if you come from south of the border as I do you're quite aware of it—a struggle of principalities and powers, and as things get worse on the foreground level it seems to me that still on our spiritual Elemental journey things get better in some ways for women who have the courage to move. And that moving—that meta-patriarchial metamorphosing journey is the journey I hope to invite you to join, and to continue if you're already there, this evening.

Well, about the sadosociety. It is my contention that the sadosociety, reagan, pentagon—this realm of godfather and company and all those holy ghosts, holy hoaxes, whatever—continually spreads. It is in large measure the product of the patriarchal male's flight from his own lechery and his flight takes the form of asceticism—I don't mean aestheticism—you know asceticism—lash, lash and in his hatred of matter he attempts to drag all the rest of us with him. This is the unfortunate part.

Take a classical example of what I mean by an ascetic: St. Jerome, an early father of the church who, because of his horror of his own lechery, his lecherous, lascivious thoughts and inclinations, went into the desert and beat himself and starved himself and deprived himself of sleep and then at night in his fantasies was visited by beves of dancing girls. Jerome was a typical saint. Or again there was another classic character in western Christianity—Simeon Stylites, one of the “pillar ascetics”. Literally Simeon, as his biographers tells us, despairing of escaping the world horizontally, escaped it vertically and mounted his famous pillar which was approximately sixty feet high and stayed there for many years. I believe thirty-six years. Kings and emperors came from all over Europe, crouched at the foot of his pillar cherishing, as if they were precious pearls, the worms that dropped from his body, gazing in awe as Simeon touched his feet with his forehead 1244 times in succession. Now this mentality may seem bizarre. Yet I would suggest that the ascetic mentality that characterizes phallocracy is not at all unusual; in fact it's omnipresent in the state of reversal which is patriarchy. That is why sometimes it's hard to see it when you're living in this house of mirrors and it's hard to pick out a reflection. Oppenheimer would be a contemporary example, Robert Oppenheimer, the

father of the atomic bomb. You know that in the 1940's Oppenheimer was in Alamogordo, New Mexico, in the place which he appropriately called "Trinity," site of the testing of the atomic bombs which he had done so much to create. He was, after this feat, named "father of the year" by the National Baby Association for fathering the atomic bomb. But what I'm interested in is the ascetic matter-hating which is also spirit-hating mentality. In a letter to his brother Frank the ascetic Oppenheimer wrote: "I think that in all things which evoke discipline; study, and our duties to men and the commonwealth, war, and personal hardship, and even the need for subsistence, ought to be greeted by us with profound gratitude; for only through them can we attain to the least detachment, and only so can we know peace." So there we have an example of Orwell's 1984 equation: War equals peace. And it is quite consistent that this radical discontinuity between cause and effect, between an act performed and that which follows, characterizes the patriarchal male. Therefore, it's not too surprising that when he was questioned about what he thought he was doing in building those bombs, Oppenheimer said: "It is my judgment in these things that when you see something that is technically sweet, you go ahead and do it, and you argue about what to do about it only after you have had your technical success. That is the way it was with the atomic bomb. I don't think anybody opposed making it; there was some doubt about what to do with it after it was made." This is the "genius" of phallogocracy and what I'm suggesting is that this asceticism is inflicted upon all of us. You know, this matter-hating spirit-hating takes many forms. Inflicted upon us is sensory deprivation, imaginative deprivation, emotional deprivation, mental deprivation. We live in a climate of lies and indeed of biggest lies. This atmosphere is characterized by the strategy of Biggest Lies because what big lies and biggest lies do is keep us mentally tortured so that we're almost grateful for a modicum of rationality. It is commonly known that tortured people, deprived of water will experience gratitude to their torturers for just a drop of water. So, too, I think we feel something like that—gratitude for any rationality at all.

So much for the Foreground. Now, the Background. It seems to me now that we have auras (force fields) and that words too have auras and that gynocide has been accompanied by verbicide: the killing of words. So the coming forth of women's Elemental being in this time is accompanied by an awakening of deep, deep meanings of words. In *Gyn/Ecology* I wrote about the universal atrocities—as some of you know, the Sado-ritual Syndrome. An example of a sado-ritual is widow burning. The Hindus in India for many centuries burned alive widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands. Even if the widow was

fifteen years old and the husband was seventy (which was not uncommon) she would be burned alive because there was really no purpose in her existence anymore. Besides that she was to blame for his death according to their religion, if not because of her sins in this life, because of her sins in a previous life. Another example was Chinese foot-maiming. For over 1000 years upper class women in China were condemned to have tiny feet." Do you know what the ideal foot was? The length of it was three inches. So that from the age of five, six or seven, a little girl who was foot-maimed, the euphemism is foot-bound would never dance, run, indeed walk again. There was European witch-burning—erased in these universities. You take ordinary History 101 or get a Ph.D. in that subject and you'll still be ignorant of the fact that hundreds of thousands of women—some feminists use the symbolic figure nine million—a large, large number of women and a few men in Europe, were burned alive. Protestants and Catholics alike contributed to this frenzy, to this atrocity. Another sado-ritual is African genital mutilation. There are now approximately thirty million women throughout Africa who have been genitally mutilated. This is required for marrigiability and nothing really is done to stop it. American gynecology also is an atrocity of the Sado-state. Finally, there is American and European gynecology. If I think Crone-logically, which is a way of thinking chronologically, I see it as arising as a form of backlash against the first wave of feminism. It was an attempt to tame women.

So seeing all that, then, and empowered by seeing and naming the atrocities, you can move into the Background. Taking words as they arise in a consciousness that is capable of exorcism and ecstasy, we see that they are double-edged, indeed multiple-edged. I think of an Amazon on her horse swinging a labrys—you know, the double-edged axe and since it is rounded, double-edged, if you think of her swinging her axe you see that it has many, many sides. So too words are labryses, are double axes. Think, for example, of the word *lust*. On the one side if I think of it, for example, *Pure Lust*, the title of my most recent book, this names the deadly dis-passion that prevails in patriarchy, the life-hating lechery that rapes and kills the objects of its obsession/aggression. Indeed the usual meaning of *lust* within the lecherous state of patriarchy is well-known. It means sexual desire especially of a violent, self-indulgent character: lechery, lasciviousness. Phallic lust, violent and self-indulgent, levels all life, dismembering spirit matter, attempting annihilation. Its refined cultural products, from the sadistic pornography of the Marquis de Sade to the sadomasochistic theology of Karl Barth, are on a continuum: they are basically the same. This lust is pure in a sense that it is characterized by

unmitigated malevolence. It is pure in the sense that it is ontologically evil, having as its end the braking/breaking of female, Elemental be-ing.

The word *lust* has utterly Other meanings than this. Look at the other side of the labrys. According to Webster's [Third New International Dictionary of the English Language] it means vigor, fertility. "The increasing lust of the earth or of the plant" is the example given. It means, according to the dictionary, an intense longing, craving. Lust means eagerness, enthusiasm. The word, then, derived from the Latin *lascivus* meaning wanton, playful, is double-edged. Wise women wield our wits making this word our wand, our labrys, for it names not only the "thrust of the argument" that assails women and nature on all levels but also the way out, the vigor, eagerness and intense longing that launches wild women on Journeys beyond the State of Lechery. Primarily then, Lust and Pure Lust name the high humour, hope and cosmic accord of those women who choose to escape, to follow our hearts' deepest desire, and bound out of the state of bondage, wander-lusting and wonderlusting with the elements, connecting with auras of animals and plants, moving in planetary communion with the farthest stars. This Lust is in its essence astral; it is pure passion, unadulterated, absolute, simple, sheer, striving for abundance of Be-ing. It is unlimited, unlimiting desire, fire. One moved by its magic is Musing/Remembering. Choosing to leave the dismembered state she casts her lot, life, with the trees, the winds, the sands, the tides, the mountains and moors. She is an Outcast, casting herself outward, inward, breaking out of the casts/castes of Phallocracy's fabrications, moving out of the maze of mediated experience. As she lurches/leaps into starlight, her tears become tidal, her cackles cosmic, her laughter Lusty.

What I'm suggesting is that there is a race of women and that this race of women happens when there is a focused will to be free, to Name our own be-ing. We break through the obstacles that block the flow of female force. This requires being in touch with fury, rage. Female Fury is Volcanic Dragonfire. It is Elemental breathing of those who love the Earth and her kind, who rage against the erasure of our kind. Of course as dragons, since we breath fire, we are considered tasteless. When you think of *race* you see again that this is a multiple-edged word. It is a labrys, it is a wand, it is my broom, it is my nightmare, it is my galloping steed. Race means the act of rushing onward, run. I see women racing, running. It was actually the feminist writer Olive Schreiner seventy years ago who first spoke of the race of women. I didn't realize that when I was writing this though. *Race* also means a strong or rapid current of water that flows through a narrow channel. But Elemental life must often flow through narrow channels, for in the

state of lechery options are narrowed. Yet under these conditions force and focus can be intense. *Race* means a heavy, choppy sea, especially one produced by the meeting of two tides. This definition applies, for the race of women is wild and tidal, roaring with rhythms that are Elemental, that are created in cosmic encounters.

The goal of the Phallic State is that we be erased, deracinated. *Deracination* is defined by the dictionary as detachment from one's background and homeland, customs, traditions. There is this constant attempt to deracinate us and, together with Virginia Woolf, feminists moan: "As a woman I have no country." Together with her we might add: "As a woman I want no country, as a woman my country is the whole world." And yet there is something poignant about this brave assertion. For the whole world is groaning under phallic rule and it must be, then, that it is in some other dimension that the "whole world" is the country, the homeland of the Race of Women. And I don't mean that a woman should cease struggling for survival within or rather on the boundary of Phalocracy's institutions. But that struggle is inadequate without Pure Lust. The act of longing propels a woman into her own country, that is into the realms of Elemental reality, discovering / uncovering her Elemental powers. It's something like this. When you see with your third eye your ordinary eyes also are open but you see all dimensions at once and begin to act accordingly. While your two ears are open, you hear also with an inner ear or what I might call the third ear. And so it is not an escapist's mysticism that I advocate, but rather a be-ing in this world that is also Otherworldly.

When I use the word *Elemental* to talk about the powers women are discovering in ourselves, of which perhaps at first we feel terrified, I have in mind many meanings. The Greek word for which *element* and *elemental* are translations used in the Epistles of Paul is *stoicheia* and I just want to put this into the scenery of our minds. *Stoicheia* translated as element, elemental, means earth, air, fire, water. It also means primal sounds of the alphabet. It means sun, moon, stars, planets. And it means elemental spirits, the intelligences that ensoul primal sounds of the alphabet; that ensoul animals, that ensoul nature.

One word that the christians used for Elemental spirits was *angels*. I personally am into reclaiming that word. Such spirits are not wimpy little cupid things. They are powerful spirit/matter. And of course in a reversal society this meaning would be minimized and trivialized. So are women. The attitude of Paul toward the Elemental Spirits is indicated in this example: "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belong to this world?" [Col. 2:20] Because I do, you idiot! Again he drives home the point: "Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are

on earth. For you have died and your life is hid with Christ and God.” [Col. 3:2-3] Speak for yourself.

In contrast to this, Elemental women experience ourSelves and therefore our quest is rooted in love for the earth and for things that naturally are on earth. Think, in contrast to all of that, of the words of Emily Brontë speaking through Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*. Catherine is speaking to Nelly: “If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable . . . I dreamt once that I was there. . . that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights where I woke sobbing for joy.” Of course these were patriarchally possessed angels and the point is that the joy of Elemental women is earthy and so is our wonderlusting quest. You see I don’t want them to have the Otherworld either. Even the patriarchal way of naming it suggests how boring it would be. They call it the “afterlife,” which suggests to me something like stagnation in a stag-nation. And that would be consistent with the society that they have created which is boring, boring. They bore and bore us, creating bore-ocracy, tying us down with bore-ocratic details and then electing themselves Chairman of the Bored. And the ultimate outcome was prophesied in the second epistle of Peter. Think of the following as self-fulfilling prophesy embedded in the brains of so-called secular scientists, big business men and all that: “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise and the elements will be dissolved with fire and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up.” [2 Pet. 3:10] Well, they’re trying. Women who have not died to the Elemental Spirits of the universe naturally do live as if we belonged to this world, which is the Otherworld in relation to the Sado-state, legitimated by Peter and Paul, Tom, Dick and Harry. Naturally we lust for Remembering the elements and Elemental Spirits.

When I was writing *Gyn/Ecology* I met a number of travelling companions, the Hags, Harpies, Cronos, Furies, Spinsters; but as the Spooking, Sparking, Spinning Voyagers continue to move and our Wanderlust/Wonderlust intensifies, the heat of our battles is heightened. The force of our fire is volcanic, epiphanic. The expanse of our journey is Astral/Archiac, and the Voyagers encounter Others. I think I may detect a few here, perhaps quite a few. For example, some of us have noticed that we are neither religious nor irreligious. We are Nag-Gnostic. To nag is to effect with recurrent awareness, uncertainty, need for consideration or concern, make recurrently aware of something as a problem, solution, etc. One meaning of *gnostic* is believing in the reality of transcendental knowledge. Nag-Gnostic, wild, Weird

women, then, sense with certainty the reality of transcendental knowledge and at the same time we never cease to nag ourselves and others with recurrent awareness and uncertainty. The Nags, who blaze the paths of Pure Lust are characterized by rich diversity. Fired by dreadful desire, we battle the butchers/botchers/blockers, reeling through new realms, Nags conjure forth Sister-Nagsters. The following list may summon forth a few We are—and you don't have to be part of this 'we'. I just use 'we' because I like it—my position is this, you will be punished just as much for being a little bit of a feminist as for going the whole way, so you might as well go the whole way. We are Augers, Brewsters, Dikes, Dragons, Dryads, Fates, Phoenixes, Gorgons, Maenads, Muses, Naiads, Nixes, Norns, Nymphs, Prudes.

*Prude! Prude!* The word *prude* has fallen into disrepute. It is a wonderful word. It is from the French *prudefemme* meaning wise or good woman, proud woman and it is rooted in the old French *prode* meaning good, capable, brave. Prude has the same etymological origins as proud. So Proud Prudes reclaim that name: "Prude", and "She's a prude." Right! Prudes, of course, are shrewd. Shrewd Prudes are glad to claim our name as *Shrew*. A shrew, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, means "a person, especially (now only) a woman given to railing or scolding or other perverse and malignant behaviour." Shrews are shrewd and indeed the term *shrewd* is derived from *shrew*. Shrewd Shrews, of course, are Scolds. A Scold is, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "in early use a person (especially a woman) of ribald speech; later a woman (rarely a man) addicted to abusive language." But given that the whole language of phallocracy is abusive to women, this definition is thought-provoking.

We are Soothsayers, we are Weirds. And if you look up *weird*, you find that one meaning of *Weird* is *Soothsayer*, Fate. As the Fates, Weirds are the three goddesses supposed to determine the course of human life. Obviously there are more than three of us. *Weird* can mean mysterious and there is even an adverb *Weirdward* meaning "bordering upon the supernatural." Women who have heard the Call of the Wild hear the Word of the Weird and this summons us weirdward—which means to the borders of the very natural, the supremely natural. And as we venture into this our homeland we conjure webs of Weird words and thus become Websters. According to Webster, *webster* is defined as a female weaver. Weaver, as a designation of woman, is derived from the Old English *Webbestre*, meaning female weaver. So Weavers/Websters of course are Spinsters and thus we are Virgins. One definition of Virgin is "never captured, unsubdued". Wild virgins assume this definition for ourselves and thus by breaking the rules of common usage we show that we are also Wantons. The adjective



*wanton* has as its first definition “lacking discipline, not susceptible to control, unruly”. This is an “archaic” definition; those are usually the best.

Now, many of us of course are Dikes. According to Webster’s, a *dike* is a “barrier preventing passage, especially protecting against or excluding something undesirable”. Needless to say, Dikes are called Viragos. A Virago is defined as “a loud, overbearing woman and “a woman of great stature, strength and courage: one possessing supposedly masculine qualities of body and mind”. Indeed Viragoes are Amazons possessing the great stature, strength and courage that are essentially female qualities of body and mind. Viragoes are Elemental.

So, there are obstacles in the way and I have found that women have been short on a vocabulary to name these obstacles. Well you know you can say prick, prick, prick. Here a prick, there a prick, everywhere a prick, prick. But it seemed that we needed a Prudishly Prepared Package of Precise Pejoratives and in order to help us in this task I enjoyed preparing a package which I call a Glossary of Snools. I will explain this. First of all, lest anyone be nervous, let me explain that these words do not necessarily name the essence of any sentient being. Neither do words like rapist or woman batterer or incestuous abuser. Nevertheless, if the rapist is a professor, a priest, a minister, university president, I would suspect that the gentleman’s behaviour would be affected by the fact that he is a rapist. So also snoolish behaviour—I would suspect that although this doesn’t name the essence of anyone, behaviour would be affected by the fact of being a snool. Snool is a wonderful word, they’ve kept it well hidden, snool rhyming with drool, cruel, school, fool, *Snool*, from the Scottish, means a cringing person. It also means a “tame, abject or mean-spirited person” according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It is also a verb; to snool means both to cow and to bully. So you can see that this names the chief characters of the sadosociety. In the sadosociety snools rule and snools are the rule. And thinking about various types of snools I thought of bores, botchers/butchers, cocks, danglers, dicks, drones, fakes, fixers, flashers, framers, hacks, hucksters, jabbers, jerks, jocks, plug-uglies. The word plug-ugly names one of the grosser snoolish incarnations. Again, you may find this in your standard dictionary. Plug-ugly is defined as “a member of a gang of disorderly ruffians often active in political pressure and intimidation”. Thus plug-uglies include your everyday rapists, child abusers, pimps, wife beaters, maimers, murderers, dismemberers, as well as professional hatchet men such as those physicians and surgeons, politicians, scientists and military experts who kill in order to cure. Plug-uglies inhabit every populated area of this planet.

There are also the fixers. If you think of the word *fix*, it has multiple, multiple meanings. *Fix*, what does it mean? It means to give a final or permanent form to, to make solid, to treat so as to make some condition permanent, to kill, harden, preserve. *Fix* also means to establish some trait or make as a trait permanent by selective breeding. It means fasten, it means to hold fast, capture; it means castrate, spay; it means to remove a principle means of defence as from a pet skunk. *Fix* means to determine the outcome of a contest by bribery or other improper methods. It means to tamper with in advance; *fix* means to get even with, punish. So, you see, this array of definitions discloses the tawdry tactics of the FIX-MASTERS who continually aim to freeze life, making Elemental be-ings stationary, implanted with fixes, non-volatile, solid, stolid, killed, hardened, preserved, selectively bred, fastened, captured, castrated, made defenseless, bribed, tampered with, so that we will forever cease from moving into our background. This is the State of the Grateful Dead.

There are also the ordinary sniffers, snitches, snookers, snoops, snot boys. I am indebted to the native women of Vancouver Island for the term "snot boy", which appears in one of the creation stories published in that wonderful book, *Daughters of Copper Woman*. These, the stories of the secret society of the native women of Vancouver Island handed down over thousands of years by their memorizers, are recorded by Anne Cameron and published in Vancouver by Press Gang Publishers. Anyway, there is a creation story which is at least a refreshing alternative to the Adam and Eve thing. Copper Woman is alone on the Island and she feels lonely and she is sobbing and sobbing and blowing her nose and sobbing, crying, blowing her nose, she can't stop herself, and she is embarrassed but she can't stop it; and she collects the mucus in a little shell and it sort of coagulates and squiggles around and eventually she names him Snot Boy. The incomplete mannequin, Snot Boy, is always incomplete; everything that he does is incomplete. So as I said it is a refreshing change from Eve born from that peculiar caesarean operation on Adam.

Such then are the rulers/snoolers of snooldom. The place/time where the air is filled with the crowing of cocks, the joking of jocks, the droning of clones, the sniveling of snookers and snudges, the noisy parades and processions of prickers. Such is cock-ocracy/jock-ocracy, the state of supernational, supernatural erections. This is a world made to the image of its makers, a chip off the old blocks/cocks, who are worshipped by the fraternal faithless in various trinitarian forms. I think of some of those in Washington, for example, as god the flasher, god the stud, and god the holy hoax.

The sadosociety then is thus ruled and these incarnations do indeed tend to block the way. Why then, one may ask, are women so slow in breaking out when we see the horror, the absurdity and the lies. Obviously some of us know about the imbedded negative self-images which are not once and for all imbedded but are constantly being imbedded through their media, through their religion, through their professions, through their ologies. From day one nursery rhymes, fairy tales and ordinary university classes embed them. These images are like time bombs inside, tidy time bombs, tick, tick, tick, ready at any moment to make a woman shrink back in fear or turn on her sister in self-hatred and horizontal violence. There's that, but there is also the imbedding of what I have come to think of as pseudo-emotions or—as I prefer to call them—pseudo-passions. Women are the touchable caste under patriarchy and in moving out of this we have to understand something about passions. Now I choose the strong word passion, because emotion and feeling have become so drooly in the therapeutic society. It's hard to use them without succumbing to psycho-babble: How do I feel about how you feel about how I feel about the way you deal with the way I feel.

So, with respect to real passions, here I draw from Aristotle. Aristotle and Aquinas, in the whole scholastic tradition, had a way of naming passions and the point about real passions, which I will spring off from in a moment, is they have nameable causes and objects. If you feel real passion you can do something about it. Thus love, desire, joy, hate, aversion, sorrow, are real in the sense that they have specific causes, objects. So also fear, daring, hope, despair, and rage are real passions. In contrast to fully expressed passions, there are pseudo-passions which are products of patriarchy and I suggest they are man-made products which paralyze, containing and concealing our fire, our true desire. I have discovered two species of these. The first species I have named plastic passions. Plastic passions are blobs in inner space. They are sort of these things in inner space that roll around, they roll and roll, paralyzing their victims, mainly women, draining our energies, perverting us from the pursuit of Elemental Wanderlust/Wonderlust. I think it would be an interesting exercise to consider now what plastic passions are bubbling around when you hear a radical feminist raging.

These have to be dealt with endlessly. Here is a list of plastic passions, these blobs in inner space with no nameable agents or objects, some that I have thought about. These unmoving, paralyzing feelings include anxiety, depression, guilt, hostility: "Oh, she's so hostile!" "Listen to her, so hostile toward men!" "It must be that Catholic background!" Right? Bitterness; reducing my passion to a lemon, and at that one of those little plastic lemons. Resentment,

resignation—the philosopher Simone de Beauvoir has written: “There is hardly a sadder virtue than resignation.” I think there is a sadder one, and I have found it. Fulfillment. These pseudo-passions exist, of course, as plastics exist. It’s not that they are not there, they are real the way plastic is real, non-biodegradable, but it is not organic. These are not organic.

Think about fulfillment. What would it be like to be a fulfilled woman. Is that what I want? To be filled full? Where do I go when I’m fulfilled? Can you imagine a passionate song or a great work of art about a full-filled woman? These man-made imitations of passion are sickening substitutes that poison/pollute our powers, preventing passion or e-motion that moves us out of the *sadostate*.

A second species of pseudo-passion I’ve called the potted passions. Potted means “planted or grown in a pot”. It also means “preserved in a closed pot, jar or can”. It means “made easily comprehensible or superficially attractive by abridgement or glamorization”, according to Webster’s. All of these definitions throw light on the potted passions for they are stunted, domesticated, confined, abridged, and glamorized, twisted and warped. Some years ago Marge Piercy wrote a poem, “*The Bonsai Tree*” in which she describes the tree which would have grown eighty feet tall but because it was pruned and pruned and pruned by the gardener it’s only nine inches tall. Stunted. So too, women have real but potted passions. These have objects but they are the wrong objects. Thus, women are trapped and tamed into loving, desiring, rejoicing in the wrong things. Hating, having aversion to, sorrowing over the wrong things. Women are reduced to fearing and daring the wrong things, hoping for and despairing over the wrong things, being angry over the wrong things. These passions are real to some extent but they stop short. They are less than they could be and women whose scope of passion is thus limited are themselves stunted, tragically. You know, so you’re angry again! Kick the television set, blame your mother. But this is not rage.

Thinking about rage, and when I was writing *Pure Lust* I thought very often about rage. I felt it very often, about all the time. I think rage is one of our greatest assets. That’s why it’s always put down. Rage is not a stage; it is not something to be gotten over. It is transformative, focusing force. Like a horse who streaks across fields on a moonlight night, her mane flying, rage gallops on pounding hooves of unleashed passion. The sounds of its pounding awaken transcendent e-motion. As the ocean roars her rhythms into every creature, giving birth to sensations of our common sources/courses, rage, too, makes senses come alive again, thrive again.

When you are aware of rage and outrage on behalf of women you are in touch with your pride. If you want to know about separation, the phallic state is the state of separation, that separates ourselves from ourselves. Radical women separate ourselves from the state of separation and that makes sense in a reversal society. It's something like this. When a woman has one strong thought and utters it, they say "Oh, she's a man-hater!" but in a woman-hating society what can "man-hater" mean? It's like calling a black person a racist. And so also, I would see separatism as a second order word. It doesn't name primarily my creativity; it doesn't name primarily our spinning, weaving creativity. It names necessary reactions as long as phallocracy is around and most primarily to me what separation, separatism, radical feminist separatism means is that I pare off the false selves that have been embedded, finding my deep self, my elemental connection. And I make choices then, very personal, strong choices of woman-bonding, separating myself from those forces that would keep me separated from myself.

Susan B. Anthony ragingly pondered the state which I would call the state of separation and she said—and I like to think of her as perhaps sitting over in that chair, Susan, one of the Elemental Spirits conjured tonight. In 1870, Susan B. Anthony said:

"So while I do not pray for anybody or any party to commit outrages, still I do pray, and that earnestly and constantly, for some terrific shock to startle the women of this nation into a self-respect which will compel them to see the abject degradation of their present position; which will force them to break their yoke of bondage, and give them faith in themselves; which will make them proclaim their allegiance to women first; which will enable them to see that man can no more feel, speak or act for woman than could the old slaveholder for his slave. The fact is women are [yes, Susan, still] in chains, and their servitude is all the more debasing because they do not realize it. O, to compel them to see and feel, to give them the courage and conscience to speak and act for their own freedom, though they face the scorn and contempt of all the world for doing it."<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, another great fore-sister whom I think is present, talked about courage.

"The manner in which all courage and self-reliance is educated out of the girl, her path portrayed with dangers and difficulties that never exist, is melancholy indeed. Better, far, suffer occasional insults or die outright than live the life of a coward or never move without a protector. The best protector any woman can have, one that will serve her at all times and in all places, is *courage*; and she must get this by her own experience and experience comes by exposure."<sup>2</sup>

Following in the paths of these many fore-sisters, including fore-sisters who were burned as witches, Virginia Woolf and fore-sisters present and future, I would like to move towards conclusion thinking about the breaking out of women as a summoning of our deep memories. Women are like volcanoes. Explosions of our ancestral racial deep memory are necessary to break the unnatural crusts of the Foreground. Such explosions coming from deep internal potency can be compared to the explosions of a volcano. A volcano is a vent in the earth's crust from which molten or hot rock and steam issue. Volcanic eruptions in women's deep Re-memberings are Elemental, breaking through the vents in the crust, and although these may be experienced as sudden, the forces that caused them have been brewing in deep natural cauldrons. Women ourselves are the brewsters as well as the cauldrons; we are the agents of our own elemental explosions. The rhythms of our Re-membering are not like the tedious, tidy, tick-tocks of the clocks and watches of tidy time: Father Time, which is very tidy, 9 to 5. Think also, of the doomsday clock. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist put out in the United States has in every issue, a sketch of what they call the doomsday clock. Midnight represents, of course, nuclear holocaust. In January 1984, they set the hands at three minutes to midnight. So much for the clocks and watches of Father Time. The rhythms of our Re-membering are tidal. We may find insights about these rhythms in the words of the scientist Rachel Carson, concerning a small, green worm known to marine biologists as *Convoluta roscoffensis* who lives in the sea sand, rising when the tide has ebbed and sinking into the sand when the tide returns. Sometimes scientists transfer a whole colony of these worms into an aquarium where there are no tides. Rachel Carson writes:

"But twice each day *Convoluta* rises out of the sand on the bottom of the aquarium, into the light of the sun. And twice each day she sinks again into the sand. Without a brain or what we would call a memory or even any very clear perception, *Convoluta* continues to live out her life in this alien place, remembering in every fibre of her small, green body the tidal rhythm of the distant sea."<sup>3</sup>

So, too even within these most alien places women can remember our original rhythms, and these rhythms are lunar, natural rhythms: Rhythms of spirit/matter, rhythms of imagining, of thinking, of psychic force.

The French Canadian genius—there are many geniuses—one is Louky Bersianik who wrote, among other books, a book called *The Euguelionne*. This is the story of a visitor from another planet who looks at the lives of women on this planet in astonishment. This is the English translation, of course, but you get the rhythm, it's the tidy,

tick-tock rhythm of possessed patriarchal women's lives. So in Louky's work there is a sample report of the lives of women on this patriarchally controlled planet.

#### FEATS BEHIND THE SCENES

Achieve. Assist. Balance the budget. Balance the meals. Bandage cuts. Bawl in hiding. Blanche. Buy. Care for. Chill. Clear. Console. Cook. Cut out. Cut up. Darn. Do the dishes. Drive. Drive. Dry dishes. Economize. Educate. Empty the ashtrays. Empty the garbage cans. Encourage. Endure. Feed. Flatter. Fold. Forbid. Forgive. Freeze. Gather laundry. Gather up garbage. Give. Go shopping. Heat up. Help. Iron. Keep. Keep (yourself) young. Laugh. Love. Maintain. Make children. Make love. Make meals. Make peace. Make sure homework's done. Pare. Pay off bills. Peel. Play. Preserve. Punish. Rinse. Roast. Rub. Serve. Set table. Sew. Shout. Shut (yourself) up. Stop (yourself) shouting. Sweep. Tidy. Use up leftovers. Wash. Wax. ETC." [pp. 131-132]

Tidiness has been enforced upon women both as passive recipients and as possessed instruments. This is the opposite of our own natural tidal time and rhythms and it's interesting, too, that *tidy* and *tidal* are from the same root as *demon*: *daiesthai* meaning to cut, divide, measure. And just as demons can be the patriarchal demons, *demon* can mean *daemon*, genius, muse. Tidiness has been enforced upon women. As passive recipients women absorb tidings of tidiness—of trapped, tamed linear thinking and feeling enforced through injections of potted fear and other pseudo-passions. As instrumental cooperators, women themselves become token tyrants of tidiness. Confined to the domains, chains of kitchen, office, schoolroom, hospital wards, shopping mall, women exercise pseudo-authority, cleaning and tidying, making their world trimmer, grimmer, fearfully "cheerful", tearful. Escaping home and the range to join male-led movements a woman finds herself in the same domestic role, cleaning up messes made by others. Relaxing in front of her tidy television set, she stares at images fashioned to tidy her brain. Boxes of Tide clutched by smilingly spic and span fembots jump off the screen to scour her mind. Tide's in, dirt's out! Down the spout, down and out. Down the drain, heart and brain. Dirt off the shirt, off with her head. Ding dong, the wicked Witch is dead. No complex grief or sorrowing here, just clean dismembering of her Tidal powers, her indwelling Demon, Genius, Muse.

And so I would like to close with an invocation. Think of all the archetypes coming through subliminal advertising, through the media in all forms. Everything is mediated; mediated experience is the name of the game. The etymology of *archetype* is revealing. *Arche* means origin. Thinking of *arche* I think of originality, of women's deep

origins, our original sunrise, our be-ing. *Type* is from the Greek *typtein* meaning "he beats" and from *tupati tumpati* the Sanskrit meaning "he hurts". Patriarchal archetypes beat into shape our originality, hammering it into shape. And then there is the repetition of these archetypes in the form of little plastic stereotypes, such as the wimpy plastic madonnas in the religious stores or the fembots on television.

When looking up archetype I came upon the word archimage which is also from *archi-*, origin, and it means, according to the dictionary, great original wizard. But, of course, we know what that means in a world of reversal: Great original Witch. There is a great Witch inside every living woman and I think that Witch who is buried there underneath the rubble, in the cauldron, is speaking, and sometimes she howls and sometimes she screams, sometimes she whispers and sometimes she speaks in a cackling way, and sometimes in a very somber way, sometimes she roars. But what the Witch within each living woman says is something like: 'Hug my earth, fly with my winds, roar with my waters, light my fire'!

*The following is a transcription from audio-tape of some of the question period that followed Dr. Daly's talk.*

MD: I guess I'm my own chair, which is fine. A chaircrone. For about twelve years now it has been my custom in public gatherings, speaking about feminist subjects, to accept questions only from women. I can hardly break that tradition so this, of course, is a risky operation. Unfortunately, the question may often come from the man sitting next to a woman who speaks; or from, I don't know, the male in the head. It's much more difficult, and in case you should want any brief explanation, I'll get it over with. Some years ago I did debate with men, for example, with William F. Buckley on television. It wasn't hard. And with dozens of Father Murphys and Professor Joneses. Often it would be a panel where perhaps Father Murphy was the one on the right and Professor Daly on the left and then the bearded little know-it-all liberal was in the middle and of course it was a set-up. You know, of course, who was crazy. But the point is that, well, I can say a lot of things. I really don't want to have to say any of them. You can think of it as a consciousness-raising experience, but I am thinking primarily of women's consciousness. And, after all, it's not a bad idea after all these many centuries in which women have been silent and intimidated, that women speak.

Q: Question from a woman in the audience regarding boycott of *The Chronicle-Herald* and *The Mail Star* because of the comic strip, THE GIRLS. She suggests boycott start December 1, 1984.



MD: I think it's important to have specific strategies like that. It's also important to be aware of the vastness of subliminal embeds. They are everywhere in ads, everywhere, everywhere. You do know, don't you. There are books, for example, by Wilson Brian Key, his older books such as *Subliminal Seduction* and *Media Sexpolitation*. He doesn't by any means have a feminist analysis, but you can work that in very easily because the ads are all woman-hating, pornographic and there is an enormous pornographic industry, we all know that. But, although as philosophers women have to be putting the severed parts together, thinking of all the connectedness in our activities, it is also important to be very specific, and so I'm glad you're taking that action.

*Q: Another question from the audience.*

MD: Could you hear that? No! She said that I speak of intimidation and asked me if I thought there was a future for women in the Catholic church. I left the Catholic church many years ago. Maybe you're confused by the fact that I teach it at Boston College. I was a Catholic. I wrote of reform of the church. Obviously now I don't think this is possible. I think that a woman attempting to reform the Catholic Church or in fact any Christian church is in a position similar to that of a black who would try to reform the Ku Klux Klan. And when you see the inherent illogic of that, you stop letting your energy be drained. It's an incredible energy drain. I published *The Church and the Second Sex* in 1968. At that time, after Vatican II, there was great hope, and besides radical feminist consciousness hadn't evolved. As usual they had stomped out feminist consciousness and so we had to go back generation after generation, going through the whole process again. Had I had available to me, really available, Matilda Joslyn Gage's work or Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, had I been educated, (my seven degrees were not an education in the real sense), I perhaps wouldn't have had to go through that reformist stage. But, no, I obviously don't think there is any hope for women in those churches. The idea of a woman priest, blessing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is a very convoluted phenomenon, particularly when you consider that Yahweh is a pale derivative of the Goddess, one of whose names was Iahu, and that then in Christianity he became this three-in-one oil the Trinity. They often talk of it as a triangle, trying to find some kind of symbol for your dull wits to grasp it, the mystery. But then it's dulled out, a reversal derivative of the idea of the triple goddess. If I had a blackboard here I'd draw a road. We're approaching Hallowe'en so it's a good time to think about it, think of a road that forks in different directions and it's like a triangle turned inside out and it's at the crossroads at the moments of choice, of decision that you meet the Goddess. And when I say Goddess I'm conscious of using

metaphor, I'm speaking of a verb, I'm speaking of Be-ing. But at any rate, a priest, a female Christian priest, it seems to me, is in a very peculiar position because to begin with you have this transsexed Yahweh and the whole scenario is so bizarre when you think of the Trinity. I did spend years studying it in Fribourg, Switzerland, in Latin. You know it was fascinating, in the early '60's, trying to figure it out, trying to know, to understand. And I learned, but not what they wanted me to learn. But at any rate, just think that the Father thinks forth himself and so he thinks and thinks and then he generates the Son and there is this eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation and through their mutual love they eternally spirate the Holy Ghost. And there's this thing, this male monogender mating, the supreme boys' club, the Men's Association, the all-male monastery. To imagine as a great ambition then, being in a position of celebrating that, is bizarre beyond words. This is a symbol system that is inherently, profoundly oppressive to women. As long, it seems to me, as God is imaged as male then the male can continue to strut around believing that he is God. And women also are indoctrinated on many levels, not all of them overt, many subliminal, into believing the same thing. But then when you think that originally there were priestesses, you see that priests are in a sort of transsexed situation. Look at the Pope; he was visiting Canada recently. Mother of the decade. He's been plopping down on, I was going to say planet after planet, but you know what I mean, country after country, kissing the ground of each country . . . and sort of this queen, this heavenly queen, this motherly, granite-jawed figure . . . Oh, I have a wonderful example of double-think here which is all very much connected with your question. It's from His Holiness. It's from 1983 but it doesn't matter, every year it's the same. The *Boston Globe* or *Glob* as some of us call it, printed an Associated Press report from Vatican City: "Pope John Paul II took his strongest stand yet against ordaining women as priests and told U.S. bishops yesterday to reaffirm traditional church views on sex and marriage, even if they are unpopular. The Pope, addressing twenty-three U.S. bishops at his summer residence in Castel Gondolfo, south of Rome, said they must strongly reaffirm church stands against contraception, divorce, homosexuality, premartial sex and abortion. But, the Pontiff also called on the bishops to oppose discrimination against women by reason of sex." You know, George Orwell, in 1984, it's all here.

*Q: inaudible*

MD: Well, you see, a key idea, if somehow this could be woven more and more into visibility, tangibility for women, is that this is a society of reversal. Of biggest lies. You watch the political debates, anything that

Reagan says you just think of the opposite, you know, and you're a little closer to the truth. They name a nuclear weapon the Peacekeeper, and what was formerly called the Department of War is called Department of Defense, etc. We all know about reversal on that level. But reversals are everywhere. As a friend of mine said, when everything is bizarre, then it seems nothing is bizarre. But in order to maintain your own sense of reality in the face of reversals, which are omnipresent in the foreground of patriarchy, it is absolutely essential that you bond with other women for, of course, a cognitive minority of one will be made to feel crazy—will be made to feel that she is absolutely nuts, and I think that there is in every woman a terror of that. And I think that when you do see *Elementally*, in a deviant, defiant way then you are a cognitive minority. Of course you will be named that way. A woman who has a roaring sense of humour is considered humourless. "Oh, she has no sense of humour!" It's because she doesn't shuffle. So, I would emphasize for women who really begin to understand those fears and to confront them, that it is absolutely essential to bond with other women in a way that through our own spinning conversations, we constantly reinforce our own sense of reality. I don't care where. You know women's space can be anywhere but it is most essential that we have it. They have pretty much possessed women's studies in most universities, it's been quite tamed, although good courses do exist and good women are there. I would never deny that, but it isn't what it could be. It's castrated. There again, "castrating bitch"—it's women whom they're always trying to castrate, physically and psychically. But, you know, find women's space, create it, it can be in the back of a station wagon, it can be in your apartment, it can be out in the park, but where women who identify as women spin and weave together our own ideas, this kind of space *is*, and I have experienced it over and over. The most remarkable things happen when women claim a space to think our own thoughts out loud, freely. And that space will be, is, women only. It's a place where we remember, it is a place where we create future memories, memories of the future. I don't know if you want to say anything more about that subject. But you see that the point is that it's all crazy anyway. It is, it's crazy. A sign of sanity is to be called weird. One possible sign.

*Q: Again inaudible.*

Daly: I'm very much into trees. And it is what is naturally me. But you see, I think that we have been isolated, I know we have, from our natural environment. And the more and more plasticized the environment becomes, the more and more you are glued to a television set, having your brain waves fixed for you, the less the possibility for being

really in touch, breaking out of the touchable caste and positively touching, breaking the terrible taboo. So, yes, it is essential to bond with women, with one's SELF, with other women, with the elements. And trees are not just vacuous symbols. Just think, Christmas is approaching. Millions of trees are slaughtered, and to see a truck of those dead trees, those killed trees go by, is a horrifying experience, especially when you realize that a tree is a living metaphor of the female principle, of elemental life. And think of what they do to Christmas trees, then, after killing them. They take them inside and while they still smell alive, look alive, so that it is all very deceitful, they doll them up. We're trained to doll them up and fetishize them. As a kid, I though Christmas trees were wonderful until I had one revelatory experience. I had some sense that there was something terribly wrong. But, I think that women living in cities need not be so separated from nature. You do after all have the sky, you have the moon, you have the stars. The connections that we have with them are natural and elemental and I want to claim those connections. I live on this earth and I love it.

*Q: Inaudible*

Daly: Well, I can't answer that question. I'm not excluding entirely the possibility for some communication with males. Obviously that is not my primary concern. In a way I answered that in *Beyond God The Father*. I haven't seen any sense in changing what I wrote then. I think that women discovering ourselves under patriarchy and moving to the boundaries experience a power of presence in ourselves. And that power of presence is experienced by those who would objectify us as power of absence. Our absence may be physical, for example we may not be in their churches, at their meetings, where they want us to be, we may be there physically but it's clear that we are not present to be used, to be objectified in certain situations. And what that absence does, that withdrawal of energy, is put the male into a situation of great opportunity, in fact. Because I think they have set up this society in such a way that they know how to tap energy sources, whether it be atoms or coal or wood or women, and they have arranged this society in such a way that each has his own battery at home and perhaps several batteries at the office. Women are batteries. If you refuse to be a battery, then the male has to find the source of energy in himself. The patriarchal male then is thrown back upon his own possibility for generating his own energy, without sapping, vampirizing, women. And that, indeed, would be a great opportunity, it seems to me—to be able to not be a parasite, to not be a vampire. But, the trick is, if you do this primarily for men, again, you are missing the point, because

women under patriarchy have never been *for ourselves*. Yes, most women bond with men in some way, but I'm inviting you to consider something else: the gynergizing, ecstatic experience of woman-bonding. Then you may want to reconsider that question or ask it again but it will be in a different context, in a different environment.

## NOTES

1. Personal correspondence, cited in Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, (Incianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1898), p. 366.
2. Letter to Woman's Suffrage Convention, 1851, in *History of Woman Suffrage*, 1, 816.
3. *The Sea Around Us*, pp. 154-5.