SEEKING POSSIBILITIES IN A TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT: ASIAN WOMEN FACULTY IN THE CANADIAN ACADEMY

by

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This dissertation examines the questions: “What are the experiences of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy?” and “How do they navigate this space?” The study aims to generate new insights into how this understudied and underrepresented population negotiates various aspects of identity, such as gender, race, language and citizenship, as they pursue their academic careers. It provides an original examination of how “Asian” women faculty who have transnational life experience interpret the Canadian academy.

Using a qualitative inquiry methodology with a transnational feminist perspective, I conducted in-depth interviews with nine Asian women faculty members in Canadian universities concerning their motivations, desires, contradictions, struggles, and coping strategies within their academic lives. Themes for the analysis arose from the literature, the conceptual framework, my own background and the data. Four major themes organize the analysis: 1) what impact the socially constructed discourse of Canadian citizenry has in the everyday lives of Asian women faculty and how “Asian-woman-ness” operates in the given contexts; 2) what technical difficulties and social barriers emerge from Asian women faculty’s experiences with spoken and written English language; 3) what “cultural logics” Asian women faculty utilize in order to survive/thrive in their social locations as Asian women in the Canadian academy; and 4) how Asian women faculty create their own legitimate space from their marginalized points of view.
Through the dual process of their citizenry being de-legitimized in the academy and the nation-state, Asian women faculty strive to become legitimate through creating alternative understandings and definitions of their academic lives. This study was meant to initiate and promote reconfiguration of study on faculty’s lives by foregrounding the transnational feminist framework, which looks at/beyond the institutional, national and temporal borders and at the same time pays close attention to gender and race within the different types of borders. The study suggests that efforts to make higher education more diverse are more complex than some might imagine.
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Dedication

To my parents
Isao & Emiko Mayuzumi

Who cried with me when I decided to go to America for my higher education but supported me throughout my studies.
Chapter 1

Introduction

1. From My Encounters to My Inquiry

In April 2005, at a North American education conference, I presented a paper on immigrant women faculty in the Canadian university context (Mayuzumi, 2005). Despite the fact that all the conference presenters were contesting the higher education space in one way or another, there was little to no emphasis on the importance of support, solidarity, and encouragement among colleagues. Despite my Canadian colleagues’ compliments on my clear presentation style, the discussant, a white male, gave me relatively negative and short comments on my paper. I was particularly struck when he said, “I am not part of the audience.” As soon as the session ended, an Asian woman approached me directly and spoke to me in a humble manner, explaining that she was having difficulty finding the conference room and had therefore missed my presentation. This woman, who I later discovered was a full professor in a Canadian university, expressed an interest in my presentation because of the challenges that she continually faced as a female professor and an Asian immigrant. She revealed to me how her small physical size meant that she was taken less seriously as an academic and a professor. Her voice sounded gentle yet dynamic and I sensed that her reason for approaching me arose from the struggles she endured in her everyday academic life. Her openness encouraged me to continue researching the experiences of immigrant women faculty in an effort to discover the root of their discomfort/discrimination. Shortly thereafter, at another conference in the U.S., I met another Asian female faculty member who openly shared with me her frustrations in the academy. She told me, “Even my colleagues don’t know what I am doing.” I gathered from her comment that she felt isolated in her workplace.

These two instances reminded me of an earlier conversation I had with another Asian female faculty member in March 2005. She responded to my questions regarding her experiences in the academy by emphasizing how she found the institution to be very white and Eurocentric. She shared her stories about her white students’ resistance against her as a course instructor and about her being mistaken for a student because of her youthful appearance. Taken together, these three incidents raised some questions for me:
“What connects the experiences of these Asian women faculty?”, “What kind of experiences have they had in academia?” “What kinds of struggles do they go through?” As I wrote about my own perspective on this topic (Mayuzumi, 2008), as an Asian woman in the academy who migrated from Japan to Canada in 2003, I felt that I could relate to some of the concerns and struggles faced by Asian women faculty who are categorized as “Asians” in the West (i.e. Canada). Given my own social location in the Western academy, I also posit that I am in a position to contest the existing space that upholds a certain dominant knowledge and culture as a “norm.” It is this in-between space that I began interrogating through my dissertation.

At the same time, my previous research on faculty who are “immigrant women of colour” that I presented in April 2005 was quite influential in my choice of theoretical framework for this dissertation. I looked at the population with an anti-racist feminist lens and recognized the importance of the discourse of citizenship and the nation-state in understanding the immigrant women faculty’s narratives. The specific question then was how Canadianness/non-Canadianness was part of their everyday thinking as well as a source of their struggles. My epistemological lens developed through this previous research made me realize that a transnational feminist approach would be the most relevant to the topic on Asian women faculty. Thereafter, I started looking into transnational feminism, which helped me to develop the issue of citizenship, the nation-state and the academy through the lens of a transnational feminist framework to be applied to my dissertation on Asian women faculty.

Through this dissertation work, I have developed my theoretical framework and began to call it a transnational feminist framework. Although there are two key themes in this research--Asian women faculty as my study subjects and the transnational feminist framework as my analytical lens-- in this chapter I mostly highlight the first one to explain the significance of this study. As for the latter one, I will explicate it more in later chapters (Chapters 2 & 9) because it becomes clearer as I apply it to actual data that I collected.
2. Asian Women Faculty in Canada

The first question posed might be, what does “Asian”\(^1\) really mean? Ang (2001) points out that it is a historically produced term/notion and that “the idea of ‘Asia’ as a distinct, demarcatable region of the world originated in a very Eurocentric system of geographical classification” (p.4; see also Jo-Anne Lee, 2006). Has the meaning of “Asian” that has been historically produced from a Eurocentric perspective changed in this contemporary world? I argue that there is no definite answer to what it means and that it is a contested term and a context-dependent notion. In this dissertation, I will interrogate the notion of “Asian” or “Asianness” as a quality of being “Asian.” The study focuses on a certain group of people who are often labeled as “Asian” in Canada -- that is East Asians who have roots in China, Korea, Japan, or Taiwan. I do not mean to discount other groups of “Asian” people such as South Asians and Southeast Asians, but rather choose to focus on East Asians as an approach to address the ambiguous contested notion of “Asians.” My chosen focus on East Asians is related to the three consecutive incidents I encountered as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter as well as to my own personal identity as an East Asian.

“Faculty” here means university employees who are assigned to carry out teaching and/or research, whom I also sometimes call “academics.” There are various kinds of faculty, such as full-time, part-time, tenure-track or non-tenure track. I did not focus on faculty with a specific kind of position, as I suspected the population of Asian women faculty was small. Unlike in the U.S., there are no specific statistics on Asian women faculty in Canada. When it comes to part-time faculty, the availability of information on their population is extremely limited as census data is only available with respect to full-time faculty (personal communication with Penni Stewart, the president of CAUT, December 6, 2010). However, there are some statistics of other kinds that may provide an indication of the underrepresentation of Asian women faculty. For example, as presented in the *CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education 2010-2011*, figures on the ethnocultural background of university teachers in 2006 show that 84.2% of all full-time university teachers in Canada are white. The representation of the East Asian population

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\(^1\) A quotation mark is added to Asian (i.e. “Asian”) when the fluid and socially constructed nature of the category, which I contest, is emphasized.
is as follows: Chinese 4.2%, Korean 0.4%, and Japanese 0.5% of all faculty. Chinese faculty members make up the biggest group among visible minority faculty (28.2%) (CAUT, 2010). Furthermore, the Feminist & Equity Audits 2006 from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (2006) reveals that in 2001, the percentage of “visible minority” women among all university teachers (full and part time) in Canada was 3.4% in contrast with 9.1% ‘visible minority’ men. Unfortunately, there are no available data updating statistics on gender among visible minority faculty or discipline among visible minority faculty.2

Thus we recognize that Canada has little systematic data on the ethnoracial/ethnocultural background of university faculty. Acknowledging this lack of statistical information, Nakhaie (2004) suggests that the underrepresentation of visible minority faculty (and administrators) is not merely about numbers but also relates to “systemic discrimination” and a “chilly climate” for faculty from minority populations. While there is a great deal of anecdotal indication of systemic discrimination against visible minority and racially minoritized female faculty, there is little systematic collection of empirical data, especially on Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy. For this reason, the study references some literature on and by Asian women in the U.S., not for the purpose of comparing Canada and the U.S., but to suggest where there may be common experiences. The dissertation will focus on stories of Asian women faculty who work at Canadian higher education institutions, thereby filling a gap in the existing literature on issues facing racially minoritized faculty, including Asian women academics. I will also use the terms “the academy” and “higher education” interchangeably to refer to university settings.

3. Research Questions

In this dissertation, I examine the questions: “What are the experiences of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy?” and “How do they navigate this space?” I use a qualitative inquiry methodology with a transnational feminist perspective focusing on

2 However, there are some figures that would help the reader better capture the Canadian academic scene. The CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education 2010-2011 also shows that about 40% of all faculty members in Canada in 2006 are not Canadian born. As for the language of university professors (by mother tongue), that of a fourth of the faculty is not English or French. The specific racial and ethnical composition of the figures is unknown (CAUT, 2010).
Asian women faculty to provide new insights into how this understudied and underrepresented population negotiates various aspects of identity, such as gender, race, language, and citizenship as they pursue their academic careers. This dissertation also provides an original examination of how “Asian” women faculty who have transnational/cross-cultural life experience interpret the Canadian academy. In other words, I pay close attention to the subject making, the constant negotiation process of how one should locate oneself in and act upon the given context, of the Asian women faculty I interviewed between 2008 and 2010. I conducted in-depth interviews with nine Asian women faculty members concerning their motivations, desires, contradictions, struggles, and coping strategies within their academic lives. As the participants’ experiences were shaped by their context and social conditions in particular, attention to the subject making processes of a certain population allows us to capture the sociological picture of the world (see Mohanty, 2003; Nealon & Giroux, 2003; Chapter 2 and 4 of this dissertation). Mohanty (2003) advocates that the perspectives of those from disadvantaged groups such as women of colour are worthy of attention because they are better positioned to see how inequity operates, which the privileged population tends to ignore or overlook (see also Collins, 2000).

Employing a transnational feminist perspective, this study highlights the interconnections between the global and local sites in which institutions such as nation-states and academy reside. My assumption is that the cross-cultural and transnational experiences of Asian women faculty direct this research toward some blind spots within the Western/Canadian academy as a contested site in our “globalized” neoliberal world. The study examines the relationship between the Western/Canadian academy and the nation-state as it pertains to issues of knowledge production. Both the academy and the nation-state operate at a similar level in terms of a hierarchy of knowledges and capitalist models of citizenship by following the corporate model (Alexander, 2005; Mohanty, 2003; Olssen & Peters, 2005). One purpose of this study is to make a positive contribution to the collective struggle for structural and transformative change in how equity is practiced within the academy. While the study primarily examines the Canadian academic context, many of the challenges to equity that are discussed may also be of concern to a wider category of marginalized people, such as immigrant women and
women of colour in various social institutions and contexts.

4. Situating Myself as Researcher

I am a heterosexual able-bodied female graduate student in a Canadian academic institution who was born and raised in the Gunma prefecture of rural Japan. My North American experience started in the third year of my undergraduate degree, when I moved to the United States as an international student. Now, after almost a decade of residence in North America, I am able to navigate through and interrogate the “lived West” and gain perspective on the “imagined West” that I envisioned before my move (see He, 2002). Here the term “the West” does not only refer to the geographical dimension of Western nation-states, but also refers to the power and privilege imbued in historical and contemporary coloniality (logic of domination). My decision to move to “the West” incorporated both a conscious and unconscious desire for a certain associated power that I had learned about through my social and educational upbringing. Part of my original vision before moving to the West was to gain social mobility by becoming fluent in English and obtaining a degree from an American academic institution. In the 1980s, just before my move to the U.S., the Japanese media and government began to discuss what “internationalization” meant and what it meant to become an “international” person (Ehara, 1992; Habu, 2000). During the 1980s and early 1990s, U.S. universities also invested in the recruitment of Japanese students to American higher education institutions, partly as a means of rectifying the trade imbalance between Japan and the U.S. (Habu, 2000). In this context, I knew I wanted to be “international,” which seemingly meant being close to or part of the West in my colonized definition, and started developing my English language skills by first going to an English conversation school and then to a second school to enhance my TOEFL scores.

In the early stages of my higher education experience in North America, one of my biggest challenges was my limited proficiency in English, which affected both my ability to communicate with people and my self-esteem to a large extent. Most notably, I

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3 The terms “coloniality” and “colonial” in this dissertation refer not necessarily to a territorial domination but rather to an ideological one through specific social technologies of knowledge production and exercise of power (see Loomba, 1998; Mayuzumi, 2009; Said, 1978). Here my colonized mind is observed through my perpetuation of Western hegemony through my desire and motivations.
felt excluded from conversations, including class discussions (Mayuzumi, Motobayashi, Nagayama, & Takeuchi, 2007). I had begun to believe the colonial discourse that English is an “international” language and was interested in acquiring “proper” English pronunciation without an accent. Behind this concept of accent, there is generally a misconception/myth about English proficiency, which determines not only one’s “official” language level but also the quality and quantity of one’s knowledge, intelligence, or credibility (see Lippi-Green, 1997). I was hardly aware of language as “the substantive technology through which social exclusion is built around power and hegemony” (Dei, 2006, p.16). I regularly asked my white peer to correct my English pronunciation whenever she heard “mistakes” in my English. I was also reproducing the colonial measurement through my desires, motivations, and goal-orientatedness as I attempted to find my place in the West.

When did I start thinking about my “Asian” identity? It is not so clear. However, it was surely not from the beginning when I came to North America in the 1990s and identified myself more as “Japanese,” as mentioned above. Even though people around me most likely would have identified me as an Asian woman, I did not internalize such an identity right away. I even tried to distinguish my Japanese-ness from other East Asian ethnicities. My Asian identity was something I started internalizing gradually as I lived the North American life, especially in the Canadian metropolitan environment. Now upon reflection, I recognize how my earlier stage of internalization of being “Asian” developed due to social forces, including other people’s identification of me as “Asian” or “Oriental.” I realize that from the beginning, when I was romanticizing the West prior to moving here, I was always an “Asian,” non-white/non Westerner who wanted to be like a white person in the West and be able to speak “good” English.

Another guiding factor in my research is my relationship with the land and the Canadian nation-state in general. When I first arrived in the West, I knew little of the colonial history of Canada. I did not even associate Canada with Aboriginal people, but rather with white “Canadians” as representatives of the nation-state. Thus I pose the question in this dissertation: What does it mean to be an Asian woman particularly in Canada? This question, which often arose in my daily life, in fact influenced the choice of my dissertation topic. Through dialogue with different Asian women, I had learned
that the question of identity for Asian women was not only my personal question, but
deserved to be tackled in a collective sense. I developed a strong desire to make sense of
the experiences of the three Asian women faculty members mentioned at the beginning of
this chapter. The roots of the pattern that I intuited from each of the women’s experiences
have not been explained or clarified within the literature on women of colour in higher
education. Furthermore, the existing literature on Asian women's experiences only named
stereotypes and discrimination, often uncritically accepting the term “Asian” and failing
to theorize these experiences in transnational contexts. For these reasons, I decided to
choose a framework that allows me to contextualize the term “Asian” within a specific
national context, while also connecting it with a transnational perspective on Asianness.
Unless the term “Asian” is contextualized, it becomes a floating signifier, sometimes used
trivially but with cultural implications and consequences for the lives of “Asians” (see
also Ang, 2001). In sum, the aspects considered above inspired me to conduct my
dissertation research on Asian women faculty in the Canadian higher education as a
collective inquiry.

5. Outline of the Dissertation
This dissertation consists of nine chapters including four data chapters (Chapters 5-8)
which include analysis of the Asian women faculty narratives. Following this
introduction, Chapter 2 presents the transnational feminist framework, which I
foreground as my analytical lens for the rest of the dissertation, followed by a
contextualization of “Asians” and “Asian women” with historical and representational
significance as part of the chosen framework. In Chapter 3, I review literature on the
academy with two major themes: the academy in global capitalism and the academy as a
colonial site. For the first theme, I focus on neoliberalism as a core ideology that
influences both the nation-state and academia. Regarding the latter theme, I review
literature discussing inequity in the academy from marginalized perspectives, especially
those of women of colour faculty, including Asian women academics.

In Chapter 4, I discuss my research journey to clarify my methodological
approach. In Chapter 5, my first data chapter, entitled “Immigrants” in Canada:
Illegitimate citizens in the nation-state and the academy, I examine how the social
markers of difference such as race, gender and language operate in the academic and
Canadian lives of the Asian women faculty. In Chapter 6, *Language, power and the academy*, I focus on issues of language in the Asian women faculty’s academic lives, including the struggles that they face regarding the English language as a hegemonic language connected to Canadianness. In Chapter 7, *Navigating the academy through cultural logics: Other practical challenges*, I highlight the notion of “cultural logics” as a focal point to understand the interconnected cultural, material, structural and historical forces that Asian women faculty navigate in their daily lives. In Chapter 8, *Carving a niche: Towards “legitimate” citizens in the Canadian academy*, I interrogate how the Asian women faculty negotiate with the academic (neoliberal) culture in order to legitimate their academic citizenship. While I focus attention more on the self legitimization process in this chapter, I should note that it is also considered in other chapters as well.

In Chapter 9, the conclusion, I introduce a “T” diagram to map out the different power dynamics involving Asian women faculty within the transnational feminist framework and discuss implications of this research project. I claim that their subject making is shaped by layers of social forces and discourses and that through the process of their citizenry being de-legitimized in the academy and the nation-state, Asian women faculty strive to become legitimate through their own definitions in their academic lives. Throughout the dissertation, I intend to illustrate the process of their subject making through their stories that convey insight into what qualifies as “Asianness” and “Asian-woman-ness”.

Chapter 2
Contextualizing Asian Women (Faculty) within the Transnational Feminist Framework

1. Introduction to Transnational Feminism

Over the past several decades, feminist work has established and pushed forward a political framework that reflects legal, social, economic, political and cultural change such that women’s studies today has evolved as a field from its inception in the early 1970s. Until that point, feminist scholarship had been neglected or ignored in academic communities; yet feminists continued to claim the importance of their scholarship linked to women’s roles in society and women’s studies kept growing throughout the 70s, 80s, and 90s (Grewal & Kaplan, 2006).

Particularly with respect to Canadian higher education in the 1970s and 80s, the androcentric culture of the academy was interrogated and the topics of study often covered issues of equal opportunity and representation, curriculum, sexual harassment, feminist scholarship and employment questions (Wagner, Acker, & Mayuzumi, 2008). Throughout the 1990s, increasing attention was focused on various dimensions of identity (e.g. race, class, sexuality, and disability) as they intersect with gender. By the turn of the century, various standpoints from different social locations were revealed through discussions of multiculturalism, difference and diversity, and equity and social justice.

However, within such feminist scholarship, one aspect that remained missing or marginalized was “an international perspective on women’s lives and concerns” (Grewal & Kaplan, 2006, p.xx). Most feminist scholarship in the Western countries had focused on national issues. Grewal and Kaplan argue that, until recently, there were only two ways of addressing international issues in feminist work. One was to look at women in a homogenized way globally by shedding light on similarities among women with respect to topics such as motherhood and family structure. This approach ignored various existing differences among women such as race, class, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality and other markers of power (Shohat, 1998). The other method of internationalizing feminist work lay in the field of “women and development,” where the division of power
between the First World and the Third World was apparent and problematized by many feminists (Grewal & Kaplan, 2006).

My research required conceptual frames that would address the complexity of “internationalized” perspectives mentioned above, yet look at issues on an international scale without discarding the local issues or the importance of prior feminist work. What would be suitable for the topic of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy and for the time of globalization and neoliberalism? Here the notion of “transnational” rather than “international” is of key importance in addressing these questions. In contrast with “international,” the term “transnational” refers to the movement of bodies, materials, and ideas across national boundaries, which makes “the strict distinctions among nations” become recognized, “altered and more flexible” (Grewal & Kaplan, 2006, p.180). The transnational feminist framework underlines transnationality as the condition of cultural and physical interconnectedness across space, which has been intensified under late capitalism and globalization (Ong, 1999). In other words, it is important to look at the differences in power relations within transnationality. Transnational feminism is different from “international” feminism in important ways (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997; Grewal & Kaplan, 2000). International feminism tends to refer to all women across the world with a key notion of “global sisterhood” while masking the racial, economic, and cultural power dynamic among women intensified by the most recent influences of globalization and capitalism (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997). Thus it could be argued that international feminism perpetuates the problematic dynamics mentioned above regarding “international” perspectives – ignoring differences among women and centring the West with respect to the rest of the world. Moreover, Grewal and Kaplan (2000, 2006) emphasize that, in contrast with “international,” the notion of “transnational” allows us to highlight inequalities and differences rather than commonalities. It stems from an

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4 Globalization is not a recent phenomenon. However, recent globalization is a more intensified version of previous one with regard to mobility and borderlessness of capital, information, goods, raw materials, services and people due to “the penetration of the capitalist mode of production on a world scale and the proliferation of communication technology” (Li, 2003, p.2; see also Appadurai, 1996). In other words, the uniqueness of the recent globalized era is marked by “the speed, the scope, and the complexity of present-day cross-border interconnections” (Li, 2003, p. 2). While Li (2003) focuses on migration of people as a key factor of globalization, Rizvi (2000) sheds light on cultural aspects emerging from the movement of ideas, images and people, which tends to be absent from definitions by many authors who focus solely on economic dimensions.
urgency “to destabilize rather than maintain boundaries of nation, race, and gender.” The term transnational “signals attention to uneven and dissimilar circuits of culture and capital” which were created and developed through movements over time and space in particular ways (2000, Paragraph 3).

Therefore, the transnational feminist framework highlights relations across national borders within the contemporary globalized economy. In doing so, it pays focused attention to concrete effects within the history of imperialism (Grewal & Kaplan, 2000) and responses to global processes in the recolonization of women (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997). It interrogates the local in relation to the global and examines how local processes are influencing and are influenced by global power dynamics. Global-local is not a monolithic formation and should not be a binary division, but has to be considered as a relationship that was constructed through history (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Hall, 1997; Mohanty, 2003). Therefore, the transnational feminist framework interrogates the specific “in-between” space of the local and the global as a site of analysis (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; 2000; Ong, 1999). In my study on Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy, I look at the local higher education institutions and their employees while simultaneously highlighting the global perspective to look at how the micro level experiences of Asian women faculty are linked to macro level historical, economic, political and social contexts.

Some previous critical studies have utilized the transnational feminist perspective. For example, in her dissertation entitled Constituting “Asian women:” Canadian gendered Orientalism and multicultural nationalism in an age of “Asia rising,” Hijin Park (2007) employs transnational feminism and critical discourse analysis to interrogate the power and domination concealed in the Canadian nation-state through Asian women’s bodies. She emphasizes that transnational feminism “enables one to centre the inherent instability, multiplicity and situated quality of the Asian Canadian woman subject” (p.77). Grounded in her reading of Canadian colonial history, she argues that a “new”/contemporary construction of “Asian women” is rather interconnected with the “old” one and attempts to illustrate how they are related through discourse analysis of three different moments/events involving “Asian women.” Another study grounded in a transnational feminist approach is that of Kakali Bhattacharya (2009). In her
methodological piece entitled, *Othering research, researching the other: De/colonizing approaches to qualitative inquiry*, Bhattacharya (2009) explicates that her transnational feminist perspective helps her in destabilizing the location of the researcher and the researched in fixed boundaries for her research on two Indian graduate students in the U.S. She also explains that it helps in interrogating liberatory discourses that may be even part of imperialistic discourses. She further articulates her transnational feminist perspective as aligning with “the ideas that support a multipronged approach to understanding and developing diverse forms of resistances against inequalities driven by globalized social and economic structures and migration of people” (p.108). The subjects that both of the authors examine in their research are minoritized bodies in Western nation-states. They pay a great deal of attention to colonial discourses around the subjects and disrupt fixed categories such as “women,” “Asian women,” and national borders. Both of them look into and connect the local-global points of view by concretizing the specificities of the subjects within broader transnational contexts.

In summary, I have also chosen the transnational feminist framework as the most relevant approach to conceptualizing and investigating the experiences of Asian women faculty in my research, the relevance of which is articulated further elsewhere (Mayuzumi, 2008). The transnational feminist framework allows me to centre the transnationality of Asian women faculty’s lives. The grey areas of their locations as Asian women – not in Asia but in the “West” – provide critical viewpoints within a framework that requires historical and global context to concretize the struggles and motivations of specific populations (i.e. rather than homogenizing “women” or “women of colour”). I highlight my intention to seek heterogeneity in women and women of colour rather than to demonstrate homogeneity in “Asian” women. My usage of “Asia” and “the West” is clarified as I articulate and employ the transnational feminist framework. In this chapter, I first discuss the transnational feminist framework as an epistemological guide to my analysis for later chapters in this dissertation. Following this discussion, I further contextualize “Asians” and “Asian women” within the framework through two sections: Immigration history in Canada – Asian exclusion; and Orientalist discourses on Asians and Asian women. At the end, I link the different sections in the chapter and discuss how the transnational feminist framework informs this particular
study on Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy and what elements will be important for this research project.

2. Transnational Feminist Framework

The recent trend in transnational feminism started in 1980s in the West and is rooted in postmodernism and postcolonialism (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). Like other feminist theoretical frameworks, transnational feminism also problematizes the modernity that stemmed from the Enlightenment ideology “with all its colonial discourses and hegemonic First World formations that wittingly or unwittingly lead to the oppression and exploitation of many women” (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p.2). As noted above, the transnational feminist framework especially looks at the transnational relations among women within the recent globalization and sheds light on intersections among gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationhood (Shohat, 1998). Let me break down some of the theoretical points of the transnational feminist framework as follows.

The transnational feminist framework is a political lens that focuses on how power relations inside and outside a nation-state are reflected in its institutions and people through transnationality. Miyoshi (1993) argues that the transnational corporations (TNCs) that emerged out of recent globalization activities represent a new form of colonialism. He states that TNCs manipulate the borderless nature of globalization for their own economic benefit, thereby perpetuating the unequal distribution of wealth. Mohanty (2003) also contends that such borderlessness “engenders profound questions about power, access, justice, and accountability” and that “after all, inequality can also be mobile in this particular world” (p.172).

Knowledge “mobility” is also a significant reflection of transnational relations based on the global economy, as it has become a commodity in the profit-oriented nature of globalization, and corporatized through advanced information technology (Mohanty, 2003; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Smith, 2005). The transnational feminist framework can also extend to the discussion on knowledge as “the new form of capital under

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5 Transnational feminist analysis existed before it caught the attention of the Western academics recently (Park, 2007; Shohat, 1998)

6 Borderlessness here refers to the recently increased mobility of capital, goods, information, and people that characterizes globalization at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Mohanty, 2003).
neoliberalism” (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 330) in contemporary global capitalism and the existing power relations within the academy in the context of knowledge production (Mohanty, 2003). It acknowledges the concept of multiplicity in knowledges and aims to bring subjugated knowledges to the centre (Alexander, 2005). Olssen and Peters (2005) argue that neoliberal governmentality in the globalization context perpetuates universality of certain knowledges and affects higher education by removing autonomous space for research or teaching (see more details in Chapter 3). Subjugated knowledges become even more subjugated as different knowledges are hierarchized in the web of power, based on race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality dis/ability, and citizenship.

Maintaining a postmodern influence, the transnational feminist framework conceptualizes spaces as interconnected rather than binary (e.g. men/women, the local/the global, West/East, First world/Third World, tradition/modernity) and analyzes multiplicity and fluidity in group definitions such as “women” and “women of colour” (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Kim-Puri, 2005). This framework problematizes the ideology of universality or hierarchy in nations, knowledges, and people with different social locations and critiques superficial understandings of “difference and diversity.” The question of what is “women” is important. It allows us to see beyond a focus on relationships between men and women and to see how the power dynamic among “women” operates across the borders of race, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality (Mohanty, 2003; Shohat, 1998). The transnational feminist framework ruptures the reductionist nature of the West-centric view, which fails to acknowledge the heterogeneous and plural formations of economies, cultures, knowledges and populations such as women of colour, the poor and immigrants (Kim-Puri, 2005).

The transnational feminist framework is a conceptual approach that deals with issues emerging from the political, economic, social and cultural processes entrenched in the making and unmaking of nations and “other” bodies that do not fit the “national character” (Kim-Puri, 2005). Unlike internationalism or international feminism, transnational feminism considers nation-states to be a focus of analysis since they are large part of the global linkages as reflected in the national systems (Grewal & Kaplan,
Through the borderless movements of globalization, nation states are charged with screening goods and people based on their national agendas. Grewal and Kaplan (2000) emphasize that nationalism is not just patriarchal but also operates within the intersection of race, ethnicity and sexuality. The transnational feminist framework often poses the question, “Who is a citizen and who is not?” in nationalist discourses to examine how the concepts are put into practice.

For example, Alexander and Mohanty (1997), working from a transnational feminist perspective, problematize the imperial nature of the U.S. nation-state. They argue that the United States situates its “utmost citizens” as white, middle-class, heterosexual and masculine. The authors critique the dominant American political agenda that they argue is driven by a central ideology of economic expansion with its “colonial, imperial, sexist, and racist practices being obfuscated by the rhetoric and ideology of Democracy” (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, xxxi). They continue, “The ideology of freedom and Democracy works in such a way that the discourse of human rights is often invoked only when U.S. economic and political interests are at stake” (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, xxxi). Likewise, Bannerji (2000) critiques Canadian nationalism based on ideological rhetoric such as “multiculturalism,” stating:

Bilingualism, multiculturalism, tolerance of diversity and difference and slogans of unity cannot solve this problem of unequal power and exchange – except to entrench even further the social relations of power and their ideological and legal forms, which emanate from an unproblematiced Canadian state and essence.

(p.106)

Therefore, the nation-states are not neutral governmental bodies, but are very much involved in the political economy. A critical examination of the national agenda allows the researcher to look into the macropolitics as well as the micropolitics that are affected by the national systems and ideologies (Mohanty, 2003).

Furthermore, in order to be more specific about the transnational feminist approach, let me discuss three major points that are important in a transnational feminist analysis (see Kim-Puri, 2005).

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7 More specifically, Grewal and Kaplan (2000) differentiate internationalism from transnationalism, stating that “Internationalism as a concept is based on existing configurations of nation-states as discrete and sovereign entities” (Paragraph 3).
First, the transnational feminist framework takes into account both cultural and material discourses, which are interconnected, in its analysis of power dynamics in the global era. In other words, it emphasizes that a cultural analysis of power relations is not sufficient. Simultaneously, as Rizvi (2000) asserts, focusing solely on the economic dimensions of globalization does not allow one to fully understand the complexity of globalization. Instead, attention should be paid to how certain “cultural logics” emerged in relation to or affected historical, economic and political processes such as the unequal distribution of resources (Ong, 1999). Moreover, in specific contexts of power, cultural politics shape people’s motivations, desires and struggles and create regional hegemony that influences people’s physical and material conditions including their travel and migration patterns (Ong, 1999).

Culture refers to various everyday practices, based on certain value systems, such as “arts of description, communication, and representation” (Said, 1993, p.xii). As Said adds “culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society’s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought” (p.xiii). What is to be noted here is that culture is not independent from the economic, political or social power dynamics in the world (Hall, 1997). In this sense, “culture” is used to represent a society or a group of people and becomes a source of one’s identity as national or state character that “differentiates ‘us’ from ‘them,’ almost always with some degree of xenophobia” (Said, 1993, p.xiii). It is important to connect this notion of cultural politics to state ideologies that construct a homogenous picture of citizens. Lisa Lowe (1996) describes the political nature of culture and how it may be used to exclude certain people or used by others to (re)claim their subjectivities (see also Razack, 1998). A question of what aspect of cultural commodification gets utilized in what way, where and by whom leads us to see the complex entanglement of economic, political and social power dynamics instead of a unidirectional flow of force. I call this flexible context-dependent formula of culture “cultural logics” (see more in Chapter 7).

It is important to acknowledge the interconnectedness of cultural and material discourses in order to conduct analysis and research that is nonessentialist and non-binary in the postmodern critique of modernity (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). Along the same lines, Alexander and Mohanty (1997) emphasize that “the recent diffusion of Eurocentric
consumer culture in the wake of the further consolidation of multinational capital” has to be taken into consideration to theorize the unequal structure of values, desires and needs for different groups of women. They assert that “any understanding of women’s experiences based on a narrow conception of gender would simply be incapable of fully addressing the homogenizing and hierarchizing effects of economic and cultural processes which are the result of this consumer culture” (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, p. xvi). In other words, within the globalization of economy, which has direct influences on cultural processes, there are complex impacts on different populations not only based on gender but also on other markers of differences.

Second, as an extension of postcolonial studies, the transnational feminist framework highlights the importance of social structures and the powerful states that are modeled after empires, imperialisms, colonialism and nationalisms through gendered, sexualized and racialized imageries. Grewal and Kaplan (2000) state that their transnational feminism is rooted in postcolonial perspectives that look at new forms of colonialism that affect the condition of women and relations of gendered power. As Ng (1995) states, “it is through the process of colonization and nation building that we see how racism and sexism became crystallized as systems of domination and subordination” (p. 133). Western nation-states such as the U.S., Canada and Australia are white settler societies that arose from the colonization of native lands and peoples. Social, political and cultural rights (e.g. immigration laws) may sometimes be a reflection of racial discrimination against non-white immigrants, including Asians (Ang, 2001; Lowe, 1996; see also Immigration history in Canada in the next section). Bannerji (2000) also interrogates “multiculturalism” as an “ideological state apparatus” of Canada that is manipulated for the state’s ideological and socio-economic interests. She argues that it actually masks and even perpetuates racialization of culture and people based on its elite governing of the state. Bannerji states:

If we consider this official or elite multiculturalism as an ideological state apparatus we can see it as a device for constructing and ascribing political subjectivities and agencies for those who are seen as legitimate and full citizens and others who are peripheral to this in many senses. There is in this process an element of racialized ethnicization, which whitens North Americans of European origins and blackens or darkens their “others” by the same stroke. (p.6)
Moreover, the economic and cultural imperialism perpetuated by globalization has exacerbated migrations of different populations and created “a space of complicated entanglement, of togetherness-in-difference” (Ang, 2001, p.5). Mohanty (2003) draws connections between the borderless nature of globalization and the consequent unequal distribution of resources. At the same time, globalization has further influenced nationalist discourses that have racialized, gendered and sexualized the question of citizenship and constructed “citizens” as legitimate while “immigrants/others” are seen to be illegitimate (Bannerji, 2000; Dua, 2003; Thobani, 2007).

The third key point in the transnational feminist framework is the site of analysis in the linkage across cultural contexts, which draws attention to various forms of border crossings including conceptual, temporal, bureaucratic, geopolitical, geographical, economic, cultural identity and disciplinary (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997; Kelly, 2003; Kim-Puri, 2005; Mayuzumi, 2005). Grewal and Kaplan (2000) emphasize that looking at various forms of movement and displacement in the modern world (e.g. immigration, forced removals, diasporas, travel for educational or corporate needs) has allowed them to analyze how inequalities of class, gender, nationality, sexuality, and ethnicity operate since these inequalities emerged and developed through movement and displacement. In his article on Canadian-Asian transnationalism and issues affecting Asian immigrants in Canada, Kelly (2003) focuses on the interdependent relationship between Canada and Asia and how it shapes policymaking in both regions. He also asserts that nation-states must be the focus of analysis with respect to migration. As formation of identity is also social and political, this border crossing also very much influences identity politics or “cultural citizenship.” Ong (1996) sheds light on the concept of “cultural citizenship” as subject making that becomes clearer through the crossing of borders:

I use “cultural citizenship” to refer to the cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging within a national population and territory. Cultural citizenship is a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society. Becoming a citizen depends on how one is constituted as a subject who exercises or submits to power relations. (p.738)

For example, Alexander and Mohanty (1997) eloquently state, “We were not born women of color, but became women of color here [in the U.S.]” (p. xiv). These words
resonate deeply with how I felt when I came from Japan to North America, where I became an “Asian woman” and where my negotiation of subject making continues to this day. Nealon and Giroux (2003) point out that “identity, ..., presupposes a process of recognition, and that recognition takes place among a series of differences” that are also “cultural categories of recognition within which our specific identities are located and negotiated” (p.51). Subject making is a process of identifying the “subject” as different from the “self.” While the “subject” refers to the relations with its surroundings and external forces, the “self” tends to focus on exclusively internal elements that are separate from the external although not entirely (Nealon & Giroux, 2003). With a reference to Ong’s above quote on cultural citizenship being “a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society,” I also add, when I use “subject” making, self making and being made are often non-distinguishable but overlap in many ways. Taking the context of webs of power into consideration leads me to use the term “subject making” rather than “self making”.

Therefore, the space of subject making in border crossings must be the site of analysis. The framework underscores the role of empirical research and sheds light on cultural, material, structural and historical forces (Kim-Puri, 2005). It is grounded in an epistemology that involves looking at people’s everyday lives as being embedded within the web of power, including economics, politics and culture (see Appadurai, 1996; Smith, 1987). Theory is not static and cannot be separated from the personal as it is constructed through experiences and knowledges in different collective spheres. These experiences and knowledges must be interrogated as a part of history (Mohanty, 2003). Hence, the specific experiences of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy are important as their subject making processes help us see by what kind of forces and discourses they are surrounded daily; these are explored through narratives in my thesis study.

The next section, following the framework, will examine the concept of “Asians” and “Asian women” that was a construct of imperial history as well as a reflection of contemporary discourses on the population within transnational contexts.
3. Contextualizing “Asians” and “Asian Women”

The definition of “Asia” or “Asians” is not fixed, but is adapted to the given context. The definition of “Asian” differs depending on the group or the individual in question\(^8\).

Therefore, in my research, I do not mean to define “Asia,” but rather to analyze the issues that accompany the notion of “Asia” and “Asians” through a historical overview, the chosen theoretical lens and my personal background. Even though the group should not be viewed as homogenous, the reality is that so many people are categorized as “Asian” within a certain system of “Asian” identification that the history has created and molded, which penetrates their everyday socialization and identity politics, especially in the West (Ang, 2001, Lowe, 1996). This section aims to interrogate the inequity and social injustice of this colonial history\(^9\) and the specific discourses that have been created regarding those identified as Asians. As mentioned earlier, my usage of the term “Asia” will become more specific as my analysis proceeds on Asian women faculty and the political and social context of higher education in Canada. Here in this section, in order to set the scene for the chapters to come and as its importance was also derived from the theoretical framework, I extend the conceptual framework to the context of “Asians and “Asian women” in North America, which includes: Immigration history in Canada – Asian exclusion and Orientalist discourses on Asians and Asian women. The historical view of Asians in Canada will also reveal how the discourses on “Asians” have developed and operated within Canadian white settler society.

3.1 Immigration history in Canada – Asian exclusion

Today, the stereotype of who is and is not Canadian works to reinforce the historical process by which indigenous, mixed race, African-Canadians, Asian-Canadians, Arab-Canadians, and others have been marginalized from Canadian society, as it obscures the history of colonialism, settlement, immigration, and citizenship policies that ensured the racialization and gendering of twentieth century Canada. (Dua, 1999a, p.7)

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\(^8\) There are different meanings of “Asia” depending on one’s location. For example, in UK, the dominant discourse of “Asia” assumes that Asians are “South Asians” in the North American sense of the term, meaning people from the former British colony of India.

\(^9\) I acknowledge that my historical examination tends to focus on Chinese and Japanese populations, not other Asian groups.
As Dua explains above, the ideology of “Canadianness” as normality and “Asians” as (illegitimate) immigrants can be traced to the colonial history of Canada. In particular, immigration has been central to Canada’s process of nation building, with Asian exclusion representing a significant part of its history (Li, 2003; Park, 2007; Thobani, 2007), as in the case of U.S. immigration history/attitudes (Lee, 2005; Lowe, 1996; Ngai, 2004). In the beginning of the 20th century, the Asian exclusion through implementation of immigrant policies was part of the agenda of the national unification that stemmed from white supremacy (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998). Despite their significant contribution to economic and social development in various parts of Canada, Asians as non-whites were considered to be “socially questionable and racially undesirable” (Li, 2003, p.19). Only in the 1960s was a non-explicitly-racist set of admission criteria adopted (Arat-Koc, 1999; Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998; Li, 2003).

Between 1858 and 1923, it is estimated that 83,000 Chinese people migrated to Canada (Satzewich, 1993). Due to shortages of labour, an estimated 15,000 Chinese labours were brought to Canada to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway during the 1880s (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998, p.94). From the beginning of the Chinese arrival, there appeared groups of people who were anti-Chinese occasionally attacking neighbouring Chinese work gangs. In response to the anti-Chinese movement, Prime Minister Macdonald emphasized that Canada needed the labour to build the railway and that nothing could be done until its completion. This statement suggests that the Chinese labourers were sought out and retained only for the sake of the national infrastructure projects, and were unwelcome with regards to permanent settlement (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998). In fact, in the year when the Railway was completed in 1885, “the Parliament of Canada passed an act to restrict and regulate Chinese immigration and to impose a head tax of $50 on practically every Chinese who came to Canada” (Li, 2003, p.18), which was raised to $100 in 1899.

By the turn of the century, despite the small percentage of immigrants to Canada who were Asian10, controversy broke out regarding Asian immigration, especially on the

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10 For example, between 1900 and 1915, government reports showed that more than 50,000 immigrants of Chinese, Japanese and East Indian descent arrived in Canada, which was less than 2 per cent of the total immigration flow (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998)
In 1903, the head tax was raised from $100 to $500. In the 1890s, there were numerous complaints against Japanese immigrants in the fishing industry because of the racist stereotypes against Japanese and the fear of Japanese taking over the industry. In 1907, when Canada encountered a sudden, though rather short, economic depression, unemployment grew and public demands for a more racially selective policy increased. In the same year, the government imposed landing-money requirements on East Indians, increased the head tax on Chinese immigrants, and negotiated an agreement with Japan to limit the immigration of its nationals (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998).

Asians’ racial, ethnic and cultural differences were perceived as a sign of unassimilability and undesirableness for a white nation-state aiming to preserve Anglo-Canadian cultural norms and values. A quote from The Canada Year Book (1930) articulates the racial and ethnic stratification of preferences in different populations at that time:

> [P]referable settlers are those who speak the English language – those coming from the United Kingdom and the United States. Next in order of readiness of assimilation are the Scandinavians and the Dutch, who readily learn English and are already acquainted with the working of free democratic institutions. Settlers from Southern and Eastern Europe, however desirable from a purely economic point of view, are less readily assimilated, and the Canadianizing of the people from these regions who have come to Canada in the present century is a problem both in the agricultural Prairie Provinces and in the cities of the East. Less assimilable still, according to the general opinion of Canadians, are those who come to Canada from the Orient. (as cited in Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998, p. 210)

The racist stereotypes characterizing both Chinese and Japanese were: unclean, dishonest, immoral and totally incapable of integrating within the larger community (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998).

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11 The racial tension that stemmed from Chinese migration to British Colombia was not limited to the binary of ‘Asian’ and ‘white.’ Mawani (2007) argues that the arrival of Chinese migrants to the West Coast from the late 1800s onwards “unsettled the region’s racial topography” (paragraph 5). In her article, Mawani points out that Chinese immigrants became a threat for the state’s effort to “improve” and “assimilate” the Aboriginal population into the white settlers society. Chinese were labeled as dangerous, cunning, and unassimilatable enough to even corrupt Aboriginal peoples through the sale of liquor, for example. She continues, “Chinese migration to British Columbia, I argue, forced colonial agents to redraw boundaries between Aboriginal peoples and Euro-Canadians in ways that generated new meanings of racial difference and new constellations of racism” (paragraph 5).
Moreover, anti-Asian antagonism also stemmed from economic situations of the emerging industrial capitalist system, specifically, competition in the labour market. Trade-unionists claimed that Asian immigrants were also a menace to the aspirations of white workers, who also had a fear of Asian workers who were willing to work for less (Goutor, 2007; Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998). Ironically, the cheap labour provided by the Chinese population was enabled by the fact that Chinese men had to be separated from their families who were back in China, as opposed to white men who had families to feed and support in Canada. Chinese labourers were forced to live separately from their families due to the concern about an overflow in migration of Chinese wage labourers and Chinese women based on the perception that the reconstitution of Chinese families in Canada would threaten the stability of the nation-state. It was seen as necessary to control the migration of Chinese women specifically, which was considered to threaten white settler society by multiplying the number of Asians on Canadian soil (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Satzewich, 1993; see also Uchida, 1998). In general, Chinese labourers were labeled as “too competitive and ruthless” and a threat to the white working class (Goutor, 2007; Satzewich, 1989).

Economic and social aspects were not separate but intertwined. The jealousy and complaints against Asian workers perpetuated racist and sexist stereotypes about Asian populations. For example, Goutor (2007) notes:

Labour leaders also contributed to the image of Chinatowns as rife with drug use, gambling, and prostitution. The Chinese were also regularly portrayed as sexual predators who sought to take advantage of white women. In the early twentieth century, unionists were key parts of successful efforts to lobby the provincial governments of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario to enact laws prohibiting ‘Orientals’ from employing white women. (p.556)

As women are usually portrayed as property of the nation (Loomba, 1998, McClintock, 1995; Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999), white women in Canada were also “racially

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12 Due to the notion of women as “biological and cultural reproducers,” historically the white nation did not welcome women of colour to immigrate to the country as they were threats to the white settler society (Arat-Koc, 1999). However, initially during the late nineteenth century, there was also at least another reason for Chinese women staying behind in China that is due to the pressure from the Chinese society with the male-dominated family clan and Confucianism (Guo, 1992).

13 In nationalist discourses of women, women have been a symbolic representation of nations and lands. Women have thus become a cultural symbol located between modernity and tradition, as associated with
gendered” (Dua, 1999b, p.255) as being the property of white men and it was the responsibility of the white nation-state to protect them (see Collins, 1999). The bottom line was that “politics of racial purity” restricted Asian men from getting into familial relations with women of European descent (Dua, 1999b, p. 245). In other words, creating and promoting the image of Asian men as invaders of their property was like pouring fuel onto the fire - an effective way of triggering further hostility towards Chinese men. In contrast, Dua (1999b) adds important information to this context by pointing out that the forced conditions of Asian men being in bachelor societies made the “demand for a ‘family’ become a central issue in communities of colour” (p.245).

Moreover, there was a racist and sexist stereotype of Chinese women who came to Canada during the 19th century. The few Chinese women in Canada were perceived as “prostitutes” by the larger society. Media contributed to the distorted image of Chinese women by emphasizing the exotic image of the Chinese women and exaggerating the malevolence of the Chinese community (Guo, 1992). Women’s organizations such as the Women’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Church also shared a distorted view of Chinese women. They felt an urgent need to “rescue” the Chinese women and founded “the Chinese Rescue Home in 1886 to provide a safe refuge for prostitutes and mui tsai who were indentured servants often referred to as ‘slave girls’ by white writers” (Guo, 1992, p.19).

Under the legislation of Mackenzie King, who advocated “effective restriction,” the exclusion of “Oriental” immigrants became quite explicit. In 1923, a revised Chinese Immigration Act was passed which effectively put an end to Chinese immigration to Canada for over 20 years. Unless they were in certain positions (e.g. merchants, students, and diplomats), Chinese were prohibited from landing in Canada and naturalization became exceedingly difficult (Guo, 1992; Kelley & Treiblcock, 1998). Despite being

women’s familial roles (e.g. “the Nation-as-Mother” (Loomba, 1998, p.216), mothers of the nation by reproducing future generations, and as a source to be controlled for civilization of the nation or land (e.g. “virgin” land to be penetrated (McClintock, 1995)). This nationalist discourse of women also played a significant role in the racialization of space (Loomba, 1998; McClintock, 1995; Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999). Thobani (2007) argues that in Canada during the 19th and early 20th centuries, white women who considered themselves as “the ‘Foremothers’ of a great nation” shared the goal of white men to “keep Canada white” (p.84-85).
more diplomatic with Japan because of their economic and World War I relationships\textsuperscript{14}, Canada imposed tight restrictions on both Chinese and Japanese immigrants, largely in response to white public demand.

Consequently, the life of Asian immigrants in Canada was affected by these unwelcoming policies based on stereotypes of Asian populations. Chinese and Japanese persons were denied political autonomy by being removed from the voters’ list in the late 1800s in British Columbia (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998, p.144). Many Chinese wives and children were separated from their husbands and fathers for prolonged periods due to Asian exclusion in Canadian immigration policy while British and European male migrants were encouraged to sponsor their wives and children (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Dua, 1999b). Even the small number of Chinese women\textsuperscript{15} had to face an unfamiliar environment with lack of support or networks. Their lack of English skills also prevented them from interacting with the larger community (Guo, 1992). Chinese women in Canada were forced to deal with “the double burden of racism and sexism in a white and male-dominated society” (Guo, 1992, p.20). Limited for the Asian population were educational opportunities, jobs and housing. In the early 1900s, racism forced Asian populations to stay away from wage labour except for domestic jobs such as cooks and houseboys. Therefore, Chinese men more commonly worked in restaurants, laundries, grocery stores, coal mines, or on farms. In the family businesses, women were always seen working side-by-side with their husbands or fathers while still being in charge of raising their large families (Guo, 1992). Naturalization was made more difficult for people from the “Orient” than for other immigrants, especially around the Depression years. Without naturalization, not only did they lack voting rights but they also had to face possible deportation. The use of deportation was common practice for decades as a means of removing recipients of public assistance and political/labour activists from the country (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998, p.227).

\textsuperscript{14} By 1925, Japan was the sixth most important trading partner for Canada. In addition, during the first World War, Japan had been an ally of Canada’s and played an important role in protecting Canada from German invasion (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998, p.204).

\textsuperscript{15} A few documents remain that describe the difficult lives of the small number of Chinese women in Canada in the 1800s, as well as wives who were left back in China (Guo, 1992; Woon, 2007).
It was around the turn of the century when the derogatory term *Yellow Peril* became actively used in both the U.S. and Canada\(^\text{16}\) to express the fear that Asian immigrants may take over the country. In Canada, it was expressed by those who felt economically and culturally threatened by Chinese and Japanese immigrants when the group population increased in the beginning of the 20\(^\text{th}\) century.

Asian exclusion as justified by agendas of economic prosperity (with a low unemployment rate for white Canadians) and national unity lasted till the World War II era. Once World War II began, Japan became the image of *Yellow Peril* as a growing international threat to Western nations including Canada. The internment of people of Japanese descent became the most massive forced relocation of any group in Canadian history. Over 22,000 people of Japanese origin were removed from their homes along the coastal regions of British Columbia. Canada’s wartime treatment of “aliens” was justified under the notion of “national security” and racism became more pervasive (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998; Thobani, 2007). Thobani (2007) reminds us of that the internment of the population had actually been preceded by “decades of popular political mobilizing against their access to fishing licenses, their ownership of land, and their access to employment and educational opportunities” (p. 94). In the same line of thought, Kelley and Trebilcock (1998) state that “the war ignited deep prejudices against those of Japanese ancestry that had been smouldering in British Columbia since the turn of the century” (p. 255; see also Thobani, 2007, p. 94). Thobani (2007) adds an interesting point to the meaning of the internment in that many organizations including women’s and workers’ fought together for exclusion of Japanese-Canadians, revealing “a race alliance forged across class and gender lines” (p. 296). Many of these stereotypes became deeply rooted in the dominant discourse over decades and began to influence socially structural stratification.

After World War II, the exclusionary nature of immigration policies gradually became less acceptable in the public eye. The major characteristics of Canada’s postwar treatment of aliens are two-fold. One involved the significant economic boom that

\(^{16}\) In order to make sense of the increasing Chinese population in late 1800s, Canadian authorities borrowed racial formulas from the United States and formed new racial epistemologies and points of comparison in the process (Mawani, 2007)
created new job opportunities. Due to low birth rates during the Depression and war years, Canada needed more labourers and, consequently, allowed in more diverse groups of immigrants than before. The second characteristic of Canada after World War II was its active participation in world affairs. For example, Canada played a prominent role in U.N. peacekeeping efforts throughout the 1950s. This phenomenon also led the general public “to favour a selectively more open immigration policy” (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998, p.312).

However, Asian exclusion was persistent, as evident in the speech made by Prime Minister Mackenzie King in 1947:

The policy of the Government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration. The government will seek … to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy… I wish to make it quite clear that Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens. It is not a ‘fundamental human right’ of any alien to enter Canada. It is a privilege. It is a matter of domestic policy…. The people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population …. Any considerable Oriental immigration would … be certain to give rise to social and economic problems. (as cited in Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998, p.312, emphasis added)

The Chinese Immigration Act was repealed in 1947, yet Chinese immigration continued to be subject to an order-in-council, a type of legislation that mostly restricted Asian immigrants to close relatives of sponsoring Canadian citizens (see also Li, 2003).

In the 1960s, there was a major change in immigration policies under certain circumstances in Canada. Until near the end of the 1963-1976 period, strong postwar economic conditions continued to prevail in Canada. The demand for immigration of skilled labour increased just like other Western nations including the U.S. In other words, the number of immigrants as skilled labour from Europe decreased and many skilled labourers started emigrating to the U.S. from Canada. Canada was thus under pressure to attract skilled labour from around the world (Li, 2003). In addition, during the 1960s, there was an increased social and political commitment to concepts of equality and non-discrimination. As a consequence, between 1962 and 1967, the explicitly racist nature of restrictions was removed from immigration regulations. However, this racial discrimination did not immediately disappear. There was still a backlash against the
racially nondiscriminatory nature of immigration policy legislation. For example, in 1962, Deputy Minister of Immigration, Dr. Davidson, expressed the concern that complete equal opportunity for everyone including “Japanese, Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, Africans, persons from the Arab world, the West Indies and so forth” would result in “a substantially larger number of unskilled close relatives from these parts of the world” adding to “the influx of unskilled close relatives from Europe” (as cited in Li, 2003, p.24). The 1962 immigration regulations still restricted the range of immigrant sponsorship for non-Europeans or non-Americans while allowing individuals with educational qualifications and technical skills to immigrate to Canada.

The 1967 immigration regulations, which began a universal point system of assessment, reflected Canada’s continued attempt to compete for skilled labour around the world. With the democratization of the process of policy formulation, these revised regulations yielded high levels of immigration for most of the period and an increasingly more diverse composition in the immigrant intake. In the late 1960s, the proportion of immigrants coming from Asia and the Caribbean increased dramatically. By 1976, more than a quarter of all arriving immigrants were Asian in origin (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998). Between 1979 and 2000, more than half of the increased total number of immigrants admitted were from Asia (Li, 2003). Li points out that, historically, Canada had been dependent on “Oriental” labour through their contribution to the development of major industries and megaprojects in Western Canada.

Even in the 1990s, despite the fact that the overt discrimination against people of colour had been removed from immigration laws, Dua (1999b) claims that critics of Canadian immigration policies pointed out that Asian and other migrants were discouraged from sponsoring their family members, who would be subjected to more requirements and barriers such as extremely long waits, more official documents to submit for proving their status, and higher chances of being interviewed. In addition to being restricted from having their lives in families, they were also systemically encouraged to present their family structures as nuclear (and heterosexual) due to immigration policies that only allowed them to sponsor one wife and only their biological children under 18 years old (Dua, 1999b). Dua contests the politics behind the policies
saying “they (the immigration policies) are designed to impose monogamous relationships and to stop the practice of extended families” (1999b, p. 245).

In 2001, there was a major change in immigration regulations as the Parliament of Canada passed a new immigration bill (Bill C-11), entitled the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. There are at least a couple of major characteristics in the new immigration policy that relate to objectives of admitting immigrants and refugees respectively. According to Statistics Canada (2001), one of the objectives for the immigration program was “to permit Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration” and another objective was “to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society” (as cited in Li, 2003, p.26). This rhetoric of cultural “diversity” and “multiculturalism” had existed in parallel with the relevant federal policies such as the Employment Equity Act of 1986 and the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act as Bill C-93.

Canada declared multiculturalism as an official state policy in 1971, partly in response to claims made by people of European origin other than English and French for their own cultural identities to be represented in the nation. It was a token initiative of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1960s (Li, 2003; Haque, 2010; Satzewich & Liodakis, 2007) and had little to do with increasing the visible minority population that was not seen as conspicuous until the late 1970s and 1980s (Li, 2003). Since then, multiculturalism has been politicized and criticized because it has promoted the conformity of immigrants’ lives to “founding” groups of Canada (i.e. British and French) rather than allowing them to conduct their own cultural behaviour in the public sphere (Li, 2003; Haque, 2010). Another critique is that a policy like multiculturalism has been used as a state symbol that actually masks the inequity that exists deep inside based on race and ethnicity (Bannerji, 2000; Satzewich & Liodaks, 2007). In fact, in the 1980s, multiculturalism as a policy drew the attention of proponents of a market-oriented perspective in the global market. Satzewich and Liodakis (2007) point out that “cultural pluralism, and the image of Canada as an equal, tolerant, and fair society, was therefore defined by the 1980s Conservative government as an asset within the emerging global economy” (p.126; see also Moodley, 1983; Thobani, 2007). In addition, multiculturalism as an ideology was utilized for construction, unification and legitimization of
“Canadians.” On the other hand, “this centrality [of multiculturalism] is dependent on our ‘difference,’ which denotes the power of definition that ‘Canadians’ have over ‘others’” (Bannerji, 2000, p.96). Despite the fact that multiculturalism policy has been perceived by many people (mostly of the dominant population) to be one of Canada’s most significant achievements, it has also been a space of criticism against the nation-state by a number of critical thinkers, especially anti-racist scholars, who find it superficial and liberal in nature (e.g. Bannerji, 2000; Li, 2003; Thobani, 2007).

Regarding the economic benefits of immigration for Canada, the outstanding element of the point system updated in 2002 is the greater emphasis on desirable immigrants as adaptable human capital in the context of global competition for skilled labour. Those considered “desirable” in the point system included well-educated immigrants aged 21-49, proficient in an official language, and holding close ties to Canada through their experiences, education and family. Li (2003) argues that Canada wanted immigrants with flexible skills rather than for specific job demands in order to meet the changing needs and labour demands of Canada’s increasingly globalized economy.

In summary, Canadian history reveals that Canada’s process of nation building has stemmed from its history of immigration. The legislation of immigration regulations has acted as gatekeeper of who was allowed or welcome into the nation-state and who might be considered “undesirable.” It is important to note that the criteria of gate keeping were mainly two fold: economic development of the nation-state and social and cultural purity of “Canadianness” that was grounded in whiteness and Eurocentrism. Li (2003) claims that “the predominance of European settlement throughout the history of Canada has also given the nation a strong European tradition, in ethnic identity, culture, and ideology” (p.36-37; see also Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002). Looking at such thorough and deep Asian exclusion entangled with race, class and gender tensions in Canadian immigration history, we see how the discourse around Asians is strongly embedded in its history and the rhetoric and that identity of “Canadians” and “Asians” are interdependent through the construction of these social categories.
3.2 Orientalist discourses on Asians and Asian women

The Asian population in Canada today is still subject to discourses that define immigrants in complex ways (see Li, 2003; Miedema & Tastsoglou, 2000). Li (2003) points out that one of the dominant beliefs about “immigrants” is that their success or failure is evaluated relative to what (white) native-born Canadians think and do. Therefore, “assessments of immigrants are influenced by how the notion of immigrants is socially constructed” (Li, 2003, p.39) within the dominant discourses of “Canadianness.” With the increased number of non-white immigrants in recent decades, as well as the notion of non-white immigrants being “too culturally and normatively removed from mainstream Canadians of European origin, the term “immigrants” has increasingly assumed a folk meaning that associates it with newcomers from a different racial and cultural background” (Li, 2003, p.44).

Thus we observe how the term “immigrants” has been racialized (Das Gupta, 1999; Folson, 2004; Li, 2003; Ng, 1996). The rapid growth of non-white immigrants to Canada after the 1960s placed some pressure on Canada to address racial and cultural diversity. This group of non-white immigrants was seen as a social problem to be dealt with by the long-term residents of Canada. The urban problems of housing, transportation, neighbourhoods, schools, and public services were largely seen to have been caused by non-white newcomers. The dominant discourse on non-white immigrants was that it was difficult and costly to integrate their linguistic and cultural differences within mainstream society. Media also promoted negative images of non-white immigrants (Li, 2003). In other words, “over time, the folk meaning of immigrants assumes a negative connotation that applies mainly to non-white newcomers who are seen as altering the racial composition of immigration, and in turn, changing the racial composition of traditional Canada” (Li, 2003, p.46). This discourse of “who is a (legitimate) Canadian?” is reflected in the question I often get asked, which is “where are you ORIGINALLY from?” I am asked this question both inside and outside Canada.

The other major characteristic that identifies “immigrants” is the language one speaks. In other words, inability to speak perfect “Canadian English” complements the non-white skin colour of the person well enough to fit into the perfect image of
“immigrants” (Miedema & Tastoglou, 2000). Language issues are discussed further in Chapter 6.

Asians are also often referred to as “Oriental,” which derives from the fundamental notion of “Orient/Oriental” as a European construct of Otherness that some key authors have discussed. Edward Said (1979) in Orientalism argues that the Orient is a term to refer to “one of its (Europe’s) deepest and most recurring images of the Other” (p.1) and is an idea that has helped the West to define themselves as the Occident, “its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (p.2). In her book, Colonial fantasies: Towards a feminist reading of Orientalism, Yegenoglu (1998) centres a notion of desire in the Orientalist discourses and adds “the gender ‘variable’ to the accounts of Orientalism” (p.1). She emphasizes that “we need to examine closely how the discursive constitution of Otherness is achieved simultaneously through sexual as well as cultural modes of differentiation” (p.2).

While Said and Yegenoglu refer to Middle Eastern women and Muslim women respectively as Oriental women, Uchida (1998) argues that nowadays the Oriental woman, within the context of the United States, refers to an Asian woman. Uchida notes that the “Oriental woman” not only signifies geographical and cultural markers of “the Other” but also signals racial, sexual and gender dimensions of Asian women (p.161-162). Uchida clarifies her usage of Oriental Woman and Asian women; the first refers to the images and stereotypes of the population and the latter refers to “the actual women who are objectified through Orientalization,” by which she means the process of “the rhetoric [being] embedded in this objectification of Asian women as Oriental women” (p.162). While the term “Asian” could sound apolitical or neutral, it is not. It is important to unmask the images and stereotypes of Asians and Asian women that are tied into Orientalist history and discourses. The Asian context of Orientalism (Yoshihara, 2004) or Orientalization (Uchida, 1998) becomes clearer in the following discussion on Orientalist discourses of Asians.

Examining “Asians” in historical and contemporary discourses allows us to see power dynamics that impact the Asian population, particularly in the West. I was once surprised to see that a racially minoritized woman with whom I was speaking referred to another Asian person by calling her “Oriental” and stretching her eyes with her fingers to
show the Asian’s “Oriental” facial features. As an Asian woman, I felt insulted, othered, objectified and puzzled. This was one of many times Asians have been categorized by their “Oriental” features, including “those with a single eye fold” (Ang, 2001, p. 13). This degrading stereotype based on appearance is reflected in a comment by Loti, who described Japanese women in 1920 as a “tiny personage with narrow eyes and no brains” (as cited in Hsia & Scanzoni, 1996, p.309). In these narratives, Asia/Asians become gendered, sexualized, racialized and disabled images (Ang, 2001; Lowe, 1996). The “West” as a white hegemonic presence in the world also reinforces the juxtaposition of “Asia” as “non-West” and “Asians” as “non-Westerner / non-white” (Ang, 2001) and “a generalized Other to Europeans, who see ‘Asian-ness’ as a strange and exotic way of being, eliciting both desire and fear” (Jo-Anne Lee, 2006, p.23; see also Marchetti, 1993).

As discussed earlier, the Orientalist fear of Asians in the West was illustrated in the term, Yellow Peril. This term was used to describe a fear of Chinese and Japanese people who were attempting to immigrate into the U.S. and Canada in the late 1800s and who were seen as invading the labour market and white “civilization” (Kawai, 2005; Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998; Marchetti, 1993; Shim, 1998). The changes in national legislation, such as immigration acts and enfranchisement, over time show non-whites, including Asians, as unwanted or illegitimate populations vis-à-vis nation-states such as the U.S. (Lowe, 1996), Canada (Dua, 2003) and Australia (Ang, 2001), despite their significant labour contributions. This fear of aliens has been reflected through history, especially when Eastern power became a threat to the West/white cultures (e.g WWII, Asian rise to economic power in the 1980s and 1990s) (Kawai, 2005; Shim, 1998). This fear of aliens is still reflected in the contemporary discourse of “too many Asians” (Ang, 2001, p.113). When I was still new to Canada as an international student, my white host family member who was giving me a tour of the neighbourhood said, “Those houses in this developed region are all occupied by people from Hong Kong.” I remember how she expressed to me her disappointment that the neighbourhood was being taken over by newcomers and therefore losing the nostalgia of the “good old days” without implicating white settlers in the colonization of Aboriginal people.

Orientalist discourses about Asia or Asians have also been entrenched in Western media and popular opinion. They create stereotypes of Asia or the “East” as feminine
while the “West” is seen as masculine (Yegenoglu, 1998), with Asians being submissive, subservient and eroticised (Prasso, 2005; Shim, 1998). Shim (1998) points out that sexual images of “Asians” that emerged in the West are distorted, asserting that “these exotic stories [set up in the East in the colonial era] incited Westerners to seek colonial adventures, equating Asian women with the Asian continent” (p. 389). Through these depictions, the East/Asia becomes feminized when it is desired (Ang, 2001; Chang, 2000; Marchetti, 1993; Shim, 1998, Yegenoglu, 1998). Interestingly, Asians themselves have tried to please the “superior” Westerners by adhering to such stereotypes based on desirable images of the East (Yoshihara, 2004). The desires for the East have also been explicated by Yoshihara (2003) who looks into the discourses reflected in various literature of the early 1900s.

Comparing dominant Western discourses on Asian women and men, Shim (1998) argues that Asian men are considered to be asexual while Asian women are sexualized (also see Jo-Anne Lee, 2006; Prasso, 2005). The feminized and desired images of Asia in Western media are associated with Asian women. In films, Asian women become sexual targets for white men who can protect them from dangerous Asian gangs (Marchetti, 1993; Shim, 1998). The dominant images of Asian women depict them as petite, cute, submissive, and non-threatening (Chang, 2000; Shrake, 2006). Arisaka (2000) points out that Asian women are perceived as doubly submissive because they are both Asian and female. In order to be accepted by the West, Asian women have to fit the stereotypes by smiling, not complaining, and bringing benefits to the Western nation - and never threatening white people (Ang, 2001; Shrake, 2006).

It is also important to note the historical and contemporary relations and tensions between white women and Asian women. Jo-Anne Lee (2006) points out the contrasts as viewed through a dominant white heterosexual masculinist lens. She states:

In the self/Other dialectic, racialized sexist constructions of the Oriental woman help to form the social identities of White Canadian women by constructing White women as innocent, pure, and in need of protection by White males as a contrast to the immoral, impure, hypersexualized, and uncivilized Oriental woman. (p.25; see also the earlier section of immigration history)

In addition, there are some scholars who have looked into how Asians have historically been placed in the Oriental discourses by white women. Yoshihara (2003), in her book
Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism, interrogates how white women were also implicated in the formation of American Orientalism that exoticizes and objectifies “Asianness.” Moreover, some Western feminist scholars research and write about Asian women who must be rescued from patriarchy without making any observations of power dynamics between the researcher and the researched (Mayuzumi, 2006). Similarly, Mohanty (2003) argues that dominant Western feminist writing about Third World women is often under the presumption that all women are located in a homogenized category through a “global sisterhood” ideology. Mohanty (2003) notes that “since no connections are made between First and Third World power shifts, the assumption is reinforced that the Third World just has not evolved to the extent that the West has” (p.40). Likewise, Minh-ha (1989) states, “one invokes them (the masses) and pretends to write on their behalf when one wishes to give weight to one’s undertaking or to justify it” (p.13). In short, Orientalist gazes within Western feminist discourses have therefore also played a role in constituting the imagery of Asian women.

In addition to the feminization of Asian stereotypes, the “model minority” stereotype that first appeared in the 1960s is also frequently used to refer to Asians’ ability to gain social mobility in the West while maintaining industrious, quiet and docile characteristics. The term “model minority” sounds like a positive phrase, but it is a form of racism akin to the Yellow Peril stereotype (Kawai, 2005).

People of Asian descent become the model minority when they are depicted to do better than other racial minority groups, whereas they become the yellow peril when they are described to outdo White Americans… [I]t is possible to think that the construction of the model minority stereotype is tied to creating a less threatening face of the yellow peril. (Kawai, 2005; p. 115)

Both stereotypes that seem to have opposite meanings actually serve the same purpose, which is to protect the white population from Asians as well as other minority groups (Kawai, 2005; Park, 1997; Shim, 1998).

All of these stereotypes operate as a mechanism whereby the nation-state maintains its dominance over its population rooted in imperialist, colonialist and nationalist power relations. In other words, the concept of “Asianness” and the imagery of being an Asian woman in the West are not only embodied by the individual but are shaped by the relations with the nation-state and other institutional structures, as well as
by race, gender, class and culture. All these relations are intertwined in discourses on Asian women, who have motivations, desires and struggles in their everyday practices and subject-making processes through “embodiments and enactments of norms, values, and conceptual schemes about time, space, and social order” (Ong, 1999, p. 5).

4. Conclusion
In this chapter, I have presented my interpretation of the transnational feminist framework that forms the basis of the epistemology I use to examine how the academic space is experienced by Asian women faculty. Based on this framework, I have also brought forward a historical overview on Asian populations in Canada by paying close attention to its nation-building processes as well as the contemporary public discourse about Asian women constructed through historical and cultural processes. These parts of the chapter lay the groundwork, which is specific for a discussion of “Asian women” in Canada, as it is also connected to the formation of the Canadian nation-state. The transnational feminist framework has allowed me to explore the concrete historical line of “Asians” or “Asian women” in Canada and its connection to and reflection in the contemporary Orientalist discourse of Asian women.

While Asian women faculty may also share similar obstacles (e.g. racism and sexism) with other minority groups, the transnational feminist framework permits an examination of how such obstacles have been created and maintained through specific historical contexts and emergent stereotypes (e.g. yellow peril, model minority) in the construction of what is “Asian.” If the minority has been seen as a monolithic group despite multiple historical backgrounds, it would be difficult to see the intersection of where the hegemony emerges from and how it has spread. This research is not meant to focus on the homogeneity of Asians, but rather to draw attention to the heterogeneity of minority groups.

Following from this discussion of the marginality of Asian women in Canadian history and the contemporary discourse on the population, as well as an elucidation of the transnational feminist framework, the following chapters will shed light on the subject making of Asian women faculty in contemporary Canada. Questions (or subquestions of the overriding questions mentioned in Chapter 1) that will be raised include: How does their subject making take place especially in their border crossing experiences? How do
the colonial history and the contemporary discourse on Asian women shape the social conditions of Asian women faculty’s lives? Is there any resistance against the social forces around them through their subject making? If so, what does resistance look like in this context? My working definition of resistance here is from Mohanty’s (2003) that is, “Resistance lies in self-conscious engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations and in the active creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces” (p.196). Moreover, what is their agency that drives them to do what they do from the perspective of Asian women faculty? Advocating for “difference” as the basis for analysis and women’s solidarity, Mohanty (2003) also claims that agency and justice must be theorized from a more cross-cultural lens. Figuring out what resistance and agency mean is an important focal point in my examination of Asian women faculty’s narratives in order to seek possibilities within the transnational feminist framework.
Chapter 3

Literature Review: The Academy as a Contested Site – Canada and Elsewhere

1. Introduction
Moving forward from the overview presented in Chapter 2 contextualizing Asian women as the subjects of this study within the transnational feminist framework, this chapter focuses on the academy as a contested site where Asian women faculty reside. This chapter has a twofold purpose: to fill in the context for what I discuss in later chapters by presenting an overview of significant academic work done on the topics relevant to my analysis; and to discuss what my research could add to the current debates regarding the academy as a contested site. Here I present the academy from two different dimensions which sometimes overlap. The first dimension is the academy within global capitalism – I specifically examine the neoliberal nature of higher education within global capitalism by drawing on different authors from different parts of the world who are critical of the global trend of neoliberalism affecting higher education. Second, I discuss the academy as a colonial site – I focus on the literature on inequity in higher education, especially from the perspectives of subordinate groups such as racially minoritized women faculty including Asian women faculty. While I attempt to bring forward literature on the Canadian context as much as possible, I also draw on the U.S. literature, which I considered worthwhile introducing here, since the U.S. has a larger volume of literature discussing the perspectives of women of colour faculty, including Asian women academics, who operate in a white settler society. While my intention is not to compare the Canadian and U.S. contexts, I am conscious of key differences. Rather, I use the U.S. literature as a complementary source of analysis due to the scarcity of Canadian literature on the relevant topics.

2. The Academy in Global Capitalism
As an aspect of globalization, neoliberalism has become instrumental within higher education in terms of “a new mode of regulation or form of governmentality” (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p. 314). With the goal of maximized profits within a competitive global free
market, which has been promoted by international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank (Harris, 2005; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), neoliberalism is closely tied to state governance that plays an important role in creating conditions, laws, and institutions that are necessary for the operation of entrepreneurial culture. Consequently, the state encourages institutions and individuals to be competitive and entrepreneurial through its governmentality that focuses on economic productivity, effectiveness and efficiency (Canaan, 2008; Olssen & Peters, 2005).

One of the most prominent effects of neoliberal governmentality is the restriction of public expenditure leading to more selective and conditional public funding for higher education institutions (Henkel, 2010). As a result, higher education institutions are forced to seek out other sources of income such as corporate funding and revenue from various populations of students in the global market while they also pursue budget cuts in various sections of the institution including faculty pay, employing part-time faculty, and performance-based pay (Buchbinder & Newson, 1990; Canaan, 2008; Henkel, 2010; Metcalfe, 2010). Consequently, “quality assurance, performance measurement, and benchmarking were some of many new forms of expertise with origins in the private sector that higher education had to develop in its workforces” (Henkel, 2010, p.5; see also Mohanty, 2003). In other words, higher education as a site of regulation and control through “performativity,” a technology of regulation and control (Ball, 2003; Canaan, 2008), has become more evident under these trends as it “disciplines” academics (Acker, Webber, & Smyth, 2009). Canada is not exceptional in this experience (Acker et al., 2009; Charbonneau, 2005).

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17 In contrast, classical liberalism advocates for the individuals to be freed from the interventions of the state (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

18 In fact, education of international students is not only economically beneficial to the institution but also to the Canadian economy as well since it is a major export industry for Canada (Owram, 2010). In 2008, international students in Canada spent in excess of $6.5 billion on tuition, accommodation and discretionary spending; created over 83,000 jobs; and generated more than $291 million in government revenue (Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc., 2009).

19 However, the degree of “audit culture” or the top-down pressure from institutions to academics in Canadian higher education institutions is not as high as that in the U.K., Australia and New Zealand, where central governments have more direct control and impacts on institutions through their systemic forces (Acker et al., 2009).
There has been a close connection between the nation-state and higher education institutions. Canaan (2008) contends that, despite the public funding cutbacks in higher education, invisible methods of top-down control by the government have become prevalent in higher education through the quango (quasi-Non-Governmental Organization) “that aims ‘both to evaluate and to shape the performance of the auditee in three dimensions: economy, efficiency and effectiveness’ (Power, 1994, p.34)” (p.260). This tendency applies to Canada as well to some extent. Metcalfe (2010) points out that the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is one of the most influential organizational bodies in Canadian research and that, through the CFI’s work, “the Canadian federal government has leveraged provincial governments and industry to devote more resources to research” (p.503). She argues that the CFI has been instrumental for higher education institutions to engage in market-like behaviours, which contribute to a phenomenon of “academic capitalism” in Canada. There has also been a formal agreement between the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and the federal government emphasizing the commercialization of academic research to be done by AUCC member universities (i.e. all Canadian research universities and most research-active comprehensive universities) (Metcalfe, 2010). This agreement has also led to intensified accountability in terms of research performance.

McInnis (2010) argues that the traditional ideology about the profession of academic faculty being given self-regulation and academic freedom in the workplace has been shifting under the influence of the “increasingly systematic efforts to manage academic work roles” (p.147). In other words, an important question during such a time of change is “What does it mean to be an academic?” (Henkel, 2010; McInnis, 2010).

The audit culture emphasizing quality assurance has had an impact on professional identities of academics (Archer, 2008; Canaan, 2008; Harris, 2005; Henkel, 2010). Harris (2005) points out that academic identities are no longer separate from corporate identities as “instrumental and economic values rather than educational values are becoming central in defining professional identity and professionalism” (p.425). Canaan (2008) employs a notion of “performativity” as a replication of produced norms (see also Ball, 2003). She argues that performativity is deeply embedded in academic identities and shows “how resistance to neoliberal performative practices in Higher
Education is difficult” (p. 266) within neoliberal universities. The market-oriented nature of governance has also diminished the level of autonomy that used to be one of the central hallmarks of academic identities (Hornosty, 2004; Olssen & Peters, 2005). Under a surveillance mechanism, some academics, especially junior faculty, now feel that they have less control over the type of research and teaching they can do (Harris, 2005; Skelton, 2004). With the emphasis on research in quality assurance of faculty, including tenure and promotion, excellence in research is perceived to attract more prestige than teaching among many faculty members, especially in research universities (Acker et al., 2009; Harris, 2005; Metcalfe, 2010; Strike, 2010). Canaan (2008) points out how neoliberal performativity is coming to dominate the lives of academics, as “we no longer view the university as an ivory tower apart from the world but as another site of struggle where social injustice can be highlighted and critical alternatives can be developed” (p.274).

Several key issues around inequity and social injustice have been discussed and documented in this neoliberal university context. Blackmore (1997) argues that the radical restructuring of the relationship between education, the economy, and the state has resulted in the privileging of discourses of efficiency and effectiveness over those of equity and diversity. Morley (2005) argues that the audit culture has reinforced the masculinities and gendered power relations and has also diminished the space for social justice in the academy, due to its increased competitiveness and the notion of students as consumers. Regarding these competing discourses, Martimianakis (2008) asks a relevant question: How can a discourse on “excellence” and one on equity coexist? Accountability that is a process of standardization and control can threaten the diversity of knowledge production, feminist scholarship, and other minority projects (Blackmore, 1997; Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Hornosty, 2004; Martimianakis, 2008; Morley, 2005). Furthermore, Nast and Pulido (2000) contend that, although there are university initiatives for diversity and multiculturalism, they are often carried out for corporate or market-driven purposes (i.e. “corporate multiculturalism”). More specifically, in the context of “corporate multiculturalism” that is supposed to be “nonconflictual and economical places of leisure and entertainment” (Nast & Pulido, 2000, p.72), differences are accepted only when they can be entertaining by being evaluated from the perspective
of the dominant population but not when they threaten the ruling norms. Consequently, the minority faculty who seek equity in their classrooms without institutional support struggle with “a hostile student population that resists commitments to understanding diversity and multicultural objectives” (Nast & Pulido, 2000, p. 723). Similarly, Newson (2004) also interrogates the consequences of the “student as consumer” model that has become prevalent in higher education and highlights challenges faced by critical pedagogues in such a context (see also Harris, 2005; Mohanty, 2003).

Despite the challenges of resisting the neoliberal performativity model, there are definitely voices claiming possibilities of creating space for personal autonomy through individual agency (Archer, 2008; Canaan, 2008; Clegg, 2005). For example, drawing on Judith Butler, Canaan (2008) also highlights “possibilities for subjectivity” that are excluded from the effects of neoliberal performativity and says “this is a crucial point to be made against neoliberal performativity, how ineffectual we would be as teachers, researchers and administrators if we solely accepted and worked within the restricted definitions of ourselves that neoliberal performativity offers” (p.272). In other words, it becomes critical to seek out the space for subjectivity that is not produced by the neoliberal performativity model in order to see the limits to imposed norms and the critical alternatives to be built (Canaan, 2008; Clegg, 2005; Mayuzumi & Shahjahan, 2008). In her study, while acknowledging the new managerialist project of higher education, Clegg (2005) sheds light on academic identities that stem from personal agency that goes beyond the scope of performativity. She articulates her hopeful view by saying, “This ordinary [day-to-day] talk [through her participants’ own meaning making] works to establish common bonds, as a way of dealing with difficulties, and in part represents small acts of defiance and resistance” (p.342). Archer (2008), who focused on younger academics to see their responses to neoliberal performativity, concludes that an academic cannot escape being a neoliberal subject because the subject cannot exist outside the conditions where s/he is constituted as a subject. However, she also emphasizes that at the micro level, “there are important moments and spaces of resistance” and that is “a hopeful sign” (p.282; see also Mayuzumi & Shahjahan, 2008).

Having reviewed literature on neoliberal academy above, I sense a lack of discussion on the academy that is also a gendered and racialized site. While there are
some recent work that interrogates gender inequity emerging from neoliberal accounts of university environments (e.g. Acker et al., 2009; Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Hornosty, 2004; Martimianakis, 2008; Morley, 2005), still missing are discussions on “racialized gender” in such contexts (Glenn, 2000; Mohanty, 2003). For example, how do the neoliberal governance and its accountability discourse affect experiences of racially minoritized women as transnational subjects? And how do the population response to neoliberal performativity in their everyday practice? My research within the transnational feminist framework will address the gap by seeking to answer the questions. In the next section, I will review some selected literature on such subjects, specifically women academics who are racially minoritized and transnational subjects, centring Canadian contexts.

3. The Academy as a Colonial Site - From Marginalized Points of View

3.1 Eurocentrism and whiteness

There is a growing amount of literature on experiences of minoritized faculty in the academy, including women of colour and Aboriginal women faculty (I call the two groups together “racially minoritized women faculty”). The chilly climate of the Canadian academy and the harshness of the social structure faced by racially minoritized faculty have been discussed in an increasing number of written works (e.g. Aguiar, 2001; Bannerji, 1991a; Calliste, 2000; Graveline, 2002; Henry & Tator, 2009; Luther, Whitmore & Moreau, 2003; Mayuzumi & Shahjahan, 2008; Mojab, 1997; Monture-Angus, 2003; Ng, 1995; Samuel & Wane, 2005; Shahjahan, 2010; The York Stories Collective, 2000; Waterfall & Maiter, 2003). The authors contest the academy as Eurocentric, predominantly white, heterosexual, middle-class and androcentric. They describe the process of marginalization incurred by scholars who do not fit the dominant category, which is similar to the phenomenon discussed in literature on the U.S. academy.

Asian women are often categorized under “women of color” and they share many of the struggles based on their race in the white and Eurocentric academic environment. Issues of knowledge production reflect racial and colonial power relations and often become the focal point for marginalized scholars including women of colour academics. To better understand where certain knowledge emerges from and how it becomes
Illegitimate in a given society, it is important to look at ontology (i.e. how one looks at the world or the ‘truth’) and epistemology (i.e. how one knows what s/he knows). In their chapter entitled *Coloring epistemology: are our research epistemologies racially biased?*, Scheurich and Young (2002) advocate that dominantly legitimized knowledge was created over time along with “modernism,” which revolved around the construction of Euro-American culture with whiteness at the centre (see also Harding, 1998; McClintock, 1995). Consequently, scholars of colour often struggle with the gap between the dominant knowledge system and their own epistemological views. Scheurich and Young emphasize that:

> [T]he dominant research epistemologies - from positivism to postmodernism - implicitly favor white people because they accord most easily with their social history… While scholars of color have had to wear these “white” clothes (be bi-cultural) so that they could succeed in research communities, however, sociologically, historically, or culturally ill-fitting those clothes might be, white scholars have virtually never had to think about wearing the epistemological clothes of people of color or even to consider the idea of such “strange” apparel. (2002, p. 12)

The notion of “double consciousness” is relevant to the discussion of dilemmas which people of color go through in a white-dominated environment. The term was first coined by African American philosopher W. E. B. Du Bois. It was originally used to describe the ambivalent and/or inferior sense of identity based on race held by African American people residing in white America as the dominant society. In other words, it is the consciousness of both worlds, the dominant one and their own. Bruce (1992) emphasizes that Du Bois made a huge contribution by providing the readers with a reference point to “understand the tragedy of racism, especially for the self-conscious individual, and also to appreciate his own program for a new definition of what it meant to be black in America” (p.307).

There are a number of scholars who echo the point that “what is considered theory in the dominant academic community is not necessarily what counts as theory for women of color” (as cited in Scheurich & Young, 2002, p. 57; see also Bannerji, 1991a; Carty, 1991; Elabor-Idemudia, 2001; Harding, 1998; Webber, 2005). As Mohanty (2003) advocates, “[T]heory is a deepening of the political, not a moving away from it: a distillation of experience, and an intensification of the personal” (p. 191), and thus
different positions of feminist thinkers claim their space in theory based on their own epistemologies (e.g. Bannerji, 1991a; Carty, 1991, Collins, 2000; Elabor-Idemudia; 2001; Wane, Deliovy & Lawson, 2002; see also later in this section).

It is documented in literature that “non-mainstream” subjects are generally discounted or undervalued in the academy (Fenelon, 2003; Muzzin & Shahjahan, 2005; Samuel & Wane, 2005). This is the case more so now than in the past, given the aforementioned knowledge economy which centres the marketization of knowledges (Harris, 2005). Hsu (2000), an Asian American female faculty member in an English department, addresses the question, “What is legitimate knowledge?” by explaining that Asian American literature is not considered to be a part of American literature and is therefore peripheral and not marketable. Coloma (2006) suggests that the culture and history of Asia and the Pacific played a significant role in the U.S. racial formations today and that Asia and the Pacific as considered to be “over there” have to be taken into consideration to understand what is considered “American” (p.11). Even though universities have created “ethnicized” or “area” studies such as women’s studies, Black studies, and ethnic studies, in response to the 20th century social movements for knowledge projects (Mohanty, 1989-1990), the disciplines are still not providing an inclusive range of knowledge production (Fenelon, 2003; Fernandes, 2003; Samuel & Wane, 2005). Mohanty (1989-1990) cautions about questions of voice in the context of the institutional hidden agenda. She points out that the institutional agenda behind the development of “ethnicized” studies has been simply to reply to the civil movements against inequity. This does not mean voices of “ethnicized” bodies are heard, and she contends that the institution may still attempt to mold them to the existing culture anyway. In this regard, Mohanty states:

Those of us who teach in some of these programs [women’s black, and ethnic studies programs] know that,…, questions of voice - indeed, the very fact of claiming a voice and wanting to be heard - are very complicated indeed.” (p. 190-191)

While a discussion of whiteness, Eurocentrism and masculinity as “mainstream” of academic culture has been shared by many racially minoritized women scholars, there are various approaches among them to contest such colonial space, which will be discussed in the following section.
3.2 Various theoretical approaches to contest the academy

Over the years, in addition to the continued publication of self-reflective accounts of racially minoritized women academics’ experiences in the academy (e.g. Agnew, 2003; Alfred & Swaminathan, 2004; Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Kobayashi, 2009), some empirical studies on the population have emerged (e.g. Essed, 2000; Luther et al. 2003; Samuel, 2005). At the same time, some of the scholars succeeded in developing and/or employing different conceptual approaches that strengthened the arguments made in their subjective accounts. For example, in the United States, Essed (2000), in her paper on women of colour in the academy, employs Patricia Hill Collins’ understanding of critical social theory that emphasizes its commitment to justice. She asserts that “women of colour in the academy have contributed to the development and articulation of new epistemologies in spite of the antagonistic conditions under which critical research and teaching often takes place” (p. 891). She continues, “The academy needs women of colour intellectuals to challenge unicultural perspectives in predominantly white colleges and universities” (p. 891).

Here, I discuss selected theoretical approaches whereby racially minoritized women scholars contest the academy as a colonial site. Although I categorize their theoretical frameworks for the sake of organization, I do not mean to over-generalize their theories or leave out some other perspectives they may highlight. However, this juxtaposition of the conceptual approaches helps us to better understand what strengths one’s approach can contain, what issues in the academy can emerge from the standpoint, and what contributions the standpoint can make. Moreover, it helps me to think about what my research within the transnational feminist framework could relate to as well as add to the debates on the academy as a contested site.

In the Canadian context, Luther, Whitmore, and Moreau (2003) employ and articulate an “anti-racist feminist framework” in their chapter examining the “culture” of Canadian universities through their qualitative research on experiences of faculty of colour and Aboriginal faculty. In their explanation of anti-racist feminism, they point out some key features of the approach. One is that gender and race are not separable; therefore, “anti-racist feminism challenges white mainstream feminism and how it has perpetuated the divisions among women” (p. 16). Another point is that in their attention
to individual and systemic discrimination and oppressions, *power* is central to their discussion. Yet, they also stress that “anti-racist feminism supports racialized people, not as victims to be saved, but as actors and agents of change” (p. 17).

In her book entitled, *Integrative antiracism: South Asians in Canadian academe*, Edith Samuel (2005) examines the experiences of 10 South Asian faculty members (and 40 South Asian students) through ethnographic interviews.\(^{20}\) She targets the subjects because there was scant literature on the specific population in academe and advocates that, to handle diversity, universities need to be aware of the needs of students (and faculty) from various backgrounds. She advocates that “to create cross-cultural awareness as a ‘way of life’ in academe, we need to consider the pedagogical implications of the power relations that shape relations between groups” (p.160). Although she includes the imperial and racist history of Canadian immigration in one chapter, the question of citizenship and the relations of South Asians to the nation-state are missing in her anti-racist analysis. Rather than examining the specific positionality of South Asians, Samuel tends to lump minority students and faculty together only in relation to white counterparts.

Featuring anti-racist politics, Black feminist thought is based on the idea that a specific population’s standpoint comes from a certain social location. In her book entitled “Black Feminist Thought,” Patricia Hill Collins (2000) poses the question: What knowledge counts as legitimate? Collins advocates that Black feminist thought based on Black women’s experiences has been viewed as subjugated knowledge within the white male interpretations of social phenomena. From a Black female academic’s point of view, Collins (2000) argues that “when elite White men or any other overly homogeneous group [in the academy] dominates knowledge validation processes,” the political criteria that influence (lack of) credibility of knowledge “can work to suppress Black feminist thought” (p. 253). In the Canadian context, an edited book, *Back to the drawing board: African-Canadian feminisms* by Wane, Deliovsky, and Lawson (2002), addresses how underrepresented Black women have been in the academy and attempts to bring this

\(^{20}\) Samuel’s focus is more on students rather than on faculty.
insight into Black feminist theories as they unfold through the lived realities of Black women in the academy.

Another standpoint is an anti-colonial account of different views on the colonial nature of the Western academy (e.g. Dei, 2000; Muzzin & Shahjahan, 2005; Monture-Angus, 2003; Smith, 1999; Wane & Waterfall, 2005; Waterfall & Maiter, 2003). For example, Waterfall and Maiter (2003), a North American indigenous woman and woman of colour, respectively, use an anti-colonial discursive framework “as the absence of colonial imposition, as the agency to govern one’s own life and the practice of such agency based on Indigenous/localized foundational wisdoms” (p. 4). They also bring up the issue of knowledge production. They take on the notion of Indigenous knowledge that values multiple ways of knowing as opposed to a dominant Eurocentric knowledge that has been embedded in the academic colonial culture. They state, “our intent for writing this paper is to center Indigenous and racialized perspectives and to create a context for the inclusion of multiple perspectives within counter hegemonic discourse” (p. 4). They also argue that the anti-colonial discursive framework allows them to shed light on the colonial nature of the academy by examining interdependent and interrelated sites of oppression such as race, gender, class, sexuality, age, and disability. Therefore, the framework becomes relevant to multiple issues of minoritization and oppression. In fact, the authors raise the issues of how racially minoritized faculty are perceived and treated and what counts as legitimate knowledge. Moreover, they advocate the need for “critical mass” and exposure of individuals’ experiences for collective resistance.

Similarly, Monture-Angus (2003), a professor and “Kahnyen’ hehaka” of the Mohawk Nation, interrogates whiteness in the university. Although she does not specifically name her framework, she describes her resistance to the systemic discriminations in the white-dominated Canadian academy based on the author’s own experience as an Aboriginal scholar with her own politics. She points to specific academic colonial practices of how Indigenous knowledge has been marginalized in tenure/promotion, publication and other aspects of academic life.

Waterfall and Maiter (2003) and Monture-Angus (2003) combine their own subjugated perspective with strong resistance to the academy as a colonial site. Interestingly, both articles as well as other literature within the anti-colonial framework
do not provide much gender analysis, although Waterfall and Meiter (2003) articulate that the anti-colonial discursive framework takes gender into account as well. This lack of gender analysis also leaves unaddressed the question of whether there is any difference between racially minoritized men and women in terms of marginality in the academy.

Another framework that has been used to examine the academy is a postcolonial one (Asher, 2003, 2006; Battiste, 2005). Battiste, who is an Aboriginal advocate of a “post-colonial” lens, with Bell and Findlay (2002), signify “resistance tied to past and present experience of colonization and imperialism” (p. 6). As there are various definitions of the post-colonial or postcolonial framework (Battiste, 2005), perhaps depending on their social and geographical locations, Nina Asher (2006), a South Asian woman academic, provides a different focus from Battiste’s. In Asher’s (2006) chapter, Brown in black and white: on being a South Asian woman academic, she addresses her challenges with prejudices and stereotypes embedded in a predominantly white university in the “Deep South” of the U.S. She labels herself as a postcolonial feminist and brings this perspective into her analysis of her personal experiences. In another article, Asher (2003) states:

Perhaps, then, the most important consideration that postcolonialism offers to feminist discourses is that hybrid, fluid identities and cultures, and multiple perspectives, are not just about “them,” the “other,” or “there/elsewhere.” They are also about “us,” the “self,” and “here/at home” (p. 4).

Asher (2006) problematizes essentialist gazes towards certain groups of people and emphasizes “the need to interrogate the dynamic, context-specific intersections of race-class-gender-culture-language-history-and-geography” (p. 170). Due to her own identity politics, she also stresses the notions of “hybridity” and “in-between” space. Within such a framework, she finds stereotypes in the academy problematic and argues that we all need to work on deconstructing them. She points out two key reasons why stereotypes are problematic: 1) they create within dominant groups even more of the politics of “divide and rule” towards people of colour and keep them in the margin; 2) they also suppress voices of marginalized groups by directing them to conform to the dominant groups.

The postcolonial feminist lens contributes to the aspect of power dynamic between the West as the colonizer and the non-West as the colonized as well as the importance of in-between space. However, questions remain, such as: “How can the
emphasis of fluidity or in-between space bring solidarity to the marginalized to resist against dominant groups?” and “How can ‘strategic essentialism’ play a role in the academy?” and “What does it mean for racially minoritized women faculty to bring in their own identity (re)formation to their pedagogies and scholarship?”

In summary, there have been various approaches to investigating and conceptualizing the academy even among racially minoritized women faculty, depending on the author’s social locations, epistemology and experiences. As noted in Chapter 2, the transnational feminist framework in my research shares the politics of the marginalized perspectives with the various feminist frameworks mentioned above; it also challenges modernism with its colonial discourses and formation of Western hegemony that lead to the oppression and exploitation of many women. More specifically, the transnational feminist framework also embraces the importance of intersectionality of different identity markers (e.g. race and gender) emphasized in anti-racist feminism, the postcolonial lens to see the oppressive nation-building processes, and the need to centre subjugated knowledges as foregrounded in anti-colonial scholarship. However, the transnational feminist framework extends such frameworks by emphasizing transnationality and its global-and-local effects that took/have taken place in the site of analysis. In other words, it helps to answer the following: how is the academy related to the nation-state placed both in the global and local?; furthermore, how are subordinate groups of people or racially minoritized women faculty including Asian women academics involved in such academic space through their everyday lives? The framework also foregrounds various borders that academics as subjects have crossed such as national, cultural and linguistic borders, which would allow us to better understand how the hegemony was created, maintained and perpetuated within the borders.

3.3 Issues raised by literature on racially minoritized women faculty

What specific themes around racially minoritized women faculty and the academy have been discussed in the existing literature? Some key themes include: racism, sexism, isolation, lack of mentoring and institutional support, authority and credibility, resistance from students, tokenism, unfair salary, and subjugated knowledges. These themes have been repeated in various articles and books, from different contexts and perspectives.
Stereotypes in the academy that are rooted in racism, sexism, and ageism have operated in discounting racially minoritized women faculty’s academic credibility and authority (Asher, 2006; Bannerji, 1991b, Kubota, 2002; Ng, 1993; Rong, 2002; Samuel & Wane, 2005; Shrank, 2006; Turner, 2002; Wong, 2004). For example, when Rong (2002), Shrank (2006) and Wong (2004), all Asian women faculty members, respectively created the opportunity for critical views towards the West and its social systems, this exercise was interpreted as “white bashing” by their white students, who became defensive towards them. Illustrating how her students criticized her for being “too opinionated and critical” (p. 182), Shrank (2006) emphasizes that Asian American females are supposed to be reserved, compliant and nonthreatening in the eyes of the students. She points out that the “model minority” stereotype and the “lotus blossom” image of racialized gender stereotypes played a role in how the students perceived her and reacted to her classroom practice.

This question of authority in racially minoritized women faculty can be contrasted with that of white women faculty (Bannerji, 1991b; Kubota, 2002; Luke, 1996). Kubota (2002), writing as a Japanese female faculty member in the United States, describes a classroom situation where she was constantly compared to her co-instructor, a white woman, and judged to be less competent by some students in the final course evaluation. Hoodfar (1992) also echoes the question of authority and credibility in racially minoritized women faculty by sharing her own experience in her course. She felt that her knowledge was eventually accepted by the students only when it was repeated by her white female colleague, who gave a guest lecture in her class.

Racially minoritized women faculty’s narratives illustrate issues of racialization around cultural capital that racially minoritized women faculty lack/possess. For racially minoritized women faculty, speaking English with an accent\(^\text{21}\) can be perceived negatively and is associated with their academic/teaching incompetency. Some racially minoritized women faculty have expressed a sense of frustration with their students’ evaluations, which may contain the complaint that the instructor speaks with an accent.

\(^{21}\) I am aware of various kinds of accents, not only of different English-speaking countries but regional accents and class-based accents. Here I refer to an English accent that is derived from another language spoken as a mother tongue of the speaker.
(see Lee, 2003; Lippi-Green, 1997; Mayuzumi, 2005, Skachkova, 2000). In Skachkova’s study (2000) on foreign-born women faculty in the U.S., she finds that European faculty with an accent in their English did not experience as much negative feedback as Asian women faculty. Some Asian women faculty received reactions such as, “She is Japanese, she doesn’t speak English” and “You are just a Japanese woman. What are you talking about? You know nothing about America” (Skachkova, 2000, p.250). Thus it appears there is a hierarchy in accents; European/American accents are more legitimate than those of people of colour (Das Gupta, 1999; Creese & Kambere, 2003; Folson, 2004; Lee, 2003). English is also a colonial language and contains “cultural imperialism that suggests one is worthy of being heard only if one speaks in standard English” (hooks, 1994, p. 174). Speaking with an accent is a clear marker that draws a line between white and non-white, citizens and immigrants, competency and non-competency, and mainstream and periphery.

Another issue in the classroom that has been raised by racially minoritized women faculty is the issue of power/powerlessness related to the appearance and physical space of racially minoritized women faculty in the classroom or universities. Bannerji (1991b) points out that in her classroom experience, her minority body, including her colour, height, and clothes, is reflected through the “gaze” in the dynamic of the space when she teaches “Gender, ‘Race’ and Class” to a “white” body of students in a “white” university. She expresses her agitation saying, “I want to hide from this gaze” (p. 6). Messner (2000) also points out that for women faculty and/or faculty of color, attire is associated with professional status by students, and students have their own racial and gender assumptions. Moreover, colonial assumptions and implications about how one looks and how one speaks are intertwined in the faculty member’s case implying their (il)legitimacy. As Creese and Kambere (2003) point out, “The accent barrier is not, after all, about communication. It is about power and exclusion, marginalization and ‘othering,’ racism and discrimination” (p. 571).

Lack of networking and mentoring among racially minoritized women faculty seems to be connected to their challenges in attaining tenure and promotion as well (Geleta, 2004; Loo & Ho, 2006; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Turner, 2002). Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) state, “women of color encounter
more barriers to professional socialization and success in the academic workplace than do their White female counterparts” (p. 166). Along the same line of thought, Geleta (2004) states that “immigrant women faculty of color who share the least commonality with the traditional senior faculty members suffer from limited opportunities for mentorship” (p.29).

Another issue discussed earlier affecting racially minoritized women faculty in the academy is how their academic lives have been affected by recent changes in the global economy. In the context of globalization, as mentioned earlier, the academy has been affected by the emergence of global capitalism (Mohanty, 2003; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Porter & Vidovich, 2000; Tierney, 2003). It has created profit-oriented features of academic institutions that are driven by the corporatization of research findings, homogenization of knowledge, neoliberalism in policy and practice and expansion and marginalization of contract academics (Buchbinder & Newson, 1990; Etzkowitz, Webster & Healey, 1998; Hornosty, 2004; Paul, 2004; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). The academic value of meritocracy has been accepted and normalized, creating a dominant discourse where equity-seekers face obstacles because of basic conceptual differences and epistemologies (Monture-Angus, 2003; Prentice, 2000; Shahjahan, 2005). The economic nature of higher education affects every aspect of the lived experiences of racialized and gendered academics (Hsu, 2000; Mohanty, 2003; Morley, 2005; Paul, 2004).

Consequently, students become “consumers” in the (corporate) academy and the issues that the majority of consumers do not like to hear about can be avoided. For example, as a result of corporate multiculturalism, “oppositional multiculturalism” and diversity issues that minority faculty try to bring into the classroom, they are faced with resistance from students and receive little support from the institution (Mohanty, 2003; Nast and Pulido, 2000; Newson, 2004; Prentice, 2000; Shahjahan, 2010). The restructuring of the academy following the corporate model has perpetuated the hierarchy of knowledges and capitalist models of citizenship that engender and racialize the academic environment and that also operate at the level of the nation-state (Mohanty, 2003; 2006). This “corporate” academy is a site that perpetuates the “chilly climate” for racially minoritized women faculty. As mentioned earlier, there need to be more empirical studies that reflect the voices of the subordinate group, as global capitalism and
neoliberal governance linked to higher education are also racialized and gendered processes.

3.4 Cross-cultural perspectives of immigrant faculty in diasporic locations

Since many Asian women faculty could also be categorized as immigrant faculty in diasporic locations, here I consider the discussion of the issues around culture faced by immigrant faculty. Even though there are some overlapping issues between racially minoritized faculty and immigrant faculty, literature on the latter group tends to focus more on the experience of physical and cultural border crossing and its consequences in their academic lives.

Compared to the amount of literature on racially minoritized faculty, there is a much smaller volume of literature specifically looking at “immigrant” or foreign-born faculty. However, there is some collective work on immigrant (women) faculty through edited books. For example, there is a recently published book entitled Immigrant academics and cultural challenges in a global environment edited by Femi James Kolapo (2009) who is a faculty member of African history at the University of Guelph in Canada. The editor declares that the notion of “culture” is the bonding point of all 11 chapters written by different authors from the Western academy including Canada, the U.S., and Australia, all white settler societies with English as their official language. According to the editor, the basic concept of culture utilized by various authors is based on the idea that “culture is made up of set patterns of behavior that humans have learned, which give them and their natal societies stability and continuance, and which are passed from one generation to another” (p.4). Kolapo states that all immigrant scholars are likely to experience fragmentation, confusion and ambivalences through their daily lives and that many of them experience discriminations that cause their academic credibility and authority to be challenged, especially by students, due to their being defined as foreign (e.g. accent, pedagogical differences, and communication styles). Within a discussion of acculturation theory, he also argues that, when immigrant academics face the institutional and pedagogical conflicts, they do not always have an option for withdrawal or rejection.

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22 According to CAUT (2010), about 40% of all full-time university teachers in 2006 are “immigrant faculty” (non-Canadian-born faculty). There is no racial or ethnic composition of the group indicated in the number.
of assimilation. Similar to the notion of acculturation (see Geleta, 2004; Sado, 2003), Du Bois’s concept of “double consciousness” has also been utilized by authors to indicate the ambivalence of scholars of colour who experience the dominant norms and the subjugated ways of living, knowing and thinking which they grew up with. However, Kolapo does not view “culture” in a picture of power dynamic other than host versus immigrants, and he sees culture as a single entity separate from race, gender, and historical and contemporary imperialism, specifically hegemony of the Western (Euro-American)-centric academy.

Another book on immigrant academics entitled Immigrant women of the academy: negotiating boundaries, crossing borders in higher education, edited by Mary V. Alfred and Raji Swaminathan (2004), brings race and gender into the discussion of “immigrant” faculty and focuses on the experiences of immigrant women of color in the U.S. Although the editors do not explicate in the Introduction why they focus specifically on women of color among all immigrant scholars in this volume, they say, “it is not uncommon for immigrant women of color to enter as adjuncts into the profession or as part-time students to get a foot in the door of academe” (p. xi). In her chapter, one of the editors, Alfred (2004), situates immigrants of colour in U.S. history, which featured the exclusion of non-European/non-white immigrants, especially Asians including Chinese and Japanese. As discussed above, she argues that the whiteness of the nation-state exists in parallel with that of higher education institutions and that, as immigrants of color are becoming a larger part of higher education than before, “higher education personnel must be aware of their own sociocultural histories and how these historical events and values influence their views about different groups of learners, particularly [that] of immigration and the assumptions they hold about different immigrant groups” (p. 16). While the entire book shows the marginality and struggles of immigrant women of color in the academy through their life history, it also attempts to demonstrate “a spirit of determination, a determination to succeed against the odds” (p.xii) in their transnational locations.

Whether they explicitly name the subject “immigrant” or not, the fluidity of the cultural identities of immigrant faculty is also documented by authors who examine the cross-cultural contexts where some academics reside (e.g. Choi, 2006; He, 2002; 2006; Skachkova, 2000). Min-Fan He (2002) shows the shifts of three teachers’ lives between
China and Canada and emphasizes that both cross-cultural identities and cultures are not static but fluid. She advocates that one’s cross-cultural experience is an important component of identity (re)formation and that it should be reflected in curriculum-making and practice. However, He (2002) does not talk about the power dynamic between the “West” and the “East,” specifically Western hegemony that made Chinese teachers romanticize the West (“an imagined West”) and actually betrayed their expectations while living in Canada (“a lived West”). She limits herself to discussing their personal feelings and experiences rather than pushing the analysis to social contexts as a bigger picture.

Skachkova (2000) wrote a dissertation on immigrant women faculty in the U.S. based on her qualitative research with 34 foreign-born women academics from 22 different nations, including European nations, Asia, Latin America, Middle East, Africa and Canada. While she pays attention to the cross-cultural identities of the faculty, she lacks both race analysis and attention to power relations among the participants based on their different contexts. Neither Skachkova nor He employ strong political standpoints to illustrate how they can make changes in the social context.

Another study that focuses on cross-cultural points of view is based on an empirical study with 19 “bicultural” faculty members of colour from the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM). Sadao (2003) examines how they have succeeded academically given their cross-cultural backgrounds and despite institutional barriers. She explains that one of the reasons for their success is that they preserve bicultural attitudes and skills by maintaining the integrity of their ethnic culture while simultaneously accepting the dominant culture. There are some weaknesses in Sadao’s study and analysis. She does not problematize much of the institutional structures that create barriers to academic success for faculty of colour; rather, she seems to encourage them to accept the dominant culture by emphasizing in her analysis that accepting the dominant culture is a key to success. Another weakness is that she simplifies what “culture” is and consequently dichotomizes the faculty’s lives into their ethnic identity and their “American” identity without questioning what “American (culture)” means or connecting “culture” with other dimensions of the society such as racial differences, national history of imperialism and Western hegemony. When she uses the framework of acculturation and biculturalism, she
does not problematize the power relations in the debates on cultural differences as cultural politics.

4. Asian Women Faculty

While there is a growing body of literature on racially minoritized women faculty in North America, the narratives of Asian women faculty tend to be individually revealed as autobiographies and not collectively examined (e.g. Akindes, 2002; Hune, 1997; Kubota, 2002; Li & Beckett, 2006; Ng, 1993; Wong, 2004). And overall, there has been a scarcity of collective works from Asian women faculty in higher education, although their individual narratives have sometimes been included in volumes on women of color faculty (e.g. Akindes, 2002; He, 2006; Johnsrud & Sadao, 1998; Kubota, 2002; Rong, 2002) or on immigrant faculty (e.g. T. Lee, 2009; Skachkova, 2000). Few studies have been done on Asian faculty in the U.S. (Hune, 1998; S. Lee, 2002; C. Lee, 2003) and no studies involving collective voices of Asian faculty are known in Canada so far.

Hune (1998) analyzes the experiences of Asian Pacific American women faculty using research studies, diversity reports, focus groups, individual interviews, and her own observations in the academy. While she discusses gender and race discrimination against Asian Pacific American women, she also comes up with a theme of “model minority” that is considered to be unique for the Asian (women) population. She argues that it is stereotypes that cause Asian women’s struggles in the academy to be discounted. Using a quantitative analysis of earnings, Sharon Lee (2002) questions whether Asian American faculty (both male and female) in higher education hit a glass ceiling. Christina Lee (2003) conducted a phenomenological study focusing on how Asian women faculty in Christian universities cope with the discriminations that they have faced. These studies deal with stereotypes and discriminations against Asian (women) faculty in the U.S. higher education, yet in different contexts and from different frameworks. They all consider the invisible nature of Asians (compared to other visible minorities), who have nonetheless been marginalized in their everyday lives due to their race, ethnicity and gender. In addition to literature that has called attention to equity issues affecting

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23 There is an extensive study on “South Asian” population in Canadian higher education by Samuel (2005), not on East Asians.
minority faculty as a monolithic group, it is instructive to analyze the specific experiences of Asian women faculty as a minority group in itself.

The emergence of the book that focuses only on Asian women academics, published in 2006, “Strangers” of the academy: Asian women scholars in higher education, also represents a breakthrough for many Asian women scholars who seek to share their professional insights and experiences in the academy. This book is a collection of 15 chapters, written mostly by Asian women scholars who shed light on multidimensional issues concerning Asian women academics in the North American context (all are in the U.S. context except for one chapter that addresses the Canadian context). The editors, Guofang Li and Gulbahar H. Beckett, initiated this collective work and the main objective of the edited volume is “to highlight and celebrate Asian women scholars’ struggles and triumph when they try to ‘make it’ in the academic environments that may differ from those in their countries of origin” (p. 2). This volume successfully presents each author’s commitment to write their honest and detailed accounts of their lived experiences and research agendas. There are many common issues identified with my research such as stereotypes and discrimination around race, gender, language, and citizenship, confusions and ambiguity stemming from ideological differences, and language barriers and stigmatization.

However, the edited book and the studies mentioned above lack a thorough socio-political or socio-cultural analysis of the power dynamics. For example the question of how Asian population came to be named as “Asian” is not considered. In general, there has not been a historical connection to the concept of “Asians,” specifically on the nature of the relationship of Asians to the nation-state in the transnational context (see Coloma, 2006). Such an approach, which I have begun in Chapter 2, would allow the readers to better understand the roots of Asian (women) stereotypes grounded in racism, sexism, and colonialism that were pervasive in the process of nation building within a global context. This approach would help us move beyond simply “naming” racism, sexism, colonialism, “model minority” stereotypes, language barriers or binaries in philosophy to identify the struggles of Asian women. The numerous contributors in the earlier literature could have strengthened their arguments by including historical and transnational analyses that link the concepts of colonialism, racialization, and Orientalism, serving to
better explain the socially constructed category of “Asian,” as well as locating the academy and the nation-state within a global context.

In short, as I have sketched out in Chapter 2, what has to be interrogated here is our definition of “Asian.” Even though the group should not be homogenized, the reality is that “Asian” has certain connotations based on socially constructed images and the history that has created and molded them (Ang, 2001; Lowe, 1996). “Asia” is most certainly a contested space. It is also important to note that Asian women faculty are also Asian women in the West who occupy the in-between space of “Asia” and the “West.” The “West” is also a space that has been historically, economically, politically, and socially hegemonic and often categorized as “superior” (Ang, 2001). Such discussion of “Asian” or “Asianness” would allow us to better understand the transnational relations both at the local and global levels (Mayuzumi, 2008).

5. Conclusion

The academy has been contested in a number of ways over the last decades and this chapter aimed to tackle it with two main points of focus given the globalized context: neoliberal universities in global capitalism and inequity from the perspectives of subordinate groups. These two aspects are major issues to be dealt with through the governance of higher education institutions although they are considered to entail conflicting and competing discourses (Martimianakis, 2008). Given the pervasive fear and anxiety that critical thinkers display about the way in which higher education tends to prioritize neoliberal governance over equity issues (e.g. Blackmore, 1997; Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Morley, 2005), examining those two specific dimensions of higher education provides a better and broader understanding of the existing academy and keeps us cautious about where it is headed. More importantly for this dissertation, it provides us with a general map of what kinds of conditions the subordinate group, such as Asian women faculty, are surrounded by in the academy. Working on this chapter I was consistently reminded of the scarcity of Asian women faculty’s perspectives in the Canadian context. Furthermore, it has shown that even in the U.S. literature on Asian women faculty, there is little transnational analysis beyond simply naming what types of stereotypes they face.
As I explicated in Chapter 2, the transnational feminist framework suggests concretizing the specificity of a population in relation to the nation-state and public discourses. As this chapter demonstrates, such a perspective is very important and to date has been missing in studies on racially minoritized women faculty or Asian women academics. This dissertation seeks out possibilities for a new angle to see the academy as a contested site in an attempt to bring equity and social justice to higher education. While I have previously employed a transnational feminist framework to examine of Asian women faculty’s narratives through a literature review (Mayuzumi, 2008), in this study, I apply the framework in the context of an empirical study on the population.

Now that I have set the context for the site I interrogate throughout this dissertation, the next chapter will discuss another context of the research, which is methodology and methods as my journey process.
Chapter 4
A Journey: Methodology, Methods and Participants

1. Introduction
It has been a long journey that has not ended yet -- there is still a long way to go. When I feel tired of this long journey, one of the Japanese proverbs reminds me of an important message. The proverb is 一期一会 (ichigoichie), which is translated as “one encounter at a time.” It means that whatever you encounter in a moment never comes back and won’t be the same at other times; in other words, as my interpretation, each encounter is precious and you should be mindful of it. While I tend to focus on and worry about outcomes, it gives me a different perspective that makes me pay more attention to and enjoy the process. Writing this chapter gives me the opportunity to reflect on the journey, many of the encounters that I had, with the spirit of ichigoichie and allows me to centre my subjectivity more overtly, even though I am not able to include every detail here.

In this chapter, I aim to concretize the process of my research journey so that my readers can better understand the nature of my research and visualize its process. In other words, I intend to show the “how” of my research as well as the “why,” included in the discussion. First, I elucidate the plan of action as methodology that underlines my philosophical and political stance. Second, I reflect the specific process of my journey through discussion of methods and emergent issues stemming from methodological underpinnings such as confidentiality, the researcher-researched relationship, and validation.

2. Methodology: Theorizing the Journey
The purpose of my study was to examine and document the subject-making processes of the Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy by identifying what social constraints they encountered and how their agency operated through their lenses. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the space of subject making in border crossing must be the site of analysis to see the existing systemic barriers within the transnational context for a marginalized population. Hence, by focusing on the specific context, which, in this case, is the Canadian academy, I looked for the complexity of views empirically through perspectives of my participants in this interpretive qualitative research (see Creswell,
2007). With this social constructivism at the centre of my worldview and thus informing my research, my assumption was that as Asian women faculty navigate the broader structural processes of identity formation within the nation-state and academic institutions (Alexander, 2005; Ong, 1999), their stories or narratives provide important perspectives on the link between Canadian academic culture and Western imperialism (see Mohanty, 2003). Therefore, I employed qualitative interviews for the study, which also sought to underscore how Asian women faculty resisted or conformed to the power structures embedded in the academic setting and how their subjectivities manifested themselves in the process. I worked to “concretize the material and ideological specificities that place[d] each of [them] differently in their engagements with local/global societies yet simultaneously constitute[d]” them as Asian women in Canadian higher education (Rhee, 2006, p. 596).

I employed narrative research that centred the stories lived and told by the specific population who conducted their lives in the context on which I focused. My interviews inquired about life stories and career histories of the participants. Employing the transnational feminist framework made me pay closer attention to their transnational subjectivities (i.e. being an Asian woman in Canada) and their relations to the larger society. Their autobiographical stories take the social context into account (Bertaux, 1981; Chase, 2005) and a goal is “to break the stranglehold of metanarratives that establishes rules of truth, legitimacy, and identity” (Tierney, 2000 as cited in Chase, 2005, p. 668) through their particular experiences and subjectivities in the existing social context. The act of narrating from a marginalized position becomes a positive act for social change (Chase, 2005). The participants provided a picture of how their relationships to the academy and the Canadian nation-state have evolved, as storytelling is a process of making both internal sense to oneself and external sense to the researcher (Tierney, 1998). With practice and theory, I understood “that doing life story research is also personal, interactional, emotional, embodied work that can have implications for the self of the researcher as well as the researched” (Plummer, 2001, p.213). I asked the participants questions related to motivations, desires, contradictions, and struggles they have gone through in the Canadian academy. Their emotions were important sources of analysis as they were not separate but connected to epistemology and the meaning
making in institutional contexts (see Acker & Feuerverger, 1996; Boler, 1999; Butterwick & Dawson, 2005). At the same time, such a qualitative and biographical approach also accounts for the subjective involvement of the researcher (reflexivity) as a means of joint reflection by drawing meanings from the marker events of her personal and academic history. This joint reflection, or intersubjectivity, was a process of (re)constructing legitimate knowledge, using their experiences as sources (Adler, 2004; Telles, 2000). Each interview also required that attention be paid to the intimate relationship between the researcher (myself) and the participants, who shared the experience of qualitative research as a process through space and time where the participant was located in “historical and social milieus” (Burawoy, 1998, p.16; see also Bloom, 1998). In other words, the time and space for the interview was not a separate entity from her everyday life. My role as a researcher in the qualitative interviews was to invite stories and become an engaged listener (see Chase, 2005). Since one of my purposes for this study was to question the power relations faced by Asian women faculty within the global picture, I also attempted to balance power relations between myself as researcher and my participants by being aware of potential differences in our social locations (e.g. researcher-researched and faculty-student relationships; see more details later in this chapter). My feminist approach as well as the openness to alternative knowledge requires respecting the narratives of the women and not permitting theory to occlude the emotions and beliefs of the participants (see Olesen, 2005).

In this chapter, I weave a complex picture of how the research and my writing journey took place with details based on a number of encounters I had in the process. This provides the readers with the context of the research and demonstrates that some of the challenges of the research are also reflective of some of the structural issues concerning Asian women faculty. First, I share with the readers my overall procedures regarding and reflections on my research experiences. Second, I discuss the specific process of recruiting participants and conducting interviews, followed by a discussion on issues of confidentiality and the researcher-researched relationships. Then I continue with the specific process of analyzing the data and writing text followed by issues of validation. Lastly, I introduce each of the nine participants with a focus on their transnational background.
3. Methods and Reflections: Unpacking the Journey Process

3.1 Overall procedures and reflections

This section discusses my overall research procedures and provides some background on my research journey, including what was going on in my (the researcher’s) life at the same time.

In the summer of 2007, when I was writing my thesis proposal, my partner and I moved to the United States with our seven-month-old son. I would be physically removed from the Canadian context for the next three years, yet I had the opportunity to visit Toronto a few times a year. My participant recruitment and data collection took place during that time. Over the span of one and a half years, between August 2008 and February 2010, I conducted semi-structured interviews with nine Asian women faculty members in Canadian universities. Because of the physical distance, I conducted quite a few interviews by phone or Skype, in addition to conducting some in person as well when I had a chance. I initially intended to interview a large number of participants during my short stay in Canada; however, this did not happen due to the difficulty in getting an agreement from candidates in time and scheduling an interview within such a limited time period. The internet continued to be a crucial pipeline for me to connect to various people for the project including my supervisor, study candidates and actual participants, as well as to access resources such as literature. My stay in the U.S. gave me an interesting perspective on researching the Canadian context while I was trying to settle in the new landscape. Canada still felt close due to technology and my immediate memories and experiences in Canada, while it also became further away as I could not physically be there. The locality of the “Canadian” landscape was not as tangible as that of the “American” landscape within which I was living and trying to learn from in order to survive and thrive.

Each interview was an amazing encounter. The interview process was one of the highlights of my research journey. Not only did it provide me with insightful stories, but it also inspired me to continue the project. Because I wanted to take the time to review and improve my interview skills as well as better prepare for the next interview, I

24 Skype is a software application that allows users to communicate with each other visually and orally through the internet.
eventually avoided multiple interviews in a short span of time. I had someone else transcribe most of the interviews and she has also given me her feedback on my interview skills. I also kept a journal.

My writing started soon after I began interviewing participants. I started with a data chapter and a theory chapter. While I was still collecting data, I developed ideas on what themes should come forward and by the time I was about to interview the eighth participant, I had written my first draft of the two chapters to submit to my committee in July 2009. I interviewed two more participants and modified the draft as well as my tentative outline accordingly. In the summer of 2010, while I was working on my first draft of the rest of the dissertation, my partner, myself and our son moved back to Toronto. The move from the U.S. to Canada presented us with a tremendous challenge in the summer. My partner and I learned that the wall between the two nations was higher than we expected. We saw it as only an eight-hour distance on the same “Turtle Island.” We had to deal with many different regulations and so much paper work in order to cross the border. The fact that we were forced to go back to Canada due to our employment status made me re-learn what citizenship meant. It was a tool and a condition to remind me of my illegitimacy in the divided land, not only socially but also materially. In that moment, I experienced another immigration process to Canada in addition to my previous one and it was a good reminder of what it is like to move across borders. Of note is that once we crossed over to the Canadian side during the move, we felt better treated by the Canadian officers than by the American ones, which made us feel welcomed back inside Canadian borders. Overall, the experience of staying in the U.S. also provided me with a wider scope to see transnationality not only between Asia and the West/Canada but also within the West. It was through this experience that I formed a clear comparison of the Canadian nation-state and the U.S in terms of policy and regulations from where I stood in relation to each nation-state.

I believe that my personal life including my periodic border crossings (e.g. visiting families, moving countries) and childrearing experiences have been influential in my own subject making during the research work in a way that stimulates a search for my own identity, as I am labeled as a certain figure wherever I go. Transnationality embedded in my own life and its surroundings, with the advanced technology in this
globalized era (including my privilege to access it), has motivated me towards a self-reflexive journey within the transnational feminist framework. I acknowledge that although this research was about Asian women faculty, I sometimes saw myself in the process of this journey, or even in the narratives of some participants, through my own interpretation. As Hatch (2002) advocates, I also attempted, in my research journey, to “concentrate on reflexively applying [my] own subjectivity in ways that make it possible to understand the tacit motives and assumptions of my participants” (p.9).

3.2 Recruiting participants

Recruiting participants was not an easy task. My original plan was to have (at least) 10 participants within four months. I ended up interviewing nine over a span of one and a half years, between August 2008 and February 2010. I contacted over 25 people by e-mail. I did not receive any response from many of them, 10 or more, despite contacting some of them more than once or twice using different methods (e.g. e-mail, phone). The following quote is a response from one of the people whom I asked to participate in my study. She was the first person I contacted. Her e-mail said:

Your research is worth doing. From my end, I'm not quite sure if I'm ready to talk about my experiences. It's more as a work-in-progress. It may take another few years for me to reflect upon various issues before I can articulate them comfortably.

This person was one of my strong candidates; due to my personal relationship with her, I had the expectation that she would be willing to participate. As a result, her response disappointed me so much that I lost confidence in my entire project at this early stage. I was particularly concerned about being able to recruit enough participants. However, I knew that what she said was completely legitimate and must be respected. It also allowed me to sense, to a larger extent, the submerged nature of Asian women faculty’s voices in the academy.

In general, in order to recruit candidates, when I used the name of whoever referred me to the candidate, I had a higher response rate via e-mail. On the other hand, when I contacted candidates without any mediators, I had a lower chance of hearing from them. Since I did not hear from many of the candidates, it is hard to know what made them not respond to my invitation. But, among the ones who responded and refused or
hesitated to be interviewed, a couple of them did not want to participate in the study; and another couple of them could not fit into my schedule or make the time commitment due to their busy schedule.

The criteria for participants were two-fold: 1) each participant is a university faculty member in Canada and 2) the participant self-identifies as an “Asian” woman with roots in China, Korea, Japan or Taiwan – countries that are geographically and ethnically categorized as East Asia. As noted above, I am aware of the complexity of labeling and categorization among “Asia” or “Asian” due to the postmodern and globalized nature of the contemporary society. I decided to limit the geographical region of origin of study participants to East Asia in order to examine the particularity of the group in history (e.g. Sinocentric25 East Asia prior to 1800s), colonial relations with the U.S. imperial power in the global economy, and physical appearances, not to say that the group is homogeneous. As discussed above, the concept of “Asia” is a Western product (e.g. as in Asian studies). Jo-Anne Lee (2006) claims that “‘Asia’ is a place of imperial imaginings created through mapping technologies and symbolic power in attempts to fix in time and space ‘unknown’ and mysterious societies and political entities” (p.23). There has been a mechanism whereby “Asians” or (East) Asian women tend to be lumped all together under the dominant discourse of Asians or Asian women. This particularity in East Asians helps us better understand the mechanism whereby the stereotypes and discourses were constructed in particular ways and are still prevalent in contemporary society. For that reason, I did not include other parts of “Asia,” such as Southeast Asian countries, although there are large populations in other parts of “Asia” or elsewhere that could share the particularity of East Asians. I also do not intend to limit the audience of this research to those who are stakeholders of East Asia. I do hope that this particularity helps others apply the issues discussed here to a larger environment around them as well as to their own particular context.

The primary methods for identifying participants were a combination of my own identification of potential participants who I believed fit the criteria for this study and other referrals. I identified an initial list of prospective participants through contacts in

25 Until another hegemonic force of “the West” came into East Asia in 1800s, China was considered to be a place for “civilization” in East Asia. (Morris-Suzuki, 1996; Sakaki, 1999)
my network and via internet search. I also asked faculty and students in universities to identify prospective participants as needed even after I began coding and analyzing the data collected initially. This is called theoretical sampling as an ongoing sample selection process (Merriam, 1998). Contact information of prospective participants was collected through an internet search. An e-mail with a letter of invitation was sent out to the prospective participants individually asking them to participate if they were interested and if they believed that they fit the criteria for this study. The interest and the availability of potential participants determined the final list of participants. A copy of the informed consent letter was e-mailed to them. In the informed consent letter as well as by e-mail when each participant and I scheduled a time for an interview, I also asked them for any materials that would help me better understand their experiences, thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and worldviews, such as a curriculum vitae (CV), journals, publications, and poetry. Most of them provided me with their CVs and some of them sent me their scholarly articles. I managed to look through at least their CVs prior to my interviews with them.

Regarding the ethnic roots of the participants, two are Japanese, two are Chinese, three are Korean, one is from Hong Kong, and the other one is from both Taiwan and Japan. I also did not limit the participants to those who were foreign-born, meaning born and raised outside Canada. Their backgrounds vary in terms of which stage of their life when they entered Canadian soil (please see later in this chapter). With respect to their disciplines, I also decided to focus on social sciences and humanities—excluding the (hard) sciences. The contrast between hard sciences and social sciences in terms of how Asian women faculty are perceived and treated would have been interesting and would be a possible future topic. With my small sample size, I chose to look at the disciplines where supposedly Asian women faculty are even more underrepresented than in hard sciences (see Jaekyung Lee, 2006). I also intentionally chose different types of institutions where the participants held their positions. Four are from research-oriented institutions. The rest were working at more teaching-oriented higher learning institutions. Their ranks also varied from adjunct to full professor. All were in tenure-track positions

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26 Here, I include fine arts in humanities.
except for one. There were four assistant professors, three associate professors, one full professor, and one adjunct professor. All the participants were also selected from only two Canadian provinces, British Columbia and Ontario – both have strong British historical influence and are predominantly English-mediated. Both provinces were chosen also because of my assumption that they have a larger number of Asian population than other provinces so that it is easier to disguise the identities of participants.

The decision as to how many participants to include in a sample is context-dependent: depending on “the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, the resources you have to support the study” (Merriam, 1998, p.64). The relatively small sample size of nine participants is justified for a number of reasons. My purpose in interviewing Asian women faculty was not to generalize the experiences of the population, but rather to “elucidate the particular, the specific” by exploring their stories in depth (Creswell, 2007, p.126). In fact, I did manage to collect rich stories from many of the participants. Another research project on Asian women faculty with a bigger sample could be a future project. However, since there has not been an empirical study in a collective way with narrative inquiry into this particular population, specifically in Canada, this study is the first step to initiate a project “that goes beyond individual experience yet retains the emphasis on meanings and emotions experienced by participants” (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996, p.404). Another characteristic that this specific sampling implies is that the fact that the population is underrepresented, especially in disciplines other than hard sciences. Considering their marginal and disadvantaged positions, not only in number but also in how much they feel safe to speak, I focussed on celebrating the richness or intimate details of the data I was privileged to collect by interviewing as many as nine participants.

3.3 Interviewing

(From my journal dated on June 25, 2008)

I feel much better this morning about my thesis project. Yesterday I became even more nervous and anxious about interviewing my participants. What kinds of questions I am going to ask, how I am going to ask them, … and so on. I felt like I don’t know anything, I’m going to fail, and I can’t do this alone. While I was strolling outside with many fire flies around, I thought that I should learn about Hikari, my first interviewee, by looking at her CV, and reading her articles and so on. That way I would feel more comfortable when I interview her and I could
save lots of time in interviewing. I felt so unprepared and got in a panic realizing that I didn’t have much time. When I went to bed, [my partner] also reminded me of that it’s not the end of the world, and what’s important is the journey I am in. This thesis is for me to be able to research independently when I receive the degree. I knew all this but I forgot. Yes, it is a journey, and this process is important. I was looking at the unknown product/outcomes. For some reason, this morning I feel much more motivated, confident and positive about the project. It is like night and day, the difference between yesterday and today. One of the reasons is probably the e-mail from xxx saying she would be happy to help me out. This little thing can easily affect my mood.

The above quote now reminds me of the time when I was about to start interviewing participants. I lacked confidence and worried that I would make mistakes or would not get “rich data.” What if I could not get rich data? Even though I had done some interviews with individuals for different projects, I had never done such intensive and comprehensive life story type of interviews for a large project such as a dissertation. In order to prepare myself, I arranged a pilot interview with an Asian woman faculty member in person. This experience helped me pinpoint my weaknesses as an interviewer and feel better prepared for the subsequent interviews. One of the weaknesses I noticed was that the questions in my interview guide had not become my own words, since they were rather written text to me. Due to this fact, I had to read the actual sentences to my participant word by word and could not manipulate the order or contents of the questions accordingly. I also had to learn to be a better interviewer through actual practice in interviewing my participants. I regret that I could/did not ask the first half of the participants for clarification on some aspects of their comments. By the last interview, I felt I was more confident in what direction I should go to and what aspects I should know more about during the interview. My confidence increased partly because I had also come up with some themes that emerged from previous interviews.

As noted, with respect to my interview method, despite my original plan to conduct face-to-face interviews with all participants, I conducted some interviews by phone or Skype due to the distance between their locations and mine. There are different benefits and drawbacks in both face-to-face interviews and phone (Skype) interviews. With phone interviews, I had to completely depend on my listening comprehension to understand what the participant was saying and feeling. For somebody who does not like talking on the phone generally, it was not easy and I had to push myself a little to get
used to the method. On the other hand, not having to travel was convenient for me in using a technological method. I did not have to pay attention to eye contact with the participant during conversations, meaning that I could instead concentrate on what questions I should ask next by checking the question list and noting down the important points made. But at the same time, I had to send some kind of sign or reaction to each statement the participant made to let her know that I heard her. With Skype, even though I could see the interviewee’s face on my computer screen, it was still more like a phone interview in the sense that there was still a huge distance physically (not in the same room) and their expressions were not shown on the screen as clearly as in an in-person interview. In one Skype interview session, the interviewee was looking towards something off screen while she was thinking and talking. With Skype, the biggest concern for me was the technological situation at the time, which could unpredictably become a problem. With a reliance on the internet connection, Skype could become a fragile tool. In one interview session, I and the interviewee meant to do Skype initially. But, we had to switch it to a phone interview due to a bad internet connection at the time, which created the bad sound quality. In another session using Skype, in the middle of the interview some noise intermittently interrupted our conversation. Unfortunately, I had to go with it until the end.

For the other four interviews, I actually traveled to Canada and visited their workplaces. One of the positive things about seeing the participants in person was that I got to see their workplaces. Even though seeing their workplaces did not provide me with direct data sources, the visual reality allowed me to contextualize their stories in a more imaginable institutional environment. With some participants, I also had multiple interview sessions due to lack of time in the first session and their willingness to be interviewed further. No matter how I interviewed them, I managed to audio record all the interviews except for one. It was actually one of the most challenging moments throughout the entire study when one of the interviewees refused to be audio-recorded on the spot. In the first session with her out of two in total, most of the conversation was not recorded. Luckily, she agreed to be audio-recorded for the second session, which provided me with adequate data.
My original plan was to have a single session in 90 minutes with each participant as I had proposed it to all participants through the consent form. However, none of the interviews ended within that time allotment. With their consent, sessions became longer and some of the participants allowed me to have another session at a different time. The total time that each participant allowed me varied from two to 4.5 hours. Simultaneously, since I was aware of their busy schedule, I sometimes felt restricted to ask further questions and had to skip some of the questions that I wanted to ask.

The questions I asked were on the participant’s demographic background, the process of their becoming faculty members in Canadian universities, descriptions of their work environment and workload, specific stories of their challenges in their academic life, and their coping strategies (see Interview Guide - Appendix B). Although I had this question sheet, it was only a guide for me to facilitate the interview; I did not ask all the questions on the sheet for everybody equally. Instead, my job was to direct the interview towards whatever deep stories each of them had, which differed from participant to participant.

3.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality in qualitative research is, in general, a source of dilemmas for a researcher who wants to convey accurate pictures with detailed contexts and yet wants to protect the confidentiality of participants (Baez, 2002; Kaiser, 2009). Discussing confidentiality, Baez (2002) adds another type of dilemma, particularly for a researcher who claims herself/himself to be a political activist, that the researcher should be responsible as a researcher/protector and an activist/exposer. My case was not exceptional. The confidentiality of the participants was one of the most crucial points to pay attention to throughout the entire process. On the one hand, I wanted to make this research “transformative” in the sense that the study should challenge any hegemonic structures associated with race, ethnicity and gender within the given context as well as that it should be documented and publicized to get the submerged voices out. On the other hand, I was always concerned about the identities of participants being disclosed even without my intention. Not only did I promise confidentiality with my participants prior to interviews, but also some of them, especially the ones who were not tenured, asked for reassurance from me that I would be extra careful to disguise their identities.
Asian women faculty are already an underrepresented group in Canada, which means that over-disclosure of information about them would easily enable the readers to identify who the stories were about. Vulnerability of the participants existed because “they were constituted as raced and gendered subjects” (Baez, 2002, p.53) in the academy where whiteness and patriarchy have dominated through history, culture, and knowledges. What would be “over-disclosed information” in the context of my research? How would I avoid it? There is no set rule on how to disguise informants’ identities, though Baez advocates that qualitative researchers should theorize confidentiality for what it permits and forecloses at every research opportunity.

First, I used pseudonyms for all the participants throughout the project. By the end, I almost forgot their real names! Second, I did not specify their countries of origin/specific ethnicities, institutions’ names or disciplines in my analysis. This choice was very challenging in the sense that disguising all this information also affected my analysis, which was limited by the undisclosed information, especially when specific ethnicities (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean), institutions and different disciplines would have been concrete contexts connected to my analysis of the participants’ experiences. With respect to their specific ethnicities, I had to replace any related terms (e.g. “China” as a country of origin and “Chinese” as a specific ethnicity) with generic descriptive terms such as [a country of origin] and [her specific ethnicity]. This was a last-minute decision that I had to make in order to further disguise their identities. I was afraid that this removal of their specific ethnicities would cause homogenization of the participants and discount each of their differences. In this particular research, I prioritized their confidentiality after much consideration. Regarding institutions, I only labeled them based on the focus of the institution in general (i.e. teaching or research). As for disciplines, I categorized them in broader fields (e.g. social sciences and humanities). Third, regarding location information of the participants, all I revealed was that they were from the two provinces, British Columbia or Ontario. Even though I was restricted in my discussion of the provincial context for each participant, not mentioning who was from which province reduced the risk of participants being identified. Fourth, I also had to exclude some of the details of narratives that might have made the participants identifiable. Some stories were so powerful that I was reluctant to remove them from my
analysis. One of the participants requested a transcript of her interview and crossed out the parts to be excluded in my analysis. Another participant asked me to send my paper with her included as a participant prior to any publication so that she could check whether my description of her is identifiable. For others, some of them specified, at the time of interview, which part of their narratives should not be included in my analysis. I also contacted some participants to consult regarding the extent to which I could describe her.

For the marginalized population, especially the ones who were pre-tenured, confidentiality was a number one priority due to their concern about the risk of institutional retaliation for tenure process should their stories be known. Confidentiality was the promise I made in order for them to participate in my study. At the same time, this intense attention that I as the researcher had to pay reflects on and stems from the underrepresented nature of the population as well as their vulnerability in some ways in the academy. My negotiation between my responsibility to assure confidentiality and my desire for social justice through my research was an ongoing task. I had to go back and forth between both points quite often. As Baez (2002) advocates, “individuals engaged in transformative political action should ask themselves, as often as possible, what are the possibilities and foreclosures of openness and secrecy in given contexts” (p.53).

3.5 The researcher-researched relationship
Arminio and Hultgren (2002) advocate that researchers must reflect on their relationship with their participants and “their relationship with the phenomenon under exploration” (p.454). My relationship with each participant lay on at least a few levels due to my multiple “I” (e.g. as a researcher, a graduate student, Japanese woman, etc.) (see Adler, 2004). At first, it was a researcher-researched relationship, which means I as researcher had most of the control over how the research would go. The questions I asked, how much of their narratives would be included in my writing, and how I analyzed them were all driven by me. Sharing their personal stories with me already provided a lot of information. On top of that, I was given the privilege to manipulate all the stories. Hatch (2002) stresses this point and advocates for reciprocity between the researcher and the researched. She states, “[reciprocity] is especially important when participants invest themselves in close relationships with researchers and trust them with sensitive
information. It is fair to ask who benefits from these relationships and who benefits most?” (p.66).

For reciprocity, while acknowledging that I as researcher benefit most out of this research, I articulated in the consent form letter what benefits the participant would experience by participating in my study. These included: opportunities to talk about herself, to contribute to the scant literature and study on the area, as well as to contribute to equity and social justice in higher education and obtain a summarized finding of the study. These are only benefits that I presented to them. In other words, it is unknown whether these were really beneficial for the participants. However, when I had a chance to ask some of the participants what the motives of their participation in this study were, one of them also explicated a benefit for her as a researcher. Because she was usually on the side of being the researcher/interviewer, she now wanted to go through an experience of being interviewed. She was also interested in my findings as well. Another participant explained that she wanted to help me as she knew how difficult it could be to recruit participants. Both of the participants came up with their answers based on their profession as scholars who understood what a study could involve and what challenges could emerge from it. There might have been other answers to the question. Nevertheless, the benefits I reaped were countless and in the end there was not quite equal reciprocity.

Prior to conducting an interview, when I scheduled a time with the participant via e-mail, I also sent either a copy or references of my published articles for a couple of reasons. First, it was an action stemming from the notion of reciprocity since she had provided me with her materials (i.e. CV and her articles) and was going to share her stories with me. It was to build a relationship by exchanging the materials that were significant in our scholarship. Second, I simply wanted her to know who I was and what kind of researcher I was so that the informant could be more certain about what kind of person she would share her information with rather than having to talk to a complete stranger. In other words, the point was to earn some trust and credibility from the informant, especially by sending her my peer-reviewed published articles. One of the articles I sent was my literature review on Asian women faculty in the North American context (Mayuzumi, 2008). Although it is unknown whether the participants read the
article, I thought it would help them better understand my research goals and the nature of my scholarship.

Second, the interview dynamic also featured a faculty-student relationship. Never having worked as a faculty member, I had to try to understand what it was like to be an employee of a higher education institution. While I viewed my participants as people who were successful in their academic careers, I was also aware of their workplace being a site of inequity and struggle. More directly, I was often concerned about their time as I was cognizant of their busy schedule. Some participants had told me up front how much of their time they could share with me for interviews. As I have already mentioned, the time constraints made me prioritize certain questions over others and/or end up not being able to ask some questions. I had to focus on “data collection.” But in addition to the time constraints, I was aware of a hierarchy of them being faculty while I was just a student. One of the questions I asked each participant was what their advice would be for a possible future academic like myself.

Third, in our relationships, my participants and I shared social markers of identity such as gender, race, and ethnicity. This does not mean that I interpret things the same way as the participants. Instead, I acknowledge that I had some insider knowledge and that some of the participants possibly expected me to understand what they were saying from my social location. This relationship definitely helped me build rapport with the participants. Some of them shared their cultural knowledge openly with me. There may have been some topics they wouldn’t have shared with me otherwise. At the same time, I also had to be careful not to over-interpret or distort their narratives based on my biased insider knowledge and to be open to what convergent interpretations would occur. As Adler (2004) states, “I must be careful to honour their words” (p.113; see also Olesen, 2005).

There may have been other dynamics in the relationships between my participants and myself. Having highlighted a few of them, I also emphasize that my various identities were always shifting as much as the participants’ were. Nonetheless, I wish to acknowledge the power that resided in me as well as limitations that emerged from our multiple relationships.
3.6 Analysis and writing

All of the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by a hired transcriber. I transcribed a few sections of interviews at the beginning of my data collection stage, but I had the rest of the transcription done by one individual outside Canada who was extremely competent and reliable. Before I sent the audio files to the transcriber, I anonymized the data by removing all the real names of the participants. I chose to have a transcriber for a few reasons. First, the task of transcription was very time-consuming for me and took away time from other endeavours such as reading, analyzing and writing. Second, since English is not my first language, it would have also been difficult for me to hear and transcribe each word of every interview. I could have done it by myself, but it would have been extremely inefficient, ineffective and frustrating. As a result, I decided that self transcribing would become a huge barrier and discouragement rather than a good opportunity for reflection or motivation.

Based on themes that arise from the literature and my conceptual framework, patterns that emerge from my interpretation of the data, and my own personal and research background, I coded the transcripts and came up with themes to be examined in my dissertation, which were not static from the beginning, but rather were always tentative at least until I finished all my interviews. My analysis was supported and strengthened by literature on women in higher education, the Asian diaspora, immigration history, anti-racism and transnational feminism, globalization, neoliberalism, and higher education, among other topics. My subjectivity was also an important source for my analysis even though it may not always have been up front (see Adler, 2004; Peshkin, 1988).

I also acknowledge that the act of writing itself was also a method of inquiry (see Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Writing allowed me to reflect, come up with different ideas, and shape the flow and direction of my arguments. One forum that I utilized to help me in my analysis was writing groups that I had at different times. In a writing group, I could have feedback on my writing from the group members. Not only did I accept some of their suggestions for my analysis, but I also used some of the tensions that I had with peers as a drive for me to push my analysis and its validation further. My experience resonated with Creswell’s (2007) description of the roles of a peer debriefer in
the peer review process, “who keeps the researcher honest; asks hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations; and provides the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to the researcher’s feeling” (p.208). In this context, my peers were tremendously helpful.

3.7 Validation

With respect to validation for qualitative research, Arminio and Hultgren (2002) promote the idea of goodness as a more appropriate concept than rigor that is more common for quantitative research. In their words:

The concept of goodness allows for the language of situatedness, trustworthiness, and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), as well as the idea of being strong in spirit, which is the aim of human science research. There are two aspects to this spirit: one is serious introspection by the researcher and the other is the goal of the research process and research outcome - to improve our practice and, ultimately, our world. … [Q]ualitative researchers can be more illuminating when offering evidence of goodness. (p.449)

What I have discussed in this chapter and previous chapters is basically to offer the essence of goodness that is the basis for meaning making in this research (see Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). My epistemology and theory outlined in Chapter 2 connected to and followed by my methodology discussed at the beginning of this chapter provided the context for the research process. The discussion of my methodology bridged my philosophical stance to choosing appropriate methods in order to fulfill my research purpose. I have also articulated my introspection, which is an important part of the research process and meaning making in the journey, including the motivation behind the research, my biases, my feelings about different encounters during the research process, the relationship between the participants and myself, the effort to bring the authentic voice of the participants forward rather than distorting their narratives, and ethics including confidentiality issues. I do not wish to imply that this research was perfect and I was the expert. Rather, I again insist that this research was a co-creation of knowledge by different people including myself, participants, reviewers, and the audience of this dissertation (see Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). I believe that I attempted to embrace the essence of goodness throughout the journey.
With regard to validation, I initiated specific procedures recommended for qualitative researchers by other authors (e.g. Cresswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). I have fulfilled at least two of them. One is clarifying the researcher’s bias from the outset of the study (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002; Cresswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). My epistemological discussion in previous chapters was meant to disclose my bias stemming from my theory and lived experiences. The other procedure I engaged in was utilizing peer review/examination (Cresswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). As I mentioned in the former section, *Analysis and writing*, I was a part of facilitated writing groups throughout almost the entire writing stage. The feedback I received from the peers in the groups was instrumental in pushing my argument further and keeping my writing as trustworthy as possible. Engaging with peers who had different theoretical or life backgrounds was also helpful, although sometimes tough. I had to be able to explicate some of my complex ideas and assumptions, some of which I had previously taken for granted.

### 4. Participants in the Journey

Having discussed the participants in general above (e.g. recruitment criteria, confidentiality, and the relationships), in this section, I will describe the nine participants in this study in more detail. Regarding confidentiality issues, I intentionally avoid going through the detailed profile of each participant individually (e.g. demographics, childhood stories, disciplines and institutional information, etc.). Instead, I discuss the transnational experiences/backgrounds of the Asian women faculty in order to introduce the participants as well as to set the context of their stories that will be central in later chapters. To do so, I use some of my participants’ narratives here to describe who they were as well as to bring their voices to the fore, rather than to reveal findings. Therefore, I limit my analysis in this section.

Transnationality that emerged from a movement across space (in this case, particularly between Asia and Canada) was clearly embedded in the experiences of all the participants in some way or another. One of the groups that are often referred to in discussions of transnationality is the immigrant population (Kim-Puri, 2005). In the interviews, there were different methods of interpretation or usage of the term “immigrant” depending on the individual’s context. Through this very brief discussion
about participants’ biographical background, including how each participant became an “immigrant,” I aim to set the stage for the upcoming analysis chapters.

One of the participants, Susan, commented on being an immigrant:

“Immigrant” is someone who has transnational roots and who has yet to establish herself or himself in a new country. And always looking at multiple contexts, I think. So, yeah, an “immigrant” is very different than someone who was born in that country.

Among the participants whom I interviewed, there were some who were born or spent their childhoods in Canada. Interestingly, all of them identified themselves as “immigrants” in addition to being “Asian women.” For example, Lucy was a participant who was born in Canada to parents who had moved from East Asia to Canada. With many siblings, she grew up in her parents’ restaurant business, which she explained was the center of their family life. Because of her parents’ long working hours at their restaurant in a working-class neighbourhood, there was very little structure in terms of time (e.g. bedtime) or space (i.e. freedom) and no vacation – very different from the life of privileged children. She stated:

So what’s interesting is that as an adult, even though I have had privilege around education, I still see myself as an immigrant. I look at the world through an immigrant lens. I don’t look at it necessarily through my Canadian-born identity. And that’s because I’ve been very much shaped in my childhood, in my interactions with my family.

These “immigrant family” experiences were shared by other participants who spent their childhood/youth with their first-generation parents. Another participant, Hikari, had a “typical immigrant” lifestyle in Canada when her highly educated parents encountered difficulties in settling in Canada as they were feeling inadequate and unsettled. Hikari described the lifestyle of “typical immigrants” as “[having] a…disconnect between …. what we felt we should be … where we should be, and the reality of where we were.” Hikari claimed that her teenage life in Canada centred a lot around “dealing with the spillover of her parents’ immigrant stress” as her parents did not have any support system.

Foo Ja is another participant who echoed the point that her childhood was affected by her parents’ struggles to survive in and to adjust to their new land as immigrants. Foo Ja’s childhood was quite a negative experience due to racism, stating:
I am not sure exactly when I would have had that term (racism) in my head. Probably some time in high school. I think as a child it was incredibly confusing and my parents were completely and totally inept at dealing with anything that their kids were going through, because they were immigrants, because they had problems with the language, [and] because, you know, they were going through so much themselves. I think it was probably so incredibly traumatic for them.

From the stories of the three faculty members (Lucy, Hikari and Foo Ja) who spent (some of) their childhood in Canada, not only did they themselves have to cope with their struggles and adjustments, but their lifestyles, perspectives, and emotional development were also influenced by their immigrant parents’ struggles for survival in a new country. As Hikari described, the life of typical immigrants is one with torn or disconnected feelings of forced relocation despite their moving to the new land for “betterment” of their lives in some way or another.

The causes of their parents’ original movement from Asia to Canada are worth discussing here to have a bigger picture in terms of historical background of the political economy at the time. One of the participant’s parents moved to Canada in the 1970s during the oil boom in the province of Alberta. Another participant’s parents moved from Asia to Canada partly because they did not agree with the government regimes of their countries of origin.

Some of the other participants moved to North America to pursue higher education. Susan looked for a university that would meet her interests as well as provide instruction in English. She also obtained a scholarship that was offered by a major organization of the hosting country. Lynn is another person who also moved to North America for her higher education and has resided there ever since.

Some participants moved to North America in their adult lives. One of the main reasons for their relocation related to the idea that the West was the best place to learn and had the most to offer in terms of material wealth and opportunity. For example, Janet originally chose to come to a city in North America because of its strong implementation and practice of certain policies, which she wanted to learn from. Katon decided to move to the West because many of the university faculty in her country of origin were from the West. Katon explained that obtaining a degree or establishing a career in the West is a way to improve one’s social status. Other participants, Sue and Hodi, each moved to Canada partly because their family members were already in Canada. Even though not
every participant articulated it, it seems that many of them or their parents had moved to Canada to better their future in terms of material resources, political settlement, and advancement of their education and careers (see Choi, 2006). Their transnational stories themselves already illustrated some of the power dynamics between their Asian homeland and the West as they reflect their history.
Chapter 5
“Immigrants” in Canada: Illegitimate Citizens in the Nation-State and the Academy

1. Introduction
This chapter centres the narratives and insights of the Asian women faculty who participated in my study. Here I examine in detail how their social location as both Asian women and faculty in Canada is negotiated within the dominant discourse of Canadian “citizenry” linked with Orientalist discourses on Asian women. I would argue that the historically produced Orientalist discourses of Asian women are still prevalent in contemporary society. How do the discourses operate in the everyday lives of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy? How do the Asian women faculty internalize or resist the Orientalist discourses through their self-identification? How is the socially constructed notion of “immigrants” as illegitimate citizens tied to Orientalist discourses in the context of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy? This chapter focuses on what systemic barriers Asian women faculty face and what process of subject making they go through due to their social locations of race and gender. I discuss two major themes: 1) “Canadian” and “Asian” – I examine the insights of Asian women faculty regarding their interpretations of these terms; and 2) Stereotypes and questioned authority – I examine how gender, race, age, and language stereotypes are addressed by the participants and how the stereotypes work against their authority.

2. “Canadian” and “Asian”
At the outset of this study, I articulated to the participants that I would interview “Asian” women faculty who also identify themselves as Asian. Instead of assuming what they meant by “Asian” and “Canadian,” I also wanted to tease out what they actually implied through their narratives. Since categorization and labeling are often based on certain epistemologies that lead individuals to identify others and themselves as certain figures in a given context, I have chosen to discuss the question of labels here. Naming or un-naming themselves is also part of their subject making, which I want to highlight in order
to better understand their insights into the citizenship discourses of who is “Canadian” and who is not.  

2.1 What is “Canadian”?  
The term “Canadian” has garnered some attention from anti-racist feminists. Dua (1999a) states that “[t]he social and political definitions of who is defined as Canadian reflect the race and gender underpinnings of Canadian society” (p.7). Through the narratives of the participants, I also came across the term “Canadian” as they used it to refer to certain groups of people in varied contexts. Some participants hesitated to name themselves as “Canadian” despite their legal Canadian citizenship. For example, Hodi, who moved from East Asia to Canada in her youth, took quite some time to respond to my question of how she identified herself ethnically. In attempting to answer the question, Hodi said that “Canadian” didn’t sound right for her self identification. She continued:

[M]y Canadianness is more the citizenship status rather than the cultural status. But then there is the question about what is it? There is no such thing as homogenous, standardized Canadian culture anyways. But still, I don’t participate in the dominant Canadian culture, whatever that might be.

Here, Hodi pointed out that her citizenship and her “cultural status” did not match but rather conflicted and contradicted each other because she did not feel she belonged to or identified with the “dominant Canadian culture.” Even though she posed the fundamental question of what “Canadianness” or “Canadian culture” is, she still asserted that she was not part of it. A question that emerges here is: how is the identity “Canadian” constructed?

Hikari, who immigrated to Canada from East Asia as a teenager, used the term “Canadian” to describe the people and mainstream culture in her Canadian high school, which was predominantly white:

Hikari: My dad was really strict and suspicious of the Canadian social scene. … Interviewer: So, when you said “Canadian,” does it mean white people? Hikari: Yeah, it was very white in the 70s…

27 While I stress the importance of labeling stemming from one’s subject making, I am restricted here from referring to the participants’ specific labels related to their countries of origin and ethnicities due to their confidentiality (see Chapter 4).
Hikari used the term “Canadian” while describing her high school experience just after her family immigrated to Canada. She described the struggles that her parents, as immigrants, had to go through in order to settle down in a new country. Her farther was suspicious of the “Canadian” way of socializing at her high school and restricted her from being involved in social activities. In this sense, the term “Canadian” is juxtaposed with the “immigrant” identity of a family arriving from East Asia. Even though Hikari observed during the interview that Canada had become much more diverse, she used the term “Canadian” to describe the predominantly white culture of Canada in the 1970s. It seems that her concept of “Canadianness” remains associated with whiteness, while she clearly sees the dramatic increase in non-white populations over the past few decades.

Lynn, another faculty member who moved from East Asia to North America to obtain a doctoral degree, shared a story that opened her eyes to ethnic and racial differences in terms of (non-)Canadian identity between herself and one of her students, who originally came from Eastern Europe. She shared her insights about the conversation that she had with the student at a barbecue gathering:

He (the student) came to Canada a year before me but he’s been in North America for a shorter period of time… [H]e was telling me that he totally identifies himself as a Canadian and he thinks he’s Canadian and Canadians are like him and everything. And I was a little bit surprised because… I do identify myself as Canadian in some ways. I agree with most of the values and the system and everything. But I still think mostly I am [her ethnicity]. So I was really shocked by that… And I started thinking actually ethnicity or race was the issue. He is white and was born in an Eastern European country and he speaks close to perfect English. I think my English is good enough but I never think of myself as a Canadian person, right. And he’s totally like, “Oh I am Canadian. Canadians are like me.”

Throughout most of the interview, Lynn denied being discriminated against as an Asian woman in North America, saying, “I am not very sensitive to these [racial] issues. I don’t feel discriminated against and, sorry, I really don’t have too much to say.” However, she emphasized that this conversation during the barbecue gathering really highlighted for her the racial differences between her Eastern European student and herself as a person in her ethnicity. She did recognize that it was the racial and ethnic factors that allowed the white European immigrant to assimilate a “Canadian” identity more easily than “Asians” or people of her specific ethnicity. Another interesting point is that her [ethnic] identity
seemed to conflict with any sense of “Canadianness.” As she observes, “I still think mostly I am [her ethnicity],” in contrast to her student, who said “I am Canadian. Canadians are like me.” The key point to explore here is what constituted “Canadianness” for Lynn and what prevented her from being a part of it compared with a man from Eastern Europe.

Moreover, this discussion of “assimilability” draws my attention to the historical record regarding who was welcomed to become “Canadian” and who was not in the global context. In the immigration history, particularly in the early 1900s, Western and Northern Europeans were most welcomed as Canada was a British and French colony to start with. It is important to note that those who migrated from Eastern Europe (non Anglo-Saxons), such as Ukrainians and Poles, and Jewish people were discriminated against in the employment sector and other realms of society. However, an even less desirable population were those from the “Orient” (Asia) (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998). This historical background raises the question of how matters would be different if Lynn’s student was from Western Europe. Would he still proudly consider himself as Canadian? Or would he distinguish himself as from a particular Western European country since Canada was only a colony of Britain and France? The idea of being “Canadian” or not being “Canadian” seems to involve which country of origin one came from based on the historically constructed borders and whether one wants to assimilate into being Canadian or cannot assimilate into being Canadian even if one wants to.

As I argued in Chapter 2, the contemporary discourse of “Canadianness” reflects the historical construction of citizenship based on the colonial history of Canada (Thobani, 2007) -- in other words, the stereotypes that emerged through the colonial history work “to determine who belongs to Canada, who is from elsewhere, who is a hyphenated-Canadian, and who is normal” (Dua, 1999a, p.7). The top of the socially constructed hierarchy in power relations within the Canadian context are Anglo, Christian, heterosexual, middle-class able-bodied males (see Jo-Anne Lee, 2006). Asian women, in contrast, is one of the categories that remains at the low of the hierarchy where they are often subject to “racialized representations as illegitimate, suspect, immigrant, foreign, and alien” (Jo-Anne Lee, 2006, p.25). They are rarely associated with the image of “Canadian” and are also in the category of “women of colour” who occupy the
historical and contemporary locations that “have been shaped by multifaceted racialized, classed, and gendered processes that made Canada into a white settler society” (Dua, 1999a, p.7).

2.2 What is “Asian”?

The notion of what exactly “Asian” is emerged as another complex issue during this research process. When I recruited my participants for this study, one of the criteria was that the participants had to self-identify as “Asian.” Therefore, they are all “Asian women” by their definitions. All the participants have roots in East Asian countries. However, as it turned out, not all the candidates who originally came from East Asian countries identified themselves as “Asian.” For example, one of the participants approached two individuals – one originally from Korea and the other from Japan – to ask if they were interested in participating in my study. This participant later told me that the two refused to participate because their self-identifications did not match the criteria. She quoted one of the women as saying, “Asia is so big. It has no meaning. How can you define yourself as Asian? I’m Korean.” For the two women faculty members, “Asia” as a category seemed to be too broad, abstract, and hard to capture. Their connotation of “Asia” may reflect a discussion in the book entitled The Myth of Continents, which states that “Asia is not only the largest but also the most fantastically diversified, a vast region whose only commonalities – whether human or physical – are so general as to be trivial” (as cited in Ang, 2001, p.4). However, Ang (2001) asserts that the term “Asia” cannot be ignored because of “the reality that in the contemporary world, ‘Asia’ and ‘Asians’ are powerful terms of identification for many cultures, societies and peoples who are somehow subsumed under these terms” (p.4).

In fact, another participant who moved to Canada in her youth, Hodi, pointed out what self identification as being Asian meant. She said, “[regarding] this notion of self-identification, I don’t really need to identify myself to myself or for myself really. So, this identification is for others.” This narrative implies that the term “Asian” becomes significant when categorization and labelling of people become important and helpful for interactions with “Asians.” Hodi continued, “it (self identification) counts a lot because when people look at me, what are they going to say, right? So, that I would simply say I am Asian.” Here Hodi implied her being labeled as “Asian” was for external perception.
of herself in society. In other words, she pointed out that self-identification could stem from negotiations with others (see Shohat, 1995).

On the other hand, Hodi also expressed her internal perception of herself as “Asian” in relation to other Asians or Asian women. Hodi added to the above quote:

I think one of the components [of being Asian] is… [that] there is a sense of recognition when I see other Asians, especially Asian women. So, there is a sharing of a certain kind of worldview or cultural context, in the sense that, where they are coming from, what makes their passions and their perceptions similar to mine. So, I think a sense of cultural affinity I feel with the other Asian women; that I found stereotyping but anyway, I think I can comfortably say that I am an Asian.

Hodi’s insights into being an Asian woman are clearly expressed through her feelings of connections with other Asian women. She was aware of her “stereotyping” and lumping all Asian women, from within the group, but it helped with self-identification with others.

Some other participants had well formulated ideas about what constitutes being “Asian.” When I asked Hikari, a tenured faculty member who does research on Asia, what her definition of “Asia” or “Asian” was, she stated:

I think it has to be, more than anything else, kind of [an] understanding of Asia and Asian society, maybe also having appreciation and [an] understanding of the language of that part of the world. I think there are a lot of second, third, fourth generation Asian-Canadians, Asian-North Americans who may not necessarily have a good idea of what “Asian” is about, except for their physical features, and except for the external identity designation based on their physical features in the Western context. I don’t consider that terribly Asian to me. I think it’s something much more internally derived. You have to be conscious about the fact that you are Asian.

Here Hikari did not provide a clear definition of “Asian” but instead articulated an important condition of being “Asian” for herself. She emphasized that being Asian should not come from external perceptions based on one’s physical features alone, but should derive from within oneself. In doing so, she also showed some tension with “Asian-Canadians and Asian-North Americans who may not necessarily have … a good idea of what Asian is about.” Thus there appears to be conflicting meaning in the hyphenated form (e.g. Asian-Canadian) that somehow “reveals much about the tension that exists between the two categories” (Ang, 2001, p.4).

Hikari continued that:
[W]hat makes me identify myself as Asian is that I think, ...I am quite conscious about myself as an Asian, like...how should I say? I locate myself within Canadian society as an Asian in this society. Maybe it’s because I am a first generation immigrant here and so I know this society. I feel comfortable in it. You know, my kids feel that they are totally Canadian but I do know that I am not one hundred percent Canadian. So, I think that’s my first impulse. I think, other than that, it’s also in the nature of my work. I do research on Asia and about Asian society. I spend a lot of time going back to Asia. So, that too, I think, I feel like I am at two places at the same time.

Hikari claimed that her Asianness was “internally derived” and acknowledged by herself. Despite her location in Canada, she described her connections with the notion of “Asia” as a first generation (immigrant) who does research on Asia. Interestingly, to contrast with her identity, she again brought up “Canadianness,” which her children embraced in their self-identifications. In this sense, “Canadianness” is not quite compatible with her identity as Asian. However, she also adds that she is “not one hundred percent Canadian,” meaning that she also self-identifies as “Canadian” to some extent, but cannot be fully “Canadian.” This leads us back to the question of “What is ‘Canadian’?” and “What constitutes ‘Canadian’ identity?” Hikari mentions always being at two locations: Asia and Canada. In her life, it seems that these two distinct identities are both present within herself. This fluid feature of her two identities reminds me of a statement by Ien Ang (2001), an “Asian” academic who lives in Australia, who observes:

Self-reflexivity requires me to be aware of my own relative cultural empowerment vis-à-vis those much more restricted in their mobility, both physical and cultural, than I am, even as my ‘Asianness’ remains an at best ambivalent signifier for my (lack of) ability to belong, to feel at home in Australia (p. 158).

Even though Hikari did not mention her “empowerment,” her physical and cultural mobility between Canada and Asia seemed to play a role in how Asian she feels being in Canada, where she also feels comfortable and possibly empowered, unlike those who may feel stuck in their lifestyles in Canada and cannot afford to go back to their Asian “home.”

There are also some racial tensions associated with being Asian. Foo Ja, another faculty member, expressed her feelings about being an Asian woman in the academy in contrast to white and other (non-Asian) minority groups:
I just knew that their (white women’s) experience of being in academia would be different than an Asian woman in academia. And primarily I think one of the things about being Asian in academia, or being Asian in general or let alone Asian women, is [that] you [as an Asian woman] don’t make sense to a lot of people. You are not black, you are not brown, you are not Aboriginal and you are not white. You are “Asian.” It’s one of probably the least understood racialized minority groups. Most white people have no idea whether they (Asians) even are racialized. They (white people) know that they (Asians) are different, that they are not white, but they (white people) really have no idea what to do with them (Asians). So I think all sorts of things happen to Asians that really don’t happen to other racial minority groups.

Foo Ja’s interpretation of being “Asian” can be characterized by two terms – “ambiguity” and “struggle” (also see Jo-Anne Lee, 2006). Foo Ja pointed out that Asians are racially minoritized, yet this is not acknowledged in general because their social category does not fit with those who are white, black, brown or Aboriginal – ambiguity, even though the experiences of Asians are very much racialized – struggle. There exists “the inescapable racialization of ‘Asians’ in the dominant cultural imaginary,” which involves “the lumping together and homogenization of a group of people on the basis of a phenotypical discourse of ‘race’” (Ang, 2001, p.113), which refers to, from what Foo Ja said, Asians’ invisibility in their racial status. This invisibility is often articulated through a racialized stereotype of “Asians” as a “model minority” group. Jo-Anne Lee (2006) states:

Racial constructions of asians as the model minority in North America’s vertical mosaic, a perception fostered by White academics, helps to deny the reality that, like other non-White Canadians, asian canadians are also marginalized and victimized in all aspects of social economic, cultural, and political life. We are defined in terms of our cultural traditions, not in terms of our struggles. (p.33)

In other words, Asians tend to become invisible and ignored when it comes to an issue of inequity and social injustice because of the ambiguity of “Asianness,” as well as the model minority stereotype that overlooks their struggles. However, Asians or Asian objects receive much attention when they become a symbol or representation of their culture through the eyes of the dominant group. Some of the participants described how their East Asian identity unnecessarily becomes the centre of the topic of conversation with their colleagues. For example:

Interviewer: Do you think you are also perceived as [an ethnicity] by other colleagues too?
Lynn: I think so. I mean, they always mention things related to [the country] or [its ethnicity] around me. So I guess that’s because they consider me as [the ethnic person].

Interviewer: I see. Does it annoy you or…?
Lynn: No it doesn’t.

Lynn is aware that her colleagues perceive her as [an person of the ethnicity] due to the way they always approached her. In this kind of environment, Lynn’s ethnic identity seems to become reinforced through her colleagues’ eyes, as one’s self-identification is affected by the surrounding discourse (Shohat, 1995). Another participant questioned the fact that when some of her colleagues talked to her, it was always about something related to her country of origin (e.g. commodity, trip, food, etc.) as if they were relevant to her life. This participant was located in the position of a “cultured” person based on the definition of “culture” that her colleagues understood (see also Mayuzumi, Motobayashi, Nagayama & Takeuchi, 2007). Here it can be glimpsed how Asians or Asian things receive attention when they are objectified through exoticism and a desire for Others (Yegenoglu, 1998; Yoshihara, 2003).

It is interesting to compare and contrast the general discourse of “Asia” or “Asian,” discussed in Chapter 2, and the subjective interpretation of being “Asian” that Asian women themselves claim. The first focuses on Asians as historical, social and cultural subjects to analyze, while the subjective accounts from within the group of people shows their agency in some way. For example, Hikari implied victorious consciousness of being “Asian” and Foo Ja emphasized her resistance against the invisibility of “Asians” as a minority group. Nevertheless, both are part of the complex entanglement of what “Asia” or “Asian” means.

The participants’ narratives about being “Asian” imply that for them to identify themselves through their experiences, they need to mention the notions of “Canadian” or “white” in juxtaposition to how they self-identify. In other words, their “Asian” identity is mentioned in relation to the socially dominant population of “Canadians” or white people by implying the power relations – mainstream and periphery, visible and invisible.

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28 Because the detailed nature of the participant’s narrative may disclose her identity, I chose to make it quite vague in my description here.
Yet both of the opposing meanings in these relations are interdependent (see Said, 1979; Yegenoglu, 1998).

3. Stereotypes and Questioned Authority

3.1 “Oriental” others – race, gender, and age

As discussed in Chapter 2, “Oriental” has been used as a derogatory term in the contemporary North American context to refer to the regions and people of East Asia. This term is derogatory because of the geographical, cultural, racial and sexual othering at the root of this concept (Uchida, 1998; see Chapter 2).

I heard the term for the first time in my everyday life from my white American female housemate referring to where I was coming from when I was new to the U.S. as an international student. I was perplexed to hear that she was labeling us\(^{29}\) as “Oriental.” Yet, I still could not articulate at that time what was wrong with the term or her usage of it. Upon reflection, the upsetting aspect was that I also started using the term by taking on an Occidental perspective, which I did not question as “colonial”; rather almost considered as “more civilized” (see more details in Mayuzumi, 2011).

Likewise, Sue, a part-time faculty member in the humanities who immigrated to Canada in the 1990s, explained that she was puzzled by the term “Oriental” and its distinction from “Asian” until her colleagues explained the difference:

They (my colleagues) were saying when they say “Oriental” they really distinguish our Asian people from Western European people. So, that’s how the “Oriental” came. So, it’s a kind of [distinction] and it’s separating [the two]. But “Asian” is more like a [geographical] term or word. So, this is just, we are in the Asian countries but “Oriental.” When they say it (Oriental), you would [feel] something, kind of looked down on. Yeah. But I think it’s changing again. I don’t know. I don’t really feel that way maybe.

There are a couple of interesting points to note here. First, this conversation is consistent with the observation that the term “Oriental” is a Western construct because, in this situation, the “Oriental” person herself (Sue) was not aware of its connotation. It was her colleagues in the West who described the distinction to her, as she told me that she periodically received English language help from her colleagues. More than a language

\(^{29}\) Here “us” refers to people from/in East Asia including my family and myself.
issue, this was a foreign concept for Sue. Second, Sue was told that the term “Asian” is more of a “geographical term,” which was completely neutralized and depoliticized in discussions by her colleagues. Third, Sue expressed how she herself felt about the terminology “Oriental” and did not completely believe her colleagues’ definition.

The terms, “Oriental” and “Asian” are not necessarily separate and this point has been recognized by some scholars who also interrogate the term “Asian.” Jo-Anne Lee (2006) points out that “much like the term ‘Oriental,’ the West also inflects the term ‘Asian’ with Orientalist desires and imaginings” (p.23). Lucy, a tenured faculty member in social science with an equity-and-diversity framework in her scholarship, shared a story of her experience that reminded her of her Asian identity when the term “Oriental” was used. She described an incident that happened in class during her graduate studies. She stated:

And I remember the instructor saying to me, “Lucy, you are like the inscrutable Oriental.” And I knew that was not good what she said to me. And I was incredibly hurt by it, that I actually completely shut up.

Lucy described how much she was hurt by the instructor’s Occidental racist comment describing her as an “inscrutable Oriental.” This term and its concept seem congruent with what Lippi-Green (1997) points out about Asian stereotypes. She says, “… our understanding of Asians – all Asians – has been reduced to a series of simple images. They are inscrutable, hard-working, ambitious, intelligent but unintelligible people, and they make us uncomfortable” (p. 102, emphasis added to original). Whether or not we can confirm that this was the meaning the instructor tried to convey, her usage of the term “inscrutable Oriental” must be interrogated within the discourse of Asians because of the emotional reaction experienced. As Scheurich and Young (2002) emphasize, unconscious acts are often underpinned by dominant norms that favour dominant groups and ignore the subjectivity of the marginalized. In fact, pain and shock emerged in Lucy when confronted by the historical and contemporary discourses of Asians. Lucy continued:

And what was interesting is that I know I did a good presentation because, frankly, all the classmates were really impressed by it. And I went home that day feeling really lousy. And then I even told another teacher about it, at the university, and they said “Do you want to do something about it?” And I said no. I said, “No, because I plan to go on and I don’t want to be labeled as the person
who raised this issue.” And I said, “Frankly, I’m not in a position right now where I can do something about it.” But I was upset by it.

Moreover, Lucy had to deal with the emotional impact even after going home, despite her classmates’ positive reception of her presentation. Because of her vulnerability as an Asian student in the academic context, she also had to suppress her anger and frustration towards the racist comment in the moment she received it and afterwards. This narrative illustrates how racist and othering the academic setting can be for Asian students and faculty. In this case, the term “Oriental” was used overtly by the academic authority, with no critical understanding of the impact of the term itself.

For the participants, not only being Asian but being an Asian woman is an important dimension of their identity and their everyday lives. Foo Ja, a faculty member in social science, shared with me her experiences of being offended by one of her white female colleagues who repeatedly made inappropriate comments about Foo Ja’s body:

[Last night one of the staff was just telling me that I’m probably at least 30 years younger than her. She’s [in her mid 50s]. So she’s basically…I don’t know what the hell she’s talking about. I told her I’m [in my late 30s] but it doesn’t really matter, she forgets anyway. And she’s constantly talking about my body, which I find [offensive just] because it’s small. And … she talks about it in front of the male faculty.

In this narrative, Foo Ja makes the point that her body had become an exotic feminized object in the eyes of her female colleague. Despite this colleague’s likely desire for the small body that Foo Ja possessed, Foo Ja felt terribly uncomfortable, exoticized and discounted. Foo Ja expressed anger at her colleague’s inappropriate and careless comments that were even insensitively made in front of mutual male colleagues, whose involvement seemed to have enhanced the level of discomfort for Foo Ja as a woman.

Unconscious acts become important sites of analysis when it comes to power issues, as they are also normalized through systems of oppression. In one interpretation, Foo Ja’s body became racialized and sexualized through the concept of desire in Orientalist discourses. Yegenoglu (1998) suggests that:

To give an account of otherness through the concept of desire implies a formulation of the process of colonial identification not as an affirmation of a pregiven identity, but as a process in which both the “Western subject” and the
“Oriental other” are mutually implicated in each other and thus neither exists as a fully constituted entity. (p.58)

Interpreting Foo Ja’s comment through this lens, the “incessant movement of desire” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p.58) Foo Ja’s colleague had for her “Oriental” body played a role in constructing the line drawn between Foo Ja and her colleague in a power dynamic. The fact that her colleague consistently made comments about Foo Ja’s physical features and put Foo Ja in an uncomfortable situation became the “process in which both the ‘Western subject’ and the ‘Oriental other’ [were] implicated” (Yegenoglu, 1998, p.58) through the colonial act as historically “white women were central to the shaping of (American) Orientalism” (Yoshihara, 2003, p.6).

Moreover, Foo Ja’s colleague not only “praised” Foo Ja’s physical features but also discounted Foo Ja’s authority by repeatedly emphasizing how young Foo Ja must be when she was actually not as young. After discussing another example of her male colleague mentioning her youthful appearance, she eloquently expressed how she felt:

I am sure people think I have a chip on my shoulder, at least one colleague, I think, does. But I don’t want to be treated like I am in my late twenties because I am the same age as you. And I don’t want to be treated like I am ten years younger than you. Why would I want that when we are supposed to be equal, we’re supposed to be colleagues and…? I don’t really want to be talked down to. Not really.

Both of Foo Ja’s scenarios address the perception of Asian women’s body features and age. In general, being small and looking young could be of general desire for women. Yet, it seems that both aspects made Foo Ja feel belittled and frustrated, especially in the academy, where authority and knowledge are considered to come together. Additionally, Foo Ja is cognizant of other people perceiving her as an angry individual. Overall, Foo Ja could be perceived as a small, young Asian woman who is always angry. This image of the angry Asian woman responding to racism resonates with the comments of the authors of a book chapter entitled, *Theorizing experiences of Asian women faculty in second- and foreign-language teacher education*, which states:

We are often seen as “angry” Asian women who make our white colleagues and students “uncomfortable.” … Invoking the unsmiling “angry Asian woman” or “angry woman of color” stereotype is a discursive ploy that serves to silence and
subordinate the voices of women of color.” (Lin, Kubota, Motha, Wang, and Wong, 2006, p.74-75)

It seems that the stereotype of an Asian woman being tiny, submissive and non-threatening is still shown and perpetuated through the pathologized image of angry Asian women embedded in the “discursive ploy” mentioned above.

Stories of Asian women looking younger were also shared by other participants. For example, Susan, a faculty member in social science, stated:

[I]n general, people don’t think I am a prof. So, … support staff and me joke about it [and support staff say] “Oh she’s (Susan’s) posing like a prof but she is really a student.” Just saying that I look young… And then somebody else would say, “Oh, because she’s not wearing a ring here” meaning I am not married and that’s why I look young. … So, they think that’s [a] compliment, I look young. But if I [was of a] different race, I don’t think I would get that kind of stuff.

In this instance, Susan was fully aware that the “looking-young” discourse on Asian women was associated with racial constructions of the Asian body. Considering Foo Ja’s narratives as well, I would add a gender dimension to the analysis and suggest that the youthful image discourse is a racialized and gendered construct of Asian women’s bodies. It is this intersection of race, gender and age that operates in their daily interactions, especially by taking away their authority.

Lucy also raised the issue that her authority as a professor was being discounted. For example, she shared an anecdote addressing presumptions about her age, which took authority away from her. She said:

[A]nother thing that happens is around age. When you’re [her ethnicity] you look younger. So, I had that a lot when I started in my pre-tenure position. For example, I won [a] very prestigious award at the university, across the entire university. And what happened was, when I went to go get the award, the woman had said to me, “Oh, I could have sworn you were an older woman by looking at your CV.” So that’s another thing too, is that, what you’re able to accomplish and…ageism. When I started at the university, I was hit with ageism, like around age, gender, race, everything.

Lucy’s discussion of others’ perception of her youthful appearance evolved into her analysis of the intersection of other aspects of her identity such as race and gender. She expressed her frustrations with the fact that her academic success and capabilities were overlooked due to her social location, including her gender, race, youthful appearance,
and “everything” because they all intersect and construct certain imaginings and stereotypes. The woman expressed surprise at seeing Lucy’s body, which did not match her imagined figure of someone experienced and old enough to win the award.

This point is also reflected in another incident described by Lucy:

And, the students too, even to this day. I think because…, my framework and perspective is on [diversity and equity], I get really, at times, weird student evaluations. The student evaluations will talk about, all the time, how intelligent I am, and they, they’re very complementary about how intelligent I am. And then they’ll combine it with, about how I’ve made a difference in the curriculum and how important this course is. But then they’ll slam me with, “But, she’s also very divisive.”

The fact that her students’ emphasized how “intelligent” she was raises the question of what she was assumed to be based on initial impression or appearance. Both of the incidents described above seem to illustrate that whenever Lucy was successful, people, including her colleague and students called this into question by reminding her that her being an Asian woman makes it harder for people to believe her achievements and level of intelligence. Lucy also added, “they are not used to seeing a [her ethnicity] woman in a position of authority who can actually impart knowledge.” She was fully aware that her experiences arose from her being an atypical (Asian/[her ethnicity]) figure holding a position of authority, while looking young and being a woman. After all, Lucy may be depicted as an “Oriental” woman, who is far from an authoritative figure due to stereotypes towards Asian women. In the next section, I will further examine issues of “authority,” which I argue is a key to better understanding sources of their daily struggles as faculty and Asian women in the academic landscape.

3.2 Questioned authority – race, gender, and accent

Authority as a pedagogue is often an important yet challenging characteristic to adopt in order to legitimize their academic identity and scholarly work for academics, especially women of color (Amin, 1999; Hoodfar, 1992; Luke, 1996). Luke (1996) asserts this point saying:

[S]ince women generally, and especially women of ethnic and non-English-speaking background, are not the standard bearers of intellectual authority and institutional power, we find ourselves in that unstable place of being institutionally authorized to speak, yet often de-authorized by students’ and
colleagues’ cultural assumptions about female professors, or worse, black or Asian female professors. (p.286)

Susan, a participant, was conscious of the fact that the combination of her accent and her appearance might reduce the level of authority that she carried as a pedagogue. She said, “I think the default is that, …, I go in, I look younger. I don’t look like I belong here. I speak with an accent so default is to suspect that I am not as capable as a teacher.”

Whereas Susan’s accent would confirm that she was not “Canadian” but an “Immigrant” or “Asian,” her status as an “Asian woman” might further label her as not authoritative enough. Based on her study examining immigrant women of colour teaching English as Second Language (ESL) in Canada, Amin (1999) asserts that gender is also an important part of the construction of who has “authenticity and authority.” She states:

Their (ESL students’) response to their minority women teachers is forged in the structural context of a society in which we communicate the message that important people are White, Anglo, and male. In the classroom, we have to address and challenge our students’ perceptions of an ideal ESL teacher and thus try to unravel their sexism and racism. (p.103)

When it comes to the authority of the teacher, not only race and accent but also gender plays a critical role in bringing il/legitimacy to the teacher’s position as an authority figure. More specifically, what prevents Asian women from having an authoritative image in the public space?

Hodi, who worked in an administrative position, shared her story of her authority being discounted by her colleagues. She said:

I don’t think there is anything really overt and apparent. But when I think of some of these instants that I was involved, I had to ask myself,… what if my position was Associate Dean? What if I was a male? What if I was, you know, ten feet tall so to speak and I had a kind of personality? … Some of my colleagues have that kind of presentation, personality, persona and as well as the title that reflects that. I sort of doubt they (these colleagues who want to attack me) would have done it. Not that they would be completely docile or bowing down but I don’t think they would have sent the nasty letters to me or contested me so vehemently. That’s my suspicion.

In this narrative, Hodi discusses what type of person (in contrast with her female body that lacked the stereotypical figure of a “big guy”) would be more accepted by her colleagues and give her more authority. Elsewhere, she also said, “If I am a non-Asian
and six feet or seven feet tall, a man dressed and talking assertive and aggressively, maybe it will go better.” Even though Hodi was given the administrative/authoritative position by the institution, when it came to her individual interactions with her colleagues for her administrative responsibilities, she received some backlash. It is important to note that there are complicated relationships among the stakeholders of the academy such as administrators and faculty depending on how much autonomy is accorded to the institution. Gordon (2010) refers to this point saying:

One crucial dimension of the relationship is the fact that institutional policies and procedures are at the core of the everyday working lives of senior administrators and related professionals, whereas they tend to be seen as unwanted bureaucratic intrusion by the many faculty who eschew personal involvement in policy formulation and decision making. (p.16)

Given the relationship between the position of administrators and that of faculty (see Acker, 2008), Hodi reached the point where she had to even think about how her individual features (e.g. gender, race, other appearances) were perceived by her colleagues to make sense of the treatment that she had received from them. This seems to have been a case where “authority is always imaginary, but the power of authority is always real” (as cited in Bauer, 2009, p.23). Hodi possibly recognized this power of authority that operated in complex ways. Bauer (2009) points out that “at the heart of defining authority is the understanding that institutions are embedded in historical and social contingencies and complexities” (p.23). In other words, the institution is not a utopian place for consensus, but rather it is an entity full of power dynamics that reflect social and historical phenomena and are influenced by the institutional policies and procedures.

In further reflection, Hodi stated, “In appearance and in my demeanour, I look…very caring and very accommodating, …wanting to… help and so I probably set that kind of expectation for people.” These characteristics she described of herself can be contrasted with characteristics of a stereotypical “authoritative” figure she described earlier – talking assertively and aggressively. I would argue that these characteristics were not independent of race or gender, but very much tied into her social markers of identity as stereotypes and expectations of how she was supposed to be.
Arisaka (2000) argues that being both “Asian” and a woman produces “double submissiveness.” It is a stereotype that is far from any authoritative figure in the dominant discourses on Asian women. Asian women, like other racially minoritized women specifically labeled as “immigrant women,” are often stereotyped as “dependent” or in need of strong male direction (Cresse, 2005; Lippi-Green, 1997). In fact, another participant, Janet, described her realization that she was being perceived through the notion of dependency/independency as an Asian woman. She stated:

They (people) ask me about the marriage…. and marriage with my [male] partner and things like that …[and have] some kind of comments like I am an independent person or something like that…which I think if I were a native dominant white, Canadian person then they wouldn’t say that.

In her anecdote, Janet revealed a stereotype about Asian women being dependent which brought on comments regarding her independence from her male partner. Such a comment also had connotations of a heterosexual norm in addition to patriarchal relationships of Asian women with their male partners. The interesting point here is that Janet was aware of her Asian-woman-ness in contrast with “native dominant white Canadian” people (females in particular), who Janet implied would not be seen through the dependency/independency frame, at least to the same extent.

This Asian-woman-ness or the stereotypes of Asian women seem to be reinforced by the issue of accent in spoken English. In her poem entitled “I Love Asian Women,” Rana Chang (2000) sarcastically describes a typical “Asian fetish boy.” In the poem, she says:

You like girls fresh off the plane with their soft voices and thick accents. They raise them so demure there – even when angry they still cute! Funny you think them naïve when you the one ready to believe anything. If I told you the squid eye the best part You would proudly eat it, smiling ink in your teeth. (p.157)

In this Orientalist gaze of the “Asian fetish boy,” even the accent of an Asian woman is a “cute” and exotic feature. The submissive, dependent, docile, and exotic image of Asian women in the dominant discourse must be interrogated. On the other side of the coin, if an Asian woman is fluent in English and does not have an “accent,” the degree of her exoticism may be lower. Chang (2000) continues in her poem: “Asian American girl is harder to understand. She speaks perfect English and thinks you the foreigner” (p.157).
Chang describes how an Asian-looking woman speaking perfect English does not meet the expectations of what Asian women should look and sound like; therefore she becomes hard to understand or “inscrutable.”

In academia, an Asian woman who speaks fluent English “without an accent” would have different experiences from one “with an accent” in terms of what kind of comments she receives on evaluations. As noted above, Lucy, an Asian faculty member whose first language was English, shared stories of having received comments from students regarding how intelligent she was. To reiterate, Lucy could not consider this a simple complement, as sometimes students would add negative comments (“She’s also very divisive”). Lucy questioned what was at the root of the complements:

When I read those evaluations, I always think, “What does my intelligence have to do with anything?” And for me, it suggests that, they are not used to seeing a [her ethnicity] woman in a position of authority who can actually impart knowledge. I think that being who I am, I get more challenge around my authority to grade and to have knowledge. So those are the ways that, you know, I do feel that my Asian [her ethnicity] identity mediates what I experience.

Even though Lucy did not mention her English proficiency as a reason for receiving such compliments from students, it might have played a role in how she was perceived by her students. What is interesting here is that the comments about her intelligence made Lucy feel as if her authority was being built up to be discounted to an even greater extent. It could have been the case that Lucy was hard to categorize for the students because she was not acting as a typical Asian woman, who would normally not be in an authority position, and also spoke “perfect” English.

When some other Asian women faculty members came across students’ resistance in the classroom, they saw their identities as Asian women as the basis for students to challenge their authority. For example, Janet shared her experience of having a problematic student who disrupted the class environment by refusing to engage in class discussion:

I was wondering what was the cause of the problem and so one hypothesis that I had was perhaps I look younger and perhaps I look whatever ethnic minority. And so when I was wondering what was going on, sort of like brainstorming in my mind, … being Asian is one category. But eventually I think it wasn’t because of my Asian-ness because … the white professor with an accent had a problem [with
the same student too. But when I was doing that kind of problem solving, brainstorming, then being an Asian came up as one potential factor.

No matter what was the real reason for the student’s behaviour, gender, race, accent and other visible markers of identity of the minority instructors cannot be dismissed where students’ resistance to authority is observed (Ng, 1993).

Spoken language could be an important addition to race and gender as visibly identifiable markers of Asian women faculty. The question of who is a legitimate citizen or a foreigner in the Canadian environment (where English is the dominant language) seems to be linked to who has authority and who doesn’t in the Canadian academy. These questions are often answered through language that is spoken by the person in addition to her/his race and gender. I will focus more on language issues of Asian women faculty in the next chapter.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how the socially constructed discourse of Canadian citizenry operates in the everyday lives of Asian women faculty and what constitutes the Oriental others embedded in their “Asian-woman-ness” in the given contexts. Orientalist discourses on “Asian (women)” can be seen to be derived from the Canadian history of imperialism and contemporary discussions of citizenship. The first theme identified, “Canadian” and “Asian,” shows the interdependent nature of “Canadianness” and an “Asian” identity within Orientalism. The second theme, stereotypes and questioned authority, highlights that various dimensions of the identity of Asian women faculty (e.g. gender, race, age, and language) have a combined influence on how Asian women faculty members are perceived and treated, and accordingly, how Asian women faculty proceed in their professional lives in the academy. I contend that, after all, Asian women are socially and historically categorized “immigrants” as “illegitimate” citizens and that their positions as university faculty, rather than bringing legitimacy to their citizenry, involves some tension between their authority and their locations as “immigrant” women.

This chapter has also illustrated the subject-making processes of the Asian women faculty tied into identifications (e.g. “Canadian” and “Asian”) and their experiences of stereotypes and discrimination. Although the term “Asian-Canadian” is used among diasporas of Asian descent, including some of my participants, in order for them to claim
their Canadian citizenship, there seems to still be tension between the two terms, “Asian” and “Canadian” through Asian women faculty’s self-identification and stereotypes and discrimination against them. The specific experiences of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy are important, as their subject-making processes help us see what kind of forces and discourses they are surrounded by daily. Moreover, their stories lead us to interrogate ideological rhetoric such as “multiculturalism” and “difference and diversity,” which has been celebrated and promoted nationally, especially in higher education institutions. The ideological rhetoric could mask what actually goes on in the lives of minoritized bodies including Asian women faculty. In the next chapter, I will focus on language, which is one of the markers that draws a line between “legitimate” and “illegitimate” citizens within nationalist discourses by highlighting the struggles with language proficiency faced by some Asian women faculty.
Chapter 6
Language, Power, and the Academy

1. Introduction
As briefly discussed in the previous chapter, one of the identity markers that affects the academic lives of Asian women faculty is the English language, both in terms of speaking and writing. The language issues were so substantial in the narratives of some participants that I decided to foreground them in a separate chapter. Specifically, I discuss both technical difficulties and social barriers emergent from their experiences with spoken and written language by asking and answering the following questions: What difficulties did the Asian women faculty have to face in their academic lives and how did they deal with them? Furthermore, by examining the language issues from a transnational feminist perspective, I also pay focused attention to systemic issues (e.g. English language hegemony)\textsuperscript{30} and how language difficulties (especially with their spoken English) operate in combination with participants’ race and gender in their subject making process. As the title of this chapter suggests, I argue that language and power are inseparable and that the power of language plays a role in determining who is considered to be legitimate and who is not in a given social context. Shohat (2006) also observes the power of language from a transnational feminist perspective:

> Although languages as abstract entities do not exist in hierarchies of value, languages as lived operate within hierarchies of power. Language and power intersect not only in obvious conflicts concerning official tongues, but also wherever the question of language difference becomes involved with asymmetrical political arrangements. As a potent symbol of collective identity, language is the focus of fierce loyalties that exist at the razor edge of national difference. (p.127)

I wish to draw on Shohat’s key point by shedding light on how the language of Asian women faculty “as lived operate within hierarchies of power” in academic contexts.

\textsuperscript{30} It is important to note that there is an increasing force towards “globalization of English” in academic communities under the neoliberal trend, global academic mobility and research collaborations (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Rizvi and Lingard (2010) state that “between 80 and 90 per cent of the world’s academic papers are written in English” (p.177).
This chapter consists of three parts: in 1) Spoken English and stereotypes, I discuss how spoken language intersects with other identity markers of Asian women faculty and how the intersection affects their daily lives; in 2) Academic writing in English as a hurdle, I illustrate the insights of Asian women faculty regarding academic writing in a dominant language, English, and the material and mental consequences of their written English; and in 3) Legitimating self, I highlight how some Asian women faculty overcame their struggles with English hegemony (especially issues with the spoken language) in academic contexts.

2. Spoken English and Stereotypes

Spoken English is not simply a language that happens to be spoken by the majority of people in Canada as one of the official languages. It has a deep impact on people’s everyday lives, where the power of language operates in various ways (Lippi-Green, 1997; Phillipson, 1992; Shohat, 2006; Willinsky, 1998). Lippi-Green (1997) advocates that language must be seen as a social construct and that the social repercussions of spoken English or of its variations have been overlooked by many linguists. She notes:

Language often becomes the focus of debate when these complex issues of nationality, responsibility, and privilege are raised. English, held up as the symbol of the successfully assimilated immigrant, is promoted as the one and only possible language of a unified and healthy nation. (p.217)

Although Canada has two official languages (English and French), unlike the U.S., which Lippi-Green (1997) focuses on, Canada is a society occupied by immigrants/non-native people dominated by Anglo-Saxon whiteness and therefore English as the hegemonic language (Li, 2003). Li (2003) claims that, like the U.S., Canada is also a country of immigrants through the colonization of North America by Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which has marginalized the indigenous people of the land. Lippi-Green’s (1997) observations of English as “the symbol of the successfully assimilated immigrant” and “[one of the two possible languages] of a unified and healthy nation” connects to Li’s (2003) analysis of Canada as a white settler society:

Over time, earlier immigrants and their descendants become old-timers of the land, and their charter status places them in a privileged position vis-à-vis the newcomers who must accept the conditions of entry and rules of accommodation laid down by those who came before them. The distinction between old-timers
and newcomers might seem trivial, since it is the duration of residence in the land that separates the two groups. In reality it is a difference between those who have the power and control to decide who the newcomers should be, and others who have to demonstrate their worth in order to gain entry and earn their place in the receiving society. (p.10)

The arguments set forward by Lippi-Green (1997) and Li (2003) complement each other in emphasizing two key points with respect to the official languages in Canada (here particularly English): 1) The official languages have been a central component of nation building and 2) they influence issues of power and control in the screening process for potential immigrants to Canada. Haque (2010) contests the status of the Canadian multiculturalism policy as originating and stemming from the Canadian bilingual framework, which centres the “two founding races,” the French and English, by erasing “the founding status of Indigenous peoples and [rendering] the ‘Other ethnic groups’ … as mere [peripheral] cultural communities” (p.81). Therefore, those who cannot speak English or French automatically become “outsiders,” “immigrants” or “non-Canadian.” In fact, Haque (2004) summarizes this point in her critical discourse analysis of Canadian immigration reports by drawing on Bourdieu’s notion of language as symbolic capital. She emphasizes that language has constituted a symbolic form of domination within Canadian immigration policy that indicates that competency in an official language is critical to (an immigrant’s) “integration into Canadian society” (p.65). Language competency becomes a yardstick to draw a line between legitimate speakers/citizens and illegitimate speakers/immigrants. As my participants were all from English-mediated institutions in predominantly English speaking provinces, I focus only on English as the language under scrutiny here.

Lucy, a faculty member and second generation Chinese-Canadian, is fully aware of the stigma attached to those whose first language is not English, as her parents were part of that group. She witnessed racial discrimination against her parents during her childhood, and observed that incompetence in spoken English was at the root of their ill treatment. She asserted this point by saying:

[M]y mother can’t read or write English and my father had better English language skills but my father used to, you know, [said] things to me like, “You should speak up. You’re so lucky that you can speak the language.” So I always knew that with the privilege I had around having English as my first language
because I would continuously see the racism that my parents would experience through their business. I would see the racism that my siblings would experience.

Lucy’s analysis connected “racism” with English incompetence in the given context. She also acknowledged the privilege of speaking English as her first language, as it protected her from the kind of racism encountered by her other family members.

In addition, speaking English does not automatically mean one will be considered “Canadian.” Certain types of spoken English are more legitimate than others in the Canadian context. More specifically, one has to speak the English of the Western Empire, which includes Canadian, British and American English. Speaking English with a non-British, non-American or non-Canadian accent is associated with an immigrant status (Creese, 2005; Creese & Kambere, 2003; Folson, 2004; Miedema & Tastsoglou, 2000; Skachkova, 2007). Even among people who speak non-Canadian English, there is a hierarchy based on the origin of their accent. For example, Katon, a faculty member who moved from her country of origin in East Asia to North America to take on a faculty position, noted, “People in this country, even in Toronto, even my colleague[s], they will say ‘a colleague with [a] French accent is cute,’ right. But if a colleague [has a] non-European accent, that’s wrong.” Throughout the interview, Katon expressed her frustration with the bias against non-native speakers of English.31 Through her lived experiences within the Canadian academy, she became aware of the distinction and privilege that is socially constructed between European and non-European (in this case, “Asian”) accents. The fact that she did not consider the French accent coming from the other official language in Canada, but instead categorized it as another European accent implies that 1) English is much more dominant than French in Canada in her eyes, as Li (2003) also confirms, and 2) the line Katon draws between European (e.g. French) and non-European (i.e. her native language) is more significant than the line between official languages (e.g. French) and non-official languages (i.e. her native language).

These points reassert the privilege of European-ness in the dominant language of Canada, which stems from the imperial history of Europe (see Willinsky, 1998) as well as

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31 I am aware of the problematic nature of the terms, ‘native speakers’ and ‘non-native speakers,’ in the sense that the notion of “native speakers” originates in the colonial history of the land and embodies the linguistic chauvinism (Willinsky, 1998, p.197). There is a risk, by using the terms, without a caution, of allowing the native speakers to maintain privileges by nation, race, gender and class (Willinsky, 1998).
racist history of Canadian immigration (see Dua, 2003; Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998; also Chapter 2). Willinsky (1998) emphasizes that English, and other European languages, reached hegemonic status as a world language and a national language in many countries not by accident but through the course of European colonial history. Willinsky (1998) reminds us that “[language] was used to regulate and police access to authority and knowledge among colonized peoples” (p.191). Similarly, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) assert that “the global rise of English [language] has been driven by British imperialism and the ascension of the US economy following the Second World War” (p.178). To this analysis of the colonial nation-building process, Haque (2004) adds that “the myth of common origin/history [in the nation] can be reified through language, and language can also be invested with a sense of a common destiny [for the nation]” (p.61). Contemporary life is still implicated in the past and Canada, with its Anglo-Saxon whiteness, is not faultless with regard to racial and ethnic imbalance of power (Bannerji, 2000). Furthermore, a hierarchy of languages is also present in historical observation. Drawing on the work of the German philosophers Herder\(^{32}\) and Schleiermacher\(^{33}\) in his book entitled Learning to divide the world: Education at empire’s end, a Canadian scholar, Willinsky, comments:

Schleiermacher states that “language, thus, just like the Church or state, is an expression of a peculiar life” (cited by Fishman, p.127), whereas Herder asks, in observing how the Chinese were held in “childish captivity” by their language, “Is not the language of each country the clay out of which the ideas of a people are formed, preserved, and transmitted?”(cited by Olender, 1992, p.46). This linguistic romanticism simply added another dimension to the European fascination with the determination and division of peoples. (Willinsky, 1998, p.198)

This statement raises the question of whether or not the “European fascination” continues to manifest itself through the contemporary linguistic and cultural power dynamic.

In fact, Katon is not the only person who points out the hierarchical difference between European and non-European accents. Skachkova (2000) conducted interviews with 34 immigrant (or foreign-born) women faculty members in the U.S. She found that all of the six faculty members from Europe received positive reactions to their spoken

\(^{32}\) (1744 –1803)  
\(^{33}\) (1768-1834)
English, which includes even friendly responses, laughter and comments like “cute.” However, with respect to their spoken English, all six of the Asian faculty members received much colder reactions, with negative comments from their students. Lippi-Green (1997) also echoes this point by asserting, “It is crucial to remember that it is not all foreign accents, but only accent linked to skin that isn’t white, or which signals a third-world homeland, that evokes such negative reactions” (emphasis in original, p.238-239). English with an accent does not operate solely in the power dynamic of the society but has been racialized in social interactions. In other words, spoken English is intertwined with race as a significant element that leads to labeling an individual or a group of people. I call this trend “racialization of spoken English.”

The racialization of spoken English is tied into the discourse of who is a legitimate Canadian citizen. In this view, the inability to speak “Canadian” English is associated with the socially constructed nature of “immigrants,” which does not include European immigrants who are white. Canadian society legitimizes more of Europeans than non-Europeans, especially Anglophones, as “original inhabitants” who shaped Canada as a white space. Furthermore, European immigrants are usually considered to have entitlements that people of color do not have (Schick, 2002). This white privilege originates from the fact that Canada was constructed as a white settler society (Aguiar, 2001; Bannerji, 2000; Dua, 1999a; Ng, 1996; Razack, 2002; Schick, 2002). Therefore, the three characteristics – 1) being labeled as an “immigrant,” 2) being a person of colour, and 3) not speaking “Canadian” English (especially in the areas of Canada where English is predominantly spoken) – seem to all be linked in the public sphere and they influence how and why people are perceived as non-Canadian. English is first a survival skill for immigrants; however their daily lives are strongly affected as it is also a symbol of social status and legitimacy in the society.

Similarly, as the nation-state has been constructed with patriarchal roots, the notion of who is a “legitimate citizen” is also gendered (McClintock, 1995; Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999). It is reflected in the socially constructed notion of “immigrant women.” Ng (1996) points out that “in everyday life [in English Canada], women who are white, educated, and English-speaking are rarely considered to be immigrant” (p.16).
This observation also implies that what “colour” one’s English is\(^{34}\) (see Creese & Kambere, 2003) also creates divisions of power among women. Simultaneously, the combination of gender and spoken English also seems to create a division among the same racialized group. This point is illustrated in Katon’s reply to my question of what it would be like to be an Asian man in the Canadian academy:

> I think if this is Asian man and provided your English is … perfect, that will make no difference [in how you are treated]. [Being a] woman, I [think] that [it] is more challenging …[because they] just compare gender, right. … [You as a] woman ha[ve] always been more, you know, compared to men and then [you are] compare[d in terms of your] racial identity especially. You are not close to native [speakers]. You [did] not grow up here. So, that’s even more challenging. …let’s say if I were a man and even if I were Asian, in this department, then maybe I would be treated differently. But of course, because I am a woman then maybe, well, I am, I benefit from the affirmative action.

Especially because Katon started her academic position in a department that was predominantly white male and included an Asian man (according to what Katon said elsewhere), she was conscious about gender differences in her academic experiences. She implied that both the level of English and the gender of the faculty members influenced the hierarchy in terms of how people are treated by others. Katon drew the connection between how she was treated and the intersection of different aspects of her identity (i.e. race, gender, and language). Being a racially minoritized woman with an accent or possessing a socially constructed image of an immigrant (i.e. outsider) woman in a predominantly white and male department placed her at a low level on the hierarchical gradient of “citizenship” in the academy.

Many of the participants observed that being “Asian” was also associated with lack of fluency in Canadian, or “white” English. In other words, they experienced the stereotype that if one is Asian or looks Asian, s/he cannot speak Canadian English. One of the significant social markers of what is “Asian” and the emergent stereotypes associated with “Asianness” arises from the issue of facility in the use of the English language (Lippi-Green, 1997). One of the participants, Hikari, observed, “I think language might connect to being Asian or not Asian. I think being able to speak good English does make a big difference.” Even though she was not sure about the connection

\(^{34}\) i.e. combination of race and spoken English
between the language barrier and being Asian, she still implied the connection by bringing up the issue in her discussion on Asian women faculty. Another participant, Janet, illustrated how much more conscious she became of her accent when in the teaching evaluations her students described her way of talking in class as “mumbling.” Janet stated:

I think it’s (the students’ criticism is) an accent issue too because sometimes I do feel like I have a wrong accent and sometimes students ask me to repeat the word. And so it does involve with my accent because I am not a native speaker and I don’t pretend to be a native speaker.

Even though Janet did not connect her accent to her Asianness, she was very conscious about her accent. She explained that in the classroom she was often conscious about whether students could understand what she said and tried to be as clear as possible when speaking.

Lippi-Green (1997) also explains the effect that stems from the combination of accent and race exhibited by Asian Americans. She states:

Like African Americans, Asian Americans have more and more difficult hurdles to leap before they can transcend stereotype and be accepted as individuals. Accent, when it acts in part as a marker of race, takes on special power and significance. (p.228)

In the context of Asian-Canadians, what people see (i.e. race and gender) and hear (i.e. accent) from an Asian woman provides reason to label her in a negative or derogatory manner. For example, Susan, a faculty member in social science, described a classroom situation with a group of new students:

I think the default is that, you know, I go in, I look younger. I don’t look like I belong here. I speak with an accent so default is to suspect that I am not as capable of a teacher. So, I might need to tell you of working through the process of establishing myself as a teacher.

Susan makes the point that her authority as a professor was questioned by her students on the basis of her looks (e.g. race, gender and age) and accent, which meant she was perceived as an outsider. Such situations reminded her that she needed to work even harder to establish her reputation as a good pedagogue throughout the school term. Susan was fully aware that she also had “difficult hurdles to leap before she [could] transcend
stereotype and be accepted as an individual [or a pedagogue]” (Lippi-Green, 1997, p.228) with academic credibility.

Some studies have drawn attention to the impact of an instructor’s image on students’ learning experiences in the classroom. In a study by Rubin conducted in 1992 in the U.S. (Lippi-Green, 1997), a lecture for two different groups of students was pre-recorded by the same speaker (a native speaker of English from central Ohio). Each student could see an image of the supposed instructor on a projected photograph, and one group saw a white woman lecturer while the other half saw an Asian woman. Interestingly, the findings show that the two different projected figures for the same native speaker of U.S. English divided the students’ evaluations in two regarding whether she had a foreign accent. More specifically, the students who saw the Asian woman on the projected slide could not hear her English objectively and found some barrier to understanding what she was saying. This study shows that a perceived accent creates negative expectations among students, which can cause a communication breakdown resulting in a poor classroom experience (Lippi-Green, 1997, p.129). Negative reactions to one’s spoken language emerge not necessarily from what people actually hear as an accent. Such reactions are sometimes caused by what people think they hear as an illusion of accent based on what they saw. According to the findings of the study, Lippi-Green (1997) concludes:

Native speakers of English are usually given the benefit of the doubt; some turn out to be good teachers, and others do not. However, non-native speakers of English – specifically, speakers of Asian, African and South American languages – are often not given a chance at all. (p.129)

Moreover, it would seem that students’ perception of their instructors’ oral language skills based on their race could divide female instructors into at least two groups – legitimate (understandable) and illegitimate (not understandable). As Hoodfar (1992) points out, this division or differences among female pedagogues also has to be taken into consideration in feminist pedagogy.

Here, I do not mean that the students’ difficulties in understanding an accent should be dismissed. Rather, I wish to point out that the issue of a communication breakdown in the classrooms of Asian instructors or (non-white instructors) could possibly be racial (ethnic, and/or gender) issues with stereotypes and bias, which have
often been overlooked in the university’s responsibility to educate students (Lippi-Green, 1997). Janet expressed a similar point saying:

I think it will be really helpful if the university as an institution recognizes that kind of aspect (cultural difference) and takes that into consideration when they see that the tenure review for example or when they have a first year students’ orientation and teach how to behave in class and things like that and how to sensitize their reaction or response to faculty with different backgrounds.

While instructors with an accent (especially those who are non-white) are often under great pressure to do something (e.g. rehearsing out loud or hiring a voice coach) or feel stigmatized regarding their accent (Amin, 1999), there is a lack of discussion within the academic community regarding stereotypes and bias associated with race, gender and language stemming from the hegemony of the English language (Lippi-Green, 1997, see also Phillipson, 1992, Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Shohat, 2006; Willinsky, 1998).

3. Academic Writing in English as a Hurdle

Besides speaking English, writing in English has an impact on faculty’s daily academic life where it is a crucial task for their career. In this section, I examine the following questions: What kinds of struggles with academic writing in English do Asian women faculty face and what strategy do they seek out in such an anglocentric environment? What are the material consequences?

The level of confidence in English writing seemed to vary among the participants depending on their English-language background. Those who did not have much training in English and moved to the West in their adulthood seemed to be more concerned about their writing skills. For instance, Sue, a faculty member in humanities who immigrated to Canada in her adulthood, expressed her fear of teaching certain courses in Canada that involved the technical side of writing (e.g. grammar and styles). Sue stated:

[I am] kind of hesitant to take (or teach) a fourth year thesis class. So, talking to them (the students) and guiding them and developing concepts is fine with me. But I have to guide them with their writing. That’s my fear. Concept development is not a problem but writing, technical writing, I don’t have that ability. So I am still working on it.
As Sue stated, she was experienced and confident in her own conceptual ability, yet not confident and almost fearful of the fact that she would have to deal with her students’ written English language.

Expression of voice through the surface structures of text is a major challenge for second language writers (Cho, 2004; Flowerdew, 2000; Kubota, 2003). For some participants, writing in English was considered an unavoidable challenge in academia, as their main responsibilities included writing reports, publications and grant applications. For instance, some participants shared how they would actually send their academic writings to paid editors to edit their English before they completed their submissions. For such scholars, this practice was not optional, but was necessary in order to get her writings accepted by competitive outlets. For instance, Susan described her difficulty with English writing by saying, “English is not my first language so there are always process[es] of writing, rewriting and making it stick to logical English language as opposed to what I might think usually.” For Susan, the “logical English language” does not come to her because of its foreignness in her ways of thinking stemming from her native language. Like Susan, it is common for second language writers to view themselves as being at some disadvantage compared to first language writers in publishing (Cho, 2004; Skachkova, 2007), “particularly in areas such as ‘less facility of expression,’ ‘take[s] longer to write,’ ‘a less rich vocabulary,’ and ‘[difficulty in writing] introductions and/or discussions’” (Cho, 2004, p.49).

Sue also expressed her difficulties with writing and her consequent request for help with some paperwork. She stated:

[R]ecently I do [ask for help in writing] more. And mostly I do (write) alone but certain letter, I have to send it to somewhere [so] that it has to be really clear, then I ask them to. But mostly I would be comfortable to write and even there [are] a couple mistakes, sometimes I can just let it go. But, you know, certain situations I don’t want to be embarrassed. It’s kind of technical thing, that’s always my fear. I am not sure, you probably, you must be really good at grammar anyway.

Sue’s narrative shows how asking somebody to help with her writing was a strategy for self-protection rather than for the reader’s sake, as she noted, “I don’t want to be embarrassed.” This notion of embarrassment intersects with a sense of respectability as a person of authority. Sue does not want to leave the impression whereby her writing skills
become openly or visibly questionable. Getting one’s writing grammatically correct therefore means that the writing becomes “respectable.” As such, sending one’s paper to an editor is a way of gaining “respect” in one’s writing instead.

It is a relatively common practice for second language writers to seek assistance from native speakers of English and it is even recommended by some scholars. For example, in a qualitative study, Cho (2004) finds that all of her four participants who were non-native-speaking scholars sought assistance from native speakers (including co-authors in some cases) in revising their drafts and that it was beneficial in getting their papers accepted by journals. Kubota (2003) asserts that, in order to be accepted by the writing/publishing community, it is important for second language writers to “[conform] to existing conventions [of writing],” which “opens up possibilities of injecting alternative perspectives and expressions into the field” (p.65).

However, there are physical and material consequences in doing so. Other participants, Janet, Susan and Katon, also sent their writings to somebody else to edit. Janet noted, “…writing in English adds one more [layer of challenge] because I need to hire a professional copyeditor to clean my English. So, I need one more step, so that’s another factor to make it slower.” For those Asian women faculty members to send their writings to their editors, they had to finish their writings way before the actual deadlines so that they could get them edited, revised and then submitted in time. In addition to having to feel pressured to get it done effectively and efficiently, it also takes more time, energy and possibly more money. As Cho (2004) points out, it is not so simple to find an effective editor who is a native speaker and knows the research area. Furthermore, having a native-speaking co-author becomes a power relation between the non-native-speaking scholar and the native-speaking scholar. Using an editor to overcome the challenges of second language writers involves various layers of complication for them to tackle.

In contrast, Foo Ja, who was raised in Canada most of her childhood, explained that using a professional editor was one of many choices. To answer my question of whether she had any support system she used for her academic work, she stated:

I think I have some. I want more and I am trying to figure out how to go about doing it. I think it can come from so many different ways and one of them is literally just paying for it. I now use an editor because I get so tired of trying to find people to read my work. And then I figure I will have money and a start-up
fund. So I now use an editor and when I don’t [have people to read my work], it’s not as stressful for me because I always know that there’s someone I can talk to about my work and it’s their job to basically read it. … And I also read more books now about how to publish. So, yeah, I try and do all sorts of stuff as well as communicate with the people around me in other countries and cities and stuff.

It is interesting to compare Foo Ja’s motive to get a professional editor with that of Sue’s, Susan’s and Katon’s. For Foo Ja, it was an alternative method when she did not find anybody else to read her work. On the other hand, for the three other faculty members, it was often the only choice to have an editor to help with their writing in English. It seems that Foo Ja’s concern was not grammar or how to communicate her thoughts in English language correctly or effectively; rather, the problem was conveying thoughts in effective “academic” language. In fact, Hodi, another participant who has English as her second language and who often gets her writing copyedited, noted a distinction between [academic] writing ability and “English” writing ability. She stated:

> Copyediting is not the same as actually having the ability to write. I have the ability to write but I want to make sure that when it has to go out for adjudications and you submit journal articles you don’t show any mistakes grammatically and that kind of thing.

Hodi resists the idea that a good intellectual writer or knowledge holder always has to be correct in grammar. She asserted herself as a legitimate scholar who can express her intellectual ability. Nevertheless, there is more desperation and dependency in the need of the faculty members whose first language is not English than those whose first language is English as they have to attain an effective level of “English” language anyway, in addition to their effort to be prolific “academic” writers.

Looking at their students’ writing skills from faculty positions, participants shared varying perspectives. For example, Lynn, who was well trained in English in her country of origin, expressed her concerns about some of her (international) students’ limited writing skills:

> I have to say it’s a challenge especially for the PhD student who is working on her dissertation. She is taking so much of my time. And … I have given her advice and ideas but now I am actually doing it line by line. But … I still suggest that she finds a professional editor to do final editing.
Lynn sounded a little annoyed by the fact that she had to spend a great deal of time and energy on the writings of her students, for whom English is not their first language. This insight that Lynn made into the students’ poor English skills must have stemmed from the broader force acting on the academy. For example, universities and the provincial governments welcome international students as the education of international students is a major export industry\textsuperscript{35} for Canada (Owram, 2010; Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc, 2009) under neoliberal governance spreading in the nation-state as well as in the academy (see Chapter 3). However, the responsibility of faculty is already overloaded and there is no credit for faculty who support students with poorer English skills in the prevailing rewards system (Acker, 2001). Yet, another participant, Hodi, pointed out that Asian women faculty possibly attracted international students, who she perceived were more present than before, as Asian women faculty were seen as more understanding of students with international background due to their expertise and Canadian experience as Asian. As a matter of fact, Lynn’s academic area of interest included the field of her ethnic background and intercultural perspectives. She had expressed to me that it was the reason why she attracted a number of minority students including international students, rather than “white” students. Therefore, Lynn’s negative attitude towards the students was understandable in the sense that spending a good amount of energy and time for her students’ English could affect Lynn’s academic life where she did not receive any credit for it and had to be productive with her own work.

When I asked Lynn whether she went through the same kind of struggles when she was a student, she said:

Yeah, a little bit but I guess I was lucky. Students came in different levels. So, some students, the non-English speakers, some were better than others. It’s not like bragging but I guess I was one of the better ones. I never took a writing course. I never used professional editing. I was fine. But I was an English major, though. So I guess I had a better foundation.

On the other hand, Katon, a faculty member who had experienced discrimination for being a non-native speaker of English and who still struggled with the language in her profession, could understand Lynn’s disappointment. With respect to the economic impact of English as a world language in higher education, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) assert that “universities in English-speaking countries … have also benefited financially from the rise of English as a world language, both recruiting international students eager to learn English and often also setting up offshore operations, even campuses” (p.178).
academic life, provided a different perspective. She was frustrated with the fact that opportunities for graduate applicants for whom English was not their first language were diminished by her colleagues’ judgment of the applicants based on their English skills. Katon said, “I think that (English proficiency) is separate [from their academic capacity] and look at what you can get from the students.” Cho (2004) also stresses that the “local knowledge” which the non-native speaking scholars brings in is valuable to the academic community. Katon continued, “So with a thing like that, that is the kind of harsh feelings of being a non-native speaker.” Katon’s observation of the applicants being rejected because of their English skills reminded her of her own experiences – her academic capability tended to be judged along with her English skills. Katon was likely to have spoken for herself as well as the applicants.

On one hand, Lynn and Katon had conflicting attitudes about students’ English; Lynn encouraged her students to improve their writing skills, while Katon was agitated by the systemic discrimination against graduate applicants who were non-native speakers of English. On the other hand, whether or not they bought into the preference for “good” English, both of them still wanted their students with English as their second/third language to succeed. Their observations also arose from different situations. While Lynn felt that her English was sufficient enough to be well received by others, Katon had been struggling with the usage of English in her academic life. This comparison also reminds us that there are differences among Asian women faculty in terms of their experiences in the academy due to their different backgrounds, privileges, and struggles.

Even though Lynn claimed that she herself did not have any problem with her writing because she had learned English during her undergraduate and masters studies back in her country of origin, she at least must have spent tremendous time and energy to acquire adequate English skills during these studies. Some other participants also shared a story about what they had done in the past to improve their English skills to come to

36 Similarly, despite the fact that Hodi recognized extra language difficulties of international students in her class such as writing, she also articulated her appreciation of having international students in her class: These international students and students with the ethnic background are almost the majority… There is a great deal of acceptance [of international students]… in this globalized age and internationalization is common place…[as well as] understanding that the encounter with otherness is an integral part of broadening your horizon of understanding. So, their presence and their contribution is appreciated even if they are not able to hold their own and argue down anything. When they speak, we all pay attention.
where they were at the time of the interview. Sue, who immigrated to Canada in her mid-30s without adequate English skills at that time, started her career plan with an ESL class and later on took a Grade 12 class hoping to improve her English well enough to establish her career in Canada. She reflected on that period:

I was in the regular Grade 12 class with kids. Yeah, that was fun. That was real fun. It was difficult. Of course it was quite different than ESL 4, move to Grade 12. But it was fun. Wasn’t that difficult either.

Despite Sue making light of her experience in the Grade 12 English class, it is still hard to imagine that what she did was all that easy or smooth because of the unusual situation – an adult as an established professional entering an English class surrounded by youth 17 or 18 years of age. The difference between Lynn and Sue was that Sue was still not as confident in her writing to this date, while Lynn seemed to have little problem with her English in the academy. It is neither about who worked harder nor about what conditions and resources were necessary for English improvement. I highlight the fact that both of them had to make an enormous effort and that Sue still has to face frustrations in their daily life due to English not being their first language.

In examining the challenges of academic writing in English that some Asian women faculty faced, the division of power and privilege between “native” speakers and “non-native” speakers became more apparent. This dynamic revealed how much the participants were conscious of their being “non-native” speakers and how they were stigmatized through their writing. Guo (2006), an Asian woman faculty member in the U.S., also asks a question, “Do I always have to look at my non-nativeness as a deficit?” (p.223) This is not to say that all “native” speakers can write well. Rather, it is to point out that there is a chance that “non-native” speakers will not be/feel welcomed in academia due to the stigma attached to “their” English, as Katon describes in the applicant’s situation discussed earlier. Dei (2006) also advocates that language is “the substantive technology through which social exclusion is built around power and hegemony” (p.16). Willinsky (1998) also expresses his concern about the notion of “native speakers:”

My concern is that the linguistic chauvinism embodied in this notion of native speaker sustains a colonizing division of the world that ultimately makes
countries where English is the mother tongue less welcoming for those from other lands and languages who seek a new life there. (p.197)

Especially when English is the dominant language in academia, where writing and facility with English count for so much (more so for academics like the participants, whose disciplines are social sciences and humanities, compared to those in sciences), English academic writing skills become a source of challenge and stigmatization for those who crossed the linguistic borders between their first language and English as their academic language in North America. While the “culture” of the English language becomes the norm through their academic work, facility with English has many consequences for their subject-making process in the meantime. Their various kinds of emotions and struggles such as desire, anxiety, stigmatization, and compromising with English hegemony arose in the name of this “culture,” which can divide people into insiders and outsiders (see Chapter 2). Moreover, there were also material consequences in the lives of Asian women faculty as mentioned earlier in this section. They had to seek different resources and ensure that their writings conformed to the “standard” and “respectable” styles of their academic community (see Kubota, 2003). At the same time, it is important to note that there were some narratives, as introduced here earlier, that questioned the hegemonic nature of the language in the academy by asserting the intellectual capacity of the “non-native”-speaking writers as separate from their English language skills (e.g. Katon, Hodi). I expand on this in the next section.

4. Legitimating Self

While the challenges of different aspects of Asianness (e.g. language/accent) are associated with the illegitimate or outsider status of Asian women faculty in the academy, there were some voices of Asian women faculty that reflected their everyday practices which challenged domination and/or legitimated themselves. For example, as noted, the challenge of “working harder” because of the language barrier was echoed by some participants. Katon claimed that despite a majority of positive comments from her students, the negative comments she received in instructor evaluations always pertained to her spoken language skills. Katon added, “[For] the language [skills], … you just have to make more efforts, right? You just have to work harder.”
In addition to their efforts to succeed in an Anglophone environment (in the context of “linguistic imperialism” - see Phillipson, 1992; or “globalization of English” - see Rizvi & Lingard, 2010.), some of the Asian women faculty resisted the expectation that they must speak “perfect” English in order to gain authority. Interestingly, both Katon and Susan had, in the past, been apologetic to their students or audience about their English. However, at some point in their careers, they no longer let the challenge of English interfere or affect the authority that they carried internally. For example, Katon stated:

When I [did] my presentations in the beginning of my first year, I [would] apologize for my English. And then later on … somehow I changed and now I [don’t apologize any more]. I organized an international conference with participants from Japan, from Taiwan in 2006. … You know how East Asian[s] apologize for [difficulties with] the language. I [said] to them, “You don’t have to [apologize]. That’s okay. It just means that everyone has to speak English, … we have the resources, we should have people who speak their own language and then have the translation that’s translating to the language and then everyone can understand.”

Here Katon reflected on the transition she made from feeling guilty about her spoken English at the earlier stage of her career to accepting her way of speaking at her mid career. After this transition, Katon even encouraged East Asian people around her to not feel obliged to speak “perfect” English but to use another “resource” that was available such as translated text and translators. These suggestions to others also stemmed from her own lived experiences – she had tried her best to make her English better understood by her audience and felt guilty when she thought she had failed. Katon continued:

And now my attitude is… “Well, I don’t need to be interested [in speaking ‘perfect English’]. People have to get used to my accent. You know, yes, I wish I could do better presentations but I don’t. That’s fine because you are setting these roots to prevent yourself from getting more information from me” … After you reach [a] certain age, if you are not specialized in English, it’s always, you just have to accept it that this is you, this is your accent.

Since Katon began to view herself as a legitimate speaker, she came to accept her accent. Instead, she reflected on those who had a problem with her English, saying it was their loss, not hers, and that they should learn to understand her accent. Through the experience at the conference, she tried to bring a sense of confidence and authority back
to herself and her East Asian colleagues. While Katon emphasized that she had become more accepting of her accent, the self-consciousness regarding her accent was still strongly embedded in her everyday academic life.

Susan also described how speaking English had been a significant source of concern in her teaching:

I would have to sometimes think about what to say and form a sentence in my head before I speak. Usually, if it’s a new group of people, I am addressing [my difficulty to them] too. So, it definitely affects me. Once I get used to the students then it doesn’t really matter as much but there are certain words I don’t know how to pronounce or certain things that I may not necessarily know. …I might still get embarrassed now but I just feel I can ask, “What does it mean? I don’t know…” (Interviewer: I see. What do you think changed you that way?) Confidence and reputation and connection with students. And experience in general.

Like many other participants, Susan negotiated the following: 1) how to communicate to her students in English; 2) how the students might judge her language skills; and 3) how much she should care about her communication skills. She had to be quite self-conscious about her English until establishing her reputation and relationships with her students. Shohat (2006) reveals that “the prestige and projection of English,” especially in countless films in the postwar period, is connected to “the axiomatic self-confidence of its speakers” (p.128). Likewise, how well one can or cannot speak English in the academic setting also affects how one carries herself in the space.

Susan was cognizant of the risks she would have to take when students did not know her background. One challenge Susan faced was how students might label her based on elements that were audible to them, including her grammar and accent. In addition, being in a position of authority as a teacher placed some pressure on her to speak “good” English. Susan was able to gain confidence and connect with her students over time, which allowed her to accept the limitations of her English and ask her students questions about certain words or expressions. Nevertheless, whether she would be able do the same thing with her future students remained in question. For Katon, accepting her accent as part of her identity does not mean that she is no longer conscious of her own spoken English. The narratives of both Katon and Susan reveal how they each try to deal with their challenges regarding language depending on the situation.
5. Conclusion

In summary, my analysis of the narratives above illustrates how capacity in the English language is much more than simply a survival skill within the Canadian context. While many of them had difficulties with the English language in their academic lives, they were quite self-conscious about their English proficiency no matter how “well” they could speak or write in English. In other words, there is an external expectation of how an “Asian” person should speak English depending on the context, which also creates stigma related to their spoken English or resistance to feeling stigmatized regarding their spoken English. In this sense, lack of proficiency in “Canadian” English has become one of the significant markers of difference that identifies “Asianness.”

As discussed earlier, it is also important to keep in mind that language is only one aspect that intersects with other facets of identity such as gender, race, class, age and profession. They have a combined influence on how people, including students, perceive and treat Asian woman faculty members and, accordingly, how the women proceed in their professional academic lives. Examining the issues from the transnational feminist framework helps us see the entanglement of power relations stemming from an imperial history and contributing to the processes of recolonization and nationalism. It also allows us to better understand how spoken language operates in the web of power through everyday social interactions and identification in the academy as part of a larger sociopolitical entity “that itself domesticates and manages Third World people in the name of liberal capitalist democracy” (Mohanty, 2003, p.216). It is this connection between the macropolitical and micropolitical that is grounded in the analysis of power with the transnational feminist framework. In this research, the individual everyday practices of the Asian women faculty become collective struggles, or forms of resistance, to survive in a system of domination as Mohanty (2003) asserts, “…all politics is collapsed into the personal, and questions of individual behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyles stand in for the political analysis of the social. Individual political struggles are seen as the only relevant and legitimate form of political struggle” (p.214).

Taking everyday-life politics seriously is the first step toward an equitable society, as everyone in the academy is affected by such power relations (Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Smith, 1987). Through the policies, mission, and organization of the
academy, it is important for all its members to be exposed to open discussion of what constitutes power and authority and how stereotypes operate in the evaluation and identification of its members. This argument is not meant to encourage administrators and faculty to dismiss the students who have difficulties in comprehending the spoken English of some faculty. Instead, I intend to point out the overlooked aspects of everyday practices stemming from bias and stereotypes that result in the disempowerment of certain faculty members, including some Asian women.
Chapter 7
Navigating the Academy through Cultural Logics: Other Practical Challenges

1. Introduction
In addition to the struggles that Asian women faculty faced as described in the last two chapters, other practical challenges in their academic lives emerged from their border crossing experiences. In this chapter, I discuss what other challenges they faced through their transnational experiences situated between “Asia” and “the West” and how they maneuvered through the academy within their given contexts. More specifically, grounded in the transnational feminist framework and qualitative research methodology, border crossing here is the site of analysis that brings forward “cultural logics” to one’s subject making. Cultural logics as flexible context-dependent formulas of culture justify the inclusion and exclusion of people relative to the national collectivity on one hand, and also provide the population excluded from the (dominant) culture of national unity with the meanings of their “different” lives and rationalizations for their actions in relation to the social forces around them (see Ong, 1999; Lowe, 1996; Chapter 2 of this dissertation). The transnational feminist framework foregrounds the connections between cultural, material, structural and historical forces in its analysis of border crossings. As the “subject” is dependent on her surrounding “social and cultural categories for [one’s] well-being and satisfaction” (Nealon & Giroux, 2003), examining the cultural logics in the participants’ subject making through border crossings allows us to identify the interconnected forces that influence in their daily lives. As Lisa Lowe (1996) comments, “alternative cultural forms and practices [such as their cultural logics] do not offer havens of resolution but are often eloquent descriptions of the ways in which the law, labor exploitation, racialization, and gendering work to prohibit alternatives” (p.x).

In this chapter, I intend to explain and concretize the particular transnational locations that impact the participants’ everyday material and ideological specificities and identify what cultural logics they utilize in order to survive/thrive in their social locations as Asian women in the Canadian academy. I argue that these Asian women faculty are consistently challenged by hegemonic norms of the Canadian academy and that through
such cultural logics their perspectives help shed light on the taken-for-granted culture of the higher education institutions within the nation-state. This chapter presents two main contexts where cultural logics emerged and illustrates their complex entanglement with social, material, and structural forces. They are: 1) different norms and customs; and 2) being an immigrant, mother, and daughter. It is also important to note that my intention grounded in qualitative research is not to examine the truth or falsity of what the participants described, but rather to acknowledge their meaning making as “part of the reality” as well as the particular context that influences their emotions and behaviours (Maxwell, 2005, p.22).

2. “Different” Norms and Customs
This section focuses on the narratives of Asian women faculty that highlight their struggles related to their expectations, confusions, feelings of ambiguity, and uncertainty stemming from the norms and customs they encountered in the Canadian academy. More specifically, I shed light on the unsettled feelings of Asian women faculty, which are often a significant part of their subject making. These feelings also lead to realizations about the surrounding culture as well as to taking specific actions in their daily lives. This analysis is underpinned by Megan Boler’s (1999) examination of “emotions” within academic discourses. She identifies “emotions as neither entirely ‘public’ nor entirely ‘private,’ but rather representative of a socially and collaboratively constructed psychic terrain” because emotions are shaped by “historical, political, and cultural forces and differences” (p.xxi) and therefore emotions are also a site of analysis for those forces.

Some Asian women faculty members expressed confusion about different norms and practices they encountered when starting their current positions in their new academic environments. For example, Hikari, a faculty member who obtained her current position as Associate Professor after working in the East Asian academy for some years, shared her story of feeling “trepidations” and being terribly confused about what she was supposed to do in general for the first few years. Having been a long-time faculty member in an East Asian country, she brought a comparative perspective on the culture.

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37 “Different” in the sense that the norms and practices were different from what they had known.
of North American universities as opposed to those in the East Asian country where she had lived. She commented, “North American universities are much more competitive,” noting that this caused her tremendous stress in her first year of the position. What specifically made her feel anxious and stressed was the “tenure thing.” She said, “simply the uncertainty [of whether I will be tenured or not] was quite unbearable.” A tenure review, in general, is considered one of the most stressful events for a number of tenure-track faculty members, no matter their cultural background (see Acker et al., 2009; Loo & Ho, 2006; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). However, the source of her (extra) stress also came from her frustration in (possibly) not knowing how to “play the game” or how to follow or manipulate publicly unspoken/unwritten rules for academic success to the same extent as other people who had been in the North American academy. She reflected on her past, saying, “Not trained in North America and being out of North America for so long, I felt very disadvantaged because I didn’t know how to play the game that everybody seemed to know how.” Her vulnerability stemmed from the perception that people around her did not think of her at a disadvantage, but rather, they considered her to be more advanced than they were since she came into the university as Associate Professor rather than as Assistant Professor. She emphasized how difficult her first few years were and how hard she worked to overcome the uncertainty.

The “game” played by faculty included negotiation or bargaining skills, which were relatively unfamiliar to Hikari, a point made about minoritized faculty in the literature (see The York Stories Collective, 2000; Tierney & Bensimon 1996). For example, Hikari learned how important negotiation skills were in the North American academy when a deal about her going toward full professorship came up accidentally. She happened to be short-listed by another university and it became a retention issue, which means that her university did not want to let her go. Therefore, her university offered her a deal by allowing her to get reviewed for full professorship right away. She asserted that it had never been her intention to play a game in order to benefit from a

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38 Hikari referred to her current environment as “North American” rather than Canadian. I suspect this is because her reference point for comparison was the academic environment of the East Asian country she had come from. She possibly viewed her experience in the current academy through a broader category. Therefore, her “Canadian” experience and the “North American” one could be interchangeable in this context.
trade with the university. She noted that the university’s arrangement came as a complete shock to her, which she stressed stemmed from “cross-cultural communication problems.” Hikari described her behavior as “being [ethnicity of the country she was from]” in this context; she was being honest and loyal to her employer by telling the chair of the department the fact that she was short-listed by another university, instead of doing “sneaky” things behind her employer’s back. On the other hand, the chair interpreted her honest disclosure as the beginning of her negotiation with the university. She described the “[North] American academy” as having a “business” environment in the way that negotiations and deals are made. She also compared the academy in North America with that of her East Asian country, which she noted does not have a negotiating system, but rather a transparent scale system. Moreover, Hikari said, “the biggest shock for me was that nobody knew how much other people were paid” at her Canadian university. Her realization that people negotiate as individuals with institutions in North America came as “a total culture shock.” She learned about the system and culture of the North American academy through her own experiences after her relocation to Canada. Hikari’s observation of the market-driven nature of the North American academy seems to be congruent with findings in the literature on neoliberalism in higher education. For example, some authors argue that the neoliberal model of governance in academic institutions has promoted individualistic and institutional competitiveness (Harris, 2005; Olssen & Peters, 2005) as it is “a way of increasing productivity, accountability and control” (Olssen & Peters, 2005, p.326; see also Chapter 3 of this dissertation).

The point I wish to make here is not about the comparison between the East Asian and North American academies. Rather, I wish to highlight Hikari’s reflections in the process of her relocation from East Asian higher education to Canadian higher education. She reflected on and realized what societal norms she had been operating with and what types of new norms and practices she had to learn within the new national and institutional borders while she tried to make sense of moments of disjuncture through her “cultural logics.”

Janet, another participant, moved from East Asia in her adulthood. She echoed Hikari’s sense of anxiety in coming into a new “culture,” where she identified her concerns about “consumerism … and mass production in academia.” While she was
critical of these influences, she also had to accept them, commenting, “I think until I get the tenure I have to play the game.” Regarding “consumerism,” she problematized the “consumer mentality” that values students as customers and affects the student-faculty relations in the field. She stated:

“I think in terms of consumerism, I think [of] the student evaluation, for example. I think it’s a good idea to get students’ voices heard and give them some kind of power so that the faculty or the university as an institution do not monopolize power, but on the other hand, I think there should be some way to be aware that students’ evaluation sometimes [involve] their consumer mentality. I know how to get the good evaluation. Maybe I can show more, for example, [entertaining films] and treat and entertain them. But I don’t think that’s a good way to educate them, for example. So, I am a little bit concerned about that. Giving them a good education doesn’t necessarily mean a good evaluation from the students. So, I think the university administration should be aware of that and then they need to take that into consideration, for example, in terms of the tenure review.

In contrast to Hikari’s case, Janet not only learned the nature of the environment but also questioned it. In fact, Janet’s observations about consumerism in higher education have also been discussed in the literature (e.g. Harris, 2005; Nast & Pulido, 2000; Newson, 2004; Olssen & Peters, 2005). In her attempts to disrupt the recent model of “student as consumer,” Newson (2004) stresses that students “are encouraged to think of themselves as ‘receivers’ of a service, not as co-creators of a teaching-learning community” (p.230).

Janet provided the example of her tenure review to illustrate her concerns about “mass-production” being valued in academia. In this system, the quantity of publications is strongly valued, and reflected on in the review of faculty performance often more than quality of publications. She added, “it’s really hard to evaluate which one is [a] really good article and which is [an] okay article for people outside of the specific area. So, I kind of understand how evaluation is done based on the quantity.” Although she understood the ‘convenience’ aspect of the system, she still expressed her concern, saying, “I think these are the sort of concerns I have in academia in general.” Interestingly, while she identified these neoliberal influences in the academy (see Olssen & Peters, 2005) as her concerns, she did not suggest any alternative way of navigating the academy but rather said she felt she had to conform to the system to some extent until she gets tenure. It seems that she was fully aware of her vulnerability in relation to institutional forces. She further added:
[Playing the game is a challenge] for faculty in general but perhaps minority faculty may feel more pressure [regarding] publication and having a good evaluation from the students too. Because … you didn’t know how the system works in terms of being successful if you have to be evaluated in that way. (Interviewer: So you are saying that minority faculty may not be as familiar with the system as white or dominant faculty?) It’s not necessarily they are not knowing but perhaps it’s a little bit more of a challenge about how to play that game better. Because it’s another, sort of like, cultural practices and difference that we have to learn, another kind of social, you know, learning. (Interviewer: So, in that sense do you recognize the difference between Canadian-born faculty and non-Canadian-born faculty?) Well, some people who were not born in Canada are still good at that. But I think people who are more familiar with this consumerism and mass-production culture [as] a naturalized practice [tend to know how to play the game better] than people with different backgrounds.

In discussing the challenging environment of the Canadian academy, Janet basically drew a “cultural” boundary between “minority faculty,” including herself, and those who are more familiar with the system as a “naturalized” or adopted practice. Even though she was careful not to over-generalize the features of certain populations such as “minority faculty” or “Canadian-born faculty,” she characterized herself as a “minority faculty” member and “non Canadian-born” person with “different backgrounds” who was disadvantaged in the academy compared to those who grew up in Canada and were more familiar with “Canadian culture.” In other words, she employed her “cultural” logics in order to make sense of her uneasiness, compromising, and feelings of inequity.

Some other Asian women faculty mentioned their encounters with aspects of the “academic culture” which conflicted with their cultural knowledge about “humility.” For example, Hodi, who moved from East Asia to Canada in her youth, shared her insights into “humility” in academia. She first defined “humility” from her own perspective:

I think being humble is a value that a lot of us Asian women grew up with and value. I say I have a good measure of that understanding and it’s almost like a philosophy of life - not individualistic, not assertive and, packed in many different ways. But, anyway, I do know a lot of different values. And it could be quite positive and I do look at it in a positive way. And so being close to the earth, that is, for me, … a powerful or constructive understanding of humility or humbleness. So, that’s fine and I like that. And I often think of also the tradition of bowing … and that kind of thing that’s being close to the earth. So, I have all that and I validate those as a positive value.
Hodi explained that humility is “a philosophy of life” that is valued as embodied cultural (and possibly gendered) knowledge for many Asian women. It is a different view of what has been stereotyped as “subservient” or “submissive” for Asian women. Hodi clearly expressed her positive attitude about the value by associating it with the earth. However, it seems that this philosophy of life or cultural knowledge is not easily applied in the academic domain. Foo Ja, an Assistant professor who moved to Canada in her childhood, also articulated what she learned about the academic “culture” in contrast with the culture of “humility” in which she grew up. In describing her interaction with an Asian colleague in another department, she said:

And sometimes we talk about things like the whole humility thing and how difficult it is to be that way. Because she has it more than I do. But it just doesn’t really work very well in academia. (Interviewer: She has more what?) More of that kind of, what here would be called “putting yourself down.” Yeah, the humility thing. So we talk about being a certain way in academia and how that doesn’t work very well. We have those conversations a lot.

This narrative shows that bringing one’s prior norms or values into the Canadian academy does not always work. The value and practice of humility which some other Asian women scholars grew up with seems to conflict with the behaviors that ensure academic success in North America (see Beckett & Zhang, 2006 for the U.S. context; also see Guo, 2006 for Canada). Whether or not this culture of non-humility was “Canadian,” academic or feminist assertiveness, Foo Ja came to realize that humility was not appreciated or practiced, through her everyday life in the academy and by sharing her thoughts with her Asian colleague, who could understand the tension Foo Ja faced.

Here the question is raised: How do Asian women faculty deal with the tensions emergent in the expression of deep-seated values and philosophies in an academic and cultural context that has different norms? Hodi first explained what humility could mean in an institutional context:

Humility operates in one’s personal and professional life as putting oneself lower than others or less than others, not seeing oneself as just as competent and deserving as others. It can be very problematic because our institution is not set up to have people operate out of this humility or humbleness. This institution is set up to operate out of rights and responsibilities. So, we have to be careful.
Here, Hodi emphasized why humility is difficult to practice in academia, where its culture is based on “individuals’ rights, responsibilities and fairness.” She came to realize this especially through her administrative position, whereby she had to organize and manage the people in the program by asserting her authority. She continued:

I think it’s probably the dimension of political that I need to even go through, I come to feeling in my own [administrative] life here, that the basis of our institution is equity, fairness. If people [or we], out of sense of humbleness, do not claim what [we] deserve and do not insist upon fairness and do not address what [we] see as inequity then we are only harming ourselves. [With] a certain sense … like my caring stance, I [would] give up what I [was] doing, what my rights [were], for others [and] go out of my way to help. Well, soon I realized that I [was] in fact enabling the inequity. If I don’t call on my colleagues for not taking their share of responsibility, and in fact I help them to not take responsibility, then I am in fact responsible for the institution not being a fair place. So, I cannot complain about other people not doing their fair share of duty while I am busy helping them to be irresponsible. So, I think we need to be quite clear about the meaning of humility and humbleness and operating in the institution whose base is not humility. … I am not promoting that people should be arrogant, self-serving. I am simply saying … that’s what the institution is about, peer governance. We are peers. That’s why we call them colleagues. So, even there we have to be careful and [not] encourage irresponsibility and unfairness on the part of others, in the name of our being humble and caring, right.

In other words, Hodi observed that in such a context of academia, humility could even become a negative trait that gives rise to irresponsibility and unfairness. Even though Hodi did not elaborate on how she came to realize this and how difficult the negotiation process was for her, I presume that it was not easy for her to come to its realization and that she had spent more energy to even reflect and review her own cultural value in the Western academy.

It was these negotiation processes that took place in the participants’ experiences of being confused and coming up with their own solutions. While Foo Ja only expressed her confusion and frustration in the academy, Hodi had to take a stance based in the climate where she had to manage people in her program. Both Foo Ja and Hodi mentioned “Asian culture or value” to explain their confusions, forced adjustments, ambiguities, and uneasiness, which revealed their interpretations of the academy and its social order. The cultural logics they utilized also helped them with their self identification (Ong, 1996). In other words, they learned, through their cultural logics,
who they were racially and sexually\(^{39}\) (i.e. “Asian” women), where they came from and, in contrast, what social forces they had to manoeuvre by drawing a border around their Canadian academic environment and situating themselves in crossing it.

Lynn, who moved from East Asia to North America for her higher education, expressed her difficulty in socializing with others on various occasions. She presented a few different reasons for the difficulty. One that she repeatedly mentioned was her “cross-cultural” background, which she thought did not allow her to connect to conversations with other people. She said:

> So in terms of Asian women. I guess one difficulty I do have as an Asian or as a foreigner in Canada and even in the States is [socialization with others]…. Maybe it has something to do with my personality as well, I am not an extremely outgoing person. So, when I go to… these parties or dinners, I always kind of,… not exactly feel awkward but I don’t have a lot to say to those people. I think partly it’s because we have such different life experiences. If I had grown up here (North America) maybe I would have had much more to say. But I don’t know how to overcome that. And apparently some people from Asia or from [my country of origin] do very well in that area but I don’t. I went to a conference even yesterday afternoon, a local conference and,… the people were just talking about these things and I thought, “Well, I understand but I guess because my experience is somewhat different, I can’t really relate to that.” Or even if I can, I don’t have much to contribute in the conversation. And it happens from time to time.

Lynn highlighted the difficulty in her being Asian or a foreigner [in the West], not having grown up in the land where she now resides. No matter what the real reason was that Lynn felt removed and isolated from the conversational groups she came across, in this narrative, she differentiated herself from other people by bringing forward her foreignness in the North American context and placing herself on one side and “those people” on the other. It may be a sense of (not) belonging that made her social interactions tenuous. Of interest, Lynn noted, “But actually I feel the same when I go back to [my country of origin] and I meet my old friends. I still don’t have so much to say.” This point of her hybrid identity may contradict with what she said earlier, “If I had

\(^{39}\) Considering that Hodi struggled with her authority, which was not well received by her colleagues through her administrative position, I presume that humility, which she claimed as a common value for many “Asian women,” is not the single source that diminished her authority. I would argue that her conceptualization of humility as cultural knowledge plays a role on the racialized and gendered terrain, where authority operates in a complicated entanglement of race and gender as well (see Luke, 1996).
grown up here maybe I would have had much more to say.” However, she consistently referred to the point of her being different, even from people in her country of origin. She continued, “[I have] a lot of different experience [from my friends’ experiences in the East Asian country]. And then they talk about their lives but they are kind of different from mine. So I tend to think that’s a sacrifice you have to make if you decide to live in a different culture.” Here Lynn emphasized more of her “cross-cultural” experiences or “shifting positions in society” (Ong, 1999, p.13) and difference from others as a deficit or “victimhood” that made her detached from people around her rather than an advantage that might enrich her interactions with other people. Lynn’s challenge in the academy stemmed from the fact that academics must also be social beings; social interactions including networking are crucial for a success in the academy (Luke, 2001).\footnote{In her book on women in academics, Luke (2001) articulates that “given the isolation women can experience, networking with other academic women is seen as socially supportive as well as a source of building influential contacts and gaining access to important information circuits” (p.7)} Lynn was unsure about how to overcome it and seemed resigned to it.

Another interesting dimension of being Asian in Canada was some participants’ constant negotiation of “different” norms without actual physical movement from one continent to another. For example, Lucy, who was born and raised in Canada by her first-generation immigrant parents, discussed how her identity incorporated both (East Asian) “collectivism” and (Canadian) “individualism.” With respect to collectivism, she explained how she was brought up in her immigrant family from an East Asian country, stating, “… you drive each other crazy but the bottom line is you have no choice. You find a way to get along.” She contrasted it with “Canadian culture” in her discussion of her family relations:

I am always amazed at how close we are as a family, to this day. Even though my father is not here, we’re very close. I know I can count on them. I know that they’re always there. I swear, the number of family events we have! I have a lot of dinners or lunches, every weekend. I have to fit that into my schedule. I can’t live the Canadian culture where some people are away from their families and things like that. I just don’t, I can’t understand that. So, I am actually used to a lot of family interaction and, everybody is so different in my own family, between my sisters and brothers. And we all find a way to get along. You know, there isn’t that room, in a way, for that kind of individualism.
Here my intention is not to analyze the cultural differences of collectivism and individualism. Rather I wish to focus on how Lucy processed her subject making in discussing the importance of her family relationships. Having been brought up in an East Asian immigrant family in Canada, she had to constantly negotiate the “cultural boundaries” without actual physical travel between Asia/her specific East Asian country and the West/Canada. In the narrative above, Lucy distinguished her experience from the mainstream “Canadian” norm of “individualism.” In other words, from her position of being “[her ethnicity]” and growing up in Canada, she could observe and critique mainstream “Canadian” ways of doing things. This categorization raises the question of what is the “Canadian” culture to which Lucy referred? Can this be answered without considering Lucy’s race, gender, ethnicity, class and Canadian history? Moreover, why does Lucy emphasize her “immigrant” identity rather than the “Canadian” or Canadian-born side of her life? My intention is not to answer these questions but rather to pinpoint her positionality, being an Asian woman in Canada, which allows for the emergence and engagement of such fundamental questions about norms, values, and taken-for-granted kinds of lifestyles.

On the other hand, Lucy also admitted that she could not completely abandon “Canadian culture” in her subject-making process. She further stated:

[T]hat’s not to say though, that I haven’t picked up some of the Canadian culture, where now I can be on my own… I can appreciate the other side. I guess, I actually can move in both [Canadian and her ethnic/immigrant cultures]. And I value them both because there’s something really wonderful about both of them.

Her negotiation in her subject making does not arise from a single source (i.e. “[her ethnicity]”/ “immigrant”). In contrast to Lynn’s narrative, Lucy’s account illustrates the celebratory nature of “hybridity” and “differences” with a warning against demarcating her shifting self using one fixed category. This celebratory nature of “hybridity” and “differences” that problematizes all the boundaries is actually grounded in the notion of “boundaries.” In other words, for “a transgression of boundaries of the nation-state” to be achieved, there need to be boundaries around diaspora who acknowledge and celebrate
their hybridity\textsuperscript{41} (Ang, 2001). Lynn’s shifting positions found through her challenges in socializing (mentioned earlier) may imply her difficulty in identifying a single source of struggle in national or cultural boundaries. Lucy also applied the notion of boundaries to her “transgression” of the boundaries between “both cultures.” Hybridity is not left out of the discussion regarding cultural politics. Rather, because of its belonging to “the space of the frontier, the border, the contact zone” and its “unsettling of identities” (Ang, 2001, p.16), the location of hybridity could be even more sensitive towards cultural politics – questions of where to draw a boundary with what cause.

In summary, the narratives of the five Asian women faculty members mentioned above (Hikari, Foo Ja, Hodi, Lynn, and Lucy) revealed unsettled feelings they face in the Canadian academy as they struggled with “differences” in norms, values and practices. They tended to juxtapose their own experiences with these norms and emphasize the hybridity of their positions in order to identify the sources of their struggles and actions through their “cultural logics.” For example, Hikari’s confusion and anxiety during the first few years of her tenure-track position was highlighted in her discussion of crossing national, institutional and cultural borders. Foo Ja also expressed the fragmentation she and her Asian colleague encountered within the Canadian academic landscape, where they missed the Asian common value of “humility”. Hodi added to Foo Ja’s narrative on “humility” by stressing her recognition of the culture of the Western academy through her reflection of the embodied knowledge with which she grew up. In discussing her struggle to socialize in the Canadian context, Lynn drew on her cross-cultural and hybrid identity which differentiated her from people who grew up in Canada and her country of origin respectively. Lucy distinguished between the (Asian) collectivism and Canadian individualism, both of which she experienced and embraced at different moments due to her diasporic upbringing. These narratives illustrate the process of participants’ subject making within their given contexts through the form of “cultural logics.” Participants draw a boundary between themselves and the other (i.e. “Asia” and “the West”).

\textsuperscript{41} Drawing on Parreñas and Siu (2007), I define diaspora as an “on-going process of subject formation embedded in a set of cultural and social relations that are sustained simultaneously with the ‘homeland’ (real or imagined), place of residence, and compatriots or coethnics dispersed elsewhere” (p.1). Similarly, because of such cultural and social relations of diaspora, hybridity as effects of mixture and in-between-ness upon identity and culture emerges as “multiplicity, uncertainty and ambivalence” (Ang, 2001, p.2)
depending on the context, and shift or lower the boundary to show their “in-between” positions.

Cultural logics lead one to certain desires, motivations, anxieties, and self-identification (Ong, 1999). It is worth noting that cultural logics are interconnected with the material, social and historical forces that exist in this transnational context and embedded in the relations that individuals have had with other individuals and collective entities such as the nation-state, institutions, and communities (Lowe, 1996; Ong, 1999). Lisa Lowe (1996) summarizes this point saying:

Culture is the medium of the present – the imagined equivalences and identifications through which the individual invents lived relationship with the national collective – but it is simultaneously the site that mediates the past, through which history is grasped as difference, as fragments, shocks, and flashes of disjunction. (p.2-3)

In this sense, I argue that these Asian women faculty members are subjects of history (see Dei, 2006) as they navigate the present linked from the past led through the discourses of “culture.” Their cultural logics implicate their sense of disjuncture in their experiences through the notion of “difference” that has been constructed through history. In other words, their self identification through their cultural logics (implying various aspects of “differences” such as race, gender, ethnicity and class) reflects their relationships with and their memories of the national collective. They reflect not only on the Canadian nation-state but also on their ‘home’/Asian nation-state, which was built and intensified through the modern history of nation building (see Chapter 2). For example, the concept of “humility” that Foo Ja and Hodi discussed as differing from the norms of the Canadian academy as well as notions of “individualism” linked to “Canadian culture” reflect historical constructions of differences. Cultural discourses and logics are used to justify one’s identity as “identification signals inclusion in a category or group – such as nation or a family or a race – but it also signals exclusion and difference from others” (Grewal & Kaplan, 2006, p.149; see also Lowe, 1996). The narratives on “cultural differences” in this section raise a few questions: What do the “differences” tell us about the participants’ relationships with hegemonic forces such as the nation-state and the higher education institution? Are the “cultural differences” free from gender, race, class and other distinctions? How do they have an impact on the material aspect of the women’s lives?
Next, I will discuss further examples of the activation of cultural logics in my participants’ narratives that had significant material and physical impacts in their lives and that emerged specifically from their immigrant, daughter and mother experiences in Canada.

3. Being Immigrant, Daughter and Mother

It was not only “cultural” or ideological norms themselves that made Lucy identify herself as an “immigrant.” It was also the material and physical conditions attached to the “cultural” baggage that Lucy carried which shaped her subjectivity in the form of “cultural logics.” For example, she emphasized that her immigrant identity shaped challenges in her academic life. She recalled her pre-tenure time, when she had to complete her doctorate, produce scholarly work for tenure and promotion, and on top of that, help her immigrant mother with the family business due to her father’s death as well as her mother’s limited English skills. She expressed how hard it was to get all the things done at the same time:

And I tell you, it was tough. It was tough. So, ..., because people [a lot of people on the outside] knew that I didn’t have children,… they had no clue of another life I was leading. And this is part of what I mean by an “immigrant family.” You don’t abandon your family. Immigrant families use their children as their labour. Labour is not a bad thing, but it’s partly because … they can’t do it themselves, right? So, what I would do is, I would be dealing with all of my mom’s business-related activities in different ways. So now the restaurant is sold but she had other types of businesses that required dealing with people, writing of cheques, reading of letters, navigating different systems and she can’t drive. So she had to learn how to use the subway and the bus. And, you know, she’s an elderly woman. So I was spending … a good twenty hours per week on her work. And then I would do my work. So it was quite exhausting.

In this discussion of a tough time in her life before getting tenure, she also emphasized what an “immigrant family” means and how it influenced her daily academic life. Most notably, Lucy had to fulfill physical demands of her immigrant family, as had always been the case since her childhood. In this instance, her experience was very much tied to the class dimension of her “immigrant” lifestyle. She had shared with me her childhood story and described her parents working around the clock at their restaurant and her own active involvement with their business. For example, she mentioned that she did not have vacation like her school friends. She expressed frustration that this significant part of her
“immigrant” life was invisible to others who may perceive her as a well-educated elite woman with little (family) responsibility because she does not have children. This situation that Lucy described raises questions of what constitutes a “family” in the dominant discourse and what responsibility females are expected to take on in her family. The Canadian dominant discourse of family (i.e. nuclear family) stems from the late 19th century project of nation building based on “a discourse of race” (Dua, 1999b, p.248) – centring whiteness (and heterosexuality) and welcoming white families (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002). Dua (1999b) argues for a link between this discourse of race, the nation, and the nuclear family and she states that the link “explains why white women and women of colour experience the family differently” (p.248). Lucy’s experience in the academy implies the heterosexual-normative way of thinking about “family” that centres (white) nuclear families, rather than (immigrant/non-white) extended families, in a nationalist discourse, which trickles down to the academic domain in terms of structuring faculty’s time and expectations.

After explaining the struggles of her pre-tenure time juggling a great amount of family responsibility, Lucy continued:

But what I’ve done is I’ve just been able to really be time-managed. But it’s really interesting for me because when people were really stressed out about getting tenure, I couldn’t fully relate to them because, yes, I was stressed out, believe me. …I was still putting in a lot of hours but I had to really time manage because it’s like I had another job.

In addition, Lucy also sounded disconnected from the fact that other pre-tenured faculty were really stressed out about getting tenure given that she had gotten through a tough time in her life by being well “time-managed.” It seems that Lucy drew a line between herself as “immigrant” and the others as non-immigrant in order to distinguish herself from them. However, it is also important not to forget that her “immigrant” identity stemmed from her race, ethnicity, gender, class, and the history of Asian exclusion in Canada which imposed a certain nationalistic discourse of “family.” It seems that Lucy found her pre-tenure experience so tremendously disturbing that she did not consider others’ struggles to be as significant or stressful as her own.

Hodi, a tenured faculty member, also expressed the struggles she went through from the beginning of her tenure-track position. In addition to being a single mother of
two children, Hodi’s own mother became ill with Alzheimer’s disease and required quite a bit of care and attention. As her mother required 24 hour care, Hodi had a government support of six hours a day, five days a week, but for the rest of the time Hodi was responsible for the care of her ill mother. Her mother had moved from Asia to live with Hodi’s family and had become ill shortly afterwards. Hodi reflected on those days:

And there’s a cultural dimension. There is no way I could think of putting her in a [nursing] home. She didn’t speak the language, she is not used to that understanding. She is not a Canadian. So I couldn’t imagine doing that. …I think, [as] part of the self identification of being Asian, right? I could not imagine me abandoning my mother. And, of course, you could say that’s not abandoning. Your mother will be off in a nursing home. It just wouldn’t work. A) my mother doesn’t speak English. And B) her worldview is such that she would consider that abandonment.

Interestingly, Hodi brought up a “cultural” dimension to explain why putting her mother in a nursing home was unacceptable. Therefore, she needed to fulfill the needs of her “immigrant” mother who wouldn’t have understood the notion of nursing homes that are supposedly more common in Canada. She continued:

And then also…after she lost her mind I did not have the sense that she wouldn’t know. Because I have this Asian view of, we know there is more than a conscious mind. So, even if … she didn’t recognize me as her Alzheimer’s progressed, … I more or less operated with the thought that somehow she knew, right? Yes, it’s not a matter of she doesn’t know anything, so…it’s okay to now just put her into a home. So, … you understand this Asian cultural deep worldview operating. And maybe amongst the young generations of [Asians] it’s not like that probably, how they consider the oldies.

Not only on her mother’s end, but also Hodi as a caretaker could not accept the idea of putting her mother in a nursing home because of the “Asian cultural deep worldview.” She could not give up this “Asian view” even in the Canadian context. Consequently, the “cultural logic” for Hodi’s actions towards her mother conflicted with her available time and energy during her pre-tenure life. She further described what her life was like then. First I asked whether she had time to sleep and then she answered:

No, I was totally sleep deprived. It was getting pretty bad. Because my mother had no mobility, right? So, she actually had to be moved every two hours during the night. So, that’s my job. I tried to wake up every two hours and move about. Otherwise she would develop a… towards the end it was just becoming totally unsustainable. And so it was very, very difficult. And I was trying to publish.
(Interviewer: When did you write?) Between 11 and one o’clock. And my older child played a big part in all this too. Yeah, she kind of sacrificed much of her teenagehood. She didn’t have the experience of being a regular Canadian teenager because she was so busy helping her mom.

Similar to Lucy’s, this narrative shows how Hodi had to juggle many responsibilities in her pre-tenure time. The physical conditions of her being an immigrant, mother and daughter made her junior-faculty life quite challenging. Being a mother alone could be a challenge for many tenure-track faculty members (Armenti, 2004). As a mother, Hodi sounded regretful about not having been able to let her child live a “regular Canadian” teenage life, but as a daughter, she had a dependent mother with Alzheimer’s to look after. Like Lucy, Hodi had another important role, which was to meet her mother’s needs especially in the context of her mother being in a foreign land (i.e. her mother not being familiar with the land, its language or lifestyle). However, for Hodi, her concern was not only about her family’s need for her physical and mental care or attention but also about her financial situation. Being a single mother was a major reason for her to continue her academic career despite the harsh circumstances:

(Interviewer: what kept you going?) Okay how do I put it? It’s not as though I had other options. I was not trained in anything else and I just saw it as an incredible opportunity…. I was totally stunned because I wasn’t expecting it [my marriage break-up] and in any case, what I am saying is… finances, I mean, we had no money. We lived on my [ex] husband’s scholarship…. The whole family lived on that. So very frugal living. But in any case, shortly after I became a single mom I received a graduate fellowship and the following year I received a four year [prestigious scholarship]. Yeah, so I couldn’t see how else I could have supported myself and my children.

Hodi’s academic career had to be maintained for the survival of her family. She even carried out her duties in looking after her mother up until she passed away. She added, “I was determined to get my tenure and determined to keep my mother at home until the last moment.” In reflecting on how she survived in such a difficult situation, Hodi concluded that “determination is a major ingredient.” Whether it was an ingredient for success or survival, it appears that family’s needs could be a source of challenge but also a source of energy or determination, especially for an immigrant family that only has each other for support in many cases. From Lucy’s and Hodi’s respective narratives regarding their lives outside of academia, it seems that their “immigrant” or “Asian” identities in the
Canadian academy were shaped not only by their cultural or ideological differences from mainstream “Canadian” ones but also by the material and physical needs of their vulnerable family members outside the academy. In other words, it seems that family is a symbolic and tangible site of gendered and racialized subject making, whereby their womanhood in being daughter and mother is constructed within their “cultural” understanding of family that is distinct from the dominant Canadian understanding of family. Both Lucy and Hodi’s material and physical struggles in their family participation seem to be reflections of the historical nationalist discourses on family through Canadian immigration policies that deterred people of colour from living in their traditional family structures and also transformed their relations into nuclear (and heterosexual) forms (Dua, 1999b). Dua continues:

[Immigration policies] are designed to impose monogamous relationships and to stop the practice of extended families. An examination of the experiences of Asians with the family also suggests that Asian people have often been denied the right to live in a family context, or the right to have the “family” form of their choice. (p. 245; also see Chapter 2 of this dissertation)

The family life that Lucy and Hodi each led did not conform with the idealized family structure in the white settler society. Their social locations aside from being faculty in the academy (being immigrant, daughter and/or mother), especially at their pre-tenure time, brought them to one of the most significant challenges in their academic lives. In other words, the material, physical and mental consequences of their “immigrant” ways of living were possibly invisible to many of their colleagues, yet affected their everyday lives persistently and significantly enough to make their “immigrant” identities even stronger. This immigrant identity seems to have even drawn a line inside the nation between immigrant and non-immigrant/mainstream “Canadian” at least in terms of their cultural logics.

4. Conclusion

My initial intention in writing this chapter was simply to elaborate on other practical challenges besides language that the participants faced due to their border-crossing experiences. However, as I started developing the stories of the challenges faced in participants’ border crossing experiences, the concept of “cultural logics” arose, one that
could not be separated from issues of gender, race, or class. In other words, I also realized that the boundary that the Asian women faculty drew in the name of “cultural difference” was at the same time bound up with gender, race, class, citizenship, and other distinctions (see Lowe, 1996, p.81). In a world where “multiculturalism” is celebrated as if it is separate from history (Lowe, 1996), shedding light on the actual subject-making processes of Asian women faculty through cultural logics helps us connect various dots—the institutional forces, the national unity, history of Asian exclusion in Canada, and issues around race, gender, sexuality, and class, and so on. In other words, I did not intend to illustrate different issues affecting Asian women faculty from those presented in Chapters 5 and 6, but rather to look at the same issue, which is their subject making, by highlighting other analytical components of the same transnational feminist framework (see Chapter 2).

Through the narratives of Asian women faculty who encountered challenges and struggles, this chapter shows their subject making within the social forces of the Canadian academy as they employ their various “cultural logics” and negotiate between them. Their diasporic lenses in their border-crossing experiences make it visible and clear what social barriers exist in the Canadian academic climate that is taken for granted by many “local” Canadian people, including those who have been labeled as “native speakers” and “Canadians.” The stories of their everyday experiences have the potential to expose aspects of transnationality and its impact on their subjectivity through their “cultural logics” that are interconnected with historically produced material, physical, and ideological forces. I emphasize here that the Asian women faculty have not only been “subject to” exclusion, restriction, and stigmatization in the dominant “cultural” practices, but have also been “subjects of” their (alternative) cultural process by being agents of cultural expression (see Brah, 1996; Lowe, 1996). Therefore, looking at cultural logics does not mean to acknowledge actual existence of clear-cut categorizations or boundaries of different cultures. Rather, cultural logics are utilized by those who try to make sense of the tensions, shocks, fragments, uneasiness, and anxieties they encounter when entering Canadian academic institutions. Furthermore, I highlight that cultural logics reflect the Asian women faculty’s relations with the institution, their academic community, and even with the nation-state that gives rise to “Canadianness.” The
relationships discussed here exist not merely at an individual level, but rather, they operate at a collective level for the diasporic/immigrant population constructed through memory and history as their individual stories helped us map out the social conditions where their subject making took place.

Brah (1996) emphasizes that in thinking through “diaspora,” no diasporic group can be homogenized or fixed, but rather must be interrogated in “the historically variable forms of relationality within and between diasporic formations” (p.183). At the same time, it is through such historical, social and cultural processes that individual experiences become associated with “collective consciousness and connectivity with other people displaced from the homeland across the diasporic terrain” (Parreñas & Siu, 2007, p.1-2). In other words, it is such processes whereby the configurations of power operate in the nation-state and institutional social sectors as major sites. Such processes become the site of analysis in the concept of diaspora, borders, differences and transnational identities. In this study, the narratives of Asian women faculty reveal some of the power configurations through their diasporic locations.

Ong (1999) argues that the liberatory potential of diasporas being supposedly able to resist oppressive nationalism is questionable. She cautions that such a view overlooks many forms of oppression in the world. Hence, I would argue that hybridity should not be dismissed as a position that merely allows one to be free from the cultural politics or that values easy multicultural harmony. Rather, it should be embraced within the uneasy cultural politics that have been historically produced (Ang, 2001). Ang states, “Arguably such hybrid multiplicity increasingly characterizes the lives of ‘Asians’ everywhere, in Asia and in the West: we are all, symbolically speaking, situated ‘between Asia and the West’” (p.17). This chapter was meant to weave intricacies of everyday stories that Asian women faculty told individually and collectively from their particular locations as agents of “cultural” expression and social transformation.
Chapter 8
Carving a Niche: Towards “Legitimate” Citizens in the Canadian Academy

1. Introduction

[T]here’s always a resistance to the kind of economy and culture [of the academy] that we have to live in that’s really egocentric and me, me, me focused. You have to portray yourself bigger than yourself and … you have to play the game in order to survive, to a certain extent. So, I think for myself, success is also about how to survive in an environment that forces you not to be true to yourself and carve out or forge the space for myself so that I still get to do what I want to do and still survive than to be perceived as successful (Susan).

Susan, a participant who is in a social science discipline at a research-oriented university, describes above an aspect of the academic culture that encourages academics to be egocentric and to boast about their achievements, a phenomenon which I call “neoliberal subjectivity.” As discussed in Chapter 3, neoliberalism is a condition in which institutions and individuals are encouraged to compete in terms of productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. Thus, neoliberal subjectivity stems from the culture of an institution where neoliberalism is nurtured and promoted. Canaan (2008) emphasizes that practices of accountability stemming from neoliberalism prevalent to the nation-state and institutions within it have ontologically reshaped academic selves in terms of their working practices and identities (see also Acker et al., 2009; Archer, 2008; Henkel 2010). According to Susan’s above description, academics are “self-managing individuals who render themselves auditable [accountable]” (as cited in Canaan, 2008, p.259) in the neoliberal culture of the academy. The interpretation of the academy articulated by Susan recalls the “humility” discussion in Chapter 7 – some Asian women faculty felt fragmented when the “humility” as an important value they had learned in their upbringing was counter-effective in the academy that Hodi, another participant, described as focused on “self, rights, and fairness.”

Susan’s commentary was quite critical of the “egocentric” nature of the academy and she acknowledged her “resistance” to such culture. Within this academic context, she also provided another dimension of what “success” in the academy should be – specifically, how to “survive” by carving a niche for herself instead of conforming to
institutional expectations. This narrative provides a snapshot of what I wish to illustrate throughout this chapter.

In this chapter, I shed light on the journeys that Asian women faculty went though in order to carve a niche for themselves in their academic positions. In other words, from their marginal points of view, how did they create their own legitimate space? Given the material, structural, historical and cultural forces around them, how did their subject-making processes evolve to legitimate their academic “citizenship?” What did they envision in the academy by staying in such a space? The strategies that participants shared in this chapter not only highlight their specific actions and motivations, but also highlight their surrounding culture and what desires they had or were forced to have.

There are at least three broad themes that emerged in analyzing the strategies for survival in the academy discussed in the narratives of Asian women faculty members interviewed. These strategies include: 1) Legitimating their identities through academic work, 2) Seeking out space and support in the existing system; and 3) Supporting others and building alliances.

2. Legitimating Their Identities through Academic Work

One important thread that emerged from the narratives was the participants’ success stories grounded in who they were as immigrants, scholars, East Asians, social justice advocates, etc. In addition to meeting the institutional expectations under a form of neoliberal governance, it was also their individual agency that became the source of success that they defined for themselves from their multiple locations. In this section, composed of three categories, I discuss how their identities operated in their academic work and what they did to legitimate such work in the academy. The three categories are: integrating unique perspectives into their work; legitimating their knowledge production; and being rigorous with their scholarly work.

42 Again, there were limitations for me as a researcher to interrogate the specific context of each participant I drew on in this chapter, due to the issues of confidentiality. I could not disclose so much of the specificity associated with their valuable narratives in order to disguise their identities. I do regret that I could not go deeper in my analysis especially with certain aspects such as their countries of origin, disciplines, specific scholarship, or institutions, which would have had a powerful impact on my analysis.
2.1 Integrating unique perspectives into their work

Some participants eloquently stated that the strength of their academic work lay in their unique perspectives stemming from who they were and the experiences they had gone through. For example, Lucy had taught a particular course on diversity and equity for five years in a row during her entire pre-tenure time and it was a course where the instructor tended to receive resistance from students. Despite the difficulty of teaching the course, she did not sound defeated or negatively affected by the experience. Instead, she explicated:

[To] be honest with you, I don’t know how I taught it for five years in a row because that’s a very challenging course to teach because if you want to get students resisting, that’s the course where it’s going to happen. So, if you look at the literature, it says it’s not healthy for you to be teaching [such a course] that long. But, …you can tell I have a strong identity and I am grounded in who I am, I think I’ve been able to weather it.

Throughout the interviews with Lucy, she emphasized her [specific ethnic] immigrant identity, which she gained through her immigrant family in Canada in her childhood and youth. She also stressed the strong and enduring ties within her family and the significance of these relationships. Although she mentioned struggles in her academic life due to having to look after her immigrant family, she also observed how being part of an immigrant family was a source of strength. Geleta (2004) echoes Lucy’s point stating, “A network of family and friends provides a sense of attachment, which is crucial for healthy identity formation [in the academic setting]” (p.28). Another participant, Hodi, also reflected on what kept her going despite a number of challenges in her academic life and identified “connection” with her family as a primary motivation:

Life was given to me by my parents. It’s a gift and I think I feel obliged in a positive sense to cherish it. And cherishing doesn’t mean, -- it’s not enough to cherish it by just living and being miserable.

Their family ties kept both Lucy and Hodi grounded in who they were and where they were coming from, which enabled them to be resilient in their academic lives which were full of struggles.

Lucy also observed how her academic work was tied to her “immigrant of colour” identity. Her professional focus on working with immigrant communities had led her to
develop an epistemology through a lens of “immigrants.” First, she explained how challenging it was for a person of colour like her to bring their perspective up front in policy work that is mostly done by mainstream populations, as she claimed:

I’ll get messages from people where they’ll say, “We don’t like that person of colour’s work because it’s all biased.” So, I sit here writing my research report being paranoid that my work is going to be … discarded in that same kind of way. So, I had to come up with strategies about how I am going to present this work so that doesn’t happen to me. ... So, what happens is, I have to admit, I actually had a bit of a mental health issue writing that research report because I said, “I don’t write like this. I don’t look at the world this way.” So, I had to kind of do it in-between. And then I think, “Oh, this is why people of colour can’t do policy positions in the government. Because I don’t write like that.”

While Lucy tried to be pragmatic about writing a report so that it wouldn’t be discarded or discounted by the “policy customers” (see Harris, 2005), she also experienced a tremendous sense of dissatisfaction due to her marginal identity as an immigrant woman of colour. In other words, she had to carry “double consciousness,” the notion coined by Du Bois (see Chapter 3), which indicates her awareness of how she is perceived due to her race and who she really is (Bruce, 1992), throughout the task of report writing. Here she shared a few interconnected lessons that she learned through her experience: 1) there are different ways of looking at the world through various policy positions and people of colour’s perspectives are not mainstream; 2) people of colour in policy positions may have to be pragmatic in order for their perspective not to be discarded; 3) These situations (1 & 2) may discourage people of colour from being in policy positions in the government. Having realized the obstacles in her unique social and intellectual location, she turns the challenges into her strength and intellectual pleasure. She continued:

And then what happened was there was an internationally-educated professional who read my research report and she said, “I didn’t want to read your research report because I thought that you were this Canadian-born person who wouldn’t understand our experiences.” And then she said, “I was shocked because when I read your report, you sounded like an immigrant.” So, of course, I laugh because she knows nothing about my background. So these are the examples of how my work is so much tied into my identity. And so, as you can see, I actually like to write about [diversity and equity], because that’s been my whole life. … I’m very bicultural.
It is apparent that, for Lucy, her academic work was not separate from her background or her everyday life. Even though she had mentioned “double consciousness” emerging from the gap between her peripheral perspectives and more dominant ones, she did include her own perspectives in her research report to some degree and she found it rewarding to receive the above comment from this “internationally-educated professional.” After all, her perspective in her scholarship was embedded in who she was and what experiences she went through. She sounded proud of the multiple lenses that she could employ.

Similarly, Susan, a faculty member engaged in anti-oppression scholarship, was also appreciative of being an “immigrant” in Canada, because it allowed her to better understand what it was like to be in a marginalized location in Canadian society.

Well, personally, before I moved to North America, I didn’t really understand fully what it’s like to be an immigrant or what it’s like to be a minority of a society by virtue of your ethnicity or race. So, that was something that I tried to imagine what it would be like [before moving to North America] but I don’t think I fully appreciated that.

By contrasting the times before and after moving to North America, Susan reflected on what she had gained by actually becoming an “immigrant” in Canadian society. She continued:

So, in that way, I feel being an immigrant myself and being a minority in the society where I live in, I can appreciate what it’s like to be an outsider or be seen as the “other” in the society. So that definitely helps my work. And I think even though it’s not always pleasant to be different and there are many frustrating things associated with them, but in terms of life experience I feel it enriched my life.

For both Lucy and Susan, being an immigrant was not necessarily disempowering for their scholarly work, but rather was a strength and an important resource for their scholarly work as it was/became tangible in their daily lives. What is interesting in Susan’s insight is her realization of the difficulty of understanding the marginalized position until you actually experience it. Her relocation from her country of origin in Asia to Canadian society allowed her to understand being “different” through her lived experiences.
Sue, a faculty member in the field of art, also expressed how important it is for her to express her ethnic and cultural background through her artwork. She stated:

I bring in lots of my background aesthetic point of view coming into my work. And several years ago, I really work[ed] into what I [had] material-wise and, conceptual-wise [that] came from my background. So, that way I think I am contributing my background as an Asian woman, particularly as a [her specific ethnicity], coming into my work. …Many people saying to me my colour sense has that feel to it. …and that’s very important to me. I don’t want to lose that either. And also I don’t want to just be particularly working with it either. Yeah, I really want it to blend together.

As Sue articulated it, “contribution” is the word and idea whereby Sue’s unique background became a source of strength in her professional work and a source of knowledge production. She acknowledged, with some hesitation, that bringing her “Asian” or “[her specific ethnic]” taste into her work is extremely important. By integrating their identities into their work, whether it was about their being immigrant women, their ethnic backgrounds, or racial and gender locations, all three of Lucy, Susan, and Sue, asserted their unique and important perspectives that enhanced their own work and contributed to the larger society. Geleta (2004) summarizes this point in her chapter on immigrant women of color in the academy by saying, “Our contributions in research and service often transcend international borders, and our contributions to a rich and varied classroom discourse leave a mark that positively impacts both the university and the world” (p. 21).

2.2 Legitimating their knowledge production

Among the interviews I conducted, there were some conversations where some faculty members were working on bringing their marginal perspectives to the fore in their disciplines. Similar to the faculty mentioned above, for Katon, a tenured faculty member, integrating her background into her work was quite important. She was upfront about it as she believed in the need for more diverse representation in her field, which was dominated by Western views. She advocated for “real” internationalization of the field and said:

[With my research, I always [come across under-representation of certain regions of the world.] Let’s say if you do [certain disciplinary] History, and then this is [the disciplinary] History about Japan, maybe [there are] two paragraphs. [The
discipline or field of study] about China, Hong Kong, maybe two sentences, and then the rest of 200 something pages is on America. … what we are talking about [as] international now is really not truly international. … So, it’s not a balance of all populations, right? So, I am not saying that you have to attract all world populations with China is the largest, whatever, but at least I would like to see that it is being represented. It’s always been the Western field there, they are the Western superior and I think that should be changed. (p.16)

Katon was thus very much aware of the hierarchy of knowledge in her discipline. Embracing her specific ethnic background and intellectual expertise in her field dealing with East Asian issues, she expressed her unsettled and frustrated feelings about the inequity which she always had to face in the Western academy. She observed that attempts were sometimes made by the dominant academic community to mask such inequity in the name of “international” and “multicultural” for development of “ethnicized” areas of study (see Chapter 3). What Katon was therefore trying to do through her scholarship was to contribute to the existing discipline where there was under-representation and under-appreciation of non-Western views while this effort was also aimed towards legitimating her own minoritized identity that was inseparable from her academic identity.

Lucy was another person who was able to bring her minoritized scholarship into her discipline while remaining strategic about proceeding with her own approach to teaching and scholarship among the mainstream conditions of her discipline. She stated:

Now, [her discipline] practice at that time, basically I was working with people with very mainstream thinking. So, what I did was, in order to be able to get into that curriculum, is I used the mainstream work but then I would critique it from an anti-oppressive framework. So, that’s how I was able to find my way. And that’s why I think I was fine. So, I didn’t really experience that kind of … conflict.

Lucy was able to navigate through mainstream knowledge instead of completely avoiding wearing such “strange apparel” or “white” clothes, which she suspected would have caused a conflict or tension with her colleagues. In other words, she did not receive any backlash or resistance from people around her, which would have made it harder for her to carry on the scholarship that she wanted to bring into the field with an anti-oppressive perspective. She continued:

And then, another thing that happened was just two years being in there, I won that very prestigious award, right. And not only that, … my work was really
respected across the university in terms of research. Because, now, for example, I am appointed by the VP of research to sit on the Board of the [name of a research centre]. The only way you can get on that Board is you have to be appointed by the top-level management of university. So I am actually known inside the university for my scholarly work. So, [non-mainstream scholarship] hasn’t been really an issue for me.

Another point Lucy made was to establish her credibility and reputation about her scholarship first, which made it easy for her to openly be the scholar that she was because few people could question her credibility. Lucy even reached the point where her scholarly work was widely recognized and valued by the top-level management at her university, which gave her a great deal of power as a tenured faculty member. In Shore and Wright’s words, Lucy became a “self-managing [individual] who render[s] [herself] auditable” (as cited in Canaan, 2008, p.259) in the audit culture of the contemporary academy. In other words, her individual accolades are celebrated in the context where entrepreneurial faculty are appreciated and privileged as her performativity paid off (see Morley, 2005). This shows that for one to work against an aspect of dominant academic culture sustained by neoliberalism, one may have to embrace her neoliberal subjectivity for a strategy to find her own space to do what she wants to do.

It seems that for minoritized bodies such as Asian women to carry on their scholarship, they have to work hard or very strategically to legitimate their subjugated perspectives on the academic terrain (see Fenelon, 2003). In doing so, Katon and Lucy desired for their scholarly work to be better represented in their academic community or/and recognized equally by authority figures in order to legitimate themselves.

2.3 Being rigorous with their scholarly work

There were also some participants who shared their strategy to gain power and legitimate their professional identities in their field by being particularly rigorous with their scholarly work. For example, Hikari, a faculty member in a research university, mentioned “internationalizing” her work as an important strategy. Her definition of success was to be recognized in the field, not necessarily by her colleagues, but by “larger international bodies.” This discourse on internationalization echoes the new mode of managerialism in higher education values in the global market that promote “internationalization” (see Gordon, 2010; Harris, 2005). Hikari felt “successful” when
she was invited to talk by people she didn’t know and when students approached her to do a PhD or post doc with her. She sounded proud of those things that actually started happening to her, as “reputation is the most highly prized commodity” in academia (Morley, 2005, p.424). Thus we see how Hikari’s academic success was connected to performativity (Acker et al., 2009; Canaan, 2008) and productivity shown in her “several [publications] every year.” Further in the interview, she shared her advice for future academics saying, “it’s also increasingly becoming important that you continue to be able to publish, … [T]his is awful but probably, at least in my field, … you should put publication and research as even a larger priority than teaching.” This reveals how the pressure Hikari felt to publish came from the climate of her research university, which typically emphasizes the importance of research (Metcalf, 2010) rather than teaching. This is observed as important particularly to the definition of professional and institutional identities (Harris, 2005; Strike, 2010) within the stratification system of recruitment, tenure and promotion (Acker et al., 2009).

Another participant, Katon, shared her achievement of having a good publication record, which seems to be her niche in her academic career. Throughout her interview, she emphasized that she had consistently been publishing in refereed journals since she was in [her country of origin], which made her CV “strong.” She sounded quite confident in the rigorous record of her scholarly work, which even stood out in her own department. When discussing the politics of her department, she expressed what she really cared about, which was not the departmental politics or her positions in the departmental or institutional environment. She said:

[A]ll I want is I want to build up my credentials, my publications and then I can… get into the Full Professor goal, move onto my life, right, not only at [the name of her university]… so I am seeing one of my possibilities is [to] build up my credentials, my publications.

From her narrative above, it is emphasized that publication is important for a faculty member to go up the ladder of academic career. Katon even stated that the institutional boundary was not a site of her focus for her academic goal, but implied that her aspiration went beyond it. This was a huge contrast with her struggles in the department she had as expressed earlier (see Chapter 6) including her stigma about her spoken English as well as her reluctance to take on other kinds of responsibility such as service. She was bound
to various responsibilities in her department and her institution to a large extent and, thus wished to be liberated from them by reaching at the top rank so that she would be able to “move on to [her own] life” as a scholar in the larger society.

Another way of being validated in the academy is to receive grants. Susan, who did community work quite actively within her research agenda, shared her insights into getting grants.

I am happy when I get money, grants. Getting grants has been relatively easy for me. So, that’s something that’s fun and that’s exciting because that [makes me] do that kind of work I do. … [W]hat’s important for me is to work with progressive communities and create the knowledge that is anti-oppressive or decolonizing what we have been doing. … [M]y political ideological agenda is very important and doing the [name of methodology] research, for example, is all about that: empowerment of community members or people who are [socially vulnerable] or…And within the limits of the academy, I still get to do something that I want to do. So, within my privilege of being able to access money, I can turn to the community and do the work I want. So, I think that constitutes success for me personally.

As seen in her quote at the beginning of this chapter, Susan was critical of the academy that generally does not allow academics to be true to themselves but rather imposes multiple institutional requirements. But the above quote describes how Susan still found her own space within the institutional border where she could navigate without being untrue to herself, and she even acknowledges her academic privilege.

Grant application has become increasingly important in the context of government budget cuts that force the institutions to seek out other sources of income (Buchbinder & Newson, 1990; Canaan, 2008; Metcalfe, 2010; MSELIN, 2010). The repercussions of this trend affect faculty careers and power dynamics within institutions. Hodi, a tenured faculty member in a medium-size university, echoed this point about feeling pressured to get grants by her institution. She said:

[I]f you have a grant you are something in the academic world. Yes. That’s how academic capitalism operates and the currency is… grants. So, if you win a grant then your status, your esteem goes up and you’re a somebody [in the department], right…because it’s not a very personal environment…. In this kind of environment, the currency is the academic prowess and the respect you garner from your colleagues and … the kind of relationship you can have. The relationship you can have depends a lot on … your ability to influence others in this manner.
Even though Hodi did not use the term *power*, I interpret her description of the academic culture as being full of power relations. Those who win grants not only gain monetary/material power by being able to do what they want to do, but also become legitimated as first-class citizens because of the institutional expectations of what they should be or do, which seem to be more visible and straightforward than ever before. Hodi shared her thoughts in occurrence of changes in academic climate over time. She stated:

> Well, in general, the pressure has gone up. And there is a lot more awareness of it and … my faculty as a whole is a lot more into pressing and publicizing. So, it’s not like… private individual scholars getting their grants and people may or may not know about it. Now, … the difference is like, when I was going to school in [an East Asian country], our grades were posted on the door, all our grades, everyone can see. So, there’s almost that kind of atmosphere now.

The phenomenon of publicizing faculty achievements that Hodi discussed above echoes Canaan’s (2008) discussion of accountability in contemporary neoliberal oriented academia. Canaan (2008) argues that accountability is based on the “new morality of attainment that emerged with the introduction of formal, written, quantifiable examinations” (p.259). Publicizing could be one of the monitoring systems in a context where academics have to “perform” for “economy, efficiency and effectiveness” according to the audit culture that is part of the neoliberal government and institutions (Canaan, 2008, p.260; see also Acker et al., 2009; Harris, 2005). The peer pressure to produce more is a product of such forms of neoliberal governmentality.

Therefore, for scholars such as Susan, Katon, and Hikari, as mentioned earlier, being rigorous with their scholarly work provided them with multiple layers of power in the climate of productivity and accountability, whereby they could pursue their intellectual agenda through their community and/or scholarly work. This way, they found their niche that was rewarding in their academic life despite existing in the academic climate that Susan described in the beginning of the chapter.

In summary, whether derived from institutional neoliberal performativity or associated with “model minority” stereotypes, participants’ aspirations, desires and motivations accomplished through their scholarly work were clearly articulated in their narratives. They emerged and operated based on who they were and how they wanted to
be in relation to their particular academic environments. It seems that all the three themes discussed here (i.e. integrating their unique perspectives into their scholarly work, legitimating their knowledge production, and being rigorous with their scholarly work) had a common goal, which was to legitimize themselves, their identities, and their citizenships on the existing academic terrain. In terms of the goal, there were multiple definitions of success, particularly institutional and their own individual definitions, which sometimes overlapped in their legitimation processes through their identity (re)formation.

3. Seeking Out Space and Support in the Existing System

There was some common strategy, among the faculty, of manipulating and navigating the existing system to carve their own niche in the academic space. For example, Lucy, now a tenured faculty member in a teaching-oriented university, claimed her strategy for success and survival had been to “navigate the system.” One of the things that she was strategic about was maintaining the proportional relationship between her teaching, research and service work. Lucy took advantages of a system that allowed her to avoid too many courses to teach because of certain conditions she faced at different times. In the past, as a junior faculty member who had not finished her doctorate, Lucy could get away with a small load of teaching and did not perform any service, which she knew did not “count” for her tenure and promotion. In the meantime, she could also build up the scholarly part of her career. Once she got tenured, she started taking on administrative responsibilities, which she even enjoyed and which allowed her to reduce her teaching load once again. She said, “So I have been able to actually, … navigate the university in terms of making sure that … I am not teaching too many courses.” In this case, navigating a system means to be able to pick and choose what was beneficial for her academic career without any backlash against her in the given context. In a teaching-oriented university like hers, she could have had many more courses to teach, which would have made it difficult for her to pursue other responsibilities (research and service) that were also crucial for her to climb up the academic ladder.

Lucy further discussed what results she gained from her navigation of the system, her rigorous scholarly work, and the recognition and respect she earned in her academic
community, which she asserted enabled her to reach the point where she could even “take some risk.” She continued:

[S]o what really helps is that because I’ve been able to… navigate the system, and then I’ve also been able to have a reputation for my scholarly work and research, being respected for it, then I am more able to take some risk, being able to express my opinion without being seen as maybe not competent, right? And one of my thoughts is that, if you want to engage in [anti-oppression] work, because of the, prevalence of racism, that in order for you to be able to challenge the system, I find that you have to work ten times as hard and be ten times as competent. Otherwise, you’re very vulnerable. …because I’ve been able to ….be okay with my work, that I am able to take a few more risks than maybe some other people can within the university. But at the same time, I’m also strategic because I also know that you have to pick and choose your battles.

From this narrative, to take a risk means to challenge the system. In this context, Lucy seems to have specifically referred to the system within her academic institution, which she could maneuver as a result of gaining some power. What is interesting in her interpretation is her perception that the level of effort required in order to gain power is not the same for everybody. She pointed out the vulnerability of minoritized faculty and their social condition, which she stressed required the faculty to “work ten times as hard and be ten times as competent.” Lucy asserted that her hard work and being competent had led her to where she now stood. But, she also emphasized another dimension of her strategy, which was to be selective about what she would fight for. It seems that she was fully conscious of her own power, privilege and limitations within the institution, which possibly enabled her to see which “battle” would be worth fighting given her relation to the institution.

Moreover, in order to establish a space where one could function and succeed in the academy, seeking out a social network and support/mentors is a typically suggested practice for faculty members (see Geleta, 2004). As knowing who to ask which questions is an important key to success in one’s academic environment (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), having good relationships with specific colleagues could determine important outcomes in one’s academic survival. There were participants who sought out a social network and support for themselves and claimed that it was a strategy for their healthy academic life. For example, Janet, a junior faculty member in social science who moved
to North America in her adulthood, responded to my request to give a piece of advice to Asian women who are future academics. She said:

[If] I am giving advice to a foreign-born Asian woman, then I think I would tell her to have … a good relationship with as many people as possible because that would be your… social network. If you are foreign-born, you have to learn things from scratch, so you have to really listen to many people, as many diverse people… opinions or experiences as possible. And then if you are born into the society then you naturally build up all these from your own experiences but you are sort of like transplanted into a new society so these are really valuable things, I don’t like to use the word “resources” because it sounds too pragmatic. But that really helps you.

Janet emphasized the disadvantage of foreign-born academics who generally needed a great deal of adjustment in terms of lifestyle, ways of communicating and knowing, social networking, self identification, and other dimensions of life known as “culture” (Geleta, 2004; Kolapo, 2009; Lin, 2006). Janet suggested that, given the lack of cultural capital as a disadvantage, a key to success for foreign-born academics is to learn about the culture, system, and unwritten rules by meeting “as many people as possible” who could be good “resources.” She continued:

Sometimes it’s kind of hard if you feel like you are a minority and you are a disadvantaged person and you build … defenses around you. And that sort of like filters out certain voices. But even between someone who you don’t agree with or someone who you feel like that person is wrong, I think that really helps to build your social experiences from listening to the voices of people. …I think the more you are open to diverse voices then I think the more that enriches your experiences and perspectives and then you can start, it really helps you to build your own strategy to find your niche in the society.

Here Janet acknowledged the difficulty in socializing, especially for foreign-born/minority faculty. Lynn, another junior faculty participant, echoed this point as quoted in the previous chapter – she experienced a difficulty in socialization due to her foreign-born background. Consequently, it can be seen that it is not easy for minority faculty to gain mentorship or networking opportunities (Geleta, 2004; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Geleta (2004) comments on mentorship for immigrant women faculty of color, saying:

[S]enior members tend to select a mentee that shares their research interests, views, and perspectives (Burgess, 1997) and notably, mentors tend to choose
mentees who are similar to them culturally and racially. Consequently, immigrant women faculty of color, who share the least commonality with the traditional senior faculty members suffer from limited opportunities for mentorship. (p.29)

Having recognized the barrier between minority faculty and the rest, Janet still insisted on the importance and helpfulness of socialization with many other people, which would open many more doors and allow one to eventually identify one’s niche. Janet apparently had observed this based on her own experience of having built her own social network and social persona in a work context of her country of origin and had to adjust in the new environment in Canada. Elsewhere in her interview, Janet mentioned some academics who she could often go to for advice when needed. In giving advice to future academics, she again embraced the importance of a social network for the survival of foreign-born Asian women faculty like herself.

Hodi, a tenured faculty member, highlighted how important it was for her to actively seek out her own group of people with whom she could feel connected among colleagues in her own department. First, she reflected on her academic environment in the institution, saying:

I think it was just yesterday I was reflecting that our work environment, despite the appearance of niceness and everybody’s collegial -- it really is not an interpersonal environment…. Also, people do not open up to each other in any substantial way.

Despite this academic environment, Hodi still managed to have some colleagues with whom she felt intimate or like “family” and described these relationships as “alliances.” As she had “good relationships with quite a few colleagues,” she also said, “if I need help I can just knock on some people’s doors.” In short, because her work environment in general is actually not very collegial or intimate, finding her own group of people like alliances had become a key to her personal survival in her academic life.

Susan emphasized the benefit of having like-minded scholars around her to provide feedback on her research. She suggested that she worked to:

create a small niche of community in my own work but also maybe other work with colleagues who are like-minded or who understand my work. Yeah, so that’s also important. …, I feel more immediate gratification often because they respond to what I do more immediately in terms of research setting.
That is, even though Susan was committed to her community service outside her institution, she still appreciated collaborations with colleagues who understood her work.

Hikari is another participant who emphasized having benefitted from having supportive colleagues. She noted:

I was very lucky in that there were a couple of key people, couple of senior professors, who were here when I came in, who were in my sub-field, who knew me from before. In fact, there was one key professor who, from early on, kind of said, “Oh, so I realize you don’t know this culture at all so I will take on an informal role as your mentor.” And so he took me on, he became my mentor and he is still a very important colleague to me. I think he was very crucial for me, for my mental health, in surviving here because I think if I didn’t have that kind of mentor inside, I think I would have probably, you know, left sometime ago.

For Hikari, who felt disadvantaged and vulnerable, with trepidations at the beginning due to her moving from [East Asian] higher education and not knowing much about the North American academic culture (see Chapter 7), having a senior professor inside her own department act as her mentor helped her to decrease her level of anxiety. Knowing the importance of the network around her, Hikari also sought out her support system quite actively outside her department. She noted:

I think my strategy for surviving has been to, …even if I can’t get the support I need from within my department, I go and look for them in other departments. So, I feel I have a really strong group of friends from different departments.

In addition to support groups or mentors, for some faculty members, finding another space outside their own department provided them with comfort, strength, and enjoyment in their academic life. For instance, Katon discussed her positive experiences with her administrative position in another program compared to her negative experiences in her own department. She was happy to have another office in the program so that she did not have to spend so much time in her department. She noted:

[T]hen later on they (the institution) also have [me] as Associate Director with the teaching offload so I don’t have to get so much involved with those senior colleagues. [in my department]. So, this (me being in the administrative position) was very positive experience for me at [Institution Name] because, and this [program outside my department] is [with] the group [of] other Asian researchers and students, so there is more, more able to understand you and with that kind of feeling.
In contrast with her negative feelings about her own department that she discussed earlier, Katon was able to assert the positive aspects of another program in which she participated. Earlier in the interview she expressed how difficult it was to be in her own department, where “senior white male colleagues” had power and manipulated the culture of the department. Whereas she felt comfortable to be in the office of the program where there were other Asian researchers and students who would be “able to understand” her as another Asian scholar. Even though she didn’t articulate it, evidently race/ethnicity was playing a role in her comfort level. It seemed to be the “space” of this other program that grounded her with positive experience within the institution rather than her offload perks (i.e. she did not have to teach as much due to her administrative responsibility) or responsibilities for the program.

Similarly, Hikari also described her maneuvering strategy in having cross-appointments (e.g. her home department and an Asia-related program). Although she expressed elsewhere how much work she had to do because of cross-appointments, she also felt the advantage of having different spaces to go to. She said, “If I were unhappy in [my department], I could always escape, go to [the Asia-related program]. …I feel good because I have both, …, different alternatives to turn to.” In other words, she was not stuck in one particular space. Moreover, the Asia-related program operated as her second “home,” which ethnically and academically legitimized as her being Asian and conducting Asia-related research. Hikari also explained that she had managed to teach courses that she wanted to teach at this program while she could not do so in her own department.

4. Supporting Others and Building Alliances
For some participants, supporting others in need of help and building coalitions with a group of people were part of their niche that kept them going or allowed them to take advantage of the power they were given in the academy. For example, Lucy supported other faculty members, especially the ones who were not tenured. She stated:

And the way you support [my colleagues] is that,… -- now what happens is that now when you’re tenured and promoted you get to sit on these committees where you review their files. And … when we’re reviewing the files, I’m also careful to point out when people make assumptions. Sometimes they’ll say, “Hey, I don’t see that person in the faculty meetings so I don’t find them very collegial.” And
then I’ll say, “Wait a minute, you know what? That person sits on this committee and that committee. Maybe they were over there.” Right?

What Lucy did to support other faculty members was to protect them from criticism about their academic performance by giving the critics other perspectives. This was not offensive to the people who critiqued her colleagues but was a rather diplomatic and tranquil method of critique. She continued:

Now, some people say that people have choice in what they teach. That’s not true for some communities. For example, if you’re Aboriginal, you have to teach the Aboriginal course because, …, there is a real problem in the university on those issues. I always think about those discussions and then, what can we do to kind of like, help each other out? Now, I would come from an approach of helping each other out because I would do it with my family all the time. So, I can’t really relate to when people are selfish in the university realm.

This narrative shows that Lucy often thought about inequity among her colleagues and tried to help the marginalized. She related her conduct in the academy to how she grew up, which involved helping each other rather than being individualistic. In other words, she believed in collective actions to help each other, as this was the way she was raised. As I have emphasized and as McInnis (2010) points out, there is a strong culture in the academy wherein individual achievement is celebrated, even though there has been a shift in the recent entrepreneurial academy toward collaborative work under the institutional management of academic productivity (p. 158). Olssen and Peter (2005) also point out that neoliberalism promotes individuals being competitive and entrepreneurial.

Lucy also emphasized the importance of practice and strategy. She continued, “at the same time, I am also pragmatic. It’s just like a sinking ship, I’m not going to self-sacrifice myself. You know what I am saying? So there’s a balance.” Important to note again here is that Lucy explicated that she did not risk her academic career. She did what she could do within the capacity and power that she was given.

For Hodi, another participant, her relationships with her graduate students was a space where she enjoyed and embraced her own personal being through her faculty position. She said:

I really enjoy working with graduate students on a long-term basis and have the close relationship and mentoring them and all that. So, that’s the most enjoyable part and important part of my work as a university teacher…. And then, of course,
you know, as your reputation establishes and people want to come with me. Or else people come to be rescued by me, I guess.

Hodi took on her privileged position where she could be of great assistance to people in need of help. Having said that, for Hodi to earn a good reputation among students, there was actually a great deal of cost to her actions. For example, she helped her students quite extensively with their grant applications. She observed, “more intense than writing for my own grants is actually helping my students get their [grant application] started.” She even sounded proud when she said, “I have a whole folder of my graduate students who received doctoral SSHRCs [Social Science and Humanities Research Council](prestigious grants from the government). I actually spend a lot of time helping my students with that perfect SSHRC grant.” Another area where she tried to provide her students with opportunities was publication. She stated:

I actually enjoy collaboration. So, after I got my tenure I focused on collaborative writing. In my faculty at least, priority is given to a single authored peer-reviewed publication for tenure qualifications, …. But once I got tenure, I felt I could just focus on collaborative writing, which I enjoy and also it benefits others, like students. So, I tend to collaborate with the students, invite them to be my co-authors or in other cases I invite them to be first author and I am second author. That part I really enjoy.

Her narratives show that Hodi’s care for students was applied to some of her outstanding actions. She was even strategic in collaborating with students for publication by focusing on it only after getting tenured. Hodi had to “negotiate” with the institution in order to do what she wanted to do. She was very much aware of what the institution validates more than others, which did not include so much supervision of students. As she articulated: “[Having heavy supervision load is] not one of those things that we can take pride or we can talk about it and get validated. It’s almost like, well, partly being seen as being crazy.” Here we can ask the question: Where was her motivation for quite intensively supervising so many students coming from?

Drawing on Judith Butler’s notion of performativity, Canaan (2008) argues that, even though it is difficult for academics to resist the neoliberal performativity that deeply influenced their ways of being, there could be even a little space in subjectivity that is excluded from the neoliberal subjectivity. While there are assumptions that are normalized through repetition as performativity, Canaan argues that “we can get beyond
them in part by working with those in other, less powerful positions (i.e. students) and in part by considering how parts of ourselves are excluded” (p.267). I wish to highlight this point related to Hodi’s subjectivity in working with her graduate students so intensively under the circumstance where the institutions and her colleagues do not value the task. This part of her subjectivity was not based on the neoliberal peformativity centering productivity, effectiveness and efficiency, but based on something outside it. Canaan (2008) advocates for possibilities for subjectivity that can be the source of alternatives to the dominant norms under neoliberalism (see also Mayuzumi & Shahjahan, 2008).

When I asked Hodi elsewhere in the interview if there are any of her demographic characteristics that make a difference to how she does her work in the academy, Hodi answered the question about her source of motivation as follows:

I think the only thing that kind of comes to me as a noticeable point is my own mother[ing] experience and also having been mothered by my own mother. And also the cultural background, both Japanese and Koreans share this incredible zeal for education, which translates into mothers being very devoted to the cause of their children’s education. So, somehow or another that went into my relationship with my graduate students. Especially the supervision. So, I seem to be going out of my way oftentimes [being] concerned with my students’ wellbeing. So, it’s not just the academic relationship but a more interpersonal relationship around it.

Hodi emphasized the cultural dimension of her being Asian as driving elements of caring about her students’ education. This nurturing and caring characteristic can become a source of stigma and dilemma for feminist pedagogues especially when the nurturing care is expected of them in the power dynamic of academic space (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996; Hoodfar, 1992; Luke, 1996; Ropers-Huilman, 2009) and when it is not appreciated as much in the neoliberal context (Morley, 2005). However, it became apparent throughout her interview that Hodi considered this maternal and cultural kind of nurturing towards her students as adding strength to her pedagogy and her professional identity. She expressed with confidence that she felt well respected and trusted by her students. Hodi added, “all those (being well respected and having a strong track record as a supervisor) I think contribute to my sense of legitimacy in the participation [in the academic community].” At least Hodi did not express to me that her “doing good” (i.e. working hard, caring for students, and being a good citizen) caused her to “feel bad” despite the academic system that does not reward much for such good work (see Acker &
Feuerverger, 1996). In other words, while she knew that the intense supervision of students did not count as much as other scholarly work in a faculty profile, she created her own space of legitimacy in her own way.

Besides supporting others in their own capacity, building an alliance was also a source of empowerment and ambition for some Asian women faculty. Foo Ja, a junior faculty member in a mid-size university, expressed her passion for a future prospective project in taking the initiative to build a coalition among Asian people in the academy. After referring to another faculty member in the same university who organized events for and with a minority group of students on campus, she said:

What I would love is, I would love to do something like that (organizing events not only for Asian people but about Asianness with Asian students) to change the institution… You should change it for the students as well as faculty and staff. … So, that’s something that I think …[and] obviously what I am passionate about.

Foo Ja’s passion about building an alliance of Asian people as she explained stemmed from the existing society that she questioned and wanted to change somehow. She was frustrated with the fact that there is little representation of Asian bodies on campus and said, “[b]ut if there are no students there then what’s the point [of organizing events]?” Although changing an institution could sound too ambitious, her hopeful attitude still lay in her equity and social justice approach. In fact, as mentioned in Chapter 5, Foo Ja was the participant who most eloquently pointed out the politics of Asians as being not seen or heard as racialized subjects in a larger society.

Given the position of power, privilege and authority as a professor or a tenured faculty member, each of all the three participants, Lucy, Hodi and Foo Ja, attempted to make a difference in the life of the marginalized or those who needed help around them. Lucy helped another faculty member who was going to be judged negatively by other colleagues around her. Hodi positively prioritized helping her graduate students in her academic workload although it did not count as much as other work that the institution would have validated. Foo Ja expressed her ambition to form a coalition with other Asian people and had been waiting for a chance to come. Not only interested in just surviving in the academy, but also thriving as a member of the collective in the given situation (also see Chapter 7), they did what they could do within the range of their power and privilege.
5. Conclusion

I have argued that it is valuable to view the academic climate and conditions from the perspectives of marginalized groups who tend to become increasingly silenced under neoliberalism (Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Clegg, 2008; Hornosty, 2004; Morley, 2005; Nast & Pulido, 2000). Mohanty (2003) also advocates that the privileged tend to be blind in viewing the oppressive aspects of the social system (see also Collin, 2000). There may be an argument that Asian women faculty as a “model minority” should not be labeled as or included in the marginalized groups, but the previous chapters have revealed the struggles, ambiguities and confusions of Asian women faculty deriving from their marginality in historical and contemporary discourses of Asian women in Canada. This chapter explores how they carve their niche, despite the struggles, to bring their own subjectivity to the centre using their agency in subject-making processes.

Asian women faculty have not been exceptional as “neoliberal subjects” (Archer, 2008) within the existing trend of the academy, where competition, egocentrism and efficiency, as mentioned by Susan in the beginning of the chapter, tended to be prioritized over equity, social justice (Blackmore, 1997) and “humility,” which is more valued in Asian culture (see Chapter 7). In other words, their subject-making is not or cannot be completely independent of the social, material and cultural conditions that shape their ways of being and doing things for survival (Archer, 2008). As Susan said at the beginning of this chapter, “you have to play the game in order to survive, to a certain extent.” This again confirmed that Susan believed that there were still, to another extent, “important moments and spaces of resistance” (Archer, 2008, p.282) against the pernicious academic climate stemming from the neoliberal performativity.

Throughout the narratives, participants explained that there were important moments and spaces of resistance or “found niches” that legitimated their sense of belonging in the academy. First, the ways in which some of the Asian women faculty linked their academic work with their identity (e.g. immigrant, Asian, etc.) indicate the degree to which they bring in parts of their subjectivity which are not dependent on neoliberal performativity (see Canaan, 2008; Clegg, 2008). Through such scholarship, they contributed to equity of knowledge production within their disciplines or institutions where inequity could otherwise be perpetuated (see Mohanty, 2003). Second, seeking out
their space to belong and connect to people could be considered a process of becoming part of a collective by securing their vulnerable yet valuable subjects. Third, within their range of influence, some Asian women faculty’s commitment to help those more vulnerable is a sign of thriving for an activist project beyond their individual survival within such an imbalanced social and political landscape. The effort made to become a legitimate citizen through carving a niche is not only an individual endeavour but can also be seen as a form of collective resistance with the potential to create institutional and personal transformation by allowing and encouraging other marginalized subjects to “be true to [themselves] and carve out or forge the space for [themselves] so that [they] still get to do what [they] want to do and still survive then to be perceived as successful” (quoted from Susan in the beginning of this chapter).
1. Introduction – Continued Questions with More Encounters

While reflecting on my research journey, I am reminded of a couple of recent incidents that brought to light how I am perceived to be an “Asian woman” in different situations. One was when I went to a parent-teacher interview for our Junior Kindergarten child with my (male) partner/husband in Toronto. Our son’s teacher, a woman of colour, sat right in front of me and my partner was sitting next to me. Throughout the whole 20 minute interview, she looked almost exclusively at my partner, except when she mentioned our son’s and my Japanese-ness (i.e. language). My attempts to jump into the conversations were interrupted unless she initiated discussion with me about our son’s Japanese education. In another incident, I recently asked a store clerk in a mall for directions in English. Just before he gave me directions after kindly looking at a map, he turned to me and asked, “Do you understand English?”

What is Asianness? Is it about ambiguity? Or is it about struggles? What is Asian-woman-ness? Is it about invisibility, incompetency, and dependence? Whatever it is, the external forces that remind me of my Asianness or Asian-woman-ness make me feel unsettled and uncomfortable in Canada. When I left my son’s school after the interview with his teacher, I was silent as if trapped in a huge hole, which I could not get out of. I could not ignore the incident and pretend that it was just a trivial matter, especially now that I have paid close attention to the historical and representational discourses of Asians and Asian women followed by the life stories of Asian women faculty. This incident made me wonder what would have happened if I had mentioned my educational credentials (i.e. completing a PhD in education), which was a contextual fact unknown to my interlocutor. Or perhaps my educational background would not have mattered anyway because I embodied Asian-woman-ness and I have learned that the authority of Asian women “faculty” tends to be discounted. Furthermore, I could not interpret “Do you understand English?” as a simple question or avoid thinking that it reflected a general perception of me as an “Asian woman.” In both incidents, I felt that I was situated on the line drawn from the historical production of what “Asian women” are perceived to be. I
do not mean to over-analyze the events recounted above, but rather to emphasize that these consecutive events are not coincidental or unique occurrences for me as an individual. I am compelled to think of them as outcomes of cultural processes whereby I became an “Asian woman” when I came to North America. As mentioned also in Chapter 1, such ongoing encounters led me to initiate this research project and now reaffirm the importance of the inquiries I took on through this project.

In this final chapter, I will reflect on the research process and some of the highlights of the findings, summarize my transnational feminist analysis in a “T” diagram, and discuss contributions, limitations and implications of the study.

2. Reflection on Findings
The overriding purpose of this research was to examine the subject-making processes of the Asian women faculty by identifying their social constraints as well as their own agency within their given context. My central research questions were: “What are the experiences of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy?” “How do they navigate this space?” and more specifically, as a subquestion, “How do they negotiate various aspects of identity, such as gender, race, and language, in their transnational locations?” In order to answer these questions, first, I introduced the transnational feminist framework as the conceptual and analytical lens to be applied to my study of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy. This framework is grounded in the concept of transnationality that signals asymmetrical power relations among nations and individuals based on citizenship discourses. Such power relations that have been intensified through the recent globalization and neoliberal processes and at the same time that are linked to imperial history had to be taken into consideration in the study of Asian women faculty in Canadian higher education, a site which is part of both global and local forces that are not separate, but rather interconnected. The three key points for the transnational feminist analysis that I articulated were: 1) to take into account both cultural and material discourses that are interconnected; 2) to highlight the importance of social structures that are modeled after imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism through gendered, sexualized and racialized imageries; and 3) to pay attention to various forms of border crossings of the subjects. I also contextualized Asian women in Canada through historical and representational discourses within the transnational feminist framework in order to
better understand the roots of various stereotypes assigned to Asians and Asian women (Chapter 2).

I also provided the readers with the research context, including my epistemological underpinnings for using life stories as a methodology, how I conducted the research specifically, and methodological issues that emerged throughout the process. One of the significant purposes of this dissertation was to glean insights into the academic lives of nine Asian women faculty. Each participant’s story went in-depth to provide data that reflect the way they conceptualize their lives (Chapter 4). While the stories of the three Asian women faculty members I encountered and introduced at the beginning of the first chapter inspired my inquiry into their perspectives, the nine participants’ in-depth interviews were important in foregrounding the lack of perspectives from Asian women faculty in the literature on the Canadian higher education setting. Here I do not mean to imply that these nine women are representative of all Asian women faculty. Instead, I emphasize that each voice is only one of many and I do acknowledge each woman’s difference; yet I also wish to highlight the common threads of their Asianness and Asian-woman-ness that shape and are shaped by their diasporic locations in the Canadian context.

Throughout the data chapters (Chapters 5-8), I illustrated the processes of their “illegitimization” as citizens in both academic and national domains and their struggles with and aspirations for their “legitimate” status. I argue that paying attention to the subject making of Asian women faculty within a transnational feminist perspective reveals hegemonic social forces not only at the local or academic level but also at the global and national levels. First, I found different elements that located the Asian women faculty in “illegitimate” or “othered” positions in terms of their race, ethnicity, gender, citizenships and language through their academic career. The socially constructed notion of “immigrants” was salient throughout their experiences and it even became their logics to differentiate themselves from the dominant population. Specifically, I highlighted how the Orientalist discourses of Asian women are still pervasive in the academic domain through different stereotypes and forms of questioned authority. The Asian women faculty’s everyday thinking about what is “Asian” also reveals the dominant discourse of what “Canadian” citizens should be. Their Asianness and Asian-woman-ness, a
combination of their race, gender, language, and youthful appearance, was associated with a lack of authority, especially in the supposedly elite positions of their professions (Chapter 5). The illegitimate nature of their status was solidified in cases where their language skills were considered to be a problem, which intersected with other identity markers including their race and gender. In fact, I focused on how the Asian women faculty struggled with and were stigmatized in their academic lives in relation to their oral and writing skills in English. I emphasized how the English language was an essential “credential” to be considered a legitimate citizen in Canada. The Asianness expressed in their English skills, especially speaking with an accent, had a combined effect with their race and gender in terms of how they were viewed in the academy (Chapter 6). While Asianness and Asian-woman-ness were external perceptions of Asians and Asian women that are influential of the lives of the population, they could also be concepts understood by Asians or Asian women themselves. In Chapter 7, the theme of “cultural logics” arose as it was interpreted as flexible context-dependent formulas for understanding “culture.” What was important to note here was that not only did the discussion of cultural logics indicate their peripheral locations and border crossing within cultural politics, but it also revealed some of the physical and material consequences emerging from their actions in the name of “culture.” For example, being an immigrant, mother and daughter was linked to some of the participants’ physical and material struggles through their cultural interpretation of their situations (e.g. looking after or helping family members).

Having discussed their illegitimacy/ peripheral locations, what I also found was the effort that the Asian women faculty made in order to legitimate themselves in various situations. For example, in defining what is “Asian,” there was some victorious consciousness of being Asian as well as some resistance against the dominant (lack of) understanding of what is “Asian” among the participants (Chapter 5). This revealed that Asianness and Asian-woman-ness are not only defined and acted upon by others/non-Asians but also are derived from within the group who try to understand the meaning of their being Asian and Asian women in the given context. I also illustrated how some of the Asian women faculty redefined legitimacy for themselves to resist the hegemonic nature of the English language through their academic practices (Chapter 6). Through
their cultural logics, Asian women faculty tried to make sense of and legitimate their “differences” from the dominant culture (e.g. Asianness and Asian-woman-ness) through their cultural expressions. As Lisa Lowe (1996) asserts, the “distance from the national culture constitutes Asian (American) culture as an alternative formation that produces cultural expressions materially and aesthetically at odds with the resolution of the citizen in the nation” (p.6) as Asian women faculty are “agents of political change, cultural expression, and social transformation” (p.9). What I wish to emphasize here is that their cultural logics serve not only to understand their individual relationship with the dominant society but rather to express their collectivity as “Asians” or “Asian women” who share memory and history that emerged from their collective relationship with the nation-state (Chapter 7). I also illustrated the way Asian women faculty carve a niche or create their own space through their academic work under the neoliberal influence of their higher education institutions situated within the context of global capitalism. Their aspirations for “legitimate” status and their specific strategies were introduced through the stories they told. For example, integrating their Asian or “immigrant” identity into their scholarly work served not only to bring in unique perspectives but also to legitimate their marginalized selves in academic communities. The enhancement of their academic credibility through being highly productive implied gaining different levels of legitimacy (e.g. knowledge production in their scholarly fields, their voice to be heard, etc.) through their neoliberal subjectivity. Seeking out a space to belong and connect to people could be considered a process of becoming part of a collective by securing their legitimate positions. Some of the participants’ efforts to help those more vulnerable (i.e. colleagues and students) were part of their activist project for collective survival and to try to thrive in the academic community where inequity persisted.

The Asian women faculty’s endeavours for equity and social justice did not necessarily conflict with their neoliberal subjectivity that makes them follow and pursue a model of neoliberal performativity. Some of them even aspired to be excellent in their scholarship by meeting the expectations of neoliberal universities. This conformity does not imply that they were all for neoliberal ideology and practice or did not care about equity. For the Asian women faculty, neoliberal performativity and equity did not necessarily oppose or conflict with each other. Rather, they accepted their neoliberal
subjectivity in one way and still sought out a way of legitimizing their scholarship and forms of knowledge production in another way, which could lead to “uncovering and reclaiming subjugated knowledges,” which is “one way to lay claim to alternative histories” (Mohanty, 2003, p.196). In other words, they could remain authentic to themselves while their academic performance would still fall in line with the expectations of the neoliberal governance model of higher education institutions. For the Asian women faculty, they would pick and choose what is effective to legitimize their academic identities in the context of neoliberal subjectivity, while at the same time they would sometimes go against the neoliberal performativity and pursue activities based on their own subjectivity that is not dependent on the neoliberal subjectivity (see Canaan, 2008). As Archer (2008) concludes in her article on a study of young academics in neoliberal universities, although the academics’ subjectivity can never be independent of the influence of neoliberal performativity, there are still moments of resistance in their academic lives. I argue that for Asian women faculty as well there are moments of resistance to the neoliberal performativity model, as their own personal definitions of “success” are not always congruent with that of the institutions and they are aware of the difference.

One may ask the question of whether Asian women faculty’s engagement with their neoliberal subjectivity implied complicity in or resistance to hegemonic forces around them. I would argue that the latter was more often the case. My research on Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy, in this sense, contributes to the discussion about “resistance” by posing the question, “What does resistance mean for the Asian women faculty?” Resistance in their context is more nuanced than the definition of resistance that I borrowed from Mohanty (2003) in Chapter 2, which was, “Resistance lies in self-conscious engagement with dominant, normative discourses and representations and in the active creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces” (p.196). I would now extend it to assert that resistance lies in the strategic creation of oppositional analytic and cultural spaces through self-legitimization in their (academic) citizenry.

In order to answer my research questions mentioned in the beginning of this section, I paid close attention to the subject making of the Asian women faculty, which
revealed the social conditions and categories that contributed to the inequity that the subjects experienced. It allowed me to identify some blind spots of inequity that I would have overlooked otherwise. I argue that subject making is a constant negotiation process of how one should locate oneself in and act upon the given context. I found and foregrounded a thread in the participants’ subject making, which was their aspiration for self legitimation in the context where they would normally be seen as “illegitimate.” This agency to aspire to and act upon self-legitimation formed the core of their survival skills and the strategy for thriving derived from the cultural specificity as well as various contexts of Asian women faculty, as agency is also both constrained and enabled by the context (see Nealon & Giroux, 2003). Where agency, resistance and justice must be theorized from a more cross-cultural lens (Mohanty, 2003), I argue that this study examining the subject making of Asian women faculty succeeded in teasing out the agency and resistance of the subjects through their unique positions as Asian women in Canada/the West.

3. “T” for Transnational Feminist Analysis
What does it mean to view the experiences of Asian women faculty from a transnational feminist perspective? Using this frame has allowed me to examine Asianness and Asian-woman-ness in a contemporary and historical milieu by tracing back the history of Asian immigration to Canada, discourses of Asian women, and stories of Asian women faculty’s lived experiences in particular contexts in academia. While being women of colour, they are also “Asian” women who embody the role of scholar/teacher. It was my intention to tease out the particularity of being labeled as ‘Asian’ no matter how the participants defined the term.

In order to summarize my analysis based on the transnational feminist framework, I wish to draw a diagram that visually represents the experiences and positionality of Asian women faculty. In doing so, I use the letter “T.” The vertical line of the “T” refers to the chronological order from the bottom (past) to the top (present), which emphasizes the historical effects to the contemporary. The horizontal line of the “T” symbolizes many different kinds of relations in the society where the Asian women faculty reside: “Canadians” and “Asians,” the global (macropolitics) and the local (micropolitics), the nation-state and higher education institutions, the public and private domains, and so on. I
do not imply here that the relationships are binaristic opposites, but rather acknowledge certain kinds of relations including intimacies, overlaps, tensions, and interdependence. In this image, I locate Asian women faculty (AWF) at the point where the vertical and horizontal lines touch each other.

**Figure 9.1 T diagram**

![T diagram]

By examining the vertical line through the transnational feminist framework, connections from the past are revealed in terms of how Asian women are perceived in the public sphere, including the academic institutions. In short, the contemporary discourses of “Asians” and “Asian women” constructed through the history of Canadian nation-building, with whiteness in the centre, are prevalent in the academy and are articulated through the stories of the women who have lived such discourses in their everyday lives. This vertical line not only connects the past to the present, but becomes a thread for the individual stories to become part of a collective consciousness due to the memory and social conditions shared throughout the timeline. Moreover, locating Asian women faculty at the edge of the line also implies that they are also part of creating history, which links to the future, with an undrawn and imaginative line as a possibility.

With respect to the horizontal line, it is slightly more complicated because it entails multiple layers of relations that are crucial for the subject making of Asian women
faculty. First, one layer could be the relation between the higher education institutions and the nation-state. They are related to each other in the sense that both are very much tied to a global capitalist system via neoliberalism. The trend in governments’ budget cuts affects the way higher education institutions are run. Consequently, the stakeholders within higher education, such as employees like Asian women faculty, have to “pay the price” in one way or another. As for the (il)legitimacy of citizenship, Asian women faculty tend to be excluded from the group of dominant “legitimate” citizens at both the national and academic levels. I argue that it is not a coincidence, but rather it is a ripple effect trickling down from the nation-state to the higher education setting. The illegitimacy of Asian women in the Canadian nation-state is reflected in the experiences of Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy stemming from their historical relationship with the nation-state and their perceived Asianness or Asian-woman-ness. Asian women faculty strive for legitimacy at least at the academic level, where they have some control over their subject making, while both the nation-state and higher education institutions tend to define outsiders and insiders (Mohanty, 2003).

Similarly, the global-local line could be drawn in parallel with the nation-state and higher education. Nation-states are not separate or discrete entities from the global, but are very much connected to it through their national systems (Coloma, 2006; Grewal & Kaplan, 2000; Luke, 2001; Park, 2007) such as immigration policies and neoliberal governance. Luke (2001) articulates the global-local line in higher education discussions asserting, “Despite the global reach of an increasingly standardized university system and universal forms of academic labor, it is local histories, politics, and the cultural ground to which global products, systems, or flows attach” (p. 237). Moreover, diverse nationalism become salient in the discussions of globalization in the transnational context, especially the discussion of who is to be a legitimate citizen in the community. Grewal and Kaplan (2000) emphasize that nationalisms are not only patriarchal as a more well-known notion but are also very much tied to the “inferiority of colonized Others” (Paragraph 7), who conduct their lives in local settings that reflect global power relations. In this sense, it is important to interrogate the interactions among women from different nations, which allows us to see the “transnational” relations (Grewal and Kaplan, 2000). Mohanty (2003) also points out that much of the literature on the impact of global capitalism on higher
education ignores questions of “racialized gender” (e.g. “Asian” women), whose perspectives and social locations would make it more visible how the global (e.g. the nation-state and its global relations) and the local (e.g. higher education institutions) are intricately intertwined.

Another layer of horizontal relations is between “Canadian” and “Asian.” Asian women faculty’s diasporic location inspires reflection about their relations and connections to both “Canadian” and “Asian” identities. What is “Canadian” and what is “Asian” are often interdependent – what is “Asian” can be articulated through the concept of what is “Canadian” in their cultural logics and self identification, which are flexible. Paying attention to these terms within the context of the transnational feminist framework allows us to rethink concepts and connotations often ignored in daily life that in fact involve important power relations. It provides a clearer answer to the principal questions asked through the transnational feminist framework: “What is the norm?” and “Who is a legitimate citizen?” In other words, from an in-between space, the norm can be more clearly recognized than from within. A focus on this in-between space also provides a sensible and timely site for analysis of the social order in this globalized age (Kenway and Bullen 2003).

The next layer of horizontal lines is between the discourse of “excellence” under neoliberalism and that of equity. Higher education is now a site to be interrogated for both discourses (Martimianakis, 2008), yet the diversity of knowledge production including minority perspectives and feminist scholarship is in jeopardy under neoliberal governance of higher education institutions (Blackmore, 1997; Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Hornosty, 2004; Morley, 2005). Asian women faculty’s scholarship with their subjectivity integrated are not exceptional. With respect to equity issues, their narratives revealed deep insights into their everyday struggles and obstacles that emerged in their academic lives. Stereotypes based on Asian women faculty’s different markers (i.e. race, gender, and language) connecting to the Orientalist discourse of Asian women were still pervasive through different points of inequity and injustice that exist in the academy. Their stories bring forward the fundamental questions and the interrogation of ideological rhetoric such as “multiculturalism” and “difference and diversity,” which have been celebrated and promoted nationally, especially in higher education institutions.
4. Final Thoughts and Remarks – Contributions, Implications and Reflections

Going back to the discussion of what is “Asian,” recent articles in both the Canadian weekly news magazine Maclean’s (2010) and the newspaper The Toronto Star (2010) on Asian university students have described certain Canadian university campuses as being “too Asian” due to the large number of students with roots in East Asia, especially China. These publications have drawn attention from scholars, activists, and “Asian” communities who are critical of the racial stereotypes against the “Asian” population in Canada. In my opinion, this discourse of “too Asian” illustrates the fear, anxiety, uneasiness, and discomfort about the increased numbers of “Asian” people from non-Asian perspectives, specifically from a white readership such as that of Maclean’s magazine. This fear of “yellow peril” and the stereotypes of “Asians” as a model minority in Canada have been repeatedly expressed in public discourse over the last century. I do not intend to argue that inequity issues have not been changed at all over the past. Rather, I wish to raise caution regarding the public discourse of “achievement” in equity by pinpointing events and dynamics in the lives of the marginalized due to the string connected from the past to the present. I would interpret the Maclean’s and Toronto Star publications as expressions of the everyday thinking of many ordinary people that is still embedded in a racist understanding of what “Canada” should be like, which would be easily ignored by those who believe only in “achievement.” The recent Maclean’s and Toronto Star articles thus support the importance of studies such as this one that closely examine the subjectivity of racialized groups.

This study contributes to two main areas of scholarly work. First, it contributes to the scant literature on Asian women (faculty) in the Canadian context. This empirical research including a collection of multiple voices of Asian women faculty is one of the first steps to draw more attention from a wider audience to the topic. The insightful narratives of the nine Asian women faculty members through in-depth interviews are extremely valuable especially given that the population is understudied, the number of Asians and Asian women among students has substantially increased in Canada, and the racist undertones of media observations such as “too Asian” are reflected in the public discourse. The interview process of narrative inquiry may have become the first step for
social change for the participants as “the act of narrating a significant life event itself facilitates positive change [for some people]” (Chase, 2005, p. 667).

Second, the theoretical and epistemological uniqueness and strength of this study lies in the combination of different levels of analytical focus such as the local, the national and the global. In the increasing “academic mobility\footnote{Rizvi and Lingard (2010) argue that academic mobility in the current globalization has economically benefitted the developed countries that are English-speaking. Canada is part of a group of nations that have benefitted from this phenomenon (see Owram, 2010; Roslyn Kunin & Associates, 2009), as more international students and scholars are likely to move there.} of this era when the nation-state and higher education institutions have been reconfigured under the conditions of globalization and neoliberalism (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), the reconfiguration of study on faculty’s lives is becoming more important. This study was meant to initiate and promote the reconfiguration by examining the experiences of Asian women faculty within the transnational feminist framework, which allowed me to look at/beyond the institutional, national and temporal borders and at the same time pay close attention to gender and race within the different types of borders with social justice as a goal. In this sense, this study would contribute to literature beyond Canadian higher education. In fact, this dissertation’s intended audience is not limited to stakeholders of higher education, but includes other disciplines such as Women’s studies, Asian studies, cultural studies, equity studies, migration studies and diaspora studies with implications beyond the national borders.

This dissertation work, including an epistemological underpinning of the nation-state as a part of the global community, also contributes to the critical views questioning “methodological nationalism” as the assumption that the nation-state is the ultimate, natural and political entity to be researched (see Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) argue that social scientists have to be critical of the nation-state as an autonomous and discrete entity and that such view of the nation-state would exclusively focus on immigrants as an “illegitimized” population as perceived by those who “belong” to the nation. In order to go beyond methodological nationalism, it is important to contest the artificially created borders by looking at how they have been created in relation to the larger global relations and who benefits in the context of such borders. “Knowing more about how our perceptions of migration, including some of the
recent work on transnationalism, have been shaped by the nation-state building project of the modern world is an important step” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 325).

Overall, the transnational feminist framework provided me with a wider and deeper lens to see such specificity as well as the applicability to other specific groups. In that sense, using it, I also demonstrated how the transnational feminist framework or the “T” lens would be useful to explore subject making processes of other subordinate populations and to identify where their marginality came from and how it is still prevalent in contemporary society. My hope is that, with all the differences and specificity among different groups as a basis for solidarity, the feminist projects can challenge scattered hegemonies in the transnational context (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, 2006; Mohanty, 2003).

Regarding the practical implications in the higher education setting, I urge the stakeholders of higher education including students, faculty, administrators, funders, equity officers and so forth to turn their attention towards the roots of stereotypes in racially minoritized populations and listen to the voices of marginalized populations. The purpose is to gain an understanding of the inequity behind ideological rhetoric such as “multiculturalism,” “equity and diversity,” and “differences,” as well as the increasing influence of neoliberal models on the academic terrain. In addition, I also urge universities to rearticulate what their equity missions are in the context of changes to governance in higher education. While higher education is receiving much attention at the present moment due to its vital role in the knowledge economy, universities should also redefine what “excellence” means from an equity perspective and create more space for equitable knowledge production for students and faculty. In doing so, the concept of “students” should also be reconsidered. Should students always be considered as “consumers” for a capitalistic society or as “co-creators of knowledge” for an innovative and equitable world with critical thinking (see Newson, 2004)? Accordingly, how should the roles of universities and faculty be defined? These discussions should be posed up front for all the stakeholders of universities during events such as orientation sessions, conferences, and workshops. These local voices and the commitment to equity with solidarity should reach the global community that tends to dominate the local terrain through the neoliberal trend.
Having stepped forward with this research on an understudied population, I also recognize some unresolved issues arising in this study, especially methodologically. As I discussed earlier in Chapter 4, maintaining confidentiality was one of the central issues throughout this research process. I had to disguise many of the participants’ backgrounds including countries of origin, disciplines, provinces, and institutions, the naming of which would have provided clearer contexts for me to see differences among the Asian women faculty interviewed. For example, I was quite regretful, in a way, that I had to remove the specific ethnicity (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean) of each participant even where they specifically mentioned it. It would not have been my choice to ignore all the different ethnicities among East Asians, yet it was necessary for the purpose of confidentiality. It was a tough decision after all, whether I should mention the specific ethnicity given to each interviewee or completely remove it. The information would have provided various nuanced meanings of “Asianness” as well. However, I thought that the most effective way of disguising their identities would be not to show each participant’s country of origin.

Other possible concerns could form the basis of future projects. For example, what are the experiences of Asian women faculty in the hard sciences? In the U.S. statistics, which may or may not echo the reality in Canada, the percentage of postsecondary faculty by race/ethnicity and gender whose principal teaching or research field is in Science, Math, or Engineering shows that Asians and Pacific Islanders have higher representation than any other racial/ethnic background, for both males and females (Jaekyung Lee, 2006, p.48-49). As mentioned in Chapter 1, absence of statistics on contingent faculty as well as of racially minoritized women faculty including Asian women academics in Canada already demonstrates the need for more systemic resources for the public to access when inquiring about this marginalized population. Moreover, what are the differences in experiences of Asian women faculty between universities in urban/cosmopolitan settings and those in rural settings? The research subject could also be extended to students and administrators as well. There are a number of possibilities in terms of ways of contesting and reconstructing the academy.

During the research journey, at some point, I as an Asian woman felt discouraged from aspiring to an academic path for my career, due to the struggles my participants
described in detail throughout the interviews. At the same time, I myself also encountered some stereotypes and discriminatory treatment by others (not necessarily in the academy), as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, as one example. Instead of feeling defeated by some of my participants’ experiences and mine, however, I often reminded myself of the title of my dissertation, “Seeking possibilities,” which I do through the process of writing not only for my potential future career but also as part of a bigger purpose. Although this is the end of my dissertation journey, it is the beginning of my journey to reimagine the world with questions such as how I could have been treated by my son’s teacher during the parent-teacher interview, how I could have responded to the silenced self, and how I am implicated in the world to be reimagined not only in an individual sense but also in a collective sense.
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Appendix A: Informational /Consent Letter & Form

Dear

Thank you for considering participating in and contributing to my research project. As I noted in our first contact, I am currently conducting a qualitative study under the supervision of Dr. Sandra Acker to fulfill the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. The study is entitled: Seeking possibilities within the transnational context: Asian women faculty in the Canadian academy. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information that you will need to understand what I am doing, and to decide whether or not you choose to participate. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and, should you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416.946.3273, for information about your rights as a participant. At the end of this letter, you will find a place to indicate whether or not you wish to participate.

The nature and purpose of the research
A study focusing on Asian women faculty will provide insights into how this understudied and underrepresented population 1) negotiates various aspects of identity such as gender, race, ethnicity, language and spirituality as they pursue their academic careers, and 2) navigate through any challenges they face in the academy. Studying this particular group allows us to have one step toward a more sophisticated analysis of the “chilly climate” issues in the academy. The purpose of this research is to investigate and explore the challenges of Asian women as a minority group in the Canadian academy while acknowledging heterogeneity within the group as well. I hope this research is going to help generate a more in-depth understanding of the experience of Asian women faculty and the complexities of their academic practices. There could be practical consequences of the study in terms of structural and transformative change in how equity is practiced within the academy.

What I am doing
I am going to conduct one individual interview with approximately 10 participants including yourself. I am going to transcribe the interviews to analyze and write my dissertation for Ph. D. Throughout the study, I will ensure your confidentiality.

Your part in the research (if you agree)
To participate in the interview with me in the conditions described below:
  ➢ The interview will be semi-structured and will last approximately 90 minutes at a location and time convenient to you;
  ➢ The questions will generally focus on:
    1. how you came to work in a Canadian academic institution,
    2. what motivations and challenges you face in incorporating your transnational/ cross-cultural identity into the Canadian academic institution where you work; and
    3. how you cope with the challenges you encounter in the institutional context.
  ➢ The interview will be audio recorded;
You may decline to answer any questions, have the audio recorder turned off, and stop the interview;
You may withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences.
Only if you are comfortable or willing to share, I would appreciate any of your materials that would help me better understand your experiences, thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and worldviews such as Curriculum Vitae, journals, publications, and poetry.

After the interview
Once the audio disks of the interview have been transcribed, the raw data, the audio disks and transcripts, will be stored under lock and key in my residence;
In the transcript and the labels of the audio disks, names and other identifying information about you or your organization (e.g., your university) will be systematically altered. Identifying codes that could connect you or your organization with the altered names will also be kept under lock and key in the place designated above;
Only I (Principal Investigator) and the faculty supervisor, Dr. Sandra Acker, will have access to the anonymized interview transcripts during the analysis phase.
The raw data will be destroyed once subsequent reports have been produced.

Associated Risks and Benefits for Participants
I do not anticipate any risks to you as a participant of this study. If you have concerns, we will discuss and solve them as needed. As mentioned above, you may refuse to answer any question and can withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences. At no time will you be at risk of harm or be judged or evaluated. No value judgments will be placed on your responses. There are no direct benefits associated with participating in this study. However, indirect potential benefits which you might derive from participating are:
To have an opportunity to express some of your knowledge, thoughts feelings and opinions;
To contribute to the area, Asian women faculty in the Canadian higher education, which is deficient in the literature by helping the researcher better understand the nature of the study;
To contribute to equity and social justice in higher education as this research revolves around the issues;
To obtain a summary of the findings of the study.

Sincerely,

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To be completed by the participant

I have read through the informational letter attached to this consent form and have been given a copy of the letter & form. I understand what is being asked and the accompanying conditions and promises. I understand the nature and limitations of the research.

☐ I agree to participate and understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time.

☐ I do not wish to participate in the research.

_________________________  _______________________
Signature of Participant      Date

_________________________
Print Name
Appendix B: Interview Guide

Demographic

- Can you tell me about your demographic background?
  - Where were you born?
  - What do you self-identify ethnically?
  - When did you come to Canada?
  - Where did you obtain your post-secondary degrees (Bachelor, Master, Doctoral)?

Personal experiences (to probe about border-crossing experiences – i.e., national, cultural, racial, ethnic border-crossing.)

Childhood experiences

- (If born and raised in Canada) What was it like for you to be Asian in Canada? (schooling, home, etc.) or
- (If having spent childhood in her country of origin) How was your childhood in your country of origin? What were you imagining about Canada before arrival? What was the impression of Canada after arrival?

Asian

- What makes you self-identify or think that you are perceived as “Asian?”
- What is it like for you to be “Asian” in Canada?
- Are you involved in any “Asian” community?

Academic life/experiences

The position/ the institution

- Please tell me about your academic position? (e.g., institution, field, title, tenure/non-tenured/tenure-track, etc.)
- What brought you to this position?
- What kinds of academic activities do you perform: teaching, research, administration, service?
- How was your first term in your current position?

Being an Asian woman faculty member

- What is it like to be an Asian woman faculty member in the Canadian academic institution?
- What do you think it would be like to be an Asian man in the Canadian academy?

Academic “success”

- Do you see yourself succeeding in the academy or not?
- Please elaborate on that.
• What have your experiences been in getting grants?
• What have your experiences been in publishing?
• What have your experiences been in service (e.g., to the university, to a community)?

Teaching
• Can you describe what your typical class looks like?
• What has your student evaluation been?
• What are the challenges that you face in teaching, if any?
• How do you deal with them?

Relationships/support/mentoring
• Who are the people you have to interact in connection with your work?
• How are you treated by your colleagues?
• Tell me your experience in your work being appreciated.
• Tell me your experience in feeling unsupported.
• What support system do you use for your academic work?

Other questions (Contradiction, strategies, motivations, etc.)
• What challenges do you face in connection with your occupation?
• What strategies do you have to deal with them?
• How do you see yourself doing in five years?
• Do you have any health issues? What are they?
• If you are to give advice to someone like myself as an Asian woman doctoral student, what would that be?
• Is there anything else you want to cover?