

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

FRANCES HENRY and CAROL TATOR (Eds.) *Racism in the Canadian University: Demanding Social Justice, Inclusion, and Equity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2009, viii + 224 p., index.

The pervasiveness of institutional racism in Canadian universities has often been unacknowledged by university administrators, faculty, staff and students unacquainted with its injurious forces. Indeed, the workings of systemic racism that infiltrate the Canadian intellectual tradition are largely undetected by many within the institution. *Racism in the Canadian University* exposes the everyday, democratic, systemic, and epistemological manifestations of racism operating in the academy, and critiques the culture of Whiteness which Henry and Tator argue informs the processes of racialization. Essays herein analyse these processes and the impacts upon racialized faculty and students with an effective blending of narrative and empirical evidence. Informed by critical race theory, critical pedagogy and narratology, the authors expose how Whiteness as ideology functions in academia, denying equity to racialized faculty and students. The detailed analyses offer a compelling argument for the necessity of addressing systemic barriers to true equity within the walls of Canadian universities; this study is a welcome contribution to the literature on institutional racism in Canada.

Essays reflect on the under-representation of racialized faculty, discriminatory tenure and promotion processes, ineffective anti-racist policies and mechanisms for diversifying faculty, and the experiences of students of colour. Prominent anti-racist scholars Frances Henry and Carol Tator finely lay out the theoretical underpinnings of these reflections and provide a solid framework for the reader unfamiliar with theories of Whiteness, racialization, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory, as well as the many constructs of racism. The explication of the text's theoretical structure allows for a wider audience to gain from this study, beyond anti-racist scholars and sociologists; university administrators and academics from diverse fields have much to learn from this book. The digestible contributions make for a particularly engaging and accessible text.

Candid reflections on personal experiences by several of the authors contribute not only to the readability of the text as a whole, but also add much weight to analyses of empirical evidence. Patricia Monture's chapter on her challenges as an "Othered" faculty member is particularly revealing: "At times, I joke about being a reverse anthropologist, studying the culture of the university and the habits of the White professorial tribe.... That I feel like a participant observer, on many days, in the institution is a troubling realization, as I have earned the title and rank of tenured full professor but often not the privileges that flow to others

(White men) from the same earning. As such, it is a realization that challenges my ability to be at peace and living in peace at the university” (87).

Such marginalizing narratives as Monture’s offer a great deal of insight into the experiences of racialized faculty and students. Personal accounts by marginalized members of the intellectual community add vital context to empirical data compiled for such a study as this one. Indeed, Henry and Tator skilfully reveal the effectiveness of contextualizing empirical research with narrative, citing the power of narrative as an “educating and organizing tool ... [which] create[s] a link between individual experience and broader societal systemic patterns” (37). Monture’s personal reflections parallel other contributors’ narratives as faculty of colour, since a heavy focus of this collection of essays is on the experiences of racialized faculty. Author Audrey Kobayashi, for example, offers an insightful perspective on women academics of colour, investigating the effects of systemic discrimination on this marginalized group with reflections on her own experiences, which “have made [her] own academic life at times uncomfortable” (64). Examining systemically produced racism as experienced by women of colour, through personal reflection, Kobayashi addresses the relationship between individual experience and group processes, and powerfully highlights the effects as individuals in relation to other individuals. This emphasis on the personal effects of systemic racism, through the stories of individual racialized faculty, is perhaps the most potent theme of the book.

Contributions by Carl E. James and Enakshi Dua complement these narrative-driven essays with careful scrutiny of university policies and praxis that impact racial minority faculty members. Thorough examination of anti-racist policies and strategies to diversify universities demonstrate their failure to achieve the objective; thoughtful solutions for enabling these policies to take hold institutionally are offered as well. For example, Dua explores why members of the university underuse anti-harassment policies designed to address racism, and identifies the need for anti-racist practitioners to facilitate support from senior administration for effective implementation of these policies. As so little research into the effectiveness of anti-racist policies in universities has been undertaken, these are important additions to the text.

While the focus on racialized faculty members is interesting, and indeed valuable, I was disappointed by the limited discussion on the effects of systemic racism on students of colour. While Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar’s essay on Caribbean students in Canadian universities is a shrewd glimpse into this group of students’ university experience, empirical findings were limited by the small sample of interviews in the study; a larger base of participants would lend more authority to the study’s findings. Although the study offers a considerable window into the experiences of racialized students, no other essay in this collection offers an in-depth analysis of students of colour; the inclusion of another study on students of colour would supplement Hernandez-Ramdwar’s essay nicely, and would make the text more comprehensive.

Despite its limited scope, however, *Racism in the Canadian University* successfully examines the processes of systemic racism with balanced emphasis on scholarship and personal perspective. Henry and Tator adeptly expound the

paramount themes of the book while drawing convincing links between contributing essays. It is sure to be a valuable and engaging text for scholars in the fields of sociology, education, minority studies, and anti-racism studies.

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