



of self-blame discourse and mobilize for positive social change. Each of the women who participated in the Lone Mothers project had the opportunity to tell their personal stories of sole motherhood. It comes as no surprise that systemic and domestic abuse, inequalities in employability and earnings, the virtually non-existent Canadian child care policy, immigration status, racism, and gender inequality all colour the ways in which sole mothers in Canada must navigate their experiences.

Most of the stories offer windows not only into lives of suffering, but also into resilience and strength. As one of the participants reflects, “We want our children to know that we are trying to change things... we have gotten something good out of this mess...” In the chapter entitled, “Making Meaning,” co-editors Caragata and Alcalde offer readers the women’s observations of how Canadian social policy has failed to support families, and also suggest how they could be improved. One of the most salient points here that truly does bust the historical and denigrating myth of the single mother welfare mom is that these mothers are in fact good mothers who have often made painful, difficult choices that put their children’s

needs first. This chapter emphasizes the unfortunate role that abuse plays as it underlies many issues in single mothers’ lives, such as addictions, mental illness and chronic poverty. Interestingly, and perhaps most poignantly, is that Caragata problematizes the notion of freedom of choice, which, she argues can only exist if women are free from abuse and economic deprivation.

While the format of the volume is most quantitatively weighted in favour of the individually-told personal life stories, the book would have been more effective with a structure that offered readers an analytical break between groups of thematically arranged stories. The discussion of the volume’s format is misleading to readers. For example, Caragata says that the book “moves back and forth between amore academically reflective discussion and the at-times earthy and grounded self-storying of the lone-mother authors.” My reading experience was not reflective of this description. Instead, I found an imbalance between the intense and often painful kind of listening that is necessary for reading these women’s stories, and the promise of reflective discussion between the stories. These stories do provide the antidote to the negative social connotations of single motherhood and social assistance. More programs like the one that inspired this book could help policy makers make better informed decisions, and ultimately improve the lives of lone mothers.

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ARTS IN GLOBAL ASIA: AN ANTHOLOGY

Theodore W. Goossen and Anindo Hazra, Eds.
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REVIEWED BY KATHRYN TRAVIS

“The struggle for a more just and humane world begins with our ability to imagine how others live and how they think.”

All too often, ‘the arts’ become centered as an object of/for analysis within academic writing (albeit an interesting and captivating one). Perhaps due to convention and/or the limitations of structure and word count, artistic creations are often synthesized, cut-down, and paraphrased to be made to fit into the body of academic work. In *Human Rights and the Arts in Global Asia: An Anthology*, a space has been created for the arts within a scholarly context. As a companion volume to the collection of critical essays found in *Human Rights and the Arts: Perspectives on Global Asia* (edited by Susan Henders and Lily Cho), the reader has the opportunity to delve first hand into the “textures of everyday life” that are presented through these literary works. The act and process of translation made it possible for a majority of these works to be presented to an English-reading audience for the first time. Introducing writers from across Asia and the Asian diaspora, this anthology is the living proof of how commitments to ‘the arts’ can play out in academic/scholarly settings.

As a starting off point, Goossen and Hazra have crafted an introduction that offers the reader contextual counter-points to read