BOOK REVIEW

Title: Whose University Is It, Anyway? Power and Privilege on Gendered Terrain

Author: Anne Wagner, Sandra Acker, and Kimine Mayuzumi (Eds).

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As a visible minority educator, I am always interested in analyzing the personal tensions, environmental barriers, and imaginative possibilities that exist when embracing equity- and diversity-conscious approaches to teaching, learning, and interacting in higher education institutions. In *Whose University Is It, Anyway? Power and Privilege on Gendered Terrain*, these areas of tension are treated as creative spaces to draw from the work of feminists who use this site as a site for power and new knowledge production. *Whose University Is It, Anyway? Power and Privilege on Gendered Terrain* motivates the reader to question whether equity is available to all individuals whose identity is interwoven with gender, race, ethnicity, disability, social class, and religion and within various situational subjects (e.g., student, teaching assistants, faculty, and administrators) in a Canadian context. The book has four parts; the first section illustrates the challenges facing racialized minority women, Aboriginal women, and women with disabilities. The second section explores various experiences such as those related to racialized minority scholars, and women who have experienced violence, queer and gendered individuals. The third section provides narratives of women in various academic roles (teaching assistants, administrative assistants, department chairs, and non-tenure-track faculty). The diversity of the women's experiences enriched the book by allowing the authors to explore various gender-related aspects. In the fourth section, the authors provide strategies and opportunities through personal experiences, and express hope that their contributions will improve the current situation in higher education.

Collectively, throughout the fourteen chapters, the authors tackle issues of power, equity, and marginalization of women in a Canadian higher educational institution. The introduction of the book is unique in terms of the authors' use of "three dimensional matrix" to theorize issues related to power, privilege, equity, and marginalization; (a) the different perspectives of diversely situational subjects in order to examine the "dynamics of power and privilege of the ivory tower"; (b) the intersectionality that covers various identity category with the primary focus on gender (though some chapters did not); and (c) the use of narrative approach as well empirical qualitative studies. Within this three dimensional matrix, the issues examined in this

book are not solely related to a Canadian context, but extend to most institutional settings. However, the institution's setting is in the diverse city of Toronto, where the women's shared experiences differ completely from monocultural settings when examining the intersectionality of racialized females. This can be seen clearly through White's experiences as being the only racialized female in courses whose student populations are more culturally homogenous. She observes that having racialized faculty as role models will not resolve the status quo of inequity in higher education. Instead she calls for "holistic expression of other" and the need to study in further detail how the dominant culture controls pedagogy and curricula.

Intersectionality plays an important role in revealing the multiple factors that shape minority women's experiences of marginalization in terms of viewing gender through a prism of racist and patriarchal discrimination. Many visible minority feminists (Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 2000a, 2000b; Miles, Rezai-Rushti, & Rundle, 2001; Mohanty, 1991) have argued that the issues facing women of colour were not part of privileged White feminists' agenda, as the latter focused primarily on "gender discrimination" and "gender oppression" through their own particular experiences. In *Whose University Is It, Anyway? Power and Privilege on Gendered Terrain*, each of the authors used intersectionality differently. Gender was the primary topic of discussion in most of the chapters. Moreover, in some chapters that examine the academic role with gender, other identity categories were not thoroughly considered. With this respect, it is important to consider the author's identity when examining the use of intersectionality and its adherence to women's experiences. For instance, Michelle Webber's chapter examined how teaching assistants navigate the concept of feminism in their seminars. All the teaching assistants were White and the focus was on the gender over other identity categories. It would have been helpful to include the voices of minority teaching assistants and provide more opportunities for examining the dimensional matrix of intersectionality from the perspective of Teaching assistants as the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, religion, social class, and other category reveal the various marginalization faced by women in academy. This is also clear with Sandra Acker's words describing her experiences as a department chair, "I cannot know what I have made of administration had I been from different cultural group" (p. 181). As such, it would have been helpful if the authors explain explicitly the impact of intersectionality on the experiences of minority women versus White women in academy.

Many of the chapters address how certain sources of knowledge are marginalized, like the experiences of Cyndy Baskin, who expressed how mainstream social work curriculum ignores the voices of Aboriginal peoples. Kimine Mayuzumi and Riyad Shahjahan also share through their participants' experiences how "spiritually minded racially minoritized women faculty" experience challenges when attempting to balance their religious or spiritual identity with the dominant secular Western values. They go on to express their feelings that their spiritual interests were not acknowledged within academia. Although their spiritual knowledge was subjugated, the participants continue to gain their confidence and strength from their beliefs and insist on providing positive images against stereotypes such as the Muslim females wearing the hijab in the academy. Another participant, a visible minority African female professor in Mayuzumi's and Shahjahan's study, who expressed how many academics underestimate the importance of one's personal religious beliefs, related how she found herself hiding her Christian values, though she explains her Christian values differ from 'White Christian' values. As such, this book is a vital reminder for those interested in equity and social justice to critically consider that regardless of all the policies of excellence, diversity, and equity – especially those discourses

examined by Maria Athena Martimianakis in the first part of the book – many individuals still struggle to preserve their identity in higher education. Thus, this book calls for the need to continuously revise those policies related to equity in academic institutions. Most importantly, this book, via the voices of various women's experiences that were examined through intersectionality, encourages readers to challenge the policies of equity and count on individuals as agents of transformation and change.

Finally, *Whose University Is It, Anyway? Power and Privilege on Gendered Terrain* provides insights into the equity issues in Canadian universities. Specifically, issues addressed in this book that relate to equity may be extended to other institutions in this globalized and interconnected world, in which many individuals struggle to navigate their identities within the policy framework of the institutions that are influenced by the structure of global corporations. This book, through its relation of the complex experiences of women, is timely and helps those interested in equity to continuously think of *Whose University Is It, Anyway?*

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