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Wickedary.com
<http://www.wickedary.com>

As a scholar and an activist, Mary Daly has been on the forefront of feminist theory. Her 1987 parody of patriarchal dictionaries, the *Websters' First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language (Wickedary)*, is a document written in hypertext. It may be confined to the printed page, but with its bits of information cross-referenced, coded and annotated, its text occupies an intellectual space rather than a flat page. The *Wickedary* allows the reader to freely navigate terms and concepts from her other books. She gives the readers connections to follow at their discretion and gives them notes that expand her text into other writers' works, making connections to the larger feminist community and an intellectual heritage. The *Wickedary.com* realizes these features digitally.

The *Wickedary.com* is my attempt to offer an alternate experience of feminist philosophy by highlighting and facilitating the hypertextual features of the book version. The user of *Wickedary.com* should be able to browse Daly's terms with fluidity impossible in the book format. Key philosophical ideas should emerge in the user's mind organically as s/he navigates the site. The interactive nature of hypermedia should reinforce the user's empowerment. This step into hyperspace, fulfills Daly's own demand for "Weaving" by "Websters," "Lusty Leaping," "Journeying" and occupying the "Otherworld," all terms made up or modified by Daly.

Daly's word plays and their various meanings keep the mind sharp and nimble for learning new things. *Wickedary.com* is also intended to be nimble in that I hope to add new words and new definitions. For example, I hope to add Donna Haraway's "Cyborg" and S. Paige Baty's "Matrix" to the digital *Wickedary*. I also plan to add the word "Computer" to highlight cyber-feminist Sadie Plant's observation that computers were formerly groups of women who computed targeting coordinates for the military. Each of

these additions participates in Daly's challenging of language and culture. Ultimately, I intend to bring together different feminist heritages to highlight their similarities rather than their distinctions.

As a Sketch in the Art and Culture category at Siggraph2000, I hope to present the *Wickedary.com* as an experiment. The questions that I hope to open to discussion are:

- Does the *Wickedary.com* accomplish the empowerment and/or education of the user, especially the woman and feminist as user?
- What are the limitations of hypermedia as a feminist medium?
- Do economic forces impact the potential of hypertext as a medium for feminist or philosophical discourse?
- Is there anything particularly "feminist" about hypertext navigation? If so does the *Wickedary.com* achieve or reflect this?
- Are there features that I can add to the *Wickedary.com* to make it better reflect its purpose as a feminist site?

With the *Wickedary.com*, I hope to demand a playful engagement with feminist ideas. Inspired by the hacker ethic outlined in Steven Levy's *Hackers*, I am in the process of dividing Daly's philosophy into data tidbits that can be manipulated. However, instead of using this deconstruction to dismantle her perspective, I hope to use these feminist tidbits to infiltrate the culture at large.

The *Wickedary.com* is the first step in the process, creating a dynamic version of Daly's text, but this is not where my work ends. My creation of a database populated by Daly's ideas enables such subversive digital acts as taking a published website, filtering its

words through the *Wickedary*, and republishing it in Daly-speak. This “dialectizing” exercises Daly’s linguistic play, giving it a space to be encountered in direct relation to the culture at large. For example, using a keyword matching system based on the content of the *Wickedary.com*, republish the front page of the New York Times website using words such as “snool,” “academentia,” “cockocracy,” “Hags,” and other *Wickedary* words. This should provide a test bed for Daly’s radical feminist language.

The issue central to my Sketch is the potential of digital media as tools for philosophical, specifically feminist, discourse. The *Wickedary.com* is an implementation of CGI, JavaScript, HTML, etc. for the sole purpose of engaging the imagination and intellectual curiosity of the user. Any further use of the *Wickedary.com* database to subvert Web culture is solely for the purpose of confronting issues of gender and culture in language. I am thereby paying tribute to Mary Daly. When I read Daly’s work, I am continually amazed by her ability to communicate incredibly complicated and radical philosophical arguments efficiently and in a way that is accessible to a wide range of people. She uses metaphors to bring not only meaning but play into a feminist understanding of the world. It is this element of play that I hope to enhance with my hypermedia version of her work.