Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and George Eliot. To do so she focuses on writing as a public act that allows the female writer to elide the divide between public and private spheres. Each of the chapters addresses a single author, with the exception of chapter five which is an insightful comparison of Gaskell and Beecher Stowe, in order to delineate how the characters writing within the novels send letters to the world.

Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey, which is the topic of chapter two, examines Austen's hidden manifesto, a declaration of writing as a craft practiced by women. Austen's intertextuality and her ability to embed within her novel the seeds of novels she was yet to write, demonstrates her ability to acquire narratives from public life, according to Sabiston. Sabiston also demonstrates that the title of Austen's novel Persuasion is framed by her desire to persuade the reader that women can write against the male tradition. In Private Sphere to World Stage both Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë are framed in relation to Scherzade, the female artist forced to confront risk, both writers having overcome barriers in order to bring their art to the world. Austen is the literary precursor to the Brontë sisters, Charlotte and Emily, who are the topics of chapters three and four.

The description of writing and books in Jane Eyre is the focus of chapter three, where Sabiston convincingly argues for Jane Eyre being both the text and in turn writing the text she embodies, as a form of self-inscription. The onomastics of Eyre not only literally create a theatrical space in the novel but help with the move from private to public, a movement which Sabiston sees as originating in Jane's rebellion against John Reed. Jane Eyre's writing becomes a way for her to move from solitude to social integration, emerging from the private sphere in order to speak to other women.

Similarly, Catherine Earnshaw in Wuthering Heights is "the most author-ative voice within the text." Sabiston's focus on the ghost-text in Wuthering Heights is very insightful, and highlights an extreme example of the movement from private to public. Her analysis of the ledger/table as the site of Cathy's writing incorporates the inter-textuality of the scene while leaving the liminality of the ledger itself unaddressed. This investigation demonstrates how ghosts can be freed by the literary work, showing how books both begin and end the novel in the textual movement from private to public.

Sabiston's comparison of Gaskell and Stowe in chapter five is very astute and demonstrates a wealth of knowledge, experience, and research, by providing close inter-textual readings of Anglo-American connections. The ability to see inter-textual traces in these novels is also seen in Sabiston's analysis of Daniel in Eliot's Daniel Deronda. Sabiston goes even further in her interpretation to address how the World Wide Web can block communication through viruses and worms, impeding the movement from private to public. She weaves a thread through each novel, demonstrating how writing as art has the ability to move the female characters in the novels (as well as their authors), from the private to the public sphere. Private Sphere to World Stage from Austen to Eliot is required reading for those interested in the female writer/artist as portrayed in nineteenth-century literature, as well as for those who are interested in the exploration of the movement from the domestic to the public sphere. Readers will definitely benefit from Elizabeth Sabiston's research as it is presented here, especially her ability to connect the dots so seamlessly between these female novelists and their position within the female literary tradition.

Ann Gagné is an ABD Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English at the University of Western Ontario. She is presently completing her dissertation entitled "Bodies Touching/Touching Bodies: The Ethics of Touch in Victorian Literature."

READING WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES IN CANADA

MARGARET HOBBS AND CARLA RICE

We have a confession: we have never liked introductory textbooks. Not in history, not in psychology, and not even in women's studies. As undergraduate students we had many occasions to throw our textbooks against the wall—once we awoke from the snooze induced by boredom. Only occasionally have we actually adopted a main textbook for the introductory course that we have been teaching together at Trent University. Usually we have preferred the flexibility facilitated by articles of our own choosing, bound in a coursepack, plus a few assigned books on specific topics. What then, are we doing here writing an extended review of many recent textbooks in women's and gender studies? And what are we doing collaborating on our own introductory textbook?

In recent years, we have reassessed our position and we have come to appreciate that a textbook can, in fact, assist instructors and students in navigating the dynamic and swiftly changing terrain of women's and gender studies. This project grew out of that familiar annual ritual for introductory course instructors: the quest to find the perfect text that will engage and inspire students while guiding them skillfully through the dizzying array of concepts, theories, issues, approaches, histories and contexts that comprise contemporary feminist and gender scholarship. Of course, the perfect text does not, and cannot, exist. Even with a more modest goal in mind, our own attempt at an introductory textbook is proving challenging, and certainly humbling. We revisit the textbook genre and assess its potential value as well as its drawbacks for teaching introductory women's and gender studies in contemporary Canadian classrooms. We then review ten recent
and popular introductory texts on the market in Canada.

We began the research for this article by identifying the many available entry-level textbooks that were either new or recent (including new recent editions). We wanted to review books with a Canadian focus or emphasis on transnational content and perspectives. Limiting our selections to those that are explicitly multi- or interdisciplinary, we also decided to consider only the textbooks that offer a sustained gender analysis. We were interested in overview style texts as well as readers that would be of specific interest to instructors of beginner-level courses. As we considered the many excellent collections on the market, our final selection was influenced by an informal survey of syllabi from introductory courses in Canada. While we did not include all of the books assigned by Canadian instructors, we have included many of them. We make no pretense of undertaking a sustained critical review. Rather, we provide summary information about the content, themes and pedagogical features of each title, giving readers a snapshot view. We organize our reviews by considering the strengths, limits and suggested uses of every text. Specifically by presenting our material in this way, we hope this piece might be a valuable resource for first-time and seasoned instructors who are preparing to teach an introductory women's, gender, or equity studies course.

I. To Text or Not To Text

Textbooks exist in two basic formats: overview style and reader style. Overview texts aim to introduce, often historicize, and contextualize the field, its key concepts, issues and debates. They may be sole-authored, or include contributions from multiple writers. Individual chapters tend to be organized broadly across a particular issue or theme in order to survey and synthesize the dominant questions, arguments, and debates. Reader-style texts, on the other hand, feature a variety of previously published or invited articles, which are each constructed to advance a particular position. There is usually some synthesis and mapping out of the terrain, but mainly to frame and situate the author's own interpretation and argument. Often, but not always, editors of readers will introduce each section of the book in order to help contextualize the disparate pieces that follow, and sometimes they add prefacing comments before each article to introduce students to the author and/or highlight their approach and argument.

The advantages and pitfalls of the textbook genre are worth considering. We find overview texts most challenging to use successfully in the classroom. First, the overview approach itself leads either to short, overly simplistic chapters or to long chapters (at least long for first-year students). Compendiously, feminist scholars often try to avoid broad generalizations, aiming instead for rich detail and inclusive content featuring a diversity of identities and experiences and drawing on a wide range of authors. Pages tend to accumulate, however, with each layer of nuance, and our experience is that many students simply stop reading when the text goes on and on. How many times have meticulously crafted textbook chapters been dismissed by students as "boring?" Multiple authors create a more dynamic text, yet it is still very difficult for individual authors to "survey" their topic in an overview text in ways that are both thorough and engaging for students. And without a compelling argument driving each chapter, it is difficult to provoke thoughtful critique and response from students. Classroom debate can be stifled, rather than stimulated.

Reader-style texts are generally more popular among students, and the inclusion of classic articles alongside more contemporary work is useful in giving students a sense of the changes that have transformed women's and gender studies over time and place. Yet there are still limitations associated with reader textbooks. We find, for example, that editors are sometimes overly interventionist, and in the interests of shortening the selections for a first-year audience too much text can be removed. The read can become choppy and the argument can falter without sufficient supporting evidence or proper linkages between points and sections. Shorter pieces allow instructors to pack more into the weekly reading requirements, exposing students to greater diversity of perspective. At the same time, the array of authors and arguments can overwhelm students.

Despite these difficulties, there are compelling reasons why instructors should consider adopting a textbook, either the overview or reader style. A textbook provides students with a concrete tangible work that they can hold in their hands as a guide through the complex and often confusing world of women's studies. First-year courses generally offer a buffer of topics and issues. At its best, a textbook can provide intellectual glue that makes more readily apparent the themes and flow of the course, as well as the interconnections between topics and the context within which particular pieces should be read. A textbook can facilitate students' navigation of the material in a way that is not possible with a collection of articles bound together in an unpublished coursepack. Textbooks can be visually interesting and engaging, and increasingly they include useful pedagogical aids appealing to a diversity of student learning styles and preferences.

II. Overview Textbooks

WOMEN ACROSS CULTURES:
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Shawn Meghan Burn

Strengths: This overview-style book explores the global diversity in women's experiences and equality struggles. It takes a human rights and "cross national, multicultural" approach emphasizing women's status and highlighting feminist thought and action worldwide (p. xi). Shawn
Meghan Burn organizes chapters by issues rather than by geography and closes with an appendix that provides a “snapshot” with key indicators of women’s status on a country-by-country basis. The content and approach make her book especially useful to students in Canadian universities, many of whom come to classes with faint knowledge of contexts outside their own. Chapters on globalization and human rights assume students have little or no prior knowledge of issues, which make these particularly valuable to instructors of first-year courses. Each chapter contains thought-provoking sidebars, quotations and information to encourage students to study the perspectives and issues raised. Reading firsthand from a diversity of feminist authors would help emphasize competing perspectives on the meaning of “woman,” “global,” “transnational,” and “feminism,” and add complexity to understanding issues such as female genital cutting, the global sex trade, effects of globalization on women workers, and reproductive technologies, etc.

Suggested Use: Due to its global scope and internationalist orientation, this text is suited to first-year classes emphasizing women’s studies in a global context.

FEMINIST ISSUES: RACE, CLASS, AND SEXUALITY, 5TH ED.

Nancy Mandell, ed.
Toronto: Pearson Education Canada, 2010

Strengths: Nancy Mandell has brought together a diverse group of scholars to present overviews of theories and issues important to understanding contemporary Canadian women’s studies. The selections are comprehensive in scope, and scrupulous in their referencing and use of examples. Generally speaking, they provide useful mappings of the scholarship on the topics covered. The lengthy chapters are made more accessible through careful use of subheadings that break up an otherwise dense text and help make visible the approach and structure. The first seven chapters are prefaced with provocative quotations, which are effective in stimulating a degree of wonder about the material before one jumps into it. Discussion questions, reading lists, filmographies, and web links close each chapter or appear at the end of the book, and these are excellent resources for students. The questions are very good—not too many, and most authors have a pretty good sense of what generates fruitful discussion. Almost all chapters include a list of suggested readings, usually with annotations. The references and websites are especially useful to students preparing research essays. Mandell has managed to keep the size of the book manageable despite the revisions involved in five separate editions.

Limits: The overall style of this book, and its very long chapters, leave it open to student criticism as “long and boring.” In our experience, students often do not finish long chapters, especially where there is no strong argument. The text in its current and past editions begins with an attempt to teach students about the key western feminist political/theoretical traditions that have influenced “successive waves.” We find that first-year students do not readily identify with these traditions and have very little interest in learning about them, especially at the beginning of the course. As well, few of the chapters take up themes of globalization and there is little or no attempt to link the Canadian content to broader global contexts. Given the significance of globalization for women’s lives and movements within Canada and elsewhere, this neglect is especially noticeable. Most authors attempt an integrative analysis sensitive to the diversity of women’s identities and social locations, yet racialized processes as they interact with gender, are not always well developed.

Suggested Use: Because the book usefully centres Canadian material and issues while also drawing on a broader range of theoretical and empirically-based literature, it is best suited for a first-year class focused on women’s studies in the Canadian context.

III. Reader Style Textbooks

GENDERED INTERSECTIONS:
AN INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES

Lesley Biggs & Pamela Downe, eds.
Halifax: Fernwood, 2005

Strengths: Lesley Biggs and Pamela Downe maintain the Canadian em-
phasis that we think is important in introductory women's studies classrooms in this country. As a "reader," this work is able to avoid some of the pitfalls common to overview texts. The editors have featured a wide range of articles, including some written specifically for this volume.

The diverse voices provide good examples and grounded analyses of how "difference" is constructed and experienced. Many selections have been reduced in size. Deliberately vetoing the "overview" style, the editors requested that contributors "lend critical commentary to...one or two most interesting, important or noteworthy issues within a broader subject area" (20). We think the pieces in this text hold their own more successfully than do many excerpts in other readers, partly because some of the contributors prepared their selections specifically for this book. There is not quite the sense of choppiness that characterizes most edited collections. Each of the eleven sections begins with a useful contextualizing overview of the themes and issues that follow. Some original elements adding to the pedagogical value of the reader include lists of statistical facts, called the "Hypatia Index," after the first known woman mathematician and scientist. The book features not just traditional academic pieces but also advertisements, poems, artwork and photographs, life writing, and in one case an excerpt from a critically important historical document in Canada—the Indian Act.

Limits: While this is an innovative reader, the short length of the articles still presents some limitations. In particular, we have noticed that there is a lack of detailed evidence supporting important components of arguments. For example, in the first chapter Biggs and Downe provide a very brief historical synthesis of the various feminist "waves" and the major western feminist theoretical traditions, but the lack of detail facilitates only a broad, rudimentary understanding. Like many other Canadian texts, the bulk of the book does not make great strides in developing local/global connections and transnational themes and issues except in a few articles. Again as with many women's studies texts, historical pieces are not well represented in this collection. For pedagogical purposes, there are no discussion questions accompanying the chapters, and while the sources are referenced there are no suggestions for further reading, and no websites flagged for students' interest and research.

Suggested Use: Its specific focus on gendered intersectionality, this book would be especially useful in entry-level courses emphasizing women's and gender studies in the Canadian context. Note: A second edition of this book was released after this review went to press.

GENDER RELATIONS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: ESSENTIAL READINGS

Nancy Cook, ed.
Toronto: Canadian Scholars, 2007

Strengths: This reader has several strengths. Nancy Cook begins with a concise introduction that outlines the book's major concepts—gender relations, intersectionality, multidisciplinarity, and a global perspective—aptly chosen to reflect important scholarly directions in gender and women's studies. Each of the book's eleven parts features a brief introduction to the readings that follow. Sections methodically link with and build on the previous ones, starting with the historical development of feminist scholarship in North America, followed by gender systems and experiences, and ending with comparative perspectives and global inequalities. Section introductions lend clarity and cohesion to themes taken up in the readings. Longer pieces have been excerpted, but not with a heavy hand. Especially useful are the pedagogical tools such as discussion questions, further readings, and relevant films and websites included at the end of each section.

Limits: While section openings are clearly written, we would like to see a more thorough historical contextualization of the readings and better theoretical development of key concepts. The book aims for a "multidisciplinary" approach rather than the more ambitious goal of "interdisciplinarity" but falls short of its goal. Section introductions interrogate gender primarily through a sociological lens, and selected readings favour sociological perspectives. Perhaps the most significant omission is the absence of scholarship on histories and legacies of colonization and slavery in Canadian context. Discussion questions are composed to invite understanding rather than to develop students' critical analyses of authors' arguments, and absent are the questions that would spark lively classroom debate. Only a minimal number of "further readings" are provided, and some are too difficult for first-year students. While some students undoubtedly will refer to the websites listed, the film lists might be more valuable to instructors than to students who have limited access to most of these titles. Some of the films recommended, especially those that examine female genital cutting, honour killings, and other issues faced by racialized women and women in the global south, need to be properly contextualized for classroom use. Without prior work, students can reproduce dominant scripts of "Third World" women as oppressed victims of patriarchal regimes in relation to "liberated" white women living in the democratic west.

Suggested Use: Because the text introduces students to diverse feminist perspectives on gender across the disciplines and around the world, it could work well in first-year sociology and women's studies courses on gender relations.

OPEN BOUNDARIES:
A CANADIAN WOMEN'S STUDIES READER, 3rd ED.

Barbara A. Crow & Lise Gotell, eds.

Strengths: With each new edition
of this useful collection of essays focusing on Canadian women’s studies scholarship, Barbara Crow and Lise Gotell have done considerable rethinking, and the content and orientation of the book have changed accordingly. The title itself captures nicely the dynamic and fluid nature of Canadian feminism and the field of women’s studies in the 21st century. Instructors assigning this book will treat their students to a reader that introduces the diversity and tensions that exist within Canadian feminist theory and practice. The Introduction clarifies the approach and the conceptual underpinnings of editorial inclusions and exclusions. The editors grapple with the distinctiveness of a Canadian feminism characterized by a “plurality of voices.” The issues, theories, and activism of Aboriginal women has been integrated throughout the book in articles by both native and non-native scholars, and the editors have been attentive overall to women’s differing social and economic locations and identities. Articles, edited for size, are grouped under sections taking up five well-chosen themes, ranging from diversity to sexuality. Crow and Gotell have made intelligent editing decisions, leaving enough of the originals to avoid the pitfalls seen in some other volumes where content has been gutted. They have carefully crafted introductions to each section, orienting students in broad strokes to the topics and articles included.

Limits: Despite the editors’ emphasis on the concept of “boundary-crossing,” students are not encouraged to explore women’s lives beyond our own national borders, or to understand Canada in relation to complex global phenomena. Many women’s studies programs are taking very seriously the call to “internationalize” their curriculum, and we feel that an introductory text should engage at least to some extent this challenge. Like so many other women’s studies texts, historical perspectives on the five defining themes are sacrificed to the appeal of the present. Without historical grounding, understanding of contemporary issues is undermined. This book also lacks many of the features that would make it more reader-friendly. First, it is very text-heavy. With only a few charts and graphs, and no other visual images or variations in format, some students might feel they are drowning in a sea of words. Second, there has been some, but not much, inclusion of work beyond the usual gold standard of academic essays. Other ways of knowing, through poetry, personal narratives and artwork, are marginalized, if not altogether absent. Third, there are few pedagogical aids to facilitate student engagement with the material.

Suggested Use: Due to the degree of difficulty of some selections and the editors’ primary focus on Canada, this text might work best in an advanced first-year or second-year women’s studies course emphasizing Canadian content and context.

AN INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN’S STUDIES: GENDER IN A TRANSNATIONAL WORLD, 2ND ED.

Interpal Grewel & Caren Kaplan, eds.

Strengths: The book by Interpal Grewel and Caren Kaplan promises to avoid the narrow self-referential focus of many classic American women’s studies texts, and attempts a transformative transnational approach that builds from previous more limited efforts to incorporate global perspectives. The breadth of topics and approaches from different geographic regions and historical periods is impressive. The book is divided into four parts. Introductory essays framing each part do the vital work that instructors require of the introductory textbook: offer excellent overviews of concepts, raise key questions, and synthesize arguments of selected readings in ways that highlight their relevance. The text includes a wide range of articles, made possible by the decision to use a heavy editorial hand in cutting the size of each piece. The articles are so short that instructors can assign many different pieces in a single week and still be confident that students will get through them. The extensive editing also makes the argument in each piece stand out more clearly to students. Each section includes highlighted text boxes, which define key terms and concepts, explain events, and identify historical figures. Summary questions facilitate students’ reading comprehension and critical analysis. One innovative feature is a companion “Instructor’s Manual” that offers contextualizing discussions of the books’ themes, arguments, and concepts, handouts, and additional teaching resources like audio-visual materials, overheads, further readings, and assignment suggestions.

Limits: Emphasis on international and transnational feminism is a strength and weakness of the text. The range of topics, approaches, regions, and time periods invite students to think transnationally. However, the shear scope of the historical and geographic contexts and scholarly methods covered means that it is easy for students to get lost in the material and lose sight of the thematic interconnections. Despite the editors’ goal of inclusiveness, they offer no Canadian material, and in our minds this is a real shortcoming for Canadian women’s studies classrooms. The western material is still primarily American. The editors’ choice to edit the readings extensively was both beneficial (as noted above) and problematic. On the negative side, the shortening process has often gutted the content, leaving a choppy read that does not do justice to the original. Students get the bare bones of the argument, but not much of the evidence, and they do not have much opportunity to see how a thesis is constructed and supported. The array of authors and arguments can also confuse beginner-level learners.

Suggested Use: Due to the theoretical difficulty of some selections along with the overarching transnational approach, this reader would work
best in more advanced introductory women's studies courses focused on transnational feminist theory and activism.

CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES: AN INTRODUCTORY READER, 2nd ED.

Andrea Medovarski & Brenda Cranney, eds.
Toronto: Innava, 2006

Strengths: Andrea Medovarski and Brenda Cranney feature articles on a wide range of issues drawn from the journal, Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme (CWS/leF), during its 30-year history of publishing. In this second edition, the editors include some old chestnuts from the early years of the journal, while also emphasizing more recent contributions. The Canadian focus of the first edition was nothing short of groundbreaking given the overwhelming American orientation of the introductory women's studies texts then available. We still welcome this feature in the revised edition, which appears alongside a number of other excellent textbooks similarly showcasing Canadian scholarship and contexts. This weighty text features 63 articles in nine thematic sections covering a wide spectrum of issues, so instructors have a lot to choose from when developing course outlines from this book. The editors have been careful to include pieces from a broad range of contributors from both inside and outside academia. Anti-colonial and anti-racist frameworks are integrated throughout the volume and there are some excellent selections grounded in Aboriginal women's analyses, experiences, and contexts.

Limits: The editors provide little guidance for students to navigate their way through the thematic sections. In the absence of editorial intervention to introduce, explain, or contextualize the selections, the collection can feel fragmented, especially to new women's studies students. There is no self-evident relation between the articles within any given section. Because old and new pieces are included, the original dates of publication should be flagged very visibly; yet this information is buried in a credit at the end of each article, making it harder for students to place the pieces historically and understand how scholarly thinking on particular issues has changed over time. We noted the absence of pedagogical aids: no key concepts, no guiding questions, and no additional resources. One of the great strengths of the CWS/leF journal itself is its attractive presentation. Not just the glossy cover, but the layout of the text, the use of images, and the highlighting of key quotations all add appeal. The introductory reader, however, contains almost no relief from the density of the text-based articles. The title of the reader continues the CWS/leF journal's problematic use of the singular “woman.” Since the 1970s when the journal was founded, such homogenized language, with its reductionist and universalizing implications, has been the subject of feminist critical theory. In a women's studies reader that is committed to inclusionary concepts and practices, the title stands out as a contradiction.

Suggested Use: Given its focus on Canadian scholarship and activism, this text is best suited for first-year classes on women's studies in Canada.

FEMINISMS AND WOMANISMS: A WOMEN'S STUDIES READER

Althea Prince & Susan Silva-Wayne, eds.
Toronto: Women's Press, 2004

Strengths: This appealing book, intended for women's studies courses in Canada, consists of nine sections. Althea Prince and Susan Silva-Wayne open with an excerpt from the Sojourner Truth speech, which sets the stage for their emphasis on plurality and inclusion, feminist theory and practice, and lived experience and social action. The first section highlights historical streams in Canadian feminist thought, which the editors identify as English, French, and First Nations. Using Alice Walker's concept “Womanism,” they challenge the exclusion of racialized women from feminist thought and movements in Canada. In the remaining sections, the editors offer an artful selection of classic and contemporary readings from a diverse array of historical and contemporary Canadian and American writers. Mainly second and third wave in tone and style, the selections work together to provide an intersectional analysis of the issues explored. In our experience, many women's studies instructors and students want substantial Canadian content, so the inclusion of a diversity of voices from Canadian feminist perspectives is welcome.

Limits: The editors' introduction to the reader is under-written, which creates a challenge for learners trying to grasp and contextualize the main ideas and issues covered. This, combined with an absence of essays to introduce each of the sections, represents missed pedagogical opportunities. The text contains no guiding questions, weblinks, or additional resources, and key concepts are not highlighted and defined. Given the diversity of voices, topics, and approaches in contemporary interdisciplinary feminist scholarship, we have found that defining key terms and concepts is important in helping students understand the material.

Suggested Use: Because many of the readings are accessible to non-academic audiences, this text would appeal to first-year students in courses focused on women's studies in the Canadian context.

INEQUALITY IN CANADA: A READER ON THE INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER, RACE AND CLASS

Zawilska, Valerie, ed.
Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010

Strengths: In her search to compile a unique reader on social theory, Valerie Zawilska writes how she was guided by three requirements: “Canadian, recent, and about inequality” (vii).
Her selections, all by key Canadian scholars, show strong representation from feminist, critical, anti-racist, and anti-colonial voices that highlight her twin commitments: scholarship and social change. Although the articles demonstrate a diversity of concerns about social inequalities, all take an intersectional approach. *Inequality in Canada* begins with a valuable introduction to intersectionality theory, followed by readings on inequality in families, health, education, and the legal system, and ending with a series of important selections on Canada’s role in creating and sustaining global inequality. Sections open with mini essays that frame selections to follow by historicizing and contextualizing critical scholarship in the area and its impact on Canadian society over the last 50 years. Each of these is a gem of clarity. Many selections are current, and cover topics that students find relevant and engaging. The editor has chosen selections appropriate for entry-level students, organized them effectively to link and build on understanding, and framed them with helpful, short synopses. A list of questions follows each reading. Another valuable feature is the editor’s decision to boldface key concepts, which are then defined in a glossary. To round off each section, Zawilski closes with a list of recommended readings, both classic and contemporary, which students can consult for assignments and further information.

**Limits:** Because they are so brief, the mini essays may be of limited use pedagogically. Some readings may be too difficult and too long for first-year students. As the editor herself points out, many important arenas of Canadian social life are left unexplored, including media, culture, social policy, and criminality. We also found the wording of some guiding questions to be stilted and not clear enough for use in the classroom. The book contains few photographs, drawings, maps, or other visually interesting features to break up the monotonous text.

**Suggested Use:** Although this text finds its “natural” home in an introductory sociology or social sciences course, it would be of interest to instructors teaching gender and social justice courses at a first, or more likely second-year level.

**WOMEN WORLDWIDE:**
**TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN**

Janet Lee and Susan Shaw, eds.

**Strengths:** American feminist scholars Janet Lee and Susan Shaw, editors of the influential text, *Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, have collaborated again on this new work. The volume, structured around broad themes or issues, examines the status of women in diverse contexts, and the interconnected systems of power which structure gendered, racialized, and other forms of inequality. A strong chapter on “Transnational Feminism” sets the stage, followed by global analyses of a wide range of issues. Critical of the homogenizing impulses behind early “global feminist” activism and scholarship, the editors and authors centre a diversity of women’s experiences. Each chapter begins with an accessible “framework essay” by a scholarly expert in the area whose job is to introduce the topic, explain key concepts and debates, and contextualize the varied shorter readings which follow. The readings include academic work as well as fiction and popular forms of writing. Lee and Shaw have ensured that the collection is fresh (they point out very few of the readings are previously anthologized). Good attention has been paid to the diverse learning styles and pedagogical needs of entry-level students. Key terms and ideas are explained and synthesized so prior knowledge is not presumed. A lot of work has been done to make the “framework essays” inviting to students. Each one begins with words from a poem, and includes a “Day in the Life” story, specific learning activities, and suggestions for further reading. The density of academic text is broken by the insertion of sidebars and textboxes, lists, charts, maps, photographs, cartoons, as well as website material and addresses.

**Limits:** Instructors hoping to highlight Canadian authors and contexts will notice the absence of this content as there is only one essay that focuses specifically on Canada. Despite the contextualizing provided in the introductory essays, students might still find the global reach of the collection challenging intellectually and politically. The “Day in the Life” biographical sketches, whilegrounding the issues in everyday experiences, might be read with a certain voyeurism by students, thus reinforcing “othering” rather than challenging it. We are also troubled by the absence of source acknowledgement for the biographical sketches. Because the volume is geared to a range of courses on women in global contexts, there are gaps in the material that will be noticed by those trying to use it to introduce women’s studies. For example, there is no basic introduction provided to the social construction of gender or to women’s and gender studies, and queer theory and trans identities are also absent.

**Suggested Use:** Although the editors do not specifically market this book for introductory women’s studies courses, the collection would be valuable where instructors are making a serious attempt to internationalize or transnationalize their curriculum.

Margaret Hobbs is Associate Professor and former Chair of the Gender and Women’s Studies Department at Trent University and has extensive experience teaching the introductory course in Gender and Women’s Studies. She is also involved with the graduate programme in Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies.

Carla Rice is Canada Research Chair in Care, Gender and Relationships at University of Guelph, a position she recently assumed after serving as Associate Professor in Gender and Women’s Studies at Trent University. A leader in the field of body image within Canada, she is a founding member and former...
director of innovative initiatives such as the National Eating Disorder Information Centre and the Body Image Project at Women's College Hospital in Toronto. Her research explores cultural representations and life history narratives of body and identity.

DAUGHTERS AND MOTHERS IN ALICE MUNRO'S LATER STORIES

Deborah Heller
Seattle: Workwoman's Press, 2009

REVIEWED BY
GISELA ARGYLE

In Alice Munro's early cycle of stories Lives of Girls and Women (1971) the protagonist and narrator Del concludes from her family's and community's stories that “Stories from the past could go like this, round and round and down to death: I expected it” (“Princess Ida”). Particularly women's life stories, which rhyme “womb” with “tomb,” words that Del "got . . . mixed up" (“Heirs of the Living Body”). However, the heroine of this autobiographical Bildungsroman—Munro called the book a novel—escapes in each of the sections from another set of models and norms that would confine her to such a circular fate. Instead, she will transcend it by transforming her experiences of girls' and women's lives into fiction—the creative move that Margaret Atwood defined a year later, in Survival (1972), as the only route of escape from typical victimhood in Canadian literature.

Deborah Heller's study focuses on a daughter's guilt about her filial failings towards her mother. Holding the present ransom to the past, this circular force is not a theme in Lives of Girls and Women, and Del's mother is hardly more prominent than other characters and institutions whose influence Del needs to understand and circumscribe so that they cannot act as obstacles on her own path. However, in many of her stories Munro has treated more darkly what she has named her "central material . . . in life." Against a background of earlier treatments, Heller discusses the recurrence and transformations of the "cycle of guilt, punishment, forgiveness, and redemption" in stories of three late collections: "My Mother's Dream," in The Love of a Good Woman (1998); "Family Furnishings," in Hearts of Friendship, Courtship, Lovership, Marriage (2000); and "Soon" and "Silence," in Runaway (2004).

"My Mother's Dream" is narrated by the daughter from her egocentric pre-natal and infant sensations combined with hindsight empathy with her mother's equal self-assertion. In the process of narration the fight between daughter and mother, as "monsters to each other," results in their achieving their respective selfishness. "Family Furnishings" is again narrated by a daughter, in this case a writer by vocation. The story exhibits three daughters in different families with different mother-daughter relations. As in Lives of Girls and Women it is the art of writing that provides an exit from the compulsions of the past, the "family furnishings." In an earlier study of Munro, the essay "Getting Loose: Women and Narrative in Alice Munro's Friend of My Youth," in Literary Sisterhoods: Imagining Women Artists (2005, reviewed in this journal), Heller has shown the narrative heroine's "getting loose" from the boundaries of both gender and genre and assuming with their narrative authority also moral authority.

The three Juliet stories, of "Soon" and "Silence," shift the protagonist's perspective from filial to maternal, from Juliet as "rejecting daughter" to Juliet as "rejected mother." In the absence of "moral logic" in this apparent retribution, since her daughter's rejection is not attributed to any failing on the mother's part, Heller argues that Munro substitutes "poetic justice" for cosmic justice, the concept of Greek tragedy that Juliet was reading about at the start of the story and the existence of which the stories seem to deny together with "a transcendental spiritual order." However, Heller's distinction between cosmic and poetic justice seems less clear when she says that Juliet is rejected by her daughter "as by some iron law of retribution." As early as in Lives of Girls and Women Munro favours unorthodox reflections on divine justice when Del, in the story "Age of Faith," concludes her testing of all the confessional church services in Jubilee with the following speculation based on her own experience: "Could there be God not contained in the churches' net at all . . . God real, and really in the world, and alien and unacceptable as death? Could there be God amazing, indiffrent, beyond faith?"

Daughters and Mothers complements Heller's essay in Literary Sisterhoods. Her accounts of the stories and her interpretations are perceptive, economic, and clear, with a nice attention to Munro's shifts of tone, from the pathetic to the farcical. The book is short, omitting theoretic framing—what too often is a stretching on a Procrustean bed—as well as engagement with other scholars' debates. The few notes usefully cite some of Munro's remarks about the autobiographical impulse in her writing. The topic of the book is of interest to scholars of Munro and to others studying mother-daughter relations; the book would be stimulating for book clubs. In interviews Munro has repeatedly spoken of her guilt as daughter and mother: "wanting other things." Her readers have been hugely grateful for both this wanting and the narrative transformation of the guilt, which offers, in Heller's words, "a universal resonance."

Gisela Argyle, Senior Scholar of Humanities at York University in Toronto, has published Germany as Model and Monster: Allusions in English Fiction, 1830s-1930s (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), another book and articles on Victorian literature and comparative literature, as well as literary translations from German into English and the converse.