Despite the multiple differences within these student’s backgrounds, Herrington and Curtis argue that these students came into the study knowledgeable of just how complex writing and the self can be (indeed, this is illustrated through the student writings in the subsequent chapters). In more simple terms, these students want to make themselves “understood” and are in the process of uncovering a variety of ways to do so (5). The stories of each research subject show how institutions, teacher expectations and comments, as well as assignments all factor into these process.

*Persons in Process* ends with an appeal to instructors. When we teach, they say, “the dominant perspective [we come from] is quite naturally our own” (390). Throughout this text, however, they have allowed us to become engaged with the research subjects and extremely knowledgeable about the ways they struggle to create a sense of self through academic writing. And as a result, we can see just how important it is to engage ourselves in as much as possible with our students, “respecting [their] positions . . . as they enter our classrooms, trying to understand those positions, and helping support students as they work to reposition themselves as writers and as people” (390).

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**Works Cited**


In the introduction to *Power, Race, and Gender in Academe*, Shirley Geok-Lin Lim and María Herrera-Sobek ask the perfunctory question, “Who is calling whom a stranger?” (2). I open with this question because it plays on
the notion of the “strange,” a concept that their book sets out to interrogate, owing to the changing demographic of women, people of color, and gays and lesbians in English and foreign language departments. At the same time, for teachers and theorists of composition, the question holds a different set of loaded implications about who, exactly, belongs in Academe.

The collection offers a refreshing view of the stories of “strangers in the tower”; that is, it pulls from a variety of scholars without universalizing the experience of any. Further, the institution of the narrative, or story, within each of the essays remains a unifying element throughout the collection, along with the struggle for recognition in the academy of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups. Essays in this volume analyze this struggle from the lenses of African American, Asian American, Chicano/Chicana and Latino/Latina, Native American, lesbian and gay, and white female scholars; they also reflect a range levels (from graduate assistant to dean). I would agree with a manuscript reviewer’s comment, quoted in the Introduction—this volume “offer[s] ‘timely, important analysis’ at a moment . . . of ‘utter importance to rethinking academic culture in significant demographic shifts in the teacher class’” (2). Indeed, one must wonder why such a work has not come along sooner.

The editors contend that the volume is separated into two halves: the first, which theorizes structures of power through “personal and autobiographical voices” (3), and the second, which “focuses on the institutional ramifications” of having such voices in the academy (4). Essays in the first half cannot help but hint at institutional change, from personal, historical, and political perspectives. The latter essays use autobiography as they both theorize and realize the future of new voices in the academy.

While I found essays in the first half of the volume to be fascinating, and by no means “undertheorized,” the strongest piece is the first, Johnella E. Butler’s “Reflections on Borderlands and the Color Line.” Butler interrogates the dismantling of affirmative action and explores the boundaries of “borderlands,” hoping that, “in the borderlands of our diversities, [we can] both negotiate and recognize differences to reveal samenesses and cooperation” (9). What I find so useful about Butler’s essay is that it emphasizes the importance of students, teachers, and the classroom (for me, the writing classroom) as loci within the academy “where some change could be effected” (15). I agree with Butler that “Morality in race relations and fulfillment of the democratic ideal . . . would most certainly be embraced by most Americans, if they only knew all the stories, studied the ways their themes conflicted, overlapped, and paralleled” (15). Although the rest of Butler’s essay charts her own institution’s struggle with a group formed for fulfilling this ideal, her work identifies the locus of change so many are calling for within the classroom itself. Further, while Butler’s
essay tells a story, it also theorizes and narrates a lived version of change, unlike some of the other essays in the first half which, although interesting and timely, only serve to reinforce the idea that yes, this is unfair and wrong, but fail to conceptualize how this can be translated into action in their own authors' institutions. Although I recognize that, in effect, the telling of stories to be read by others can effect change, perhaps this preference for action- or change-oriented approaches would serve the purpose and intended audience for this book (a "resource and teaching guide for junior faculty members as they enter the profession" [2]) in a slightly better fashion than narratives that serve to repeat the horror stories many have (unfortunately) already heard.

This is why, suffice it to say, the essays in the latter half of Geok-Lin Lim and Herrera-Sobek's collection appealed to my own reasons for picking up Power, Race, and Gender in the first place. While I am aware that assuming a minority status within the academy can and does negatively affect lives and careers, I am more curious about how marginalized minority (writing) scholars and teachers are working to change this, and, even more importantly (for me), how marginalized minority writing scholars and teachers are working to change this. While the first of my concerns is relatively well met by the latter half of the essays, the latter concern is less well met throughout the compilation.

With titles of essays in the second half of the compilation that begin, "At the Limits of My Feminism," "Now That They Have Us, What's the Point?," and "Where's Oz, Toto?," one expects to read a number of diverse essays that touch upon both the challenges and the reactions of those that face department standards that exclude, or that fail to recognize, as Sandra Gunning explains in "Now That They Have Us," that "faculty authority is structured through—rather than in spite of—race, class, gender, and sexuality" (177). Further, all essays in this section elucidate some of the most pressing issues for teachers and scholars that hold "minority" status: the public nature of identity and the politics of teaching fields, students' expectations of relationships between themselves and teachers' inscribed public identities (classroom politics), differential course assignments, the balance of pedagogical ideals with "subject" positioning, the unfamiliarity of one's research area to more authoritative faculty, and "hidden" workloads such as student mentoring and extra large doses of committee work. More importantly, three particular essays in the latter half reveal these (and other) important issues, but also offer up guidelines for solutions outside of the classroom that might help alleviate some of these burdens: Annette Kolodny's "Raising Standards While Lowering Anxieties: Rethinking the Promotion and Tenure Process," Carrie Tirado Bramen's "Minority Hiring in the Age of Downsizing," and the aforementioned "Where's Oz, Toto?:
Idealism and the Politics of Gender and Race in Academe.” These three essays most clearly meet the announced objective. By themselves, they give the most comprehensive look at departmental problems and procedures, thus best serving as resources for graduate students or junior faculty.

Kolodny’s essay not only summarizes the tenure process and its pitfalls for marginalized scholars, it also offers an appendix of her own institution’s revision of promotion and tenure procedures as a model for those who are looking for a similar revamping in their home departments. Bramen offers a bleak but accurate view of the reduced number of tenure-track positions and the problem of the “replacement of permanent academics with temporary ones” (115) in her essay, “Minority Hiring.” Bramen calls for mobilization through academic unions like the AFT, NEA, and AAUP. Lastly, Ruth Y. Hsu examines the “underrepresentation of racial minorities in administrative positions” (191), asserting that “The ability to effect significant changes in the academy is contingent upon the ability to gain access to and to influence people who make budgetary decisions” (191). Hsu recognizes, rightly, that only when marginalized groups gain control over the purse-strings of an institution, can they create institutions “committed to diversifying and liberalizing” Academe (193).

Perhaps the reason that these three essays appealed to me was that, as a compositionist, I could see the plight of the composition scholar-teacher reflected in them. For example, the recognition by Annette Kolodny that often lone specialist scholars (like compositionists) need more protection in their departments in terms of career advancement (94-5); or the focus by Bramen and others on the plight of contingent labor that affects us all; or the unifying realization that although a white female scholar does not suffer the exact consequences as a scholar of color, or a gay or lesbian scholar, marginalized groups from an entire department can join together to work for change. Just the same, as a Rhetoric and Composition specialist, I often felt as though there was no room for me among the essays; none of the contributors specialize in writing or any aspect of it (such as WPA), and an essay by John A. Williams (a distinguished Literature professor that has dabbled in the teaching of composition) might particularly isolate writing teachers, whom he calls “blue collar workers” (38). Williams asserts that, “Composition students were the toughest to teach, for you were trying to fill a hole that should have been dealt with in grade school. . . . Without this foundation of basic intelligent communication,” Williams asks, “how does one move easily on to literature?” (39-40). An essay such as this one reveals that while this book does a great deal in disclosing just how complicated the system of marginalization in Academe is, it also demonstrates how powerfully difficult it is to unseat.

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