The books reviewed in this section explore feminist politics in a global frame. We aim not just to include writings in feminist international relations, but also to feature multi-disciplinary scholarship pertaining to global gender relations. The section is usually made up of a combination of several distinct elements: Rethinking the Canon, Feminist Classics/Many Voices, review essays and book reviews. 'Rethinking the Canon' gives space for an individual to reflect on one text that they feel ought to be essential reading for feminists working on global issues, but which is likely to be marginalized by existing disciplinary boundaries: they are invited to bring the text to our attention and to explain why it is essential reading. 'Feminist Classics/Many Voices', by contrast, includes several short appraisals of a book already widely considered a classic for feminists working on global issues. Reviewers draw on their distinct disciplinary, geographical and personal locations to offer diverse readings of the classic text. Review essays survey several texts on a single theme, aiming either to explore a recent debate that has generated a range of new publications or to survey the best of the literature covering a more established area of research. The book reviews provide brief introductions to, and evaluations of, as broad a range of new publications as space allows. Anyone with suggestions for texts to be reviewed, or requests to contribute to the section, is encouraged to contact the Reviews Editor, Juanita Elias, Juanita.elias@adelaide.edu.au, School of Politics and History, Napier Building, The University of Adelaide, SA 5005, Australia.

Review Essay

BOUNDARY CROSSING: FEMINISTS ON TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

Pei-Chia Lan. Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestics and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. ISBN 0–8223–3742–8.

Kamala Kempadoo with Jyoti Sangherea and Bandana Pattanaik (eds). Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work and Human Rights. Boulder, CO & London: Paradigm Publishers, 2005. ISBN 1–59451–097–0.

Laura Maria Agustin. Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry. London: Zed Books, 2007. ISBN 9781842778593.
Migration is not new, neither is selling sex or care work. But what is exciting and new about these books is how the authors move beyond the sensationalism and rhetoric that surrounds global migration, prostitution, trafficking and domestic work to offer original and thoroughly engaging feminist insights into these debates.

The books are examples of excellence in feminist scholarship made possible by the authors’ years of work and activist commitment. As much as I learnt about the work of women migrants, whether as sex workers or domestic maids, in South Asia, Taiwan or Europe, I learnt even more in reading these books about good feminist methodology that can engage with and translate across the very different worlds of migrant sex and care workers and the authors’ own spheres of academic and political engagement.

Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestic and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan is a detailed study by a Taiwanese feminist scholar using interviews and vivid ethnographic detail. It provides a nuanced look at the boundaries between workers and employers in a changing Taiwan. Pei-Chia Lan shows how class, race, ethnicity and gender differences play out among Taiwanese employers and their Philippine and Indonesian domestic workers. She provides both the macro and the micro context as the chapter titles: ‘A Bounded Global Market’ to ‘Cinderella with Mobile Phone’ indicate, but with a major difference, that she too is crossing boundaries, as the photos of her relaxing with smiling domestic workers reveal.

Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry is an honest unashamedly controversial attack on the moralizing and stereotyping of migrant sex workers. It emerges as an answer to Laura Agustin’s own question about the puzzling contradictions she found between migrant women’s perception of their work and lives and the intent of the rescue industry of ‘fundamentalist feminists’ who spend so much passion and effort to ‘help’ women selling sex. Agustin shows that the sex industry is best understood as part of a thriving global economy, one that binds NGOs as much as the migrant workers they seek to assist. Agustin’s beautifully written study as an insider/outsider, researcher/activist Latin American in Europe, gives a completely new standpoint to the issue of migrants, work and the largely Church and feminist NGO industry spawning around them.

Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work and Human Rights offers a well put together set of essays that takes us deep into the thorny and complex debate around transnational sex exploitation with a focus on South Asia. It gives both global overviews of the highly contested area of trafficking together with detailed case studies from research undertaken in the region. While acknowledging the controversies around the issues, the book does its best to remove the hype and look with analytical care at the nexus between migration, sex work and human rights. The authors are respected feminist activist researchers largely based in Asia and North America associated with the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), an alliance of feminist and human rights activists and organizations.
With their finely tuned assessments of ‘women on the move’ between different countries, homes and jobs these books are not the product of armchair studies. All three books are based on solid feminist analysis in relation to both the big picture and the nuanced complexities informing women’s lives. Pei-Chia Lan returned to Taiwan from her studies in the United States to interview Indonesian and Philippine domestic workers and to understand the shifts their presence within a once closed Taiwanese society indicate. She openly shares with the reader her positioning as a Taiwanese US trained scholar and her own reactions as she writes the book. It is evident that she enjoyed her time with the domestic workers sharing picnics with them on their days off anxious not to impose on their precious hours of leisure. While sipping tea, served by workers who stay in the kitchen, she admits how dismayed she was to hear racist and calculating remarks from upper and middle class women. Laura Agustin has been working with migrants along the borders of Mexico and the USA in Latin America and on the margins in Spain for fifteen years, travelling and living in the places she writes about. The narratives from her field work and candid disclosure of her choice of subject and approach reflect a highly original way of undertaking anthropological gender aware writing. The collected studies on trafficking and prostitution edited by Kamala Kempadoo with Jyoti Sanghera and Bandana Pattanaik emerge as honest accounts of activists dealing with the very difficult area of trafficking. They seek to stay true to their strong feminist beliefs in the rights and dignity of the exploited and poor women and girls caught up in an inhumane industry while, at the same time, they underline that trafficking must be seen as an economic and social global issue rather than a moral issue. The collection gives a valuable postcolonial feminist reading to the topic, as well as offering some candid self-reflections on the role NGO activists play in supporting the rights of sex workers.

What is common to all of the books is that they underscore the context in which migrant sex work and care work is being carried out as an integral feature of globalization. The numbers involved in the flows of people migrating transnationally are huge – it is estimated that 200 million people leave home to look for a new life. These books delve below the numbers to examine what is happening culturally and socially in order to understand how not only global economic but also social relations are shifting. Moving countries to provide care and sex services often in vulnerable situations, if not exploited and dangerous situations, cannot be described simply in cut and dried economic terms. Care and sex work is not easily compartmentalized into neat divides between leisure and work. Agustin shows how sex for money is provided in numerous ways in various places from cyberspace to backs of cars to high class luxury hotels. Some of the women, transsexuals and men she spoke with see selling sex as temporary work, a good way to travel and see the world. Others feel trapped and exploited. Her study underlines how it may be for some just a job like any other, but unlike any other it is subject to moral scrutiny and control in ways that do little to provide the security that would enable sex workers to negotiate their preferential working conditions and terms. Agustin
challenges the reader to lay aside their own prejudices about sex work, as she exposes the layers of morality by many feminists in what she dubs as the rescue industry. Some of the most graphic writing in the book is about the shrill condemnation of prostitution as victimization by feminists in conference settings that Agustin contrasts deliberately with the far more understanding and respectful help provided by Catholic nuns. She also draws a telling comparison between feminist fundamentalists and brothel owners who provide organized and secure conditions for their workers. Agustin takes a distance from all her subjects but she does make us question why so many European men (and women) buy sex from migrants, but why the migrants who provide these services are so castigated (either as victims, or as illegal or as carriers of HIV/AIDS). Her book forces us to go below such patent hypocrisy, also within the feminist movement, and look at the complex realities of the global sex industry by observing and listening to the migrant sex workers themselves. Agustin is, quite frankly, courageous in taking on the European anti-prostitute campaigners. She asks that in order to make a real difference in the lives of migrant sex workers, feminists and others in the NGO world concerned with trafficking, need to stop blaming others, the law, institutional bodies, the communications media and violent men and look also at their own practices and prejudices, in short to leave aside their own certainties.

Lan is perhaps more sympathetic than Agustin to her subjects in her attempt to look at the contradictions and difficulties for both domestic workers and their employers in Taiwan. She, like Agustin, pushes us to go beyond stereotypes of exploited and victimized foreign worker and unfeeling employer. The survival strategies of the domestic workers are described in Lan’s very interesting analysis, including a detailed look at their dress, their food and their disguises. In one case she describes how a domestic worker would deliberately change look, from humble employed maid to star of the disco scene every Sunday, and the surprise, but not condemnation, of the employer when she finds out. Lan sees such disguises as a way for a domestic worker to draw boundaries that enable her to keep her dignity and sense of self often in confined and potentially intrusive spaces. Lan relates how domestic workers carefully make a line between their feelings and the employing family, politely listening but not being involved emotionally in the wife or husband’s sometimes intimate confessions. On the other side, she relates how middle class Taiwanese women are employing migrant workers as a modern working mother’s survival strategy. In the absence of the help of their husband they turn to paid domestic help to support them. The changes of Taiwanese family life as the three generational family system (with three generations living in one home) is breaking down also means that domestic help is employed to cater for the shift in the role of the mother in law. Lan helps us understand the inner struggle of employed and employee alike as they try to negotiate caring roles, paid and unpaid, within small domestic spaces and with uncertain rules of what is an acceptable level of emotional engagement on both sides. Lan though obviously more sympathetic to the domestic workers, gives us the predicament of hard working young
middle class mothers who hire domestic workers in an effort to move outside of tradition, often spending all their income to pay the domestic worker.

Her study of how care work is stretched beyond borders through the use of mobile phones to keep mothers in touch with their family back home, is a particularly interesting aspect of long-distance parenting and caring. It touches on the uncomfortable issue of migrant work as an aspect of our consumer globalized world, where a mobile phone call once a day serves to bring families closer, as mothers work for years away from their children to provide the schooling and housing that the State fails to provide. In a globalized world the considerable profit of all those telephone calls goes to the multinational phone companies.

The edited book by Kempadoo, Sangherea and Pattanaik deals more than Agustin or Lan with the dark side of women on the move – the fate of women and children in the legal and illegal global sex market in South Asia. But like the other books, as feminists working for human rights and economic and social change, the editors collectively underline that it is the macro picture of global economic exploitation and social marginalization that leads people to situations where they are trafficked. The studies show the difficult lives of these women trafficked across borders with some important insights as to how and why women are trafficked. It is clear that not all the women are trafficked in ways that are as sensational as newspapers report. Like Agustin, the editors stay clear of judging the women and recognize that their motivations to move need to be recognized and respected. They also scrutinize their own role as activists in the efforts to stop the exploitation. As the opening chapter ‘From Moral Panic to Global Justice’ indicates they are looking at trafficking and prostitution as part of deeply embedded gender inequalities within global capital. The book aims to gather qualitative and quantitative research to map out the situation in South Asia in order to move from a strategy of ‘rescuing’ to mobilization to end economic and social exploitation of migrant workers.

I found the chapters unpacking the prostitution and trafficking discourse in the UN and in legal debates extremely helpful as they provide a much needed stock-taking in both the theory and practice of anti-trafficking and human rights discourse. The chapters looking at the global discourses are nicely backed up by the field work in the case studies in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the Mekong Region. They all go beyond the myths to look at the problem of exploitation within the larger context of global capitalism. They provide a counterweight to mainstream trafficking frameworks spelling out the difference between prostitution and trafficking, bonded labour and slavery. I was particularly interested in the Taiwanese study as a point of comparison with Lan’s work on domestic workers, though actually the studies do not overlap as Lan is careful to focus on domestic and care work rather than sex work (though having read Agustin I may well question if these lines can be so carefully drawn). The study by Josephine Ho looks at how an anti-prostitution campaign led to the social discipline of sex workers in the name of child rights in ways that have curtailed and controlled the lives of all Taiwanese while ignoring the exploitation of the growing numbers of domestic and other migrant workers.
What these three books offer are new ways of understanding women’s (paid and unpaid) sex work, care and domestic work in today’s global world. They explore the shadow work of women in bars, homes, brothels and streets reflecting on the perceptions of the migrants’ experiences and on those who employ them or seek to ‘rescue’ them. I particularly admire the willingness of Agustin and Lan to dig out the stories that in vivid detail reveal how race, class and gender relations are changing, whether for good or bad, due to global migration. As an Australian living in Italy I would agree that migration is about relationships across different borders, that are shifting and changing once given gendered roles and identities. While it is true that the ebbs and flows of people have been an enduring feature of many of our histories and places, what these studies of sex and care work show is that women are needing to negotiate different arrangements as our globalized lives interlink within the complexities of global capital. The stark levels of inequality, violence and uncertainties that dominate and curtail migrant women’s lives may be in the shadows but as the authors’ own narratives reveal, they are not so far from the lives of many IFjP readers. The economic and social factors that are leading to 200 million migrants in search for another life demands that all of us need to ask what living in this transnational world means for our sense of self, community, belonging and home. Whether we are migrants or tourists, cybersurfers or newspaper readers, workers or consumers, and the layers in between, all of us live far more global lives that demand the deeper feminist analysis that these books provide.

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Reviews

Carly Milne (ed.). Naked Ambition: Women Who Are Changing Pornography. New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005. ISBN 0–7867–1590–1.

Jenna Jameson with Neil Strauss. How to ... Make Love Like a Porn Star: A Cautionary Tale. New York: HarperCollins, 2004. ISBN 0–06–053909–7.

What could be more American than apple pie and pornography? While porn magazines like Playboy and Penthouse have been in distribution since the 1950s and 1960s respectively, it wasn’t until the home video phenomenon of the 1980s that the adult entertainment industry exploded in North America. Initially, women were used as little more than eye candy to sell male-centric films so that other men could turn a profit. Early feminist pornographers like Annie Sprinkle, Nina Hartley, Candida Royalle and Susie
Bright fought against the sexism of the industry and demanded more control over how they were represented in film. These women challenged industry insiders, industry consumers and anti-industry feminists for respect and legitimacy.

Feminist pornographers? Empowered female adult film stars? A contradiction in terms, some might argue, but not according to Carly Milne’s anthology Naked Ambition: Women Who Are Changing Pornography and Jenna Jameson’s autobiography How to . . . Make Love Like a Porn Star: A Cautionary Tale. Both texts present compelling new ways of thinking about women in porn and the industry that surrounds them. They are inspiring and stimulating texts that are must-reads for all feminist scholars and activists.

Naked Ambition is an eye-opening and intimate testimony of female porn performers, producers and distributors. Curious to learn more about the industry from the inside, Milne accepted a job with industry giant Adult Video News. In addition to the industry-wide magazine where Milne worked, Adult Video News runs the AVN Awards (otherwise known as the Oscars of porn) and the AVN Adult Entertainment Expo (the largest annual adult industry event that draws insiders and fans from around the world). She admits that she didn’t expect to meet so many intelligent, powerful, and influential women working in pornography. Many of these impressive women author chapters in Milne’s anthology. The thirty-one contributors challenge stereotypes that women in the porn industry are only ever victimized, exploited and unable to make informed decisions on their own behalf.

Naked Ambition could be considered a showcase of the first women of pornography. From editors at magazines and radio hostesses, to sex writers and Internet site hosts, to the performers themselves, this book has it all. Written by women representing just about all cross-sections of the pornography industry, the various chapters are engaging, witty and insightful. True to its subtitle, the anthology provides an excellent analytical commentary on how women are changing the porn industry. Possibly the most compelling aspects of the text are the personal essays by award winning porn performers Tera Patrick, Nina Hartley, Jewel De’Nyle, Stormy Daniels and Danni Ashe. Also included are anecdotes and family secrets from Holly Randall, daughter of famed photographer Suze Randall, and Theresa Flynt, daughter of porn legend Larry Flynt.

In and among the high calibre writing and engaging material was Tristan Taormino’s thought-provoking chapter. Taormino, producer of the House of Ass porn series and writer of The Ultimate Guide to Anal Sex for Women, asks, ‘So what the heck is feminist pornography anyway?’ She answers:

For me, it means that the process of making it is fair and ethical. There is absolute consent and no coercion of any kind. The work environment is safe, everyone wants to be there, and respect is essential . . . Feminist porn is porn that empowers women and men: it gives them information and ideas about sex. It teaches. It inspires fantasy and adventure. It validates the viewers when they see themselves or a part of themselves represented . . . And yes, it arouses.

(pp. 95–6)
Similar to *Naked Ambition*, porn star Jenna Jameson’s best selling autobiography, *How to ... Make Love Like a Porn Star: A Cautionary Tale*, presents an insider look at an industry fraught with controversy and surrounded by stigma. Jameson’s impressive autobiography (which remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for six weeks) is divided into six sections and totals nearly six hundred pages. It includes dozens of pictures, diary excerpts, film scripts, comic strips, sex tips, industry do’s and don’ts, and transcribed interviews with her brother, father and an anonymous male porn performer. The book draws you in from the sexy front cover through to the final pages and wedding photos. As you should with any good autobiography, by the end of the book you feel like you’ve known her your whole life.

Jameson doesn’t glorify the porn industry; instead she paints a realistic picture of the complicated and sometimes self-destructive lives of both male and female porn performers. While some could label her life a clichéd story of the porn star that lacks a mother figure, has an absentee father and is a sexual assault survivor, Jameson’s story can also be read as one woman’s struggle through hardship to gain control of her life and realize her dreams. It is a touching, candid and sincere telling of one sex symbol’s rise to fame and stardom despite drug abuse, violence and an unstable home life. Jameson is resolved to become the most famous porn star and dedicates her life to accomplishing this goal. Her hard work eventually pays off and she is now the CEO of her own company, Club Jenna, where she is in charge of both her trademark image and her life; a far cry from her childhood and youth. The autobiography is heart-felt, brutally honest, at times unflattering and yet also shows her inner strength and resolve.

Jameson offers a detailed and intimate account of her active bisexual sex life and divulges some juicy gossip on her celebrity affairs. *How to ... Make Love Like a Porn Star* is a well-written and enticing read; like Carly Milne’s *Naked Ambition*, I could barely put it down. Granted, reading it on the subway proved to be a bit of a challenge. With the number of revealing full-page photos it regularly caught the eye of fellow travellers. Simple solution: keep an outstretched hand ready to cover the photos. Other simple solution: make someone’s ride to work a little more enjoyable and let them sneak a peek over your shoulder.

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Amanda Gouws (ed.). *(Un)thinking Citizenship: Feminist Debates in Contemporary South Africa*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. ISBN 978–0–7546–3878–0.

While South Africa is infamous for its apartheid legacy, its political and legal transition to democracy has sparked a different kind of acclaim – that of a remarkably inclusive and progressive new Constitution. But has this
legislation substantially changed people’s lives, and if so, has feminism completed its work in South Africa? Known for her scholarship on the National Machinery for Women in South Africa, and her interdisciplinary background in political science, gender politics and feminist theory, Amanda Gouws persuasively examines these questions in her edited collection.

As the title suggests, Gouws wants to unthink or undo limited definitions of citizenship and the category of ‘women’ in order ‘to create new liberating knowledge’ (p. 1). She arranges contributions around five different sites for rethinking citizenship. Part One considers how the citizen-subject needs to be constructed beyond the inclusion and exclusion debate of female representation in government. Linzi Manicom situates the stakes of this argument within the geo-political boundaries of South Africa, she radically argues for a theoretical move away from a universal understanding of ‘women’ because it erases difference and introduces ambiguities that are too often abused by the project of nationalist discourse. Her analysis has transnational implications for countries grappling with a definition of citizenship in a market-driven economy.

Part Two calls for a deconstruction of the ways women and men have been located as citizens in the apartheid, transitional and post-apartheid context. Shireen Hassim points to the need for feminists to expand social rights to the private sphere to incorporate women’s reproductive and sexual autonomy, and their agency to counter traditional (male) leadership. Amanda Gouws challenges feminists to demand government elimination of women’s crippling poverty and expand their access to first-class citizenship. Daniel Conway advocates against a universal, desexualized definition of citizenship that limits full rights to a prescribed performance of gender.

Expanding legal practices to include issues that largely impact women, Part Three explores the limitations of agency for women under current conditions in South Africa. Beth Goldblatt argues for state support of parenthood as part of the right to citizenship, while Danwood Mzikenge Chirwa and Sibonile Khoza assert that the gendered nature of poverty requires a gendered legislative bias towards the eradication of women’s poverty. Anneke Meerkotter calls for a community-based response to HIV/AIDS that advocates against stigmas and policies that obstruct access to its prevention and treatment.

Further ways to rethink the access that women have to autonomy and independence are offered in Part Four. Cheryl McEwan notes black women’s active involvement in community-based structures but proposes the need for restructuring local levels of governance to incorporate women’s potential contributions. While Gertrude Fester does not dismiss the gains of ‘motherism’, she doubts that simply increasing women’s political representation has substantially transformed access to citizenship. Finally, Part Five reveals the sexualized nature of citizenship, linking this reality to heteronormativity and restricted definitions of rape as a private, sexual phenomenon.

This important collection of feminist scholarship on the gendered experience of citizenship speaks specifically to the context of South Africa while acknowledging broader transnational forces such as globalization and neo-liberalism.
The essays gesture towards the complexity of citizenship by incorporating both a concern for the substantive inequalities that women face as well as celebrating the ways in which women are already contributing towards the building of a democratic society. This collection persuasively illustrates that while independent South Africa can indeed offer legislative lessons with regards to gender and race relations, this instruction requires an unthinking – and rethinking – of citizenship through a feminist lens.

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Gillian Youngs. Global Political Economy in the Information Age: Power and Inequality. London & New York: Routledge, 2007. ISBN10: 0–415–38406–0.

The formidable task that Gillian Youngs sets for herself in this book is an ‘interdisciplinary navigation of the conceptual and concrete challenges of the new information era’ (p. xii). The disciplines she combines are mainstream and critical contributions to International Relations and International or Global Political Economy (GPE) on the one hand and media and communications studies on the other. Youngs approaches her task in terms of two themes that also constitute the two main parts of the book: the first theme is the new time/space frameworks brought about by information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their pivotal role in reorganizing patterns of production and consumption. The second theme is borders and inequalities, which increasingly stratify people according to socio-economic and gender lines within states and across them. In a third part, Youngs reconsiders notions of technology and power with particular reference to the ongoing hegemony of the United States in the global sphere.

Central to Youngs’s argument about the changes brought about within GPE by ICTs is her differentiation between the geospatial and the sociospatial: the geospatial encompasses the traditional concept of territorially based nations and markets. The sociospatial designates the technologically mediated social spaces created by the Internet and the world wide web – what is otherwise known as the virtual. Both spatial forms are intrinsically linked to distinct concepts of time. Insisting on a very useful historical approach, Youngs offers a complex analysis of how, in the past, states and markets played a pivotal role in the creation of the geospatial by fostering individual and collective forms of identification with national boundaries through notions of citizenship, shared national history and sense of time, currency, language and mass media. With the rise of ICTs and their networks in recent times, these geospatial boundaries and identities have been augmented and contested by a multitude of sociospatial phenomena. In her account of these phenomena, Youngs is careful to depict the sociospatial as contradictory, simultaneously
enabling geospatially indebted articulations and networks and fostering horizontal forms of communication and networks that depart from these traditional roots in the geospatial. In any case, the author stresses that the sociospatial follows its own logic of time, contributing to the ever more speedy erasure of boundaries, most notably between leisure/private time and productive/public time. Youngs does not only demonstrate that these new developments deeply challenge familiar GPE concepts. She also explains how feminist researchers concerned with the traditional, geospatial sphere have long been engaged in exposing the masculinist and patriarchal underpinnings of these boundaries and concepts and thus their ideological, hegemonic nature.

While I find this overall framework developed by Youngs intriguing and rewarding, as a feminist researcher I am disturbed by her methodological and narrative decision to start out inevitably with a mainstream, gender-blind discussion of the concepts she interrogates. With a total of only 150 pages that she dedicates to her huge topic, this means that the feminist critiques that she rightly sees as vital for reconceptualizing GPE appear unduly marginal. Thus Youngs for instance only presents gendered implications or feminist critiques of citizenship, nationality, the capitalist system and technology in a second step, after dealing at length with mainstream views on their own terms. In her considerations of cities, the national mass media or financial markets and their instruments, feminist critiques are not even presented at all. Yet Youngs’s treatment of global inequalities, like many of the other recent contributions on this topic currently available, shows that the gender digital divide is a central feature of our present times and thus necessitates a thorough, gender-conscious conceptualization. In general terms, Youngs addresses so many complex issues, among them neoliberal ideology, the role of cities and the workings of currencies and financial markets, that I feel would benefit from being explored at greater length and being more fully integrated into the interesting analytical framework that she offers. But put positively, this means that Youngs touches upon many central facets of what she terms the information age and implicitly encourages her readers to think about, test or even extend the framework she proposes.

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Denise Roman. *Fragmented Identities: Popular Culture, Sex, and Everyday Life in Postcommunist Romania*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003 (paperback edition, first published 2007). ISBN 978-0-7391-2118-4.

Denise Roman’s study of discourses, identities and practices of everyday life in post-communist Romania is modestly framed in the mode of a story that a
flâneuse through contemporary Bucharest might choose to tell to draw others in, and even captivate them with her encounters of aesthetics and politics, youth culture and gendered subjectivities, especially in regards to women and queer subjects. And also to warn them about what they may perceive as alien or shocking, especially that peculiar phenomenon of a discourse of hate directed against an absent target, an anti-Semitism without the Jews.

Vast as the explored landscape is, the book escapes the obvious dangers of rushed or overly schematic portrayals of these complex and variegated fields. An important reason for this is that these analyses are shaped by a sensitivity trained through prolonged exposure to scholarly discourses such as feminist theory and Cultural Studies. Indeed, the chapter on discourses, identities and practices of everyday life distils the more important insights from these literatures that later will prove useful and necessary lenses for interpreting aesthetics and politics, youth culture, the discourse of hate and gendered subjectivities. The subsequent chapters, dedicated in turn to each of these topics, provide useful, theoretically informed, and, in my view, largely accurate accounts of the empirical reality a flâneur, or flâneuse, might encounter.

One core contention in the book that cuts across these empirical areas is that while it is possible to document emerging subjectivities, the mobilization of such subjectivities for political ends, their constitution as political identities proper is yet to take place. Paradoxically, perhaps, it is the State itself that is creating openings and spaces for such political agency to occur. Roman argues that progressive changes in state policy have largely been introduced as part of the broader project of European Union accession and integration, which has required alignment with prevalent norms in the Union. However, the case of the changes in the penal code with reference to homosexuality, where decriminalization of certain behaviours and protection of rights were legislated in 1996 and 2001, also seems to attest, as Roman herself shows, that an alliance between local interested groups and their transnational allies, mobilized under the more generic banner of human rights, could also play a role even against the background of a largely passive if not conservative and hostile societal response to questions of difference in the area of sexuality and gender.

This lagging of society behind the more enlightened reforms introduced from the top by Europeanizing elites has long been a theme in Romanian cultural analyses, and has been famously described as a case of ‘forms without substance’, by Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917), a prominent literary critic and author. The feeling that Roman evokes however is a significant departure from the pessimistic undertone that usually characterizes such assessments. Rather than emphasizing disappointment in the face of a reality that fails to meet expectations built on standards created in other places, the book brings out and even celebrates the vibrancy of emergent subjectivities, the sense of openness and possibility that is present in Romanian society, and in Eastern Europe more generally. Roman is also lucid about the road yet to be travelled in terms of moving from mere
constitution of subjectivities to the constitution of political identities through political mobilization and civic activism within distinct social movements and subcultures. Her book captures very well an often confused and bewildering cultural landscape in which elements of the pre-communist cultural heritage, of patterns and practices created during the communist era, as well as the ever more immediately present ideas, images, styles and discourses now imported from the West and from around the globe vie for attention, assessment and response.

Thus, the book is animated by an appeal and an invitation for further dialogue and academic engagement with these cultural political issues in Eastern Europe. In fact, the postscript new to this paperback edition is explicitly dedicated to an appraisal of the virtual neglect of the region in the transnational feminism that dominates US academic departments. May the invitation be heard.

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Deborah Brennan and Louise Chappell (eds). ‘No Fit Place for Women’?: Women in New South Wales Politics 1856–2006. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006. ISBN 0–86840–964–2.

This book brings a gender dimension to our understanding of the ways that political institutions operate in a specific Australian state – New South Wales (NSW). It documents how women in that state have participated in both formal and informal politics since the mid-nineteenth century. The first woman was elected to the state’s Parliament in 1925, challenging the men who claimed that Parliament was ‘no fit place for women’ (p. 1). Since then, only eighty-two women have entered Parliament, in comparison to the election of more than two thousand men. This volume argues that NSW political institutions are gendered, but this goes beyond the fact that there have always been significantly more men than women participating in politics. As Brennan and Chappell assert in the introduction, political institutions encompass a ‘substantive gender dimension’ (p. 3), meaning that masculine norms, expectations and practices shape the behaviour of the participants and hugely influence political outcomes and public policies. This is not to suggest that gender power is static: the book convincingly demonstrates the capacity of activists to change political authority by working both within and outside various institutions. Accordingly these three themes – gendered political institutions, the insider outsider nexus and acknowledging both formal and informal political strategies – frame the chapters. Despite the development of a strong and energetic feminist movement, women’s advancement within the formal political system has been woefully slow. Gender is also
shown to permeate the federal structure of Australian politics with the states largely controlling ‘soft’ or ‘women’s issues’ such as children’s welfare or family allowances while ‘hard’ ‘masculine’ issues such as macroeconomic policy are controlled at the federal level.

The well-researched analysis includes chapters on women’s participation in political parties, various lobby groups, non-government organizations and the bureaucracy. Deborah Brennan provides a comprehensive historical overview of women in Parliament, arguing that while women may have clear objectives and priorities, they face institutional constraints that limit their achievements. Chapters by Rebecca Huntley, Janet Ramsay, Don Harwin and Jenny Gardiner focus on the major political parties (the Australian Labor Party and the Coalition parties) while Ariadne Vromen, Anika Gauja and Rodney Smith focus on the minor parties and independents. These chapters illustrate how masculine norms have continued to produce barriers for women who wish to be politically active inside formal institutions.

The importance of networking between feminists working inside and outside of formal political institutions is clearly explained by Chappell whose chapter discusses the bureaucracy and by Sue Goodwin who examines the role of women’s advisory committees (which were established to provide a voice for women and represent their various interests). Goodwin’s goal is to acknowledge the numerous women who work hard to politicize issues, wrestle with the nuts and bolts of appropriate policy responses, re-politicize problems that had disappeared from policy agendas and evaluate policies and programmes (p. 180). Marian Sawer analyses the work of organizations such as the Women’s Electoral Lobby and the Australian Federation of Women Voters. Jenny Donovan revisits women’s suffrage focusing on the importance of coalition-building to challenge the misconception that women were handed the vote ‘on a plate’ (p. 39), while Ramsay tackles the persistent problem of domestic violence. Sarah Maddison’s chapter questions young women’s roles as outsiders. Given their invisibility in parliamentary politics, she argues that young women are in fact influential at a time when feminist activism is not manifestly apparent. Describing them as ‘outsiders among outsiders’ Maddison traces the activism of young feminists during the late 1960s and 1970s, through the 1980s and 1990s as a more neo-liberal political and economic agenda emerged. Maddison argues that young women have adapted in diverse ways, which, while different from their older sisters, should be viewed positively: their ‘ability to adapt should be seen as a sign of the flexibility and strength that enables the women’s movement to survive the changes constantly occurring’ (p. 234). Like feminists throughout Australia’s political history, women – whatever their age – disagree and debate a range of issues such as race, class, sexuality and ethnicity. This is an encouraging phenomenon, because it points to a robust vibrancy within the feminist movement.

The collection will appeal not only to an academic audience, but to general readers who have an interest in feminism, history and politics. While the editors have to make difficult choices about what to include in one volume, I
would have liked to see a chapter dedicated to ‘women and work’ and the changing role of industrial relations – an issue that has been at the centre of political debate in Australia over the last few years. Overall, this informative, interesting and insightful study fills a large gap in the literature on women and politics.

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Susan Hogan. *Conception Diary: Thinking about Pregnancy and Motherhood.* Sheffield: Eilish Press, 2006. ISBN 0-9551656-0-1.

Like trying for a baby, reading this book deserves more than one go. Like sex, the story is in turns engaging, embarrassing, intimate, intense, funny, familiar, loving, loathsome, repetitive, reflexive, compelling, shocking, messy and hard to conclude. Unlike the suggestion of the title, it delivers much more than reflections on conception, pregnancy and motherhood. The seeds of these thoughts are buried in a rich soil of sexual and familial relationships, employment patterns, maternity policies, cultural norms and media reportage. They illuminate aspects of ageing, ethnicity and class and are underpinned by contemporary feminist theorizing.

The ‘trying for baby’ story starts in February 2003 with an unexpected trip to casualty prompting the querying of the writer’s ability to become pregnant. Susan Hogan is, at this point, a forty-two-year-old academic in a relatively new relationship with Robert, the father of her second child, Emile, and they are taking conception seriously. The book, in the form of a personal journal, charts the ensuing twenty-two emotional months.

The most fascinating aspect of the storyline is the brutally honest unpacking of sexual intimacy. From loving looks, romantic anticipation of conception sex and Robert’s guaranteed performance, we are taken through a more mechanical coupling to the withholding of affection and crossness, as love-making increasingly becomes an obligation and stamina is challenged. The death knell of the relationship sounds, as Susan’s thoughts drift during sex to planting Eucalyptus trees while Robert attributes his performance failure to wind. Anthony Giddens’ (1993) optimism about the transformation of intimacy by feminists may be supported by Susan’s ownership of her sexual desire and her explicit (arguably ‘pornographic’) accounts of her sexual encounters with her partner. More striking, however, is her capturing of the mundaneness of intimacy between couples over time (Hockey *et al.*, 2007).

At the same time, while Susan’s relationship might not fit the common stereotypes of hegemonic heterosexuality, neither is it free from coercion. Susan is ‘fucked’ on those days that are not conception days and ‘bullied’ into patterns of household management that are about her partner’s desire for control. He leaves her to manage two young children and the fine detail of domestic...
demands, while he enjoys his customary four hours with the Sunday paper. Here we have an observation on a (masculine?) way of acting based on the argument that people are able to make choices about the way they live their lives. Unrecognized are the myriad factors, not least gendered and familial roles and identities, variously impacting on individuals’ perceptions of the choices available to them.

And so Robert chooses not to acknowledge his ‘step’-daughter Eilish (except when she has performed well at school) and the reader is taken on another voyage, this time exploring the complexities of ‘family’ in the face of divorce, the forging of new and alternative relationships and the meeting of different class and ethnic backgrounds. Robert’s response mirrors his father’s privileging of the blood-link (despite Robert’s rejection of his father’s Indian culture and Parsi religion), yet he is not happy for Eilish to see her biological grandparents due to his jealousy of Susan’s previous relationship.

Susan is clear in her joy of motherhood, pride in her children and delight in their unconditional love and hungry exploration of the world. However, she confesses how easy it is to forget how hard it is in the beginning. Moreover, raising her children in the house she has chosen with Robert demands a dual income and subsequently a commute to and from work, long hours and seriously compromised writing time and eaten-up creativity.

All the time she is telling her story, Susan is weaving in other stories, from newspapers, published books, television news or popular soaps, illuminating the nature and range of ongoing commentaries on motherhood and babies colouring our views, influencing our perceived choices. Together they form the stuff that is the strength of the book: contextualization of pregnancy and motherhood alongside honest personal documenting of the trials and ambivalence of (not) conceiving. The account is shot through with contradictions and at times, possibly naive. While so attuned to the ovulatory phase of her menstrual cycle, Susan seems to miss the obvious connection between her regular nausea/dodgy tummy and the onset of her period. Similarly, she attends to the emotional well-being of her au-pairs but does not acknowledge the possible link between their high turnover and the tensions and conflict of the Hogan household. It is hard to swallow the claims for the necessity of Susan’s income in light of the au-pairs, Victorian semi-detached house and holidays in a Tunisian resort and Centre Parcs. This is undisputedly a middle-class, academic analysis. Nevertheless, Susan writes with a raw but touching wit much more real than the anodyne humour of Bridget Jones’ diaries of sexual relations and parenthood (Fielding 1997, 2000): check out the story of the birth of her son in the back of a black cab, for example. The whole conception thing may be an ‘absolute emotional quagmire’ (p. 117) but Susan’s is also an affirming story which can stand, along with the likes of Anne Oakley’s (2007) recently released account of breaking her arm, as a crucial reminder of just how political is the personal.

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Cynthia Enloe. *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. ISBN 0742541126.

A curiosity about the genesis of the widespread lack of curiosity in US popular and political culture about US military unilateralism, particularly after the events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, prompted Cynthia Enloe to write and compile a series of essays entitled *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (see review in *IFJIP* vol. 8, no. 3). In that collection, she introduced the notion of what she called ‘feminist curiosity’ as a way to interrogate that which is made to seem ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ (Enloe 2004: 3). In her newest project, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*, Enloe utilizes this approach, which requires feminist researchers not only to ask hard questions about things that seem ‘normal’ or ‘natural’, but also to take seriously the lives of women and the workings of patriarchy (particularly in terms of socio-cultural assumptions about gender), in order to make visible the too often hidden connections between the people, products and processes of militarism and those of corporate globalization. She points out that, like corporate globalization itself, the international ubiquity of militaries and militarism is not new; rather, the novelty lies in the global reach of militarized ideas and processes, their strength, their quantity and ‘the intricacy of international alliances among the players’ (p. 8). Globalization, Enloe argues, has become militarized, and militarism has become globalized via these complex alliances, so it is to them that feminist researchers must apply our feminist curiosity if we hope to begin to understand – and potentially disrupt – the myriad ways in which contemporary configurations of globalization and militarism are co-constitutive.

While the questions and concerns of *Globalization and Militarism* will come as no surprise to those readers already familiar with Enloe’s earlier critiques of the gendered dynamics of global politics, her work here is innovative in its potential efficacy as a pedagogical tool. By situating the question of how to develop and apply a ‘feminist curiosity’ as one of the book’s paradigmatic themes, Enloe demonstrates the value of this perspective as both research method and theoretical intervention by modeling for her readers the complexity of the research questions she is able to conceptualize and explore just by refusing to accept as ‘natural’ and
‘normal’ that which others take for granted. For Enloe, enacting a feminist curiosity means ‘asking questions about the condition of women’ and exploring ‘the relationship of women to families, to men, to companies, to movements, to institutions, to ideologies, to cultural expressions, to the state, and to globalizing trends’ (p. 10). Perhaps hardest of all, it also means ignoring the criticisms of those (usually mainstream academics, pundits, policymakers and government officials) without feminist curiosity who consider these sorts of issues unimportant.

In her application of feminist curiosity-as-research-method, Enloe insists on the historicism of both globalization and militarism and, therefore, on the necessity of conceptualizing them as happening over extended periods of time. She also introduces five ‘conceptual flashlights’, masculinization, feminization, militarization, globalization and patriarchy, that enable her to shine ‘a brighter, more realistic light’ (pp. 54, 66–7) on the notion of women’s ‘cheap labor’ in the transnational production of sneakers, to interrogate the contemporary meanings of ‘national security’, to think through the ways in which femininity and masculinity are militarized, to make sense of US state policies of torture and terror at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo and, finally, to posit potential strategies for demilitarization in local and global contexts. Enloe is, as always, concerned about the gendered consequences of state and global policies, but here she encourages her readers to think also about the gendered causes of such policies: What assumptions about and/or fears of masculinity and femininity result in particular policy decisions? Who makes them? When? Why? And in what contexts? While Enloe applies these questions to expose and interrogate the hard work done by politicians, policymakers, government officials and corporate elites to create and sustain the intricate links between globalization and militarism, feminist curiosity-as-research-method can travel easily, making Globalization and Militarism an important contribution to the growing literature on feminist research methods, approaches and perspectives across a wide variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary sites of knowledge production, both in- and outside the academy.

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