



# Women's Voice

Illinois State University

Volume 6, Issue 5, January 2001

## From the Director:

### The UN and Women's Empowerment

The United Nations is widely acknowledged as a key advocate for women's equality and empowerment and for research on women. In the wake of the emergence of second-wave feminism, the UN proclaimed 1975 to be International Women's Year, and launched the UN Decade for Women immediately afterwards. Since then, there have been four international conferences on women (Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995), numerous regional meetings, a five-year review of the achievements of the Beijing Conference (which took place in New York in June 2000), and a proliferation of publications on the status of women. The conferences and meetings have been extremely important in that they have raised international awareness of critical issues pertaining to women – such as the feminization of poverty, trafficking in women, and the adverse effects of neoliberal economic policies on working women. They have also provided opportunities for women from around the world to interact and to form networks, organizations, and working groups.

The research that has been carried out under the auspices of the UN and its specialized agencies, programs and funds has been equally important. One of its achievements has been the development of gender statistics. In 1995, the UN's Statistical Division published *The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics*, which provided data on population, health, literacy and education, work, and politics for women, grouping the data by country and grouping the countries by region (developed regions, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Pacific). This text became a sort of bible to gender researchers everywhere, and is now updated to reflect data for the late 1990s. At present, *The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics* is a major source of data for researchers such as myself. At the same time, the UN compiled a database on Women's Indicators and Statistics (WISTAT), which made the gender statistics available on diskettes. The most recent version (1999) is available on CD-ROM, and that too is an important source

of data on women's demographic trends, education, labor-force participation, and political participation.

A key legislative advance for women worldwide has been the adoption of the UN's *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (the Women's Convention). This has provided legitimacy as well as an additional rhetorical tool for women's rights advocates everywhere, given that states-parties to the Convention are required to make periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). And in 1995, the adoption of the *Beijing Platform for Action* reinforced women's positions further. The Platform for Action (PFA) is a detailed account of the situation and needs of women with respect to 12 critical issues (health, poverty, armed conflicts, media representations, violence against women, etc.); and it includes recommendations for women's empowerment that involve proactive and collaborative measures taken by governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations.

#### Review and Assessment: Beijing+5, June 2000

A five-review review and assessment of the implementation of the Beijing PFA was planned for June 2000. In advance of it, the UN sent a broad questionnaire to the member governments to report about their implementation actions and policies, and some 146 Member States (out of 188) responded. These replies were summarized in the January 2000 report *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, which provides information on achievements at the official level (E/CN.6/2000/PC/2. United Nations, 2000).

Several other reports were produced to facilitate the review and assessment. Every five years since 1984 the UN system has collaborated to produce a world survey on the role of women in development, and these have served as important background resources for each review and assessment emanating from the successive world conferences on women. They are also very helpful (Continued on Page 2)

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## Women's Studies Staff

<b>Dr. Moghadam</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>438-2947</b>
Dr. Harmon	Academic Advisor	438-7361
Rozel White	Secretary	438-2947
Meridith Kruse	Lecturer	438-8300
Dr. Ann Haugo	Instructional Asst. Prof.	438-3955
Katherine Moritz	Graduate Assistant	438-2948
Ravi S. Meduri	Graduate Assistant	438-2948
Priyanka Samarkoon	Undergrad TA	428-2948
Bethany Struebing	Undergraduate Assistant	438-2947

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# The UN and Women's Empowerment (Continued)

to researchers and scholars outside the UN system. The fourth survey in this series is *The 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Globalization, Gender and Work*. This survey is based on research, knowledge and data produced by appropriate UN organizations and agencies and not relying on the information given by the governments only. Another very useful publication that was produced in time for the FiveYear Review was the UNIFEM biennial report, *Progress of the World's Women 2000*.

In a recent analysis of the reports produced by the UN, Finnish feminist and long-time UN observer Hilikka Pietila writes that they provide an abundance of information on the situation of the world's women today and the progress taken place in recent decades. They also provide criteria and indicators, which have been lacking until relatively recently. The information available on women in the UN sources is very broad and of a high quality. But some gaps remain. For example, the information on violence against women is sparse and comparative statistics rare, largely due to the sensitive nature of the problem and its traditional silencing. Another deficiency is that the national statistical offices still don't disaggregate their information adequately, although the UN has requested this since the 1970s. Thus the reports do not have equally extensive and reliable data on women for every country.

## Alternative Reports by the Women's Movement

A novel development pertaining to the advancement and empowerment of women is the participation of NGOs in the review and assessment process. In addition to the obligation of Member States to report periodically to the UN, there are active NGOs and women's groups in most of the member countries, and they monitor these issues more closely than the UN can. The idea – which came from women's organizations – was that they prepare *alternative reports* on the implementation of the PFA. The NGOs would use the same questionnaire sent to the governments by the UN. In their report the NGOs could comment on the reports of their governments, make their own assessment, record their own activities in implemen-

tion, and propose additional actions to be taken. Pietila quotes a feminist representative at the Beijing+5 meeting in New York:

For the NGOs the Beijing PFA is the culmination of women's struggles for justice in their diverse contexts around the world and an embodiment of their vision and hopes for the society that recognizes women's rights as human rights, and not just an international document to pay lip service to, as it is to many political delegates.

Altogether 116 alternative reports were received in preparation for the Beijing+5 special session. The reports received were compiled and summarized into the *NGO Alternative Global Report by the Coordinating Committee of the Conference of NGOs* (CONGO, 2000). This report was forwarded to the President of the Special Session, Theo Ben-Gurirab (Namibia).

Hilikka Pietila notes that the most important function of the preparation of alternative reports was to mobilize women in countries all over the world to critically study their governments' reports, and to comment on them at home. The work done and the ideas collected in this process also provided the NGO women with better competence to subsequently comment on the official draft Outcome Document prepared for the special session.

What I have described above summarizes a complex process that involves the UN, governments and the women's movement with respect to the advancement and empowerment of women. It is also meant as an introduction to the focus of our Sixth Women's Studies Symposium, scheduled for Friday, 23 March 2001 here at ISU. The keynote speaker at our event is Dr. Yakin Ertürk, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women. The Division coordinates the conferences on women and acts as secretariat to the Commission on the Status of Women, another UN mechanism for women's rights. Dr. Ertürk will be talking about the UN and women's rights, and we are all very much looking forward to her visit. More details on her visit will be provided in this and subsequent issues.

## Dr. Yakin Ertürk to be Keynote Speaker at the Sixth Annual Women's Studies Symposium

Dr. Yakin Ertürk, a national of Turkey, was appointed Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department for Economical and Social Affairs (DAW/DESA), on 1 March 1999.

Since 1986, Dr. Ertürk has been on the faculty of the Department of Sociology and the Women and Gender Programme at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. From 1979 to 1981, she was Chairperson of the Department of Sociology at the Centre for Girls, at King Saud University in Riyadh. Since 1976, she has designed, carried out, and supervised research and training projects while also raising funds for these projects.

Dr. Ertürk conducted training activities for Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture in principles of diagnostic survey, a World Bank financed extension project (1992), as well as in gender awareness, on the "Beijing Express", to the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995). She also conducted problem identification workshops for rural women in selected regions of Turkey, under a grant from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP/1996).

Dr. Ertürk has undertaken consultancies as a rural sociologist and as an expert on women in development, in various projects and socio-economic surveys in Turkey, Egypt, Yemen and India for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNDP, ILO and the World Bank.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Dr. Ertürk served as a member of advisory committees in Turkey to the Ministry of Work and the State Ministry Responsible for Women's Affairs and Social Services on such issues as elimination of child labour and improving women's employment. She was a member of the National Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO). From mid October 1997 to the end of February 1999, she served as Director of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

In addition to publishing numerous articles and conference proceedings, Dr. Ertürk has prepared technical reports for various United Nations bodies. She has also received a number of grants and awards.



Dr. Yakin Ertürk, Ph.D.

## Sixth Annual Women's Studies Symposium

9:00 am to 4:00 pm.  
Undergraduate and Graduate  
Student Presentations

Friday, March 23, 2001

Keynote Address (1:00 pm),  
"The United Nations and  
Women's Rights"

University Galleries  
Center for the Visual Arts

Admission to lectures and the luncheon is free, but luncheon reservation by March 20 is requested.

For information about the Women's Studies Symposium or to make a luncheon reservation by March 20, contact Women's Studies by phone (309-438-2947) or email ([white@ilstu.edu](mailto:white@ilstu.edu))

## CALL FOR PAPERS

**Faculty**--Please encourage your fall and spring semester students to submit abstracts or complete papers that they prepared for your classes to the Women's Studies Programming Committee for consideration for the spring symposium.

# Sixth Annual Women's Studies Symposium

**Friday  
March 23, 2001  
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  
[rwhite@ilstu.edu](mailto:rwhite@ilstu.edu),  
or visit our website at:  
<http://www.cas.ilstu.edu/womenstudies>

## Call for Papers

Panels in the morning and afternoon

Lunch at noon

Keynote Address (1:00 pm)

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Yakin Erturk, Director,  
Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations

### Call for Papers (second round)

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 send a one-page proposal with the following information to the address below, preferably by **February 26, 2001**:

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 to [rwhite@ilstu.edu](mailto:rwhite@ilstu.edu). ✉

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# WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAMMING - SPRING 2001

- February 13, 14, and 18**  
 7:00 p.m. (13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>)  
 3:00 p.m. (18<sup>th</sup>)  
 Bone Student Center,  
 Circus Room (13<sup>th</sup>)  
 Old Main Room (14<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>)
- Illinois State University students and members of Womyn's Coalition will perform the Obie Award-winning play, "The Vagina Monologues"  
 Co-sponsored by Womyn's Coalition, PRIDE, MECCPAC, Theatre Department, Phi Eta Sigma, University Housing Services, Health Promotions, and Women's Studies
- Thursday, February 15**  
 7:00 p.m.  
 Normal Theatre
- Screening of "The Apple", directed by Samira Makhmalbaf (Iran)  
 Co-sponsored with the annual Foreign Film Festival
- Thursday, March 1**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Kemp Recital Hall  
 Admission Fee
- Lily Afshar**, University of Memphis  
 Classical Guitar Guest Artist Recital  
 Co-sponsored by Women's Studies and Department of Music
- Thursday, March 8**  
 12:35 - 2 p.m.  
 STV 401
- Prof. Valentine Moghadam**, Director, Women's Studies  
 "Globalization and Transnational Feminist Networks"  
 (Global Connections seminar)
- Friday, March 23**  
 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
 Center for Visual Arts,  
 University Gallery
- Sixth Annual Women's Studies Symposium  
 Keynote Speaker: **Dr. Yakin Ertürk**, Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations  
 "The UN and Women's Rights"
- Friday, March 23**  
 4 - 5 p.m.  
 Bone Student Center  
 U-Club
- University Club Discussion Hour  
 Faculty Reception for **Dr. Yakin Ertürk**
- Thursday, March 29**  
 12:35 - 2 p.m.  
 STV 401
- Prof. Ann Sisson Runyan**, Women's Studies and Political Science, Wright State University  
 "Gender, Global Restructuring and Feminist Politics"  
 (Global Connections seminar)
- April 2 - 6**
- Minority-Scholar-in-Residence  
**Prof. Mary Johnson Osirim**, Bryn Mawr University
- Thursday, April 12**  
 12:35 - 2 p.m.  
 STV 401
- Prof. Anita Weiss**, International Studies, University of Oregon  
 "Muslim Women's Human Rights"  
 (Global Connections seminar)
- Friday, April 13**  
 2 - 5 p.m.  
 CVA 145
- Mini-conference on Women in Cinema  
 Participants: **Prof. Mehrnaz Saeed Vafa** (Film Studies, Columbia College, Chicago, "Women and Cinema in Iran"); **Prof. Joelle Vitiello** (Dept. of French, Macalester College, St. Paul, "Representations of Gender in Tunisian Cinema"); **Prof. Sophia McClennen** (Foreign languages, ISU, "Gender and Mexican Cinema")
- Friday, June 1**  
 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
 Bone Student Center  
 Old Main Room
- Conference on *Enhancing Women's Capabilities in Central Illinois*  
 Keynote Speaker: **Martha Nussbaum**, Distinguished Professor of Law and Philosophy, University of Chicago, "The Capabilities Approach to Women's Rights"

# NEWS ABOUT WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENTS AND FACULTY/STAFF

## Heritage Academy Talk by Dr. Harmon

**Sandra Harmon**, Women's Studies and History, will give the featured presentation at the Heritage Academy, one of the Founders Day activities, on February 15. Her talk is entitled "The beneficiaries of the famous and timely act of '57': Women and the Illinois State Normal University, 1857-1899." The quotation in the title comes from a speech by Sarah Raymond Fitzwilliam at the jubilee anniversary celebration of the school in 1897. Raymond of the class of 1866 served as superintendent of Bloomington schools from 1874 to 1892, one of the first women in the state to be named a city superintendent of schools. In her speech she called attention to the opportunities afforded women students by the establishment of the state normal school.

In her paper, Harmon will focus on the educational experience of women students in the coeducational environment of the ISNU and on the career, marriage, and family patterns of the nineteenth-century women graduates. The program is at 10:30 a.m. in the Second Floor West Lounge of the Bone Student Center on Thursday, February 15.

## Welcome New Women's Studies Minor

Sarah Grant—History

## Faculty and Staff News

**Val Moghadam**, Women's Studies, participated in a conference on "The Future of Revolution in the Context of Globalization", held at the University of California, Santa Barbara, on 25-26 January. Her paper was entitled: "Is the Future of Revolution Feminist? Rewriting 'Gender and Revolutions' for a Globalizing World". She was also invited to lecture at the University of California, Riverside, on 29 January, sponsored by the Institute for Research on World-Systems and the Women's Studies Department. Her paper: "For Gender Justice and Economic Justice: Transnational Feminism and Global Inequalities."

**Dr. Moghadam** was interviewed by a student reporter for the University of Indiana's campus newspaper, in connection with an article on women in the Muslim world that appeared on 5 December 2000. The full article may be found at: <<http://www.idsnews.com/story.php?id=2306>>.

She has also been awarded a sabbatical leave for Spring 2002. During that time, she plans to complete two book projects: an updated edition of her first book, *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*, and the first draft of a book on Globalization and Transnational Feminist Networks.

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## Globalization and Women's Movements WS 391 – Seminar in Women's Studies Fall 2001 Wednesday 5.30 – 8.20

**Dr. V. M. Moghadam**  
Women's Studies, Rachel Cooper, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Tel: 438-2947

### Course Description

This course examines the twin processes of globalization and the expansion of women's movements and organizations on a global scale. We will look at the historical roots of international feminism (early 20<sup>th</sup> century), the rise of second-wave feminism in the 1960s, and the proliferation of women's organizations and transnational feminist networks since the 1980s. We will then explore the connections between these developments and the process of globalization during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The course will familiarize you with globalization and with global feminism, two of the most critical and contested issues of our time. The main objective is to understand the connections between the two.

### Course Requirements

- ?? A short paper on globalization. What is it? What are its dimensions? What are its implications for women?
- ?? A short paper on feminism, the women's movement, and women's organizations. What is local, international, global, and transnational about them? What is the relationship with globalization?
- ?? A research paper on a women's movement or on a transnational feminist network of your choice, and its connection to the process of globalization.

### Readings

- (a) Required: There will be a course packet of articles for purchase.
- (b) Recommended: Contact Women's Studies for a list of recommended books for reading.

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

## Foreign Film Festival 2001

The Department of Foreign Languages at Illinois State University presents Foreign Film Festival 2001 on February 15-25, 2001. Shakespeare wrote that "All the World's a Stage" and the films in this year's festival demonstrate the many ways this statement is true. Many of the films depict the act of performing and many tell stories of filmmaking. Others reveal *Global Acts* by representing the ways that individual acts shape the lives of others. The films allow the viewer to watch how performances transcend national boundaries, while simultaneously teaching us about local cultures. One of the films, *The Apple*, is co-sponsored by Women's Studies.

On Thursday, February 15 at 7:30 p.m., Dr. Val Moghadam, Director of Women's Studies will introduce a film from Iran in Farsi, *The Apple*. *The Apple* was directed by a 17-year-old girl, Samira Makhmalbaf, the daughter of the Iranian filmmaker, Mohsen Makhmalbaf (*Gabbeh*). It tells the true story of twin 12-year-old girls, Massoumeh and Zahra Naderi, who were locked up behind iron bars by their father for their entire lives until the neighbors complained and the authorities came and temporarily removed the children from the home. The story begins at the point where the girls, so retarded they are barely able to speak, have been cleaned up and shorn and returned to their parents on their blind mother's promise to wash them. Their father, a 65-year-old beggar who scratches a living by being paid to pray for the forgiveness of the sins of richer people, agrees not to lock them up again, but does so as soon as he has gets them home. At this point a social worker turns up and tells him he has to let them out. Then she locks *him* up, borrows a hacksaw from a neighbor, and tells him he has to saw his way out, thus destroying the bars.

For further information on the festival and a complete schedule, contact the Department of Foreign Languages, or Dr. Sophia McClennen's website <http://lit.ilstu.edu/smexpos/filmfest2001.htm>. The festival is being co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost, the Office of International Studies and Programs, Department of Art, Department of English, Department of Political Science, and Women's Studies.

## THE V-DAY 2001 COLLEGE INITIATIVE Comes to Illinois State University

### "The Vagina Monologues" by Eve Ensler

February 13, 2001 at 7 p.m. in Circus Room  
February 14, 2001 at 7 p.m. in Old Main Room  
February 18, 2001 at 3 p.m. in Old Main Room  
(Circus Rm. and Old Main Rm. are located in the Bone Student Center)

Tickets are a \$5 donation at the door  
with all money being donated to  
Countering Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center.

V-Day is a campaign to end sexual violence against women and to proclaim Valentine's Day as the day to celebrate women and demand the end of abuse. For the third year in a row, the V-Day College Initiative is coming to college and university campuses around the world. Join us for a performance of Eve Ensler's Obie Award-winning play "The Vagina Monologues." Round the-clock and up-to-the-minute information about V-Day 2001 and violence against women can be found at the event's global website at <http://www.vday.org>. The performances are sponsored locally by MECCPAC, Womyn's Coalition, Theatre Department, PRIDE, Phi Eta Sigma, University Housing Services, Women's Studies, and Health Promotions.