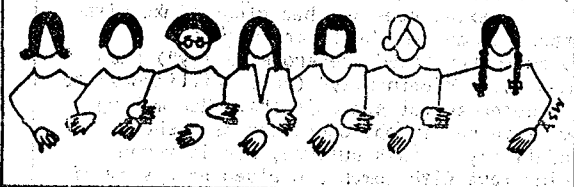


Women's Studies

March 1995

Candlelight Vigil

On Friday, March 17, Women's Issues Group will sponsor a candlelight vigil for survivors of rape and incest. The event will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will occur at Crim Dell Amphitheatre. The program will include testimonials from survivors, along with music and poetry. If you have a testimonial, or a song or poem to perform or read, please call Kristi at 221-4753. If you have a testimonial, but wish for it to be anonymous and read by someone else, feel free to slip it under my (Kristi's) door at Hunt Hall, room 202, by Thursday, March 16. Rain date: Friday, March 24.



FORUM: PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN AND CULTURE

Women's Studies 205: Perspectives on Women and Culture, will hold forums every Tuesday evening at 7:30 p.m. in Washington Hall, room 201. All are welcome. The schedule of forums for March is as follows: Mar. 14: Small Happiness, documentary on women in rural China; Mar. 21: Panel Discussion on the Family; Mar. 28: Workshop on Heterosexism and Homophobia; Apr. 4: Rosie the Riveter, film on U.S. women during World War II.

SUMMER INTERNSHIP MONEY AVAILABLE

The Carol Woody Scholarship is available for women students interested in receiving "real world" experience to complement their W&M studies. Awards from \$100 to \$400 are available for summer internships. To apply, submit a one-page proposal to Dr. Green, Women's Studies Office, 327 Richmond Road, by April 10. For more information, call Dr. Green at 221-2457.

WASHINGTON D.C. TRIP POSTPONED

Women's Issues Group has rescheduled its trip to D.C. The group now plans to go on a Saturday in late March or early April. All members of the W&M community are invited. Transportation to the Women's Art Museum and Lammis, A Women's Bookstore, will be provided. For more information, or to sign up, call Melanie at 221-5623.

W&M JOURNAL OF WOMEN AND THE LAW

Women's Studies welcomes the addition of an important new resource, the William and Mary Journal of Women and the Law.

Women's Studies holds a copy of the journal at the office, 327 Richmond Road. Topics addressed in this first issue include anti-stalking bills, abortion law, and a feminist analysis of breast implant litigation.

RIGHT-WING ALERT: BREAKING THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

A new e-mail list has been created concerning the campus response to the right-wing initiatives in the "Contract With America." This "Contract" includes proposals to slash education funding, end environmental protections, eliminate programs addressing violence against women, destroy the safety net for the poor, and scapegoat immigrants for economic problems. The new e-mail list is called CAN-RW (Campus Activists' Network, Right-Wing Alert), and discussion will focus, at least for the first few weeks, on student organizing. After this, the list will serve as a forum to educate people about the growth of right-wing movements which have led to proposals such as the contract. To subscribe, send e-mail to: canet@pencil.cs.missouri.edu with a subject of "canet" whose body just says: sub can-rw Your Name "digest".

CONFERENCES / CALLS FOR PAPERS

Feminism Beside Itself

Indiana University presents this conference, to be held March 23-25. On-site registration is \$35 for faculty, \$25 for students. For more information, contact Diane Elam at (812) 330-8269.

Population, Women, Environment

The Principia College School of Government presents the 46th annual Public Affairs Conference, to be held April 6-8 in Elsau, Illinois. For more information, contact Yannick Laclau, Director, Public Affairs Conference, Principia College, Elsau, IL 62028. Phone: (618) 374-4938.

National Women's Studies Assoc.

NWSA '95--"Women's Movements: Cultural, Intellectual, and Political (R)evolutions"--will take place June 21-25 at the University of Oklahoma. Speakers will include bell hooks, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Charlotte Bunch, and Cynthia Enloe. For registration information, contact Loretta Younger at the National Office. Phone: (301) 403-0524/0525. E-mail: nwsa@mail.umd.edu.

Physical Illness and Sexuality

The Journal of Sex Research requests paper submissions for a special issue of the Journal, "Bodies Besieged: The Impact of Chronic and Serious Physical Illness on Sexuality, Passion, and Desire." Manuscripts are due August 1. For more information, send a letter and SASE to Naomi B. McCormick, Ph.D.,

Dept. of Psychology, SUNY-Plattsburgh, Plattsburgh, NY 12901; or you may e-mail her at: mccormnb@splava.cc.plattsburgh.edu.

Feminist Theory and Music III
The University of California, Riverside, will host this conference from June 15-18. A primary aim of the conference is "to develop a critical language, common to all the subdisciplines of music, that intersects with the insights of feminist theory." For more information, contact Philip Brett, Feminist Theory and Music III, Department of Music, University of California, Riverside, CA 92521-0325.

International Feminist Summer School
Odense University of Denmark will host this intensive two week course for Ph.D. students, titled "Gender, Body, Subject--Other: Feminism in Science and Cultural Studies from Multicultural and Interdisciplinary Perspectives," from August 17-30. The course will be conducted in English. For more information and/or an application, contact: Nina Lykke, Department of Feminist Studies, Odense University, Campusvej 55, DK-5230 Odense M. Denmark.

Women and Leisure
The University of Georgia in Athens will host this conference from May 10-13. Fees are \$130 for faculty, \$95 for students. Meals will be provided. For more information, contact Diane M. Samdahl, Dept. of Recreation and Leisure Studies, 223 Hardman Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602-2303.

LET'S DIALOGUE

From the recent survey put forth by the Women's Studies Program at the Women's Studies Tuesday night forum, many of you indicated you were interested in exploring the issue of women and religion. In what ways do you believe women are oppressed in organized religions? I encourage you to write (anonymously), sharing your lived experiences. Send comments, responses, or questions to: LoraLee Clark, 327 Richmond Rd., Women's Studies Program.



WHAT CAN I DO? SEX, SEXUALITY, AND FEMINISM

Many people feel sex and sexuality shouldn't be subject to feminist analyses. The standard objection is: "I don't think anyone should spend time analyzing what people do in their bedrooms as long as everyone in the bedroom has consented to it." However, in our society the following chart indicates the "appropriate" gender roles for sex and sexuality:

SEX	Female	Male
GENDER	Woman	Man
GENDER ROLE	Feminine	Masculine
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Heterosexual	Heterosexual
STYLE	Passive	Aggressive
SEX POSITION	Bottom	Top
RELATION TO PLEASURE	Gives	Takes

We live in a culture that does not affirm sexual freedom. Take for example the classic (yet unfortunately still well-and-alive) virgin/whore dichotomy, heterosexism, homophobia, and sacrosanct views concerning bisexuality and transsexualism. And how are those who choose celibacy over another form of sexuality seen? We can sell cars, beer, and perfume with sex but we cannot examine it at a political level? How can sex not be political when it clearly oppresses and coerces?

Sexual coercion has clear links with heterosexism: men should prove their "masculinity" (read "heterosexuality") and women their "femininity" (read "willingness to be a heterosexual sex object"). Men making love with men is not appraised as a show of masculinity in this culture, nor is women making love with women appraised as a show of femininity.

Make no mistake: The struggle to end prejudice, exploitation, and oppression of lesbians, gay men, and other sexual minorities is a crucial feminist agenda. As bell hooks states, "It is a necessary component of the movement to end female sexual oppression. Affirming lesbianism, women of varied sexual preferences resist the perpetuation of compulsory heterosexuality" (p. 151). Hooks further states that "[j]ust as the struggle to end sexual oppression aims to eliminate heterosexism, it should not endorse any one sexual choice; celibacy, bisexuality, homosexuality, or heterosexuality" (p. 152).

Women need to know they can be politically committed to the advocacy of feminism regardless of their sexual preferences or practices. Before advocates of feminism can develop oppressive- and coercive-free sexual theories, we must first become aware of how our established cultural constructs are detrimental to the everyday lived experiences of women. We must examine how we as individuals support and maintain our and other women's oppression in the areas of sex and sexuality.

Support the varying degrees and practices of free sexuality. Encourage women who choose to examine and/or reexamine their sexuality or who wrestle with questions similar to those posed in this article. Keep in mind that the heart of feminism centers on choice, regardless of what one's choices concerning sex and sexuality are.

(Supporting materials gathered from the August/September 1993 issue of Off Our Backs and from Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center by bell hooks (1984).

Kay Domine
Swem Library
University Archivist