

First, I think it is clear that her postcards from Rome were the original “postcards from the edge.” It was a margin that she deftly and courageously turned into a center à la bell hooks. I think it is fair to say that she sparked millions of people to see the blatant hypocrisy and injustice of a male-only clerical caste pretending to be the guardians of the Catholic theo-ethical jewels that Mary so valued at one point in her life. She declared a pox on their house and they on hers. I am confident that history will treat her far more kindly than it will treat those who continue to abuse children, disregard women, and dishonor queer people in the name of a divine that few recognize. In short, Mary was right early on about institutional Roman Catholicism.

Second, her reaction to the women-church movement was typical of her reaction to many things that she did not fully understand—like racism and transgender people—in that it was blunt and reflexive. This is not a helpful way for a public intellectual to further the conversation. On consideration, she softened her view, even changed a bit as she increasingly understood, for example, how we at the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) serve no church but provide feminist intellectual and pastoral resources that women want and need regardless of their faith perspectives.

To her credit, Mary continued to grow in her support for the variety of ways women create radical spaces for survival and thriving. I take this as evidence of her understanding far more deeply on issues of racism and transgender than her sometimes-unannounced public statements would indicate. At the same time, her unambiguous challenges force the rest of us to reexamine presuppositions, guard against co-optation, and otherwise stay on our theopolitical toes. It is a trade-off.

Finally, there is simply no denying that for whatever reasons Mary loved the *Summa* and all of its complex, well-parsed, thoughts. I suspect it was not just because she was the “peeping Thomist” I always jokingly accused her of being. Rather, it was because she respected the Catholic intellectual tradition in which, despite her many moves away from it, she was formed. She knew it could be a source of cosmic goodness. So she made it so despite itself.

Based on these three anecdotes, I submit that Mary Daly’s feminist relationship to Catholicism, a good subject for a book, had many layers. While she was formed in the 2,000-year-old faith tradition, she changed it more than it changed her. For the safety and well-being of the world, this is a good thing for which future generations remain in her cosmic debt.

FINDING NECROPHILIA IN MEAT EATING: MARY DALY’S EVOLVING FEM-VEG PERSPECTIVE

Carol J. Adams

Mary Daly’s books, like her life, are populated with animals. From William

Blake's "Tyger, Tyger burning bright"¹ on the dedication page of *Beyond God the Father* to her cat coauthors of the Cat/egorical Appendix to *Pure Lust*,² from the cow who jumped over the moon in *Outercourse*,³ and all the animals who joined her (and Mary) there: frogs, tigers, seals, emus, elephants, canaries, raccoons, wolves, whales, bears, bats, squirrels, birds, and trillions of insects. From the gorillas, like Dian Fossey, hacked to death, and discussed in the *Wickedary*,⁴ from Dolly the Sheep, transgenic pigs, and whales and dolphins in *Quintessence*,⁵ to the Irish setter and Emily the Cow who was about to be "murdered" (Mary's words) and escaped from a slaughterhouse in *Amazon Grace*.⁶ Besides the clover blossom,⁷ the famous hedge,⁸ the lilac bush,⁹ and the dandelions she felt connections to, there are a large number of animals with whom she had friendly connections as she was growing up.

Mary was friends with and inspired by twentieth-century feminist literary scholar Andrée Collard. She wrote the foreword to Collard's *Rape of the Wild: Man's Violence against Animals and the Earth* in 1988. Collard, Daly writes, "really cared what happened to any bird or beetle that crossed her path."¹⁰

Daly refers to the process of camouflaging "cruelty [against animals] with rever-

¹ Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon, 1973).

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame they fearful symmetry?

² Mary Daly, *Pure Lust* (Boston: Beacon, 1984), 413–17.

³ Mary Daly, *Outercourse* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992), 342–43.

⁴ Mary Daly, *Webster's First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language* (Boston: Beacon, 1987), 204.

⁵ Mary Daly, *Quintessence: Realizing the Archaic Future. A Radical Elemental Feminist Manifesto* (Boston: Beacon, 1998).

⁶ Mary Daly, *Amazon Grace: Re-calling the Courage to Sin Big* (NY: Palgrave/Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, 2005).

⁷ "I was launched on this Quest [to become a philosopher] by the Be-Speaking of a clover blossom which Announced its be-ing to me, thereby bestowing upon me an ineffable gift—an intuition of being. This Be-Speaking also gave me a kind of 'Interior Compass'" (Daly, *Outercourse*, 113).

⁸ At St. Mary's Notre Dame, in graduate school, "It was during my sojourn at St. Mary's that I had an experience that I recognized as the sequel to my adolescent encounter with the clover blossom, which had given me an intuition of be-ing. This time the Speaker was a hedge on the campus that caught my attention one shimmering, dewy morning. The hedge added to the message given me years before. It not only Announced its be-ing to me. The hedge Said: 'Continued existence.' . . . The hedge simply unfolded more of the Background knowledge implicit in the Speaking of the clover blossom. I was deeply grateful for that Elemental encounter" (Daly, *Outercourse*, 51).

⁹ "I also had friendly connections with my guardian angels and with a number of animals in the neighborhood, with certain trees (a catalpa tree, especially), and with the rosebush and the lilac bush that grew in our back yard, and the dandelions that came back every year" (Daly, *Outercourse*, 30).

¹⁰ Mary Daly, "Foreword," in Andrée Collard and Joyce Contrucci, *Rape of the Wild* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), ix.

sals and soul-killing banality.” Knowing what happens to animals means getting involved. For many years, she served on the board of Feminists for Animals Rights.

By the time of *Outercourse*, she was citing *Animal Factories* by Jim Mason and Peter Singer.¹¹ Regarding the cow who jumped over the moon, she remarked that the cow was “seen by some foolish farmer as basically no more than an udder and a breeder, perhaps as a large package of potential hamburger.”¹² Mary had not only feline but also bovine familiars.

As opposed to “gynocide and biocide,” the “taming and killing of women and animals and all life,”¹³ and especially *necrophilia*—which I believe operates whenever someone eats a dead animal—Daly believed in biophilia and Be-ing. Biophilia: “the Original Lust for Life that is at the core of all Elemental E-motion; Pure Lust which is the Nemesis of patriarchy, the Necrophilic State.”¹⁴

She also wrote: “All Wild creatures and Other realities participate in Being. By which I mean ‘Ultimate/Intimate Reality, the constantly Unfolding Verb of Verbs which is intransitive, having no object that limits its dynamism.’ . . . The Shock of meeting Be-ing is simple and direct. It is absolutely surprising and joyous. It is Self-transformative and changes Everything.”¹⁵

Mary and I had a great beginning, a gulf of many years, and then a fascinating time of conversation and mutual critique in the 1990s. My evolving feminist-veganism and her evolving biophilic philosophy bumped up against each other at times. Usually, at least in the beginning, she had the last word.

I moved to Boston to study with Mary in 1974. She would later write about the 1970s that “the connections between the expropriation of animal life and the imprisonment of women in the patriarchal State of Possession were not as clear to me—or to any of us—as they would subsequently become.”¹⁶ But I’d like to argue that the trajectory of Mary Daly’s thought proves an important point of radical feminist theory: radical feminist theory is the logical home for decentering humans and expanding our vision to including other than humans. In other words, it makes sense that feminists like Collard and I sought out Mary, and that Mary was supportive of these ideas.

I became a vegetarian the week that I moved to the Boston area. I also began attending Mary’s Feminist Ethics class, which taught me how to think and theorize about women’s inequality. That fall, mulling over the readings for her class and those I was doing independently, and living in the midst of the Boston-Cambridge feminist community (I have always said that being in that community in the 1970s

¹¹ Daly, *Outercourse*, 343n.

¹² *Ibid.*, 343.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 385.

¹⁴ Daly, *Wickedary*, 67.

¹⁵ Daly, *Amazon Grace*, 45.

¹⁶ Daly, *Outercourse*, 147n. She is referring to the 1972 meeting of the American Academy of Religion, and the extracurricular activity that occurred, specifically, visiting a “Lion Country Safari.”

was like Gertrude Stein living in Paris in the 1920s), I suddenly realized there were connections between feminism and vegetarianism, between meat eating and patriarchy. I asked Mary if I could do a paper on this for her class and she said yes.

One time Mary came to dinner. I had been reading *Herland* (which features a vegetarian matriarchy) in its original form at the Schlesinger Library (it wasn't yet available in paperback then). As we ate, I said to Mary, "do you know what Charlotte Perkins Gilman said today?" Mary turned to me and called me a "necrophiliac." She was writing *Gyn/Ecology* at the time and necrophilia was much on her mind. If only I had time traveled and read the book Mary had not yet written that talked about transtemporal travels, I could have said, "Gilman came here to talk to me about biophilia!" Instead, I looked at her shocked, and poured us some more of her black-cat wine.

Later, when we were all gathered together planning a protest against Boston College, Mary went up to one of the plants in my apartment and said, "Carol eats beings like you." At that famous Boston College protest, Emily Culpepper, Linda Barufaldi, and I had prepared a skit we entitled "Foremothers in Two Acts by Three Odd Women." (Mary had not developed the idea of the nonhierarchical and nonlinear "foresister" yet.) One of the many readings from our foresisters was one by Madame de Stael. She said, "The more I see of men, the better I like dogs." Right after those words were spoken, a dog barked. Add that dog to Mary Daly's list of animal friends.

When *Gyn/Ecology* came out, I wrote in the margin of my copy of the book, "use Mary [s ideas] to critique herself as sister." I was disappointed because I wanted her to more explicitly identify domesticated animals as victims within the necrophiliac state. Where do we see death where they see life? I believe this is a basic question for feminist and progressive theology. I see it on the plate of meat eaters, and in the glass of (cow's) milk.

In the first edition of *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, I wrote, "When Mary Daly suggests raiding the *Playboy's* playground to let out 'the bunnies, the bitches, the beavers, the squirrels, the chicks, the pussycats, the cows, the nags, the foxy ladies, the old bats and biddies, so that they can at last begin naming themselves' we, her readers, know that she is talking about women and not about actually bunnies, bitches, beavers, and so on. But I argue she should be."¹⁷ I wanted the conscious, active articulation of interconnected oppressions, not the subtle, linguistic acknowledgment.

Late one night, Mary and I discussed this passage and my charge that follows that citation, that "feminist theorists' use of language describes, reflects, and perpetuates oppression by denying the extent to which these oppressions are culturally analogous."¹⁸ Mary challenged my way of challenging her and writing about this problem in radical feminism.

¹⁷ Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 61, quoting Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

My marginalia on my own copy of *The Sexual Politics of Meat* includes this quotation from Mary next to the passage in the book where I criticized her writing: That night, on the phone, she said to me: "We do our best." She was right, as feminist theorists, we do our best. In the tenth anniversary edition of *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, I removed that specific quotation of Mary's about cows and nags and bats and biddies. I also changed my conclusion: "Feminist theorists' use of language should describe and challenge oppression by recognizing the extent to which these oppressions are cultural analogous and interdependent."¹⁹ I learned something important. How does one critique sister theorists? I think there is a more honest way to do it than simply publishing one's disagreements.

The interconnections in the view and treatment of women and nature that *Gyn/Ecology* identifies, *Outercourse* picks up on, discussing how these patterns of destruction have continued. Mary writes, "The torture of animals in laboratories and in agribusiness beggars description."²⁰

In a late-night telephone conversation Mary and I had in 1996, I objected to the cloning of Dolly (and consider the sexual-politics-of-meat nature of Dolly's naming—she was cloned from a mammary gland so she was named for the buxom, according to the patriarchal gaze, Dolly Parton). Mary challenged me that my critique was too narrow: "Cloning, animal factories. What about genetically modified organisms (GMOs)?" "But," I wanted to say: "animal agriculture, factory farms, this is not narrow!"

In a September 2010 e-mail, Richard Twine, author of *Animals as Biotechnology: Ethics, Sustainability, and Critical Animal Studies*, told me, "I'm amazed that neither animal studies nor critical animal studies has a good mapped-out description of the major players in the meat industrial complex, or at least not one that I know of." How little we know. How little we knew.

And so it went.

In fall 1974, some of us gave a presentation honoring Susan B. Anthony at Radcliffe College. Mary came. When it was over, she approached me, shaking her head, and said, "About Susan B. Anthony's motto 'Failure Is Impossible.' My ambitions are greater than that." And yet she returned to Anthony in the closing pages of *Outercourse*, which ends with Anthony's famous words, "Failure is impossible." I like to believe I helped her embrace Anthony's words as affirmations.

This year, the twentieth-anniversary edition of *The Sexual Politics of Meat* appeared. To the original dedication remembering all the animals being killed to become food, I added this one: "In memory of Mary Daly, my first reader. She opened worlds where we found ourselves at home."²¹ Even our critiques

¹⁹ Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat, Tenth Anniversary Edition* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 72.

²⁰ Daly, *Outercourse*, 222n.

²¹ Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat, Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (New York: Continuum, 2010), vii.

of her arise from within the space she helped to create. I think she recognized that; it is only one of the many reasons failure truly is impossible.

CELEBRATING AND CON-QUESTIONING MARY DALY

Xochitl Alvizo

It was five years ago here at the American Academy of Religion (AAR) conference that I first saw Mary Daly in person. At that session, one of the women who spoke with Mary said, "nothing is complete. There is no complete system—there are only conversations, we can learn and receive from each other, and we can give and teach each other."

And that is part of what I want to emphasize here today: how we can build on and build up each other's work. One of the first things Mary Daly did at that AAR session was conjure our fore Sisters. It was a beautiful practice and a new one for me that I witnessed her model that day. She started by quoting, "You will forget us but maybe someday someone will remember us"—so we remembered them: Sappho, Sojourner Truth, Hildegard, Theresa of Avila, Virginia Woolf, and Matilda Joselyn Gage.¹

Some of the women I knew; some I did not, but rest assured that I went home and looked up the ones I didn't know. Mary set a mood of *gynergy*, remembering the liberating work of women gone before us, affirming that their energy and work still exist and was present. Mary herself invited women to build on her work and each other's work. For nothing is complete—there is no complete system.

At times, Mary's work reads as if she thought she had a complete system—but she herself knew better. I worked with her the last two years of her life, learning from her and learning to con-question with her, as well as engage in the mundane tasks of everyday life with her, the beta. Although, with Mary's fiery spirit, nothing ever was really mundane. That first day in Mary Daly's presence, I lost my breath and all ability to articulate any words—I was a bit of a bumbling goof. But I went from that first moment with her to being with her during her last days, the days when her own breath was leaving her. It is one of those rare experiences that makes you really believe that divine forces are at work for your delight.

Mary Daly expected us all to continue building on each other's work, learning and receiving from, questioning, and building on. When we would raise questions to her or disagree with her, she would say—"Good then, now go build! Go beyond what I've done." She did not take for granted the wisdom we receive from one another and the fact that we can continue building on it. Because no wisdom is complete. She knew that.

¹ Mary Daly, "Fascism, Fundamentalism, and Women's Resistance," November 20, 2005, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

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