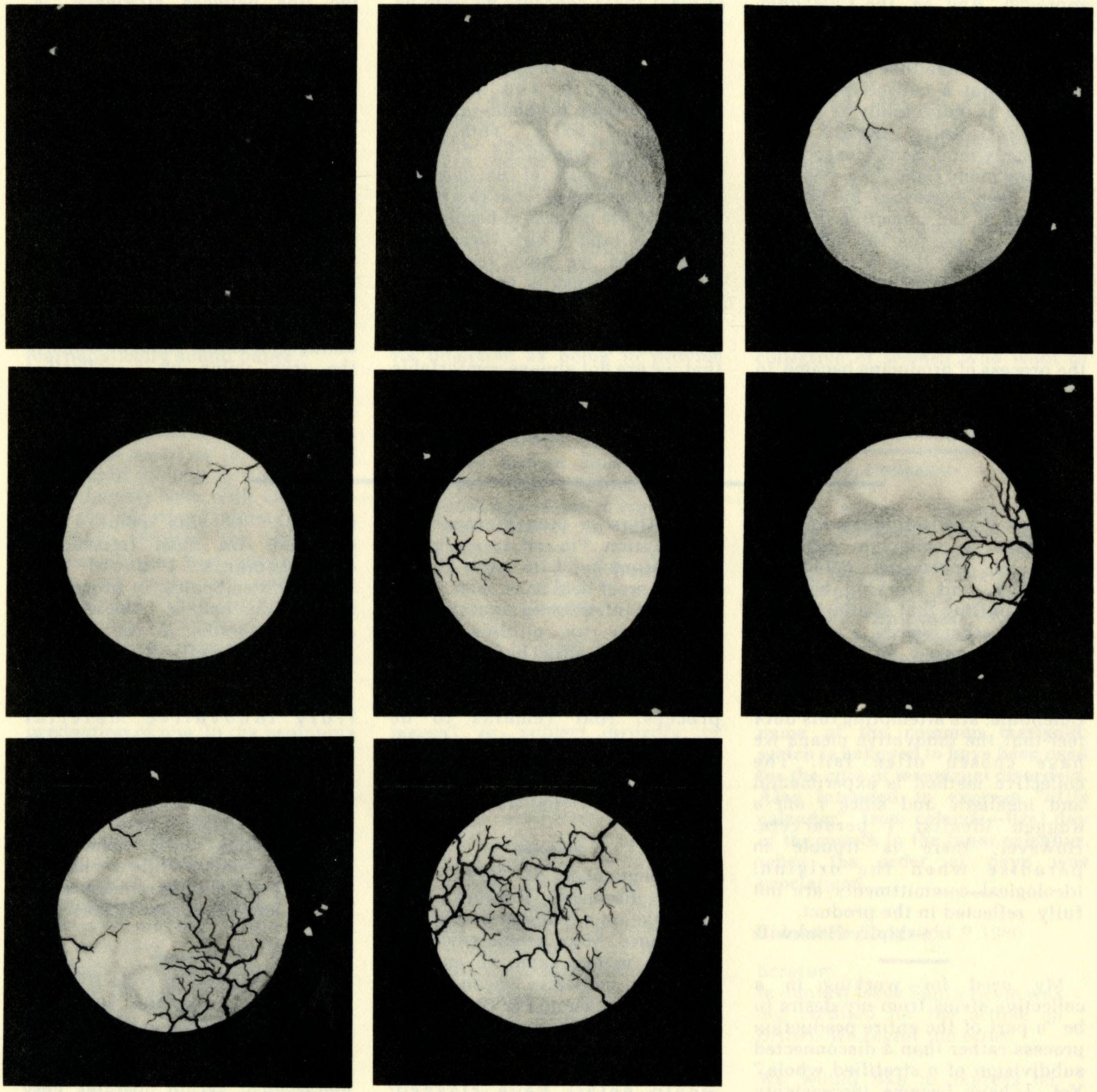
Calendula

May 1980
No. 3

A Barnard Feminist Publication



COLLECTIVE IMPRESSIONS

In the beginning (when *Calendula* was just an idea, lacking a name and lacking funding) it was decided that the organizational structure of this publication should, in itself, represent the political goals that *Calendula* would attempt to approach. And so, the *Calendula* collective was born. Yet, as our third issue goes to press we at *Calendula* realize that the question of just what a collective process means to us individually as well as organizationally should, and necessarily must be discussed.

During many *Calendula* meetings it has been expressed by various members of the collective that, by choosing to pursue the collective process (rather than a traditional hierarchical structure of editors, copy-readers, etc.) we have committed ourselves to a concept of "means and ends." In other words, the process of producing became, to us, as important as the product itself. But upon re-examining this rhetorical definition, it has become clear that this specific concept of collectivity is not sufficient, nor even accurate. We have found that the concept of a collective is as amorphous as the concept of feminism itself—for we each have out own continually growing ideas of what these concepts mean to us individually, as well as what they mean for *Calendula*.

And so, it may seem an uncomfortable and perhaps insurmountable problem—all of us committed to a "feminist" publication produced "collectively," yet each of us carrying different notions of what this really means. In the process of becoming a collective (and I say "becoming" because, as we have found, the collective process is one which is constantly in the state of "becoming", rather than one which miraculously *is*) we have learned that we are not always comfortable with the results of our efforts. Yet it is precisely this discontentment which leads us to grow with each other, and allows *Calendula* the freedom to become the publication we wish it to be.

It is not an easy process, for, as we have discussed among ourselves many times, there is always the question as to where one draws the line between efficiency, ie. getting the publication out at all costs, and process, ie. feeling completely comfortable with the method used to produce that publication. Many times we have found it difficult to draw that line and, as a result, a certain amount of discontent has arisen within the collective itself. Yet specifically because we *are* a collective, we have found that these problems have room to be expressed. As a result we have begun to understand the importance of true co-operative effort as well as the importance of dialogue. It is this dialogue which is the true value of a collective process, and so we invite you to share and grow with it, as we have begun to do.

—Suzanne

I think of a collective as a working collection, a collection being a group of specimens noted for similarity, and working being a way of putting that similarity into effect. In other words, a collective should be based on a common ideology and should work within and for that common end. We, at *Calendula*, are attempting this but I feel that the innovative means we have chosen often fail. The collective method is experimental and idealistic and since I am a dogged idealist I perservere. However, there is trouble in paradise when the original ideological committments are not fully reflected in the product.

—Molly Hankwitz

My need for working in a collective stems from my desire to be "a part of the entire production process rather than a disconnected subdivision of a stratified whole." Yet, I have become increasingly convinced that a collective means more than a non-hierarchical organization. I'm not sure what it does mean, but I do know that it takes a great deal more than desire and good intention to create a good, collectively-run publication. A great deal of conflict has arisen, and trying to work this conflict out has been a necessary, but tedious process, that remains to be resolved. When we get it straight, we'll put out something that we all feel really good about, that lives up to the potential that we all have.

—Susana

In September of 1979, three people discussed working in a collective on a feminist newspaper at Barnard. More people voiced an interest; money came in, and the *Calendula* collective began. Began to work together on PRODUCING a publication. In the course of the last two semesters, our visions of what that process and that publication would entail have clashed; sometimes dealably, sometimes radically. At this point I am confused. We have tremendous disagreements. I doubt that *Calendula* embodies, in process of content, our beliefs. I know that I am disappointed in the product (and so in myself). It is a wishy-washy, college Women's Studies newsletter. The potential to print truly innovative material (criticizing current world order) is definitely here. *Calendula* does not yet represent an alternative way of thinking about or living our lives. I must say though, I have met and made friends with some very creative feminists while working on it. That I will always remember: the people, and the conversations.

lisa

I have worked in collective and hierarchal journalistic situations and thus have been exposed to the advantages and disadvantages of both. Although a well-run hierarchical set-up operates very efficiently overall, there always

(cont. from page 2)

seems to be discord amongst the people trying to work within this type of system. This is not to imply that collectively-run boards function in complete harmony, but it seems to me that the hierarchical situation naturally causes discord because someone is always at the top and someone is always at the bottom. By having a collectively-run editorial board any feelings of inferiority are automatically removed because everyone is allowed equal input into all decisions made. In my past experience the largest problems arising in hierarchically-run papers have been those of some people feeling inferior or unnecessary.The collective system alleviates this major cause of tension within a group by trying to work together. Of course, collectively-run organizations can be less productive than those run in a hierarchical set-up, but this problem is often reduced as the group learns to function as a whole, journalistically sound paper.

—Laura

When I joined *Calendula*, I was extremely naive as to what could and would happen in a collective. After having been with *Calendula* since its inception I do not feel that we have defined the collective process to our best advantage. I think we were all under the assumption that a collective process had an inherent structure, but we are realizing that we must create this structure ourselves. This leads to conflicts concerning the process of a collective versus the production of one. In the beginning the process/product controversy was seen as one of polar opposites, but we are beginning to see that they can work together.I have been frustrated and angry and yet we are trying to address these problems and once we understand compromise as it applies to our process we will truly begin to work as a collective. I do not feel these problems are insurmountable and I hope for the sake of *Calendula* that our personal differences can take on less importance and that we can establish a critical, innovative forum in which women can express themselves honestly.

—Sarah

Throughout history, it has been necessary for women to draw support from collective women's groups in order to infiltrate the male dominated spheres of scholarship, politics and economics. In the Middle Ages, for example, women who wanted to participate in religious and political life did so in convents. Monastic orders resisted the growth of such female communities, with the 1215 Lateran council issuing a decree saying that no new female orders could be founded. So women founded their own institutions—beguinages. The beguinage was economically and politically run by women, with women serving as abbeys, prioresses, librarians, mystics, writers, cooks, doorkeepers, weavers, etc. In their autonomous community these women developed a female consciousness which promoted creativity, leadership, and administrative abilities.

Calendula, defined as a collective of women publishing a feminist newspaper, has goals which parallel those of the beguinage. I see its objective as being to provide Barnard/Columbia's women's community with a resource for feminist ideas, literature, art, and a calendar of events. In so doing, we will have broken down into the structure that maintains and reinforces oppression of women, i.e. the male control of ideas and knowledge.

—Amy Wehrenberg

I decided to work on *Calendula* knowing two things: that the publication was feminist, i.e. the content concerned "women's issues" (a subject broadly or narrowly defined depending on whom you ask), and that it was put out by a collective. I separate the two—the publication and the group—because at first that is how I perceived *Calendula*. I didn't realize that it was a chance to see the theory of "product embodying process" at work; to see where and why it didn't work and how the publication was different as a result of being produced by a collective.

In the effort to establish the more obvious characteristics of a collective—the rotating chair, group decision making, equal group responsibility for tasks—we realized just what the choice to work in a collective entailed. Open communication was the most important committment we had to make and keep. Every member had to know what the group was doing, who was doing what work to move production along. This involved more than coming to weekly meetings or keeping up with what went on there. Each of us had to have a strong interest in the publication itself, a sense that *Calendula* had *us* in it. This required a continuous receptivity for writing/artwork, policy making, and group workings to encourage each of us to her greatest creativity. It still does.

Putting out a publication collectively comes from a desire to work with people differently. We've all had numerous experiences working in hierarchical systems—we live in one. The point of this different way is to solve some of the problems of hierarchies. I want *Calendula* to make something new: not only to give a voice to women in this community, but to reflect the fact that it is published by a collective of women who want to create something in their work together.

—Deborah

Calendula Collective

Eileen Clancy, Susana Fried, Molly Hankwitz, Sonia Levin, Suzanne Levitt, Lucy March, Sarah Orshefsky, Elisa Parrish, Amy Poe, Laura Schisgall, Deborah Sherman, Rebecca Skinner, Amy Wehrenberg.

CALENDULA— /kuh LEN ju la/ n. (calendae, calends + ula) Generic name of the common marigold, which is believed to have been used for the cure of menstrual disorders. Also intended to express "little calendar": from calends—first day of the month in the lunar calendar, when the order of days was proclaimed.

Erratum
In our last issue Sonia Levin was not credited for the article on BASH. We regret the error.

We would like to express our appreciation to *Barnard Bulletin* for their co-operation.

Barnard and Women's Studies: Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

by Sarah Orshefsky and Susana Fried

There is good news and bad news. The good news is that Barnard has a "dedication to the education of women," the bad news is that this dedication wavers. This 1980 graduation will be the first to include formally declared Women's Studies majors. We would assume that this implies that Women's Studies has been granted legitimacy by the instituion. However, we as Women's Studies majors have become increasingly aware of the problems which plague this program and are wondering whether our future and indeed the future of the program, are in peril.

Women's Studies at Barnard started off as a dialogue of conflicting ideas. It formally began six years ago, in 1974, when the Women's studies committee was established. This was an ad hoc sub-committee of the Committee on Instruction and its purpose was to create a Women's Studies Program which would, over time, gain general acceptance amongst faculty and the institution. The design was to be interdisciplinary. As excitement and organization grew, a Women's Studies page was added the the Barnard catalogue (1976). In 1977 a proposal was made and accepted to have a major in Women's Studies (W. S.).

From its inception the program has been subject to problems inherent in any form of education that attempts to break out of a traditional mold. The most persistent and overriding problem is a lack of funding. The Barnard administration has professed a commitment to the program, yet this commitment is not being financially substantiated. Professors have not been hired specifically to teach W. S. courses, and professors who do teach W. S. courses and are dedicated to the program, have been given neither tenure nor the recognition they deserve. Only now is a full-time tenured program director being

(W.S., cont. p. 6)

Sun Poem

I am hanging in the sky.
I have grown a home around you.
You are wearing sunspun cloth.
But what's the use
of greening leaves and warm finches
if you won't sit in the doorway

if you won't sit in the doorway,
nod in the light,
hear the rockless sounds
that roll through me?

I am waiting for you
to declare youself—
anything!
a giant tree, a frog,
a tongue—rooted in its mouthing home.
But, be sure of me:
squint
use your hands,
knuckles, wrists.
Track them along my hip parts.
Use your fingers;
touch my humid skin.
See that it is burning,
see that it contains me.

This sun, sweetheart,
answer this sun.

Deborah Sherman

Goddess Descends on Brooklyn

by Lucy March

Relegated to the personal ad section of a newspaper (somewhere between "Wanted: Volunteer lab technicians" and " Women's band seeks lead guitarist"), the Goddess has been defamed and all but forgotten by the West. She lives on though, even in the midst of such adversity. You can find her in Brooklyn.

Through June 30th, the Brooklyn Museum is hosting an exhibit on the Goddess in Indian Art. Consisting of forty-six sculptures and paintings, the exhibit is a fine introduction to the varied depictions of the Goddess in the art of India and Indianized Asia. This region, the last major bastion of the concept of divine feminity, has a tradition of goddess worship as old as Indian culture itself.

Such worship, as in the West, was early practiced at the popular level, with the Goddess seen as a universal mother figure—one who gives birth to the earth, and from whose outstreched legs comes the grain planted by the villagers. The museum has several pieces from this period, including sculptures dating from the 3rd century B. C. to the 1st century A. D. Depicted as a round and full figure, this early goddess is a nuturing figure—a shelter to both child and adult.

Later, this explicitly fecund imagery of the Goddess was somewhat altered; the depiction of the Goddess with out-stretched legs came to be thought shameful, and indeed, the first goddess mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, India's central epic, is a virgin. Interestingly too, the Goddess enters the mainstream of the Hindu tradition only through increased attention given to the goddess wives and consorts of male gods. The Goddess thus gains legitamacy only by being associated with male deities, losing a certain amount of her independence even as she takes on many new names and distinct personalities.

Central to this latter era is the goddess Durga. Durga embodies cosmic force, *shakti*, and protects worshippers and destroys demons. She is the female power, born of the fierce radience of the male gods and consort to Lord Siva. Her creative power activates *prakviti*, Primal Matter, from which comes forth the

(Goddess, cont. p. 5)

The Flounder

by Amy Poe

Günter Grass's novel, *The Flounder*, needs to be chewed and digested slowly, in small portions. Indeed, a rich dessert of many ingredients may be the best metaphor for this epic, which attempts to chronicle the history of sex, sex roles, pop anthropology, and food from the Stone Age to the present.

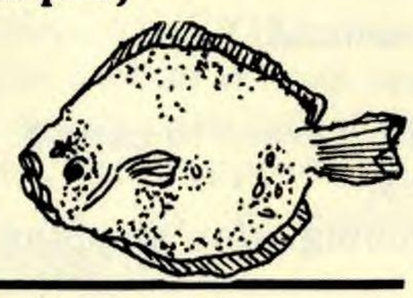
Grass wisely limits the scope of his tale by structuring it loosely around the lives of eleven (or possibly twelve) cooks. These stories are arranged in roughly chronological order, but with numerous overlaps and repetitions, a multi-layered technique which works as a comment on the nature of storytelling and history. Grass often refers self-consciously to the storytelling process, and the repetition to various versions of the same incident helps to keep the reader constantly aware of the story as story. Yet, despite the fact that the reader must constantly question and compare the relative truthfulness of different views of history presented by Grass, the author is not trying to destroy the idea of truth or constancy in history. His point is that there is an inner human set of truths which remain constant, just as his characters remain constant while they are reincarnated under new names. As the narrator says towards the end of the book, "At last it was confirmed. Fairly tales only stop for a while, or they start up again after the end. The truth is told, in a different way each time." It is this subtle underlying message which gives the string of tales coherence, movement and interest beyond their anecdotal appeal.

Nevertheless, *The Flounder* is not without literary flaws. The poems which close every chapter add nothing but unnecessary bulk to an already massive work. And even for those who are fond of complex sentences, Grass's sometimes collapse under their own weight:

He commanded the fresh, May-green leaves to fall as in November, and when Billy, Siggie, and Maxie shouted "More! More!" he defoliated the rest of the birches roundabout, the last only half, for in the meantime the laughter between Spandau and Tegel and on the shore of the Grunewaldsee had shifted, as it does so often, to male mourning.

This tendency towards verbosity, added to the great length of the novel, the density of the prose (there is almost no direct dialogue) and the deliberate repetition of some incidents, may discourage less patient readers or those who attempt to read the book in a few sittings. Reading *The Flounder* is an exhausting task which must be done slowly, but is well worth the effort. The sheer imaginative scope of this epic and the skill with which it is executed show Grass to be a writer of Chaucerian genius who can effectively mingle archetypal folk tales with telling, concrete

(Flounder, cont. p. 8)



(Goddess, cont. from p. 5)

universe. She is also *maya*, the magical power of illusion, and as Kali she is destroyer of the universe itself.

As portrayed in Indian art, Durga and Kali are fearsome, triumphant, and even terrifying. Several pieces in the Brooklyn collection show Durga destroying the Buffalo Demon, Mahisa. Kali, The Dark One, wrapped in a tiger skin, wearing a garland of human skulls and wielding terrible weapons, is depicted cutting off heads, lapping up blood, and walking on a dead man.

Fierce as they are though, goddesses such as Durga and Kali are thought to be very approachable by those within the tradition. Indeed, goddess worship may have in part flourished because, unlike the male gods, the Goddess could be worshiped without the officiation of priests, themselves invariably male.

Likewise, the Goddess is seen not only as a whirlwind of destruction, but also as a compelling and even sensuous deity. In this vein, there is a continuation of the early tradition forms, each of which have their significance in Indian culture, particularly as they reflect and shape the status of Indian women.

Other forms of the Goddess include Saravasti, goddess of wisdom and music, Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, and iven a goddess whose special domain is the curing of smallpox. Of note too is the Goddess' intimate connection with nature. Rivers and trees—these are the provinces of female deities, and the Ganges itself is the flowing hair of the goddess Ganga.

The Goddess, then, takes many of the goddess as mother. There are also beautiful and desirable goddesses, particularly the goddess as consort, as well as the goddess as dutiful wife, notably Parvati.

The most major of these forms are well represented in the Brooklyn Museum exhibit, and one painting, "The Manifestations of the Devi," presents a clear picture of the unity underlying these diverse images of the Goddess. Thus, what is at first a foreign and rather bewildering collection, is in the end very accessable. The repitition and comprehensiveness of the imagery, as well as its combination of the human and the divive, draws the entire exhibit together for the viewer. And above all, the power of the Goddess shines through—a fine thing in Brooklyn, and well worth crossing the river.

Healing Length

In the clamorous light of the emergency
room I see everything too clearly.
Your skin split open by the full wine bottle of
a 14-year-old mugger. Your tan
flannel shirt blood-smeared. Your dark blonde hair matted with
blood. We sit in a room. A woman
vomits. Children wail. The severity of white
is everywhere. Cops stand solid, blue.

Anger flows out of you. Your words are sharp bottles
full of vengeance. The cops advise you
"Throw the little spic down an elevator shaft.
No one cares, no one would ever know."

Your anger frightens me, makes me withdraw. I am
scared of men's violence scared of my own
violence scared of being alone walking the streets
alone of being raped scared of blood
your blood/my blood scared of white hospitals sterile
disinfectant smells scared that once I
start screaming I will never stop. The orderly
calls your name. You lie on a sheeted

table, the doctor's fingers spread your wound. I put
my head between my knees. The doctor
threads blue fish line through split skin. I want to caress
your stomach, run my warm tongue over
your body, make your hands stop clenching, stop gripping
the table's edge, make your body stop
arching away from the bloody sheet. The doctor
cuts the thread, then leaves the room. You turn

toward me, I look at your face. Your skin is yeast-white,
rises to a ragged, shiny gash.
The doctor said there won't be much of a scar. I
imagine your face six months from now:
the stitches gone, the skin will close, a thin line will
point to your cleft chin like an arrow.
We will both mend, help each other heal. Our fingers
will trace the healing length of your scar.

Susan Biskeborn

(W.S., cont. from p. 4)

considered. Last year W. S. lost two professors because they were denied tenure: Mary Parlee (Psychology of Women) and Cynthia Lloyd (Sex Discrimination and the Division of Labor). This year the trend continues and we are losing three W. S. professors and at least as many courses. Susan Sacks (Child Rearing—A Survey of Alternative Practices, W. S. Senior Research Seminar, and a member of various committees) was denied tenure. She has been offered a part-time position in Education but has been explicitly prohibited from teaching any more W. S. or Psychology courses. Hester Eisenstein, Senior Lecturer in Experimental Education and who has taught Contemporary Feminist Thought since 1975 (as well as Experimental Studies 3, Colloquium in W. S.) will be on leave next year and is probably not returning. Catharine Stimpson (English 40—Sex, Gender and Symbols, Sex, Gender and the City, editor of *Signs*, known as Kate the Great) has been teaching at Barnard for seventeen years. She has tenure as an associate professor but was not offered a full professorship, which for someone of her prestige and teaching vitality is an insult. We would like to note (to add injury to insult) that English 40—now Women and Literature, is going to be taught by a man. This is occuring in a department that includes several women professors who have demonstrated their commitment to W. S.

> "Tenure decisions, after all, are the point at which schools define themselves by what they do rather than what they say. . . .It must also be noted that "lack of legitimacy" is rarely openly given as a reason for denying tenure."*

The problem of tenure is exacerbated by the fact that tenure decisions are made by a committee in which three out of five members are Columbia faculty. The tenure situation is bad for faculty at Columbia as well as Barnard, yet we must question Columbia's commitment to Women's Studies and more generally, to Barnard. Because of

(W.S., cont. p. 7)

Kate Ellis on Culture and Politics

by Deborah Sherman

On March 26th Kate Ellis, the feminist poet, columnist for *In These Times* (she also teaches at Livingston College, Rutgers University) gave a lecture/reading/ and held discussion in Barnard Hall. She was invited to speak on "Culture and Politics" by DSOC and The Barnard Literary Magazine. Ellis approached the subject first by describing the philosophy of three writers: Virginia Woolf, Jean-Paul Sartre and Franz Fanon; then by speaking of, and reading from, her own work.

Kate Ellis' discussion of the three other writers focused on two subjects. First, was the exclusion of certain artists from the mainstream culture of their period. Woolf wrote specifically of women artists in this position, while Sartre was concerned that such a "dictatorship in art" ignored much of the work's potential audience. Second, Ellis spoke of Fanon's writings on the art created by a colonized people. She expanded the definition of

(Ellis, cont. p. 7)

(W.S., cont. from p. 6)

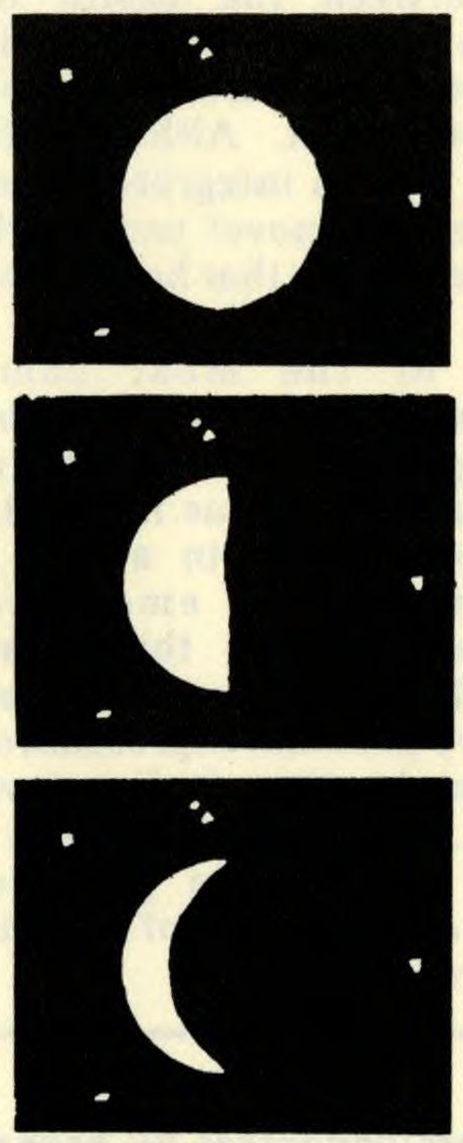
this tenuous situation it is particularly important that a tenure or tenure-tracked position is made available for the prospective Women's Studies Program director. Although a search committee has been created, it is unclear whether the full-time position of a W. S. chair will be filled by Fall 1980. With hope and perseverance it will be filled by Spring 1981.

To make matters worse the tenure question is inevitably connected to the problems involved in an interdisciplinary approach Because W. S. has no full-time professors it is dependent upon the professors it can attract from other disciplines. This assumes the good will of other departments and the dedication of the faculty as a whole to Women's Studies as a legitimate educational field. There are only four core courses offered by the W. S. program (W. S. II—Major Texts in Feminist Tradition, W. S. I2—Colloquium in W. S., 2I-22 Senior Research Seminar) and two more will be added to the curriculum (English 20Y The Lesbian Literary Tradition, and Anthropology W. S.-v3039x Women in the Third World).

As an interdisciplinary program, the amount and variety of courses needed to complete the major seems overwhelming at first, but it affords a broad perspective in many areas. It is for this reason that we as W. S. majors are deeply concerned about the program's existence and feel it is essential to criticize it where it is weak and subject to the contradictions of the institution. The W. S. committee is doing its best, especially considering the complications and political realities of the situation, yet it is important that there be no ambiguity in the conception of an interdisciplinary major, either within the departments or in the catalogue. We should remind the administration of its stated support of W. S. and that many women involved in the program came to Barnard specifically because of it. We demand that tenure or tenure-tracked professors be hired, more courses be offered and that the organization of the program be made clear to both faculty and students. We, in the W. S. program, should realize our potential strength and ally ourselves with other interdisciplinary programs (which most likely are facing similar problems) so that we may make our grievances known and listened to. As students, we should seek increased and frequent dialogue with other students and faculty involved in these issues. The W. S. students have already drafted a two-page listing of some W. S. courses offered by other colleges throughout the country and which we suggest be considered for the Barnard curriculum. We feel that for a well-balanced program to exist each department must have at least one W. S. course and also that the number of independent W. S. courses be increased. We are aware that these changes will take time, but to prevent the stagnation and perhaps the eventual demise of the program, they are priorities. We are asking all W. S. majors and students interested in W. S. to send their names and the times they are available to *Calendula* C/O College Activities Office, so that we can set up a meeting to discuss possible action towards the support and future of W. S. as a viable educational alternative.

* Special Programs for Women in Higher Education A Report from the Barnard College Conference March 14-16, 1979 p. 39

We would like to thank Mindy Domb and Sonia Levin for their help.



(Ellis, cont. from p. 6)

"colonized" to any group (not necessarily minority) which has been oppressed within a society or culture, and whose art/artists correspondingly have been excluded.

Franz Fanon wrote that colonized artists first imitate the dominant culture's art, then delve back and create out of their collective, "pure", pre-colonial past, and then make art inspired by their own revolution. Kate Ellis sees a fourth stage, one in which the artist can remain outside of any particular movement and be the articulator/expressor/connective for many people in different positions—both inside and out.

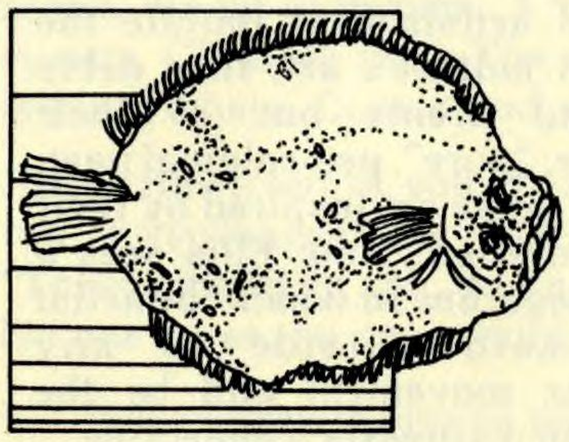
About her journalistic writing Ms. Ellis said she tried always to "balance on edges," to stay on the outside of groups which allow their members but one identity and little ability to have more than one perspective on anything. She understands this outside position well because, as she said, "A woman's relationship to her class is much looser than a man's," so women tend more often to have a double perspective—to see things both from within and without.

The subjects in Ellis' poems range from her family background, to memories of the Vietnam War, to identification with a woman political prisoner in New Jersey, to her feelings about women she is with on a subway or in a laundry In these poems Ellis remains outside of any one group in order to connect to individuals in many different ones. Thus in poetry too she attempts that "fourth stage"—the one Fanon didn't write. Writing from this perspective Ellis is perhaps beginning to fill the gaps that many artists (Fanon, Woolf and Sartre are just three) have noted and exposed. Because she is "writing her own history" in poetry, Ellis answers Woolf by including herself, as woman writer, in Contemporary American literature; Sartre by writing from a perspective which consciously disregards any cultural restrictions on her work; and Fanon by attempting that "fourth stage"—creating a voice which speaks of and to as many human experiences as possible.

(Flounder, cont. from p. 5)

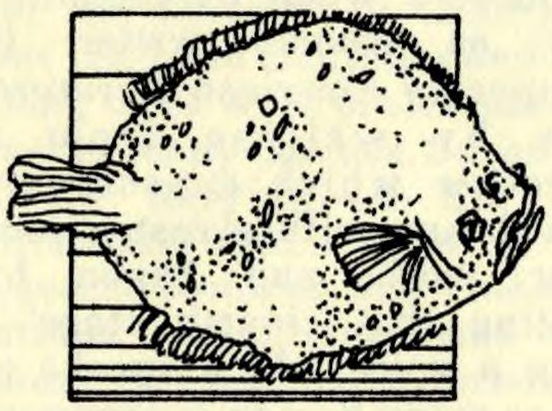
details.

The Flounder is controversial not because of its literary faults but because of the author's treatment of women and the women's movement. To put it bluntly, this is a sexist

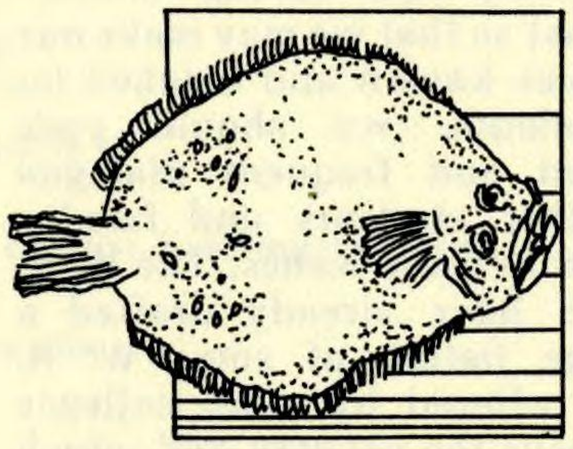


novel. Grass is said to have written *The Flounder* as a fiftieth birthday present to himself, and the book clearly reflects an aging man's fear and grudging acceptance of change in the social order. The narrator's realistic and affectionate portrayal of his wife, Ilsebill, often degenerates into an obviously distorted picture of a jealous, hysterical woman who combines all the worst of the stereotypically feminine attributes. Sometimes Grass's attitudes are extremely offensive, most notably in his absurd and grotesque portrait of a group of four lesbians (the only lesbians in the novel) as self-centered monsters whose maltreatment of one of the group's members leads to her rape and murder by a gang of Hell's Angels. To add insult to injury, Grass then begins the next chapter, "Capable of friendship, that's the way we men are."

Despite the author's prejudices, he often displays laudable sentiments about the women's movement, and provides a valid warning to women to avoid what the Flounder call "the male ethic" of factionalism and power struggles. His portrait of the movement, seen in microcosm in the Women's Tribunal which tries the Flounder,

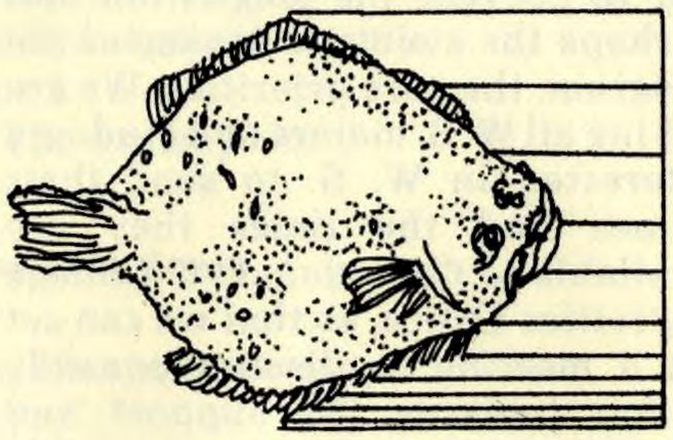


pokes fun at its organizational quarrels and splits. Still, the author's attitude is clearly one of



respect for the women, both as a force and as individual members of the group.

Intellectually, Grass speaks through the Flounder against male dominance and the destruction it has caused, yet on an individual, human level, Grass and his narrator



have trouble applying these principles to their own lives. The narrator is able to abstractly admire the strong, individualistic cooks of his past, but he cannot deal with his own strong-willed wife. The author realizes this contradiction, and sometimes makes fun of the narrator, who is torn between the desire to be sheltered and nourished by dominating women and his desire to dominate them. Although he is seldom able to integrate these two impulses, the novel ends with the final realization that he will have to try.

One of the most common problems women have had to face recently is that men who may agree with feminist ideas intellectually are often unable to accept them personally and emotionally. Approached with this point in mind, *The Flounder* is interesting as a very personal expression of one man's ambivalent feeling towards women. Read it. While it may both offend and intrigue you, from a purely artistic point of view it is a joy to read.

flounders/goddesses by hankwitz
moons by parris

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, May 7
Opening of the play *Yesterday Is Over*, by Mady Christian. At Women's Experimental Theater, 552 W. 53rd St. Mat. Sat., Sun. $6 weekend, $5 other. Times to be announced. For info: 246-1050.

Monday, May 12
4-6:30 p.m.—"Women's Words: A Workshop on Feminist Publishing," sponsored by the Feminist Students Organization of City Univ. Representatives from *Signs*, *Feminist Studies*, *Heresies*, and other feminist presses, will speak on using and contributing to their publications. Reception to follow. Grad Center, 33 W. 42nd St., Rm. 207. Free. For info. call Claire Reilly, 258-8959.

Tuesday, May 13
Gallery opening of a re-creation of a revivalist church. At Women's Interart Center, 549 W. 52nd St. Exhibit will be open Mon.-Fri. 12-6 p.m.

Saturday, May 17
8:30 a.m.-day
Sales Career Conference sponsored by NY NOW. Martin Luther King High School, Amsterdam Ave. & 56th. Registration $17 with scholarships available. For info: 989-7320.

Benefit Dance for The Lesbian Health Collective of St. Mark's Clinic 9 p.m.-3 a.m. at Earl Hall, Columbia Univ. Sponsored by Lesbian Activists at Barnard. For women only. Childcare available. Suggested donation $3.

Monday, May 26
Panel: "Networks, Influence and Positions of Power." Nancy Spero, moderator. Panelists to be announced. Located at AIR, 97 Wooster St., NYC 10012. For info: 966-0799. **8 p.m.**