

HOW ASIAN/ASIAN NORTH AMERICAN WOMEN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATORS
NEGOTIATE POWER DYNAMICS

by

JANNETTE WEI-TING W. P. GUTIERREZ

(Under the Direction of RONALD M. CERVERO)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand how Asian and Asian North American women negotiate race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education. Two research questions guided this study: 1) What are the power dynamics within Asian/Asian North American women theologians' learning and teaching environment?; 2) What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning in which patriarchal ideologies dominate?

The sample for this qualitative study was comprised of eight Asian/Asian North American women theological educators who taught or are teaching in theological institutions. Participants include one Chinese American, two Chinese immigrants, one Korean American, one Japanese immigrant, one Japanese American, and two Korean immigrants. Their age ranged from 38 to 62.

Analysis of the data revealed that participants, as learner and teachers, experienced power dynamics and utilized a variety of strategies to negotiate in the context of theological education. The power dynamics in their learning and teaching were characterized in four themes: mastery, voice, authority, and positionality. Categories under mastery were downgraded academic performance as students and being resisted, challenged and dishonored as teachers. Nonexistence

of role models and invisibility to students and colleagues were categories of the theme of voice. Authority was usurped, undermined, and questioned; authority was weakened due to their race, gender and age; and secured and reinforced authority were found under the theme of authority. Categories of being stereotyped, Androcentrism and white privilege, and tokenism emerged under the theme of positionality. The data also showed that participants developed and utilized various resources of strategies to negotiate their power when they encountered race and gender in the context of theological education. These strategies included teaching philosophy, faith and theology, sense of accomplishment from teaching, acculturation/absorbing/adjustment, engaged feminist and critical pedagogy, authenticating their authority as teachers, pronouncing and asserting their positionality, and alignment with and getting supports from communities and allies.

Three conclusions were drawn from this study. First, Asian/Asian North American women theological educators are invisible and silenced in the construction of knowledge in the patriarchal context of theological education. Second, the positionality of Asian/Asian North American women impacts the power dynamics in their classrooms and is negotiated with a variety of strategies. Third, perpetuated racism and sexism was experienced by Asian/Asian North American women theological educators in the institutional context of theological education.

INDEX WORDS: Asian American, Asian American Women, Adult Education, Theological Education, Christian Education, Religious Education, Sociology of Adult Education, Sociology of Religion, Power Dynamic, Positionality, Feminist Pedagogy, Feminist Theological Pedagogy, Feminist Theory, Asian Theology, Racism in Christianity, Sexism in Christianity.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although women constitute the majority of Asian and Asian North American Protestant churchgoers, the principal leaders and pastors are still predominantly men. Very few Asian/Asian North American Christian women are encouraged to take leadership or pastoral roles in their community and some even are barred from doing so due to the patriarchal ideology of Christianity. They are not only discouraged from seeking advanced degrees in theology but also lack opportunities for teaching and research since there are very few role models and mentors. In spite of this, some women who have received systematic and formal theological education become faculty members who investigate and confront the patriarchal teachings that exclude Christian women from full participation in all activities of the church and in the construction of theological knowledge.

According to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) statistics, Asian and Asian North Americans comprise about four percent of their faculty (Meinzer & Merrill, 2004). All these faculty members teach in institutions which are predominantly Euro-Anglo in culture-ethnic mix. In most cases an Asian or Asian North American faculty member is the sole Asian or Asian North American on the faculty. Some students have never had an Asian or Asian North American educator teaching them before, and many find it a novelty to see one of them teaching Christianity and not Asian religions. This indicates that students still assume that Christianity is a western religion, even though Christianity was born in the western part of Asia and the majority of Christians are living in the Southern Hemisphere. These theological educators strive for inclusion through their teaching and through transforming theologies in their institutions.

During the last two decades, feminist and womanist theologians and scholars of color have challenged Eurocentric assumptions of what qualifies as knowledge in general and theological knowledge in particular (Brock, Kim, Kwok, Boonprasat-Lewis, Ng, Yang, & Yee, 1999). Most theological educators carry these Eurocentric assumptions about knowledge into the classroom. Such assumptions have an effect on the “what and how” of the transmission of knowledge and have important implications for deciding whose scholarship is included and whose is left out (Brock et al., 1999). As Kwok has stated “in theological education, a large part of the curriculum has been the study of the lives and thought of white, male, Euro-American theologians, to the exclusion of many other voices. More importantly, the theologies done by these people are considered normative, which set the standards and parameters of what ‘theology’ should be” (1995, p. 144). Furthermore, because the patriarchal ideology is ubiquitous in Christian institutions (J. H. Kim, 1997), the composite and multiple positionalities of Asian and Asian American Christian women educators become a site for learning as well as a site for struggle.

The Statement of Problem

For many Asian and Asian North American women theological educators whose cultural identity is greatly shaped by a Confucian ethos whether they are conscious of it or not, it might be assumed that Confucian ways of teaching would predominate. In this sense, part of the authority of the teacher is what has been described as “achieved authority” in addition to “ascribed authority” (Radcliffe, 1989). Ascribed authority is given because of the teacher’s rank (professor), in addition to social status, age, or sex, which are the major considerations in Asian cultures. One can easily see the potential for a problem when the teacher is of the same age or younger than the students, or when the teacher is a female and many theological students are male. Asian American teachers growing up in North America have been exposed to Dewey (1963)

with his attention to experience in learning, process, and social learning. In order to be faithful to Confucius' example of contextualizing teaching, salient questions such as how do we discern when to employ which approach, and when to make concessions because of students' needs are raised (Brock et al., 1999).

Asian and Asian North American women theologians point to the contextual, historical, and political nature of knowledge, and urge theological educators to embrace a plurality of knowledge and diverse cultural styles of knowing. Ways of knowing certainly imply ways of teaching. The construction of a gender-and race-balanced curriculum must first be embraced by educators. Tisdell (1995) reminded us that "Educators must be aware of the politics of knowledge production and dissemination: what counts as knowledge, who is involved in its production, and their relative positions in the power structure" (p. 19). The assumption that the canon of knowledge is fixed and universal, defined by the white, male, and European experience, impacts Asian and North Asian American theological educators' ways of teaching and their functioning as educators, especially when they attempt to introduce Asian or Asian North American perspectives into their respective theological disciplines. Challenging the biases in the traditional assumptions of knowledge production and transmission is a critical step in transforming the existing curriculum. It will clearly imply a paradigm shift in the theoretical and theological framework and assumptions of knowledge that one brings to the classroom (Brock et al., 1999). These extra requirements place constraints on their struggle to teach as effectively and faithfully as they would like (Brock et al., 1999). The call for a recognition of cultural diversity, a rethinking of ways of knowing, a deconstruction of old epistemologies, and the concomitant demand that there be a transformation in the classrooms of theological education, has been a necessary revolution (hooks, 1994). There is a need for a new learning of the history of Asian

and Asian North American Christian women educators who have been invisible - their cultures, and their lived experience as well as the social construction of categories such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and disability. While these women do challenge the status quo, resistance is generated as they feel inadequately prepared to deal with the diverse teaching materials and dynamics in the multicultural learning environment.

Although once considered the "yellow peril," (Kim, 1982) Asian North Americans are subject nowadays to an insidious racial stereotype of the "model minority" (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Suzuki, 1989; Yamauchi & Tin-Mala, 1989). The stereotype is fuelled by a perception of them as high achieving "whiz kids" who overcame racism and succeeded in American society through a combination of discipline, hard work, quiet perseverance, tightly-knit family cohesion, and respect for and submission to authority. This stereotype belies the fact that not all Asian and Asian North Americans are successful, and that there are significant socio-economic differences among their ethnic groups. Moreover, the stereotype has been used as an ideological weapon by the dominant white society to shame and discredit other racial/ethnic groups, and obscures the very real ways in which Asian North Americans suffer racial discrimination in this society (Yamauchi & Tin-Mala, 1989).

Asian/Asian North American women are adversely affected by this "model minority" stereotype in several ways. They feel pressured by their parents and institutions to succeed and suffer acutely from "achievement" expectation while negotiating hurdles that do not usually stand as barriers to their male counterparts. They have coped with racial incidents primarily through deflection, non-confrontation, and blending into the mainstream (K. H. K. H. Osajima, 1991), mechanisms which are exacerbated by their traditional reluctance to call attention to themselves. Asian North American women must also negotiate divided multiple identities, in

ways that White American women do not. Consequently, Asian and Asian North American Christian women educators must deal with the complexities involved in their hybridized identity along with their gender and sexual identities in their practices. Issues of enculturation and diversity that mark their experiences cannot be ignored. Asian North American women encounter multiple issues in the development of self-identity in a White dominated culture. Their efforts to address the issues are hampered by the prevalent stereotype of Asian North Americans as "the model minority," which often clashes with the patriarchal roles of the traditional Asian household. Moreover, they often fall victims to a complex interconnection of sexualized racial stereotypes, racialized gender stereotypes, and internalized racial oppression. Therefore, Asian and Asian North American Christian women educators must negotiate multiple identities in their teaching practice that are simultaneously ethnically, regionally, and culturally diverse.

Most Asian and Asian North American women educators are lone voices in their fields. As pioneers in this endeavor, they have few role models to look to or mentors to consult. Where racial politics are still largely defined by Black and White, these educators often find their issues are being ignored when they are called upon to serve as mediators for Black and White racial conflicts. There are several significant studies that evaluate how Christian women in immigrant and ethnic churches negotiate their identities and the role of religion in the cultural passage from Asia to America (Kim, 1997). However, very little research has been found on the positionality of Asian and Asian North American teachers and the diversity and complexity of their lived experiences. As Asian and Asian North American Christian woman struggle to share their experiences and analysis of religion, learners can also experience the phrase "gender, race, and class" not as a mantra of postmodernity, but as a "litany in the attempt to transform Eurocentric patriarchal studies into multicultural, nonracist, non-sexist, nonelitist education" (James, 1998, p. 76).

The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

In a project “Developing teaching materials and instructional strategies for teaching Asian and Asian American/Canadian women's theologies in North America” reported by Brock et al. (1999), they noted and challenged us with a few pressing issues. They are: a) the canon of knowledge/ways of knowing and pedagogical issues in the teaching of Asian and Asian North American women's theologies; b) the social-cultural issues facing Asian and Asian American students and their surviving and thriving in academia; c) the identity of and challenges facing Asian and Asian American/Canadian women faculty. Besides, while much has been written on feminist pedagogical issues, there is a lack of critical research on the complex and multilayered power dynamics in the classroom when the teacher is an Asian or Asian North American woman. The complexity is a result of her multiple subject positions in the theological classroom. As a teacher and as a theologian, she has some authority over the students, but as a minority woman, she is marginalized by the White mainstream. The question is what difference it makes if the teacher is an Asian American and a woman in this teaching context. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand how Asian and Asian North American women negotiate race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education.

Two research questions guiding this study were:

1. What are the power dynamics within Asian/Asian North American women theologians' learning and teaching environment?
2. What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning in which patriarchal ideologies dominate?

The Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the theoretical and practical aspects of adult education. Firstly, this study fills the gap in the literature regarding teaching and learning of Asian and Asian North American women in adult education especially in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education. Secondly, this study of minority Asian and Asian North American women adds to the multicultural facets of feminist theory. Further, this study contributes to the construction of knowledge of feminist pedagogy. Lastly, it broadens the scope of theological education and also deepens and makes the substance of theological knowledge more inclusive.

There are several practical implications of this study. Firstly, this study enables adult educators to be more aware of the importance of taking into account racial and gender elements in the teaching and learning of adult educators. In addition, this study provides adult educators, including clergy and laypersons who minister in the context of Christian theological educational teaching environment. It also addresses pedagogical issues in environments such as church, theological continuing education and seminary education. Most importantly, this study provides a bridge for Asian and Asian North American Christian women who have been struggling at their teaching ministry due to their race and gender within the patriarchal context of Christianity.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is much literature that reviews how Christian women in immigrant and ethnic churches negotiate their identities and discuss the role of religion in cultural passage from Asia to America (J. H. Kim, 1997). However, very little literature has been found on the positionality of Asian and Asian American teachers and the diversity and complexity of their lived experiences. Therefore, the following chapter will review Asian and Asian North American women's multiple ethnic, regional, and cultural identities as Christian theological educators.

The literature reviewed in the first part of this chapter shows the historical, sociocultural, and religious background of Asian and Asian North American women. In this section, the stereotypes such as "model minority" as detriments to the development of Asian and Asian North American women is highlighted. Secondly, I reviewed the literature around theological education and feminist theological education and discuss how these concepts shape Asian and Asian North American Christian women. Finally, I examine both the intersection and the gap between the theory and practice of critical adult education and their relationship with Asian and Asian North American women theological educators.

An Overview of Asian Pacific American

In their report on Meeting the mental health needs of Asian and Pacific Islanders and Americans, Lee and W. stated that, while representing only 4.1 percent of the United States population, according to the United States Census Bureau, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the United States as well as among the most diverse.

Individuals in this population come from 43 different Asian and Pacific Island groups and speak at least 32 different languages. They are also educationally and economically diverse. Although some Asian and Pacific Islander Americans have attained high levels of education and income, many live below the poverty line and many have not completed high school. Members of this group reside mainly on the East and West Coasts and in Hawaii, often in large urban centers. They are mostly foreign born, and often marry members of other ethnic groups; they often regard religion and spiritual practice as important in their lives, and they are on average younger than other population groups in the United States (Lee, 2002).

Although there is a problem in using a single category to describe the umbrella term of “Asian American”, the definition of Group Classifications as presented in “Nineteenth Annual Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education” (Harvey, 2002) will be utilized throughout this literature review. The term “Asian American” was formed as a self-definition during the social movement of the late 1960s in the United States. They were college students and community activists, mostly Chinese and Japanese Americans then, with a smaller numbers of Filipino and Korean Americans. The definition includes a person having origins in any of the peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. These areas include, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, The Philippines, and Samoa and their people are called “Asian Americans.” Asian Americans therefore also include Pacific islanders (Harvey, 2002). In the following review, Asian American, Asian Pacific Islander (API), Pacific-North American, and American Pacific American (APA) are used interchangeably with Asian American.

The Myth of “Model Minority”

The “Model Minority” myth has been and continues to be an insidious stereotype which is commonly ascribed to the APA community since the late 1960’s when it was originated by

Petersen (1966). APAs have been portrayed as academically brilliant, collectively obedient, and socially conservative. This image persists despite the heterogeneity and diversity of a community with 29 different ethnicities under the banner of "Asian Pacific American" and extreme variations of economic status between the different communities. The myth of the "Model Minority" suggests that Asian Pacific Americans have succeeded in the United States in spite of racism and that other "minority" groups should be able to achieve this same success. As a result, this myth has set the Asian Pacific American community in opposition to the African American and Chicano/Latino communities.

At the beginning of January 1966, sociologist Petersen went to great lengths in a New York Times Magazine article, in which he invented the term "model minority", to compliment the efforts of Japanese Americans on their successful struggle to enter the mainstream of American life. At the focal point of this rationalization was a direct link between traditional Asian cultural values and subsequent achievement in education and professions (K. Osajima, 1988). Furthermore, the article offered a clear theoretical justification for why Asian Americans had succeeded. Petersen (1966) argued that Japanese Americans' adherence to values such as a deep respect for parents and authority, a reverence for learning, and a proclivity for hard work created a psychological achievement orientation that drove Japanese students to do well in school. Dudley (1997) argued that, "by hard work, cultural assimilation, family stability, and thrift, Japanese Americans had succeeded where other American minority groups had failed". Similarly, in December of that same year, the U.S. News and World Report also published a story acclaiming Chinese Americans for their extraordinary achievements and praising Chinatowns as mainstays of peace and prosperity. As with the Japanese Americans, the article praised the Chinese for their ability to overcome years of racial discrimination, as they defeated obstacles and moved up the socioeconomic ladder (K. Osajima, 1988).

Woo (1997) stated that, “each ethnic group has a different history, and a simplistic method of modeling which assumes the experience of all immigrants is the same and ignores the socio-structural context in which a certain kind of achievement occurred” (p. 221). The tendency to compare how minorities as disadvantaged groups are doing relative to each other is to view Asian Pacific Americans as a “model minority”. This practice obscures the structural barriers and inequities, claiming that any problems are simply due to different cultural values or failure of individual effort (Woo, 1997). The idea that Asian Pacific Americans have been a successful group has been a popular stereotype perpetuated by mass media for more than three decades. Accordingly, it has developed into a belief that cutbacks should be made in governmental support for all ethnic minorities and for Asian Pacific Americans because they apparently are already successful as a group.

Scholars who portray Asian Pacific Americans as socially and economically successful, indeed, ignore fundamental inequalities. If we take a closer look at the images associated with Asians as a model minority group, it suggests competing or contradictory themes. For example, one image is that Asian Pacific Americans demonstrate a competitive spirit which enables them to overcome structural barriers through perseverance and ingenuity. On the other hand, they are also seen as complacent, content with their social lot, and expecting little in the way of outside help (Woo, 1997). Conversely, this “model minority” stereotype differs sharply from earlier stereotypes of Asian Pacific Americans as sneaky, manipulative, untrustworthy, and manual laborers (Fujino, 1998). This model stereotype peculiarly developed at the same time African Americans, Chicanos, and Asian Americans were struggling against racism with the result that it functions to position Asian Americans as the wedge group (Hirabayashi, 1998).

The fundamental elements of the original model minority thesis that illustrated the empirical evidence for success and a culturally based explanation for achievement continue to be central components of the contemporary discussion on Asian Americans. Members of the Asian American community have argued that “the image is racially stereotypic, empirically inaccurate, and no longer applicable to the changing Asian American population...the model minority thesis, then, was far from a neutral construct” (K. Osajima, 1988, p. 165).

It is plausible that the “myth” of the Asian achievement confirmed that the United States was indeed the land of opportunity. Conversely, it defined success in narrow, materialistic terms. The movement of Asians into the mainstream of American life ostensibly misrepresented the ideal that America was an open society, willing to accept and incorporate those minorities and immigrants who were willing to assimilate. Most importantly, the thesis upholds a fundamental meritocratic belief that America is a fair society that rewards people based on their ability and talent rather than their class privilege or wealth. Osajima (1988) critiqued this view that, “Asian Americans had made it because America judged and rewarded people, not by the color of their skin, but on the basis of their qualifications, skills, attitudes, and behavior” (p.167).

Stereotypes, Biases, and Obstacles of Asian Pacific American Women

Asian American women have been especially lauded as a “model minority” and praised for their outstanding achievements. The concept of “model minority,” however, obscures the fact that in reality one’s accomplishments are not adequately recognized in terms of corresponding income or choice of occupation. The product of the myth of “Model Minority” is the belief that APAs are immune to racism and therefore do not need to be brought into the larger discourse on race and racism (Woo, 1997).

Never has there existed as much specific legislation toward a broad cultural group as there has been toward Asian Americans (Chan, 1991). Very unambiguous legislation has been targeted to prevent women from immigrating or assisting in the development of permanent Asian American communities in the United States. Stereotypes other than the “model minority” that exists for Asian American women might be analyzed as reflective of sentiments of anxiety and hostility that flowed with the tides of economic depression, wartime, and societal transformation. For example, two non-threatening stereotypes were widely acknowledged for Asian American women (Root, 1998). The first stereotype, that of the subservient woman, emerged during the period of World War II through the Vietnam War when the United State military personnel were distributed throughout the Pacific region. Both stereotypes, the subservient woman and the exotic geisha girl who catered to men’s sexual fantasies, were brought to America during this time. The second one is particularly paternalistic.

These sentiments are embodied in enduring stereotypes of Asian American women. For instance, the daughter of Fu Manchu, as portrayed in American films, is given the role as the diabolical, cunning, manipulative stereotype exemplifying her as an Asian American woman who is immoral and hypersexual with a weakness for White men. She is labeled as being a “dragon lady.” “This label is attributed to assertive Asian American women who do not cater to men, particularly White men” (Root, 1998, p. 213). Root (1998) illustrated these stereotypes by stating that “Asian or Asian American women are characterized as childlike, fragile, and innocent as in ‘China dolls,’ ‘Polynesian babies,’ and ‘Asian Thumbelinas’ (the latter appearing in some of the reptilian monster movies)” (p. 213) These two stereotypes, among others, combine to produce the “Suzie Wong” stereotype of the “hooker with a heart of gold” who is portrayed as having a penchant for White men.

Theological Education

You may go over the world and you will find that every form of religion which has breathed upon the earth has degraded women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Stanton, 1885)

In this study, the terms, Christian theological education, religious theological education, theological education, and religious education refer to any teaching and learning activities that involve and advocate the importance of spiritual formation as well as theological knowledge and ministry skills. Thus, these terms are used interchangeably in the following literature review.

As Kohl (2001, p. 27) stated, the vision of “Theological education is at the center of Christianity-as the seminary goes, so goes the church.” He asserted that theological institutions are responsible for the direction of the church of the future:

The professors’ lectures, seminars, and textbooks are the foundation on which the leadership of our churches and Christian organizations is built...It follows, then, that the lives of church members and the ministries in which they are involved will reflect what is taught in the theological schools. The direction in which a theological school is moving, any failure to communicate basic and essential elements of the faith or of ministry, and any undue emphasis on particular formations or functions of ministry will all be replicated in the ministries of the students. (p. 27)

In his analysis of the current trends in theological education, Kohl believed that it is essential to emphasize how to ensure that church leaders, who were traditionally trained in theological education through accredited theological institutions, are receiving the “best possible training for doing ministry.” Ministry, in the sense of that word that broadly includes formal and informal learning, takes place within the church and outside the church in people’s everyday

lives. Vawter (1995) revealed that theological education provided by theological institutions has failed to meet the expectations of the church. He identified four problematic areas when commenting on seminary education at a meeting of several hundred pastors and Christian leaders in the 1990s. He said, “It is taught by the wrong people in the wrong place with the wrong curriculum and has the wrong oversight” (p. 41).

Apparently, the problem here is not only the gap between theory and practice but also the deeper level of the issue about who benefits and who should benefit from the theological education in reality. Whose interests are at stake at the planning table of theological education? (Cervero, Wilson, & Associates, 2001). Are they Boards of Directors, trustees of theological institutions, accrediting agencies, evaluation teams in the institution? Although Kohl (2001) identified the miscommunication between the institutions which provide the theological education and people who are being ministered to and educated in church, he did not recognize the power relations that result in incompetent church leaders graduating from the theological institutions. Table 1 shows the five priorities in the preparation of a pastor as identified by three groups (Study, 1994). The preparation of a pastor is from among 800 lay people, pastors, and theological professors.

Table 1 Five Priorities in the Preparation of a Pastor

Lay priorities	Pastors' priorities	Professors' priorities
1. Spirituality	1. Role model	1. Theological Knowledge
2. Relational skills	2. Management skills	2. Character
3. Character	3. Communication skills	3. Leadership
4. Communication skills	4. Spirituality	4. Communication skills
5. Theological Knowledge	5. Theological Knowledge	5. Counseling skills

In this level of observation, Kohl pinpointed the divergence between theory and practice and suggested the following five directions for developing theological education. They are: 1) changes in subjects to be taught; 2) changes in missiological emphasis; 3) changes in the area of fieldwork; 4) changes in organizational structures; and 5) changes in dealing with financial resources. All these concerns are resonated with Cervero, Wilson, & Associates' (2001) insights that "political is practical: the ability to get things done." Kohl valued theological education that transmits practical knowledge of how to accomplish something. He believed that this could only be done by encouraging all theological institutions to develop a strategic plan, failing which they will struggle to be effective or they may not even survive. However, he overlooked the question of whose interests are at stake when designing theological education. Therefore, what Burns and Cervero (2002) discover would be a good reminder for Kohl because "the ministry...involves negotiating with others, choosing among conflicting wants and interests, developing trust, and knowing the informal and formal organizational ropes. In short, the ministry involves politics" (p. 304)

Kwok (1995) took a distinctive stand in terms of theological education from Kohl by challenging that "in theological education, a large part of the curriculum has been the study of the lives and thought of white, male, Euro-American theologians, to the exclusion of many other voices. More importantly, the theologies done by these people are considered normative, setting the standards and parameters of what 'theology' should be." The theological education or training provided by institutions is the preparation for those who possess the deep desire to further understand theology through studying the Bible. The Bible then is the "authority" and "truth" for most Protestant Christians as well as Asian and Asian North Americans in the field of theological education. However, feminists, scholars, and womanist theologians have been embarking on re-examining the Bible. Kwok (2000) revealed that,

The Bible emerged from the rich cultures of different races and peoples living in Palestine, Mesopotamia, Africa, and the Mediterranean world. In the history of the Christian church, the Bible has largely interpreted from a white, male, and clerical perspective. As a result, the subtleties of the historical encounter between different cultures, the politics of racial relations, and the hidden voices of women in the biblical account were either overlooked or interpreted from a very biased standpoint. The Bible has been used to legitimize racism, sexism, and classism, as well as to condone colonialism and cultural imperialism. (p. 101)

Feminist Theology and Theological Education

Russell and Clarkson in their work *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies* (1996) stated, “Theological education has been defined as the task to motivate, equip, and enable the people of God to develop their gifts and give their lives in meaningful service” (p. 282). In the structure of theological education, it has been a long tradition that the male is the privileged dialogue partner in the academy. Nevertheless, feminist theologians affirm that theological dialogue refers to what the people of God and their communities do. The Cornwell Collective (1980) and Cannon (1985) first undertook the significant analysis of theological education in the 1980s. They argued that theological education should be mainly about justice and that feminist analysis must include racism, class, community formation, and alliance building across cultural, racial, and economic barriers.

Russell and Clarkson (1996) noted that feminist pedagogy is a counter-hegemonic enterprise. They reiterated that “It promotes the analysis, deconstruction, and reconstruction of all socially defined categories, including distinctions between the natural and human worlds” (p. 79). They further identified three characteristics of feminist pedagogy: 1) grounding in one’s

own social location within a community of accountability; 2) a commitment to alliance building between communities and cultures that emphasizes lived experience and the importance of individual and communal life and 3) a political commitment to change the position of women in every racial, social, economic, and sexual-identity group and, therefore, to change the society. According to Russell and Clarkson (1996), feminist pedagogy holds the fundamental premise that knowledge and, indeed, all of human reality are socially constructed. Therefore, the purpose of feminist theological education should examine the cultural and social production and reproduction of knowledge, ideologies, and class, race, and gender identities in the field of theology.

Chopp (1991) in her essay, “Situating the structure: Prophetic feminism and theological education”, states that, “for at least twenty-five years, feminism has offered its resources in North American schools of theological education.” She examines what feminists and researchers cite as the current problems in theological education. There are two significant issues in theological education (Russell & Clarkson, 1996). The first issue is who is and ought to be doing theology today. The second issue questions what is and ought to be the perspective for practicing theology today. The following is not a complete sentence thought and must be restated. Consequently, feminist theologians assert that some are marginalized in the church’s theologizing such as the nonclergy, black, aboriginals, young children, differently abled persons, sexual minorities. Further, they believe that women should be recognized as capable of making and being equipped to make their contribution to theology. Who should be doing theology is inseparable from the question, doing theology for whom? Theological education then should include the experience of people of “poverty and impoverishment, injustice and aspirations toward human dignity and freedom, oppression and the longing for liberation, emptiness and yearning for full life are the

start realities of daily life” (Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, 1996b, p. 241). Thus, theological education is a personal, ecclesiastical social transformation process for individuals and for society.

As noted above, women play a critical role that challenges the theological method. As active agents of change, they put efforts into breaking down the ancestral weight of male-centered, patriarchal church structures that exclude women from the construction of theological knowledge, from theological education and from playing a major role in ministry. According to Russell and Clarkson (1996), women’s contributions in theological education embrace the following areas. 1) Seeing theological education in an ecumenical and pluralist perspective; 2) building a community-based ecclesial theory; 3) questioning the epistemological foundations of theology; and 4) reinforcing the theory-practice relationship.

Furthermore, Russell and Clarkson (1996) clarified that pluralism refers to tradition, context, ethnic background and gender. They said, “There is not one hegemonic discourse unfairly claiming the privilege of being universal but rather the concept of all nations, praising God” (p. 283). In regard to theological education that is based on ecclesial theory, they believed that theological education is not only about clergy-based education. Instead, they opined that it should contribute to theology production and make this production as relevant as possible to the community’s faith, traditions, and cultural context.

In Western society, received practices (Russell & Clarkson, 1996) aim to design education to reproduce the social and economic relationships that form the hegemonic international order. Educators assume that objective knowledge about the world is possible; that one truth can be found by the normative human being that is European, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, literate, and middle to upper-class. In contrast to this ideology, feminist theologians interrogate the epistemological foundation of theology. They promote learning how to critically analyze and

reconstruct history rather than learning historical facts. Doctrinal system learning is replaced by becoming skilled at theological methodology. Most importantly, women's perceptions and perspectives should be integrated into the interpretation of the Bible rather than passively accepting male-led biblical revelation without suspicion and reexamination (Russell & Clarkson, 1996).

Pacific-Asian North American Religious Education

Ng (1997), as an Asian-Canadian Christian educator, explicates the characteristics of Pacific-Asian North American Religious Education through the perspectives of historical, religious, cultural, and social background. In her work, the "Asian Americans" are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Religions and Languages of Asian Pacific Americans

	Groups	Religions	Languages
Far East Asia	Chinese Vietnam* Singapore* Malaysia* Korean Japanese Taiwan	Buddhism Christian Confucianism Taoism	Japanese Malay Mandarin Sino-Tibetan Taiwanese Vietnamese Dialects
South and Southeast Asia	Filipinos/as Asian Indians Pakistanis Sri Lankans	Roman Catholic World Religion Christian**	Indigenous Dialect English
Indochina	Cambodian Hmongs Laotians Thailand	Buddhist Christian Confucianism Muslim	Laos Thai Hmong
Pacific Islanders	Native Hawaiians Samoans	Aboriginal cultures spiritualities	English

*Chinese elements; ** A very small percentage

Asian and Pacific Islander Americans (APIs) are generally viewed as the “model minority,” a stereotype that has been widely spread across the global and has been seldom challenged. Owing to substantial cultural differences between the above groups, my study focused on the women theological educators from the first group, which remains strongly influenced by Confucianism. The history of Pacific Asian existence in the United States and Canada has significant impact on their religious life. Pacific Asian American immigration experiences affect both the development of individuals in Christian faith communities, and the religious education goals of those communities (Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, 1997). Accordingly, Far East Asian sociocultural values, including an historical overview of their philosophical and religious roots, will be examined in the following four sections.

Ancient Indigenous Religions and Women

In the ancient religion of “dragon bones and oracle inscriptions,” a period between 1800 B.C.E. and C.E. 1200, Chinese people sought advice about human affairs such as war and marriage from the dead, especially from ancestors through divination, burning tortoise shells with lighted incense sticks and reading the cracks for signs, which were recorded as “oracle bone” scripts, were the major activities of this religion. In this period, a shaman or wu, who was a female, functioned as spiritual broker to communicate between the seekers and the spirits of the deceased.

In Korea, shamanic practices were one of the few ways that women shamans (mudungs) could exercise religious leadership whereas in China, the ancestral cult could only be performed by a male - a practice that is at the root of the quest for at least one son in every family. Shamanism was usually consulted for healing from mental illness, for improving one’s fortunes, or to appease the seeming anger of the dead. Female Shamans gathered on these occasions in solidarity.

Confucianism and Women

Confucianism is often characterized as a system of social and ethical philosophy rather than a religion. In fact, Confucianism is built on an ancient religious foundation to institute the social values, customs, and transcendent ideals of traditional Chinese society. It was what sociologist Robert Bellah called a "civil religion," in the sense that religious identity and common moral understanding were at the foundation of the society's central institutions (Bellah, 1975). It is also what a Chinese sociologist called a "diffused religion" (De Bary, 1960); its institutions were not a separate church, but those of society, family, school, and state; its priests were not separate liturgical specialists, but parents, teachers, and officials. Confucianism was part of the Chinese social fabric and way of life; to Confucians, everyday life was the arena of religion (Berling, 1982).

In Confucian belief, the function of the individual is enmeshed in a web of familial and social relationships, that is to say, the *wu-luen*, or Five Human Relationships which consists of mutual and reciprocal relationships between ruler and minister or subject, father and son, husband and wife, older brother or sibling and younger brother or sibling, and (older) friend and (younger) friend. Ng (1996a) describes the dynamics among these relationships, that "the elder or superior of each pair was to exercise caring and protection toward the younger or junior partner while the latter was to accord respect and loyalty (p. 67)."

There were three phases of changes by followers of Confucius that later aggravated and perpetuated the hierarchy incipient in general, particularly the role of women among these relationships. Firstly, Confucianism became both the state religion and the governing ideology that upheld political stability during the great empire of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.) (Man, 1992). Then, the supplemented philosophy from The Book of Changes (I-Ching) brought

in the cosmology and metaphysics of yin-yang. Last, Confucianism embraced the legalist theories of the rule of law and power which gave rise to rigid notions of authority and obedience. These were the three major developments that played a crucial role in ingraining the hierarchical and patriarchal relationships in the countries whose cultures were, and still are shaped by Confucianism. Han thinker Tung Chung-shu (179-104 B.C.E.) amalgamated the three developments above to the disadvantage of women afterward. Feng & Boddy (1948) stresses how Tung rearticulated the relationships.

The meaning of sovereign and subject, father and son, and husband and wife is expressed by the way yin-yang. The sovereign is yang and the subject is yin: father is yang and son is yin: husband is yang and wife is yin. The way of yin cannot go independently....This means that yin relies on yang....Wife's achievement relies on husband....and the earth's achievement relies on heaven (p. 196).

Consequently, this philosophy has permeated Asian countries that espouse Confucianism as the way of interacting within a family, community and society. Women's "three obediences" (which are obeying father when unmarried, husband when married, and son when widowed) are still honored and widely held explicitly among Asians. Later in neo-Confucianism, following the influence of Buddhism and Taoism, subordination of female to male changed to one that was taken as "natural" in the Sung dynasty (960-1276 C.E.).

Taoism and Women

Tao means a "way of life" as well as "the Way" that two features of freedom and nature are characterized in the writings of Taoism in Chuang-tzu (399-295 B.C.E.). The crucial spirit of Taoism is the attitude of "nonbeing" or wu-weh which, "like water filling and taking the shape of

whatever cavities it finds itself in, stands in stark contrast to the earnest assertiveness of the Confucian school” (Greer Anne Wenh-in Ng, 2000, p. 69). Taoist philosophy has an effect on Chinese aesthetics and spirituality which has helped to sculpt the submissive and noncombative attitude of “go with the flow.” This tendency of the Chinese, of gliding among all human relationships, is easily observed among groups of East Asian personalities (Ho, 1963).

In regard to the status of women in Taoism, the composition of yin-yang takes the advantage of equality between two which means that both female and male sexuality are indispensable, although this practice might result in women’s dependency on men. Ng (1996a) points out Taoist propensity to be acted upon rather than acting, of receiving and, by analogy, suffering, has not exacerbated women’s suffering in all of East Asia.

Buddhism and Women

Ng (1996a) described that Buddhism teaches the philosophy of the inevitability of human suffering and its solution (or salvation) of escaping the never-ending cycle of birth-suffering-rebirth through reaching nirvana by becoming freed from all affective desire. It synthesized the elements of Taoism and proselytizing not only in China, Korea and Japan where it was adopted as the state religion in 594 C.E. In first century China, devotees of Buddhism practiced the eightfold path of holiness of Buddha’s (dharma) teaching. In this period, only males could join the Buddhism community or monastic (the samgha or sangha) life.

On the one hand, the place of women in Buddhism under its world-view and philosophy is that they should be emancipated and liberated since all living things are seen as having the Buddha nature. On the other hand, nuns who are being admitted into a monastic community in a separate section have to obey monks. Nonetheless, women who come to a decision to become a Buddhist, as Leo affirms, are to “seek a multidimensional personality, a totally centered and

integrated life, and the ability to fulfill their role not only as wife and mother, but also as their own person” (p. 72).

My participants either are Asian born, growing up and being educated in their homeland before moving to the United States, or were born and educated in the United States. Thus, the following discussion will focus on the review of Ng’s (2000) exploration of the pedagogical development of the Confucianism of Asian/Asian North American theological educators who face dilemmas when they commit to a feminist, liberative pedagogical approach. In Ng’s perspective, “Confucius Renaissance” is alive and not only in the “four little dragons” of Asia (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore), but also across the ocean, where the maple grows and in the “land of the free.” Nevertheless, the philosophy of teaching and learning developed and passed on by Master Kong (Confucius) has come to terms with the rigorous critiques on the banking model of education, which are brought up by adult educator Paulo Freire. For instance, learners who have been cultivated by Confucius’ teaching would expect the teacher to be the expert transmitting knowledge and the pupils to be obedient recipients. Therefore, in an educational activity such as Bible studies, the teachers will be accorded supreme respect not only for their knowledge, that is, as persons with achieved authority, but also for who they are (age, gender, sexual orientation) in their ascribed authority (Radcliffe, 1989).

As Ng (2000) highlights this teaching and learning relationship and reveals the more powerful connection when it at times combines and transcends the perceived deficiencies of age (where the teacher is younger than the student) and gender (where the teacher is female, with male students). Asian and Asian American women learners and teachers who were nurtured by Master Kong’s educational philosophy carry their positionality such as ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and physical stature, that interlocking with age and gender, manifest the convoluted

struggles. As a consequence, when Asian and Asian North American women theological educators teaching in a group of learners who predominantly are white, middle-class males, when they should foreground or background the Confucian's educational philosophy as ethnic-minority women theological educators becomes imperative.

Furthermore, Ng (2000) raises the issue of whether it is a dream or a possibility to live and teach as feminist Confucian religious educators by asking, "dare we admit to being spiritual descendants of the master teacher, and at the time to sit with our students in an egalitarian 'culture circle,' to learn with and from them?" The reason it is impossible to be feminist Confucian religious educators is the unequal nature inherent in the Confucian depiction of teachers and learners. It perpetuates what feminists advocate of collaborative relationship between teachers and learners. Therefore, what issue would emerge while one intends to integrate feminist pedagogy with a Confucian background is my essential research question that guides this study. In the discussion of power issues between learners and educators, she implies that "we do need to be mindful of the discrepancy in power between ourselves and our students, in both academic and church settings, especially in situations in which clergy-lay dynamics come into play. A key in this discussion is discerning when to emphasize which role, so as to meet a learner's particular need" (Greer Anne Wenh-in Ng, 2000, pp. 316-317). Nonetheless, Confucian religious educators who are also inspired by critical pedagogy should also be aware of the misconception that "all highly participatory discussions and collaborative learning strategies are liberative. These can be nonliberative if they do not help participants to question existing realities" (Mayberry, 1999; Greer Anne Wenh-in Ng, 2000).

As an Asian Canadian religious female educator, Ng (2000) emphasizes that her gender and race play critical roles in her relationship with the learners who are predominantly white males.

Therefore, she evokes the importance of owning the ascribed authority in the institution and says, for racial-ethnic minority teachers, who already have diminished social power in the presence of ‘majority’ colleagues or students, to ‘give our power away’ too drastically in the seminary classroom is to further erode our hard-earned credibility. The challenge is how to exercise such ascribed authority without reproducing ‘master narratives of dominance’ in contexts that are still predominantly if not overtly patriarchal and racialized, and how, in spite of everything, to keep moving steadfastly toward the ideal of a democratic and liberating classroom. (p. 318)

Even though she (Greer Anne Wenh-in Ng, 2000) addresses the dilemma faced by religious and theological educators committed to a feminist, liberative pedagogy when teaching learners in the church whose Confucian upbringing has socialized them into different means of instruction, this discussion is neither a gross generalization nor based on an empirical study. To discover how Asian/Asian North American women theological educators strive to authenticate their socially constructed identity and preserve their integrity as educators in the real world is my reason to conduct this research.

The population of my study who are Asian and Asian North Americans have been nurtured and fostered by the compound philosophies of ancient indigenous Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Some of them were born in a theistic country and converted into Christianity later in their life. Some of them were brought up in a Catholic tradition. Their sundry religious backgrounds indeed intermingle with their formation of Christian faith, their relationship and interaction with people, and their professional practice as educators.

Teaching and Learning of Asian Pacific American Women

...I want to call attention to something that is easily overlooked by sensitive and well-intentioned people. In our American 'family,' Asian Americans are treated like orphans, foreigners, and underlings. We're kept outside the house. And when we enter, we are not allowed to stand straight. That's because we face glass ceilings in industry, the academic world, and our government. (Woo, 1997, p. 7)

In the Academic Pipeline

Stereotypes and biases in American society are perpetuated in college and universities that obstruct the academic development and advancement of APA women. The following description is an examination of the academic pipeline of APA women, students, faculty, and administrators from the Nineteenth Annual Status Report on Minorities in Higher Education, 2001-2002. This report presents how they experience overattention, while at the same time, experiencing underattention. Asian Pacific American women earned 53.9 percent of all APA bachelor's degrees in 2000, more than double their number over the past two decades. They favored degrees primarily in business and outnumbered APA males in all fields except in Engineering. The high rate of attaining bachelor's degrees by APA women tends to protect some APA women from being confined to low-wage employment as service workers and machine operators where foreign-born APA women who lack English proficiency and schooling are concentrated (Woo, 1989).

Asian Pacific American women experienced more than a 148 percent change in the number of master's degrees earned between 1991 and 2000. In 1991, only forty-three percent of all APA master's degrees were earned by women. In contrast, women in general earned 53.8 percent of all master's degrees that year. Asian Pacific American women outnumbered APA men in master's

degrees earned in all fields but were underrepresented in business, and engineering/engineering technologies in 1991, 1999, and 2000. One concern raised in the report was that academic institutions merge data on doctoral students who are Asian foreign nationals, most of whom will return to their home countries, with APA doctoral students, who are members of a racial minority, thereby distorting the reality of APA doctoral production by United States universities. This tendency also inflates the data on the number of Asian faculty due to the combination of APA with Asian foreign nationals. Among all minorities, APA female full-time faculty has been constantly underrepresented in the last decade compared to their male counterparts. According to Smith, Wolf, and Busenberg (1996):

Resistance to changing traditional faculty recruitment processes (largely dependent on recommendations from those whom one knows) and the lack of diversity on search committees have been identified as a barrier to increasing faculty diversity in academic institutions at the same time that colleges and universities recognize the need for change. (p. 137)

In the aspect of administration, in 2002, there are only six APA women among 27 APA Chief Executive Officers of U.S. colleges and universities (Harvey, 2002). The small number of APA women (and APA men as well) at the highest level of academic administration is not commensurate with their representation as students and faculty, and it suggests the effects of a glass ceiling. The summary of APA women in the academic pipeline serves as an indication of how they are underrepresented in the colleges and universities. Their slower advancement in earning doctorates and being hired for faculty positions, and their significant absence as academic CEOs, raise serious concerns. The quality of their faulty experience and the number of APA women in higher education are equally imperative issues in the academy.

Stereotypes, Biases, and Obstacles of Asian Pacific American Learners

If only a social blemish, the myth of "model minority" could be quite harmless. However, this stereotype has profound implications for public policy, allocation of federal and state resources and services provided to students in college and university campuses across the country. Moreover, the myth of "model minority" is evident in the way the United States talks about and perceives race relations. (AARC Theme 2000-2001, ¶.3). Osajima (1988) pointed out, that "the stress on educational achievement and subsequent occupational mobility remains the main, albeit narrow, criteria for success...The articles largely perpetuate a stereotypic view of Asians as the model minority" (p.169, 171). This dominant message conveyed that Asian Americans are successful and have overcome discrimination with determination and hard work. This message alone is evident in the titles that grab the readers' attention and suggest the preliminary image of Asian Americans as successful. Consequently, regardless of the work of scholars and academics to deconstruct the myth of "model minority", it remains as a real dynamic that has a direct effect on the lives of Asian American students both at personal and institutional levels. Whether experiencing lost opportunities for advice and counseling because of perceived stability and academic ability or being overlooked for psychological support, Asian American students experience the myth of "model minority" on a personal and individual level.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Issue

I have both Korean and non-Korean friends [at the university]; however I actually had to attempt to make Korean friends by joining a cultural club. My biggest fear was that I would not be accepted because I was too 'white or too 'American' [being from a pre-dominantly white small town]. To my surprise, most Korean American students experienced the same thing...racial hatred, rejecting their

culture, and going through an identity crisis. For the first time, I met people who were similar to me. (S.-H. Kim, 1996, p. 147)

All those who identify themselves as Americans except Native Americans are immigrants from different countries, from the Third world to the First world. In American history, African Americans are hardly ever categorized as immigrants in educational research. On the contrary, the history of Asian Americans is, at all times, a history of immigration. They have been considered as “forever foreigners” no matter how many generations they are in the United States. It is not unusual for a fourth-generation Asian American to be asked, “Where are you from?” and the expected answer is not “Cleveland or Ohio” but some exotic place in Asia.

As immigrants, Asian Americans bring with them or were brought up with a variety of cultures that oftentimes are ignored by the majority of Americans. The above example of being vocal is typical and is seen as part of a majority-valued American characteristic along with being individualistic, dominant, and competitive, regardless of gender, class, or ability. Thus, in Johnson-Bailey and Cervero’s (1998) research, being free to speak out in class and express their opinions would not be an issue for Asian American women who defer to quiet strength. More importantly, their teachers and peers would show their appreciation for their distinct communicative culture which they brought from their family or education in their previous countries. Asian American women learners might have been considered weak or stupid through the stereotype of “passivity” imposed upon them by others.

Hune (1998) pointed out that we can’t assume that all APAs are doing well. We need to continue to bring attention to the fact that there are barriers that limit and constrain students and that there are barriers that limit and constrain minority faculty advancement. Part of it is that we could be doing more than we are currently to address these issues. Biases in intergroup and

intragroup relations between Asian American women teachers and learners would be a notable issue to observe as related to the positionality of APA women.

Hune (1998) found that most students want to feel they are accepted and fit in on campus, but APAs speak of the many subtle ways in which race prohibits them from a full campus life. She pointed out further that, “some APA women are so hurt by racism that they internalize their racial oppression and develop self-hatred and shame about themselves” (p. 20). Asian Pacific American women may distance themselves from other APAs and minority issues in order to gain acceptance in the dominant white culture. Osajima (1993) also raised the same concern around this issue. He identified rejection of an APA identity, discomfort around other APAs and students of color, and fearfulness about whether or not they are accepted as “American” as among the “hidden injuries of racism” borne by APA students.

The Campus Climate

American Pacific American women articulate that frequently they encounter “model minority,” “exotic,” and “passive” stereotypes which encompass racial, gender, class, and cultural biases on campus. They struggle daily in society against these stereotypes which are disseminated widely in the academy and marginalize them. Issues further brought up by the APA women students pertaining to personal level include financial assistance, language assistance, and a culturally sensitive environment on the institutional level. They have been leaders in student demonstrations and hunger strikes in recent years over these appeals. Unfortunately, institutions failed to respond to these problems that are part of the negative climate (Hune, 1998).

Asian Pacific American female faculty members are insufficiently recognized for their academic expertise, but are called upon when diversity issues need to be addressed, especially those in ethnic or women’s studies. They are often marginalized because of their research

interests, while those in “traditional” fields are considered as if they were ethnic scholars regardless of their expertise (Hall & Sandler, 1986; Hune, 1998). Other difficulties faced by APA female faculty are the lack of mentoring, the absence of a sense of community with their colleagues, the fact that their leadership is ignored and underrated, and indifference to their contribution to campus life. These concerns may be questioned by white and sporadically by other minorities who do not see APAs as racially disadvantaged or by labeling them as the “model minority” (Hune, 1998).

The academy has not yet acknowledged that racial and gender discrimination and stereotypes of APA women exist. Their lack of representation in managerial and academic administrative positions in academe is subject to biases such as stature and youthful appearance, language and accent discrimination, communication and leadership styles, and notions about appropriate roles for women. Ideas of competency and authority are culturally based and socially constructed. As a consequence, these preconceptions undermine their authority as administrators.

While women of color are changing higher education in different areas, they do so within race and gendered space. Thornton (1989) has identified “Hegemonic masculinity” as the gendered space of the academy. It is a space of difference that undervalues women, their standpoints, and their work. Hune (1997) emphasized that,

Dominant group members do gender by treating women and men differently.

These practices contribute to the reduction of women in the pipeline as doctoral students and as faculty compared with their majority participations as recipients of bachelor’s and master’s degrees. (p. 192)

Race is also an area of difference for women of color. In fact, Asian Pacific Americans are affected by cultural colonialism which denotes the ideology of “Ethnocentrism.” Barger (2003) stressed that,

Ethnocentrism" is a commonly used word in circles where ethnicity, inter-ethnic relations, and similar social issues are of concern. The usual definition of the term is "thinking one's own group's ways are superior to others" or "judging other groups as inferior to one's own." But this definition only reflects part of the attitude involved in ethnocentrism, and, more important, does not address the underlying issue of why people do this. Most people, thinking of the shallow definition, believe that they are not ethnocentric, but are rather "open minded" and "tolerant." (Ethnocentrism, ¶.1)

Park (1988) opined that modern colonialism is no longer composed of the political subjugation of an indigenous people by a foreign country, but rather a universal domination of the Third World by the First and, somewhat, by the Second World. Cultural domination, as well as political domination and economic mistreatment, are always associated with colonialism. Cultural hegemony is a form of ethnocentrism that rebuffs the history of the colonized, fails to recognize and yet represses their culture. Further, the delineation of good and bad culture draws attention away from societal factors and places the blame for racial inequality on minorities. Barger (2003) described ethnocentrism as: making false assumptions about others' ways based on our own limited experience. Ethnocentrism leads to the misinterpretation of others. We incorrectly misrepresent what is important and useful to other peoples through our own tinted glasses. Cultural colonialism subordinates non-Western peoples and their perspectives. Asian Pacific American women, therefore, are seen as a problem-free “model minority.” Higher education, as a consequence, renders a visible minority invisible.

In spite of "...vilification, exotification, subjugation, and infantilization, which deflects a process of adaptation and transformation....In a country and in many cultures where gender carries an inferior status, women's resistance is remarkable" (Root, 1998, p. 211). Asian Pacific Americans, both females and males, experience inequalities everyday that undermine their access to the academy particularly for the females. Hune (1997) reminded us that, "formal structures and edicts alone are incapable of changing the hierarchy of higher education and replacing a 'chilly climate' and a 'revolving door' for women with a climate of inclusion and advancement" (p. 193). Attention must be given to the power of informal practices, the everyday interactions of sexism and racism that preserve and perpetuate the dominant order.

Positionality in Teaching and Learning in Adult Education

Adult education has a significant role in the distribution not only of knowledge but also of social, economic, and political power. We can no longer believe that adult education is a neutral activity in this continual struggle for knowledge and power. (Cervero, Wilson, & Associates, 2001, p. xv).

There has been increasing attention paid to how learner's and educator's positionalities affect learning in classrooms, although there has been more focus on the learner than on the educator. Maher and Tetreault (2001) in their book *The Feminist Classroom* introduced positionality in the context of formal and informal learning environments. Positionality can also be defined as metaknowledge, locating the self in relation to others within social structures, such as the classroom, that re-create and mediate those relationships. They described that, "positionality refers to the idea that "people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed" (p. 164). While always defined by gender, race, class, and other significant dimensions of societal

domination and oppression, positionality is also always evolving, context-dependent, and relational, in the sense that constructs of maleness create and depend on constructs of femaleness, while blackness and the term "of color" are articulated against ideas of whiteness. (Maher & Tetreault, 2001)

Tisdell, Hanley, and Taylor (2000) addressed adult education practitioners as embodying sundry social locations and positionality (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability) and implementing these theoretical frames in practice in quite different ways. For them, positionality (gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and/or disabilities) of both educators and learners shape how classroom dynamics unfold and how knowledge is constructed in a learning environment. They conceived that these differences in practice are based in part on differences in positionality. The positionality of how the educator shapes teaching and learning for critical consciousness has not been adequately explored.

The primary attention that Tisdell, Hanley, and Taylor (2000) tried to attract us to with respect of positionality is,

Taking an active role at addressing the power disparities that exist between and among student and faculty by establishing ground rules early on, including often marginalized voices about the topic under discussion through readings, outside speakers, and setting conditions and a tone necessary for all voice to be included in critical discourse...Decenter the notion of "teacher authority" and attempt to have students become authorities of their own knowledge. (p. 136)

Maher and Tetreault (2001) observed feminist-oriented classes and interviewed participating professors and students at six institutions ranging from predominantly white, liberal-arts colleges to a predominantly black, female liberal-arts school, as well as large, ethnically diverse state and

research institutions. The observations and narratives are characterized and organized around four analytic themes of mastery, voice, authority, and positionality. This book delineates the relationships between teachers, students, course content, the academic institutions, and society in general. It points out how the stereotypes of the "male-dominated, 'traditional classroom'" ("authoritarian," "competitive," and "concerned with... 'separate' and rational approaches to learning") vs. the feminist classroom ("democratic," "cooperative," and "concerned with 'connected' and relational... approaches to learning") are oversimplifications. The authors re-examined their own positionality as researchers in this edition.

Overall, the purpose of this book is well-intended. In re-writing this book, the authors took seriously the responses of their critics and actively responded to them. In this new edition, they reevaluated the significance of whiteness and its meaning in their research. They also admitted their simplifications of gender with women and race with blackness. They acknowledged their awareness that race is not a natural category and whiteness as a social position is constructed in relation to others and power demonstration. What was not helpful is that this ethnographic piece of research consisted of a varied but complex body of interviews and observations for which I can not understand the purpose, as a reader, due to their anecdotal presentation. The scattered anecdotes in the first few chapters provide less substantive analysis and integration of feminist theoretical perspectives. Finally, this is a book that is heavily concentrated on the issues of Black and White. While this does not surprise me, I am eminently concerned when it appears that research about positionality issues in a classroom is done in such a way as to benefit the greater (majority) good and propaganda of the learning society. Besides, there is no detailed discussion on Asian American educators and learners.

Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) present a qualitative comparative case study of two adult education classrooms. The authors examined the educational philosophy that has prevailed with most adult educators. One philosophy positions the role of facilitator as if the hierarchical power relation does not exist in the teaching and learning dynamics. Similar to Maher and Tetreault (2001), the data analysis focused on the four themes of mastery, voice, authority, and positionality. The results showed that the power relationships that structure social life do not stop at the classroom door. Rather, relationships present in a society that is structured around class, race, gender, and sexual orientation are also played out in all adult education classrooms and have a profound effect on the teaching and learning processes.

Using the approach of sociological lenses to evaluate the adult education learning environment, this research attempted to raise consciousness of how the adult educators' positionality impacts classroom learning. Their clear standpoint was that neither teachers nor learners are generic individuals; therefore, we must understand who learners and teachers are and what they bring to classrooms with their personal agendas borne by their race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation. However, this research provided evidence that supported what Maher and Tetreault (2001), Tisdell (1998), Sheared and Sissel (2001), and other researchers have attested about how power relationships outside the classroom are indubitably perpetuated inside the classroom.

Along with other research, this research focused on consciousness-raising or problem-identification rather than offering concrete strategies about how to deal with the impediments or dilemma when teachers recognized their positionality within the teaching and learning dynamic. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) found that "adults could act out on such entitlements (be aware of their positionality) consciously or subconsciously" (p. 397). Although

they tended to be sensitive to the cultural differences that all students brought into their classrooms, this research represented how these two researchers focused on typical Black and White issues in the classroom, which was probably due to their respective positionality. In addition, who conducted and wrote various parts of this research remains a mystery that leads me to wonder about the power relations between these two researchers. The nature of these two classes might result in various expectations from learners as opposed to the teachers. Would the results have been dramatically different if the Black female writers exchanged courses with the White male professor? Finally, I believe that the responsibility to identify how positionality impacts the learning in any classroom is borne by both the teacher and the learners. It's a collaborative effort.

Mojab (1997) who is an immigrant woman, a Marxist feminist, an activist, is as well a teacher at the Department of Adult Education and Counseling Psychology, the Ontario Institute for the Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, Canada. The purpose of her study was to investigate the experience of minority women students in the academy in order to contribute to our collective struggle for the transformation of the academic institution into a democratic and equitable place. A qualitative approach and survey questionnaire using the perspective of feminism were used as her methodology, which included focus groups, archival research on documents, discussions, and questionnaires. The sixty undergraduate minority women students in the focus groups were obtained through on and off campus advertisements around Concordia and McGill universities in Canada. Her findings were analyzed based on clarity and comprehensiveness of participants' narratives and returned questionnaires of 22 out of 30.

In her study, Mojab (1997) first identified herself under the understanding of positionality as a minority teacher in her teaching practice. She stated, "I know, as a minority woman teacher,

that my objectivity and authority are often under scrutiny. But I do not always have the intellectual tools to conceptualize, theorize or problematize my daily experience of racism and sexism” (Experiential learning process, ¶ 2). Furthermore, she suggested that as a teacher, she walks the students through the learning process which enables them to relearn their privilege and oppression. Besides, she centered her class in the living experiences of all class participants, the learners, the teachers, and the social and political context where learning was taking place. There are some highlights from the narratives of the participants that underline the notion of positionality of a learner in a classroom. One of the students experienced negligence, condescension, and exclusion from her teacher and was perceived as less competent because of her accent. Some students found themselves treated like a spokesperson or a reference point in a discussion around race issues. When they did speak up, teachers and classmates often showed their resistances in their classrooms. Some of the participants did not experience discrimination which implied that these women might have advocated the ideology of the majority.

In the conclusion, her findings showed that the balance of forces on the campus has not changed visibly even though the universities in Canada took a numbers of initiatives in the last twenty years to redress gender inequality. She argued that poststructuralist and postmodernist theory was due to the overestimations of power imbalance between the highly and hierarchically organized state/institutions and these minority women students. Moreover, she disputed that the feminist movement had left its mark on campus life, “feminist knowledge is in a defensive posture and women’s studies program have become institutionalized and their role as advocates of change has been minimized” (The feminist movement, ¶. 3).

As Mojab (1997) stated in the beginning of her article, there was a worthwhile theoretical perplexity in the literature on the topics of democratization of education, anti-racism education,

and a variety of feminist and other critical pedagogical perspectives on the relationship between knowledge and power. This article could have explored the issues in greater depth and width from the narratives of the participants. She also did not provide enough demographic background on the two universities and positionality of her participants whose stories were told in her research. However, the questionnaires contained such data and this could have been the reservoir for the construction of knowledge. In addition, the justification for showing a documentary “Inequality in the Classroom” (a tool for training faculty for inclusive classroom practices) was unclear and questionable. It made explicit that the personal agenda of Mojab as a researcher misguided her participants.

Brown, Cervero, and Johnson-Bailey (2000) used the theoretical framework of Black feminism (Collins, 1991). The purpose of their study was to understand how the societal position of African American women affects their experiences when teaching mathematics to adults in postsecondary institutions. A qualitative research design and in-depth interviews and classroom observations with seven African American women teachers in technical schools and community colleges were used. The researchers found that the teachers' positionality affected their experiences by, (a) producing a teaching philosophy based on a history of marginalization, (b) raising issues of credibility with students because of the teachers' race and gender, and (c) directly affecting their classroom interactions and teaching strategies. The conclusion drawn was that there are no universal teachers but, rather, teachers whose experiences are affected positively and negatively by their positionality in society. Their research well reflects what Cervero, Wilson & Associates advocate that to it is vital to “understand how the power relations in the wider society are manifested in the concrete programs, practices, and policies in adult education, and to offer educators ways of acting in the face of these power relations” (2001, p. xvi).

Brown, Cervero, and Johnson-Bailey have done a well-organized and well written research paper by illuminating “the reciprocal relationships between these practitioners everyday work and the wider social, economic, cultural, and political systems of society, thereby providing a clear connection between the ‘what for’ and the ‘how to’ of adult education” (Cervero, Wilson, & Associates, 2001, p. xvii). Brown et al. (2000) clearly stated the purpose and hypotheses of their research. Brown, as an African American woman, wittingly used her previous research which showed that African American women bring a unique development and personal history into the educational environment as their own positionality and platform (1997). She believes that power disparities between women and men that exist in society are generally reproduced in the classroom.

In the literature review, they focused on how the learning environment plays an important role in the teaching-learning process for learners. This review acknowledged the worth of the theorists of adult education such as Knowles (1980) and Galbraith (1991) who both emphasized that classroom climate that is created by the adult educator. They provided a framework and guidelines for adult educators in the establishment of a positive climate for adult learners in the classroom. However, Brown et al. (2000) critically assessed these assumptions. They critiqued that although they recognized the diversity of adult learners, neither Knowles nor Galbraith take the educator’s race or gender into account. In addition, they illustrated how Brookfield (1986; Brookfield, 1990, 1995), Colin and Preciphs’ (1991) focus on how a learner’s race and gender or a teacher’s racism has an impact on learners.

Rich findings combined with a strong theoretical framework are the highlights of this research. This research contributes not only to the knowledge-base of theory in adult education, but also to the practice in the field. One thing that caught my attention was their assumption that,

the educational philosophy that stresses “learner-centered” and the belief in “authority” of a teacher probably caused the scarcity of research on how teacher’s race and gender influence their teaching. Once again, authority issues came across and resonated with one of the strands of the feminist pedagogical research agenda.

Positionality refers to the place one occupies in the societal hierarchy and is generally delineated by the foremost categories of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and/or disability. Sheared and Sissel (2001) advocate that,

We believe that we as educators have played a role in the perpetuation of many being marginalized...[Adult educators that] our lack of recognition of the way we may be reproducing unequal and disempowering social relations situated in raced, classed, and gendered positions of power and privilege, powerlessness, or oppression. (p. 330)

Asian/Asian North American woman educators are far from being a complete “success story” or “model minority” as seen in their moderate representation in higher education in general, and in the field of theological education in particular. Hune (1998) brings this notion to our attention by reminding us of how and why Asian/Asian North American women faculty members are misrepresented and mistreated. The positionality of Asian and Asian North American women would suggest that they are doubly burdened because of their disfranchisement based on gender and race status. In the teachers’ narratives, it was apparent that their minority race status and their female gender were factors that students used when deciding if these Asian and Asian American women were credible theological educators. These teachers have to work hard to establish their credibility in the classroom because students have set beliefs about theological teachers being White and male. Consequently, there is an urgent need to build up

credibility in a field where these women do not automatically have it (Brock et al., 1999). As Hune (1998) pointed out,

The most vexing issue for Asian Pacific American women and men currently is the power of the 'model minority' image to frame how they are treated in American society. The stereotype implies that all APAs are achievers who have overcome racism through hard work, and therefore do not suffer discrimination in education and employment. (p. 9)

In regard to positionality when race becomes the foreground, Kim claimed that, "Asian Americans have not been racialized in a vacuum, isolated from other groups; to the contrary, Asian Americans have been racialized relative to and through interaction with Whites and Blacks" (C. J. Kim, 1999, p. 106). Consequently, Asian American woman educators as racialized and marginalized figures face remarkable challenges in their practices. Positionality of educators biases how classroom are constructed. People make assumptions based on their own positionality and this in turn, biases how they view the world. The construction of positionality cannot be generalized due to Asian and Asian North Americans' complexities and diversities. What it means to be an American differs from one region to the other in the United States, which an Asian North American must reckon with in the construction of her own identity. With the stereotypes faced by Asian/Asian North American women, they suffer from the complex convergence of sexualized racial stereotypes and racialized gender stereotypes. The plurality of these women are delineated as being ethnically, regionally, and culturally diverse. It is an everyday struggle to negotiate their multiple and shifting identities that are simultaneously multidimensional and diverse (Brock et al., 1999).

One example that demonstrates the identity creation is the American film, “Joy Luck Club”. (Tan, 1993) This film portrays second-generation Asian Americans and shows the complex nature of individuals struggling to reconcile their cultural background, their ethnic heritage, and the ways of mainstream society. These individuals, born and raised in a society whose ideals and way of life differ dramatically from the values of their immigrant parents, must not only reckon with the identifiable generational gap that exists between parent and child but also with the cultural gap created by being reared by parents who are firmly rooted in the culture of their homeland and living in a society with completely different social expectations. This film recognizes Asian Americans and explores the identity issues of individuals caught between two often contradictory cultures, offering three key opposing ideals which play an important role in the characters' journey towards self-realization: silence versus voice; community versus the individual; and economic growth versus spiritual growth. This thesis presents the idea that these three themes are at the fundamental core of the ideals set forth by both cultures; hence, the very act of self-creation is composed of the conscious and unconscious choices the characters make with respect to these values. Asian Americans push the boundaries set forth by birth and circumstance to give birth to a unique self.

Mentorship

Hune’s (1998) report on Minorities in Higher Education reflected that Asian and Asian North American faculty list the lack of mentoring, the absence of a sense of community with their colleagues, and the campus community’s indifference to their contributions. This lack of mentorship helps explain the small number of Asian/Asian North American woman educators. Some American students have never had an Asian or Asian North American faculty teaching them before, and many find it a novelty to see one of them teaching Christianity and not Asian

religions. This indicates that students still assume Christianity to be a western tradition, although Christianity was born in the western part of Asia and the majority of Christians in the world are living in the Southern Hemisphere. Therefore, Asian and Asian North American faculty might identify the predominantly male and white environment as restraining and restricting their access to information and social networks that could uplift their sense of inclusion in academia (Hune, 1998). In the field of theological education, Asian/Asian North American women educators might not be seen as qualified to teach “Western Religion” (Brock et al., 1999). Similarly, Asian and Asian North American women educators in theology might feel like “outsiders” and “strangers” and speak of being silenced.

Communication and Leadership Styles

Narrative delineated by Matsui-Estella (1995) opened up the discussion of her personal learning experience due to different communicative and leadership style. She recalled,

I experienced Asian American leadership in the context of Hawaii to be “making things happen” by working behind the scenes and in concert with a number of people. Someone who was a good listener, a consensus builder, possessing quiet strength, and working with genuine humility, was experienced as a leader. An individualistic style of leadership was frowned upon. Talkativeness was more often seen as an ego trip of showing off... When Euro-American teachers gave favorable grades based on classroom verbal participation, Asian American students felt hurt and angry but often were not able to express this dismay. (p. 3)

Hune (1998) stressed, “misinterpretations of what is appropriate behavior occur when mainstream Americans emphasize ‘youth, individualism, and aggressiveness’ and traditional APA cultures favor ‘seniority, consensus, and reticence” (p. 15). Hence, APA women in academe

find their often youthful appearance may be a benefit for entry level positions, but works in opposition when they seek higher level positions. One example is that of an APA female faculty member seeking consensus in a meeting through being polite and deferring to a senior colleague and waiting to have something to contribute to a discussion before speaking. This courtesy and waiting is likely to be considered by the dominant white male culture as a lack of leadership qualities, low confidence in her own abilities and original ideas. Teaching in hierarchal institutions, Asian/Asian North American women educators are in a “Catch-22” situation while they prepare their courses.

Intersecting with race and gender stereotypes, biases in regard to stature and appearance are another impediment APA women must contend with daily along with being silenced by the chilly climate and restrained in their interactions. The “reticence” of an APA female faculty may be interpreted as cultural when in fact she is being silenced by everyday inequities and small behaviors. Still other APA women internalize the notion of cultural differences, find fault with themselves, and seek opportunities from institutions and APA groups to develop mainstream communication and leadership skills.

APA women in North America in a predominated white environment are coping with everyday inequalities. Since women are usually on the wrong side of binaries and at the bottom of hierarchies, feminists have troubled these structures that often brutalize women. For instance, feminists believe that the first term in binaries such as culture/nature, mind/body, rational/irrational, subject/object is male and privileged and the second term is female and disadvantaged (St. Pierre, 2003). In order to preserve their distinctions, binaries are more flexible than one might think and operate in subtle ways. In addition, Poststructuralism reminds us that many very different people are slotted into the category “woman”, and their differences across

the other identity categories -- race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and wellness, -- are subsumed under the substance of a single identity category, gender, in an attempt to produce order and regularity (St. Pierre, 2003). In order to keep such shaky categories intact, it is imperative to define the essence of a category as well as the essence of things in the world, the "thing itself," so they can be matched up. This activity, which is accomplished with language, is the search for identity, and it, of course, privileges identity over difference (St. Pierre, 2003).

Some feminists, however, are concerned that the desire to fix this essence is dangerous, since they believe that all the identity categories -- race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, wellness, -- not just gender, must be taken into account as we think about people's lives. They believe that a person is the "intersection" (Crenshaw, 1995) of these identity categories; thus, race or wellness, at different times, might be as important to someone as gender. Their concern is that once the differences are erased by identity, people can more easily be slotted into a hierarchy or grid and then manipulated, dismissed, and oppressed (St. Pierre, 2003).

Theological classrooms are sites for complex interactions of power in which relationships of privilege and oppression around race, gender, and class are formed in unpredictable ways and these relationships cannot be understood through universal theories about structures of power and oppression (Imel, 1999). As Asian/Asian North American educators investigate how they are affected by their interactions with others in regard to our gender, race, and class consciousness, in other words, their positionality, and interrogate how their positionality shapes their thinking and acting in the world, their way of seeing themselves as individuals, their individual identity, begins to shift (Tisdell, 2001). She explicated that,

In short, its emphasis is on making conscious the connections between one's individual (constantly shifting) identity and the social structures of race, gender,

and class that inform that identity. The point here is, the more we are conscious of how structural systems of privilege and oppression inform our identity and behavior, the more we have capacity to act to change our behavior on behalf of ourselves or others, thus shifting our identity. (p. 275)

Asian/Asian North American women educators need to keep in mind that their constant shifting identities around their understanding of their positionality affect and shape the learning environment. They are required to be aware of how mastery, voice, authority, and positionality (Maher & Tetreault, 2001), rather than working as a single element, work as interlocking mechanisms that fashion their practice, both consciously and unconsciously, as educators in the context of theological education.

hooks (1994) noted that “way of knowing enhance our capacity to live fully and deeply” (p. 29). Moreover, Sheared and Sissel (2001) urged that “unless we go beyond the simple explanation to the more systemic and structural factors addressing racism, sexism, classism, that contributes to this variance, we continue to perpetuate hegemony and marginalization of others” (2001). Formal and informal policies, practices, and programs often exclude, marginalize, or silence Asian/Asian North American woman educators in the curriculum, classroom, co-curricular event, advisement, mentoring, research, fellowship, employment opportunities, and other areas. Asian/Asian North American women educators are called to be more attentive to the nuanced ways that the characteristics of mastery, voice, authority, and positionality manifest in the preparation and teaching of a course of theological education.

Conclusion

If adult education plays a significant role in the distribution not only of knowledge but also of social, economic, and political power (Cervero, Wilson, & Associates, 2001), it should be as

noteworthy in the distribution of theological knowledge as well. However, little attention has been paid to this issue. In this chapter, a review could be found on the positionality of Asian and Asian American teachers and learners in general, but how the diversity and complexity of their lived experiences in the context of Christianity in particular remains unexamined. In addition, even though much literature has been written on feminist pedagogical issues which mainly focus on Black and White, there has been a critical lack of literature written on the complex and multilayered power dynamics in the classroom when the teacher is an Asian or Asian North American woman. Mohanty advocates, “Education represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations. Thus, education becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of the lived culture of individuals and groups situated in asymmetrical social and political positions” (1994, p. 147). The complexity of the Asian and Asian North American theological educator as a racial minority woman is marginalized by the White mainstream. Consequently, if we believe that adult education is not a neutral activity in the continual struggle for knowledge and power due to the positionality of the educators, the research on how Asian and Asian North American theological women educators negotiate their multiple ethnic, regional, and cultural identities in their teaching practice under the hierarchical and patriarchal context is necessary. Therefore, my study adds to the missing part of the literature on ethnicity study, feminist pedagogy, feminist theological education, and critical adult education.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the qualitative design utilized in this study of Asian and Asian North American women educators in the patriarchal context of theological education. A description of qualitative research is provided, along with an explanation of the research design, sample selection, procedures employed for data collection and data analysis. A discussion is presented on reliability, validity and ethics as they are relevant to the study as well as the limitations and assumptions which will be explained.

While much has been written on feminist pedagogical issues, there has been a lack of critical research on the complex and multilayered power dynamics in the classroom when the teacher is an Asian or Asian North American woman. The complexity is a result of her multiple subject positions in the classroom as an educator, while she is also a theologian who has some authority over the students. Moreover, at the same time as a minority woman, she is marginalized by the White mainstream. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand how Asian and Asian North American women educators negotiate race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education. Two research questions were used to guide this study: 1) What are the power dynamics within Asian/Asian North American women theologians' learning and teaching environment?; 2) What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning in which patriarchal ideologies dominate?

Research Design

The central foundation of qualitative research is based on the premise that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world (Merriam, 2002). The reality of the world is not a fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon as believed by positivists. In qualitative research, ontologically, the interpretations of reality and multiple social constructions are never stable and change over time. Epistemologically, qualitative research knowledge produces through the meanings that conferred are to the phenomena studied. Knowledge in qualitative research is contextual and time dependent. There are three overarching theoretical perspectives in qualitative research. They are understanding (interpretive), emancipation (critical and feminist), and deconstruction (postmodern) (Imel *et al.*, 2002).

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

One of the characteristics of qualitative research emphasizes the role of qualitative researchers. Rossman and Rallis (2003) stressed the purpose for qualitative researchers in the study is to learn about some aspect of the social world and to make new understandings that can then be used. As qualitative researchers, they become part of the process, continually making choices, testing their assumptions, and reshaping their questions. The researchers strive to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences. It is assumed that meaning is embedded in people's experiences and that meaning is mediated through the investigator's own perceptions. While the inquiry process grows from curiosity or wonder to understanding and knowledge building, the researcher is often transformed. Characteristics that are most often used to describe qualitative research are included in the following paragraphs (Creswell, 2003; Imel *et al.*, 2002; Merriam, 1998, 2002).

Qualitative researchers are oriented toward the social world: They gather data about sensory experience: what people (including themselves) see, feel, hear, taste, and smell.

Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researchers do not extricate people from their everyday worlds; instead, they go to the people, face to face with real people and work in the field. It usually takes place in the natural settings and typically examines a small number of sites, situations, or people over an extended period of time. This site of individuals or place helps researchers understand a certain level of details where participants are highly involved in actual experiences on the site. Qualitative researchers hold the philosophy that the messiness of the lived world should be valued because they make a sustained focus in the context that is integral to their work. Moreover, the researchers assume that a comprehensive understanding of human experience is gained by exploring these complexities. Life occurs in context, that is, the natural setting in which the people work, study, play, eat, drink, love, in fact, live (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

There are three features of qualitative research pointed out by Rossman and Rallis (2003). Firstly, they (Merriam, 1998, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003) believed that the researcher is the means through which the study is conducted, and the purpose of the qualitative research is to learn about some facet of the social world. Before and after the research, a qualitative researcher values the emergent nature of qualitative research. The researchers are responsive to the context; they adapt techniques to the circumstances. When they are in the field, what is known about the situation can be expanded through sensitivity to nonverbal aspects (Merriam, 1998, 2002). The researchers can process data immediately, can clarify and summarize as the study evolves, and can explore anomalous responses. However, qualitative researchers try not to oblige a rigid or a priori framework on the social world. Instead, they want to learn what comprises notable

questions from the participants themselves. Even though no formal hypotheses are shed before the study, researchers do bring a conceptual framework that guides their research questions. This conceptual framework, however, can be and most often is changed, modified, and refined once in the field. More importantly, more questions are discovered after they have entered the field which leads to the ultimate purpose of qualitative researchers' learning. Merriam (1998) reminded us that qualitative research is evolving rather than tightly prefigured. The research questions may change and be refined as the inquirer learns what to ask and to whom it should be asked.

The emergent aspects about the role of the researcher in qualitative research have been historically defined as placing principles of inductive logic or reasoning from the specific to more broad statements to theory. Qualitative researchers by tradition have been portrayed as responding to this inductive process rather than to deductive reasoning, which starts with a theory and then tests its applicability. Qualitative research acknowledges that any individual enters a context with a personal perspective that shapes and is shaped by perceptions (Merriam, 1998, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Qualitative research is primarily interpretive. Instead of testing an existing theory, qualitative research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories. This means that the data we derived from the participants' perspectives and the researcher attempts to make an interpretation from the participants' frame of reference. This process is achieved by developing a description of an individual or setting, analyzing data for themes or categories, and typologies and drawing conclusion about the data (Merriam, 1998).

All inquiry goes through a complex, nonlinear process of induction, deduction, reflection, inspiration, and rationalization. This can be conceptualized as researcher praxis that is the iteration between theoretical ideas, data, and the researcher's reflection on both. Consequently, it

involves complicated reasoning that is many-sided and iterative, moving back and forth between the parts and the whole. The researcher regards social phenomena holistically. Therefore, in qualitative research the more complex, interactive, and encompassing the narrative, the better the qualitative study is. Additionally, the researchers are constantly introspective and [verb missing here] their biases, values, and interests enough through reflexivity during the whole process of the study. In this regard, the personal-self is inseparable from the researcher-self. This connection represents honesty and openness to research, acknowledging that all inquiry is laden with values. Peshkin (1988) stresses that the researchers' subjectivities "can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected" (p.18).

In summary, the characteristic of qualitative research employs multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic, for instance, participant observation, interview, and archival analysis. In regard to participant observation, the researchers look for involvement of their participants in data collection and seek to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study. On the other hand, the researcher can utilize various methods of data collection, including open-ended interviews, observations, archival research on documents, sounds, emails, scrapbooks, and any text data and images data. In the process of data collection, the procedure might change as doors open and close and the researchers learn the best sites at which to learn about the central phenomenon of interest. A research process is flexible; research designs can be changed to match the dynamic needs of situations. Writing up a qualitative research involves reporting research result that is rich with quotations, narrations, and details, and includes thick descriptions. The researcher generally embraces words and pictures rather than numbers to convey what they have learned about a phenomenon.

Types of Qualitative Methods

Nassar (2001) suggested five factors that should be used when deciding on which approaches to use for a qualitative study. They are 1) the research problem; 2) the training and experience of the researcher; 3) the psychological attributes of the researcher; 4) the focus of the study, and 5) the need of the audience. Merriam's (2002) suggestion is the most comprehensive in term of methods in qualitative research. She offered eight approaches which are: 1) basic interpretive qualitative study; 2) phenomenology; 3) grounded theory; 4) case study; 5) ethnographic study; 6) narrative analysis; 7) critical qualitative research, and 8) postmodern research. Questions asked in this type of critical qualitative research revolve around whose interests are being served and who has the power to make changes. Critical qualitative research uncovers, examines and analyzes the social, cultural and psychological assumptions that structure and limit the ways of researchers' thinking and being in the world. Postmodern research is the newest form of qualitative research and it challenges other forms. This approach disputes the routine of the modern world with its emphasis on a reality that is predictable and scientific. The last two approaches as well as feminist methodology are intertwined in this study.

Sample Selection

Quantitative research tends to draw upon a great number for the sample and deducts a statistical result that justifies their hypotheses. On the other hand, the qualitative researcher is concerned with selecting a small number of research participants. Besides, sample selection in qualitative research is usually but not always nonrandom, purposeful, and small. The most common type of sampling in qualitative research is purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). In purposeful sampling, participants are selected based on who will provide the most in-depth and richest source of information for the study. According to Patton, "Information-rich cases are

those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the purposeful sampling” (p. 69). The intent of this study was to understand how Asian and Asian North American women negotiate race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education. There are a total of 3607 full-time faculty members from all theological schools in North America. However, only 4% of them are Asian and Asian North American faculty, of these only 31 are females (Meinzer & Merrill, 2004). Therefore, the technique of snowballing (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002) or chain sampling which helped from respondents in identifying the population under study was used in this study.

Eight theological educators agreed to participate in this study and were studied between November 21, 2003, and May 10, 2004. Each interview lasted about one-and-a-half hours to two hours. Follow-up questions were asked via periodic emails. A purposeful sample (Patton, 2002) was selected based on the following criteria: 1) participants have experience teaching subjects of Christian religion such as systematic theology, feminist theology, Biblical studies, religious education, ministry or other associated subjects; 2) they are members of different denominations rather than from a single denomination; 3) their identities manifest the diverse socio-cultural dimensions of the Asian Diaspora, for example, experiences from countries such as Korea, Japan, China. The eight participants in my research consist of one Chinese American, two Chinese Immigrants, one Korean American, one Japanese Immigrant, one Japanese American, and two Korean Immigrants. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants. Tapes of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed. These eight participants were found by my soliciting emails to the following three groups that I am associated with in order to look for my participants. The groups are Pacific, Asian, North American Asian Women in Theology and

Ministry, American Academy of Religion and Asian Pacific Americans and Religion Research Initiative.

Data Collection

Rossmann and Rallis (2003) noted that data gathering is a thoughtful, conscious, systematic process that describes both the products, the data, and the processes of the research activities so that others may understand how the study was performed and can assess its satisfactoriness, strength, and ethics. Data collection and data analysis are simultaneous and ongoing activities that allow for important understandings to be discovered along the way and then pursued in additional data collection efforts. In qualitative research design, not all the specifics of a study can be outlined in advance. I was attentive to emergent themes throughout the research process. All interviews were transcribed and field notes were made using Word processing software with the lines of the data numbered sequentially. These transcriptions were duplicated for a few copies of the transcripts. After each interview, I read through and analyzed the entire set of printed data. I started coding by looking for recurrent themes. These themes indicated the essence of the category of meaning (Maycut & Morehouse, 1994). Interviews were analyzed based on phrases and statements, rather than line-by-line.

“Talk” is essential for comprehending how participants view their worlds. Deeper understandings are obtained through long dialogue and in-depth interviews, as the interviewer and participant “co-construct” meaning (Rossmann & Rallis, 2003, p. 180). Described as “a conversation with a purpose” (Burgess, 1984, p. 102), “a conversational partnership” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 11), and a social “encounter” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 3), in-depth interviewing may be an overall approach to a study or one of the several techniques that would be used. There are several types of interview methods: informal conversational interviews, the

interview guide approach, standardized open-ended interview, and dialogic interview (Patton, 2002, pp. 342-347). The interview guide approach was utilized in this study. The purpose of guided interview was to elicit the participant's worldview. The researcher posed open-ended questions followed by follow-up questions and requested for elaboration; the participant responded with long narratives. Therefore, in this study, the participant's perspective on the phenomenon studied revealed as the participant views it and not as the researcher views it. The researcher's role was to capture the unfolding process.

Interviews

As the primary method used in this study, interviewing is a crucial way to obtain rich, detailed data about how people view their worlds. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) illustrated that when using interviewing as a data collection method, the researcher should ask open-ended or semi-structured questions around facts, people's beliefs about the facts, feelings, motives, present and past behaviors, standards for behaviors, and conscious reasons for actions or feelings. Interviews involve personal interaction where cooperation from the participant and interpersonal skills of the interviewer are essential. Interviewees may be unwilling or uncomfortable to share all that the interviewer hopes to explore. Yet, they may also be unaware of recurring patterns in their lives. Sometimes the interviewer may not be able to ask questions that evoke rich responses because of either limited expertise in interviewing or unfamiliarity with the local language as it standardizes the usage of pronunciation. In this research, English is not my native language.

Qualitative researchers talk with people, watch and listen as research participant folks go about their everyday tasks, read documents, record and look at the physical space, clothing, tools, and decorations of the researched sites. These are more formally known as the primary techniques of interviewing, observing, gathering documents, and examining material culture

(Rossman & Rallis, 2003). According to these characteristics of data collection techniques in qualitative research, one to two hours of semi-structured (guided interview) and audiotape recorded interviews from the participants and field notes from casual conversations were the primary source of my data collection. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim and field notes were made.

Data Analysis

Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data is a process of intense immersion in the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials the researchers have collected. I kept and organized these materials into salient themes and patterns so that the themes conveyed a consistent story. In qualitative research, analysis begins simultaneously with the study and is initiated at the conceptualization stage. The research questions, the strategy for the research and the design, and the genre to which my study links: all these provided preliminary results for my analysis. Decisions made in the field focused the analysis as I discovered important but unanticipated ideas and shift emphasis in the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). All field notes and transcripts from audio-taped interviews were prepared for analysis by first photocopying all the data, and then identifying categories of meaning in the data. These categories of meaning then organized into different tables for easy manipulation during data analysis. Constant comparative method was used as the method of data-analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002).

Furthermore, coded data were organized into broad categories. These categories resulted from units of meaning that were similar in nature. Once categories were established, computer files were created for each category. All units of meaning that fit in the category were “cut” from the original data source and “pasted” into the category document. The data course and line numbers were included with each unit of meaning. This allowed for a constant comparison of data across the interview data.

Once all the data was collected and the initial analyses were completed, all transcripts were reread. Data, codes, and categories were then be reexamined to look for further connections between and within all the sets of data. As categories and themes began to solidify, data was reexamined to ensure that they accurately represented the words of the participants. The categories were then organized around the corresponding research questions. Data was presented in themes that specifically address the two research questions. Categories and subcategories were grouped with the corresponding themes.

In constant comparative method, I looked for the emerging themes and categories. As I collected more data, I wrote analytic memos about my data, and reevaluated my previous theories as I compared old data with new (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The themes generated by my pilot study were used to expand in depth and breadth and it produced more themes that guided the development of my study. According to Maycut and Morehouse (1994), constant comparative method of data analysis can be illustrated as follows: 1) inductive category coding and simultaneous comparing of units of meaning across categories; 2) refinement of categories, and; 3) exploration of data yielding an understanding of people and setting being studied.

Constant comparative method of data analysis is a complex procedure that requires analytical and abstract thinking (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). It involves analytical induction from the beginning of the research process and is completed by the end of data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Although this method of data analysis can be described in a series of steps, in practice it is common for all the steps to be in operation simultaneously (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Glaser (1978) recounted the steps in the constant comparative method of data collection as follows: 1) begin collecting data, 2) look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus, 3) collect data that provide many incidents

of the categories of focus, with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories, 4) write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while continually searching for new incidents, 5) work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships, 6) engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories. As Merriam (Merriam, 1998) puts it, the process of constant comparative method of data analysis leads to categories that are compared to each other and to other instances. While this method is complex, it can be thought of as reading, rereading, coding, and recoding the data to see connections.

Rossmann and Rallis (2003) provide the following pointers to facilitate analysis: 1) keep my questions in mind, 2) remember what I am trying to learn, 3) stay connected to the qualitative genre while framing my study, 4) modify my data gathering based on what I am learning, not by chance, 5) ask analytical questions as I go along, 6) write constantly. Note hunches, thoughts, impressions, write descriptive and analytic memos, 7) keep a journal and re-read it from time to time, 8) talk my ideas through with people, 9) develop a community of practice or interview with the participants, 10) executive reading [should be 'read', without 'executive' in order to make sense and be balanced with the rest of the list] on my topic of research about what others have said regarding the topic, 11) use research literature, movies, novels, poems, and art to gain insight, 12) be creative; use metaphors, create images, draw pictures, and draw concept maps, 13) think about how I might characterize what I am learning: what is it like? What image does it evoke?

Theories are shaped by data, but can never sufficiently manifest the multifarious political realities of people's lives. Ezzy (2002) suggested that the researcher is never finished with exploring, searching, examining and theorizing. New depth, complexities, subtleties and

uncertainties are continually uncovered (Ezzy, 2002). As McGettigan (1997) put it: “The social world is far too encompassing, evolving, and complex an environment for researchers ever to assume that they have arrived at any of its final truth” (p. 376) This means that my interpretations are always to a certain extent, uncertain, and the facts are always rather indefinite. Ezzy (2002) stressed, humility is required here: “A preparedness to listen, to accept that earlier interpretations were inadequate, or could be expanded. However, this humility is combined with fascination and with discovery” (p. 25).

Rigor and Ethics

Ethical management of qualitative research is much more than following guidelines provided by an ethics committee. It involves a consideration of both how data collection is conducted and how the analyzed data is presented, and will vary significantly depending on the details and idiosyncrasies of the situation of the research. Correspondingly, rigor in qualitative research is as much situated and linked to the politics and particularities of the research as it is to following established methods and practices (Ezzy, 2002). Some researchers argue that the quality of description and interpretation is central to what constitutes rigorous qualitative research. Although Gubrium and Holstein (1997) suggested a set of criteria that they describe as the “new language of qualitative method” and they have removed many of the hangovers of the natural sciences model, they do not deal with the integrally political nature of qualitative research. A more provocative approach to rigor is taken by researchers compellingly influenced by postmodernist and hermeneutic theory (Clough, 1992; Denzin, 1997). They argued for an integrally political nature of social research. Rejecting the distinction between facts and values, these researchers reiterated that rigorous methods must integrate research and political action (Lincoln & Denzin, 2001). The political model of rigor is typically influenced by the work of the

feminists. There are six features of this model. The first is positionality: research that claims to be objective and uninfluenced by the standpoint of the author is deceptive. Text must recount the position from which the author speaks. Secondly, the community acts as an arbiter of quality; academicians, politicians, and participant communities become important arbiters of the quality and value of the research. Thirdly, voice: research should provide voice to those who are silenced or marginalized in traditional political process. The fourth feature is critical subjectivity: a reflexive self-awareness is required in order to be able to be sensitive to the voices of others. Sacredness is the fifth feature of this model. Some researchers seek to re-enchant contemporary life and see this as an extension of a profound respect for the dignity, justice and collaborative nature of the research process. Sharing privileges is the model's sixth feature. Researchers should aim to acknowledge the importance of participants' contributions to their research and return to them with both results and royalties. Research should not be written simply for our own benefit and consumption, but for the participants.

Researchers Values and Assumptions

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is interpretative research, when the researcher is generally involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants. This brings in a scope of strategic, ethical, and personal issues to the process. The researchers should explicitly identify their biases, values, and personal interests about their research topic and process (Creswell, 2003). Hence, the researcher plays a significant role throughout the research process; thus my personality and skills need to be assessed.

In this proposed research, my targeted participants who are Asian/Asian North American women instructors are culturally, ethnically, and regionally diverse (Brock et al., 1999) besides their denominational differences in the field of theological education. These Asian women,

regardless of whether they are descendants of immigrants or foreign-born, must grapple with many stereotypes and biases. These stereotypes, biases, and premises were described in the chapter two and are possessed by society as well as the researcher. One salient feature that is highly predictable is the common characteristic of silence. As a researcher, I was required to be particularly aware of this characteristic of the culture, to contemplate upon it and take it into account as I collected my data. However, this inevitable situation of silence as I went about my data collection was not my major concern. As Kim (J. H. Kim, 1999b) in her ethnographical research on women in a Korean church in the US said, “Women’s understanding and experiences of silence are placed at the center for achieving a sense of freedom, resistance, and liberation” (p. 210). Silence oftentimes is seen as strong as a speech, not only in cultural based research, but also as a binary that poststructuralists tend to deconstruct.

Qualitative researchers recognize the significance of reflecting on who they are and how this affects their research. Qualitative research is exquisitely sensitive to personal biography. Qualitative researchers value their irreplaceable perspectives as a source of understanding rather than something to be cleansed from the study. The sensitivity is a simultaneous awareness of self and other and of the interplay between the two, captured by the term reflectivity (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Thus, other important issue in my data collection process was my insider/outsider status. Similar to the discussions in the previous section, positionality as the foreground in teaching and learning is strongly relevant in my research. There were points in the interaction as a researcher where I shared a common understanding with my participants and other times when I needed to remind myself to step back (Merriam *et al.*, 2001). As an international student who is also biologically and culturally biracial (Taiwanese and Filipino), I have been educationally exposed to Western and Eastern perspectives. After completing my college studies in Taiwan, I

spent seven and a half years in graduate level programs in the United States. In addition, I am culturally caught in between the patriarchal community by and large in my daily life and feminist advocacy calling inside my heart. Finally, as a lesbian Christian, I am torn apart by theological conservatives when my faith is strengthened, while at the same time, I am also utterly denied and ruthlessly ostracized.

Qualitative researchers systematically reflect on how they affect the ongoing flow of everyday life and are affected by it. They do more than affect ongoing social life: their worldview shapes the entire project. From initial curiosity to writing the final report, their personal biography is the lens through which they see the world. Gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, politics and beliefs all affect any research project. As a result, my initial concern that I had during data collection was not the silent characteristics of my participants due to the virtue of silence. Rather, I was worried about my positionality as a multiple and yet unstable positionality might cause distrust and further silence in the data process. Calling attention to how positionality informs knowledge production both challenges the boundaries and definitions of knowledge, and creates what Hill (1996) refers to as fugitive knowledge - knowledge that resists the dominant culture. Interestingly, the participants who were informed by my positionality during the public forum of the same conference we were at revealed themselves more than those who was not aware of my sexual orientation. This means, I was viewed as an insider at some point to some participants at the same time I was regarded as an outsider. Therefore, to reveal and reflect upon my positionality as an Asian lesbian woman is still a critically never-ending undertaking in my future research. Although in much qualitative research literature, it is vital to be open and honest, an ethical issue to me remains as to whether it is prudent to reveal my sexual orientation. Each revealing or concealing of my sexual orientation

shoves me to the brink of isolation and remoteness. This inner fear and unassertiveness resulted from the homophobic society in which are ultimately reproduced whether in Christianity or society at large. Therefore, an ongoing question is asked: In what way does our positionality shape our willingness to be vulnerable in classes focusing on systems of privilege and oppression?

One other important issue that I experienced was my relationship with the interviewer which was the unbalanced power dynamics. In this study, the population of participants is a group of elite women who are highly academically trained and engaged in scholarly works of writing and being activists in their local respective communities. The culture that I am deferring to this group of female instructors as an Asian is subject to their credentials in the theological field and to their seniority, since I am not yet a mature scholar in many ways including my spoken English that might be seen as inarticulate as a researcher. Finally, this concern was dispelled in the end of the researcher. All participants seemed to take me under their wings since they were interested in and excited by my research.

In order to explore the feasibility of my study, I undertook a pilot study in November, 2003. In the pilot study, I interviewed two participants and generated 31 pages of transcripts. Pseudo-names are assigned to the participants for the purpose of confidentiality. In these two interviews, preliminary themes such as teaching styles, establishment of authority and silence emerged. However, due to the cultural factor and language barrier, the interview guide used for the pilot study (Appendix B) was modified. The revised interview guide (Appendix C) was utilized for this research.

Finally, Kvale (1996) used two metaphors of the interviewers: as a miner or a traveler. I found the metaphor of researcher as a traveler encouraging. He explicated that, "Traveler

metaphor understands the interviewer as a traveler on a journey that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home. The interviewer-traveler wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered” (p. 4). In this metaphor, I as an interviewer wandered along with the local inhabitants, asking questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world, and converse with them in the original Latin meaning of conversation as “wandering together with.” Silence from the inhabitants or from the interviewer in the journey will be, at the moment, all of them are wordlessly astounded by the milieu that belongs to both of them.

This study is a reflection, in midstream, of action that is always in progress. It is not only a collective wisdom composed by the participants’ narratives but also is an in-depth analysis of women’s experiences who are Asian/Asian North American theological educators. These women whose experiences of theological education are reflected in this study come out of contexts shaped by religious and feminist commitments even though some of them might not openly claim themselves as a “feminist.” They had been and continue to be searching out new ways of striving in the patriarchal context of theological education. As an Asian Christian woman, I am aware of my perceptions, insights, and shape of this research is limited by who I am, what education I have been edified: by mostly white, mostly Protestant, mostly middle class, mostly representing schools of theology located in or near consortia. Therefore, neither I nor the participants in this study do claim to speak for all Asian/Asian North American women in theological education. Likewise, this study does not represent all efforts at addressing the problems of sexism and racism as they affect theological education. Nevertheless, this study does assert to speak out genuinely the participants’ experiences and to characterize a theological and political perspective that schools of theology and the Church must take seriously if issues of justice and liberation are to be addressed.

Personally, I was not only informed but also by these women who participated in this study. However, I was also frustrated at times when I realized their common experienced of racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination were disregarded of their un-accented English or their earned credential as a professor in colleges. As a seminarian myself, I encountered discriminations although race was not an issue in Taiwan. I turned to the second seminary which was a more liberal in the United States to seek for answers for the existence of injustice in my first seminarian in Taiwan. However, I experienced more injustice in this US liberal seminary as an Asian woman. Then I turned to the secular university for the solution to all the discriminations in the religious institutions and found the dead end too. Theological education, feminist theology or another human-created knowledge is not the only and right answer or truth for questions of mankind. All answers given by human beings are just partial truth of the whole truth which is only revealed by Jesus Christ him/herself. My ultimate question for myself would not be to eliminate all forms of power dynamics which reside in the human interactions but how to reconcile with God who gives hope, strengths and wisdom first then navigating the Christian journey with everyone with tears and joy.

CHAPTER 4

PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

This section introduces and provides profiles of the study participants. The profiles include demographic information and a sketch of their faith journey. Since this study focused on Asian/Asian North American women theological educators (called AANAWTE hereafter) and how race and gender affects their learning and teaching experiences, the demographic information provided highlights the context of the institutions where AANAWTE encountered research-related concerns rather than the background of their current teaching institution. The participants are presented in alphabetical order. For the purpose of confidentiality, all participants were referred to by pseudonyms created by the researcher: Allison, Belinda, Cameron, Debbie, Emma, Fay, Gloria, and Harriet. Table 2 displays the demographics of these women theological educators and their teaching environments.

All these eight AANAWTEs carried a faith journey with them in spite of where they were born in Asia and were brought to the United States by their parents in their youth or when they were in toddlers. Moreover, faith journey were also meaningful to these women who were born and educated in the United States. By bringing up their faith journey, they described the religious backgrounds of their family that were diversely from Buddhism, Catholics and Christianity and how these upbringings influenced their own faith journey and the correlations between their journey and their current vocation as theological educators.

Allison

Allison, a Chinese-American, is middle-aged about 50 to 60 and has taught in the field of theological education for more than two decades. Describing her faith journey, Allison explained, “Even though I’m pretty sure I’ll be Catholic all my life...I was no longer ‘a Catholic’ according to the official sense.” She started her story by telling me that she was raised Roman Catholic and her mother was a very zealous Roman Catholic. Even so, she rebelled against it very much since she was little. Being a Catholic for her whole life until two-and-a-half years ago, she officially joined a Protestant denomination for the sake of intellectual and spiritual honesty. However, she cherished her Catholic charismatic experiences at that young age. Allison showed what those experiences meant to her and how they established her steady relationship with God. She responded confidently:

I think it was more a matter of growing up in the faith. I mean, I don’t regret, I don’t regret the charismatic renewal at all because it gave me a very deep personal relationship with God. But I think you grow up, that spontaneous, overwhelming experience of God, you know, is now just a steady relationship for the long haul.

When she talked about where she is in her religious journey as a Protestant and about teaching in her current seminary, she responded with acceptance:

This is where I do belong. So, that’s why I changed. I mean, it was to be intellectually honest but also because I really liked [my current] church even though in many ways...I mean, I still...subscribe to National Catholic Reporter, I still keep tabs on it, but every time I read it I’m so glad I’m not a Roman Catholic anymore.

Table 3 Research Participants' Demographic Information

Name	Age	Ethnicity	Familial Religious Background	Current Church Affiliation	Subject Area	Teaching Experience	Theologate Denomination
Allison	50's	Chinese American	Catholicism on maternal side	Episcopalian	Hebrew Bible	25 years	Episcopalian
Belinda	50's	Chinese Immigrant	Born and raised Buddhist and converted to Christianity	Baptist	Old Testament	11 years	Baptist
Cameron	60's	Chinese Immigrant	First generation Christian	UCC	Christian Education	40 years	Retired/UCC
Debbie	30's	Korean American	Third generation Christian in maternal side	United Methodist	Feminist Theology	7 years	Jesuit
Emma	40's	Japanese Immigrant	Converted to Christianity about the same time as her parents	Presbyterian	Church History	9 years	Presbyterian
Fay	50's	Japanese-Puerto Rican	Born in a Buddhist but raised in a Baptist family	Christian Church	Religion/Women's Studies	18 years	Retired/Christian Church
Gloria	40's	Korean Immigrant	First generation Christian	Presbyterian	Church History	9 years	Inter-denominational
Harriet	40's	Korean Immigrant	4 TH generation of Christian	Presbyterian	Feminist Theology	18 years	Inter-denominational

In the Catholic school where Allison taught for fourteen years before she began teaching in her current institution, she was the only non-white instructor in the white-dominated

environment. Allison's teaching environment was primarily white, primarily upper Midwest, and many of her students were of Scandinavian descent. She described her students as very wealthy and very upper-middle class. Her perception of the students was that they were "very privileged, very entitled and also very sheltered."

Belinda

Belinda who was born in Hong Kong was raised Buddhist. After she started going to Catholic school did she came to deeply believe that worshipping the true God somehow must be through Jesus. Asians who become first-generation Christians provoke a revolution in their family, particularly when the existing religion in the family culturally and theologically differs from Christianity. A typical Asian child, Belinda desired her parents' approval for her decision to be baptized. She was interested in Catechism for two years. Unsurprisingly, Belinda's mother, like most Buddhist parents, rejected Belinda's longing to become a Catholic. Later on, her grandmother made her and her brother join a Chinese Baptist church and take part in the choir. Although she hated this at first "because it was someone else controlling," she later loved being a part of that church and had what she called a "conversion experience." Since then she has remained a Protestant and a Baptist.

In the institution where Belinda teaches, which is located in the Southern United States, there is a comparatively high percentage of female students. They comprise 30% of the student population and almost all of these women are white. With respect to the makeup of the faculty, there are 15 full-time faculty, of whom two are women, and Belinda is the only racial minority.

Cameron

Cameron, an immigrant from China, declares she has been a feminist since she was six-years old. In her religious journey coming from a non-Christian family, she was first exposed

to Christianity by attending Baptist and Roman Catholic missionary schools. Before she went to high school, she did not have much of a problem with believing all the Jesus stories and creation stories. Nonetheless, Cameron took a pause in her faith journey and shared a rather different experience from Belinda's who was ready to be baptized in her early youth. Cameron professed,

I couldn't bring myself to join the Catholic Church at that time because I was very literalistic I guess, and I figured if I joined a church I would have to follow what they say, and there were some things I just couldn't follow in practice. So, I held off baptism until almost university age, and then I joined a [Chinese] congregational church.

Cameron has been teaching Religious Education in Canada for more than two decades. Unsurprisingly, she was the only racial-ethnic minority at the seminary where she first taught on the West Coast of Canada. She described her institution as a place where "they never tenured a woman even if the position was tenurable. But nobody had stayed long enough to get tenure."

Debbie

Unlike Belinda and Cameron, Debbie was born in a Christian family and was impressed by Christian hymns in the vacation Bible school which made a huge impact on her when she was eight years old, before she departed Korea and moved to the USA with her parents. As a young child at the retreat center where she spent every weekend for revival worship services for a whole year, she was deeply moved by the spiritual sensibility, in spite of it being "theologically so conservative almost probably fundamentalist." For most first-generation Korean American Christians who immigrated to the United States, church becomes the center of immigrant life.

Unlike most participants in this study who are primarily teaching seminarians from theological institutions, Debbie's major teaching responsibility has been as an adjunct faculty and she is now teaching at a Catholic university in the northeast. In her five-year-teaching career

which has taken place in the midst of a predominantly-white faculty and student body, she also has taught students preparing for ministry who were from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Speaking of her practice, she compared her experiences between teaching college students and teaching students preparing for ministry and said,

They [undergraduates] are not indoctrinated yet, but I notice a difference when I do first-year college students, they are so open, and then when you do seminary students, they are already so closed by then. You know, you have to like deprogram them, and that's even more work because half of the energy is spent on deprogramming or having them open up to even receive or being in conversation with you. Whereas I think undergraduate students are much more open and willing to risk because they actually, a lot of them, don't have a... I don't want to say 'defaith' but the students that I teach are non-practicing Christians so they tend to be much more open to receiving different kinds of theological perspectives.

Emma

Like the rest of the participants, Emma was educated in a religious (Catholic) high school in her homeland and knew something about the Bible or faith even though she could not understand it. Later on in her college years in Japan, she was introduced to Christianity by her family. She thought her parents were hypocrites when they first became Christians. She laughed shyly saying that behaviors don't change overnight.

As regards to the incident which brought her into the field of theological education, she recounted that it had only happened pretty recently. Her initial plan was to be a minister and a missionary, which she believed was where her calling lay. Nevertheless, she could not follow her heart as a result of her denominational background as a Southern Baptist. She graduated from a Southern Baptist seminary but could not serve as she wished; she disclosed her inconsolable

frustration with Southern Baptists and decided to stay away from them. In the end Emma joined the Presbyterians. She further described this episode in terms of her relationship with Southern Baptists in this way:

[A]bout the time I graduated they thought women shouldn't be ordained, and also I was a foreigner in their eyes, so even though I worked as a minister for ten years in that denomination, I was never fully convinced of that or recognized, and so I was burned out in ten years and I was thinking about doing something else. I would teach in that capacity, but then I wanted to know more about the Bible and the traditions and so I went back to school.

Emma's students are young students who grew up in the South. They have preconceptions about everything. Her seminary traditionally is a white seminary. The students are very sheltered.

Fay

Fay was raised in a Japanese Buddhist family until she was six years old, when she moved to the United States and was adopted by a white man who raised her as a Southern Baptist. Religiously, although she identified herself as a Protestant who went to Sunday schools and learned the Bible stories, she said, "They seemed like interesting stories to me but not anything related to me personally. And so I don't think I really thought too much about my own personal beliefs at all except that I knew the stories and I thought most of them were a little strange." She added interesting comments on her understanding of Jesus.

I thought Jesus was a very strange character and he seemed kind of rude, from an Asian perspective. He tells people off and calls them this and that and people seemed to think that was fine, that he was some kind of heroic figure. But I didn't think so...I thought he was a strange white man who was rude to people. People talked about him being God and

I thought, well, that's a strange God... There are pictures in church, him praying and his portrait. He's a white man with a long, sort of light-colored hair and blue eyes.

Growing up on a US military base which was integrated racially, Fay had friends from diverse ethnicities. Her best friend from high school, whose father was a Baptist minister, influenced her a lot in her Christian beliefs. Fay went to this minister's church as a social activity in her youth. Although the minister was fundamentalist, she enjoyed the debates about evolution and abortion in the church. She had a great time in that church and those experiences undergird her strong faith in Christianity. She highlighted how this minister molded her faith until now.

I made a profession of faith when I was sixteen, and I was baptized by this minister which I am really grateful for because if I had wanted anyone to baptize me, it would have been him. And he believed once saved, always saved. It was like once I was baptized, I could do nothing to lose my salvation, no matter what I doubted or where I went, I was saved. And that's a big debate in Baptist circles, whether you can lose your salvation, and he was adamant, once saved, always saved. So, at some level, it was like a kind of sense of confidence, that I could doubt, I could think, I could do things and it didn't matter that somehow there was God. And as long as it wasn't doubting for evil, like hurting other people, just my own journey.

"About my sixteenth year [of teaching], I realized 'I don't have the passion for this anymore and I'm really tired of it and I don't want to do it anymore' and so I quit. I haven't taught in seven years," said Fay. She was an experienced teacher who once taught in religion departments and women's studies departments. Her primary incident relating to race and gender in the classroom was her first full-time teaching job at a black college located in Texas.

Gloria

Talking about her faith journey and how she became a Christian, Gloria recalled going to a retreat meeting for Sunday school teachers when she was in her sophomore year. She said,

It's kind of a short revival meeting, and the priests came and asked us to repent of our sins, and I was really offended by that the whole time, the whole day. And at the end of the day, throughout the whole day he kept telling us we were sinners, we have to repent our sins, and I was very [upset] about the notion that he was calling us sinners. I thought that he more sinned against God than I sinned against God because I was just second-year college kid and I tried to do everything right in the eyes of my parents and eyes of everybody around me. So, I thought I was a very conscious person.

However, she was moved by a song played in the retreat meeting called "Jesus loves me" and realized she was indeed a sinner and decided to become Christian at the meeting.

Gloria also impressed me with her perception of women pastors in the Korean immigrant church whom she thinks are patronized by male pastors in the church. Women pastors who are working for male pastors are not the role models she is looking for. In terms of her current teaching institution, she is the only female Asian-American full-time faculty teaching in a seminary situated a metropolitan area.

Harriet

Harriet was born and raised in a Christian family. Her mother's family had been Christians for three generations. Her father, a loyal believer in Confucianism, converted to Christianity as a condition of marriage. Although Christian theology conflicts with Confucianism on issues such as ancestor worship, her father's conversion did not lessen her mother's duty as a wife who was married to the first-born son.

The good thing about teaching seminary, Harriet told me, is that they let her do what she wants to do. They never censor her classes. In her class she can teach anything she wants to teach which is very good, although she still feels the criteria of what is academic in her seminary is very much a Western, white men's model.

How the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity, age, and physical appearance of Asian/Asian North American women played out as learners and teachers is introduced in the following section. Additionally, the socio-cultural context that impacts these women's learning and teaching is presented as well.

Triggers that Led to Studying Theological Education

In spite of their religious backgrounds, all participants recounted various incidents that led to their decisions to attend theological schools. On one hand, some of these events occurred in their religious lives, growing out of frustration or discontent with their commitment or ministry in religious communities. On the other hand, some of these events occurred in their personal lives, growing out of a desire to reconnect with their ethnic community and a longing for deeper understanding of theology. It is noted that one's personal, professional, religious and religious life is not lineated or could be segmentized rather, all aspects of one's life are inseparable. However, in order to identify the barriers and issues that faced by Asian/Asian North American women theological educator, discussions around their religious (faith) life and academic (professional) life are interrogated in binary approach.

Allison's recollection of why she made her mind up to pursue further study in theological education was when she served as the leader of prayer meetings in her undergraduate years. In this instance, she experienced sexism during one of the prayer meetings. A man stood up and told her that she couldn't be there. As a 21-year-old student who had never read the Bible before, she

could not comprehend the Bible's command that women should not be leading meetings in churches as the man insisted. This was the beginning of Allison's discontent with Catholic theology regarding women's role in the ministry. As a work-study student in the Dean's office, she brought out the question of "whether it is really true that women can't speak in assemblies" and took it to a faculty member who came into the office. However, he did not respond to her inquiry. Instead, he encouraged her to go for a Master of Theology with free tuition. In the meantime, she was more upset with the Catholic Church. Further along in her narrative, she revealed the most important factor which brought her to advanced theological studies:

I was getting very upset...I was in a covenant community, Catholic charismatic, but I was getting very upset with the rigidity. First of all, they felt it was "the Lord's will"; they used that language to manipulate, okay? It was the Lord's will that I shouldn't be doing my masters because it was taking me away from work in the community. So, they felt it was the Lord's will I shouldn't do a Masters of Theology. You know, it's that manipulation, you know, "I think the Lord says..." and what it really means is that you want for me to do something [chuckles].

Mistreatment of women among Korean and Korean-American Christian churches also caused some participants to end up searching for answers of faith by going to theological schools. Debbie told a shocking story about her mother who was physically abused by her violent father and sought for help from their pastor. She described how the pastor responded to her mother's vulnerability. The pastor replied, "If only you were a better wife maybe he would not be violent to you." Strangely enough, Debbie regarded her father as a religious man. She narrated her ambivalent sentiments toward this man who was a "Christian" but was extremely patriarchal and sexist but at the same time was politically liberal. Debbie related it this way.

I grew up in a home that was very violent, and at the same time they were very religious—my father was very religious. I remember beginning to think and wonder why is it that if God is love and God is so good that these good people could do such bad things. And that's what led me to seminary.

Furthermore, she was dreadfully, tied emotionally to her father which she described as “a love-and hate-relationship.” In effect, her father wanted her to go to seminary because everybody in his family had become a pastor except him. She gave more details in terms of this love-hate relationship.

I think he always regretted it, and so I was the oldest and he wanted one of us to go to seminary and in that case, gender didn't matter to him. Even though he used to tell me that I should be obedient, he also said, “You can be an ordained pastor.” So, I went to seminary, actually against my will because he harassed me so much that I went and I was going to drop out after one year.

After the initial stage when Debbie was young as an immigrant kid, her family went through a lot of economic hardship. Meanwhile, she began to develop a very difficult relationship with the church because the pastor lived so well. She summed up,

They drove nice cars and when we were in the church, there was an issue of class, there were a lot of professional Korean immigrants, there were the blue collar working immigrants or people with economic hardships. And there was a lot of classism.

Gloria described the patriarchal environment which surrounded her in the church. She said that what women were doing at the Korean-American church does not represent what she desired but repelled her. To do something meaningful is better than to be a woman pastor in a Korean-American church, she said. She believes that women pastors who are working for male Korean pastors are not looked up to by other

women. In her eyes, women are relegated to doing chores such as preparing food or shopping for men's meetings in the church. In order to transform the church, she wanted to go to theological school.

I interpreted the passage that it is equal partnership rather than woman is below the man.

And also in Korean society, you know, even today, the woman is more like a second-class citizen, and I don't like that role, that we are always subservient to the man. So, I wanted to find out. That was the only reason [she wanted to go to seminary]. Maybe if I found that I liked it, maybe I could work with the Korean community to make some little transformation for my part. So, that was my idea.

Chapter Summary

In sum, several participants were intrigued by studying theology after encountering injustice in regard to their religious life. For example, Allison was challenged about her legitimacy as a prayer meeting leader by a male believer on college campus when she was a senior student. Belinda did not recognize her interest in theological education until her graduate school: As the only Asian on her campus, she became the Bible study leader for a Chinese school as a way to quench her hunger for longing to reconnect with things Chinese. Long discontented with the patriarchal context of Korean and Korean-American churches, Gloria and Harriet looked for a solution in theology. Unhappy with the church and the daughter of a violently abusive father, Debbie turned to theology to find answers and solutions to her questions of faith. Likewise, Emma turned away from her previous denomination which disqualified her from being an ordained minister to become a Presbyterian where she could serve as a minister.

CHAPTER 5

POWER DYNAMICS AND STRATEGIES TO NEGOTIATE

The purpose of this study was to understand how Asian and Asian North American women theological educators negotiate issues of power with regard to race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education. Two research questions guided this study: 1) What are the power dynamics within Asian/Asian American women theological educators' learning and teaching environment? 2) What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning in which patriarchal ideologies dominate?

There are a total of 3607 full-time faculty members from all theological schools in North America. Only 4.1 % of them are Asian and Asian North American faculty, of these only 31 are females (Meinzer & Merrill, 2004). Most Asian North American female educators are teaching in primarily Euro-Anglo/White classrooms. As minority faculty, Asian/Asian North American female educators encounter myriad challenges in their field. Ways of knowing implicate ways of teaching. To delve into what obstacles they are dealing with, we need to understand the construction of their positionality as Asian/Asian North American women educators. Takacs (2002) reinforced this premise that one's positionality biases one's epistemology. We then need to ask questions such as who the Asian/Asian North American woman is and where she stands in relation to others shaping what she knows about the world. To this extent, the deeper concern is, as an Asian American woman who is engaged or teaching theology, how does her epistemology mold her teaching practice?

As Johnson-Bailey and Cervero suggested (1998, 2001), adult education must be considered and be handled as they occur in the real world because the power relationships that structure our social lives cannot possibly disappear in the classroom. Thus, Asian American woman theological educators must recognize their positionality in relation to their learners. Maher and Tetreault (2001) accentuated “the idea of positionality, in which people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed” (p. 164). Understanding positionality means understanding where you stand with respect to power, an essential skill for any social change agent (Takacs, 2002). In the meantime, how they construct their theology with their idiosyncratic positionality influences how they perceive and are perceived by learners; this becomes an imperative endeavor. Furthermore, Maher and Tetreault (2001) informed us that merely acknowledging that one’s knowledge claims are not universal truths is not enough; one’s positionality can bias one’s epistemology. An epistemology of positionality proposes the undertaking of not only debunking the dominance entrenched in society but also of dislocating the naiveté of social locations of dominance.

Consequently, the inquiry and venture carry a notion about the construction of theological knowledge by a theological educator. What scholar in theological education do they bring into the classroom for what learners and who is left out in this scholarship? All these issues above could be encompassed within the interrelated themes on Mastery, Voice, Authority, and Positionality that have been researched in the learning and teaching process (Brown et al., 2000; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998; Maher & Tetreault, 2001; Mojab, 1997). Furthermore, Maher and Tetreault (2001) point out that teachers engage with feminist theory in an attempt to deepen their understanding of the gender power structures and dynamics within the classroom and

overall institution. Therefore, the following sections are findings organized through these themes in responding to the research question. Table 4 is the data display that answers the first research question, What are the power dynamics within Asian/Asian North American women theological educators' learning and teaching environment? In each four themes, findings discuss the power dynamics in AANAWTE's learning and teaching are described by their experiences as seminary students, as teachers teaching, and as faculty members working at the theological institutions.

Table 4 Data display for research question one

Themes	Categories
Mastery	Downgraded academic performance as students
	Resisted, challenged and dishonored as teachers
Voice	Nonexistence of role models
	Invisibility to students and colleagues
Authority	Authority was usurped, undermined, and questioned
	Authority was weakened due to their race, gender, and age
	Secured and reinforced authority
Positionality	Being stereotyped
	Androcentrism and white privilege
	Tokenism

Mastery

Mastery in the classrooms meant the mastery of students and teachers over a body of knowledge, through the creation of knowledge. Instead of banking transfers of information from teacher to student, knowledge is constructed in collaborative, not hierarchical ways. Teachers

struggle with the relationship between the identities of their students, what they need and want to master and know, and who they can become as a result. Furthermore, mastery is not about being in control of the topic but about understanding the interactive connections to the material rather than finding the right answer. According to Maher and Tetreault (2001), mastery is thus redefined within feminist pedagogy to refer to the individual interpretation of material developed through interaction with another individual or text. Therefore, mastery is not only redefined as the construction of knowledge by both students and teachers but also by colleagues whom teachers work with at the institutions.

Moreover, mastery in the educational setting refers to comprehension of the material covered in the course and accumulation of individual or collaborative knowledge. According to a report (Brock et al., 1999) on a team project conducted by Asian and Asian North American/Canadian women faculty who are from both theological schools and departments of religion and sociology in universities in the United States and Canada, Asian and Asian North American women theologians point to the contextual, historical, and political nature of knowledge, and urge theological educators to embrace a plurality of knowledge and diverse cultural styles of knowing (Brock et al., 1999). Teaching in the field of theological education where the scholarship has been focused on the study of the lives and thoughts of white, male, Euro-American theologians, the classroom that is constructed by trained Asian and Asian North American women educators in North America is under the precarious assertions of universality and neutrality. Therefore, the transformation of the construction of theological knowledge is one of the salient characteristics of Asian and Asian North American women educators in North America. bell hooks (1994) emphasizes, “The call for a recognition of cultural diversity, a rethinking of ways knowing, a deconstruction of old epistemologies, and the concomitant

demand that there be a transformation in our classroom, in how we teach and what we teach, has been a necessary revolution” (pp. 29-30).

As Asian and Asian North American women educators in North America, they bring in their theologies, which reflect who they are and who they are becoming, to their classrooms. They need to be aware of what Poststructuralism has pinpointed as the connections between the individual and the intersecting structural systems of privilege and oppression that affect how participants construct knowledge, discuss their own experience, and interact in the classroom. An educator in a course that helps Christians to deepen their theological knowledge should recognize that all learners are theology makers. Through dialogue, we are led into doubts about the certainty of the “correctness” of our own position, as we come to learn that our views may be constrained by the narrow range of experiences we have had (Takacs, 2002).

Asian/Asian North American woman educators bring new and different theological perspectives, life experiences, curriculum, research interests, and ways of being, thinking, and doing to institutions. The educators critique society and the students’ Euro-Anglo absolute “Truth” concepts in order to stir up critical interrogation in the process of construction of knowledge. The following issue of voice is interconnected with this instance. Findings in this study showed that power relationships between students and teachers and teachers and colleagues evolved around the issue of mastery.

Downgraded Academic Performance as Students

In their learning at theological institutions, some participants encountered many forms of discrimination under the predominantly white and male educational environment. The power dynamics that they experienced in the classroom were that their academic performance as seminary students was downgraded and questioned by their teachers and peers.

Allison referred to a classroom experience while she was in her theological studies. It was unfair evaluation of her class performance by a white male professor. As she recalled the episode, she was not able to distinctly analyze or name the rationale why she was given a certain grade when she thought she would have gotten a better one until, at our conversation, she revealed,

I mostly had a very good time in my graduate [work]...I don't even remember undergrad but in graduate school, I was a very attentive student and I worked very hard. I do remember one class which was all male filled with Jesuits and I did very well in that class. I beat them out. I do remember that...my master's thesis director, first of all, never encouraged me to go on from graduate school and told my doctoral thesis director that he thought I'd never make it in the doctoral program. And I don't know why, I mean...I'm wondering if it was because of gender. So, I don't know. I just heard that second-hand from my doctoral dissertation professor. Because we usually did have a good...I mean, I got all A's from my thesis director in the master's, and I was wondering why he didn't think I would make it in a doctoral program.

Intertwined with other complicated discriminations, Allison is now able to view this historical incident as an example of "clericalism" on the top of sexism and racism. In this case, despite the fact that she thought she deserved a better grade than she got for the class, she did not fight for the result.

Belinda had good experiences in her learning journey by and large. However, she illustrated one example in which her opinions were blatantly degraded by her professor in the classroom. She said, "I've also experienced where professors tell me that what I said was incorrect because they were reading it from a white American perspective and I was thinking more from a world perspective." She further explained this story in detail,

For example, a question was asked as to what do we think, each person, the minimum education that every person should have, and I thought in the sense of world, I think some people would be lucky if they get sixth grade, elementary school education. And so I said, “I think everybody should have at least a sixth grade education” and he actually told me that’s wrong, basically in those words. Sometimes it still sticks in my mind. But he said, “That’s wrong.” Basically in those words. Somehow that was still stick in my mind, that’s been so many years. And he said “that’s wrong.” Everybody should have at least twelve grade, all the way through high school as a minimum education” and I thought, that’s not possible for a lot of people around the world but I didn’t say anything because I’ve always been drilled that whatever the teacher says is right (laughs). But that really stuck in my head.

Furthermore, the power dynamic between her peers was noticeable in the classroom while the participants were studying in the seminary. Debbie remarked that she was discriminated against by her peer students when she met her husband and married him when both of them were still students. She highlighted the biased attitudes from the peers,

I think...the biggest thing initially was sexism, just even from your peer students. I think male students tend to think that they somehow had the right to be in a seminary. I think my struggle was always that somehow I didn’t belong there and I had to prove myself that I could think theologically. And when I met my husband through seminary and married, it became even worse because now I was his wife so other fellow students no longer saw me even as a student, as a female student. They saw me as wife to students. So, even now he is an ordained pastor and I consider myself a scholar but I’m still the wife first. My identity is through him and I have no real legitimacy. When people

introduce me in a church setting, they don't say, "Oh, this is professor [so and so]", they say, "Oh, this is the pastor's wife." And before I think I was gracious about that, it doesn't bother me, but it really bothers me more and more, yeah, it really bothers me more and more.

Resisted, Challenged and Dishonored as Teachers

After being equipped with theological education from seminaries, these women became theological educators who still cannot escape power dynamics in the micro-environment, such as teaching classrooms, as well as in the macro-environment, such as in their working with colleagues. These forms of power dynamic experienced by some participants are manifested in mastery by means of resistance, challenges, and being dishonored both in their classrooms as well as in the larger institutions.

Cameron who has been teaching Christian Education in Canada for more than three decades explained how she underwent multifaceted power issues in terms of her mastery as a teacher in the classroom,

In this required class [Christian Education], everybody has to take it, and half of them are not interested in Christian education. So, they were already resistant to begin with. So I can never figure out, now is he/she resistant because he didn't like the subject and it is marginalized in the academy, or is it because this teacher is also marginalized. I suspect it's both. So, you almost have to do twice as much to convince them that this [subject] is really important.

Debbie had some negative experiences interacting with her students who were mostly white, and she shared her frustration of how her mastery was distorted: "There are students who accuse me of being racist and a reverse sexist" She shared how she was told by white female students in

their evaluations that she was racist against white people and that she was a man-hater. Additionally, she also had issues with white young male students who “they tend to sort of question her intelligence.”

Voice

Voice refers to a student’s ability to speak and more importantly to their degree of comfort in speaking. Asian-born women educators’ credentials might be marked down because of their limited English skills. Asian and Pacific American female faculty in higher education have discovered that American society is by and large intolerant of English spoken with an Asian accent, but accepts, and even privileges, English spoken with a European accent (Hune, 1998).

It is easy to uncover the major themes and theory in historical work such as feminist pedagogy and critical race theory. Regrettably, the discussion has been primarily surrounding Black in the foreground and White as scapegoats in the teaching and learning process. What has always been absent from this discussion between Black and White, are Asian and Latin American immigrants who continue to diversify the United States population. (C. J. Kim, 1999). The question of what are the specific issues rather than “Black and White” based on the positionality of Asian women teachers or learners in theory or research remains unanswered.

Okihiro (1994) argued that, "Asians have been marginalized to the periphery of race relations in America because of it’s conceptualization as a black and white issue -- with Asians, Latinos and American Indians falling between the cracks of that divide. To many, Asians are either "just like blacks" or "almost whites." In spite of the fact that, once Asian and Asian North American women educators share their theologies with their students in a dominantly White learning environment, the discussion is still dominated by a White perspective. How Asian and Asian North American women educators listen to but not silence their own voices while at the

same time creating a non-hostile classroom climate is seen as an inevitable challenge. Their classroom is where much of the ideological power of whiteness is taken for granted. It necessitates that Asian and Asian North American women educators reveal the effects of unanalyzed whiteness in classrooms where white students are the overwhelming majority. To set aside the well-preserved web of assumptions of whiteness and leave them unexamined and unquestioned in classrooms will lead to the continuing duplication of white privilege not only in the theology but also in all other aspects of social positionings (Maher & Tetreault, 2001).

According to Maher and Tetreault (2001), in the space created by feminist/transformational pedagogy, both teachers and students construct or fashion their voices, they don't just find them. Moreover, through a recognition of different identities (along gender, class, race, ethnic, national and other lines), and perceptions of reality, their voices "intersect in the construction of new and multidimensional forms of knowledge" (p. 18). Moreover, voice is also 'fashioned' through dynamic interaction. In this way the authors improve upon existing notions of voice which do not address the influence of social interaction but rather imply that voice is "found" through the discovery or awakening of an essential self. Consequently, in this study, voice is about, recognizing and fostering the emergence of the students' and students' responses and the presence of multiple voices; it also recognizes the connection of one's education to one's personal experience and the existence of different identities.

Findings emerged from data concerning the theme of voice answer the research question: What are the power dynamics within AANAWTE's learning and teaching environment? Generally speaking, findings showed that how Asian/Asian North American women's voices have been ignored surrounding two themes about them experienced silence/d as the learners and the educators.

Nonexistence of Role Models

Absence of role model in relation to “voice” suggests that majority of my participants cannot find any academic assistance as students and professional support as teachers since Asian/Asian North American women are underrepresented in the field of theological educational. This scarcity of role models and mentors indicates the absence of their voice in the construction of theological knowledge. As a result, these women cannot find someone with similar background in the theological institutions where they learned and teach as Asian/Asian North Americans. For instance, Allison felt discouraged when she was preparing her application of theological schools for her Master of Theology degree,

One of the things I do regret is that I never had any mentors. I never had mentors. It is only by...I am sure...only my....I think God’s grace, one, but also the fact that I just ran into people that helped me, like the faculty member who told me to go and apply for a masters in theology when I had that run in with that guy and then at a prayer meeting. I didn’t know anything about [the school I eventually ended up going to] but this guy thought it was a nice place and so I applied there and they accepted me. And so there was no...I mean, if I had to do it over again, I would have gone to a place that really specialized in Bible and things like that but I mean, I had no idea so it was just more like serendipity or good luck or God’s grace. And so I do wish that I did have some mentoring because I did not.

Belinda also talked about her frustration to this lack of role model in her pursuit of theological education.

Yes, yes, [I was discouraged in my pursuit of theological education] mostly by males because I actually did not have female role models. All my professors were white males,

even the pastors that I have except for this Chinese pastor, they were all white male. And I was at a very conservative church which would not even allow women to be in pulpit to do anything.

Debbie described how the lack of a role model influenced the interaction between her Asian/Asian American students and herself in when she co-taught with a Jewish white women. She began to portray this interaction with intra-racial students, however, with a slightly disappointed tone. She talked about her previous learning experience in which it was rare to see an Asian/Asian American teacher since they are in the minority for her. “When I was going through academia I didn’t have one Asian American mentor or role model for that matter. And that’s why I’m always so delighted when I have Asian American female college students in my class.” She expected that her Asian students would be pleased to see her teaching them. In contrast, her Asian students feel very uncomfortable with her presence, which was a strange dynamic she thought. She continued her conversation about how the voice of Asian/Asian North American women is omitted by self-isolation. “I think that they are not encouraged (to be an Asian/Asian American theological educators) first of all...[Besides], the lack of role models results in our [Asian/Asian American women theological educators] always isolating ourselves so that some of them just give it up.”

Invisibility to Students and Colleagues

As AANAWTEs teaching in the institution, their professional work often was misconstrued by their colleagues. Some participants described that their efforts in contributing diverse perspectives in teaching and learning is not being appreciated by the colleagues and students. Furthermore, their voices are being ignored when team-worked with colleagues.

Cameron told a story about team-teaching a class with a white woman on popular education

methodology. They deliberately arranged this co-teaching method in order to prove to the students that it was a class embracing cross-cultural points of view. However, power issues appeared in the collaboration between this white female colleague and Cameron. Cameron recalled,

And I noticed that both in the preparation when we did the assigning of the course and so on, she was very dominant. She would bring her ideas and until I said, “Look, you bring these categories because that’s all you know, but there are other categories, you know?”

Cameron articulated that she spent a long time in learning how to be strong enough to express her real feelings toward this domineering white female colleague. She referred to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator that both of them were strong “J”s which suggested they tended to go to details. It took them a few years of team-teaching to learn to share the power, and it generated a lot of reflections. In concluding this episode, Cameron was aware of how both power dynamics and different epistemologies playing out in her interaction with this white female colleague. She feels that her actions enlightened her colleague,

She is very genuinely open and committed to equality. And so, she said, “I’m really glad you spoke to me that way because I just didn’t realize that I was claiming all this time.”

Because she is a white woman, she is used to being listened to, and so she just figured she would just charge in and take charge of this. And I said, “Well, if we are team teaching this course, don’t you think we should both bring what we can offer, and also I do have some different ways of looking at this, for example, the rest of the world doesn’t always look at everything in oppositional ways. But you are sort of assuming that this is the only way to go.

Harriet expressed her frustration as a Korean scholar trying to bring her Asian approach in the field of theology,

I feel I don't get appreciated by other faculty. They didn't say that but...I have a sense that they consider me not really academic enough. Real top, top raised scholar and so I'm some superficial thing with artists and singers and dancers Gloria and Alice Walker.

Some people think that way and it is hard for me sometimes.

Voice also refers to whether the AANAWTE's and their student's voices are being heard or unheard by each other which is bound by the constraints within institutional structure. One participant revealed that her students' voices are suffocated by the culture of the institutions and brings about imbalanced power dynamics between them. Emma teaches at an institution in the South of the United States. Due to the culture of the South, she described her students as "very polite and don't really say it [disagreement] out loud."

I can see faces falling down, like today...today's lecture was about nineteenth century colonial expansion and the missionary movement together, and so well intentioned missionaries had to go with the colonial power and so they were able to accomplish some good things but at the same time, destroy, and I know that some people are very uncomfortable...If they reject the idea, they wouldn't show it... [In fact, there was] not real strong resistance, they are polite and quiet. They don't like conflicts. Presbyterians also like to feel guilty (laughs) so they kind of enjoy that, a moment of shame (laughs)

Authority

These teachers deliberately dismantled the authority of the teacher, or the extra-bright student, with regard to knowledge transmission. Students are made responsible for their own learning, something that they do not necessarily enjoy, at least not at first. This does not mean

that teachers lack authority, but it is derived from the pattern of interaction with the students, as well as what they bring to the classroom such as from their work as community activists.

Therefore, the authority is no longer limited to the status or the possession of exclusive knowledge passed on in the classroom, but is constructed around a personality and the way the teacher gives up some of her/his authority to enable others to become responsible for their own learning.

Authority refers to the scrutiny of the conventional view of the teacher as the power or authoritative figure and the students as the dominated or the inferior. The facets of mastery and authority are intertwined and concurrent for an Asian/Asian North American woman educator in a class that is predominantly non-Asian/Asian North American. Teaching theology is a heavily populated male field; it is not routine to have an Asian or Asian American woman in charge. This may cause them to be questioned about their authority by students, especially by white male students. The following is a student comment encountered by a third-generation Japanese American woman teaching an advance managerial cost accounting course:

Pretty boring but what do you expect from a fat dumb little nip. She should go back to Japan and let some interesting, deserving American teach. While my fathers were building this country her fathers were trying to destroy it. What right does she have taking my money? (Hune, 1998, p. 24)

Another issue that has been raised relating to authority is the corporal manifestation. Concepts of ability and authority are culturally based and socially constructed. Many APA female faculty, staff, and administrators illuminate that they are treated differently because of the way they look. Their youthful appearance and small figure insinuate they are “child-like” and not to be perceived seriously. But even tall and experienced APA women describe being seen as less intelligent, less qualified, or simply ignored (Hune, 1998).

Furthermore, “the personal integrity and quality of life of the teacher is paramount. This is something the teacher attains after much striving, not something born with” (Brock, 1996). In this sense, part of the authority of the teacher is what has been described as "achieved authority" in addition to "ascribed authority"-- that which is given because of the teacher's rank (professor). Social status, age or sex are major considerations in Asian cultures. One can easily see the problem when the teacher is either of the same age, or younger, than the students (a not infrequent occurrence in theological schools these days), and female -- when many Asian theological students are male. Therefore, the issue of authority in this study is added to address the power dynamics between the teachers and their colleagues as they were both the co-constructors of the theological knowledge. The following narratives are analyzed around what the power dynamics within AANAWTE’s learning and teaching environment are while their achieved and ascribed authority were challenged at the theological institutions.

Authority was Usurped, Undermined, and Questioned

One similar dynamic happened to Cameron and another white female colleague. She said that her white woman colleague’s authority wasn’t questioned in the same class even though Cameron was using the same methodology for the same class. Surprisingly, students just did whatever this white female colleague said. This phenomenon gave Cameron the insight that the social power of the teacher in the classroom is uneven if the teacher isn’t in the majority. However Fay felt that her power issues occurred more often with other teachers,

My authority is questioned a lot more. So, let’s say my white woman colleague, she was doing the same thing in our intro class in ministry, nobody questioned her. They would just do whatever she said. But for my classes and the way I learned about this is when I was doing my first review, there were evaluations by students and so the chair said,

“Okay some people are saying this.” I said, that was interesting because in the intro class, we were doing the same thing. How did those things work and when they compare, exactly the methodology but not the same evaluation. So that also gave me a clue as to how the social power that you bring into the classroom is very uneven if you are not in the majority.

With regard to how their authority was questioned due to her identities as Asian/Asian North American women, Debbie remarked that she has been grappling with the whole notion of sexuality and ethnicity in the classroom. She emphasized that men see Asian women in a very non-threatening way: “They don’t really see you as aggressive so they are not aggressive to you. Most of them treat you in a nice way but at the same time what they tend to do is that they undermine your authority.”

In the teaching setting, Debbie attempted to conceal her feminine appearance by dressing conservatively when she was in a classroom. Therefore she hoped to divert attention away from her femininity as a woman, which might be a distraction from her professional authority. Even though “it sounds really bad” and “is so detrimental long run,” she claimed, she felt obliged to do this in a predominantly white educational environment. She justified her action as follows,

Like someone said white male students or white male professors see you as this little girl and sometimes even without my awareness, I become this little girl in the context.

Because in the family setting, you always played those roles. So, it is very easy to slip into that role.

In teaching practice, by and large, teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching through various sources including their own retrospection and interrogation. Cameron, whose background is in Education, certainly paid more attention to her teaching assessment. She tried

very hard to be fair. “So I’d say, ‘Is it this person’s learning style one that doesn’t fit with mine?’ And at first, I very naively thought, well, maybe it’s their learning style. So I should try to accommodate them.” After a while, as the students’ defiance grew regardless of Cameron’s remedy of being as inclusive as she could in her teaching, she became more perplexed. Their resistance concerned her. Eventually, she attributed her students’ resistance to her race rather than her teaching style or method. Surely she believed that her ascribed authority was pared down.

A lot of students resist and I never could figure out, I mean, I couldn’t actually figure it out properly. Maybe you really can’t do it very distinctly how much of it was because they simply resist the methodology because they are so used to just getting the teacher to tell them what to do or whether it is also partly because in the classroom, even though I had ascribed authority as a faculty person—a professor—my social power was very low in that classroom.

Authority was Weakened Due to their Race, Gender, and Age

Harriet underlined a frustrating incident in relation to the power dynamic with an intra-racial student in respect to an issue of authority. The whole notion of her authority was a problem for her female Korean students. She emphasized, “Ironically, the worst nightmare of guiding students was with a student of the same race—not with the white students or black students but with an Asian Korean woman student.” She explicated that “we assume too much of sisterhood, you know, in Asian culture.” Coming from the same cultural background, this student expected a certain interaction such as favorable treatment by Harriet. In Asian culture, favoritism implies that if you have the same family background or same school background, you give them a favor. However, Harriet believed that such favoritism would not be appropriate in America: “I couldn’t do that, this is not a Korean institution, I have to treat her as other American students

and with her Korean sensibility she could not accept that.” This student was unable to regard Harriet as an authority figure although she was her advisor. “I don’t have to be authoritarian, but if I am grading her paper, and if she didn’t do the work to the level of expectation, she has to do it again. And so she couldn’t tolerate it so she went to the dean and said I’m so abusive. She used the institution for protection.” Harriet responded with an assertive tone that she did not do anything abusive to this Korean student. The only problem with this student was that she had inappropriate expectations of Harriet. Having a “Korean mentor guiding a Korean woman student of the same age creates a lot of problems.” Harriet did not experience these problems with white women students. Except for this Korean female student, the rest of the students reacted in “a positive and respectful” way.

Power issues between students and teachers and among colleagues were prevalent in the data. Some of these issues concern whether the power of the teacher, as an Asian/Asian North American woman theological educator, is less than, equal to, or greater than the students. However, the power issue between colleagues seems to suggest that colleagues outrank the Asian/Asian North American women theological educators at the institutions. The story begins with Allison. As regards to authority issues in teaching, she pointed out the inevitable need to establish her authority as an Asian American woman in the classroom at the conservative Catholic institution where she previously taught undergraduates for 14 years. She described,

First of all, I had two things going against me there, being a racial ethnic minority and a woman. And so one of the things I had to do is...in both cases, is to exert your authority. I mean, you had to be, in a sense, hierarchical because otherwise, if you did it more as a collaborative thing, I think students would start usurping your authority, because they didn’t respect you.

At the institution where she is teaching now, although she gave more credit to this current seminary in respect to dealing with controversial issues such as race and gender, she also clashed with one white female who questioned her authority in a colloquium of doctoral students. She recalled,

[There was] a woman who would not accept my authority, but she would always go to the white male to confirm that I was telling the truth. I mean, she wanted to do a thesis of just handing in her poetry. No one else, [would do that] you know...a thesis of somebody's poems is not a thesis. And so I was trying to tell her that you have to have an analysis in this. She wouldn't take no for an answer. She kept saying that she would apply to the program because she was assured that she could hand in her poetry for her dissertation which is bullshit. So...it was a hard semester for me because she would do everything to disrupt my class. (Silent) She would do everything to go over my authority.

Belinda was told by her ethnic minority colleagues that the seminary where she was about to teach was located in the Bible belt, and "it was a plantation in the South," too. Whether this remark played a role as she started her first teaching experience as a Californian, she revealed that the dynamics between her students and her was a mutually uncomfortable encounter in the classroom. She said,

And so I had to find my way and the students have to find their way with me because I think I was probably the first exposure to a non-white teaching them. So, some of them feel very free to challenge me and I felt quite intimidated. It took me two or three years to really feel comfortable with who I am and what I do. So, I would say that it was uncomfortable at the beginning.

She went on with the conversation to how her male students questioned her authority: “I think the males automatically get more respect just because they are males. Whatever they say, is often less challenged than what I would say.” She also told me about another disturbing experience that had happened recently. One white male student commented on her Chinese-accented English. Her English, if not as perfect as native speaker’s, is well and easily understood even by a non-native English speaker like me.

Cameron’s acute analysis on her race and gender speaks for many Asian/Asian North American women theological educators. “Because I was not white, my original language was not English, I wasn’t born in North America, all those power pedals I didn’t have all of them” she said. As a result, her students doubted her authority. “Most of the students try to be... ‘We’re above all that, we’re not racist.’ Nobody every mentioned the word racist.” As an Asian woman teaching a required course in Christian education (a course she thought had been marginalized as well as she) and being compared to someone whose expertise is theology, Cameron sadly believed that there she faced multiple dynamics in the classroom. “I can’t ever figure out, now is he/she resistant because he didn’t like the subject and it is marginalized in the academy, or is it because this teacher is also marginalized. I suspect it’s both”, she surmised.

Emma also described a situation in which her authority was questioned in her teaching. Teaching a required course of Church History, she usually has about 50-60 first-year seminarians. Last year, there was a group of young and bright students who always sat in the back of the classroom. During the class, this group would talk among themselves and sometimes pass magazines or play games on the laptop. “I did not criticize them in the beginning but asked them to switch seats sometimes so they could have different perspectives,” explained Emma. The situation was to deteriorate even further,

One day I had a guest speaker and this person said that she had a cold. But the microphone didn't arrive in time...and so I asked the students to all move up closer, but they would not even though other students encouraged them by saying, "You need to come down." I felt that it was a challenge to my authority in front of a guest. This same group of students acted inappropriately when they were being taped for a promotional video about the seminary. It seems to be a perpetual problem. It's amazing that future ministers acted that way, and I guess the next time I went back I said, "I'm asking you to please move up" and then they said such things as "Well, you can't make us move." I shouldn't have said, "I can ask you to come down because I am a mother." ...I should have said "As your teacher, I am asking you to come closer."

Emma expressed that she should have said "I am your teacher" instead of "I am a mother" even though she was speaking in a joking tone with the group of students. These "back row" students, whom she candidly characterized as "young women who are having difficulties with their mothers -- white women" threatened her authority in her classroom.

Gloria gave a picture of another instance of being questioned on her authority. This happened on the first day of her class in which one of the white female students was ceaselessly demanding the questions for the examination and for class assignments. She replied to her that it would be unfair if she only gave them to her first. Faced with the attitude of "come-on, just give it to me," Gloria determined to distribute the questions later but this decision did not satisfy the student. The student nagged saying that "you told me you would give it to me." This student's behavior also interrupted the class and her classmates were impatient with her, too. Accordingly, Gloria regarded this occurrence as an example of racism. She explained,

And I think she kind of challenged me from a white woman's perspective, you know, you are Asian woman and you look young, you look like this is your first teaching job.... She was like, "Oh, let me just press her to get what I want to get. Ask her a favor whether she is gonna give it to me or not." And she got mad at me about that.

Overall, the data prevailingly showed that there were power dynamics between student and teacher where the teacher was challenged. Nonetheless, there were a few affirmative and comforting stories from the participants as well. For example, as a young Korean-American woman teaching in the primarily African-American seminary, Gloria felt that her students were fascinated to have her teaching them. She believed that her possessing the Asian and American bi-cultural perspectives provided the students a more diverse way of viewing the world.

Secured and Reinforced Authority

In contrast to the erosion of ascribed and achieved authority in relation to the power dynamics between these AANAWTEs and their students and colleagues, a few participants described how they utilized their authority to reinforce their power in their classroom. They considered that the power of grading student's papers secured their authority and influenced their interaction with students.

Fay offered a rather positive example in terms of reinforcing her authority as a teacher in a Black college in the South of the United States.

I knew my own authority in the classroom, and I wasn't afraid of the white male students. I had very big black guys in my face yelling at me sometimes, and it didn't scare me and they knew it didn't scare me. And so I hear about women of color, their authority being challenged in the classroom, that didn't happen to me.

It seems that the legitimate power of grading bestows on all participants undeniable authority in the classroom. This power of the teacher in some way dominates the voice of students who care for grades more than anything. As I asked one of my participants whether there were more negative examples in respect to interaction between her students and her, Gloria said, “I’m sure that they have something they wanted to say but they don’t come to me and challenge my authority. They just sit down there quietly. Because, after all, I’m the one who graded their paper, so they would not do that.” She believed that her students know exactly who holds the power. With confidence, Gloria announced, “I understand exactly what’s the power dynamics here.” In the story about Emma and her “back row” students, Emma revealed that young and smart students did not surrender to her authority because these students understood they could make good grades. Nonetheless, Emma was concerned with this kind of power.

The negative side is...their fellowship money is tied to the grades so they are so anxious and worried about their performances, and so I don’t know...some students think that if they are nice to me (laughs) on a personal level, and since I am Japanese, an Asian woman, maybe I’m, I will reciprocate in that way and give them good grades.

Positionality

According to Maher and Tetreault (2001), the positionality of different students and the teacher have the greatest influence on the construction of knowledge – “positional factors reflect relationships of power both within and outside the classroom itself” (p. 22). As teachers, this means opening up to the possibility of oppositional discourse among students, and vis-à-vis the teacher and learning how to facilitate dialogue in the context of conflict and tension. The position of the ‘knower’ is critical to validate the credibility of knowledge and to recognize that our own position is crucial in our quest to interpret other peoples’ realities. Consequently, the following discussions unfold the interconnection of

race, gender and ethnicity while AANAW were seminarians and faculty members and what are the power dynamics in their learning and teaching with regard to the issue of positionality.

The characteristic of positionality and shifting identities that emerge for Asian/Asian North American women educators cannot be ignored. As Poststructuralists highlight the notion of “constantly shifting identity,” (St. Pierre, 2003) they propose that as women examine the impact of social systems of privilege and oppression on their own identity, including their beliefs and values, the “discourse” is disrupted, thus shifting their identity as well as increasing their capacity for agency.

Furthermore, the literature pointed out that the positionality issue that surfaced in the practice of Asian/Asian North American women educators is gender. Poststructuralists suggest that rather than being a fixed characteristic in a person, gender should be seen as a fluid variable which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times. Butler (1999) emphasized and expressed that certain cultural configurations of gender have seized a hegemonic hold. In other words, they have come to seem natural in our present culture. She calls for subversive action in the present through “gender trouble” which involves the mobilization, subversive confusion, and proliferation of genders and therefore of identity.

Alcoff (1997) moves beyond cultural and post-structural feminisms. She looks at alternative-positionality. First, a woman’s position is not static but a constantly shifting context involving economic condition, political struggles, cultural institution, ideological movements, and other people. Second, a woman’s position offers women reasons for collaboration. If a woman looks to her left and right, she will see close to herself other women who share, in their own way, her oppressed economic, political, cultural, and ideological position.

Being Stereotyped

First of all, one of my participants told me how she encountered power dynamics due to her positionality in the classroom. Gloria related how she had encountered a learning barrier as a Korean American PhD student. She said that her white faculty members have a stereotypical image of Asian students as being quiet and passive while she acted like an outspoken student. Gloria described that her learning style which did not fall into the categories of her white faculty's impressions of Asian women irritated them.

In another example with regard to experiencing injustice as a student in the classroom, Fay recounted her encounters as a seminarian when the feminist movement was burgeoning in the United States. She recalled that she immersed herself in feminist literature for three months before she went off to seminary in 1972 which she considered was an extension of her activism: to undertake feminist issues as a student being taught by white male faculty,

I think most of the old white men at the seminary, they seemed old to me, they were clueless about feminist issues and they didn't use inclusive language and they were very patronizing, and even the ones who were very nice and encouraging, they were sort of patronizing.

Gloria also experienced dilemmas in her learning as she struggled with her identity as an Asian woman. Brought to the United States involuntarily by her parents as a 16 year-old girl, she constantly underwent difficulties in making an effort to attain acceptance in two diverse cultures, not only as an Asian but also as an American. Further along in her narrative she related it this way,

I want to make sure that I am a Korean woman, but not a Korean woman subservient or obedient but [as] a Korean woman who is strong, who is intelligent, who is independent,

yet who does not rebel against what has been built up. That is very hard to even balance.

In terms of their teaching in the theological institutions, the AANAWTEs also faced challenges. In the first year and the first class of Debbie's teaching, her authority was questioned by a white female student because of her race. This student spoke to her after a class. "Wow, I'm really impressed that you have no accent when you speak English." Debbie was insulted and responded. "Well, I would hope so because I have spoken it longer than you've been born...I've been living in this country longer than you've been in existence." Debbie claimed that in addition to this 18 year-old girl's commenting on her race.

Cameron reported an incident with respect to how her positionality became an element between the interactions with her colleagues. She started off, "When I had this rude shock that no matter what I say, the very fact that I don't appear white, they had already prejudged you according to some of their preconceived ideas of what you will be bringing to them." She continued by revealing a negative example in which her race and gender impacted her interaction with her colleagues. In essence, it was not so much that she was a woman but that she was not white, as she realized.

This incident occurred on a panel which consisted of Cameron's three seminary colleagues. On this panel, they discussed liberative pedagogy which was one of Cameron's specialties, including feminism. At the end of her speech about Freire, an Anglican, white male student made the following comment: "Oh is that why you were teaching the way you did?" Cameron explained,

I would conduct my class in a very feminist model, you know, with participatory stuff, I always get them to bring their experience and say, you know like, how the experience helped them arrive at this point, so this white student said, "Oh, is that why you were you

doing that? I thought it was just because you are Chinese.” So, he was equating whatever I do to my cultural background, not even hearing what I was saying in class about the theory that I was using to back up my practice. So, I was totally shocked. So, I thought, “Is that what you think?” and he actually thought that was because I was Confucian, and I had to disillusion him, I said, “Confucius is very hierarchical” although he used a lot of questioning; definitely the students would not question the teacher’s authority.

Emma, too, encountered issues regarding classroom management as a junior faculty member which resulted from her race and gender. While grading was a primary concern of students, Emma said, “Some students think that if they are nice to me [laughs] on a personal level, and since I am Japanese, an Asian woman, maybe I’m, I will reciprocate in that way and give them good grades.”

Cameron’s experiences resonated with those of Emma. In interacting with Asian students, she pointed out that age and seniority also served important foci. She firstly clarified the differences between teaching Asian students in Asia and in North America. Asian students in Asia have the inclination to consider a teacher’s age as a factor influencing their relations with the teacher. However, teaching Asian students in North America was another story. For instance, women who were older than she were “usually able to do the seniority thing second and the teacher student...they would take teacher-student relationship over the older/younger kind of thing.” Male Asian students who were older than she usually have a problem with her because of age and gender. However, younger Asian male students would not question her. Similarly, Debbie viewed her youth as a negative factor and revealed that she’d “had situations where older women...and I think that ageism comes in then because you are young, they treat you a certain way.”

Consonant with the experiences of the other participants, Emma talked about how her positionality plays a noteworthy part in the interaction with her students. “We live in a very racist society,” Emma stressed. She realized that people have their own misconceptions and stereotypes about Asian women and so she is very conscious about that. As an Asian woman, as soon as she enters the room, her race impacts everyday, every word she says, and every action she takes.

Participants conveyed that the lack of role models due to their positionality brought about disadvantages in their learning and teaching. In search of a comfortable identity, because of lacking role models or mentors, it was inevitable and easy that Debbie fell unconsciously into the stereotype of the Asian woman who is sweet or nice in her classroom. Moreover, professionally the participants stumbled on the journey to become good educators since there were no Asian/Asian American theological female forerunners to follow. All of them stated that the only teaching method they carried was to teach how they’d been taught as students. “I do regret is that I never had any mentors. I never had mentors,” Allison grumbled. Nonetheless, she does not regard this lack of mentors as a drawback now but as a plus. She explains,

Maybe one of the things that helped me because the lack of mentors, I didn’t become dependent upon a mentor so I developed a lot of self sufficiency, and so I would make things happen in my own theological education that maybe would not have happened if I was dependent on somebody else. But it would have helped....I mean, five years of my doctorate was in New Testament, and the reason why I switched over to Old Testament was because I couldn’t find somebody that would take me on in New Testament and I was really liking the Old Testament. But I wish I had had some guidance there. Those were some of the good things and the drawbacks that I’ve encountered in my own education.

Belinda also reported lacking a female role model. She was subject to discouragement when she shared her passion for going to seminary. In her graduate school, all the faculty were white male professors, except for one Chinese pastor. Furthermore, the church she was associated with at the time was a conservative one which would never allow women to be on the podium or to be in a leadership role.

He [the Chinese pastor] was not very happy because he did not even get a seminary degree either. He went to a Bible college, and so he thought it was ridiculous that I was wasting time going to seminary when I could be serving already. So, yes, I had some discouragement. Mostly in the way that people just ignore you, like...they don't really come right out and say "You shouldn't do this" but you know that they are not pleased with you.

Due to the participants' positionality, the interaction with their colleagues also showed the power dynamics between them. They described white privilege and tokenism as two major issues in their relationship with the colleagues and the institutions.

Androcentrism and White Privilege

Belinda was aware of Androcentrism and white privilege in her institution. Talking about her interaction with colleagues, she revealed her role in the department that is distinctive from the rest of her white colleagues due to her race and gender. She recalled,

Since most of my colleagues are white males, I have the sense that they get more respect just right off the top because they are white males. And I know that...well, for the other woman who teaches in the seminary, she's a very motherly figure, she's everybody's mother and many of the students will come to the seminary, they need a mother so they will gravitate to her if they need that nurturing, that mothering. Fewer students come to me

because I've developed a reputation for being tough, demanding, which I probably am in a way...you know. In reality I don't think so compared to the larger scheme of things.

All the AANAWTE were aware of the impact of their race and gender in their professional lives. Fay talked at length about how her race and gender impacted the interaction with a white male colleague who was supposedly on sabbatical.

I would say where my race and ethnicity and gender really negatively impacted me in my career was with colleagues, and somehow I was their orientalized projection of this Asian woman that they were going to like hit on...The first time it happened I was puzzled. The second time it happened, I thought it was a pattern. The third time it happened, I knew it was a pattern.

This colleague was ten years older than her and his office was located next to hers. "He kept coming in, and he totally had no social skills. He was really repulsive." This colleague constantly visited Fay during her office hours. "He'd come and stand in the door and take all my time and talk to me." Fay could not bear it and tried to solve this annoying situation. At first, she left the door open and thought the colleague would not come in. Then interestingly, he'd come and open it. At last, she closed the door and put "Please knock." During this process, he asked Fay out to movie, but she rejected him. In this whole story Fay was irritated. Although she eventually changed her strategy and informed her class of her change of office hours without posting them on the door, she never confronted this white male colleague directly because "he was a senior colleague and it wasn't like I could just say "Would you leave me alone." She believed that this white male colleague had authority over her.

Another aspect in relating to the power dynamics between Asian/Asian North American women theological educators and the colleagues is showed in the use of classroom evaluations

from their students. For instance, Cameron was informed from the evaluation of the students saying that students were discontented with her teaching in spite of the identical teaching approach used by her white female colleague. Debbie also was described as racist and sexist through students' evaluations. Likewise, Allison depicted how her institution treated her when it came to the evaluation part of her teaching,

It wasn't as high as the others in the department but it was still high. I mean, it is kind of a sore thing with me because they were high but my chair used my evaluations against me with the [feminist theologian] Rosemary Ruether incident to give me a lower rating for my merit pay which was so unfair because I did have high evaluations, but he used some of the negative ones...you know how you always get a negative evaluation from a student, he picked the negative ones to use against me in punishment for bringing in Rosemary Ruether. So, that had nothing to do with my evaluations, it had something to do with the idiot chair who was evaluating me.

Emma received an evaluation which shocked the committee at the seminary. These evaluations comprised both negative and positive from her students. The most interesting comment was regarding her race,

Let's see...I do not teach...I have never taught in Japan, right? And I don't teach...my field is not Japanese studies or anything like that, but then one student said I'm always comparing them to the Japanese students. It's really interesting to me; they just don't know how to...go past some of their assumptions. And there are some very hurtful ones, too, like...I do not communicate well...But I think I communicate well. Communication is always two ways. So, there are very negative comments like that.

Gloria also showed her disappointment with her colleagues' stereotypes of Asian women.

“So when I speak up, when I say something against what they are saying, they get really upset with me,” she said. Similarly, Emma was frustrated at the interaction with her colleagues due to their stereotypes of Asians.

I think there are many well-meaning people, but...I guess Southerners are polite in a sense, so...even if...they want to have more professional interactions with me...I have to take the initiative all the time and it is tiring, and I have questions like “Do you eat Sushi everyday?” or “I’m sorry that this faculty meeting is not providing sushi,” and stuff like that. So the level is very low.

Fay had experienced the most dramatic episode of all regarding discrimination from the institution. In the beginning, she disclosed her efforts in provoking African-American college students in her religion course at an African American college. This was her first full-time teaching job. Coming from California, she was not aware that the African Americans she was dealing in her classroom were extraordinarily dissimilar from the African-Americans, such as Black Panthers, whom she knew in California. Her feminist teaching agitated the whole department and resulted in the loss of her job. Her teaching was radical by asking her students critical question such as, “If you are at a black college and your teachers are black but you are reading white authors, is this a black education? What does it mean to be at a black college?”

As a junior faculty without any mentors or support from the institution, she worked painstakingly with this group of students whose average reading level was only second grade. After searching for more enhanced teaching, she struggled through many different teaching methods and different grading systems. It came to the time when she was ready and was confident she could provide a better class for her students at one fall semester after all the preparation and improvements. She was called to an emergency meeting of a feminist institution

to which she belonged in the middle of the semester. As usual, she got signed permission to leave, but she called in sick in order to go to this meeting, having made an arrangement with a good substitute teacher who covered her class but was disapproved of by the department. From nowhere, she was fired for insubordination after she came back from her meeting. As she recalled, she was fired after the passion around the material which was about internal oppression and her class just blew up after that. Moreover, she found out she was set up to get fired. In her analysis, she was convinced that she was fired because of her teaching about the Freireian model of political analysis in the classroom. In short, her race and gender impacted her teaching in this black college since she wasn't black.

Tokenism

Allison and Belinda who were the only two participants stressed they were overloaded with institutional responsibilities because of their race and gender. They offered a noteworthy facet of being discriminated against by the institution because of the intersection of racism and sexism. Allison astutely pointed out that there was “unconscious racism but [it was] definitely there, and the reason why I say that is because I am firmly convinced that there is an interconnection among the isms -- sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, heterosexism -- there's definitely a connection there.” Serving on committees at the institution is the norm. However, Allison has a different view on this issue while she was teaching at a conservative college,

Let's say the overt racism is to be the affirmative action candidate, you know...but so they want diversity, but they really don't, and that in itself is a form of racism, putting you on every committee because you are a woman and a woman of color, you know, is a form of racism. So, that's where I feel that racism came into play at [my institution].

Belinda substantiated Allison's argument. She said that as an ethnic minority and as a woman, she was

put on many committees, “not only [at the seminary] because the seminary faculty is small but also at the university.” Teaching in a seminary in a general university, if the school needs representation, Belinda will get pulled into those committees which she “would really prefer not, but sometimes there is no choice.”

In this section, the findings for my research question of what strategies the participants use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning are presented. There are eight tactics that participants used to deal with learning and teaching difficulties as Asian/Asian North American women theological educators. These strategies consisted of internal psychological and cognitive processes and external manifestations that the participants drew upon around their learning and teaching environments. It is noted a strategy might have both internal and external dimensions. Themes are the answer to the research question two: What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning in which patriarchal ideologies dominate? These stratagems are: teaching philosophy, faith and theology, sense of accomplishment from teaching, acculturation/absorbing/adjustment, engaged feminist and critical pedagogy, authenticating their authority as teachers, pronouncing and asserting their positionality, and alignment with and getting support from communities and allies. These mechanisms used to cope with the power dynamics in the classroom reflect the micro-aspects of social change will be explicated as follows.

Teaching Philosophy

Some participants talked about how their strong beliefs in God led them to respond to God’s calling in the vocation and ministry as an educator. They all agree that this sense of calling to be an educational minister is one of the best means to change the status quo. Reflecting Debbie’s sense of calling to be a teacher, Emma also believes in the power of education. Her students inspired her to make efforts to transform and challenge them with her comprehensive teaching of the historical tradition of the church.

Debbie revealed how she was so on fire and so enthusiastic to indoctrinate her students during her first classes that she wanted to “change all these women to become feminists.” As her teaching evolved, however, she waited for the “ah-ha” moment rather than forcing changes. She teaches with the philosophy that “it is more of ‘here’s the stuff, here’s the knowledge, here are all the tools, possible perspectives,’ and I try to let the students grapple from their own personal journeys and positions because everybody has a different journey.” As a facilitator, Debbie played the role of providing guidance for students. Learning from her own faith journey with God, she is less driven to find answers and is open to theological disagreement with love. She elaborated,

These days, it’s less about coming to an agreement, it’s more about human relationships so that I could speak to an evangelical person, but somehow if we connect as human beings, those theological differences, they don’t really stress me as much because I feel that even those theological differences could be respected by each other if there is a certain level of love.

She also holds the belief that when people get older, they should be less judgmental “because it’s like, ‘seen it all, heard it all.’” Her perception of a theological educator is not to convert her students to think radically or critically. Instead, it comes to the realization of “everybody recognizes things at a different rate.”

Gloria underscored the importance of keeping her heart open to the things which sustained her working in theological education. “I want to be honest, I want to keep the integrity and I want to respect the other person’s interest so that I don’t...I try to listen. I try to open my heart to things.” In her classroom, she makes her teaching space very open. She emphasized that there is tension in living in a multi-ethnic society even in the same racial group. Therefore, she doesn’t

want to make an easy “either-or” decision but to embrace both. Besides, she found out the way to live with contradictions in her faith is to embrace the differences rather than judging them so quickly. Her philosophy of teaching is that of embracing differences with her students so it can transform both herself and her counterparts. Teaching at the seminary, Harriet felt the criteria of what academia is very much a western, white men’s mode. Nevertheless, she has vision and conviction even if her work is underappreciated at her institution. She believes what she has been doing is planting seeds.

Emma also loved her teaching, especially when it came to teaching students who were at the seminary as a second career. She explained that this group of students who have more discipline and were more interested in learning rather than making good grades. Emma usually looked for their nods or puzzled looks in her classroom which energized her teaching. Besides, she also attended student forums to understand what students’ positions were. In fact, the group of African-American students whose forum she attended verbally appreciated her presence,

I try to go to students’ forum or something on these issues, whenever students run forums sometimes, like the issue of race, homosexuality and ordination of homosexuality, stuff like that, and I try to go to these and try to understand what their positions are.

Debbie, with her more liberal theology, has strength and confidence in herself. As she described, it is unnecessary to gain more authority rather than merely being a woman. Committing herself in the field of theological education instead of working in the church, she contended, “I think I sense that the church was even more sexist than academia, so I chose to go into academia, and luckily I’m good at it. I really enjoy it.” When people ask her, “Why don’t you become ordained because you have access to both?” She replies,

I guess it is my ego -- that I don’t want to do that. I don’t feel that I need to have even more

legitimacy as a female. I want people to just give me authority as who I am. I don't have to go around getting all these titles to legitimate myself or my voice, so I haven't gone into that.

One inner resource that only Debbie stressed in the negotiation of power dynamics in her teaching and learning was learning to make use of the authority of spiritual sensibility. "I think the more that I came into my own personal, gendered power, personal authority as a woman, the more I was able to also have authority about my spiritual sensibility," she proudly pronounced. As one of the Asian American theological educators who are at the leading edge, she encourages her colleagues and students to acknowledge the fact that it's mostly women who attend churches so that more women pastors and educators are needed.

Faith and Theology

All my participants discussed contradictions they had faced in their faith and shared how they grappled with them: all of them embarked on the studies of theology. Furthermore, one of the characteristics was they were transformed through struggles and anger before they were able to live free from the contradictions. As Debbie said "I think I just struggled a lot. I think there is a lot of anger." And Emma just responded, "I don't know, I am mad everyday."

Harriet found that one way to live with contradictions in her faith is through practicing meditation. Debbie had to overcome the evangelical theology which had impacted on her. The emphasis on guilt in evangelical theology had oppressed her in the past. She explained,

I think my faith has gone through such a tremendous transformation. There is still the power of what I experienced when I was young, but it was not necessarily a patriarchal faith that I experienced or spiritually, it was a different kind of spirituality...I find that for a long time I resisted the patriarchal [image] of Father God and at the same time for a

long time I could not say Mother God. So, God was this neutral metaphor, but now I have no problem with the Mother God image. I have no problem with feminine divine. I think there is less guilt, I think guilt was such a big heritage for me because fear of being punished is you deviate theologically. But I really don't have that anymore...The church has less control on me now. In a way I feel so free of theological fear and from the church.

Moreover, Debbie also advocated untangling one's personal life journey and gaining power for oneself. She further explained more about this strategy.

When your personal life journeys become...untangled and start to resolve a lot of issues and you give power to yourself, I think that other people lose power, right, because you don't give them power anymore, and I think that's the process that it took for me to become free from patriarchal, sexist religion as well, to say, "Gosh, it's not that powerful, it is only powerful because I let them have that power over me."

Furthermore, all participants spoke about both the oppressive and tolerant aspects of Christian theologies in my findings. They were all drawn into the mystery of Christian theology which consists of dual presence that represses people while simultaneously liberating them. This paradox was ubiquitously in the participants' interviews, especially when they discussed contradictions in their faith. For instance, what intrigued them to further study theology was suffering various discriminations in their religious communities. When first wrestling with their beliefs, they pulled themselves together by their strong and deep conviction in Christianity which they felt would somehow bring answers to the uncertainty about their religion. Debbie said,

It does break my heart when I see sometimes when I go to worship services and everything is this patriarch of God, patriarch of priest or pastor, there is something existentially suffocating for me. And we notice most of pews are filled with women, and you know that their life experience is so contradictory to what is being taught by the church.

Debbie described her heartbrokenness and being suffocated by Christianity. Additionally, she explained her insight, saying “When I see women who suffer so much yet they still believe in this God, I sometimes wonder is it the fear of God or is it that you really experience divine?” She further elaborated her contradictions in faith regarding the symbol of the cross. The paradoxical theology in “bear[ing] your cross” bewildered her when she knows “the people who bore the cross are in many ways victims but they are also the strongest people.” Nevertheless, the more she teaches Christianity theology, the more she is overwhelmed by the dual presence of “oppressiveness and liberation.” Harriet confirmed that “theology can be both liberating and oppressive.” She explains,

I know Christian theology can kill people. Also Christianity theology can make people liberated and alive. It is very, very dangerous discourse. First, I think the Bible is one of the most dangerous discourses -- women’s oppression, slavery, colonialism, economic exploitation and destruction of the earth -- everything is justified, but at the same time in the Bible all of liberation movement, feminist movement, egalitarian society, the vision of utopian society -- those things can be advocated, too.

Similarly Gloria revealed her paradox “I didn’t like the idea of becoming a seminarian, any kind of pastor, because in Korean community the woman pastors are not the role model that you wanted to become, because they are always patronized by male pastors.” Nevertheless, she opted

to attend theological schools because she assumed that by being a pastor, she can preach more about how to remove injustice in the church and she felt that she was “doing part of God’s work.” Because of where she grew up, the church that Emma was associated with in Japan was in the embassy district. Furthermore, she learned all the Bible stories from women of color who were from the Philippines and from Africa. Consequently, her image of the ideal “church” was a place of worship by maids, ambassadors and different ethnicities until she started going to churches in the United States. Emma states,

When I came to the States to study about the church and realized that...there is no church like that (laughs). And so I guess that was the conflict that I had even when Presbyterian Church USA says in the constitution, you have to have representation of every race and gender in every level of the polity, but that doesn’t happen, especially in the South, it’s very clear that African Americans are separated from the whites, and Koreans do their own thing.

Fascinatingly, these women have not walked away from the church or Christianity regardless of the disagreements they have. They strive for the emancipative facet of Christianity even though it remains incomprehensible in their eyes. Many of them hold the belief as expressed by Debbie that “faith is no longer solely derived from Christianity, the male patriarch religion.”

Sense of Accomplishment from Teaching

Debbie carried her passion to change the status quo as her teaching philosophy and it was one of the significant strengths that sustained her interest in theological education. She focused on the lack of preaching feminism/feminist theology in the patriarchal church to drive her to work industriously as a theological educator. She is compassionate about sharing with women

students how the Bible could be read through various approaches. She loves to say to her female students. “You’re not evil, you’re not inferior, you don’t have to be dominated, that you can look at the Bible this way and not this way you’ve been taught.” Debbie also found that she enjoys teaching an oppressed minority group at the highly racially and ethnically diverse school (one of the two schools where she teaches). She proudly shared with me an example that supported her in her work as a theological educator. This happened at the seminary in a metropolitan city in the Northeast of the USA. The group of students she was teaching was very conservative and evangelical Pentecostals. When they first came to the seminary, they had a hard time when they were given theories and critical ways of looking at the Bible. However, Debbie stressed that because they had experienced so much oppression, they were already suspicious when they received the tools. Consequently, they integrated it so well, so fast. By the third year, these people had become critical theologians. Debbie said,

And so you saw the transformation because I had the privilege of teaching first year students who made it to the third year and taught them again in the third year class and their mindset had just transformed dramatically. But they still managed to retain their spirituality, their evangelical Pentecostal spirituality, at the same time they were radical, critical progressive thinkers.

As a successful scholar in North America, Cameron has been playing an essential role in the field of theological education. She imparted her insightful notion that she had passed the mission of changing the status quo on to her students.

I have decided that I won’t try to turn it around in my lifetime, or maybe it doesn’t need to be turned around, maybe we will just do it subversively. The way I do it is to get my students who are mostly training for the ordained ministry and let them too, recognize,

because you can't just impose ideas on them if they already have this received tradition of marginalizing these poor Sunday school teachers.

Acculturation/Absorbing/Adjustment

It has been a long journey for these Asian/Asian North American women theological educators to gain a foothold in academia in theological education. Three of the strategies that the participants drew upon from their internal resources were to acculturate into the predominantly white culture, to absorb themselves into their sufferings, and to adjust their attitude or behavior in order to negotiate in their learning and teaching.

Cameron had to do everything as if she were a white woman before she was able to integrate her existential being as an Asian woman. Surviving in predominantly white academia with white norm and standards, she said, "Here is the stuff that I've written and it all fits in and the majority of the people are white, so I always aim at a white audience."

Emma, working as a junior faculty member in an institution that has its own culture, as a junior faculty member, Emma chose to respect the culture of the institution saying, "I guess the seminary has produced some usually very good pastors and I like all the tradition." Nevertheless, at the same time she does not want to adjust to it so much that she loses her critical lens.

The inner powers within the participants presented above strongly play essential roles as catalysts that impel and sustain Asian/Asian North American women theological educators' endeavors in the field of theological education, not only as students but also as teachers. What tangible tactics they applied while they interacting with their students and colleagues and how they navigated their way in the institutions are illuminated in the following discussions? These strategies were utilized in dealing with multifaceted obstacles they encountered in the classrooms such as teaching methods, styles, and classroom management, as well as in managing discriminations they faced in the institutions.

Engaged Feminist and Critical Pedagogy

One of the major themes deduced from the data in answer to the research question was that all the participants drew on the work of feminist scholars, adult educators, and social activists -- in particular from those of racial minority scholars. The most salient example is Cameron. In her teaching, she intertwines the work of Freire and feminist theologians. Cameron said,

So, it's a convergence of Freire and feminist theology, first of all in the Seventies through feminist biblical interpretation, hermeneutics, and it is a very simple thing so I always kept those first few books, "Jesus According to a Woman," by Rachel Wilber, a person who belongs to a very conservative tradition but was actually a lesbian, and then she had a book about men, women and the bible and it was just very basic stuff, but for me it was very liberating.

She elaborated on how her teaching has been based on Freire, bell hooks, and the feminist model such as participatory theory. "I learned over the years to-- as one of my declarations and assumptions at the beginning -- to respect, acknowledge their background, and everything. I got consciencized about, part of it is Freire, but part of it also is feminist theology." In responding to my question about how she reconciled using theories of Freire and feminist theories while some scholars saw the incompatibility between these two theories, she answered: "The way I pick stuff from people, I take what is usable in my context, and I meld it with what I bring from other contexts -- Confucian even because he got his students to ask questions. People do critique Freire this way and so you have to be careful. You can't just reproduce it."

According to Fay, when she was teaching at the black college her students were at second-grade reading level, and there was no mentoring help. She revealed that this black college had been teaching in the traditional authoritarian way, and that most of the students in school

were flunking out. The students had no help, and Fay didn't have anybody who understood pedagogy at the school either. Fay read Paulo Freire, whose work she had been introduced to in a ministry program of Christian education. "I read Dewey, Freire. I went back to them to try to -- Piaget, Montessori -- to figure out....and I'd gone to an alternative school." Further along in her teaching career after she taught at the black college, she took over the women's studies department at a women's college. She offered an interesting anecdote about teaching there, recounting,

When I took over women's studies, nobody was taking any women's studies courses hardly at a women's college. It was the most avoided area, and I tried to figure out what was wrong. And I thought, you know, they teach these classes like everybody is already a feminist. They need to teach how to be a feminist.

In that period of teaching feminist classes, Fay felt free to experiment with different teaching methods in her classroom, such as group grades and writing contracts with students. Among these experiments, she proposed as the most important feminist principle she would hold onto in her teaching, which was, "You can't coerce people into anything."

The participants also apply the feminist and critical pedagogy which emphasizes critical thinking in their classrooms. They cultivate students' ability to read the Bible and reflect on their faith critically, as opposed to the patriarchal and conventional teaching environment: a contribution in the attempt to implement social change through the participants' teaching pedagogy. Emma offered an example of how her students began to think critically about their own faith through engaging themselves in a social context.

Last year's class I went to Jamaica in the Alternative Context class when most of these students...it was interesting, they are....in Jamaica, we had to live very closely and it was a

challenge for all of us because Jamaican society is very poor, and we visited places where we saw so much tragedies and so they were beginning to form serious questions about Christianity and church and faith and things like that. And so in that context I was able to help them to have critical eyes to themselves, to examine themselves, too.

Fay reflected on her experience as a feminist teacher teaching in a black college in Texas where she was fired because of her feminist commitment. She believed that her provocative take on feminist and critical pedagogy would raise her students' critical awareness as an oppressed group.

I don't think it had anything to do with race, but it certainly had to do with my feminist commitments to conscientizing the Freireian model of political analysis. I thought that they had hardly any consciousness about their own oppression or the way they suffered from their own oppression, so in my religion class I taught them critically to think about those questions through a theological or biblical lens.

Consequently, these participants regarded their commitments to feminist and critical pedagogy as an agency not only to promote their students' critical thinking in the classrooms but also to bring about social change outside the classrooms.

Co-construction of Knowledge

Gloria's teaching principle of feminist pedagogy responded to what Johnson-Bailey and Lee describe as that "the practices that flow from feminist pedagogy center on connected teaching, which involves the teacher and students jointly constructing knowledge" (Johnson-Bailey, Gong, & Lee, p. 3). Gloria believes that she can learn from her students and see the differences and acknowledge the differences much as Fay believe, who also drew her students' experiences in her class. Gloria's relationship with her students is reciprocal as she just came out from her "very sheltered life." She is happy now that her life has opened up because she became a teacher.

I look at all different people from all different backgrounds and different cultural traditions. So, actually it is more give and take in a way, that I see them, then I open up myself. Also they see me as a different way of teaching and a different way of learning. I think I am a teacher who wanted to establish an open equal partnership teaching and learning. Not only that I teach them but I'm also learning from them.

A Caring and Safe Environment

Emma regarded conflicts as opportunities for transformation in her classroom. She is looking at conflicts more seriously, therefore a macro-aspect of social environment is shown in the classroom. "I'm not dismissing them I guess, and trying to look at these conflicts from the theological lens and use the classroom space itself as conflicts arise." Fay and Harriet acted as referees whenever their classes had a big argument. In the search for ways to negotiate their power when encountering racism and sexism in the classroom, one theme that emerged was, to be firm on their authority as a teacher in the classroom, as Fay demonstrated when her students tried to undermine her authority by challenging her. She considered the students' behavior stemmed from their insecurity and she would take them on. She gave details of how she dealt with these students,

There were some guys that like to test you, to see if you would rise to the occasion. And I'd say, "Well, actually that's an inappropriate comment." I didn't do this very often but I would say, "You're not entitled to be in this class and if you don't like the way I'm teaching it or what I'm doing. You are welcome to drop the class. "

As the African-American faculty member asked the white female student to leave her class, Gloria's student also dropped out from her class since her behavior was disruptive the whole class.

After all, I'm the one who graded their paper. They would not do that. They know exactly and I understand exactly what's the power dynamics here. But this woman was like "I don't care." So, hey, don't come to my class. So she dropped out of my class. It's fine. She dropped out of the other professor's class too.

In a similar episode between Harriet's female student who is the same ethnicity and about the same age regarding authority issues, here is how Harriet managed,

So, finally, I gave her an option. If you want to study with me, you have to listen to my guidance. If you can not listen to my guidance, you have to go to another school, and so she went to another school. So, it was a good solution because I cannot think of nurturing a Ph.D. student who doesn't take her advisor's comments seriously.

Authenticating Their Authority as Teachers

The following strategies used by the participants involve developing and exercising the authority that was given on account of their position as a teacher in the classroom. For instance, in contrast to traditional teacher-centered authoritative teaching style, the participants alternatively took on feminist and critical pedagogy in the classroom even though not all of them have claimed they are feminists in their daily life. Furthermore, these teachers made positive use of their inherited authority as teachers, such as having power over classroom management and supervision on students' grades.

As adjunct and junior faculty, who, as she admitted, was less influenced by the culture of the institution teaching religion in undergraduate classrooms. Debbie regarded her students have an open hearts. She sees a similarity between preaching and teaching. As a teacher, she is selective in terms of her syllabus including how she structures the classroom climate and how she presents the materials. Debbie said,

I actually think it's like preaching, you know, if you are a charismatic professor then you are going to have that much influence as well, and I've come to realize that I'm very good at what I do, and the students pretty much all respond well.

Debbie established her authority in her classroom; and she stressed inviting students' questions and conversation among themselves. "You don't have [to] agree with me. It's not crucial that you agree with what I say. But it is crucial that we have these conversations." She depicted the principles she used in her teaching. One of the key things that she tried to do in the classroom was to create space for openness, which means being open to difference. It is to bring all kinds of conversations to the table, "even if you have conservative perspectives," she added.

One of the strategies that Debbie uses when she encounters the issue of authority in her classroom is that no matter how strict she is, she becomes very pastoral. "I don't try to negate or control them" she said,

I just let them be and I try to meet them where they are. If they are challenging me, I want to let them challenge me, and I try to respond to them with integrity, without putting my power on that. Most of the time they don't directly challenge you. There is enough of a buffer so you can negotiate, and I'm willing to negotiate.

In Harriet's classroom, Harriet had encountered an African-American male student who came from an authoritarian church structure. The fact that their instructor was a young Asian woman who taught theology and challenged their perspective sometimes made the students very upset. Therefore, she talked with them in the class,

I let them talk from their experience, what bothers them, what is problematic to them, and then I respond. Very open. I don't make conflict hidden under the rug. I make it always open. We can all talk about it together in the class.

Furthermore, as the location of the college where Harriet is teaching is a metropolitan city, controversial topics such as racial or gay and lesbian issues caused tensions in her classroom. Although she is open to conflicts and makes ground rules in her classroom--no judging, blaming or name calling in talking and discussions. She had to intervene before her classroom was out of control. She recalled,

So, the students come to class with their own identity politics, and sometimes we have a conflict and name-calling and shouting. So sometimes I have to really intervene to calm them down and have a conflict resolution, make some peace in the class because sometimes discussion becomes very sharp. For example, as students from very conservative evangelical traditions, they can not accept gay and lesbian theological students. They have big discussions and fighting in the class. And I have to be a referee to let them hear each other rather than let it to become a shouting match.

As Asian-American women who tend to look younger than their age and as they are often mistaken for students, Debbie saw the imperative need to build up her authority in the classrooms before she introduced the critical tools. Therefore, she claims that her religious background which is third generation Christian in which most of her uncles are ordained pastors, somehow giving her legitimacy. On top of that, she lays emphasis on her marriage to a pastor, as well as working as a Christian Education director at a church. She explained, "If I don't do that, I don't think they will take me seriously." The actual strategy she developed to substantiate this was to overwhelm her students with so much work in the first or two classes of the semester that they won't mess with her on an intellectual level. However, unlike some American professors, she forbids her students to call her by her first name believing that doing so would impact the power dynamic. She characterized her authority in the classroom,

I'm very strict. I'm almost a dictator in the classroom. I will have mutual discussions and stuff, but I let them know that I am the professor because I realize with undergrad students, they really want to take advantage of you as much as they can.

Belinda advanced the same notion of developing authority in the classroom. In her observation, she sometimes thought her students were "wusses," "such a wimpy bunch." She said,

So, I feel like a drill Sergeant in a way. But also I think, you know, Chinese have the saying, "Shia-Ma-Wei" (which means to warn against insubordination, etc. by enforcing strict disciplinary action when one first takes office) so I feel like I need to establish who is going to be in charge, because with my size, with my ethnicity, with my gender and I'm talking about some of my students being six three, six four, two hundred eighty pounds, rednecks. So, if I don't establish that "You are not going to run over me," they would and some try even with my posture. They still try.

Pronouncing and Asserting their Positionality

Strategies that the participants developed when they encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning were to vocalize and declare their positionality. Strategies include embracing marginality and striving from the edge and setting boundaries in navigating their ways out of the negative power dynamics in which are manifested in their teaching and learning as Asian/Asian North American women theological educators.

Influenced by the work of racial minorities, Cameron has been striving for a better teaching and learning environment for Asian/Asian North American women theological educators through working from the margin especially for next generation. She has always fought for a channel for change. If there was no channel, she had to petition and to fight the battle every time. She

suggested “Even though it wasn’t automatic so it still has to be case by case you still have substantiated it, but at least it was a channel.” Over the years, she has learned how to do anything subversively to get people around her “from Point A to Point B.” Cameron said,

I also know that it is very hard to move institutions, so I learn how to say structurally I won’t try to move the structure. I then select to move, to work from the margin, and I have found bell hooks helpful. She talked about marginality...bell hooks was really helpful because she says we choose the margins as a sign of possibility.

She further advocated more strategies working in the field of theological education. For instance, team teaching is the strategy with which she can work from the margin. In the meantime, she has made working from the margin like an experiment with allies. Cameron gave details about her experience in the beginning of working from the margin:

We worked out a strategy, so that’s another thing I learned, is always make it like an experiment so people are not switching things, they are only giving you a space to try something else. It is both working from the margins but try not to continue be marginalized totally. It is how to work with allies, I guess, that’s the other thing. So, the solidarity, theology of solidarity within the field of theological education.

Harriet’s role as an educator, she revealed, was to deconstruct and debunk the harmful, domineering, oppressive aspects of Christianity and to make people aware of its liberating, life-giving aspect. She declared herself a “church theologian at the margin or outside of the church.” She explained that, as a theological educator, she regarded working from the margin as the strategy to give this liberating legacy to the next generation rather than perpetuating the hegemonic ideology of the Euro-white, male, colonial theology. She stated succinctly,

This is my mission. This is my theological education, because I discovered that theological education only in academic study and seminaries is not enough. The majority of the people are not theologians. They are lay people. And they are sick of religions, many of them, or they are all in religious institutions but they are not satisfied. In a way I decide to be church theologian at the margin or outside of the church.

The strategy for teaching in a predominantly white educational environment, Cameron considered, was that claiming one's voice was inevitable in the sense of make herself visible and being heard by the others. "But claiming your voice I think that come slowly and then for me, I had to learn how to claim it in a, you know, not a confrontational way but also in a very firm way." In reality, she claimed her voice through fighting for the younger generation to make them know that women could be ordained as well as going for doctorates "because otherwise what is the sense of struggling through all those years and being able to teach and so on, and the students or younger people are not seeing the role model." She gave a good example about how she was not able to acknowledge the value of her own identity as an Asian in the early stage of her career. She became aware of this after a short conversation with a colleague. Her colleague said to her: "There are so many things that I'd like to know about you but you never talk about them." She replied, "Well, what do you mean?" He continued, "Well, you know like some of the stuff about how you came to be Christian." After this conversation, she finally realized that maybe there were special things she could bring. She realized, "Oh, yeah, I can bring my lens not just out of my culture but also out of who I am as a woman, who I am as a marginalized Christian educator." Cameron admitted that at that time her consciousness wasn't raised to the point where she could ask things about Orientalism when a person was interested in her personal story. Otherwise, she would have spoken up at the occasion. Orientalism in this sense is defined that

“throughout history, western culture built up an exotic stereotype of "the Orient"--seductive women (i.e. the femme fatale) and dangerous men living in a static society with a glorious but long-gone past. Many critical theorists regard Orientalism as part of a larger, ideological colonialism justified by the concept of the ‘white man's burden’”

(<http://encyclopedia.learnthisthis.info/o/or/orientalism.html>).

Debbie viewed claiming her voice in a different way though. She argued that if her professional authority is challenged, then she has no qualms about asserting herself. She gave me some examples of the lack of confidence which had prevented her from asserting her voice.

When people introduce me in a church setting, they don't say, “Oh, this is Professor Debbie,” they say, “Oh, this is the pastor's wife.” And before, I think I was gracious about that, it didn't bother me, but it really bothers me more and more, yeah, it really bothers me more and more. And I think...probably the biggest of the difficulty is overcoming your own sense of lack of confidence.

In terms of the respect for age of Asian/Asian American women, the students in the communities where Cameron taught were more like Asian students who do not respect those who are younger. She had to strategically use her ascribed authority in addition to her achieved authority.

So, I had to really play up my gray hair. I'd tell them I had a son who was at the university. The seniority in age really was respected in those communities, of course, also the fact that you are a professor.

Gloria stated that she was able to strategically utilize her identity and power as an Asian-American woman to make sure that Asian-American woman can teach. She earnestly wanted her students to see how it's different or the same by teaching with her race and gender.

The other side is that they have to see that gender and race are very important to them to see different perspective. It's not only like one side of teaching thing, but also I want to them to see how it is different or how is it the same coming from different background and different gender issues.

She explained that for her holding on to her identity was not the most important thing. More importantly, living in the postmodern world, as she emphasized, she needed to step back to see clearly her identity and her cultural identity. In essence, she needed to distance herself from her identity and recognize the differences of other's identities, then acknowledge and embrace the differences. Besides the use of her own identity, Gloria made a check-off point during the semester to know how her students interpreted the material from their own perspectives and to encourage them to acknowledge their own identities. Gloria explained,

I want to make sure they got that, so throughout the whole semester there is a checking point that I ask questions, "What do you think coming from this perspective?" This is how I see it as an Asian-American woman, how I interpret this. What do you see? So, there is always responding and questions, and I'm also checking how they say and how they learn which is something new to them so they can also interpret the material in is many different perspectives as possible.

Cameron additionally suggested speaking up as a strategy to cope with racism in the academy. However, she tried not to bring up herself or her experience as an argument against racism. She argued,

Look, I can't speak up because it would look as if I'm too narrow-minded, but I think you need to speak up. Usually, I try not [to] bring up myself to get somebody else to speak but if nobody else is there, I will bring it up.

Similar to what Cameron encouraged, Emma spoke up in the committee where she saw injustice. She related,

In a larger faculty since this is a small school, we are put into...faculty committees, and even though I just came, I was put on some significant ones and ... first I was just listening and learning about this culture here, but then I really saw injustice. I think finally the dean recognizes that I do that and I just went through the first year and the colleagues' comments are that I do make critical comments and they honor that.

Alignment with and Getting Support from Communities and Allies

All the participants elaborated not only on spiritual nourishment but also support from friends were the fundamental helping them navigate in a white predominated theological teaching environment. Allison stressed that, as a student, she was clueless even about any well-known schools of higher education. Through the recommendation of all school-related information by her college faculty, she got into the studies and teaching of theological education.

After the “back row” episode that a group of student who always sit in the back of the classroom denied Emma’s authority as a teacher with regard to their interrupting behavior, she sought help from her colleagues which was important for her. She needed support from these colleagues in order to go on with her teaching career. She said,

I’m older (in age), but I am a junior faculty. [Therefore] to have a senior faculty racial ethnic background to help me out [is important]. So, I’m fortunate to have African American women on the side and Latino men on the side and African men on that side, and so if I am really desperate, I can just knock on their doors. I am mad because of these things and stuff like that.

Gloria's told a story about a white female student who kept requesting the questions for the examinations and the class assignments. Gloria sought advice from a faculty member who is an African American woman with a long history of teaching. At the end, this faculty member told her, the student who gave her a hard time should be removed from her class. She recreated their conversation for me:

Faculty: "Oh, I heard what had happened."

Gloria: "Yeah. I don't understand whether this is racism thing? I don't understand if this is a challenge me as a freshman faculty member."

Faculty: "Don't worry about her. She did that to me, too. She came to my class and challenged every little single thing I said in the classroom. And asked me 'I wanna see data, written data, about what you're saying.' Don't worry; she does have history with colored women faculty members."

With the support of this African-American woman faculty member, she understood that this student would not challenge male faculty members. Instead, she would challenge only female faculty members, especially women of color faculty members. Gloria finally was informed that she wasn't the first one at the seminary to face this problem. This white female student challenged the African-American woman about every little single thing in the classroom.

As a member of a racial minority teaching in the patriarchal context of theological education, the participants believed that support from allies and networking with religious and professional communities were critical elements as they strived for the profession. Gloria said, "Horizontally, I have lots of friends, I hang out. I hang out and drink good wine and good beer and joke around. But what I try to sustain in my horizontal relationship is honesty." She expressed the need for the ties with her community, because she must balance herself not only as

a trained theologian but also as a trained minister. Community is the base for Gloria as an Asian-American women theologian.

Cameron, has been a feminist since she was six years old and was influenced by her grandmother, spelled out how allies such as her grandmother, her two aunts and her husband have been her support along her journey. In religious communities, she advocated the importance of involvement in the local church. It was not only because she was active in the church but also because she valued the link with the women, no matter whether laypersons or trained theologians, who are in the church. She added, “because that I know communities can be very oppressive, so you have to remember how to critique this whole, lifting up what is communal, what if the community becomes very unfaithful? Who is gonna monitor us.” Professionally, she has been associated with groups and organizations that brought Asian/Asian American Christian women together.

While Emma was sad that she still can’t have time to connect with other Asian/Asian American women in the field of theological education, Harriet considered the human asset of a friend to be the most important asset in the world. Harriet underlined,

I think I’ve spent almost last fifteen years of my career to have this kind of connection of networks around the world. So, these people are not just my colleagues, they are friends, too. I think the human asset of a friend is the most important asset in the world.

Debbie also pointed out that the most challenging aspect in her teaching is not becoming an isolated academic person but to be where she is from. She wanted to hear the stories from the community where she came from, as she said, “I was always remembering where I began my journey.” She elaborated at length,

It hasn't stopped, that there are still issues out there, that there are young women who struggle with coming to know who they are. Mostly it's keeping this balance of academic teaching and learning and at the same time the human aspect to it, hearing the voices that are outside the academic world.

Debbie has been struggling with a question: "Well, to what extent am I part of the Asian-American community because I'm always in the academic setting that is so isolated. Do I really have the authority to speak on behalf of Asian-American young women?" Consequently, she was questioning her existence, her authenticity of who she speaks for, and what she speaks. However, she reassured herself not to burden herself with the guilt of the balancing between academia and community instead of feeling paralyzed.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings answering to two research questions: 1) What are the power dynamics within Asian/Asian American women theological educators' learning and teaching environment? 2) What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning?

In summary, there were four main critical themes in this in-depth study of these AANAWTEs: mastery, voice, authority and positionality regarding the power dynamics they experiences in their learning and teaching. How their academic performance as students was downgraded and how their mastery as teachers was resisted, challenged, and dishonored were described under the issue of mastery. Under the theme of voice, the nonexistence of role models, the structural constraints of the institutions and their invisibility to their colleagues were discussed. With regard to the topic of authority, AANAWTE's authority was exercised, undermined, and questioned in addition to being reinforced and weakened due to their race and

gender. Finally, the most salient theme in terms of what the power relationships within AANAWTE's learning and teaching was the issue of their positionality. Their positionality was being stereotyped and impacted by Androcentrism and White privilege. Besides, because of their positionality some of them experienced Tokenism at their institutions.

There were eight primary themes to answering the second research question: What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning? Theoretically, the finding showed that the participants drew upon a variety of resources to cope with power dynamics when encountering race and gender issues in their teaching and learning. These are: teaching philosophy, faith and theology, sense of accomplishment from teaching, acculturation/absorbing/adjustment, engaged feminist and critical pedagogy, authenticating their authority, pronouncing/asserting their positionality, and alignment with and getting support from communities and allies which the participants used as the strategies to deal with power dynamics in their learning and teaching.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has shown that Asian/Asian American women theological educators experienced power dynamics in their learning and teaching. In order to cope with these power dynamics, they developed and utilized a variety of strategies to negotiate the relationships in the context of Christian theological education. This chapter firstly presents the findings of the study and the conclusions drew from the findings. Secondly, it will explore the literature to support the conclusions followed by addressing the practical and theoretical implications. Finally, what future research is foreseen will be recommended respectively.

Summary and Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand how Asian and Asian North American women negotiate race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education. To obtain the data, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with a total sample of eight participants. The data was first transcribed and then analyzed through constant comparative analysis. Two research questions guided this study: 1) What are the power dynamics within Asian/Asian American women theological educators' learning and teaching environment? 2) What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning in which patriarchal ideologies dominate?

A purposeful sample was selected based on the following criteria: 1) participants have experience teaching subjects of Christian religion such as systematic theology, feminist theology, Biblical studies, religious education, ministry or other associated subjects; 2) they are members

of different denominations rather than from a single denomination; 3) their identities manifest the diverse socio-cultural dimensions of the Asian diasporas -- for example, experiences from countries such as Korea, Japan, China. As a result, the sample consisted of one Chinese American, two Chinese immigrants, one Korean American, one Japanese immigrant, one Japanese American, and two Korean immigrants.

The data collection methods used in this qualitative study were interviews and field notes. The setting of interviews varied: five were conducted at annual conferences of different professional associations; one was conducted in a seminary; one was conducted at a local coffee shop; and one was conducted at a participant's home. Interviews ranged in length from one-and-one half hours to over two hours. Two field note systems included both descriptive and reflective comments (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The descriptive field notes included description and information of the interview setting and the participant. The reflective field notes included my personal research journal written about what worked and what did not work during the interview.

There were four main critical themes in this in-depth study of these AANAWTEs responding to the first research question: What are the power dynamics within Asian/Asian American women theological educators' learning and teaching environment? Themes of mastery, voice, authority and positionality regarding the power dynamics they experiences in their learning and teaching were discovered. The findings included how their academic performance as students was downgraded and how their mastery as teachers was resisted, challenged, and dishonored were described under the issue of mastery. Under the theme of voice, the nonexistence of role models, the structural constraints of the institutions and their invisibility to their colleagues were found. With regard to the topic of authority, AANAWTE's authority was

usurped, undermined, and questioned in addition to being reinforced and weakened due to their race and gender. Finally, the most salient theme in terms of what the power relationships within AANAWTE's learning and teaching was the issue of their positionality. Their positionality was being stereotyped and impacted by Androcentrism and White privilege. Besides, because of their positionality some of them experienced tokenism at their institutions.

Furthermore, there were two primary themes to answering the second research question: What strategies do they use when encountering power dynamics in their teaching and learning? The findings showed that the participants drew upon a variety of resources to cope with power dynamics when encountering race and gender issues in their teaching and learning. They were teaching philosophy, faith and theology, sense of accomplishment from teaching, acculturation/absorbing/adjustment, engaged feminist and critical pedagogy, authenticating their authority, pronouncing/asserting their positionality, and alignment with and getting support from communities and allies.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study revealed that eight Asian/Asian North American women theological educators experienced various forms of power dynamics in their learning and teaching. Three conclusions were drawn from this study: 1) Asian/Asian North American women theological educators are invisible and silenced in the construction of knowledge in the patriarchal context of theological education; 2) The positionality of Asian/Asian North American women impacts the power dynamics in their classrooms and is negotiated with a variety of strategies; 3) Perpetuated racism and sexism was experienced by Asian/Asian North American women theological educators in the institutional context of theological education.

This research focused on the complex and multilayered power dynamics in the classroom when the teacher is an Asian or Asian North American woman. The complexity is a result of her multiple subject positions in the theological classroom. As a teacher and as a theologian, she has some authority over the students, but as a minority woman she is marginalized by the white mainstream. The question is what difference it makes if the teacher is an Asian-American and a woman in this teaching context. Furthermore, this research also showed that their positionality as Asian/Asian North American women factored into their learning as seminary students, which indicates that their positionality plays a significant role in impacting both their learning and teaching. Therefore, they challenged these power dynamics by astutely developing and utilizing a range of strategies in their classrooms.

In this section I will discuss the three primary conclusions centered on the themes of theological education positionality of AANAWTEs, strategies they used to deal with power dynamics, and how they navigated within the institutions as Asian/Asian North American women theologians. The following discussion is developed around these conclusions.

Asian/Asian North American women theological educators are invisible and silenced in the construction of knowledge in the patriarchal context of theological education

This study indicates that Asian/Asian North American women were left out the construction of theological knowledge under the mainstream, white-males led Christianity. In the data, all participants articulated how they viewed the purpose of theological education and brought up their questions and concerns about what is theology, what is theological education, and who gets to define both arenas. Findings of the study also identify that AANAWTEs were powerless within the construction of theological knowledge. Their perspectives in theology and their experiences as Christian women on the whole were missing and silenced in the patriarchal

context of theological education. Consequently, they turned to feminist theory and feminist theology as alternatives in theological education.

Stanton declares, “You may go over the world and you will find that every form of religion which has breathed upon the earth has degraded women” (1885). Needless to say Christianity is not free of guilty from this charge either. However, what constitutes the doctrines and theologies that 21 billion Christian believers espouse (Barrett & Johnson, 2005) has been a contested terrain and has enthused many Christian and non-Christian scholars on doing research. First of all, what is theology? In scholastic Latin sources, the term came to stand for the rational study of the doctrines of the Christian religion, or more precisely the academic discipline which investigated the coherence and implications of the language and claims of the Bible and of the theological tradition (Theology, ¶. 3). The definition of theological educators in this sense will be *everyone* who claims a Christian and to do research on such an endeavor. The following discussion is about how the stance of Asian/Asian North American women theological educators have been forgotten and not been presented in mainstream white-male theology that is accepted as true by one-third of world population.

Theological Education

The first conclusion of the study defies the purpose of theological education proposed by Kohl (2001): “Theological education is at the center of Christianity-as the seminary goes, so goes the church” (p. 27). He, as influenced by mainstream white-male led theology, asserted that theological institutions are responsible for the direction of the church of the future:

The professors’ lectures, seminars, and textbooks are the foundation on which the leadership of our churches and Christian organizations is built...It follows, then, that the lives of church members and the ministries in which they are involved

will reflect what is taught in the theological schools. The direction in which a theological school is moving, any failure to communicate basic and essential elements of the faith or of ministry, and any undue emphasis on particular formations or functions of ministry will all be replicated in the ministries of the students. (p. 27)

In his ostensible analysis of the current trends in theological education, Kohl believed that it is essential to emphasize how to ensure that church leaders, who were traditionally trained in theological education through accredited theological institutions, are receiving the “best possible training for doing ministry.” In the broader sense, ministry includes formal and informal learning, takes place within the church and outside the church in people’s everyday lives. Analyzing from the different position as opposite to Kohl’s understanding of theological education, Vawter (1995) disputed that theological education provided by theological institutions has failed to meet the expectations of the church. He identified four problematic areas when commenting on seminary education at a meeting of several hundred pastors and Christian leaders in the 1990s. He said, “It is taught by the wrong people in the wrong place with the wrong curriculum and has the wrong oversight” (p. 41).

Apparently, the problem here with regard to the vision of theological education of Vaster and Kohl’s theory is not only the gap between theory and practice but also the multifaceted level of the issues about who benefits and who should benefit from the theological education in reality. Whose interests are at stake at the planning table of theological education? (Cervero, Wilson, & Associates, 2001). Are they Boards of Directors, trustees of theological institutions, accrediting agencies, evaluation teams in the institution? Although Kohl identified the miscommunication between the institutions which provide the theological education and people who are being

ministered to and educated in church, he did not recognize the power relations that result in incompetent church leaders graduating from the theological institutions. Table 1 shows the five priorities in the preparation of a pastor as identified by three groups (Study, 1994). The preparation of a pastor was investigated from 800 lay people, pastors, and theological professors.

Table 1 Five Priorities in the Preparation of a Pastor

Lay priorities	Pastors' priorities	Professors' priorities
1. Spirituality	1. Role model	1. Theological Knowledge
2. Relational skills	2. Management skills	2. Character
3. Character	3. Communication skills	3. Leadership
4. Communication skills	4. Spirituality	4. Communication skills
5. Theological Knowledge	5. Theological Knowledge	5. Counseling skills

In this level of observation, Kohl pinpointed the divergence between theory and practice and suggested the following five directions for developing theological education. They are: 1) changes in subjects to be taught; 2) changes in missiological emphasis; 3) changes in the area of fieldwork; 4) changes in organizational structures; and 5) changes in dealing with financial resources.

All these concerns are resonated with Cervero, Wilson, & Associates' (2001) insights that "political is practical: the ability to get things done." Kohl valued theological education that transmits practical knowledge of how to accomplish something. He believed that this could only be done by encouraging all theological institutions to develop a strategic plan, failing to do so will result in a struggle to be effective or they may not even survive. However, he overlooked the question of whose interests are at stake when designing theological education. Therefore, what

Burns and Cervero (2002) discover would be a good reminder for Kohl because “the ministry...involves negotiating with others, choosing among conflicting wants and interests, developing trust, and knowing the informal and formal organizational ropes. In short, the ministry involves politics” (p. 304). Consequently, the study confirms that theological education suggested above not only misconstrues the meanings of it but also misrepresents whose voices should be included in theological education.

Feminist Theological Education

The participants in this study expounded the principles of feminist theology in their teaching. They believe and hold the teaching philosophy that theological education should be mainly about justice and that feminist analysis must include racism, class, community formation, and alliance building across cultural, racial, and economic barriers (Cornwall Collective, 1980). Moreover, this study confirms these two feminist theologians, Russell and Clarkson (1996), and notes that feminist theological pedagogy is a counter-hegemonic enterprise. They argue, “It promotes the analysis, deconstruction, and reconstruction of all socially-defined categories, including distinctions between the natural and human worlds” (p. 79).

This study asserts that many Christians especially women whose voices and experiences have been wiped out in the theological knowledge embarked on questioning and challenging the construction of theological knowledge and the purpose of theological education. Chopp (1991) in her essay, “Situating the structure: Prophetic feminism and theological education”, states that, “for at least twenty-five years, feminism has offered its resources in North American schools of theological education” (p. 47). She examines what feminists and researchers cite as the current problems in theological education. In addition, there are two significant issues in theological education (Russell & Clarkson, 1996). The first issue is who is and ought to be doing theology

today. The second issue questions what is and ought to be the perspective for practicing theology today. Consequently, feminist theologians assert that some are marginalized in the church's theologizing such as the "non-clergy, black, aboriginals, young children, differently-abled persons, sexual minorities" (p.79). Further, they believe that women should be recognized as capable of making -- and being equipped to make -- their contribution to theology. Who should be doing theology is inseparable from the question, doing theology for whom? This study supports this literature that theological education then should include: the experience of people who are in "poverty and impoverishment, injustice and aspirations toward human dignity and freedom, oppression and the longing for liberation, emptiness and yearning for full life [that] are the stark(?) realities of daily life" (Ng, 1996, p. 241). Thus, with the result of this study, theological education should be a personal, ecclesiastical social transformation process for individuals and for society.

The literature emphasizes that, "In theological education, a large part of the curriculum has been the study of the lives and thought of white, male, Euro-American theologians, to the exclusion of many other voices. More importantly, the theologies done by these people are considered normative, which set the standards and parameters of what 'theology' should be" (Kwok, 1995, p. 144). Furthermore, because patriarchal ideology is ubiquitous in Christian institutions (Kim, 1997), the composite and multiple positionalities of Asian and Asian American Christian women educators become a site for learning as well as a site for struggle. In this regard, this study reveals that AANAWTEs were edified and immersed in theological knowledge constructed and claimed by white Anglo-Saxon Protestant males when they studied in the seminaries. As few Asian/Asian North American women seminarians persisted to become faculty members (Meinzer & Merrill, 2004) at the beginning of their careers they unconsciously

disseminated the same theological perspective without critically examining the sources, but were nevertheless able to embrace and integrate their own positionality as a part of the construction of theological knowledge. Consequently, this study strengthens the perspectives of feminist theologians who have been embarking on re-examining the Bible. Kwok (2000) revealed that,

The Bible emerged from the rich cultures of different races and peoples living in Palestine, Mesopotamia, Africa, and the Mediterranean world. In the history of the Christian church, the Bible has largely interpreted from a white, male, and clerical perspective. As a result, the subtleties of the historical encounter between different cultures, the politics of racial relations, and the hidden voices of women in the biblical account were either overlooked or interpreted from a very biased standpoint. The Bible has been used to legitimize racism, sexism, and classism, as well as to condone colonialism and cultural imperialism. (p. 101)

Therefore, theological classrooms are sites for complex interactions of power in which relationships of privilege and oppression around race, gender, and class are formed in unpredictable ways and these relationships cannot be understood through universal theories about structures of power and oppression (Imel, 1999).

The positionality of Asian/Asian North American women impacts the power dynamics in their classrooms and is negotiated with a variety of strategies

The second conclusion of this study is based on two major premises. The first one is that the positionality of Asian/Asian North American women impacts their learning and teaching in theological education. The second part of the conclusion is that Asian/Asian North American women theological educators therefore developed and used strategies to negotiate the power dynamics in their classrooms. The following discussion is around these two topics. First, all eight

participants experienced some form of power dynamics in their classrooms due to their positionality as Asian/Asian North American women in their classrooms. Then, they developed and utilized a variety of strategies to negotiate these power dynamics both as students and teachers. Overall, they were stereotyped and encountered Androcentrism and white privilege learning and teaching in predominantly-white theological institutions.

First, the characteristic of positionality in adult education is discussed followed by how their positionality influenced their learning as seminary students. Hence, how their positionality affects their teaching in the classrooms as AANAWTEs is addressed. While studying in the seminaries, all participants experienced various modes of discrimination in classrooms as students due to their positionality. For instance, their academic performances were downgraded by their professors and classmates because of sexism, racism, and clericalism. In their learning journey, the participants revealed that a lack of role models resulted from the under representation of Asian/Asian North American women in the field of theological education.

Secondly, the power dynamics, due to their positionality, existed when these Asian/Asian North American Christian women progressed from being students to being faculty members. Their relations with students and other co-teaching colleagues were uneven in classrooms, resulting in challenges to their authority. This conclusion discusses how their positionality critically affected theological education and challenged the construction of knowledge in their teaching and learning. For example, two participants' authority was questioned by their students although they brought the same material and same teaching style as their white female colleagues. Due to students' stereotypical perception of Asian/Asian North American women, both their ascribed and achieved authority were usurped and undermined. Most important, these theological educators needed to establish and reinforce their authority in order to rectify any misperception of their positionality in the classrooms.

Consequently, Asian/Asian North American women theological educators used a variety of strategies to address power dynamics in classroom settings. This conclusion indicates that all participants drew upon various strength as strategies to negotiate the power dynamics in their classrooms. These participants used strategy consisted of their teaching philosophy and faith when encountering power relations. Additionally, they demonstrated that their sense of accomplishment from teaching sustained their work in theological education. With regard to external resources that supported these theological educators, the findings showed that they utilized feminist and critical pedagogy in their classrooms. Additionally, the participants mentioned the importance of keeping close connections with their personal, religious, and professional communities as a strategy for navigating the learning and teaching environment in the context of theological education.

As seen in Chapter 2, in general there have been studies on learning obstacles that Asian/Asian North American women experienced because of their race, gender, ethnicity and age which are complexly intertwined with their positionality in higher education. Yet, there has been one piece of research done on developing teaching materials and instructional strategies for teaching Asian and Asian North American Women's Theologies (Brock *et al.*, 1999). Furthermore, there is literature that reviews how Christian women in immigrant and ethnic churches negotiate their identities and discusses the role of religion in cultural passage from Asia to America (Kim, 1997). However, very little literature has been found on the positionality of Asian and Asian American teachers and the diversity and complexity of their lived experiences. In particular, there has been neither research nor attention paid to these women's positionality with regard to power dynamics in their learning and teaching which they experienced in the context of theological education. As mentioned above, the first topic of the second conclusion of this study bridges the gaps of these studies.

Positionality

It is important to point out that power dynamics are interwoven into all aspects of AANAWTEs' learning and teaching environment. Positionality refers to the fact that "knowledge and voice are always located within the vectors of time, space, and social power" (Barker, 2004). In this sense, the concept of positionality conveys epistemological concerns regarding the who, where, when and why of speaking, judgment and comprehension. Consequently, in order to understand how Asian and Asian North American women theological educators negotiate race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education, this study acknowledges what Barker (2004) stresses, that theological knowledge "is not to be understood as neutral or objective phenomenon but as a social and cultural production since the 'position' from which knowledge is enunciated will shape the very character of that knowledge" (p. 154).

Furthermore, the literature affirms that the characteristic of positionality and shifting identities that emerged for Asian/Asian North American women educators cannot be ignored. As Poststructuralists highlight the notion of "constantly shifting identity," (St. Pierre, 2003) they propose that as women examine the impact of social systems of privilege and oppression on their own identity, including their beliefs and values, the "discourse" is disrupted, thus shifting their identity as well as increasing their capacity for agency. In addition, the result of this study also highlighted one salient aspect of the positionality issue that surfaced in the practice of Asian/Asian North American women educators is gender. Poststructuralists suggest that rather than being a fixed characteristic in a person, gender should be seen as a fluid variable which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times. Butler (1999) emphasized and expressed that certain cultural configurations of gender have seized a hegemonic hold. In other words, they have come to seem natural in our present culture. She calls for subversive action in

the present through “gender trouble” which involves the mobilization, subversive confusion, and proliferation of genders and therefore of identity.

The literature shows that the idea that Asian Pacific Americans have been a successful group has been a popular stereotype perpetuated by the mass media for more than three decades. Particularly, this study shows that the myth of “model minority,” stereotypes, biases, and obstacles faced by Asian/Asian North Americans (Chan, 1991; Dudley, 1997; Osajima, 1988; Petersen, 1966; Root, 1998; Woo, 1997), was also experienced by these women theologians both as students and teachers in the context of theological education in this study. In general, the outcome of this study disputes the myth of the "model minority" suggesting that Asian Pacific Americans have succeeded in the United States in spite of racism and are able to achieve success (Petersen, 1966). In contrast, this study reveals that AANAWTEs experienced not only racism but also sexism and other forms of discrimination due to their positionality in the patriarchal context of theological education. For instance, this study shows that Asian/Asian North American Christian women experienced inequality and discrimination from faculty and peers while they were seminary students.

Due to the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity and age of AANAWTEs, their academic performance was devalued and their voices were silenced by teachers and peer learners. Many of the participants disclosed their disappointment at the lack of role models and mentors in their learning and teaching journey, which implies that Asian/Asian North American women theological educators have not been truly successful in the academy. This study affirms that the myth of “model minority” obscures the structural barriers and inequities, claiming that any problems are simply due to different cultural values or failure of individual effort (Woo, 1997). Furthermore, it confirms that, “Each ethnic group has a different history and a simplistic method

of modeling which assumes the experience of all immigrants is the same and ignores the socio-structural context in which a certain kind of achievement occurred” (Woo, 1997, p. 221).

This study also demonstrates those stereotypes by stating that “Asian or Asian American women are characterized as childlike, fragile, and innocent as in ‘China dolls,’ ‘Polynesian babies,’ and ‘Asian Thumbelinas’ (the latter appearing in some of the reptilian monster movies)” (Root, 1998, p. 213).

Asian/Asian North American women bring a unique development and a personal faith journey into their learning and teaching environment. Since these Asian/Asian North American women theological educators are teaching in a field that is conceptualized as a white male field, their positionality affects both achieved and ascribed authority in their classrooms. Many students taught by these Asian/Asian North American women theological educators had never had an Asian/Asian North American teacher, especially not an Asian/Asian North American woman theological educator. As a result, they either devalued the experience or actively resisted the experience. Furthermore, students’ expectations surrounding the positionality of the teacher influenced their interactions with the teacher.

Adult Education

This study strongly supports what Cervero, Wilson, & Associates argue, “Adult education has a significant role in the distribution not only of knowledge but also of social, economic, and political power. We can no longer believe that adult education is a neutral activity in this continual struggle for knowledge and power” (2001, p. xv) because theological education is an environment where adult education takes place. Asian and Asian North American women theologians point to the contextual, historical and political nature of knowledge and urge theological educators to embrace a plurality of knowledge and diverse cultural styles of knowing.

Ways of knowing certainly imply ways of teaching. The finding that the positionality of Asian/Asian North American women impacted their learning and teaching in theological education upholds Tisdell's (1995) belief that "Educators must be aware of the politics of knowledge production and dissemination: what counts as knowledge, who is involved in its production, and their relative positions in the power structure" (p. 19). The assumption that the canon of knowledge is fixed and universal, defined by the white, male, and European experience, impacts Asian and North Asian American theological educators' ways of teaching and their functioning as educators, especially when they attempt to introduce Asian or Asian North American perspectives into their respective theological disciplines.

Mohanty advocates, "Education represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations. Thus, education becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of the lived culture of individuals and groups situated in asymmetrical social and political positions" (1994, p. 147). This study reveals that the complexity of the Asian and Asian North American theological educator as a racial minority woman is marginalized by the White mainstream. As Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2001; 1998) suggested, adult education must be considered and be handled as they occur in the real world because the power relationships that structure our social lives cannot possibly disappear in the classroom. Thus, Asian American woman theological educators must recognize their positionality in relation to their learners. Besides, the results of this study also confirm the research of Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) on their adult education classrooms. They examined the educational philosophy that has prevailed with most adult educators. One philosophy positions the role of facilitator as if the hierarchical power relation does not exist in the teaching and learning dynamics. The outcomes of their study showed that the power relationships that structure social life do not stop at the

classroom door. The same is true in classrooms of Asian/Asian North American women theological educators. This research advocates that relationships present in a society that is structured around class, race, gender, and sexual orientation are also played out in all adult theological education classrooms and have a profound effect on the teaching and learning processes.

Using the approach of sociological lenses to evaluate the adult education learning environment, this research is related to Johnson-Bailey and Cervero's attempting to raise consciousness of how the adult educators' positionality impacts classroom learning. Their clear standpoint was that neither teachers nor learners are generic individuals; therefore, we must understand who learners and teachers are and what they bring to classrooms with their personal agendas borne by their race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation.

This study shows that the mechanisms used by the participants to cope with the power dynamics reported in this study reflect the micro-aspects of social change in the classroom that have been explicated in the findings. Furthermore, these mechanisms also serve as indications of macro-aspects revealing the significance and influences on social change. As the literature noted, understanding positionality means understanding where you stand with respect to power, an essential skill for any social change agent (Takacs, 2002). Furthermore, Russell and Clarkson (1996) describe that women play a critical role that challenges the theological method. As active agents of change, these women theological educators put efforts into breaking down the ancestral weight of male-centered, patriarchal church structures that exclude women from the construction of theological knowledge, from theological education and from playing a major role in ministry.

Consequently, this study revealed that the perseverance with which the participants upheld their learning and teaching in spite of encountering barriers and discrimination due to their

positionality as Asian/Asian North American women theological educators struggling to provide an alternative paradigm for an anti-sexism and anti-racism enterprise. The educators who bring distinctive positionality play the role of social agents and pioneers striving for equity.

Furthermore, the strategies they utilized in responding to discrimination in learning and teaching played an integral part in moving them toward social justice. For instance, the ways by which these women theological educators authenticated their authority in their classrooms signifies that to appropriately exercise one's authority in a White-predominant learning and teaching environment is a proactive and mandatory action in the patriarchal context of theological education. Consequently, this study supports what Maher and Tetreault (2001), Tisdell (1998), Sheared and Sissel (2001), and other researchers have attested about how power relationships outside the classroom are indubitably perpetuated inside the classroom, which is the site of their struggle for equality of women educators of color. Therefore, one of the strategies that the participants employ to navigate in a White-predominant environment is the assertion of claiming their affirmative power, which promotes not only an environment that is more just for learning and teaching but also brings about social change in a larger scheme.

Feminist Standpoint Epistemology

Harding (1993) claims that race, class and gender form a matrix of privilege, and race is constructed in individual, structural and symbolic forms. Essentially, the matrix of privilege is a distortion and all units in the matrix are not autonomous but interdependent. That means the all areas which comprise the positionality of Asian/Asian North American women are interlocking and cannot be discussed or analyzed separately. Harding also points out that "science" is a contested zone as to theological knowledge that Asian/Asian North American women theologians teach in the context of theological education. No knowledge can be valued from

“strong objectivity” (Harding, 1993) without taking the notion of “positionality” into account in particular theological knowledge brought by these Asian/Asian North American women. In this research, AANAWTEs not only embrace their objectivity but also critique it. They strive to protect themselves from dangerous depoliticization and to investigate their so-called (but nonexistent) neutrality (Harding, 1993).

This research affirms that there is not “pure” theology which ignores the origins of the knowers’ race, gender, ethnicity, and age -- those embedded in one’s positionality. This research also shows that it is preposterous to believe that the construction of theological knowledge requires the elimination of all the social values which form Asian/Asian North American women theological educators’ beliefs.

This research resonates with what Harding (1993) stresses: All knowers are not abstract individuals or invisible observers but are situated through their communities. AANAWTEs, as learners and teachers, are redefining participants in the construction of theological knowledge who are not abstract individuals or invisible observers outside the realm that is defined by the mainstream: white, middle-class males. As outsiders and marginalized knowers, Asian/Asian North American women theological educators contribute their perspectives to achieve more complete, undistorted, and holistic theological knowledge.

Feminist Theological Pedagogy

The third topic of the second conclusion of this study is that Asian/Asian North American women theological educators developed and used strategies to negotiate the power dynamics in their learning and teaching. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) found that “adults could act out on such entitlements (be aware of their positionality) consciously or subconsciously” (p. 397). Therefore, this study indicates that the participants utilized the strategies to cope with power

relationships in their classrooms underpinned and advocated by feminist theological pedagogy (Russell & Clarkson, 1996). According to Russell and Clarkson (1996), feminist pedagogy holds the fundamental premises that knowledge -- and, indeed, all of human reality are socially constructed. Therefore, the purpose of feminist theological education should be to examine the cultural and social production and reproduction of knowledge, ideologies, and class, race, and gender identities in the field of theology. They further identified three characteristics of feminist pedagogy which were found in this study: 1) Grounding in one's own social location within a community of accountability; 2) A commitment to alliance-building between communities and cultures that emphasizes lived experience and the importance of individual and communal life, and 3) A political commitment to change the position of women in every racial, social, economic, and sexual-identity group and, therefore, to change the society.

As noted above, this study demonstrates that as these Asian/Asian North American women theological educators negotiate their power in a White-predominant learning and teaching environment, their commitments to feminist and critical pedagogy enhance mutual understanding and knowledge between the students and themselves. By engaging in feminist pedagogy, these educators authorize their students to question their authority as teachers while at the same time that they improve students' critical thinking in the interpretation of their theology and faith. Moreover, these Asian/Asian North American women theological educators take conflicts as an opportunity to change the controversial perspectives on racism and sexism. They have created an open environment for learning and teaching in order to promote a democratic classroom. Therefore, the ingrained stereotypes about Asian Americans and their lower status quo in society as Asian American women might be transformed by their endeavor.

The construction of a gender-and race-balanced curriculum must first be embraced by educators. Challenging the biases in traditional assumptions of knowledge production and

transmission is a critical step in transforming the existing curriculum. It will clearly imply a paradigm shift in the theoretical and theological framework and assumptions of knowledge that one brings to the classroom (Brock et al., 1999). These extra requirements place constraints on their struggle to teach as effectively and faithfully as they would like (Brock et al., 1999). The call for recognition of cultural diversity, rethinking of ways of knowing, deconstruction of old epistemologies, and the concomitant demand that there be a transformation in the classrooms of theological education, has been a necessary revolution (hooks, 1994). This study also asserts that there is a need for a new learning of the history of Asian and Asian North American Christian women educators who have been invisible - their cultures and their lived experience, as well as the social construction of categories such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and disability. While these women do challenge the status quo, resistance is generated as these educators feel inadequately prepared to deal with the diverse teaching materials and dynamics in the multicultural learning environment.

Furthermore, the literature consistently demonstrates the significance of the inclusion of women's voices in general, and racial minority women in particular, in feminist theological education. In Western society, received practices (Russell & Clarkson, 1996) aim to design education to reproduce the social and economic relationships that form the hegemonic international order. Educators assume that objective knowledge about the world is possible; that one truth can be found by the normative human being that is European, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, literate, and middle to upper-class. Most important, women's perceptions and perspectives should be integrated into the interpretation of the Bible, rather than passively accepting male-led biblical revelation without suspicion and reexamination. Therefore, this study upholds AANAWTEs' endeavor to make their voices heard in learning and teaching as they

contribute their viewpoints and lived experiences. The theological knowledge generated within their distinctive positionality is opposed to that of mainstream, normative, male-centered theology and seeks to prove that “There is not one hegemonic discourse unfairly claiming the privilege of being universal but rather the concept of all nations, praising God” (Russell & Clarkson, 1996, p. 283).

An Asian North American theological educator, Ng, argues that the history of Pacific Asian existence in the United States and Canada has significant impact on peoples’ religious life. Pacific Asian American immigration experiences affect both the development of individuals in Christian faith communities and the religious education goals of those communities (Ng, 1997). This study focuses on Asian and Asian North Americans who have been nurtured and fostered by the compound philosophies of ancient indigenous Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Some of them were born in a theistic country and converted to Christianity later in their life. Some of them were brought up in a Catholic tradition. Their sundry religious backgrounds indeed intermingle with their Christian faith, their relationship and interaction with people, and their professional practice as educators. Accordingly, these women’s sociocultural values -- including an historical overview of their philosophical and religious roots -- obviously underscore their different approaches to handling interactions with students who mainly come from the background of Christianity. Frequently, the intermingling of their different sociocultural, religious, and historical perspectives with white male-centered theology caused them to be regarded as deviant from the patriarchal context of Christianity, and consequently to be considered heretical by their students whose theology is deeply ingrained by the fundamentalist Christian theology.

*Perpetuated racism and sexism is experienced by Asian/Asian North American women
theological educators in the institutional context of theological education*

This final conclusion of the study is to explore how race and gender dynamics frame the experiences of Asian/Asian North American women theological educators in the institutional context of theological education. First, the power relationships were evidently out-of-balance between these women theological educators and their colleagues. Owing to the positionality of the Asian/Asian North American women theological educators, they were not able to move within the structure but were only able to work from the margin in the predominantly white educational environment. Moreover, how the culture, tradition and context of the institutions influenced their teaching practice in addition to their positionality was described as well.

This study shows that Asian/Asian North American women theological educators experienced racism and sexism that are perpetuated by the ingrained patriarchal ideologies not only in the society but also in theological education. Their race and gender frame their experiences in the institutional context of theological education by and large. The one piece of educational research on Asian American women in higher education was conducted by Hune (1998) who concludes that they were underrepresented and overlooked as students, faculty members, and administrators. This conclusion also applies to the how these women were treated in the context of theological education. In the *Fact Book on Theological Education 2004-2005* (Meinzer & Merrill, 2004), a total of only 31 Asian/Asian North American full-time faculty members are listed -- which is less than one percent out of 3,607 full-time faculty members teaching in accredited theological institutions in North America. If it takes five years to prepare a full-time faculty member to teach in a theological institution, there was only two percent of total seminarians in the year 2000 who actually entered and worked in theological education in the

year 2004. This miniscule number of Asian/Asian North American women theological educators has encountered overt racism and sexism in theological institutions.

The literature indicates that Asian Pacific American female faculty members in general are insufficiently recognized for their academic expertise but are called upon when diversity issues need to be addressed, especially those in ethnic or women's studies. In this study, Asian/Asian North American women theological educators were often marginalized because of their research interests, while those in "traditional" fields were considered as if they were ethnic scholars regardless of their expertise (Hall & Sandler, 1986; Hune, 1998). The result of this study also confirms that difficulties faced by AANAWTEs included lack of mentoring, the absence of a sense of community with their colleagues, the fact that their leadership is ignored and underrated, and indifference to their contribution to the theological knowledge in the field. Besides, these concerns may be questioned by whites and sporadically by other minorities who do not see AANAWTEs as racially-disadvantaged or who label them as the "model minority" (Hune, 1998). Overall, the literature review in higher education is highly applicable and resonated with this study. For instance, the academy of higher education has not yet acknowledged that racial and gender discrimination and stereotypes of Asian/Asian North American women exist. Their lack of representation in managerial and academic administrative positions in academe is subject to biases such as stature and youthful appearance, language and accent discrimination, communication and leadership styles, and notions about appropriate roles for women. Ideas of competence and authority are culturally based and socially constructed. As a consequence, these preconceptions undermine their authority as faculty members in the institutions.

With regard to participants' experiences with Androcentrism and white privilege in their interactions with colleagues, Asian/Asian North American women theological educators were

affected by cultural colonialism which denotes the ideology of “Ethnocentrism.” Barger (2003) stressed that,

Ethnocentrism" is a commonly used word in circles where ethnicity, inter-ethnic relations, and similar social issues are of concern. The usual definition of the term is "thinking one's own group's ways are superior to others" or "judging other groups as inferior to one's own." But this definition only reflects part of the attitude involved in ethnocentrism, and, more importantly, does not address the underlying issue of why people do this. Most people, thinking of the shallow definition, believe that they are not ethnocentric, but are rather "open-minded" and "tolerant." (Ethnocentrism, ¶.1)

This study concludes that these women theological educators were undervalued not only in their professional knowledge but also in all aspects of their lives. Park (1988) affirms the experiences of the participants in this study whose culture was invisible to their colleagues and to their institutions. He believes that cultural hegemony is a form of ethnocentrism that rebuffs the history of the colonized and fails to recognize and yet represses their culture. Further, the delineation of “good” and “bad” culture draws attention away from societal factors and places the blame for racial inequality on minorities.

In spite of “...vilification, exotification, subjugation, and infantilization, which deflects a process of adaptation and transformation....In a country and in many cultures where gender carries an inferior status, women’s resistance is remarkable” (Root, 1998, p. 211). This study asserts that AANAWTEs experienced inequalities every day that undermine their access to the academy, particularly for the females. Hune (1997) informs the participants teaching in the field

of theological education that, “formal structures and edicts alone are incapable of changing the hierarchy of higher education and replacing a ‘chilly climate’ and a ‘revolving door’ for women with a climate of inclusion and advancement” (p. 193). Instead, attention must be given to the power of informal practices, the everyday interactions of sexism and racism, which preserve and perpetuate the dominant order in the institutional context of theological education.

Implications and Recommendations

This study focused on the power dynamics that were experienced by Asian/Asian North American women theological educators and how they negotiated their positionality when they encountered these power relations. There has not been any research done on the power dynamics in any teaching and learning of Asian/Asian North American women educators in general that of women theological educators in particular. Furthermore, no research examines the significances of positionality of Asian/Asian North American women theological educators impacting their learning and teaching. Therefore, there are implications of theory and practice found in this study.

Practical Implications

There are a number of practical implications which develop out of this study. Asian/Asian North American women theological educators have been the only racial minority in their teaching institutions. In the aspect of educational implications, first of all, it is anticipated that this study’s findings will provide a bridge for Asian and Asian North American Christian women who have been struggling at their teaching ministry due to their race and gender within the patriarchal context of Christianity. From the institutional perspective, this study informs trustees, faculty members and administrators who are in the position of power to take the positionality of the applicants into account and move toward a more holistic and inclusive approach when

recruiting and retaining faculty members in higher education in general-- and in theological education in particular. From the Asian/Asian North American women theological educator's viewpoints, this study helps them consider themselves as change agents and assets through acknowledging and affirming their contributions to the institutions. With regard to the implications in the religious aspect, Christian women have hidden themselves behind the curtains and silently but assiduously made their efforts in Christian communities. Furthermore, this study provide a resource of reflection for church people—women and men, lay and ordained—whose churches are affected by ministries distorted by sexist and racist theological education. Most important, this study adds the voices of Asian/Asian North American women to the patriarchal context of Christianity and provides wisdom and hope to the rest of women of color. Those with similar backgrounds but teaching in the other fields also will find this study inspiring and applicable to their situations as Asian/Asian North American women educators. Furthermore, in the management of pedagogical issues, the results of this study offer substantial strategies for both pedagogical and administrative tools not only as AANAWTEs but also any minority educators when they encounter discrimination in their teaching and learning. Besides, it will also address pedagogical issues in environments such as church, theological continuing education, and seminary education. Lastly, this study helps clergy and laypersons of the church understand the lived experiences of AANAWTE so they can support them personally and spiritually as a network and as supportive communities.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this research makes an important contribution to the literature on feminism, women in the academy, and the theorizing of personal experience in general. In this study, the participants' narratives reflect a form of passionate, embodied knowing, intertwining critical

insights with stories of struggle, commitment, and courage. In addition, this study fills the gap in the literature regarding teaching and learning of Asian and Asian North American women in adult education, especially in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education. Moreover, this study of minority Asian and Asian North American women adds to the multicultural facets of feminist theory. Further, it contributes to the construction of knowledge of feminist pedagogy and feminist theological education, broadens the scope of theological education and also deepens and makes the substance of theological knowledge more inclusive. Lastly, this study enables adult educators to be more aware of the importance of taking into account racial and gender elements in the teaching and learning of adult educators. This research adds to the literature on women of color in leadership positions and, more specifically, it bridges the gap for understanding Asian American women educational leaders. Educational institutions might use this research as a guide to educate Asian American women educational leaders in leadership preparation programs and to provide appropriate counseling and professional training support for Asian American women interested in pursuing administrative careers in education.

Future Research

The results of this study point to additional research beyond the scope of this work. Johnson-Bailey, Gong and Lee emphasize, “There is no generic feminist pedagogy. The feminist pedagogy of our practices is one that needs to be informed and honed by our positionalities as Asian and African American women. Such a pedagogy must not only take into account how our cultures shape our practices, but how our colleagues and especially our students respond to what they perceive as our cultural ‘uniqueness’ and accompanying mandatory racialized and gendered agendas” (2005, p. 1). Therefore, to undergo a research on how students and colleagues regard Asian/Asian North American women as theological educators is imperative. In addition, several

directions could be considered, such as the fields of religious studies, multicultural education, feminist pedagogy, adult religious education, and ethnicity and feminist studies. First of all, in the field of religious studies, the literature and the construction of knowledge has been emphasized on the white male Christianity, more research should include the lived experiences of all non-white Christians and theological educators. In terms of the areas of education, there has not been any empirical research on the learners who are Asian/Asian North American in the context of theological education. To initiate studies on Asian/Asian North American learners will be a catalyst to further study on different genders within the same racial groups. Furthermore, it would be enlightening to expand on the different denominations of the participants' religious affiliations to investigate how culture and theology embed in various denominations influence Asian/Asian North American women theological educators' learning and teaching in the patriarchal context of Christian education. Lastly, there was a common thread shared by the participants in this study that indicates such research would be beneficial.

Finally, this study shows that the positionality of Asian/Asian North American women theological educators is not fixed but shifting and fluid. Besides, Lee (2002) stated that, while representing only 4.1 percent of the United States population, according to the United States Census Bureau, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the United States as well as among the most diverse. Individuals in this population come from 43 different Asian and Pacific Island groups and speak at least 32 different languages. They are also educationally and economically diverse (Lee, 2002). Therefore this study also draws attention to the umbrella term of "Asian American" which presupposes the commonality of learning and teaching experiences of theirs (Harvey, 2002). As a matter of fact, the participants in this study all are descendents of North East Asian. Therefore, the vital question should be asked

is that “who are Asian American women” which leads to further in-depth research even doing research using the case study of learning and teaching experiences of individual ethnicity to evade the temptation of generalizing the experiences of diverse Asian Americans.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

I, _____ agree to participate in the research study, “Navigating a way out of no way in a White-dominated society: Asian/Asian North American women theologians in the patriarchal context of theological education,” conducted by Jannette Wei-Ting W. P. Gutierrez, Adult Education, The University of Georgia, (706)353-2474 under the direction of Dr. Ronald M. Cervero, Adult Education, The University of Georgia, (706)542-2214. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary; I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research study records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The purpose for this research study is to understand how Asian and North American women negotiate race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education.
2. The procedures are as follows: I will be expected to meet with the researcher at a mutually agreed upon time and location and discuss semi-structured questions pertaining to the above stated research study for approximately one to two hours. The interview will be audio taped. I will provide official records and documents: such as syllabi, journals, letters, and resumes, if available. These documents will be maintained in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s private office and will be destroyed after three years.
3. Through the interview I will gain some insight into the issue of race and gender in the patriarchal context of Christian theological education that may affect the theory generated on the identity as an Asian/Asian North American woman theologian teaching in a White-dominated society.
4. If, during the course of this research study, I feel any stress or am upset as I am recalling unpleasant past and/or current teaching and learning experiences, I will feel free to talk with the researcher about how I can best deal with these feelings. I may also choose not to answer certain questions posed by the researcher.
5. No risks are foreseen. I will be assigned a pseudonym and a number as a code for tape recording for my protection. All tapes will be erased after one year. My interview will be transcribed and the data will be held until 11-23-04.
6. The results of this participation will be confidential, and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. A copy of this research study will be available for me if requested.
7. The researcher will answer any further questions about this research study, now or during the course of the project at (706)353-2474 or email to jannettewg@hotmail.com

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature of Researcher/ Date

(706)353-2474, jannettewg@hotmail.com

Signature of Participant/ Date

PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM. KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE RESEARCHER.

For questions or problems about your rights please call or write: Chris A. Joseph, Ph.D., Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide Used for the Pilot Study

1. Describe your faith journey.
2. When did you first recognize your interests in theological education?
3. Describe the factors that have influenced your theological pursuit?
4. How have you been encouraged in your pursuit of a theological career?
5. How have you been discouraged in your pursuit of a theological career?
6. Tell me about your work.
7. Describe your experiences in the classroom as a student in your theological education.
8. Describe your classroom experience.
9. Based on what you have heard or observed, how would you describe interactions between students and other teachers at your institution.
10. Describe your students' reactions to you when they first encounter you.
11. Describe your interactions with your students in the classroom.
12. What type of evaluations you get from your students?
13. Describe the factors that have influenced your teaching practices.
14. How has your teaching practices evolved during your career?
15. Describe your feelings toward your profession/field.
16. How do you perceive yourself as a theological educator?

APPENDIX C

Revised Interview Guide

- 1 What religion were you raised in?
 - 1.1 Describe your religious experiences from your childhood.
 - 1.2 Describe your religious experiences from your adulthood.
- 2 When did you first recognize your interests in theological education?
 - 2.1 What influenced your choice?
 - 2.2 Who encouraged you?
 - 2.3 What barriers did you encounter?
 - 2.4 What or who helped you?
- 3 What do you do in your classrooms, lecture, role play, discussion?
- 4 How do your students act towards you on the first day of class?
- 5 Describe your interactions with your students in the classroom.
- 6 What is your relation with your students? Are these relations typical for other faculty?
- 7 What is your relation with other faculty?
- 8 Describe the factors that have influenced your teaching practices.
- 9 Describe how your students respond to your teaching? What type of evaluations you get from your students?
- 10 Do you see a difference in your teaching over years?
- 11 How has your teaching practices evolved during your career? Describe these changes.
- 12 Describe your feelings toward your profession/field.
- 13 How do you perceive yourself as a theological educator?
- 14 Give me negative and positive examples of your interactions with students.