



University of Virginia

# Studies in Women and Gender

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Looking Forward, Looking Back
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- The Other Side of the Door
- Life After Women's Studies

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## Looking Forward, Looking Back



Rina Williams, Interim Director of Studies in Women and Gender

Dear friends,

As we embark on another academic year, I wanted to write a note about looking forward and looking back. It seemed to me that a great deal of what's in this third newsletter relates to what's behind us and what's ahead of us. As I tried to figure out which items were which, though, I couldn't!

Facing ahead, we're thrilled to welcome Vanessa May to our faculty this year. Vanessa just completed her Ph.D. in History here at UVa, and she'll be offering classes on American women, race, feminism, work, and welfare. We also brought a former UVa faculty member, Bella De Paulo, to give a talk on the exciting new directions her research on singles is taking—research that she began during her time here at UVa.

Inside these pages, you'll find photos from our graduation ceremony in May. It's hard to express how incredibly honored I was to have presided over this most important rite of passage for our students. Their bright, smiling faces are full of hope and the promise they will certainly fulfill as they leave us.

And I know their futures will be bright because we have proof! This comes in the form of articles by two of our alumnae—including the graduation speech that one gave during our ceremony. These women have done and keep doing wonderful things, just as we know our newest alumnae will too. Keep sending us your stories!

This, I realized, is what our Program is about: our past is our future, and vice versa. I hope you'll enjoy reading about these pasts and futures—which each of you, in a different but important way—helps to define. But I doubt you'll be able to disentangle which is which!

With warmest regards,  
Rina

## Interview with Bella DePaulo

March 2007



Bella DePaulo is the author of *Singled Out: How Singles are Stereotyped, Stigmatized, and Ignored, and Still Live Happily Ever After* (St. Martin's Press, 2006)



Drawing from social science data, politics, and popular culture, DePaulo presents a myth-busting, consciousness-raising, totally unapologetic take on singlehood.

*Caitlin Corcoran's article is based on an interview with Bella DePaulo*



Contributed by  
Caitlin Corcoran,  
graduate of the  
Studies in Women  
and Gender  
Program, Class  
2007.

Not just anyone can introduce a new word into society, but Bella DePaulo is doing just that. With her new book, *Singled Out: How Singles are Stereotyped, Stigmatized, and Ignored, and Still Live Happily Ever After*, she works to raise awareness of “the twenty-first-century problem that has no name”: singlism. This past March, the Studies in Women and Gender Program brought DePaulo to the University to talk about her book and the work she has done with the study of singles.

DePaulo's book focuses on defining and exposing singlism in society. As its name implies, singlism is the “stigmatizing of people who are single” (including those who are divorced, widowed, or always single). DePaulo's book describes the legal and social disadvantages faced by singles, as well as the ways in which society's glorification of couples overlooks other significant relationships in people's lives.

DePaulo was a Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia when she began exploring the study of singles. Her “Singles in Society” seminar was so popular that some students sat in on the class just to participate in discussion. In her lab, she and colleagues Wendy Morris and Stacey Sinclair started exploring stereotypes about singles. They found stigmatization and discrimination of singles alive and well. She was invited to write a target article for *Psychological Inquiry*. For DePaulo, this article put the study of singles on the academic map. It was on her sabbatical that she realized this really was her passion. She wanted to expand it past academia, writing a book for a wider audience.

DePaulo's passion for the study of singles is evident in her excitement when speaking on the subject. Always single herself, the constant assumptions (often negative and untrue) that others made about her single life left her wondering if she was the only person who could be uncoupled and happy. Slowly, she began asking people about their experiences with singlism. Increasingly, others would chime in and even follow up by e-mail with experiences of their own. Realizing she was not alone, she began looking at the academic literature that often justified the print media's glorification of marriage. DePaulo had seen so many positive headlines even she began to believe marriage really did make people healthier, happier, and live longer; however, when she looked at the studies from a social science perspective, she was astonished at the unchallenged and misleading characterizations that the media made by misconstruing the results.

DePaulo's argument against singlism is extensive. Ultimately, she hopes for less singlism and more fairness in society's attitudes and laws. All people and all types of relationships should have similar value; priority should not be given to couples. Her consciousness raising has started slowly. Hoping that those who are open to her ideas will enact change at individual levels, DePaulo has begun by appealing to these people. At the very least, she gives other singles a sense of solidarity and affirmation. Some of the e-mails she receives express relief from singles who, despite their happiness and success, had worried there was something wrong with them or their lives.

DePaulo also hopes individuals will speak up against singlism in their everyday lives. She acknowledges this is harder, but hopes that if people are called out on their actions, they will step back and reconsider. She has heard from people who have stood up for themselves; one reader

confronted their boss because it was assumed that, because they were single, they could work on holidays. While people may not be able to take this next step, DePaulo hopes that singles will feel validated.

DePaulo also wants to create greater understanding about singles. One key way she hopes to do this is by integrating the topic of singles into university curricula. Studying singles opens up new questions and issues most students have not considered before. DePaulo also sees the need to integrate the study of singles into academic research. While psychology has studied a vast number of stereotypes, singles are not included in this. Studies of relationships focus overwhelmingly on couples and marriage, missing out on other important relationships in couples' lives and all those in the lives of single people. Studying singles would expand and deepen our understanding of relationships, proving that there is more than one kind that matters.

DePaulo is not deterred, though this could be a slow process. Some of the difficulty arises from the idea that being single is not a permanent status; yet, on average, today's population spends more of their adult life single than married. With consciousness raising and the growing number of singles, the stigma towards them will have to disappear.

While DePaulo emphasizes the benefits that eradicating singlism has for both sexes, its implications for women specifically cannot be ignored. Acknowledging that single women can have rewarding lives presents a different view of women than society typically holds. Even some key feminist struggles, like the work/family discussion, leave out single women. DePaulo believes that people are different; what makes life valuable to one person is different from what does for another. Marriage may be great for some, but those that do not fall into that category should not be stigmatized. If this message is taken seriously, she sees it as a way to expand everyone's lives.

By allowing for a single life to be full in and of itself, we are encouraged to look at all the aspects that can make life happy and rewarding. Contrary to what the print media may lead us to believe in its warnings about single women, DePaulo notes that many of these women don't have a problem. Even more so than men, they are living happily on their own. That they can be single and have a fulfilling, successful life can be threatening to those that still want marriage to occupy a place of privilege.

Through her extensive work in raising awareness of and fighting singlism, DePaulo wants "work and passions and pursuits you care about" to be considered "valid in and of themselves, rather than regarded as compensation for not having a spouse."

## FACULTY NEWS

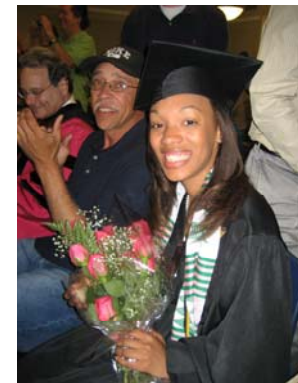
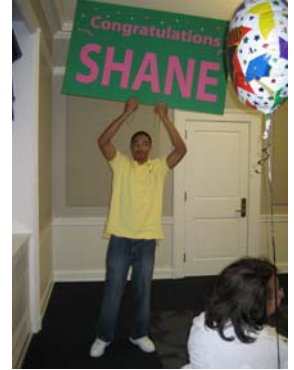


Vanessa May joins us as an Instructor in Studies in Women and Gender. She received her Ph.D. in 2007 from the University of Virginia in American History, specializing in the history of women in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States. Her dissertation, "Working in Public and in Private: Domestic Service, Women's Reform, and the Meaning of the Middle-Class Home in New York City, 1870-1940," examines the debate over wage and hour legislation for domestic workers through the lens of worker activism, middle-class reform, and the issues of public and private. Her research interests include the history of women's activism, cross-class reform, and the intersections between gender and public policy. Vanessa is looking forward to teaching SWAG students.

# Graduation 2007

May 20, 2007

*“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”*  
-Eleanor Roosevelt  
(First Lady 1933-1945)



# New Courses Offered Fall 2007

SWAG 220: *American Feminisms (Primary)*

Vanessa May [vhm4z@virginia.edu](mailto:vhm4z@virginia.edu)

13:00-13:50 M W F

SWAG 222: *Political History of Housework (Primary)*

Vanessa May [vhm4z@virginia.edu](mailto:vhm4z@virginia.edu)

9:30– 10:45 T R

SWAG 224: *Black Femininities and Masculinities in Media (Primary)*

Lisa Shutt [lt7q@virginia.edu](mailto:lt7q@virginia.edu)

19:00- 21:45 R

SWAG 230: *Women and Gender in the Deaf World (Primary)*

Sandra Wood [skw8x@virginia.edu](mailto:skw8x@virginia.edu)

9:30– 10:45 T R

SWAG 310: *Gender and Print Media (Primary)*

Virginia Moran [vam2rq@virginia.edu](mailto:vam2rq@virginia.edu)

14:00-17:00 T

SWAG 317: *Women and Families in Slavery (Primary)*

Calvin Schermerhorn [jls4ac@virginia.edu](mailto:jls4ac@virginia.edu)

14:00-15:15 M W

SWAG 416: *Single Mother to Welfare Queen (Primary)*

Vanessa May [vhm4z@virginia.edu](mailto:vhm4z@virginia.edu)

16:00– 18:30 W

SWAG 418: *Women's Rights in America (Primary)*

Cori Field [cf6d@virginia.edu](mailto:cf6d@virginia.edu)

9:30– 10:45 T R

Please refer to our online Program Course Directory for additional information:

<http://www.virginia.edu/womenstudies/coursedescriptions/FALL2007.doc>

# Graduation Speech

May 20, 2007



Contributed by  
Morgan Cosby,  
graduate of the Stud-  
ies in Women and  
Gender Program,  
Class of 2004, and  
Graduation Guest  
Speaker 2007.

morgan.cosby@gmail.com

## The Other Side of the Door

I am so honored – and admittedly flattered – to return to this podium as an example of “getting it right”... no pressure there... Before I begin with the speech I’ve prepared for you today, I just want to go back to Rina’s wonderful words and make sure we all take another minute to recognize the absolutely AMAZING faculty and staff in this program because they are a huge reason that SWAG is “getting it right.”

To give you a little background, the last time I stood here, I received a very important piece of paper, and I also started crying. I cried from the mixture of excitement about graduating and sadness of initial recognition that it would soon be time for me to move on from SWAG and from UVA. The academic environment had always been a comfortable space for me, and after 20 years of school, it was time for something new: something unknown. After the ceremony, I lingered, enjoying the moment with faculty, family and friends... still a little bit in shock to be holding my diploma – well, the blank scroll that promised my diploma would follow in the coming weeks by mail, anyway. All the while, in the back of my mind, the thought was building: “what really happens on the other side of that door, and where do I want to go once I walk through it?”

That was three years ago, and while I am still filled with wonder when I think of what the future holds for me, it is no longer an intimidating thought, but rather an exciting prospect. I know that much of this confidence I feel when I think ahead to the future comes from my experience as a SWAG major.

It is such a joy to see that the SWAG program has more than doubled in size in just a few short years. There were only 13 women who graduated from the program my year. It speaks both to the excellence of the faculty and curriculum, as well as the high caliber of students that this program continues to flourish and expand in new directions. I look forward to seeing what the coming years will bring.

SWAG welcomed me as a 19-year old, 2nd year Anthropology major. The study of Anthropology fascinated me, but in my heart, it felt like there was something missing. On the first day of SWAG 210 – the introductory course with Ann Lane – I finally felt as though I had found my home here at UVA. The two majors fit hand-in-hand and created the perfect course of study for me.

During my 3rd year, I had the privilege of taking Feminist Theory with Ellen Fuller – the first time she had ever taught the course. She pushed me harder than any teacher ever had and brought my critical thinking skills to a new level. She signed on as my thesis advisor for 4th year and went above and beyond in that role – opening her office to me and guiding me through the biggest undertaking of my academic career. Ellen continues to be both a mentor and a friend to me, and I feel very lucky to have met her at such an important stage in my life. I am sure each of you is able to call to mind a SWAG professor for whom you have the same admiration, and I encourage you to hold on to that special relationship.

Since graduation, I have had two jobs in two very different areas of the non-profit sector. I have worked in Hawaii with high school exchange students from all around the world, and I am involved in the restoration and preservation of national parklands in the San Francisco Bay Area. Although both of these jobs have challenged me, and taught me a lot about the issues at hand as well as myself, I have come to recognize that the next career step I want to take is a transition to working full time with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. I have been a volunteer counselor for survivors for about five years now, and I realize through this involvement – as well as my employment in other areas – that providing social support services is what speaks to me. What I wish to impart to you from my own experience is that even if you start out in what turns out to be the “wrong job” for you, there are still les-

sons to be learned from it. Always listen to your instincts and draw on your experiences to continue on the path towards the “right job.”

To switch gears for a moment and address the family and friends in the room: I’d like to tell you a little bit about SWAG, and its majors. Each of these women have accepted the challenges of an extremely rigorous academic program and lived to tell about it. They have taken the proverbial “road less traveled” through UVA and as a result are prepared to take on any of the numerous opportunities that will present themselves in the future.

Earning a Bachelor’s Degree in Studies in Women and Gender from the University of Virginia is no small accomplishment. It requires not only a keen intellect, but also the desire to discuss and debate difficult issues that hold direct relevance to each and every one of our lives; to write... edit... rewrite... edit... papers on topics that were never meant to be contained in 10 pages, and most importantly, it takes the drive to come to each class ready to engage fully with peers and professors. Oh yeah, and if they’re any thing like my class, which I’m sure they are, these women have also committed countless hours a week to shaping other areas of the University. From internships at the Women’s Center to involvement in community service, athletics, second majors, and countless other organizations, being a SWAG major is synonymous with being engaged in your community. There is a standard of excellence in SWAG that will serve each of these young women well as they move through their lives.

I saw on the cover of this spring’s Ms. Magazine “1,024 things to do with a Women’s Studies Degree.” What an inspiring message! Not that we need to see it in print to know that we have options ahead of us with this degree, but it is still a great affirmation of our choice to pursue something we wanted to study as undergraduates. Inside, the heading of the article was “Transform the World: What you can do with a Degree in Women’s Studies.” I believe that each of these women in the room with us today have the power to transform the world, and I am hopeful they will use this power to pursue their passion – because that is the best way to go about effecting change.

To return to you powerful women who are graduating today: As you head out to transform the world, I urge you to hold on to the lessons you have learned in your time as a SWAG major and to cherish your friendships with each other, never to stop thinking critically and listen to your heart and do what you believe is right. There may be times when that is not the “popular” thing to do, and there will be times when it is not the profitable thing either, but regardless of what captures your interest, be sure to check in with yourself from time to time to make sure you haven’t lost your way. Regardless of what career you choose – and I do mean choose because SWAG has prepared you for any life course that calls to you – make time to stay involved in the causes that you deem important.

If any of you are feeling in this moment the way I felt 3 years ago – a little unsure of what direction in which to aim your limitless potential, or the answer to the innocent yet stressful question I’m sure you’re all familiar with, “so what are you going to do next?” Or even if you’re completely confident today, and doubt creeps in at some point down the road, I would genuinely welcome you to be in touch with me at any time. If the thought of discussing life with a person you’ve known for about 20 minutes seems daunting, I encourage you to talk over your feelings with a trusted friend or mentor.

In a minute, you will be receiving your diploma and then heading through that door and going in separate directions. But for now, take a moment to breathe in, look around you and truly appreciate what is on THIS side of the door. After all, you will be on the other side of it for the rest of your life... except maybe a brief cameo at a graduation ceremony down the road a few years(?). So, slow your spinning minds... look around at your family and friends, and remember how much their love and support have gotten you to where you are at this moment. Look at these representatives of the SWAG program and reflect on their impact in your life. And most importantly, take a moment to congratulate yourself on this incredible accomplishment.

I’d like to close with a quote that both inspires me and also provides me with comfort in moments of doubt. It comes from Howard Thurman, a leader in the Civil Rights Movement:

*"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."*

I personally believe these words to be true. It does not matter so much what you decide to do with your life, so long as you are engaged in what you are doing. Find something that lights a fire in you. Don’t be afraid to change your mind, or try new things. The right place in our world is out there for you, and if you follow your instincts, you will find it.

ALUMNI  
INSIGHT

## Life After Women's Studies

Well into my third year at UVa, after repeated letters from the Dean's office demanding that I declare a major or have my enrollment suspended, I counted up my credits, took a deep breath, and declared a major in Women's Studies. It's not what I had planned; it's where I happened to have the most credits. But for some reason I wasn't ready to take the plunge into a hugely stigmatized major even though it was clearly what interested me. And I am also quite certain it's not what my father, a retired Marine and staunch conservative, had planned for me. Studying anything in the liberal arts was bad enough; Women's Studies was literally beyond his comprehension.

The day after graduation I got in a car and drove to San Francisco without a job or even a plan, but when I arrived I immediately went to work on my resume. To my shame, I changed my Women's Studies major to Anthropology, my concentration within Women's Studies. There's no way to know what effect it would have had, but I was running out of money and it seemed like a risk. I'd defended my choice of major from attack enough to know how it can affect people. In any case, I landed a research assistant job at a hedge fund, where I quickly learned, with the help of my boss, a Rhodes Scholar and risk arbitrageur, that I was "plenty smart" but just not detail-oriented enough for the role.

A stroke of luck, it turns out, as I landed at a consulting firm where I discovered that my abilities to write, analyze and communicate were a perfect fit for this field, one which I had never before considered. Turns out the place was chock full of other liberal arts majors, and I couldn't wait to tell my dad. The consulting job led to work at a software company during the rise of the Internet, which led to the company's IPO and my brief stint as a "paper millionaire." When the Internet bubble burst I left to pursue an MBA at London Business School, where my degree in Women's Studies was again the foundation for my success.

The engineers in my class were great with the numbers, but couldn't write. The commerce undergrads did okay all around but their insights were homogenous and predictable. It would take me paragraphs to map out exactly how the intellectual rigor of my "Feminist Criticism and Women's Fiction" class made me good at analyzing business cases, but let's just say that if you can have an intelligent discussion about a feminist deconstruction of the phallogentrism in a 19th century novel, you will have no problem developing theories about why a company with an all-male, all-white, all 40-something management team seemed to keep making bad decisions, as one Harvard Business School case study asked. Business isn't easy, but I have yet to find a board room discussion even remotely as intellectually challenging as any given session of Susan Fraiman's class.

Sometimes I feel guilty that I'm not working for Planned Parenthood or some world-saving organization; instead I work in marketing at a for-profit corporation. But my feminism and my roots in Women's Studies inform everything I do, from not accepting gender-based discrimination in any form to consciously destroying gender stereotypes every chance I get. In fact I joke that I carry the weight of my gender on my shoulders, feeling obligated to be able to play golf, drink whiskey and parallel park as well as any man, if not better, or risk letting my fellow women down. Foolish? Maybe. But stomping on peoples' negative stereotypes of women fuels me like a drug.



Contributed by  
Mandy Moore,  
graduate of the  
Studies in Women  
and Gender pro-  
gram, Class of  
1995

It pushes me through fear and self-doubt like nothing else.

These days, ten years after graduation, I tell people Women's Studies was my major every chance I get. I don't know exactly what changed and when, but I could not be more proud of it. Perhaps it's because I finally got over my own stereotypes of what it means to be a Women's Studies major, and I know that I don't fit other peoples' ridiculous stereotypes (after all, I am gainfully employed). It's as if there is a bit of stereotype crushing just by saying, "My major was Women's Studies." And boy, does that feel good!

Regards,  
Mandy

**The Studies in Women and Gender Program  
Invites you to Attend our Second Annual**



***SWAG Student-Faculty Social***

**Wednesday, October 3rd, 2007**

**4:00 – 6:00 PM**

**227 Minor Hall**

Come meet, mix, and mingle with our new and returning  
students and faculty.

**Refreshments will be served!**

# Additions to the SWAG Library

## DVDS

Erin Brockovich  
 Fire  
 First Wives Club  
 Gandhi  
 Kramer vs. Kramer  
 Murphy Brown (First Season)  
 Norma Rae  
 North Country  
 Running in High Heels  
 Sex and the City (Complete Series)  
 Silence Broken: Korean Comfort  
     Women  
 Silkwood  
 The Accused  
 The Contender  
 The Story of the Weeping Camel  
 Thelma & Louise  
 Water



“No entertainment  
 is so cheap as  
 reading, nor any  
 pleasure so  
 lasting.” Lady  
 Mary Wortley  
 Montagu (1753)

## BOOKS

*Abortion and Politics of Motherhood*-Kristin Luker  
*Bananas, Beaches, & Bases*-Cynthia Enloe  
*Contested Knowledge*-Steven Seidman  
*Creating Gender*-Cathy Johnson  
*Democrats, Republicans, and the Politics of Women's Place*-Kira Sanbonmatsu  
*Engendering Democracy*-Anne Phillips  
*Feminism & Politics*-Anne Phillips, ed.  
*Feminism & Method: Ethnography, Discourse, Analysis and Activist Research*  
 -Nancy Naples  
*Feminist Contentions*-Banhabib, Butler, Cornell, and Fraser  
*Feminist Inquiry*-Mary Hawkesworth  
*Gender & Nation*-Nira Yuval-Davis  
*Gender in Third World Politics*-Georgina Waylan  
*Gender Justice, Development, and Rights*-Molyneux and Razavi  
*Gender Policies in Japan and the United States*-Joyce Gelb  
*Gender Transformations*-Sylvia Walby  
*Gender, Globalization, and Democratization*-Kelly, et.al.  
*Gendered Paradoxes: Women's Movements, State Restructuring, and Global  
 Development in Ecuador*-Amy Lind  
*Global Challenges: War, Self Determination and Responsibility for Justice*-  
 Iris Marion Young  
*Global Feminism*-ed. Myra Marx Ferree and Alli Marie Tripp

*Globalization and Feminist Activism*-Mary Hawkesworth  
*Identities*-ed. Linda Alcoff, E. Mendieta  
*Inclusion and Democracy*-Iris Marion Young  
*Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*-Susan Miller Okin  
*It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*-Jennifer L. Lawless, Richard L. Fox  
*Just Advocacy*-W. Hesford, W. Kozol  
*Justice and the Politics of Difference*-Iris Marion Young  
*Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the Postsocialist Condition*-Nancy Fraser  
*No Shortcuts to Power: African Women In Politics and Policy Making*-Goetz and Hassim  
*On Female Body Experience: Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays*-Iris Marion Young  
*Priestess, Mother, Sacred Sister: Religions Dominated by Women*-Susan Starr Sered  
*Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*-Theda Skocpol  
*Protest, Policy, & the Problem of Violence Against Women*-Laurel Weldon  
*Recovering Subversion*-Nivedita Menon  
*Redistribution or Recognition?: A Political-Philosophical Exchange*-Nancy Fraser, et.al.  
*Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women*-Dai Sil Kim-Gibson  
*States and Women's Rights: Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*-Mounira Charrad  
*The Almanac of Women and Minorities in World Politics*-Mart Martin  
*The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective*-McGrory and Basu  
*The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*-Cynthia Enloe  
*The Girl's Guide to Absolutely Everything*-Melissa Kirsch  
*The Politics of Women's Interests: New Comparative Perspectives*-ed. Louise A. Chappell  
*The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*-Nancy Burns, et.al.  
*The Women's Movement in Latin America*-Jane Jaquette  
*Where Women Run: Gender and Party in the American States*-Kira Sanbonmatsu  
*Why Women Protest: Women's Movements in Chile*-Lisa Baldez  
*Women and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook*-Barbara Burrell  
*Women in Modern India*-Geraldine Forbes  
*Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island*-Ruth Ann Keyso  
*Women, Democracy, and Globalization in North America: A Comparative Study*-Jane H. Baynes  
*Women, Islam and the State*-Deniz Kandiyoti  
*Women, the State, and Political Liberalization*-Laurie Brand  
*Women's Movements Facing the Reconfigured State*-eds. Banaszak, Beckwith, Rucht  
*Women's Political Discourse: a 21st-Century Perspective*-Molly Mayhead, Brenda Marshall  
*Zora Neale Hurston & American Literary Culture*-M. Genevieve West



**“Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes a human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning.”**  
 - Maya Angelou



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