



# Women's Voice

Illinois State University

Volume 8, Issue 3, January/February 2003

From the Director:

## ***Global Crises, Alternative Visions, and Global Feminism***

As I write, the new year has not gotten off to a promising start – the U.S. is threatening war against Iraq, Israelis and Palestinians are still killing and maiming each other, North Korea is acting out, and confidence in the capitalist market remains badly shaken by recession and institutionalized corruption. Each year, we hope for peace and security, but will we see that during 2003? At the moment, it does not seem likely, mainly due to the failures of the international state system and the global economy. Fortunately we have alternative visions from the growing anti-war movement, the anti-globalization movement, and the women's movement, all of which are transnational social movements.

As I ponder the current crises underway in different parts of the world, I am reminded of a 1985 book entitled *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspective*. Written by Gita Sen and Caren Grown after extensive consultations with Third World feminists, it was the "manifesto" of a new transnational feminist network called Development Alternatives With Women for a New Era. The book is still timely – it highlights the impacts of four interconnected and systemic global crises – famine, debt, militarism, and fundamentalism – on poor women in the Global South, and it offers alternative visions from a socialist-feminist perspective. This is from its preamble:

We want a world where inequality based on class, gender and race is absent from every country, and from the relationships among countries. We want a world where basic needs become basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated. Each person will have the opportunity to develop her or his full potential and creativity, and values of nurturance and

solidarity will characterize human relationships. In such a world women's reproductive role will be redefined: men will be responsible for their sexual behavior, fertility and the well-being of both partners. Child-care will be shared by men, women and society as a whole.

We want a world where the massive resources now used in the production of the means of destruction will be diverted to areas where they will help to relieve oppression both inside and outside the home. This technological revolution will eliminate disease and hunger, and give women means for the safe control of their lives, health, sexuality and fertility.

We want a world where all institutions are open to participatory democratic processes, where women share in determining priorities and making decisions. This political environment will provide enabling social conditions that respect women's and men's physical integrity and the security of their persons in every dimension of their lives.

DAWN has continued to produce telling critiques of the global economy, social inequalities, and patriarchal nationalisms. Other TFNs do so, too. For example, the late Bella Abzug, a founder of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), said the following:

Women do not want to be mainstreamed into a polluted stream. We want to clean the stream and transform it into a fresh and flowing body. One that moves in a direction -- a world at peace, that respects human rights for all, renders economic justice and provides a sound and healthy environment.

And Women in Development Europe (WIDE), a Brussels-based TFN that monitor's the European Union's development cooperation and trade with countries in the Global South, has offered the following judgment on Continued on Page 2

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Visit our website at: <http://www.womenstudies.ilstu.edu/>

# VIDEO AND SEMINAR SERIES

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the various forms of economic restructuring that have occurred since the early 1980s:

These various forms of economic restructuring are being driven by a corporate agenda and a simplistic view of the merits of free market capitalism. These policies have a cumulative effect on increasing the gap between the rich and poor both within nations and between nations.

When these macro-economic policies are evaluated through their experience of women, their negative impact on the quality of life, of women and children, and on the functioning of local communities becomes clear. A disproportionate amount of the human cost of global economic ideology is being borne by women. Governments and corporations are using women's labor, energy, time and sexuality to sustain this agenda of corporate growth.

The solution is movement toward democratic and accountable institutions of global governance, and the active participation of women's organizations in strengthening the United Nations, reviving the welfarist, developmentalist state, and democratizing the world system. Toward this end, TFNs work within the UN system as well as outside it. They have actively participated in the UN's international conferences since the 1980s, often forming women's caucuses that criticize official documents, lobby delegates, and seek to influence policy-making.

TFNs emerged in the 1980s, expanded during the 1990s, and are the organizational expression of the global women's movement. This is not the place to discuss their achievements, setbacks, effectiveness, access to resources, political leverage, and so on. (I do so in my forthcoming book on the subject.) But it is worth noting that TFNs not only reflect global feminism but explicitly endorse it as a real phenomenon as well as a solution to the world's problems. Here is one TFN describing the growing political power of women and the importance of their perspectives:

In the decade since 1985, women have moved a long way in terms of the agenda we are taking on. We have recognized that while pursuing women's rights, we must also take on the context: the political, economic, and social structures. Women are taking the lead and making a huge contribution to defining the international agenda in terms of human rights, macroeconomics, conflict/peace, and sustainable development. We have a valuable and unique perspective on these issues as women and as human beings. We recognize that feminism in one country is not sustainable – we need feminism on a global scale.

TFNs are aware of the difficulty of transforming the entrenched structures of economic and political power, but are determined to work together and with other social movements (labor, human rights, environmental) to effect change. Will we see coalitions of social movements working together to end violence and militarism, economic corruption and insecurity, environmental degradation and health disasters, and patriarchal nationalisms? Stay tuned.

## The Vagina Monologues

V-Day 2003 College Campaign/Illinois State University's production of "The Vagina Monologues" by Eve Ensler will be presented on **February 14 and 15 at 7 PM**, and **February 16 at 4 PM** in the Bone Student Center Ballroom. Tickets are available at the Box Office for \$5 for students and \$8 for non-students. All of the proceeds will be donated to local charities working to stop violence against women and girls. For further information contact Megan Volpert of Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance at [mavolpe@ilstu.edu](mailto:mavolpe@ilstu.edu).

## Video and Seminar Series

The Women's Studies program has developed a video series dedicated to "Understanding the Status of Women in Muslim Societies." The video series takes place Tuesdays from 12:30-1:30 PM in Rachel Cooper 234 and all are invited. Cookies and fruit juices will be served. Additionally, the International Studies program is hosting a seminar series on Wednesdays from 12-1 PM in Stevenson 401. The seminar series events are open to all and a free lunch is provided. ■

### Women's Studies Spring 2003 Video Series

Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30 PM, Rachel Cooper 234

- 2/4 **Under One Sky: Arab Women in North America Talk About the Hijab**  
Muslim women discuss what it means to veil. (44 minutes)
- 2/11 **Beyond the Veil: Are Iranian Women Rebelling?**  
Concerns women's everyday acts of resistance and efforts of empowerment, as explained in interviews with Islamic and secular women. (1997, Canada, 22 minutes)
- Behind the Veil: Afghan Women Under Fundamentalism**  
Shows the difficulties faced by Afghan women and their acts of resistance. (2001, 26 minutes)
- 2/18 **Dancing Girls of Lahore**  
Gender and social conditions in Pakistan. (1993, 40 minutes)
- Defying the Odds: Women Around the World Create New Roles**  
Profile of Pakistani lawyer and activist Asma Jahangir. (10 minutes)
- 4/8 **Daughters of Allah**  
Modern Palestinian women face dramatic choices. (1999, 25 minutes)

### Seminar Series

Noon, Stevenson 401, FREE Lunch

Please Note: \* Indicates Sponsorship by Women's Studies

- 2/5 "The Representation of Women in African Film and Literature"  
**Dr. Valerie Orlando**, Illinois Wesleyan University
- \*2/12 "Identity Constructs of Modern Turkish Women: Tensions Between Secular Nationalism and Islamic Traditionalism"  
**Dr. Emine Evered**, History, ISU
- 2/19 "Health Seeking Behavior in Times of Economic Crisis in Nigeria"  
**Dr. Assata Zerai**, University of Illinois
- 2/26 "Smaller is Better? Scale in Japanese Life and Aesthetics"  
**Dr. Roger Thomas**, Foreign Language, ISU
- 3/5 "Public Art in Cuba"  
**Dr. Patrice Olsen**, History, Public Art in Cuba
- 3/19 "Public Art and Power in the Americas"  
**Dr. Bruce Campbell**, Public Art in the Americas
- 3/26 Middle East and South Asian Studies (TBA)
- 4/2 Middle East and South Asian Studies (TBA)
- \*4/9 "Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism"  
**Dr. Janet Afary**, History and Women's Studies, Purdue University
- 4/16 "The World Trade Organization and the Future of African Culture"  
**Dr. Godson Obia**, Geography, Eastern Illinois University
- 4/23 "Political Culture and Participation in Rural China: Some Empirical Evidence"  
**Dr. Yang Zhong**, Political Science, University of Tennessee
- 4/30 Middle East and South Asian Studies (TBA)

*Partial support for these projects has been provided by the US Department of State grant for the Cooperative Grants Program of NAFSA: Association of International Educators.*

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ENCOURAGING DIVERSITY.

# Prof. Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa to be Keynote Speaker at the Eighth Annual Women's Studies Symposium



Dr. Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa

## Eighth Annual Women's Studies Symposium

8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Undergraduate and Graduate Student Presentations

Friday, March 21, 2003

Keynote Address (1:00 pm)

"Iranian Cinema: In Search of Women"

University Galleries

Center for the Visual Arts

**Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa** is a filmmaker and a full-time faculty member teaching film at the department of Film & Video, Columbia College, Chicago. She has taught the following courses: Third World Cinema, Iranian Cinema, Indian Cinema, Multicultural American Cinema, Aesthetic of Film and Video, Film Production and Post-production, Documentary Production, Film Festival: A Filmmaker's Perspective, Creating Personal Documentary, and Thesis Seminar.

She has made several short films that have been shown at various festivals. Her documentary, *A TAJIK WOMAN*, won first prize in the Sony/AFI Visions of US Video Contest and a jury grand prize at the Festival of Illinois Film & Video Artists.

Dr. Saeed-Vafa has been the Artistic Consultant of the Festival of Films from Iran at the Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago since 1989, and has lectured and written extensively on Iranian cinema. She has co-authored *The Cinema of Kiarostami* with Jonathan Rosenbaum to be published by University of Illinois Press in March 2003.

**Admission to the symposium and the luncheon is free, but luncheon reservation by March 17 is required.**

For information about the Women's Studies Symposium or to make a luncheon reservation by March 17, contact Women's Studies by phone (309-438-2947) or email ([rwhite@ilstu.edu](mailto:rwhite@ilstu.edu).)

**If you need a special accommodation to fully participate in this event, please contact Women's Studies at 438-2947. Please allow sufficient time to arrange the accommodation.**

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# MY VIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## My View

### For fear of feminism

By **Shelby Sebens**

(Reprinted by permission from the Daily Vidette, January 28, 2003)

Are you a feminist? Such a vague label, I know; how can one answer such a question with a name encompassing so much negative connotation? I couldn't.

Women of Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East sounds like a boring class, but it turns out the content is far beyond those classes that serve as cures for insomnia.

Of the students present on the first day of class, only two were men. The professor asked if we were feminists. Two people raised their hands, and I was not one of them.

The term, with its vague definition, has caused massive amounts of controversy and made for interesting editorial topics in the past, but put in a different light, it made me think twice.

My first assignment was to read a novel, "Woman at Point Zero," and write a paper on it, which was easy enough as I'm a writer. But this paper is different. I was asked to find one theme within the book I can relate to.

Well, at first I had trouble because the book is about a Muslim woman facing a great deal of oppression throughout her life. How could I, a white girl from a small American town of 1,300 people find something in common with an Arab woman who spent her life as everything from a slave to a prostitute?

All my life I've been lucky. I live in America, the country of freedom. Freedom to choose what I wear, who I marry, where I work, and most importantly how I live my life.

But as I read about her struggles as a woman in a Middle Eastern society, and later listened to various speakers from overseas, I began to see that she is just like every other woman, struggling in a man's society to simply have a life.

The woman, Firdaus, is raped, beaten, genitally mutilated, enslaved by all the men in her life and eventually sentenced to death for killing a man who was trying to rape her. The point in reading this novel was not to feel sorry for her but rather to establish a connection with her.

In the book, Firdaus becomes a prostitute and her life changes. She is no longer poor, she has the option to say "no" to men who will not pay the highest price, and her life actually begins to look up.

But no matter what point she arrives at, her life, or lack of it, always spirals downward, and the epiphany she comes to is that whether she is a wife or a prostitute, she never gets an ounce of respect.

I also watched a film about women in Jordan being "honorably" killed by their brothers because they were raped. Again, how could I possibly relate to these women when I hold a good position in a job I love, am involved in a 100 percent equal and loving relationship, and have a family background that is near perfect?

After listening to Palestinian women speak in class and racking my brain for the past two weeks, my eyes began to open.

I once fell into the assumption that when a girl was in a relationship where she was being beaten, it was her fault. Why doesn't she just get out? I know many people who feel this way, men and women.

But when I stopped and opened my mind I began to realize that no matter what the situation, someone is still hurting someone, and how can we blame the victim?

I began to realize that my mindset was not too far off from those across the globe who believe women who are raped are to blame. Although it is at a much different level here, oppression is still alive and well. We just choose to believe we are above those other nations.

So the object here is to simply open your mind to the possibility that this "free" nation we're living in still has many problems, and yes, we have come a long way, but it took entirely too long to get here, and we still have a long road ahead.

Women are still paid less than men in the same job positions and are still discriminated against.

As one of the speakers in my class told us, "It's not a different world, just a different culture." ■

## YWCA Volunteers Needed

The McLean County YWCA Sexual Assault Program, Stepping Stones, needs volunteers to provide phone counseling and medical or legal support. The 40-hour training starts on Thursday, February 6 and continues every Tuesday and Thursday night and two Saturdays until March 4. An application and brief interview are required. For an information packet call the Program Director, Vickie Smith, at 309-662-0461 x272.

Stepping Stones is confidential, 24-hour, FREE support to survivors of sexual assault, their families, and friends.

Stepping Stones will:

- Listen
- Accompany survivor to hospital, police station, and court
- Support the survivor in coping with the rape

For assistance call:

- PATH 24-Hour Hotline: 309-827-4005

Toll Free Hotline: 800-570-7284. ■

## Internship Opportunities

The NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund seeks candidates with a demonstrated interest in women's issues, the law, education, and/or public policy for internships and volunteer positions. Undergraduate interns and volunteers assist in various aspects of the National Judicial Education Program and the Communications, Development and Legal Information and Referral. Specific opportunities include:

- Communications Internship
- Development Internship
- Public Education and Outreach Internship
- NJEP Internship
- Public Policy Internship Fall 2003 (Washington D.C.)
- Immigrant Women Program Fall 2003 Internships (Washington, D.C.)
- Volunteers

Applications for the fall and winter are accepted on a rolling basis. For more information, visit [http://www.nowldef.org/html/about/intern\\_under.shtml](http://www.nowldef.org/html/about/intern_under.shtml) or contact Women's Studies. ■

# WOMEN'S STUDIES FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS

## Congratulations Graduates

We wish the following women's studies minors well as they graduate from Illinois State University.



Erin Hale - Social Work  
Sarah Rhodes- Biological Sciences Teacher Education  
Ashley Rowden - Political Science  
Winter Wren - Art

## Faculty News

**Kyle Ciani**, History, presented "Negotiating A Cultural Divide: The Female Worlds of Mexican Mothers and Anglo Reformers in Progressive-era San Diego" at the American Historical Association annual meeting in Chicago in January.

In December, **Sandra Harmon**, History and Women's Studies, presented a paper, "Assistants, Training Teachers, and Preceptresses: 19th Century Women Faculty at the Illinois State Normal University," during the Illinois State Historical Society's annual Illinois History Symposium in Springfield.

**Najma M. Adam** was invited by the Islamic Society of North America and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration conference on Grant Writing where she presented on "Domestic Violence: What it is and Why it Happens". The conference was held in Orlando, Florida, December 20-22. Dr. Adam has also been asked to serve as a scholar on a National Board consisting of scholars, activists and community members that will develop standards to deal with domestic violence in Muslim communities. ■

## Women's Studies Minors

Women's Studies would like to welcome these new Women's Studies Minors.

**Audrey Goudreau**-English  
**Lauren Madison**- General Student  
**Michelle Moore**-English  
**Samantha Rangel**-Mass Com.  
**Krista Reichert**-Social Work  
**Julie Simonsen**-English

## Alumni News

**Gina Olson** is Assistant Director for the Center for Gender Studies at the University of Chicago. She graduated from Illinois State University in 1991 with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Women's Studies. After graduation, she was on the staff of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador from 1991-95, serving as Midwest Regional Director from 1993-95. She has done public program and policy work in HIV/STD prevention with the Chicago Department of Health and development work with the American Friends Service Committee. At the Center for Gender Studies she coordinates all programming and oversees administration of the Center. She is a board member of Women in the Director's Chair, "a Chicago-based, international media arts /activist center which exhibits, promotes, and educates about media made by women, girls and transgendered people that expresses a diversity of cultures, experiences, and issues." ([www.widc.org](http://www.widc.org)). She also serves on the board of Queer to the Left, a multi-racial group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people who fight for racial, economic, gender, and sexual justice.

**Anne Sendlak**, a May 2001 graduate with a major in Political Science and minors in Women's Studies and Peace and Conflict Resolution, lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, and coordinates a restorative justice conferencing project in Greeley. She works with juvenile offenders and the victims of their crime by bringing everyone together to talk about the incident, who was affected by the crime, and how the harm that was done can be repaired. Last March she was diagnosed with a brain tumor and underwent chemo and radiation treatments. With the treatments completed, she reports that she is feeling a renewed sense of energy and excitement about this coming year. ■

## Eighth Annual WOMEN'S STUDIES SYMPOSIUM

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2003  
8:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

UNIVERSITY GALLERIES  
CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT 1:00 P.M.

Pre-registration required for free lunch. You may register by returning the adjacent form or sending an e-mail to Rozel White at [rwhite@ilstu.edu](mailto:rwhite@ilstu.edu).

Contact Women's Studies for further information by telephone (309-438-2947)

If you need a special accommodation to fully participate in this event, please contact Women's Studies at 309-438-2947. Please allow sufficient time to arrange the accommodation.

## Eighth Annual Women's Studies Symposium

Friday, March 21, 2003

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR FREE LUNCH,  
PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN

March 17, 2002

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan to eat lunch:  Yes  No

Please detach and mail, e-mail or Fax to:

Women's Studies Program, Illinois State University, 237 Rachel  
Cooper, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Campus Box 4260, Normal, IL 61790-4260.  
Phone: (309) 438-2947, Fax: (309) 438-5104.  
E-mail: [rwhite@ilstu.edu](mailto:rwhite@ilstu.edu).

**Women's Voice  
Illinois State University  
Women's Studies Program  
Rachel Cooper 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Campus Box 4260  
Normal, IL 61790-4260**

**Eighth Annual  
Women's Studies  
Symposium**

**Friday  
March 21, 2003  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**University Galleries  
Center for the  
Visual Arts**

**Illinois State  
University**

*For more information, contact  
Women's Studies at:  
(309) 438-2947,  
e-mail Rozel White at:  
[wstudies@ilstu.edu](mailto:wstudies@ilstu.edu),  
or visit our website at:  
<http://www.womenstudies.ilstu.edu>*

## Call for Papers

Panels in the morning and afternoon

Lunch at noon

Keynote Address (1:00 pm) - Dr. Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa, Film Studies,  
Columbia College, Chicago

Undergraduate and graduate students are invited to submit proposals for presentation of papers at the Symposium. Proposals/papers are welcome on any topic related to the study of women and gender. Outstanding papers on women and gender issues prepared for courses will be especially welcome!

**Proposal - Please notice the extended deadline.**

Please send a one-page proposal with the following information to the address below, by **February 20, 2003**:

Proposed paper title

Your name

The course for which and the professor for whom you wrote/are writing the paper

Your address, telephone number, and e-mail

Please briefly describe your proposed presentation. Where relevant, include a summary of the main argument or findings, your research methodology (if applicable), and sources of information/data.

Send to: Women's Studies Programming Committee, Illinois State University, Campus Box 4260, Normal, IL 61790-4260, or bring your proposal to the Women's Studies offices, Rachel Cooper, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, or e-mail [wstudies@ilstu.edu](mailto:wstudies@ilstu.edu). ■