

BECOMING COLORFULLY HUMAN:
A PASTORAL THEOLOGY OF THE IMMIGRANT
AND THE COMMUNITY

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There are not many social issues that command more public attention than immigration does in the world today. It is because, whether in the United States or elsewhere in the world, immigration and migration have become ubiquitous and undeniable features of contemporary life, born out of, and reflecting a confluence of, complex factors at work both locally and globally. From major urban centers to remote villages across the globe, the effects of immigration and migration are being proved significant on all levels of the society.

Though it has been historically important for humans to be able to move around in search of safety, food, and community, as this mobility was often a factor in survival and prosperity of individuals and groups, the unprecedented scale of immigration and migration taking place currently in the world, and the ensuing wide-ranging implications, reactions, and public policies, require a critical interdisciplinary approach to the investigation of this complex phenomenon more urgently than any time in the past. An examination of the growing debate on immigration within the United States suggests that a comprehensive treatment of the subject is difficult to achieve. Namely, a viable theoretical framework that addresses the person of the immigrant seems to be lacking in the public discussion. A. R. Zorberg states the questions of human identity and agency as, “Who is human?” and “Who is in the position to dictate and control the definitions of human being?” have been absent in the immigration debate.¹

¹ A. R. Zorberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 12.

For these reasons, there is a need to develop hermeneutical models that can critically inform the discussion of immigration by perceiving immigration through the vantage point of human identity, agency, and relationality. Specifically, there needs to be a discussion about the ethics of protecting and accommodating both the immigrant and the local² and a careful analysis of how economic, social, and political policies are being negotiated and implemented presently. Within the field of practical theology, this calls for an understanding of the ethical relationship between the immigrant and the local that brings religious traditions, resources, and practices of informing human dignity and hospitality into an interdisciplinary conversation with other fields of study.

Pastoral theology, a branch of practical theology, which has taken a turn for an increased engagement with public matters in the last couple of decades, is strategically situated to address a topic such as immigration. Pastoral theological method can be of particular relevance to the discussion of immigration because it links personal and public experiences in analysis and implication and is conducive to developing norms and practices of care for individuals and communities in social, relational, and political webs. My primary agenda for this dissertation was to test the utility of pastoral theological method as a public theology in relation to immigration. It was to see if speaking to the lived experience of a particular people could challenge the ethical assumptions of public immigration policies and attitudes and lead to more inclusive values and practices.³ Specifically, I was interested in finding out if a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community could help frame the immigrant and the local as fellow human beings with inalienable rights and a shared future, thereby promoting a collaborative,

² By 'the local,' I am referring to the members of the society who see themselves as the native citizens of the country irrespective of their heritage and see immigrants as newcomers to their society.

³ N. Ramsay, "Pastoral Theology as Public Theology: Revolutions in the Fourth Area." In *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*, ed. N. Ramsay (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004): 45-64.

communal, and resourceful response to this complex and compelling enterprise of human mobility and resettlement.

The pastoral theological method makes it imperative to speak to the immigrant's actual experiences of immigrating, arriving, and settling and their implications as a source of theological reflection and construction in order to carry out the aforementioned task. Within a postmodern, multicultural, and religiously diverse context, this task then becomes a mandate for exploring the process by which the immigrant's sense of personhood is negotiated and revised within one's "living human web,"⁴ and it privileges the subjective meanings and values to which immigrants subscribe in their journey of immigration. In this regard, how the concepts of self, the other, and the divine within the person of the immigrant come to be developed can be a proper domain of exploration and clarification.

The goal of this study was to explore the immigrant's selfhood as mediated in their experiences and perspectives. This emphasis on the person of the immigrant as well as the person of the local would hopefully generate important implications of relationality and mutuality, which would create a space within the public forum to ask the questions of "how to understand" and "how to accommodate" immigrants so as to expand the conversation.

Furthermore, the study investigated whether the immigrant's experience of uprooting from their homes, traveling across borders, and settling in a new land speaks to that which is fundamental and essential about the nature of human life and whether the questions that arise in the immigration enterprise are necessarily reflexive and existential in nature and probe the meaning and movement of life, community, and even faith. If the answers to these questions were affirmative, then the immigrant's experience would have the potential to be a fertile source

⁴ B. J. Miller-McLemore, "The Human Web: Reflections on the State of Pastoral Theology," *Christian Century* (April 7, 1993): 366-369.

of material for visioning human life in a new light for individuals and communities. On a deeper interpersonal and relational level, the significance of the immigrant experience could be further appropriated if identities, relationships, and worldviews of both the immigrant and the local were understood as a natural outcome of meaningful and symbiotic encounter with each other.

To this end, the lived experience of Korean immigrants was researched and examined in the study. I chose Korean immigrants as the focus of my research for two reasons. First, I am a 1st generation immigrant from Korea, and I have shared in the Korean immigrant journey. Therefore, to speak about my community is an exercise of agential empowerment. Second, it is because Asian immigrants as a whole represent a neglected part of the immigration story in the United States. The historian Ronald Takaki states that this faulty and imbalanced Eurocentric reading of the American history, which heavily focuses on the contribution of European immigrants in the making of this country while leaving out the historical importance of Asian immigrants, is of great injustice and an impediment in improving racial relations in the U.S. He implies that Asian immigrants were historically treated as “strangers” by American society and this, he credits, was largely due to their “color” of skin.⁵ Thus, the experience of Asian Americans speaks powerfully of racial discrimination and systemic marginalization against minorities in this country and reveals the U.S. government’s inconsistent and often unfavorable immigration policies toward non-white immigrants.

Despite this much-shared legacy as Asian Americans in the U.S., Korean Americans differ in many significant ways from other Asian immigrant groups, and this recognition qualifies my study as limited in its implications and generalizations. The historical context, including the domestic situation in Korea, within which Korean immigration to the U.S. started

⁵ R. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), 13.

and their subsequent experience of acculturation took place, makes their story particular and different from that of others. However particular their experience might be, I wanted to probe if there were certain qualities of their experience that could be conducive to speaking of being human in community in such a way that helps imagine new relational ethics of tolerance, mutuality, and accountability between the immigrant and the local. This effort in speaking about the Korean American immigrant experience is one part of the bigger conversation about immigration and the immigrant that is currently on-going in the public forum, which contains many diverse racial, ethnic, and political representations.

To discuss the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S., I locate my work within the wider context of previously published scholarship on the subject of Korean immigrants and their experience and note my specific contribution to the field. There have been so far three major fields of study that have produced works of significance in relation to Korean immigrants. First, there are scholars in the fields of literature, history, and women's studies such as Elaine H. Kim, Heinz Insu Fenkl, Young-Key Kim-Renaud, Roy Richard Grinker, Kirk W. Larsen, You-me Park, Patricia Pei-chang Chu, and Nora Okja Keller, whose works have been making a critical contribution to Korean American scholarship. Second, there are scholars in the fields of sociology, education, social work, anthropology, and psychology such as Luke Kim, Pyong Gap Min, Won Moo Hurh, Eunju Lee, and Young Lee Hertig, whose pioneering works on Korean immigrants and their communities have been well recognized. Particularly, Won Moo Hurh's *Korean Immigrants in America*,⁶ Pyong Gap Min's *Changes and Conflicts*,⁷ and Young Lee

⁶ W. M. Hurh, *Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation* (London: Associated University Press, 1984).

⁷ P. G. Min, *Changes and Conflicts: Korean Immigrant Families in New York* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998).

Hertig's *Cultural Tug of War*⁸ are basic textbooks on the topic of the Korean immigration experience. Then, there are theologians such as Jung Young Lee, Sang Hyun Lee, and Andrew and Sung Park whose works laid the foundation of contextualized Korean immigrant theology for others to follow.

This study builds upon the works of many of the aforementioned scholars, but, at the same time, it proposes a new trajectory of interdisciplinary scholarship. I approach the subject of the Korean immigration experience from a pastoral theological perspective and engage in the work of theological reflection with the lived experience of immigrants as its theoretical basis. Specifically, I present constructive proposals of relational ethics and theological anthropology with the purpose of informing the immigration discussion, and, to do this, I bring various sources, particularly those in the Korean immigration experience, social sciences, and Christian tradition, into an interdisciplinary discussion. Whereas other scholars primarily work out of theological and theoretical positions in their discussion of the immigrant, I locate the contribution of my work in allowing theological reflection to grow out of this interface of life, theory, and practice. In short, my work represents a new direction in the contextual, intercultural, and pastoral theological scholarship.

There are four theologians whose works, in my understanding, are being continued and expanded conceptually by my work. I start with the works of Jung Young Lee and Sang Hyun Lee whose thoughts on the concept of existential marginality factor seminally into my framework of relational ethics and theological anthropology. I also engage in my work the concepts of *Han* and *Cheong* as articulated theologically by Andrew Sung Park and Wonhee Anne Joh in their respective works. My research on the lived experience of Korean immigrants

⁸ Y. L. Hertig, *Cultural Tug of War: The Korean Immigrant Family and Church in Transition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001).

engages in a critical dialogue with the ideas of these scholars to generate new meanings and visions for being human in community in the context of immigration in our globalized world.

As a pastoral theologian, my method was to take a contextual, constructive, and interdisciplinary perspective to studying immigration as well as the lived experience of Korean immigrants as a proper location for doing theology. The research data came from the life stories of Korean immigrants via case studies, in-depth interviews, and a survey of biographical materials, historical documents, and works of literature regarding Korean immigrants in the U.S. Then the findings from the collected data were brought into conversation with other sources in theology and social sciences to create a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community.

To carry out this constructive work of arriving at a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community, I divided this dissertation into ten chapters. Chapter One presents a brief introduction on the topic of immigration and an argument for critical hermeneutical models that are needed to ethically frame the on-going immigration debate in the U.S. I state the case for a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community based on the lived experience of immigrants that takes seriously their humanity and identity as a viable critical model. In this study, it is Korean immigrants whose life stories and narratives of immigration provide the material for research and theological reflection.

In Chapter Two, I present a concise overview of the brief history of research and the pastoral theological method including the qualitative research methodology used in constructing a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community. I introduce the Korean socio-emotional construct of *Cheong* as a potential paradigm for informing relationality and communality between the immigrant and the local. The pastoral theological method utilizes a

revised critical correlation in which theological sources and social sciences engage in an interdisciplinary constructive dialogue of mutual revision.

Chapter Three proceeds with my presentation of the research method, which utilized case studies, in-depth interviews, and a survey of biographical, fictional, and historical documents as tools to derive salient themes and narratives of the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. In the discussion is included the method of narrative analysis utilized in data collection and analysis stages. Narrative Analysis' unique ability to uncover important moments of identity formation and transition in participants' narratives is highlighted.

Chapters Four and Five focus on the presentation of the findings from case studies, in-depth interviews, and the surveyed literature. Themes of faith, identity, family, and community, which were found to be important in participants' narratives of immigration, are illustrated. The narratives of "we-ness" found in the in-group experience of Korean immigrants are seen indicative of the shared need for safety, belongingness, and community. The surveyed literature discloses a historically situated and embodied nature of the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. A historical analysis of Korean immigrants' footsteps points to inconsistent and often restrictive immigration policies directed at Asian Americans. The findings illustrate Korean immigrants' remarkable journey of resilience, resourcefulness, and self-discovery that is at the same time juxtaposed with much pain arising out of the hardship of immigrant life and racism in the society.

In Chapter Six, Victor Turner's theory of liminality and the research of two Korean American theologians who utilized the concept of marginality in their theological reflections on the Korean American experience are brought into a mutual and interdisciplinary conversation in an effort to elaborate and clarify the human in the Korean immigrant. The portrait of the human

in the immigrant, seen through this hermeneutical lens of revised liminality, as appropriated by the Korean immigrant experience, is that of a creative neighbor who practices a liminal life of mutuality, creativity, and accountability with the local. Empowered by the embodied experience of receiving and offering hospitality in the manner of *Cheong*, a Korean understanding of human interrelatedness, the immigrant can become a prophetic voice in the society and function as a promoter of tolerance and acceptance.

Chapter Seven explores the feminist theologian Letty Russell's ideas of *partnership* and *hospitality* and their implications for the kind of radical hospitality needed for building a just society in which the humanity of the immigrant is intricately interdependent with that of the local. The picture of the immigrant that emerges from this exploration is that of a responsible neighbor whose communal interactions with the local contribute critically and prophetically to the formation of both of their humanities.

Chapter Eight presents a constructive proposal in theological anthropology, which views mobility, fluidity of identity, and acceptance of the different as life-forming, life-enriching, and life-sharing principles for a God-intended design of human existence on the earth. The hermeneutic of co-authoring brings the conceptual work carried out in Chapters Six and Seven with the cultural sources informing immigration and the Christian tradition of receiving the stranger in hospitality into a further correlative process of mutual clarification and correction. Christian tradition is given centrality in this correlative conversation, and the theological and biblical sources are interpreted from liberative perspectives that privilege ethical practice over doctrinal orthodoxy. The metaphor of the "blessed guest" is employed to present the immigrant as someone whose difference, participation, and proximity provide to the local a channel through which one recognizes the stranger within oneself as well as the sacredness of life. This

alternative anthropology has implications that, when taken seriously, would revise patriarchal, racist, and capitalist theological and cultural discourses dominant in the society.

Chapter Nine presents the discussion of the implications for pastoral practice. Specific areas of needs for immigrants and their families are discussed, and concrete suggestions for welcoming them into one's community are provided. Then, the society's obligation to an active amelioration of the immigrant's pain through confrontation of systemic evils is articulated in relation to advocacy for and solidarity with the marginalized. The church as a social and religious institution is challenged to rediscover the biblical mandate of Jubilee, become an active protector of the immigrant, and be a willing mediator of intercultural encounters in the society.

The final chapter, Chapter 10, proposes recommendations for future research and suggestions for further pastoral theological engagements with immigrants.

Chapter 2: Where It Begins

Brief History of Research

A simple survey of the field of pastoral theology, care, and counseling shows an apparent dearth of literature on the topic of immigration or its derivative issues. Paradigmatic shifts that occurring within the field in the last twenty years reflect a movement toward communitarian, contextual, and intercultural orientations,⁹ but, with the exception of a handful of pastoral theologians that are engaged in ethnographic studies¹⁰ or pastoral clinicians focused on their specific multicultural milieus,¹¹ the subjects of immigration and migration have yet to directly engage the imagination of pastoral theologians in the United States. I believe, in order for the impetus for pastoral theology as public theology to continue,¹² public issues such as healthcare and immigration, which address the dynamics of power and difference operative within the culture, must be given considerable attention for exploration and discussion. Hence, this project represents a continuation of the new trajectory of the field of pastoral theology into the public arena and tries to incorporate a critical appropriation of the human experience of immigration in its constructive theological process.

⁹ N. Ramsay, *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004).

¹⁰ M. C. Moeschella, *Living Devotions* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2008).

¹¹ K. S. Lee, "The Teacher-Student in Multicultural Theological Education: Pedagogy of Collaborative Inquiry," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 22 (2002): 81-99.

¹² B. J. Miller-McLemore, "Pastoral Theology as Public Theology: Revolutions in the Fourth Area." In *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*, ed. Nancy Ramsay (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004): 45-64.

Human Identity in the Field of Pastoral Theology and Care

Any inquiry into human mobility as in migration and immigration requires foremost an examination into human identity, agency, and destiny. It is because the movement of an individual or a community from one place to another does not happen in a vacuum but within the framework of assumed values of what one understands and aspires oneself to be. Therefore, any critical reflection on immigration by a pastoral theologian needs to incorporate a historical overview of how the human has been viewed in the field of pastoral theology.

The field of pastoral care, counseling, and theology, in its early decades, was shaped heavily by “therapeutic sources and practices on which it drew to inform the theory and practice of care.”¹³ The metaphor of “the living document,” coined by Anton Boisen, the founder of clinical pastoral education and training, illustrates the early clinical paradigm that emphasized the immediate lived experience of the self as a main source of insight into human personality “with social context often in the background.”¹⁴ This heavy dependence on psychological studies, which predominated the field of pastoral care, counseling, and theology from the 1940s until the 1980s had posited “the interpersonal and existential experience of the one(s) receiving care” as the focus of pastoral reflection and analysis.¹⁵ Within this orientation, “relational humanness is the normative image of that redemptive intent.”¹⁶ Personhood was best understood in terms of largely humanistic goals such as healing, authentic relationship, and growth.

However, the field of pastoral care, counseling, and theology has shifted in orientation toward more contextual and communal paradigms in the last twenty years.¹⁷ This shift has

¹³ N. Ramsay, *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1.

brought the diversification and expansion of the understandings of personhood and community so as to account for the experiences of many different people groups. Particularly, this shift in orientation had resulted in the transformation of the normative concept of the person espoused in the field. The once reified position of the white-male, middle class personhood of the status quo has been challenged by diverse discourses of race, gender, and class as more feminist and minority scholars entered the field. Bonnie Miller-McLemore's living human web "has emerged as a better metaphor than Anton Boisen's living human document for describing a wider focus for pastoral care, counseling and theology."¹⁸ Furthermore, the shift from the pastoral clinical paradigm to the communal, contextual, and intercultural paradigms revises "relational humanness" to promote "relational justice" as the normative image of the field of pastoral care, counseling, and theology.¹⁹ Larry K. Graham states, "To fulfill the image of God in human relationships therefore is to be liberated from internalized bondage and to create a human environment characterized by a relational justice rather than oppressive structures of domination and subordination."²⁰ Now in the place of the clinical pastoral paradigm, which lacked a critical engagement with social context, a forum for a multiplicity of anthropological perspectives and further expansion of what it means to be human exists.

It is important to note there have been many multicultural and intercultural voices that contributed to this shift in the paradigms. Emmanuel Lartey has been one of the most influential pastoral theologians behind intercultural methodologies for pastoral care and counseling who speaks to the complexity of cultural pluralism.²¹ Samuel Lee has been another important voice

¹⁸ Ibid., 25.

¹⁹ L. K. Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 25.

²⁰ Ibid., 25.

²¹ E. Lartey, *Pastoral Counseling in Inter-Cultural Perspective* (London: Cassell, 1987).

as he advocated for the need of intercultural sensibilities in classroom settings and supervisory relationships.²²

In summary, there is a confluence of factors within the field of pastoral care, counseling, and theology that makes the pastoral theological treatment of immigration both appropriate and necessary. The paradigmatic shift toward communal, contextual, and intercultural orientations, the impetus for pastoral theology to engage the “public issues of significant practical and pastoral consequence,”²³ and diversified notions of personhood generated by pastoral theologians²⁴ all point to the readiness of pastoral theologians to become a prophetic voice on the issue of immigration. In this regard, Mary Clark Moschella’s work on immigration and identity as an ethnographer of an Italian immigrant community has been a welcomed addition.²⁵ The most important development, however, in my opinion, has been the theme of “neighbor love” that has emerged as a primary diagnostic category for pastoral theology.²⁶ The practice of love and justice for the self and the other has the potential to inform and transform the way both the immigrant and the local can live in community and solidarity.

The Human in the Immigrant

In order to speak of the humanity of the immigrant, there are two groups of theologians that must be included in the conversation. First, there is a camp of Catholic scholars that

²² K. Samuel Lee, “Becoming Multicultural Dancers: The Pastoral Practitioner in a Multicultural Society,” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 55, no. 4 (2001): 389-396.; K. Samuel Lee, “The Teacher-Student in Multicultural Theological Education: Pedagogy of Collaborative Inquiry,” *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry*, 22 (2002): 81-99.

²³ B. J. Miller-McLemore, “Pastoral Theology as Public Theology: Revolutions in the Fourth Area.” In *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*, ed. Nancy Ramsay (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004): 45-64.

²⁴ P. Way, *Created by God: Pastoral Care for all God’s People* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005) and E. Wimberly, *Relational Refugees* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000) are some of the pastoral theologians producing works on diverse notions of personhood.

²⁵ M. C. Moeschella, M. C. *Living Devotions* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2008).

²⁶ N. Ramsay, *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 9.

theologizes about what it means to be human in the context of immigration and migration. Catholic conferences²⁷ over the last thirty years have focused on “ethical, ministerial, and practical implications of the massive presence of immigrants within the society.”²⁸ Some of the Catholic thinkers who have begun to treat the phenomenon of immigration itself as a locus of theology include G. Campese and F. M. Regonie,²⁹ O. Espin,³⁰ P. C. Phan,³¹ R. J. Schreiter,³² and D. G. Groody.³³ These scholars refer to various religious orders such as Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits in locating the tradition of caring for immigrants within the mission of the church. However, the most notable tradition is located within Missionaries of Saint Charles, which was founded by the Bishop of Piacenza, Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, a patron of Italian immigrants in the United States and Brazil.³⁴ The journey of immigration and migration, in their conviction, is foremost a manifestation of God’s divine presence and witnesses a “God who becomes fellow Pilgrim in this journey.”³⁵ Another contribution of these thinkers is the

²⁷ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (1986, 1998, 2000, 2001); U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano (2003).

²⁸ G. Campese, “Beyond Ethnic and National Imagination: Toward a Catholic Theology of Immigration,” In *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*, ed. P. Hongdagneu-Sotelo (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007): 175-190.

²⁹ G. Campese and F. M. Rignoni, “Hacer Teología Desde el Migrante: Diario de un Camino.” In *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, ed. G. Campese and P. Ciallella (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003): 181-203.

³⁰ O. Espin, “Immigration, Territory, and Globalization: Theological Reflections.” *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 7, no. 3 (2000): 46-59.

³¹ P. C. Phan, “The Experience of Migration in the United States as Source of Intercultural Theology.” In *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, ed. G. Campese and P. Ciallella (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003): 143-169.

³² R. J. Schreiter, “Theology’s Contribution to (Im)Migration.” In *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, ed. G. Campese and P. Ciallella (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003): 170-180.

³³ D. G. Groody, “Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist In *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, ed. G. Campese and P. Ciallella (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003): 143-169.

³⁴ G. Campese, “Beyond Ethnic and National Imagination: Toward a Catholic Theology of Immigration,” In *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*, ed. P. Hongdagneu-Sotelo (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 175-190.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 178.

articulation of the notion of *convivencia*,³⁶ which means “to live with or together” in Spanish as a hermeneutical tool to revision the stranger in the immigrant.³⁷ Though the focus of these scholars tends to be the plight of immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border, their reappropriation of *Imago Dei* in the humanity of the immigrant and the redemptive notion of *convivencia* can aid the theological reflection of Asian immigrant experience significantly.

Another group of theologians that should be mentioned in regard to the discussion of the humanity of the immigrant includes several Asian American scholars of systematic and constructive theological orientations who have taken up the task of writing from immigrant perspectives, namely, Jung Young Lee, Andrew Sung Park, Peter C. Phan, Sang Hyun Lee, and David Ng. The most significant commonality these scholars share, besides the fact their own ethnic communities are a source of theological reflection for their writings, is their recognition of the experience of immigration as a basis of contextualized theological discourse and the prophetic potentiality of such theologies to shift the theological center of the dominant culture. I have chosen these scholars as my references for the immigrant because, despite the fact that their works remain mostly within the confines of doctrinal theology, they recognized the autobiographical nature of theology, the importance of intercultural theological dialogue, and the value of the immigrant experience in the U.S.

Jung Young Lee was one of the first Asian American theologians who brought Asian conceptual frameworks into the theological academia in the U.S., particularly in the area of

³⁶ *Convivencia* is a Spanish term used by theologians to refer to the ethics of belonging together for the mutual enrichment when in writing about the experience of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border. Refer to *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, ed. Daniel G. Groody and G. Campese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

³⁷ R. Fornet-Betancourt, “Hermeneutics and Politics of Strangers: A Philosophical Contribution on the Challenge of *Convivencia* in Multicultural Societies.” In *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, ed. G. Campese and P. Ciallella (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003): 210-224.

Christology.³⁸ Andrew Sung Park utilizes the Korean indigenous concept of *Han*³⁹ in working out his theology of sin.⁴⁰ Peter C. Phan proposes a Vietnamese American theology based on his theological reflection on intercultural identity formation.⁴¹ Sang Hyun Lee writes from a Korean American immigrant church perspective about the concepts such as liminality.⁴² David Ng focused on the interchange of theology and culture from an immigrant viewpoint.⁴³

The aforementioned scholars and others⁴⁴ provided an initial interest for my theological reflection on the person of the immigrant. In conclusion, a new theological anthropology is needed that builds upon the scholarship of these Asian theologians by incorporating the lived experience of Asian immigrants as researched data and dialoging with social sciences through a pastoral theological methodology. To this end, I present my research findings on the concept of the immigrant self and immigrant theological perspectives in an effort to build a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community from a Korean American immigrant perspective.

³⁸ J. Y. Lee, *The Theology of Change: A Christian Concept of God in an Eastern Perspective* (New York: Orbis, 1979).

³⁹ Andrew S. Park defines *Han* as follows. "Han is the rupture of the soul caused by abuse, exploitation, injustice, and violence. When the soul is hurt so much, it bursts symbolically; it aches. When the aching soul is wounded again by external violence, the victim suffers yet a deeper ache. The wound produced by such repeated abuse and injustice is han in the depths of the soul." Andrew S. Park, *From Han to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 11-12.

⁴⁰ A. S. Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: the Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).

⁴¹ P. C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face: In Our Own Tongues, Being Religious Interreligiously*, (New York: Orbis, 2003).

⁴² S. H. Lee, "Liminality and worship in the Korean American context," in *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. David Yoo (Urbana: Chicago, 2008).

⁴³ D. Ng, *People on the way: Asian North Americans discovering Christ, culture, and community* (Valley Forge: Judson Press (1996).

⁴⁴ Some of the theologians that talk about theological anthropology from immigrant perspectives are Andrew S. Park, *Racial conflict and healing : an Asian-American theological perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996); E. S. Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004); F. Matsuoka and E. Fernandez, ed., *Realizing the America of Our Hearts* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003).

Starting at the Margins

Who is the person in the immigrant? This question was posed and answered differently by five Asian American scholars. First is Jung Young Lee who in, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*,⁴⁵ posited that a new center of doing theology was needed for people of marginalized status. To Lee, the hermeneutics of centrality (the orientation of the dominant group) was oppressive toward minorities and the hermeneutics of marginality was crucial if they were to be empowered and validated as agents of change in the society. In doing so, Lee proposed a new concept of marginality that brought together the positive and negative experiences of marginality. The “classical self-negating definition of marginality” of the In-Between and the “contemporary self-affirming definition of marginality” of the In-Both orientation are subsumed under the “holistic definition of marginality” of the In-Beyond.⁴⁶ This conceptualization allowed Lee to reframe marginality as having a creative center and claim it as a nexus of self-affirmation and transformation for the marginalized.

The image of the immigrant is, thus, one of an authentic reconciler and active reformer of cultures that transcends artificial barriers of ignorance and racism and occupies the place of “in-beyond.”⁴⁷ In Lee’s view, Jesus Christ was the marginal person *par excellence*. Imagining the immigrant as having creative and redemptive power, however idealized this supposition might seem to be, was Lee’s way of envisioning a pluralistic society where “marginal thinking...[as] an inclusive, open-minded, and creative nexus becomes the new norm by functioning as an interface in which various views and interpretations meet.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ J. Y. Lee, *Marginality : The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis : Fortress Press, 1995).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

For Sang Hyun Lee, however, the marginality of the immigrant takes on a realist outlook.⁴⁹ Though it is a place for creativity and prophetic witness, “[Asian Americans] are pushed to liminality and are coercively made to stay there by the barriers set up by the racist center.”⁵⁰ The image of the immigrant, according to Sang Hyun Lee, is a reflective and conscientious pilgrim, who, through quiet indignation and prophetic witness, makes a powerful indictment of the dominant culture. Here, the hermeneutics of marginality for transformation and authenticity in the theology of Jung Young Lee contrasts with the hermeneutics of suspicion and pragmatism in the theology of Sang Hyun Lee. Sang Hyun Lee’s realistic treatment of racism in the United States views the immigrant as perpetually remaining on the periphery of the culture, ‘outside looking in,’ compared to Jung Young Lee’s portrayal of the immigrant, ‘outsider walking in through the door,’ who can learn to move between two centers of power somewhat fluidly.

Another Korean American scholar who gets at an immigrant theological anthropology is Andrew Sung Park. Park, in his books *The Wounded Heart of God*⁵¹ and *The Christian Doctrine of Sin and Racial Conflict and Healing*,⁵² utilizes the Korean cultural concept of *Han* in constructing an Asian American theological anthropology that embodies the experience of the immigrant living on the margins of the society by speaking to the sense of victimization and its implications for salvation and liberation. To Park, the immigrant harbors the dual measures of *Han*, the residual suffering carried over from one’s homeland through memory and the enduring dynamics of oppression in one’s life and the new suffering due to racism that one experiences in

⁴⁹ S. H. Lee, “Marginality as Coerced Liminality.” In *Realizing the America of Our Hearts: Theological Voices of Asian Americans*, ed. F. Matsuoka and E. Fernandez (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003): 11-28.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, .23.

⁵¹ A. S. Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).

⁵² A. S. Park, *Racial conflict and healing : an Asian-American theological perspective* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996).

the new country.⁵³ The immigrant is a marginalized person whose *Han* can be an effective tool for self-awareness as well as a means of solidarity with others in effecting theological and cultural transformation.

The theme of marginality is shared by Peter C. Phan who proposes a Vietnamese American theology which calls for a “both this and that” identity.⁵⁴ Drawing from Jung Young Lee’s understanding of marginality, Phan rejects the potentially negative identity of being either American or Vietnamese in favor of the potentially positive identity of being both American and Vietnamese, thereby fusing the resources of two cultures to “fashion a new, different world, so that they stand not only between these two worlds and cultures but also beyond them.”⁵⁵

Another eminent Asian American scholar, David Ng, viewed Asian Americans as people on the way.⁵⁶ Here, the emphasis is not on finding a durable identity which Asian Americans could claim and live into, but living into a fluid, malleable, and open-ended identity that fits better with the provisional nature of the immigrant’s existence. Ng called for Asian Americans to “tell their faith stories and to write theologies...for the reasons of being and becoming...[as people] on the way.”⁵⁷

Finding the Voice

What these Asian American scholars have in common besides the acknowledgment of the marginal and liminal nature of the immigrant’s existence is a new way of doing theology. Both

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ P. C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face: In Our Own Tongues, Being Religious Interreligiously*, (New York: Orbis, 2003).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ D. Ng, *People on the Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1996).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Jung Young Lee and David Ng were explicit in making their audiences aware that the Asian American way of theologizing is inherently autobiographical and, as such, narrative. Lee stated, “All theology is...rooted biography,”⁵⁸ whereas Ng stated that it was doing theology through story.⁵⁹ Who is the immigrant? At least according to these Asian American theologians, the immigrant, though on the margins of the society, has the potential to construct his or her own identity by telling the story of what one aspires to be.

The human envisioned through the eyes of Asian American immigrants has a great affinity for the postmodern view of the self. Kenneth Gergen describes the impact of postmodern on the concept of the self, which underlies a movement from an essential view of self toward a nonessential and pluralistic view of the self.⁶⁰ This view of multilayered and multidimensional identity actually fits very well with the Asian concept of change.⁶¹ Jung Young Lee, in bridging the process theology of Whitehead and the *I Ching*⁶² concept of Asian philosophy, prefers a “this-as-well-as-that” view of reality over an “either-or” view of reality, which comes from the Aristotelian notion of substance.⁶³ Often this process of self-prescription leads to a hybrid⁶⁴ identity for immigrants. Many immigrants refuse a categorical conscription of self into already available cultural discourses on identity and go beyond the notion of what is simply Asian or Korean or American to arrive at an identity that is idiosyncratic. In this way, the

⁵⁸ J. Y. Lee, *Marginality : The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis : Fortress Press, 1995).

⁵⁹ David Ng, *People on the Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1996).

⁶⁰ K. J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Lif*, (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

⁶¹ J. Y. Lee, *The Theology of Change : a Christian Concept of God in an Eastern Perspective* (New York: Orbis Books, 1979).

⁶² *I Ching*, Book of Changes, is a metaphysical and cosmological system that became the overarching framework of Chinese, Korean, Japanese philosophies. See the introduction and Chapter 1 of Jung Young Lee’s *The Theory of Change* (New York: Orbis Books, 1979).

⁶³ J. Y. Lee, *The Theology of Change : a Christian Concept of God in an Eastern Perspective* (New York: Orbis Books, 1979).

⁶⁴ For the postcolonial reading of hybrid identity for Asians, refer to Namsoon Kang's chapter, "Who/What is Asian?" In *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity, Hybridity, and Empire*, ed. C. Keller et. al. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004)

immigration self is an identity-in-the-making and, as such, privileges the provisional and transitional nature of the subjective process of self-formation and self-articulation.

Neighbor Love

Andrew Sung Park has made a contribution to theology by introducing the concept of *Han* as an alternative way of exploring the difference between forgiveness for victimizers and liberation for victims. As real as *Han* is to Koreans in the embodiment of suffering, there is yet another powerful construct in the Korean language that deserves an equal level of theological reflection and application. That is the culture-specific construct of *Cheong* which can be loosely translated as love or affection but for which western cultures seem to have no equivalence. Choi and Choi (2001) describe *Cheong* this way.⁶⁵

Cheong is one of the essential psychological components necessary for describing the Koreans' socioemotional dimension. Reflecting the Korean cultural emphasis on inter-individual relationships rather than on intraindividual independence, *Cheong* embodies the emotional links among individuals that are bonded both socially and relationally and forms the conceptual nucleus of the we-ness bond among Koreans.

The significant connection between *Cheong* and the immigrant identity exists in its role within the immigrant community as a promoter and actualizer of neighborly tolerance and acceptance. *Cheong's* properties are discernable in the interpersonal dynamic of drawing people closer for the reason that the only requirement for *Cheong* is shared time and close proximity.⁶⁶ *Cheong's* qualities of communal resilience and neighborly concern could have been originated as an indigenous response of Korean people to mitigate the effect of longstanding historical injuries

⁶⁵ S. C. Choi and S. H. Choi, "Cheong: The Socioemotional Grammar of Koreans." *International Journal of Group Tensions* 30, no. 1 (2001): 69-80.

⁶⁶ According to Choi and Choi, *Cheong's* properties cover history, space, relation, and personality aspects of interpersonal relationship. *Cheong* is a long-term experience of we-ness (time and space), an understanding of, accepting of, and helping of the other (intimacy and personality), sharing joys and sorrows (time, space, relation), and celebrating heartedness of the relationship (relation). (2001 "Cheong: The Socioemotional Grammar of Koreans." *International Journal of Group Tensions* 30, no. 1 (2001): 69-80.

and collective consciousness of suffering as embodied in *Han*. This is precisely the constructive theological position that Wonhee Anne Joh takes in her book, *Heart of the Cross*.⁶⁷ Joh develops a dialectical understanding of *Han* and *Jeong*⁶⁸ and uses it as a basis of articulating a Korean American feminist theology of redemptive love. One cultural observer describes it this way: “I dare to say that it has taken thousands of years for Koreans to cultivate and forge this ethnic core emotion [of *Cheong*] under the oppressive forces of both foreign and domestic rulers. It’s baffling, often outrageously so, to outsiders. Even for some natives, it’s a paradoxical riddle.”⁶⁹ If *Han* is understood to be the embodiment of pain and suffering and, as such, denotes the passivity of the injured in the sense of helplessness experienced, then *Cheong* needs to be understood as the embodiment of love and hope and denotes the active resilience and resistance against the threat of dehumanization.

Therefore, the utility of *Cheong* lies in its potentially humanizing effect for the immigrant and the community in which one lives. An ethical and empathic appropriation of *Cheong* can make the immigrants who find themselves as strangers in the new land practitioners of radical hospitality. The practice of authentic *Cheong* may open the door for the immigrant to invite his or her neighbor to share a new way of relating and belonging in the world, thereby becoming something else altogether, an emerging community of concerned and compassionate people. In this sense, *Cheong* in its pastoral implications is very much like the ethics of *convivencia* – “the sense of sharing in such a way that there is celebration and a mutuality of enrichment.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ W. A. Joh, *Heart of the Cross* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006).

⁶⁸ Joh spells it *Jeong* rather than *Cheong*. I use *Cheong* just because it is used more widely by scholars.

⁶⁹ K. W. Lee, “This Thing Called Cheong,” *The Korea Times* (June 21, 1996).

⁷⁰ R. Fornet-Betancourt, “Hermeneutics and Politics of Strangers: A Philosophical Contribution on the Challenge of *Convivencia* in Multicultural Societies.” In *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, ed. G. Campese and P. Ciallella (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003): 210-224.

Cheong must be treated critically so as to prevent it from being romanticized. *Cheong*, lest informed by relational justice, can lead to the blanket acceptance of the other's faults and wrongs without accountability. Many in Korea and in the United States, particularly Korean women, have been for so long pushed to accept self-abnegation, relational abuse, and silent injustice for the good of the other in the name of *Cheong*. Therefore, *Cheong's* redemptive qualities must be balanced by the ethics of authentic participation and collaboration for everyone involved. Given that these conditions are met, the fear of the stranger and the hostile politics of individualism and racism can give way to the formation of neighborly love in the practice of *Cheong*. The lonely and marginal immigrant, by living into healthy and authentic *Cheong*, chooses to identify oneself as a person of worth, agency, and love, and invites the neighbor to join in this enterprise of self-construction and community-formation.

Pastoral Theological Method

In order to reflect theologically on the complex social person of the immigrant and the community, the revised critical correlation was chosen as the pastoral theological method in this study. Theological sources are brought into a collaborative conversation with secular disciplines “in which each can challenge the other and contribute both descriptive and normative states, coming to a deeper understanding through essentially equal dialogue.”⁷¹ The context of immigration and globalization requires a critical engagement between theological sources and social sciences with the aim of arriving at liberating and humanizing practices of solidarity and hospitality that benefit both religious communities and society at large. To discuss further the pastoral theological method enlisted in the study, I will address the role of theology,

⁷¹J. N. Poling and D. E. Miller, *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985).

interdisciplinary relations, the role of experience, my social location, operant theology,⁷² the praxis orientation, and the major theologians and theorists that furnish the hermeneutical lens of my study.

Role of Theology

In the interdisciplinary work of correlating the questions and concerns of the culture and theology, the revised correlation method allows for the integration of various disciplines and concerns but always with an emphasis on the centrality of theology. In this study, a theological inquiry and reflection on what it means to be human in the immigrant rests at the core of this constructive theological endeavor in formulating relational ethics between the immigrant and the local. Judeo-Christian traditions that emphasize the care and protection of the stranger as in the biblical mandate of Jubilee, the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, and Jesus' teachings about loving one's neighbor, in addition to the church's practice of hospitality, are important sources for an interdisciplinary engagement with the cultural sources that inform human relational principles of common concern and mutual survival. The theological concern about the immigrant and the community, while aimed at transforming cultural and political treatment of the immigrant as well as the attitudes of the local, examines ways to revise certain theological doctrines such as sin and the church's practice of diversity and inclusion.

Interdisciplinary Relations

In this interdisciplinary and constructive work of speaking about the immigrant and the community, those social sciences that address the phenomenon of immigration, human relational dynamics, and issue of power and privilege in the society are drawn into conversation. Namely,

⁷² Christie Cozad Neuger, a pastoral theologian, iterates the importance of identifying one's key theological commitments or themes as part of methodology, C. C. Neuger, *Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 57.

the disciplines of immigration and migration studies, Asian studies, anthropology, history, and psychology all contribute as important dialogical partners in the discussion. Particularly, the relatively new field of immigration and migration studies provides much empirical knowledge about the acculturation and adaptation processes in which immigrants are engaged. The field of psychology also provides information about the racial identity formation and relational dynamics regarding the immigrant and the community.

The concept of liminality posed by Victor Turner add to this interdisciplinary conversation between social sciences and theological sources. The conceptualization of the immigrant self as engaged in the enterprise of moving out of the forced place of marginalization and into a place of authoring a new identity is one example of an area of convergence between social sciences and theological reflection. I tried to maintain discreet boundaries among these conversational partners without discouraging an active integrative discourse.

Role of Experience

In this study, the lived experience of Korean immigrants constitutes the main framework in the construction of theological claims about the immigrant and the community. The historically situated and embodied experience of Korean immigrants which has been largely neglected in the public forum is privileged here as sources of local knowledge that can potentially help revise dominant narratives of culture and power in the society.⁷³ The research on Korean immigrants' experience is the qualitative part of my overall pastoral theological method and, as such, provides the data in the form of salient themes and narratives that are useful in conceptualizing human in a new way and generating implications for a new relational ethics between the immigrant and the local. The practice of *Cheong* in the communal life of Korean

⁷³ Regarding uplifting local knowledge as a form of political insurrection, please see M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge; Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 84.

immigrants as evinced in the interviewed data provides a theological category akin to *neighborly love* that expands the definition of what it means to be human in community.

Social Location

Because the field of pastoral theology takes a critical postmodern approach to scholarship, an author's context and social location needs to be duly noted for the role played in grounding one's discussion within discreet boundaries and limited claims. Therefore, in this section, I delineate what makes my perspective unique and autobiographical to the extent of its relevance to the subject matter and qualify my personal voice within the historical and cultural context of Korean American immigration out of which this study emerges.

I am a first generation immigrant from South Korea and have lived the last twenty-seven years of my life in the United States. It means that I subscribe to the reality of being a racial minority, particularly an Asian, in the view of the dominant culture. My worldview has formatively been colored by my firsthand experience of immigration at the age of thirteen. Upon arrival in this new country, I settled in the Bronx, New York, with my family and spent the formative years of my teenage and young adult life in an urban, culturally diverse, and politically liberal environment. I attended high school, college, graduate school, and seminary in New York and New Jersey. My close proximity to a large population of Korean immigrants in the Greater New York metropolitan area and participation in the Korean immigrant community privileged me with an insider's access to the daily life of Korean immigrants and their struggles as well as their joys. Particularly, my work as a Protestant Christian educator for many years and a Presbyterian minister for the past several years afforded me an opportunity to experience the religious culture of Korean immigrant Christians.

In this way, my socio-cultural particularity and bilingual competence afford me a multiplicity of cultural identities and notions of self. I examine and explore the world through ever-shifting meaning systems and allegiances that fluidly and collectively define who I am. Furthermore, my identity as an immigrant serves as an entry point into advocacy for and solidarity with those that are marginalized in the society.

Therefore, I approach this project both as an insider and an outsider. My identity as an immigrant provided the initial interest in this research topic and a basic theoretical framework out of which to work. In qualitative research, the person of the researcher is inevitably a part of the research process, especially when it deals with the lived experience of people with whom the researcher shares many commonalities.

The researcher's cultural proximity and emotional involvement, however, can compromise the integrity of the research process and lead to misrepresentation of the data without appropriate safeguards in place. First, it means that I, as the researcher, need to adequately de-center my experience in order to maintain a practical level of distance and detachment to minimize the researcher bias. One method is to engage in an on-going process of critical self-reflection about my potential biases and presuppositions and employ an awareness of possible conflicts of interest that may arise from my role as both a researcher and as a member of the in-group. In this way, I would not be oblivious to the "taken-for-granted" and inadvertently filter the data through my assumptions and expectations, reading into the data what I set out to find instead of interpreting the data for what it is. All these steps are designed to help toward maintaining the integrity of the research process through insuring the role of participant-observer and balancing the need of objective inquiry and the subjective involvement of the person of the researcher. Second is to utilize interview questions that are not designed to lead interviewees'

answers and, as such, are more investigative than directive. Open-ended questions allowing participants to volunteer data over closed-ended and narrowly structured questions are preferred for research of this kind. Third is to use verbatim in recording participants' words as a measure to insure an accurate interpretation of participants' feelings, intentions, and experiences. Fourth is to utilize participant feedback⁷⁴ by verifying my interpretations of participants' viewpoints with the participants so as to clear up any miscommunication.

Theological Commitments

To this method of critical correlation, I bring my theological commitments that are normative and operant in the "formation of [my] value systems and [my] sense of purpose in life."⁷⁵ Here, I share three theological commitments that frame the discussion of immigration in this study in order to insure clarity and transparency.

The first commitment is that of justice. Justice in my reflection is fundamental to the being of God, the nature of creation, and the true aim of Christian ministry. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, "It reminds us that the universe is on the side of justice.... This belief that God is on the side of truth and justice comes down to us from the long tradition of our Christian faith."⁷⁶ In an age where immigrants and migrants are often exploited for the economic advancement of the market-driven society without proper legal protection, monetary compensation, and historical acknowledgment, it is important to remember that evoking justice in the name of God should mean, for Christians, issuing a call for the actions of liberation and deliverance on behalf of the oppressed.

⁷⁴ Y. S. Lincoln and E. G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1985).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Martin Luther King, Jr. "Facing the Challenge of a New Age" in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. J. M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 141.

The second commitment is that of freedom as espoused by the biblical mandate of Jubilee.⁷⁷ The biblical Jubilee values the inherent sanctity of, rather than the utility of, the person and land, and makes the point of guaranteeing the recovery of properties and protection of relational networks even at the expense of the free market economy. The central notion of freedom that undergirds the theory and practice of Jubilee endorses the principle of *radical concern* for the other, both locals and immigrants alike. The particularity of the immigrant's situation calls not only for justice, but also for the antidote of radical acceptance that is based on mutuality, common concern, and shared destiny.

The third theological commitment that orients this work is the practice of peacemaking as iterated and embodied by Jesus Christ in Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus is seen as saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." The need for durable peace is all too apparent not only in various contexts of inter-group violence, but also in the languages and attitudes that permeate the public awareness and discussion of immigration. It is the call to peacemaking that Christians must heed and embody concretely in their relationality and behavior as true disciples of Christ.

In summary, my theological commitments to justice, freedom, and peacemaking constitute a hermeneutics of the "beloved community."⁷⁸ I borrow the concept of the beloved community from Martin Luther King, Jr.,⁷⁹ which he envisioned to be a society where freedom,

⁷⁷ Leviticus 25:10 commands, "And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family" (NRSV).

⁷⁸ Gary Simpson (2008) describes Martin Luther King, Jr.'s understanding of the beloved community as follows: "Martin Luther King Jr., begins with Jesus' command to love the enemy and moves to an understanding that in the beloved community God is change the face of the enemy. In that beloved community, were all are brought together in a way that changes all, true freedom is found," "Changing the Face of the Enemy: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Beloved Community," *Word & World* 28, no. 1 (winter, 2008).

⁷⁹ King, M. L. Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1986) See King's concept of the beloved community expounded in "An

equality, and solidarity become the norms of human interaction and governance, and I use it as a theological lens that privileges the welfare of and advocacy for the marginalized, in this case, immigrants. Consequently, any pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community, I believe, should take the standpoint of “a prior political and ethical option...for the poor”⁸⁰ as in liberation theologies and have the freedom, empowerment, and care of immigrants and migrants as its basic operating principles.

The theological commitments to justice, freedom, and peacemaking then allow me as a pastoral theologian to imagine and articulate a beloved community of immigrants and locals living harmoniously and working together for the common good. The hermeneutics of beloved community furthermore critically read and evaluate the theological sources such as the bible, the tradition of the church, and Christian practices through the perspective of the marginalized with the task of uncovering and reclaiming the themes of harmony, cooperation, and reconciliation.

The Praxis Orientation

This paper is interdisciplinary, intercultural, and constructive in approach, bringing insights from social sciences, especially diversely cultural and autobiographical voices, into dialogue with biblical narratives and various theological resources with the aim of developing a critical and revisionist theological anthropology.

The two major approaches to theological reflection of theory and practice for this study are those of liberationist and feminist orientations. The liberationist approach starts with the lived experience of a particular oppressed group (in this case, Korean immigrants in the United States of America). It examines the reality of interlocking mechanisms of systemic oppression

Experiment in Love” 16-20; “The Ethical Demands for Integration” 117-125; “If the Negro Wins, Labor Wins” 201-207; “I Have a Dream” 217-220.

⁸⁰ E. Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Herndon: Cassell, 2003).

for Korean immigrants through social analysis, proceeds to hermeneutical analysis of bridging social analysis and theological sources, and produces a pastoral response of ethical and moral action.⁸¹

Feminist approach to theological reflection embodies this process of generating *orthopraxis* as “rightful action for change.”⁸² Rebecca Chopp iterates the role of theology in embodying “saving work,” a type of ethical and moral practice aimed at survival and flourishing.⁸³ Emancipatory praxis replaces theological education for the sake of intellectual and theoretical knowledge as the method *proper* and is interested in the pragmatic end of the “transformation of social structures as well as transformation of personal narratives and of interpersonal relations.”⁸⁴

Liberationist and feminist approaches to praxis are particularly relevant and useful to a theological anthropology of immigration because they locate theological symbols, images, and meanings not in the abstract truth claims of doctrine but in the embodiment of faith in practice. According to Elaine L. Graham, this shift from an essentialist and ontological emphasis to practice is the proper effect of pastoral and practical theology.⁸⁵ Graham goes as far as to say that models of God should not “emphasize essence and identity but action and agency, consistent with the notion of practice as the sphere of Divine-human encounter, and of *orthopraxis* as the vehicle of Christian truth claims.”⁸⁶ A constructive pastoral theology of immigration subscribes

⁸¹ E. Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Herndon: Cassell, 2003).

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ R. S. Chopp, *Saving Work: Feminist Practices of Theological Education* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ E. L. Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (Eugene: Wipk and Stock Publishers, 1996)

⁸⁶ Ibid.

to this aim of generating a transforming practice of neighborly concern and compassion especially for immigrants, strangers, and marginalized others.

My Conversational Partners: Letty M. Russell and Victor Turner

The major theologian who provides my theological framework of speaking about the immigrant is Letty Russell. For Russell, it is uniquely human for researchers to be able to “stand outside of themselves and to watch what is going on around them and within them.”⁸⁷ This capacity, however, creates the dilemma of the human subject being both the questioner and the questioned, and herein lies the real challenge of the query of human identity and purpose. Precisely for this reason, Russell states, the failure to search for the meaning of human identity would result in the magnification of the vulnerability of being human. She states,

If as human beings we don't really know who we are, this makes us terribly vulnerable. We are afraid to find out who we are.... We are also vulnerable to the way others decide who we are and how we should act, and often deny our own particular gifts in order to find favor with family, friends, neighbors, and employers. Others in turn are vulnerable to us if we seek to conceal our own fear by adopting a role of superiority and domination toward them. Whether or not we seek to escape ourselves through manifestation of weakness or of power, we still do not escape the fact that our human life is not a given, but must be created as we go along.

Russell locates this responsibility to openly and courageously live into self-reflection and self-construction within the identity-forming and meaning-making nature of human life. The process of making sense of personal and social history leads to weaving new meanings, stories of possibilities, and clues “for our present and future journey.”⁸⁸

Furthermore, Russell's vision of common humanity and call to take responsibility for one's neighbors can be of particular importance to the plight of immigrants and migrants in this

⁸⁷ L. M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982)

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

country. Common humanity is situated not so much in the shared physical traits and intellectual faculties as it is found in “sharing a common world destiny under the hand of the Creator.” Locating common origin and destiny as the basis of solidarity and participation in neighborly practice, in my estimation, can be a pertinent framework for building a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community.

Therefore, the theme of partnership which is prominent in Russell’s writings can be used as an interpretive lens through which the experience of Korean American immigrants is viewed.⁸⁹ Russell explores the examples of both human-to-human and divine-to-human partnerships in the biblical narratives and identifies partnership both as a mandate for the present and a hope for the future. She writes, “Freedom is a journey with others for others, toward God’s future.... Our assurance of that future is anchored in the past events of God’s liberating action that have already made us partners in the journey and sent us on our way.” And most importantly God becomes a partner and co-author⁹⁰ in generating new narratives of personhood. Therefore, Russell states, “...our vulnerability is not just a problem. It is a gift of God, for it enables us to open ourselves to God in such a way that we ‘fall in faith’ and consent to share our life story with the One who comes to dwell with us.”⁹¹

To explore theological anthropological options for Korean immigrants, I employ the anthropologist Victor Turner’s theory of liminality and bring it into conversation with two Korean American theologians whose views on the Korean American experience appropriated

⁸⁹ L. M. Russell, *The Future of Partnership*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), *Growth in Partnership* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979).

⁹⁰ The term ‘co-authoring’ is borrowed from Narrative Therapy of Michael White and David Epston. It refers to the collaborative therapeutic relationship that allows therapist a significant part to play in mapping the direction of therapeutic process. For a brief summary of Narrative Therapy, refer to the article “What is Narrative Therapy” by Alice Morgan at www.dulwichcentre.com.

⁹¹ L. M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982).

Turner's thoughts. Victor Turner explored Arnold van Gennep's theory of rites of passage and further expanded the idea of liminality as a source of change in traditional societies.⁹² According to Turner, the process in which a society becomes revitalized involves a dialectic movement between *structure* and *antistructure*. Antistructure is the transitional experience that certain members of the society have when they leave their culture (the structure) behind. This experience of change (liminality) accompanies the members back to their former social structure and becomes a basis of renewal of the society. This liminal situation serves as a "temporary antinomic liberation from behavioral norms and cognitive rules," and therefore liminality is "a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise."⁹³

The lived experience of Korean immigrants is explored as a process of liminality of people living in and making meanings on the margins of the society. When their experience of community-building *Cheong* occupies the liminal place of their life, then it is imagined that the immigrant becomes a creative neighbor who lives into the human interrelatedness of mutuality, creativity, and accountability with the local.

Summary

In the interdisciplinary discussion of the immigrant and the community, the questions and concerns of culture and theology are brought together to explore constructive ways to formulate new relational ethics of hospitability, justice, and inclusivity for both immigrants and native members of the society. Revised correlation method, which engages theology and social sciences in a mutual collaboration but maintains an emphasis on the centrality of theology, was used. The focus is on bringing theological clarity to understanding the immigrant not as a

⁹² V. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974); *From Ritual to Theater: The Seriousness of Human Play* (New York: Performance Art Journal Publications, 1982).

⁹³ V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969).

“visitor” or “intruder” but as a “neighbor” with whom to experience a fuller meaning of community and mutuality. Several Asian American theologians and Catholic theologians involved in the work of reflecting on the marginalized personhood of the immigrant and broadening the understanding of God’s concern for the disenfranchised provided the initial research interest and preliminary assumptions to explore about the immigrant and the community from the Korean immigrant perspective. The qualitative research design investigated the research hypothesis by examining the lived experience of Korean immigrants collected from case studies, in-depth interviews, and a survey of Korean American literature. Particularly, the indigenous Korean socio-emotional construct of *Cheong* was explored to see if it would be a useful framework for critically informing pastoral practice of mutuality, inclusion, and accountability for the faith community. The narratives of Korean immigrant experience in the qualitative data then were further appropriated for critical engagement with theological and social science sources to generate implications about the person of the immigrant and the community and to serve as building blocks for expanding and revising theological categories of hospitality and neighborly love. The hermeneutical lenses provided by the theories of Letty Russell and Victor Turner further clarified the emergent role of the immigrant and the community in prophetically contributing to the formation of the local’s humanity. In this process, my theological commitments to justice, freedom, and peacemaking in conjunction with *orthopraxis* orientation that privileges right action over right doctrine served as the norms through which various theological and cultural sources were evaluated.

Qualitative Research Methodology

The purpose of the qualitative research was twofold. First, it sought to generate a level of raw data out of the case studies, interviews, and a survey of biographical materials and historical documents large enough and stable enough for exploration and discussion. Second, it sought to utilize the data produced as the basis on which to generate a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community. In particular, the goal of the case studies and interviews was to develop a wholistic representation of the participant's immigration story. It was hoped that, out of the interviews and case studies, certain definable emphases and themes would emerge to identify a basic contour of the shared Korean immigrant narrative.

The collected data were assessed for any significant anthropological assumptions that could provide valuable insights to a constructive understanding of the journey of immigration and the personhood of the immigrant. In short, my research methodology was primarily of qualitative orientation and utilized case studies; in-depth interviews; an analysis of documents and materials in collection; and interpretation of data.

Sampling

For the sample of case study and interview, several churches, individual businesses, and community agencies and organizations based locally in the Greater Richmond were contacted. In the initial recruiting stage, 37 participants signed up for the screening process out of which 22 individuals successfully met the criteria set by the researcher. Due to scheduling conflicts and voluntary withdrawal, only twelve participants followed through with the interviewing process, resulting in two case studies and ten in-depth interviews.

Data Collection

There were two phases in the data collection process. First was the collection of data through case studies and in-depth interviews that involved live participants. Second was the collection of data through a survey of pertinent literature addressing immigration experience.

In this project, the following research questions were asked:

- (1) What is the impact of immigration on one's understandings of self, the other, and the divine? How are immigrants changed through the experience of immigration?
- (2) What are the cultural narratives within the Korean immigrant community that serve as important sources for informing and shaping their sense of identity and community?
- (3) What are the features of human life that are highlighted in the lived experience of Korean immigrants?
- (4) In what ways are pastoral practices informed by the lived experience of Korean immigrants?

My hypotheses on these questions were as follows:

- (1) As one of the most important events in one's life in terms of its impact on the development of identity and relationship, immigration experience forces the immigrant to redefine his- or herself, neighbor, and community. From the place of displacement in a new setting, he or she must travel to a place of synthesis and hybridity that is functionally adaptive and coherent. This process is liminal and self-constitutive.
- (2) There are certain cultural narratives that Korean immigrants carry from their homeland and into their new environments which then serve as the translative and transformative means of redefining personhood and community. One such narrative

is the socio-emotional construct of “Cheong”⁹⁴ for Korean immigrants. These concepts and values help sustain and strengthen the communal bond and practice of living into the redemptive “we-identity” over individualistic “I-identity” or “you-identity.”

- (3) Life can expect to be more fluid, unsettled, and conditional to the immigrant than the local. The immigrant finds the dynamics of journeying, becoming, and communing essential to his or her understanding of life.
- (4) A pastoral theology of immigration informed by the Korean American experience has the potential to effect significant changes in pastoral practice in general. Its emphasis on an empathetic understanding of the other and radical concern for the neighbor will bring about changes in pastoral practice that posit cross-cultural and multi-cultural encounter as pivotal to the formation of individuals as well as congregations. In addition to the roles of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling as in the definition of pastoral care,⁹⁵ *authentic participation* and *partnering* through direct and meaningful encounter with peoples of diverse cultures and persuasions will become basic functions of pastoral care and counseling in the world where globalization and immigration are facts of life.

⁹⁴ Some writers use ‘*Jeong*’ instead of ‘*Cheong*.’ According to Irene Kim, Luke Kim, and James G. Kelly, “*Jeong* refers to emotional bonding, a special interpersonal bond of trust and closeness. There is no word in the Korean vocabulary more endearing and evocative than the word, *Jeong*. There is no English equivalent. *Jeong* encompasses the meaning of a wide range of English terms: feeling, empathy, affection, closeness, tenderness, pathos, compassion, sentiment, trust, bonding, and love.... Koreans consider *Jeong* to be an essential element in human life, promoting the depth and richness of personal relations.” I. Kim, L. Kim, and J. G. Kelly, “Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families,” *Journal of Community Psychology* 34, no.2 (2006): 149-165.

⁹⁵ W. A. Clebsh and C. R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (New York: Harper, 1967).

Case studies were intended to get at a wider spectrum of information about participants and designed to utilize a flexible method of information-gathering and allow for voluntary information-sharing by participants. In-depth interviewing was carried out with ten interviewees. Though in-depth interviews were more structured in terms of the questions posed to participants than in case studies, the format was still open enough to privilege participants to take the lead and shape their conversations about their immigrant stories.

The second phase of data collection involved a survey of primary sources in immigration literature (essays, memoirs, and autobiographies) and secondary sources (biographies, novels, and historical works). The survey of Korean American literature was carried out to provide an overview of the historically situated Korean immigrant whose experience was largely shaped by external circumstances such as the geopolitical factors surrounding Korea and the U.S. government's immigration policies. Furthermore, biographical and fictional works were surveyed for the portraits of Korean immigrants that could complement or even revise the findings of the interviewed data. In particular, autobiographies of immigrants were viewed as an important source of the lived experience and as such were examined for personal and cultural narratives of journey from the old to the new.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the collected data was carried out by a two-pronged approach informed by narrative analysis. The first approach entailed an exploration of the broad contours of life stories of immigrants based on the narrative principle of "emplotment." The immigration stories uncovered in the cases studies and in-depth interviews were analyzed for significant plots and personal meanings that were operational in changing the participants' views about themselves,

others, and the divine. The second part of the two-pronged approach utilized a hybrid model of qualitative thematic content analysis and thematic narrative analysis.

Themes were developed both deductively and inductively. The preliminary theory of the role of immigration in the development of personal identity and faith formation provided an initial list of coding categories that was modified as new categories emerged from case study materials, in-depth interviews, and the selected literature through inductive reasoning.

Summary

In summary, my hypothesis postulated that the lived experience of Korean immigrants shows the human in postmodern and multicultural contexts as being fluid, resilient, relational, and self-constructive, always moving back and forth between allegiances, loyalties, and identities of old and new. Furthermore, the ethos and practice of *Cheong* in the lives of Korean immigrants can be a resource in promoting a new kind of relational mutuality and reciprocity that is needed in moving individuals and communities away from a state of nominal cohabitation with the ethnically-different other and toward the dynamism of intercultural engagement with their neighbors.⁹⁶ The concept and practice of *Cheong* will be discussed in depth in other chapters. It suffices to state here that *Cheong* serves as an important conceptual framework through which Korean immigrants interpret their interactions with fellow Korean immigrants, neighbors, and even the divine. The Korean immigrant experience can present one of many ways of being authentically human. A pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community that speaks to the narratives of self-discovery, neighborly love, and community formation as in the Korean immigrant experience can, hopefully, open up yet another way of visioning the humanity of solidarity for those for whom immigration is close to home.

⁹⁶ K. J. Greider, "From Multiculturalism to Interculturality: Demilitarizing the Border Between Personal and Social Dynamics Through Spiritual Receptivity," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 22 (2002): 40-58.

Chapter 3: The Map for the Journey - Qualitative Research Methodology

*Ari-rang, Ari-rang, A-ra-ri-yo
He is going over the Ari-rang Hill
Since he leaves me all alone
He'll have a pain in his foot without going very far*

This is, perhaps, the most well-known Korean folksong among Koreans. Wherever the tune of this song is heard or played, any Korean present in that place can reflexively recognize their Korean heritage and feel the resultant pull for their motherland.⁹⁷ In this way, this song about a jilted woman who is pained over her lover's departure can serve as a cultural identifier for many Koreans, bringing their collective and personal consciousness together.

Immigrants tell stories of their immigration. They tell stories about from where they came, why they came, and with whom they came to the new country. They share these stories with their children and others as a way of making meaning out of their experiences. Storytelling is then essentially how they negotiate and locate their identities within the host society. Therefore, any research project of quality on immigrants requires a methodological commitment to listening to their lived experience, accommodating their agency to tell their stories of their

⁹⁷ See the example of a Korean immigrant woman in p.287 of *Strangers From a Different Shore* by Ronald Takaki (1998).

own accord, and bringing their narratives into conversation with those of others in an interdisciplinary enterprise of mutual enrichment.

The subject of this research is Korean immigrants to the United States, and its methodology treats their stories as a source of data. The research examines the stories of Korean immigrants via case studies, in-depth interviews, and a survey of Korean American literature that are pertinent to deriving salient themes and narratives about the Korean immigrant experience. The researcher plays an active role in this interview process of uncovering important features of the life of the Korean immigrant and the Korean immigrant community by attending to the participant's act of telling, making meaning, and interpreting of their stories. The survey of literature focused on biographical writings and works of historical importance so as to glean the projected portrayal of the person in the Korean immigrant and the Korean immigrant community.

The qualitative research represents the empirical part of the study's overall pastoral theological method laid out in Chapter One, and its goal is to provide the building blocks for further engagement with theological and social science sources. The findings of the qualitative research are used in critically reflecting what it means to be human in community within the framework of Judeo-Christian traditions and conceptualizing pastoral responses to the needs of the immigrant and the local. The findings are further refined and appropriated in their engagement with several theorists and incorporated into a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the local. The overall method, thus, is qualitative, phenomenological, and narrative in outlook.

In the next chapter, the findings from the case studies and in-depth interviews conducted in the qualitative research are presented. In Chapter 5, the findings from the literature review are presented.

1. Qualitative Methodology

In order to address the complexities of the experiences of Korean immigrants in the United States, I chose a qualitative, phenomenological, and narrative methodology. Qualitative methods are better suited to capture complex human behavior and cultural phenomena in context than quantitative methods. Qualitative research designs on immigration as a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon conventionally studied within theoretical frameworks such as identity, acculturation, adaptation, and other meaning-making processes can produce in-depth analyses that are otherwise difficult to achieve through quantitative means. Yuen defines qualitative research as “(involving) the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data that relate to the social world and tie ideas, perceptions, and behaviors of people within it.”⁹⁸

Secondly, this research design is phenomenological in orientation in that the lived experience of selected Korean immigrants and sources was investigated.⁹⁹ The purpose of this research is twofold. First, it seeks to generate a level of raw data out of the case studies, in-depth interviews, and other biographical or autobiographical documents that is large and stable enough for exploration and discussion. Second, it seeks to utilize the findings as the basis for generating a pastoral theology of immigration. The phenomenological aspect of the research focuses data collection and analysis on the subjective meaning of the immigrant experience derived through dialogue and reflection. In particular, case studies inquired into the interviewee’s life history with an emphasis on the event of immigration and the process of acculturation in the new

⁹⁸ J. K. S. Yuen, “The Moon in Foreign Countries is Particularly Round and Bright: Narratives of Chinese Immigrant Women in the U.K.” *Compare* 38, no. 3 (June 2008): 295-306.

⁹⁹ G. B. Rossman and S. F. Rallis, *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003).

country. In-depth interviews utilized questions aimed at orienting the interviewer and the interviewee to the telling and listening to the immigration story.

Within this overarching framework of qualitative and phenomenological methodology, the method of narrative analysis was adopted for the research design. The tradition of narrative research has many branches such as phenomenological studies or sociolinguistic studies.¹⁰⁰ Basically, “narrative analysis aims to understand people’s interpretation of their experiences by investigating their narration of past life events.”¹⁰¹ Narrative analysis studies a chronologically told story, with a focus on the sequential order of events and temporal organization of the narrative. C. K. Riessman describes three different approaches to narrative analysis.¹⁰² There is the life story method which uses the principle of emplotment. A second type of analysis focuses on a sequence of core narratives within an interview and their structures and thematic connections. A third type of analysis involves re-transcribing the narrative as poetic stanzas. It is in the first and second modes of analysis that narrative analysis was used in this study.

The reasons for selecting narrative analysis for the research design are as follows.

Inductive approach to understanding

Narrative analysis was chosen for its ability to readily access the meaning-world of the interviewee. In narrative analysis, the interviewee chooses to narrate one’s life events in the way that is meaningful to oneself. M. A. Kramp states, “Narratives reveal to us how the persons we

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 99.

¹⁰¹ M. C. Lam and T. S. Chan, “Life Themes in the Narratives of Young Chinese Immigrants Who Have Successfully Adjusted to Life in Hong Kong,” *Journal of Youth Studies* 7, no. 4 (December 2004): 433-449.

¹⁰² C. K. Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993).

are studying construct themselves as the central characters and narrators of their own stories.”¹⁰³

Within this research design, narrative analysis allowed the interviewee’s immigration story to emerge in one’s preferred light with the least possible structure, facilitating a holistic and personally meaningful representation of one’s experience. Through case studies and interviews, the immigrant’s story of leaving one’s homeland, journeying, and settling in the United States was communicated and examined for personal meanings assigned to the experience of immigration.

Interdisciplinary

Narrative analysis was chosen for its interdisciplinary nature and its ability to handle the specific data collection instruments used in this study which were case studies, in-depth interviewing, and other surveyed life-historical documents. G. B. Rossman and S. F. Rallis state, “Narrative research is interdisciplinary in nature and covers a wide range of specific approaches, including life histories, biographies and autobiographies, auto ethnographies, oral histories, and personal narratives.”¹⁰⁴

Positioning

As a researcher, I operate under critical and postmodern assumptions that “all inquiry is embedded in power relationships and privileged knowledge.”¹⁰⁵ It means that I come to a critical awareness of where I, as researcher, stand in status and power, in relation to the other, the

¹⁰³ M. A. Kramp, “Exploring Life and Experience Through Narrative Inquiry,” In *Foundations for Research Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*, ed. K. DeMarrais and S. D. Lapan (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004).

¹⁰⁴ G. B. Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis, *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 99.

¹⁰⁵ C. K. Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993), 93.

participants in the inquiry. This self-reflexive analysis allows for the purpose of inquiry to be emancipatory.

One implication of the postmodern critique that is particularly relevant to narrative inquiry is that I, as researcher, do not remain an objective observer but become a participant in the interviewing process along with the interviewee. In telling their stories, interviewees invite the researcher into their lives. This “personal involvement” is “the very condition that makes it possible for...[a] researcher to gather and interpret narratives of participants in the study.”¹⁰⁶

As an insider to the same ethnic group to which participants belonged, I had to be aware of the possibility of reading and injecting my views into their experiences. Some narrative researchers opt for auto-ethnography which permits the inclusion of the researcher’s self-understanding as a member of the researched community as a tool for corroborating and even adding to the participants’ narrative.¹⁰⁷ I chose not to subscribe to auto-ethnography as a method of inquiry for the perceived risk of interjecting my own interpretations into the interview process. However, I exercised my position as an active listener and co-participant so as to facilitate rapport, clarification, and meaning-making in this narrative inquiry process. This meant that I had to acknowledge the sense of connection between my interviewees and me as real, I had to be present for their words as well as feelings, and I had to authentically affirm their experiences to the extent of our shared points of reference.

¹⁰⁶ M. A. Kramp, “Exploring Life and Experience Through Narrative Inquiry,” In *Foundations for Research Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*, ed. K. DeMarrais and S. D. Lapan (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 114.

¹⁰⁷ See the description of auto-ethnography in Jenny K. S. Yuen, “The Moon in Foreign Countries is Particularly Round and Bright: Narratives of Chinese immigrant women in the U.K.” *Compare* 38, no. 3 (June 2008): 295-306.

2. Sampling

The sample population for case study and in-depth interviewing came from first-generation Korean immigrants living in the Greater Richmond metro area including counties such as Richmond, Chesterfield, Henrico, and Hanover. The venues of initial contact with potential participants were local Korean churches, civic organizations including the Korean Association of Richmond and Asian Chamber of Commerce, and individual retail businesses owned by Korean immigrants. The following sites were particularly helpful in locating and recruiting Korean immigrants as participants for my research:

- Richmond Korean Presbyterian Church
- Richmond Korean Central Presbyterian Church
- Emmaus Korean United Methodist Church
- Korean Food Market
- The Korean Association of Richmond
- Youngbingwan Korean Restaurant
- Moma's Kitchen

Initial contact with the community organizations, religious congregations, and local businesses was done by phone and written correspondence (Appendix Part I, Form A) introducing my intent and the framework of my research. In this initial stage of contacting these sites, I set up future appointments with them during which an in-depth presentation of my research protocol was provided to the organizational leaders or business owners for their information. Some of the sites then provided me with dates and times for visiting with their members and recruiting potential participants for the study. With the religious and community organizations, an arrangement was made that I, as researcher, needed to provide the information about the research study to the audiences directly and personally without the advance priming by the organizational leaders in order to prevent or reduce the appearance of any explicit

endorsement or inadvertent pressure for participating in the study. With the individual businesses, with the permission from the owners, I set up a table with informational materials about the research and contact form for the interested individuals to fill out.

The informed consent form was made available to participants in both English and Korean in the beginning of the recruitment stage (see Appendix Forms B & C). The research foresaw a minimal level of attendant risk in this research process. There was no deception used. Participants were made clearly aware of their right to not share any information that they did not want to volunteer. However, since participants could experience some discomfort and emotional pain by sharing their story to the extent they would choose to do so, I brought this risk to their attention by making the statement, "Telling your immigration story may produce painful emotions." I intermittently asked the participants throughout the interview process about their state of mind and if it was appropriate for the conversation to continue as a safeguard to make sure the interview process did not incur more than minimal emotional or psychological discomfort.

It was explained to participants that the interviewed data would be collected in the form of hand-written notes, cassette tapes, photocopies of documents, and photos and that participants would be given the permission to voice any objection or complaint regarding the interview process. The participants were made aware of their right to terminate the interview process for any reason.

In total, thirty-seven potential participants signed up for the screening process. These potential participants were given the screening form to either fill out on the spot or mail back to me. The screening questions included:

Are you an adult (18 years or older)?

Are you cognitively impaired?

Do you require your parent's consent to participate in a research project?

Were you born in Korea?

How long have you been living in the United States of America?

Do you consider yourself an immigrant (living permanently in the U.S.)?

Do you have any problem talking about your immigrant experience for the purpose of participating in this project?

The screening questions were designed to exclude minors (under 18 years of age) or anyone needing parental consent, the cognitively impaired, those who were not born in Korea, those who have been living in the United States less than two years, those who were not planning to stay in the U. S., those who did not consider themselves to be immigrants, and those who had problems with discussing their immigration story. The aim of the screening process was to select those candidates who were able to reflect on their immigration experiences and derive at meaningful ruminations of their stories as immigrants to the U. S. This was not to imply that those who were younger than 18 years of age or cognitively impaired were not capable of articulating or making meaning of their immigration experience. This was, however, to limit the sampling to the participants who could be easily deemed qualified as reliable and competent to tell their own stories by external criteria.

Of thirty-seven, twenty-two individuals met the screening criteria set by the researcher. However, due to personal scheduling conflicts and voluntary withdrawal from the selection process, only 12 participants followed through with the interviewing process, resulting in two cases studies and 10 in-depth interviews. The phase of contacting sites, screening, and selecting participants spanned from April of 2009 through September of 2009.

In summary, twelve first-generation Korean immigrants, seven women and five men, participated in the study. They were all born in Korea. The majority of the participants were raised in Korea and moved to the United States in their adulthood with the exception of a few who came as children or teenagers. Most of them had been living in different metropolitan centers such as L. A. or New York – home to large Korean communities in the U. S – before moving to Richmond. Table 1 summarizes each individual participant’s biographical data at the time of interview.

Table 1

Name	Age	Age at arrival	Arrived in	Years in US	City of arrival	Method
Gilbert	48	19	1981	29	LA	In-depth Interview
James	45	20	1984	25	LA	In-depth Interview
Jennifer	39	13	1983	26	NY	In-depth Interview
Jin	42	23	1990	19	Richmond	In-depth Interview
Kevin	35	20	1995	15	NY	In-depth Interview
Ki	59	25	1975	34	LA	In-depth Interview
Lisa	58	8	1960	50	St. Louis	Case Study
Min	55	26	1981	29	Richmond	In-depth Interview
Sung	81	26	1954	55	Boston	In-depth Interview
Tera	38	9	1980	29	LA	In-depth Interview
Yoon	38	13	1984	25	NY	In-depth Interview
Young	63	29	1975	34	Ohio	Case Study

3. Data Collection

There were two phases in the data collection process. First was the collection of interviewed data from case studies and in-depth interviews that involved live participants. Second was the collection of data through a survey of pertinent literature that addressed immigrant experience of Koreans in the United States.

Interviewing

Narrative inquiry was carried out through case studies and in-depth interviews. Case studies and in-depth interviews were designed to elicit data about participants' understanding of their immigration experience and personal meanings they assigned to their immigration stories. These instrumentations were designed to be inductive in orientation and capable of carrying out interviewing with minimal structure to aid participants in telling their stories from their point of view. The aim here was to allow various themes and images that were important to participants to emerge in their immigration stories along with their reflections on how they viewed their experience, world, and others.

Two cases studies were conducted for data collection. Participants, Young and Lisa, were chosen for case studies. Each participant met with me on three separate occasions. In the first meeting, which lasted less than an hour, information about the research design was given, their role as case study interviewees was explained, their questions about the research were answered, and consent forms were signed. During the second meeting, which lasted anywhere from two to three hours, the actual telling of their immigration stories took place. Tape-recording and handwritten notes were chosen as the means of recording the conversation. Rather than using a structured interview format, I chose to conduct the second session in an interactive format where the interview more or less came about as the result of the conversation between participants and me as interviewer. This collaborative communication was not only important in the narrative sense that it allowed the conversation to flow and further develop,¹⁰⁸ but it was also important in building rapport and a sense of safety within this intimate setting of sharing

¹⁰⁸ S. Sadeghi, "The Making of "Good Citizens: First-Generation Muslim Immigrants' Narratives on Race, Gender, and Identity in Higher Education," *The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations* 7, no. 4 (2007): 104-111.

personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences during which participants could feel emotionally vulnerable. Open-ended questions such as, “So, what happened in your immigration journey?” were asked to allow for voluntary representations of their life stories. In the third session, an opportunity was given to participants’ to hear my summary of how I received their stories and re-tell certain aspects of their stories so as to correct and modify any representation as they saw fit. Furthermore, any pertinent documents or photos or personal artifacts that participants deemed important as adding to the layers of their stories were made available for my viewing and questioning.

In summary, case studies were intended to get at a wider spectrum of information about participants and designed to utilize a flexible method of information-gathering and allow for voluntary information-sharing by participants. Three sessions for each participant were held. The first session was informational and procedural in nature. The second session was where the actual interviewing occurred. The third session was mainly used for participants’ re-telling and clarifying their stories. It is important to note that several open-ended questions were asked in the beginning of the second session to encourage participants to shape the conversation in their preferred direction. The case study interviewing sessions for these two participants took place from October of 2009 through November of 2009.

In-depth interviewing was carried out with ten interviewees. Though in-depth interviews were more structured in terms of the questions posed to participants than in case studies, the format was still open enough to privilege participants to take the lead and shape their conversations about their immigrant stories. I, as interviewer, interjected with questions and comments only for the purpose of clarifying the statements made, expanding the conversation,

and retaining the focus on the topic at hand. Again, this method of generating participant-directed stories is in line with narrative analysis which then continues through the data analysis stage in this research design. These in-depth interview sessions were tape-recorded.

In-depth interviewing took place at various venues. In most instances, the participant chose the venue. These venues included participants' churches and homes as well as public places such as restaurants and schools. All of the in-depth interview sessions lasted less than one hour and a half. These interviews took place from October of 2009 through July of 2010. Beside the basic questions utilized in gathering basic biographical data of each participant, interviewing focused on questions designed to probe the individual's immigration story and personal meanings attached to one's experience. The list of questions used to guide the conversation included but were not limited to the following.

1. What happened in your journey of immigration?
2. What did it mean for you to leave your homeland and come to this country?
3. If you were changed by your experience of immigration, how would you describe it?
4. Do you see yourself or others or the divine differently as the result of your immigration? If yes, how?
5. What were some resources on which you relied in your immigration journey?
6. What were some things that helped you get through difficult times in your immigration journey and settling in the new country?
7. What are some things that have become important to you as the result of your immigration?
8. What happened to you that would not have happened if you had not immigrated?
9. Did your immigration change your views about your neighbors? In what way?
10. What would be an image or metaphor that you would use to describe your immigration experience?
11. To what kinds of communities and organizations do you belong now and how?

One important note needs to be made here about how in-depth interviewing evolved over time in terms of how and what kinds of questions were used. The interviewee sessions that took

place in the early phase of the data collection process used the above questions more or less in how they were structured. As I became more competent in framing the questions through repetitions, I realized that participants' stories could cover many of the questions naturally as they emerged in the natural course of interviewing. In the latter stage of the in-depth interviewing process, the role of questioning changed from one of generating data to that of facilitating participants to tell their stories in a way that could answer the questions fluidly and flexibly.

Out of ten participants, three participants were interviewed in Korean as their preferred language of choice. These interviews then were transcribed into English for data analysis.

Literature

The second phase of data collection involved a survey of primary sources in immigration literature (essays, memoirs, and autobiographies) and secondary sources (biographies, novels, and historical works). The collection of literary materials was conducted with the goal of identifying the historically situated, culturally informed, and embodied experience of the Korean immigrant and the Korean community. In particular, autobiographies of immigrants were viewed as an important source of the lived experience and were examined for personal and cultural narratives of journey from the old to the new. Some of the sources identified in the data collection process include:

Autobiography/Biography

The Golden Mountain: The Autobiography of a Korean Immigrant, 1895-1960 by Easurk Charr

East to American: Korean American Life Stories by Elaine H. Kim and Eui-Young Yu
Man Sei! by Peter Hyun

In the New World: The Making of a Korean American by Peter Hyun

East Goes West by Younghill Kang

In the Absence of Sun: A Korean-American Woman's Promise to Reunite Three Lost Generations of Her Family by Helie Lee
Still Life With Rice: A Young American Woman Discovers the Life and Legacy of Her Korean Grandmother by Helie Lee
The Cock Still Crows by I. Pakk
Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in American by M. P. Lee
Doing What Had to Be Done: the Life Narrative of Dora Yum Kim by Soo-Young Chin

Memoir

Forever Alien: A Korean Memoir by Sunny Che

Novels

Native Speaker by Chang-Rae Lee
A Gesture Life by Chang-Rae Lee
Guilt Payment by Ty Pak
Hansu's Journey by Philip Jasohn
The Martyred by Richard E. Kim
The Innocent by Richard E. Kim
The Year of Impossible Goodbyes by Sook Nyul Choi
Clay Walls by Ronyoung Kim
Ricepaper Airplane by Gary Pak
Dancer Dawkins and the California Kid by Willyce Kim
Dead Heat by Willyce Kim
A Cab Called Reliable by Patti Kim
Yellow by Don Lee
Memories of My Ghost Brother by Heinz Insu Fenkle

Poetry

Fragrance of Poetry: Korean-American Literature by Yon-Hong Choe and Yearn Hong Choi (editors)
School Figures by Cathy Song
Dictee by Theresa H. K. Cha
Notes from the Divided Country by S. K. Kim

Anthology

Surfacing Sadness: A Centennial of Korean-American Literature 1903-2003 by Yearn Bong Choi and Haeng-Ja Kim (editors)
Kori: The Beacon Anthology of Korean American Fiction by Heinz Insu Fenkl and Walter K. Lew (editors)

Making More Waves: New Writing by Asian American Women by Elain H. Kim and Lia V. Villanueva (editors)

Echoes upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings by Elain H. Kim, Laura Hyun Yi Kang, and Hyun Yi Kang (editors)

Seeds from a Silent Tree by Tonya Bishoff and Jo Rankin

Historical Importance

Tales from a Korean Maiden in America by Dorothy M. Hong

Comfort Women by Nora Okja Keller

Ten Thousand Sorrows: The Extraordinary Journey of a Korean War Orphan by Elizabeth Kim

Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America by Ji-Yeon Huh

Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in US-Korean Relations by Katherine Moon

Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood by Richard E. Kim

A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America by Donald Takaki

Strangers from a Different Shore by Donald Takaki

The Golden Mountain: The Autobiography of a Korean Immigrant, 1895-1960 by Easurk Charr

Becoming Asian American: Second-Generation Chinese and Korean American Identities by N. Kibria

Petition of Easurk Emsen Charr, 273 Feb. 207, 1921, in Missouri

King Gojong's letter to the King of England protesting the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905

A Speech by Chang Ho Ahn published in *Shinhan Minbo*, July 12, 1917

4. Data Analysis

Within the framework of narrative analysis, there is no clear distinction between data collection and data analysis. Instead, data analysis starts in the interviewing process and runs through until reporting is complete. Even then, analysis continues as the written report is read by numerous others who bring their meaning to bear upon it and put it through interpretive revisions.¹⁰⁹ It is because, according to Riessman, “investigators do not have direct access to another’s experience...but deal with ambiguous representations of (the primary experience) – talk, text, interaction, and interpretation,” and it means representational decisions need to be

¹⁰⁹ C. K. Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1993), 14.

made at numerous points in the research process.¹¹⁰ For the purpose of this research, it suffices to state that analysis occurs in all three stages of collecting, transcribing, and analyzing of data.

Two-Pronged Approach Informed by Narrative Analysis

The collected data was analyzed through a two-pronged approach informed by narrative analysis. The first approach entailed an exploration of the broad contours of life stories of immigrants based on the narrative principle of “emplotment.”¹¹¹ This strategy focuses on the plot that emerges in the participant’s life story from the “unexpected twists in the narrative that draw attention to differences from the conventional story.”¹¹² Within the immigrant’s storytelling, the experience of immigration is assumed to be a critical event that triggers a “change of understanding or worldview.”¹¹³ Therefore, the immigration stories uncovered in the case studies and in-depth interviews were analyzed for significant plots and personal meanings that were operational in changing the participants’ views about themselves, others, and the divine.

The second part of the two-pronged approach utilized a hybrid model of qualitative thematic content analysis and thematic narrative analysis. Because of the methodological closeness between these two methods of analysis, I chose to combine them as a single method to generate important themes and images from participants’ stories. First, as a qualitative research tool, thematic content analysis examines the transcribed data for unique themes that arise in participants’ stories. In this study, themes, not physical linguistic units,¹¹⁴ became the meaningful unit of analysis and as such were coded when notable ideas emerged in participants’

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹¹¹ See the first case study in Chapter 2 of C. K. Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1993), 26-33.

¹¹² F. D. Ginsburg, *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

¹¹³ L. Webster and P. Mertova, *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method* (London: Routledge, 2007).

¹¹⁴ V. Minichiello, R. Aroni, E. Timewell, and L. Alexander, *In-depth Interviewing: Researching People* (Hong Kong: Logman, 1990).

storytelling. Though there is no agreed-upon methodology in narrative analysis to derive themes from narratives, akin to thematic content analysis, “meaning units or salient incidents through repeated readings of the texts” can be identified and used as “the basis for the researchers to summarize and interpret meanings embedded in the narratives.”¹¹⁵ Also as in thematic content analysis, narratives may be coded according to the categories deemed important by the researcher. This affinity between two methods gave the theoretical basis for a hybrid strategy of analysis for interpreting the data.

Themes were developed both deductively and inductively. The preliminary theory of the role of immigration in the development of personal identity and faith formation provided an initial list of coding categories that was modified as new categories emerged from case study materials, in-depth interviews, and the selected literature through inductive reasoning. Another deductive and inductive comparison was done regarding the socio-emotional construct of *Cheong*. Choi and Choi took the topographical dimensions of *Cheong* (historicity, co-residency, intimacy, heartedness) and operationalized them into content categories.¹¹⁶ They are long-term experiences of we-ness, understanding/accepting/helping, sharing joys and sorrows, and similarities between individuals. The emergent themes and images from the data then were compared and contrasted with these initial coding categories provided by Choi and Choi.

Transcribing

The very first steps in moving from data collection to data analysis were carried out by transcribing and re-transcribing for the purpose of content reduction and narrative generation.

¹¹⁵ M. C. Lam and T. S. Chan, “Life Themes in the Narratives of Young Chinese Immigrants Who Have Successfully Adjusted to Life in Hong Kong,” *Journal of Youth Studies* 7, no. 4 (December 2004): 437.

¹¹⁶ S. C. Choi and S. H. Choi, “Cheong: The Socio-Emotional Grammar of Koreans,” *International Journal of Group Tensions* 30, no. 1 (2001): 69-80.

The case studies were transcribed from audio files into written rough drafts by simplifying statements and adding information from handwritten notes. Then, they were re-transcribed with emergent salient ideas as themes and significant plots for further analysis. In-depth interviews were transcribed first for literal transcription of the conversations. Then, the written texts were re-transcribed for themes and ideas as in the case studies. This process of transcribing and re-transcribing produced narrative plots and themes for further analysis.

Examples of Analysis

1) Case Study

Young is a retired medical doctor in her early sixties living in Richmond. She is married to her husband of thirty-five years and with whom she immigrated to the United States in 1975. Young mentioned her reason for coming to the United States was for the development of her career as a physician and pursuit of a better life. Young and her husband, who is also a physician, were part of the influx of young professionals who immigrated to the U. S. from Korea during 1970's. They first settled in Ohio. Young stayed at home as a housewife while her husband completed his internship at a local general hospital. Then, they moved to New York and lived there for three years. The couple moved to Richmond where they have lived ever since. After working at a medical practice for 20 years, she retired in 1999. She currently spends her time playing golf and volunteering at a medical clinic in downtown Richmond.

The Faith Narrative as Both a Critical Event and a Theme

Critical Event - When young first arrived in Ohio, she felt lonely and helpless due to the culture shock she experienced and the apparent language barrier. She found support at a

local Korean church where she met fellow Korean immigrants. But the church came to be more than a community center and a support network. She stated, “There, I met Christ and everything changed.” She iterated that her identity as a born-again Christian became the most important identity that triumphed over and subsumed all the other ones, even that of immigrant. This identity, according to Young, “helped her overcome all hardships in her life” and even her challenges as an immigrant in the United States. Within the temporal framework of narrative analysis, Young’s new self-understanding provided a vantage point through which she could arrive at new meanings about her past, present, and future.

Thematic narrative of “God put me here” – Young’s faith is the primary lens through which she understands her immigrant journey. She mentioned her best friend who wanted to be a missionary back in high school and Young’s promise to support her financially. Though she is currently out of contact with her long-time friend, Young financially helps many missionaries all over the world as a way of keeping her promise and because she interprets her coming to the U. S. as ultimately God’s work of providence and her medical work as God’s gifting.

Thematic narrative of “Money is not everything” – Young mentioned professional success and pursuit of a better life as the motivating factor in her immigration. But the critical event of personal spiritual conversion also shifted her definition of success in life. “I want to serve God and help other people while I am young enough.”

Emergent themes – the idea of remaining close with and helping fellow Korean immigrants (consistent with the long-term experience of *we-ness* and understanding/accepting/helping categories of *Cheong* by Choi and Choi); the idea of serving people of different racial and ethnic groups as in her work at a medical clinic and during her medical mission trips (hospitality toward strangers as an important theme; it contrasts with the *we-ness* of *Cheong*).

2) In-Depth Interviewing

Ki is a 59-year-old Korean man who has lived in the United States since 1975. Fresh out of mandatory military service, Ki got a job on a Korean freighter bound for the United States and came to this country for the pursuit of the American Dream. He initially landed in L.A. but settled in New York shortly thereafter. He got married and became a successful small business owner. He and his family moved down to live in Richmond eventually. His oldest daughter is a doctor in Chicago and his younger daughter is a lawyer in New York.

The Community Narrative as Both a Critical Event and a Theme

Critical Event – When Ki made enough money to get to New York from L. A., he went to see the sister of a friend. Through her, he got a job and settled in New York. He came into contact with a group of friends with whom he began to socialize regularly and do *Gye*, an indigenous method of money-pooling and saving among Koreans. This event helped open his eyes to the virtue of communal sharing and mutual assistance. Through

this experience of being helped by and helping others, he was changed from a person who just sought to make it in the U.S. at all costs to a communally-minded person who regularly practices providing opportunities for others' advancement in the society.

Thematic narrative of "We help each other" –

"You know back then. There were not many Koreans in America. When you know someone, they are there to help you. My friend told his sister about me, good things. She was willing to help. She was married and her husband had a fruit and vegetable store. They were willing to give me a job. They were nice people. They let me stay in their apartment for about a month before I found a roommate to live with in Queens." (P7 – transcript)

"You could make money. You work hard and make some money every month. You send money back to your family in Korea. My family was poor in Korea. My father died when I was in the Army. My mother was working as a seamstress. I had three young siblings. I was the oldest. That's why I came to America. There were not many jobs in Korea in 1970's.... But here, life was tough. I had to work hard every day. But if you send even 10 dollars back to Korea at the time, it was a lot of money. It helped my family." (P9 – transcript)

"At the time, Koreans did a lot of Gye (a form of money-pooling). I did it with a group of people introduced by my friend's sister I talked about...(P14) Well, if you need a large amount of money, lump sum, this is a good way of raising money. You pay all back in installments. But it helps people out in many ways...(P16) Right you need to be able to trust your people. We stuck with the same people. Same people, trustworthy people, it became a social club. We go out to eat, we have social gatherings for our families, and we did a lot of things together." (P18 - transcript)

Thematic narrative of "You need others in life" –

"But as I lived in New York, as I met that group of friends with whom I did Gye, as I met my wife, I realized that you don't make it here alone. It's a mighty lonely place to be as an immigrant both legal and illegal." (P34 – transcript)

“I realized that you can make anything happen but you don’t do it alone. You need good people. And I met good people.” (P35 – transcript)

“When I came to America, I met a lot of people. I worked with Hispanic people, black people, and some white people when I was in New York. Now, that I am in Richmond, many people in my business are foreigners, immigrants. Some of them are from Russia. Some of them are from Central America. I see them struggling in their lives, too. Especially young people, I try to help them out. You know, I do this with young people who work in my store. I make a promise to help them out and they make a promise with me. Basically, I tell them, if you choose to take a fixed amount of money from your paycheck and put it in a savings account, I will match that amount the whole year. But you cannot touch that money. If you do, then the deal is off. I had success with a couple of young people in my store. They saved like 50 dollars each week from their paycheck and I matched it for one year. They saved several thousand dollars like that.” (P44 – transcript)

Emergent themes – making sacrifice for one’s family, helping those with whom one works, helping fellow Koreans or immigrants (consistent with the categories of *Cheong*); realizing God’s watching out for each one, realizing one does not need to go to church to be spiritual, depending on God for help (consistent with the category of arriving at new views about the divine in the immigration experience); feeling that minorities understand what other minorities go through, thinking that minorities know what it means to be marginalized whereas the dominant group doesn’t (consistent with the category of arriving at new views about others and neighbors).

The above examples illustrate how the two-pronged approach of narrative analysis was carried out in the data analysis stage of this study. The discussion of the results from a full analysis of the interview data is presented in Chapter Four.

Chapter 4: Journey through Life

Presently, Korean Americans comprise the biggest ethnic group among Asian Americans in the United States after Chinese, Filipino, Indians, and Vietnamese. The U.S. Census for 2000 estimates the Korean American population at 1.1 million, and this number is deemed to be lower than the actual due to underreporting and Koreans who entered unofficially. There are major pockets of Koreans in most urban centers across the United States. The most notable Korean communities are currently located in L.A., New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and Fairfax County, Virginia. As an ever-increasing number of Korean American politicians, scholars, and celebrities continues to emerge on the national scene, the profile of Koreans and Korean Americans in the United States is bound to rise, and their collective voice is sure to garner a greater attention to their issues in the near future.

The history of Koreans in the United States goes all the way back to the early 1900's. The first Korean immigrants arrived as part of the foreign labor force for sugarcane plantations in Hawaii. By 1907, some 1,000 Koreans had immigrated to the United States.¹¹⁷ Those that went inland reached the copper mines in Utah, the coal mines of Colorado and Wyoming, the railroads in Arizona, the salmon fisheries in Alaska, and the state of California.¹¹⁸ In 1910, there were 1,200 Koreans in the United States. Since then, the history of Korean immigrants has seen several cycles of growth and contraction largely due to the inconsistent and restrictive

¹¹⁷ R. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Little, Brown, and Company: New York, 1998), 270.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

immigration policies by the U.S. government. However, in every step of the way, Korean immigrants' existence has been woven deeper and deeper into the cultural fabric of America.

Yoo and Chung delineate three major phases of Korean immigration to the United States: “labor, picture brides, and (Korean) independence (1903-1945); the postwar period (1945-1965); and the post-1965 period (1965-present).”¹¹⁹ Each of the first three phases coincided with major political upheavals in Korea such as Japan’s annexation of Korea, Korean Independence, and the Korean War. Most Koreans who entered the United States during these years belonged to special demographics such as immigrant laborers, picture brides, political refugees, wives of American servicemen and their children, adoptees, and students. However, the last phase of Korean immigration came to differ greatly from the previous ones in many ways. The most significant difference for the last stage is that immigration was opened up for the general population and the reason for immigration became primarily economic and educational.

The year 1965 marked the passage of new immigration legislation in the United States that brought an end to restrictive and discriminatory immigration policies and ushered in an era of unprecedented immigration of Koreans. David K. Yoo describes the phenomenon: “This influx (which peaked in the mid-1980’s) transformed smaller historic Korean American communities in urban settings such as Los Angeles and New York, and these newer immigrants and their families make up the majority of the million or so Korean Americans in the country today.”¹²⁰ All of the case study and in-depth interviewees with the exception of one person were part of this last wave of Korean immigrants, and their stories need to be situated within this historical context and its effect.

¹¹⁹ D. K. Yoo and R. H. Chung, ed. *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America* (University of Illinois Press: Chicago, 2008), 2.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

1. Findings from the Case Studies

Two cases studies were conducted for this study. Three potential interviewees were randomly selected from the pool of 22 candidates that passed the screening process. However, only two interviewees followed through with the interviewing process for the case study.

Each participant met with the researcher on three separate occasions. In the first meeting, the interviewee was oriented to the research design, procedure, and consent forms. In the second meeting, the interview session lasting two to three hours was conducted. In the third session, the researcher reviewed the content of the previous interview session with the interviewee, and the interviewee added, clarified, and modified any details that needed to be revisited. The life stories of the two case study interviewees are summarized in the following.

CASE STUDY #1: YOUNG

Young is a retired medical doctor in her mid-sixties living in Richmond. She is married to her husband of 35 years, and she immigrated with him to the United States in 1975. They do not have any children of their own. Both of them are retired and currently spending time playing golf, traveling, and engaging in other activities they value.

Young mentioned her reason for coming to the United States was for the development of her career as a physician and pursuit of a better life. Even as medical students in Korea, the couple prepared themselves to go abroad by completing their medical degrees and certification programs. Young and her husband were part of the influx of young professionals who immigrated to the U. S. from Korea during the 1970's. Young mentioned 30 of her 50 medical school classmates and about the same ratio of her husband's class eventually came to live and practice in the U.S.

When the couple immigrated, they first settled in Ohio. At first, Young stayed at home as a housewife while her husband completed his internship at a local general hospital. She spent her first year studying and passing the examination that was needed for her to start a medical internship in the U.S. Young's first year in America was difficult due to the cultural differences and language barrier she encountered. Her sense of isolation, however, was alleviated largely through a Korean church where she could worship and socialize with other Korean immigrants. The couple then moved to New York where Young found a position at a hospital and her husband started a surgical residency. After living and working in New York for three years, they moved to Richmond where they have lived ever since.

Upon moving to Richmond, Young joined a prominent medical practice where she was quickly made a partner. This was significant for her and her practice for the reason that she became not only the very first female doctor but also a Korean doctor in a town which was predominantly white in its racial makeup. She practiced there for twenty years until her retirement in 1999.

Personally, Young suffered an illness as a child in Korea which left her infertile and her body partially impaired. Her search for the cure of her childhood illness ultimately led her to medical school and the medical profession. Faith was important in her family of origin and has continued to be a source of identity and formation throughout her life. Young always has cared for the poor and the sick, and she has been using her work as a physician to educate, care for, and advocate on behalf of the marginalized in the society. Young goes on medical mission trips to Central America frequently, volunteers her time at a medical clinic in downtown Richmond, and serves her church in various roles.

CASE STUDY #2: LISA

Lisa is a Korean American woman in her late fifties living in Chesterfield County, Virginia. She is married to her husband of about thirty years and has a college-aged son whom she and her husband adopted as baby. She has a Masters degree in human sciences and worked in private industry for many years. She immigrated with her mother and two siblings as a child to the United States in 1960. The family first settled in the vicinity of St. Louis, Kentucky.

Lisa stated her mother brought the family to the U.S. for a better life. She said that immigration “sort of just happened.” She was merely eight years old when she immigrated to the U.S. She remembered how envious her neighbors in Korea were as the family prepared to leave for America. She said people back then thought the streets in the U.S. were paved with gold. She described how different she felt when she first came to the U.S. She lived in a town where everyone was white. There were no Asians around. There was also no Asian church or community. She felt isolated in school for no one reached out to her. She had to learn English quickly in order to adapt to her new environment. In the process, she lost her ability to speak Korean. She attributed her low self-esteem with which she struggled for many years to this experience of growing up in a predominately white community.

Immigrant life was difficult for her family. Her mother had to hold down multiple jobs just to provide for the family. Lisa and her siblings had to work all the time. By studying hard, Lisa and her siblings all graduated from college and went on to earn advanced degrees. Lisa said it was her family’s reliance on each other that got them through their difficult times. Looking back on her immigration journey, Lisa said she was grateful to her mother for bringing her family to the U.S. Her mother’s dream had come true in her children.

Lisa is active in her church's congregation life as well as in the Korean American community. She helps the recently immigrated get adjusted to their new life in the U.S. by interpreting for them, educating them about social services and resources in the community, and providing emotional support. Though her Korean is not fluent, she leads an actively bilingual life and fluidly operates out of the Korean and English cultural modes.

Common Life Themes

In narrative analysis, people narrate their stories in such a way that their ultimate concerns or significant life themes emerge from their narrative accounts. "These ultimate concerns very often reflect how people interpret their world and their lived experiences."¹²¹ Though the two interviewees had unique life events and immigration experiences, there was a common thread of themes and concerns that surfaced in their stories. From initially experiencing displacement in the new country to finding community, developing constructive coping strategies, and arriving at an integrated immigrant identity, the interviewees' stories echoed the belief that immigrant life's challenges can be resolved effectively through discovering personally meaningful values with which to live, work, and relate to others.

The data from the case studies revealed the prominence of five themes in the interviewees' narratives: 1) the role of faith in the development of stable self-identity; 2) the participation in the Korean immigrant community as a necessity for psychosocial wellbeing; 3) the discovery of community through the hospitable acts of others; 4) the commitment to serving others as a way of empowering immigrant life; and 5) the importance of family.

¹²¹ M. C. Lam and T. S. Chan, "Life Themes in the Narratives of Young Chinese Immigrants Who Have Successfully Adjusted to Life in Hong Kong," *Journal of Youth Studies* 7, no. 4 (December 2004): 439.

1) Faith in Identity-Formation

One consistent finding that various studies report on Korean Americans is the importance of religion. In particular, Christianity has historically been linked to Korean immigrants. Between 70% and 80% of Korean Americans identify themselves as Christian.¹²² The most notable seems to be the impact that religion has on immigrants. Almost 40% of those who claim this Christian identity belong to the immigrants who were not Christians at the time of their arrival in the United States.¹²³ There are about 2,800 Korean Christian churches in the United States. In the Greater New York metro area alone, there were more than 500 Korean churches in 2006.¹²⁴

Besides the role of church as a strategic community center and a valuable resource for the psychosocial wellbeing of Korean Americans, Young's story illustrated that church can provide an outlet for the immigrant's spiritual yearning for God and incorporate faith into the immigrant's life in a meaningful way that produces a stable self-identity that is resilient, hopeful, and durable. When Young first arrived in Ohio, she felt lonely and helpless due to the culture shock and the language barrier she encountered. She found support at a local Korean church where she met fellow Korean immigrants. But the church came to be more than a community center and a support network. She stated, "There I met Christ and everything changed." She iterated that her identity as a born-again Christian became the most important identity that took primacy over all the other ones, even that of immigrant. This identity, according to Young,

¹²² S. A. Suh, *Being Buddhist in a Christian World: Gender and Community in a Korean American Temple* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 3–5.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Personally counted this number of Korean churches from the directory of New York Korean Church Association in 2006.

“helped her overcome all hardships in her life,” especially her challenges as an immigrant in the United States.

Within the temporal framework of narrative analysis, this experience signaled a major turning point in her self-understanding and her fundamental view about her life in the U.S. Prior to this event, Young was an ambitious and promising doctor but also a culturally marginalized member of the society as an immigrant. The challenges of learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, and navigating her medical career in a new environment were formidable and stressful. But her experience of spiritual conversion brought about a shift in her perspective that allowed for a new plotline of self which was to be based on agency, creativity, and resilience rather than cultural insecurity and incompetence. In this way, Young’s new self-understanding borne out of her faith provided a new narrative about her past, present, and future.

For Lisa, faith happened with a community of Caucasian Christians that went out of their way to befriend and support her family in the early years of her family’s adjustment to the new life in the U.S. As Lisa continued to worship at her new church, she stated she began to see herself as a child of God who was loved unconditionally and whose worth was great. And her low self-esteem, which was the product of her experience of marginalization from living in a predominantly white town, began to give way to a confident self-identity she described as being “in Christ.”

2) Participation in the Korean Community

For both interviewees, the theme of community was inexplicably tied to their religious identity as Korean Christians. Participating in the congregational life of their respective

churches where they could socialize and relate to fellow Korean immigrants was a primary avenue of promoting personal and relational wellbeing.

For Young, the Korean church,¹²⁵ particularly in the early years of immigration, provided a safe haven for sharing, naming, and expressing fears and frustrations about immigrant life. Young described the communal bonding that took place in her church as “sticky good” and “a medicine for her psyche.” Even after gaining a comfort level in her adjustment to the new country, Young depended on her church community for continued support and appreciated the measure of attentiveness and interest she received from the members of her church. Despite many problems that currently exist in her faith community, Young reported her unwavering support of its role as a center of worship and source of meaning in her life. Furthermore, Young sees supporting the 1.5¹²⁶ and 2nd generation Korean American young adults in her faith community an invaluable end for which she sacrificially invests her time and personal resources because she believes, “They are the future of Korean Americans.”

In Lisa’s case, the Korean church entered late into her immigrant journey. Because her family settled in a place where there were no Koreans at all, it was a local church of predominantly white membership in which she found a faith community. However, her life journey soon took her to several encounters with fellow Korean immigrants which then led to her involvement with the Korean church.¹²⁷ Soon, Lisa recognized the benefit of relating to and interacting with Korean American Christians, and this relationship with the Korean faith community has continued throughout her immigrant journey placing it at the center of her life

¹²⁵ I am using ‘the Korean church’ to refer to not any individual church but the church as a religious institution for Korean Americans in the general sense of the term.

¹²⁶ 1.5 is a term that describes those who were born in Korea but immigrated to America at a young age.

¹²⁷ See the footnote 9.

and work. Lisa described, “If you take church out of my life, then there is not much left.”

Currently, both Lisa and her husband are active in many ministries of their church, particularly the educational ministry for youth and young adults. As in Young’s case, Lisa sees herself as a bridge between the 1st generation Korean immigrants and Korean Americans who were born in the U.S., and she often does the work of a cultural mediator and communal conciliator in her faith community which she stated is becoming ever so diverse.

3) Finding Community Through Hospitality

Another common theme that runs through the interviewees’ stories is the experience of receiving hospitality from unexpected agents. Lisa’s experience of finding a friend in high school whose acts of hospitality came to have a profound effect on her self-image is a critical event that brought about a new level of equilibrium in her life.

Growing up in a predominately white community, Lisa felt isolated and marginalized during her early years of her immigrant life. She described how her sense of self was wounded and how she struggled socially. However, in high school, Lisa made a friend who, though being white, the captain of the cheerleaders, and very popular, took her around everywhere. Lisa said it was her friend’s acceptance and validation that brought about a positive change in her self-image. Lisa said her friend was a Christian who later became a wife of a missionary in the Philippines. Lisa credited her friend’s faith for setting an example of Christ’s love. Over time, Lisa began to see herself and others through Christ’s love as God’s children with great worth.

Young also mentioned how she and her husband were able to experience acceptance, emotional support, and hospitality from several individuals in the early years of her immigration life. During her time in New York, as she began working at a hospital, she encountered a few

doctors who went out of their way to support her work and help her navigate through difficult career choices. Young credits them for instilling in her compassion and a spirit of hospitality which she tries to extend to others in her work and life.

4) Serving Others and Empowering Immigrant Life

In contrast to her motive of immigrating to the U.S. to pursue a successful professional career and financial well-being, it is the narrative, “Money is not everything,” that informs Young’s definition of success in life presently. Here, her personal spiritual conversion experience seems to have also reprioritized her goals in life. Young stated, “I want to serve God and help others while I am young enough.” Young’s work as a volunteer physician at a medical clinic and as an amateur medical missionary to Central America attests to this ideal of serving the marginalized of society.

Lisa’s work in the Korean immigrant community echoes this theme of serving others. She helps especially the recently immigrated to get adjusted to their new life by educating them about social services and community resources. Lisa has been particularly active in working with and recognizing Korean War veterans. She hosts annual banquets for them and speaks regularly at the War Memorial in Richmond about her experience as a Korean immigrant and her views about the war’s legacy. Lisa acknowledged the relational principle, “You are as important as I am,” as the underlying narrative for her life and work. She stated being an immigrant gives her a unique vantage point through which she sees the immigrant in all people and which compels her to treat everyone with respect.

5) Family as Central to Immigrant Life

From Lisa's narrative accounts, it is clear that her families, both her own and her family of origin, constitute the primary concern for her life. Particularly, her sense of crisis in immigrating to the United States as a young child would have been unmitigated if it were not for her family's strong bond. Her mother, who had to raise her children alone, reinforced the importance of family as the most crucial and meaningful in her children's lives and modeled this value by sacrificially providing for her children and even her relatives in Korea. Through difficult moments in Lisa's immigrant life, she stated, "We had to depend on each other for everything." The fact that Lisa and her siblings remain in close contact with each other and continue to provide mutual emotional and financial support is an indicator of this family narrative. Lisa recalled her mother's words, "We have to sacrifice for the family" and "We must take care of our own," in expressing her mother's legacy. In her own words, she said, though she did not realize it at the time, the intimacy within her family helped provide an emotional and relational buffer against the harsh reality of immigrant life. Lisa stated she tries to instill the same attitude about family in her son whom she adopted as an infant.

Young's reliance on family was qualitatively different. When Young and her husband immigrated to the U.S., all her family, with the exception of her younger brother, remained in Korea. For this reason, her relationship with her family of origin contributed to her self-understanding as an immigrant indirectly compared to Lisa's case. However, the theme of supporting her family of origin back home was evident in her story, and the distance between her own family and her family of origin helped bring balance to her relationships. There is another sense in which Young's narrative slightly differs from that of Lisa. Young's narrative, "I am as

good as my husband,” reflected her personal and professional identity as a competent physician and talented individual in her own right which she came to construct about herself while living in the U.S. While fomenting a family narrative with her husband as a cohesive family, it seems Young came to see her marriage more through the lens of egalitarian values such as mutuality, partnership, and equality. The concept of marriage, in her immigrant experience, has been reconfigured to incorporate the principle of differentiation between, and development of, two partners who do well by complementing, supporting, and even competing with each other in life. In this way, the values of agency, freedom, and solidarity, which were articulated in other parts of Young’s immigrant story, also found their way into her marriage and family life, and this development of self-narrative was consistent with her experience of the American society as more open and equitable than the Korean society she had left behind in her homeland.

2. Findings from In-depth Interviews

The transcribed texts of in-depth interviews were retranscribed in order to demarcate salient ideas and narratives disclosed by the interviewees’ statements and to initiate a process of content reduction. Once the ideas and narratives were identified from interviewees’ transcripts through inductive reasoning, they were compiled in a master list and coded thematically for further examination of logical association and cross-referencing. Each theme or narrative as a coding unit then was counted for the frequency of occurrence across the interviewees. For example, the narrative, “There are more opportunities in America than in Korea,” was found in five of the ten interviewees’ stories. All of the themes and narratives that were counted in more

than three interviewees' stories were then collected and grouped according to their coding categories.

The findings about the themes and narratives can be classified into five groups. First, there were the cultural and personal narratives about immigration. Second, there were themes of hardship and marginalization about immigrant life. Third, there were the narratives about faith and God particularly in regard to their role in the immigrant identity formation. Fourth, there were the themes of mutuality, hospitality, and solidarity. Lastly, there were the narratives about the in-group experience with fellow Korean immigrants.

There are two types of data that need further mentioning. First, critical events that significantly shifted the interviewees' worldviews thereby bringing about a new equilibrium in their sense of being as in the case studies were incorporated into the discussion of the findings. The last piece to the montage of immigrant life comes from the imagery and metaphors selected by the interviewees in describing their experiences.

1) Cultural and Personal Narratives about Immigration

Immigration can be said to have begun in the interviewees' minds even before they had actually set foot on American soil. For many of them, it was the kernel of a dream about a better life that they had been hearing about from their relatives, neighbors, and friends. America was what Korea was not and much more than what Korea was for them. Sung, one of the interviewees, remarks, "My biggest motivation (for coming to America) was this land of opportunity.... I think there is no place like the United States." For many interviewees, coming to the United States meant pursuing their dreams of becoming more than what they could ever

imagine becoming in Korea. Inversely, this narrative further reinforced their narrative about

Korea: Korea was a country of limited opportunities. Interviewee Ki remarks,

My family was poor in Korea. My father died when I was in the army. My mother was working as a seamstress. I had three siblings. I was the oldest. That's why I came to America. There were not many jobs in Korea in 1970s. Even if you had one, you would not make a lot of money. But here, life was tough. I had to work hard every day. But if you send even 10 dollars back to Korea at the time, it was a lot of money. It helped my family.

Another narrative that most of the interviewees articulated was, "America is a place where individuality and freedom are promoted." Moving away from a traditional and patriarchal society in Korea to a more open society with egalitarian values such as equality, tolerance, and fairness were both intended and unintended consequences of immigration. Interviewee Yoon states,

Here, the expectation is different completely.... Most of the people here generally know what matters to you is what makes you happy...your goal, you achieve that, that's good, that's happiness. But in Korea, if you are (in a high class), you have to achieve certain things in order to be accepted and say, I have done well.

James echoes this narrative about individual freedoms afforded in the U.S.

(In Korea), there is no individuality. Here, you can be who you are. People don't really care what you do. You can be your own person. You have freedom. The culture is so different.

In relation to personal narratives about immigrants and immigrant life, there were two values that were particularly meaningful to the interviewees. First, the narrative, "You have to be resilient and hopeful as an immigrant," seems to denote the necessary life attitudes that one should cultivate in the face of the harsh reality of immigrant life. Interviewee Min explains,

Immigrant life is tough. All you can do is to take each day as it comes. No matter what hardship comes, you just have to do your best. Sometimes, your best is to cry, scream, to call out for help. But you have to do your best and good things happen ultimately and good people come to you in the process. Like I said before, you cannot question why you

are here or why you are going through what you are going through, because there may not be answers. But as you keep doing your best, things work out. At least, in my case, it did.

Gilbert shares the same conviction about the resilient attitude immigrant life demands.

The thing that has become the most important to me is the spirit of resilience and never giving up in the face of difficulty. The conviction, whatever the challenge is, if you keep on keeping on, you can achieve your goal ultimately.... If you faithfully do what you do, then one day you will reap the fruit of your work.

The second narrative discusses personal responsibility about steering one's own life in one's preferred direction. Min, as an immigrant woman, illustrates the narrative, "You need to take full control of your life as an immigrant," by calling for women to become more active agents in shaping their own lives.

Still back in Korea, many women were stay-home wives. They do not work as much as women do here. They basically can depend on their husbands. But in immigrant life, women have to become more assertive.... I literally changed from a very passive person to a very strong person, though it did not happen quickly.

James stresses the importance of getting after one's goals in immigrant life.

In Korea, I could just go with the flow.... Here, I was different because I was an immigrant. I had to go grab it in a way. I had to become much more active, much more proactive.

2) Hardship and Marginalization in Immigrant Life

All of the interviewees spoke about the difficult nature of immigrant life in two ways. First, they pointed out the stress from having to make linguistic, cultural, and even physical adjustments in their new country. As immigrants, many either had to do manual labor themselves or help out their parents in their family businesses. Financial burden, including long hours at work, often caused conflicts in family life. Those that came late in their life as adults

cited the language barrier as a significant predicament in their adjustment and an impediment to becoming competent participants in American society.

In the case of two interviewees, the burden of immigrant life resulted in very personal events. For Jin, her divorce from her husband in the early years of immigration was partially attributed to the lack of a support network in her immigrant life. She states,

If I were in Korea...I guess, I might not have divorced. Partly because my husband, my ex-husband and I were in a very tight community.... People would have intervened a lot but (divorce) advanced sooner here than in Korea. We were here and without the tight community (of friends).”

In Min’s case, working in a crime-ridden neighborhood led to her husband’s death. She recalls,

By that time, we were running a small grocery store. It was in a real bad neighborhood. A lot of black and Hispanic people.... One day, he was working alone and a robber came into the store and shot him dead as he tried to rob him.

For Min, her husband’s death, though it happened many years ago, still affects her sense of self and view of the other significantly. When asked about her view of neighbors, Min stated that she still feels very much fearful when she is with African Americans. Though an event of this nature can occur anywhere, Min’s perception of certain groups of people seems to have been significantly damaged from this very personal tragedy.

As in Min’s case, the most significant implication of encountering the harsh aspect of immigrant life seems to be its marginalizing impact on the immigrant sense of self. Ki describes his experience of feeling inferior and incompetent in this way,

(America) is a mighty lonely place to be as an immigrant both legal and illegal. You don’t understand the language well. American people don’t treat you well. They think you are stupid because you don’t speak English. Life is tough. Man, had I known my life would be this hard, I might not have come here after all.

Jin expresses her sense of disability that resulted from being unable to communicate and move about in the new country.

(When) I came to the United States, I couldn't go to the store by myself. I had to learn how to drive and there was no public transportation, so I couldn't go to any place by myself. I could not communicate with anyone by myself.

Tera shares her feeling of being isolated from growing up in a predominately white neighborhood.

Being in a small city didn't help because the city was 95% white and conservative. And they hadn't even heard of the country called Korea. So when people, other kids, would ask, "What are you?" I would be like, "I am Korean." They would be like, "What's that?" So, I knew that they had no idea what Korea was and I think, because of that, there was a lot of ridicule, a lot of it. I don't know if I can call it racism, but negative memories related....

And Tera goes on to describe the impact this experience of marginalization had on her sense of self. "Yeah, I think I was already a little shy to begin with, but growing up in a predominantly white area, I became even more reserved and unable to express myself." In this way, the interviewees' state of displacement coupled by their experiences of isolation and marginalization in the society crystallized into negative self-image and an internal sense of crisis which at least for some of them came to be resolved with the assistance of hospital personnel and communities to a large measure.

3) Narratives about Faith, Spirituality, and God

Without examining their life stories carefully, the link between the interviewees' immigrant experiences and their faiths can be partially read as a simple representation of their demographics. Many of the interviewees, in fact, are currently self-professing Christians who practice their faith actively. However, this correlation is misguided because only three of the six interviewees currently belonging to Christian faith traditions had any meaningful Christian

background prior to immigration. Their stories revealed all of the six interviewees came to either adopt or confirm Christianity as their religion of choice only after encountering God and church in personally meaningful ways in their immigrant lives. Particularly, their experiences of faith, spirituality, and God were reported to have played a formative role in shaping their immigrant identity.

In Gilbert's case, his experience of God's grace during a very difficult time in his life became a critical event which came to permanently shift his worldviews. He describes,

During her pregnancy, my wife developed diabetes. The baby inside her was so big. Because it happened on December 23, her regular doctor was not available. We had to rush to the doctor. The doctor was not competent and unaware of the risk due to her diabetes...(Upon giving birth), my wife's body was paralyzed. She could not move. They were literally dead. I cried out to God for them. That was the turning point in my immigrant life. I think all the hardships God has allowed in my life have born much fruit. Still I am going through a lot of hardship, but...my faith became passionate.

Gilbert's experience aptly shows how crises in immigrant life can direct or magnify one's sense of faith to interpret events and occurrences through the vantage point of divine presence and benevolence. Sung expresses his belief that his eventual immigration to the United States was part of God's grand design for his life, and he locates God's providence in an incident during the Korean War when he helped save an American army officer from danger who later sponsored him to come to the U.S. out of gratitude.

Without Korean War, I would have never become a true Christian, a real Christian. (I) tried and intended to become a good one. That's what I am doing now really. Without Korean War, I would never have made it.

In addition to God's providence as a theme, many of interviewees' stories presented a significant connection between one's faith and one's development of immigrant identity as shown in case studies. Tera, whose experience of marginalization affected her sense of self

negatively, describes her new found faith as providing a resolution for her pain and a new identity through which she was able to see herself and her life differently. She states,

I accepted Jesus. I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. And I realized that I have an identity I hadn't realized before. That was a type of freedom that I felt to express myself without being ashamed.

Yoon reports a similar experience of encountering God.

(Immigrant life) was hard and I think that kind of hardship let me look forward to meeting God more on a personal level because God gave me so much comfort, peace in my heart, despite all the changes and challenges I faced. Definitely seeking God was the utmost important thing at that point in my life.

It is important to note here that those interviewees who did not report themselves as Christians or overtly religious also described spiritual openness to be important in their immigrant experiences. Jennifer discusses her spiritual openness that came about as a result of her immigrant experiences.

I believe God is everywhere. I believe Christians, Jewish people, Muslims, and all other religions basically believe in the same God. It's just people have different ideas of God. If my experience as an immigrant has influenced me, it just made me realize that God loves and accepts all people. My struggles to fit into this society helped me realize that I should not try to fit in but be who I am... I think God is one who allows people to be who they are because God made them like that.

Narratives about faith, spirituality, and God seem to be situated in the heart of Korean immigrant identity which many scholars of differing fields continue to corroborate.¹²⁸ Precisely for the reason that Korean Americans find their churches to be both a social and religious institution, a multiplicity of factors can be seen as producing this phenomenon of religious identification. Furthermore, this religiosity of Korean Americans needs to take into account the

¹²⁸ O. Kwon, "The Religiosity and Socioeconomic Adjustment of Buddhist and Protestant Korean Americans," in *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. D. Yoo and R. H. Chung (University of Illinois Press: Chicago, 2008): 60-80.

importance of ethnocentric orientation of Korean culture as conceptualized in *Cheong* which is discussed in the summary.

4) Experiencing Mutuality, Hospitality, and Solidarity

In-depth interviews disclosed how the interviewees experienced hospitality, acceptance, and advocacy from others, which then led to the empowerment of their sense of worth, humanization of their existence, and concrete support for their circumstances. These themes of mutuality, hospitality, and solidarity are consistent with the findings from the case studies and strengthen the correlation between the immigrant's wellbeing and the local's attitude towards the immigrant. Speaking of her high school teachers, Jennifer remarks,

They were just good people. They saw the potential in me. I don't know whether it was because I was a minority or not. They accepted me the way I was and encouraged me to do better in what I did. I guess they made me feel safe by trying to understand and help me. I felt accepted by them.

Jennifer's encounters with her high school teachers were significant enough that her views about her sense of self were changed positively from being fearful to feeling safe.

Upon a closer inspection of the narratives, however, one can see the interviewees' stories expand and build on the findings from the case studies in several important ways. While the case studies primarily described the interviewees' experience of receiving hospitable acts of others, several in-depth interviews demonstrated a dynamic of mutuality present in the relationship between the immigrant and the local that needed exploration. In fact, in some of the stories, it was the immigrant who contributed significantly to the education of the local and the formation of their multicultural awareness. In other words, in addition to experiencing the other as hospitable and neighborly, the immigrant's acts of hospitality toward the other seemed to have facilitated the humanization of the local's self and broadened their relational horizons.

In Gilbert's case, his sharing of immigrant experiences led to a change in his colleagues' understanding of, and attitudes toward, immigrants. Gilbert describes,

There were several occasions on which I got to share with my colleagues about my difficulties that I was going through because I was an immigrant and minority. I found out they were not aware of those difficulties. [Through my sharing] they came to understand me and were changed in how they approached me. I saw little changes in their attitudes and behaviors for the better. It happened in my workplaces.

Jin's intentional effort at trying to be hospitable to the non-Korean elderly members of her church demonstrates a similar impact.

This is why I like to go to English service purposely to help the elderly couples, to help people feel like they are connected to the church. If I let myself stay in my comfort zone, I would probably stay in the Korean congregation. When I go home, I even live in a [white] neighborhood. But my personal associations are very much Korean. But I make myself available to different cultures, especially for minorities. When I see these elderly couples at the church – it's true that they are minorities in our church – I try to help them feel accepted because I identify with minorities more.

Sung shares how his simple gestures of hospitality toward his neighbors seem to have a humanizing effect on them.

[My neighbors] help me. I try to help them. I cut my neighbor's lawn for about three years because her husband passed away.

Furthermore, the interviewees' stories exhibit a sort of solidarity with, and compassion toward, others that provides a broad foundation of immigrant identity which is stably based on their Korean self-understanding but very much multicultural in its outward orientation and outlook. Ki's program of helping young workers at his business illustrates this quality poignantly.

But when I came to America, I met a lot of people. I worked with Hispanic people, black people, and some white people when I was in New York. Now that I am in Richmond, many people in my business are foreigners, immigrants. Some of them are from Russia. Some of them are from Central America. I see them struggling in their lives, too. Especially young people, I try to help them out. You know, I do this with young people

who work in my store. I make a promise with them and they make a promise with me. Basically, I tell them, if you choose to take a fixed amount of money from your paycheck and put it in a savings account, I will match that amount the whole year. But you cannot touch that money. If you do, then the deal is off. I had success with a couple of young people in my store. They saved like 50 dollars each week from their paycheck and I matched it for one year. They saved several thousand dollars like that.

The findings of the interviews recognize, at least for these interviewees, being an immigrant allows them to be more cognizant of the plight of other minority and immigrant groups and empathetic in their attitudes and actions.

5) Living Among Fellow Korean Americans

In addition to the central role of family in the lives of Korean Americans, the interviewees' stories provided a clear correlation between their wellbeing and participation in their community life with fellow Korean Americans. Consistent with the findings of the case studies, the interviewees' lives were intricately woven into their social, religious, and educational communities, which were largely Korean and immigrant. In regards to the narrative of finding community among fellow Korean Americans, all but one interviewee answered affirmatively and spoke of the importance of maintaining this shared base of identity and relationship. Kevin discusses his experience of making friends at a local YMCA in this way.

I heard there was an English class at a local YMCA where you could learn English for free. I took the class and I met several good friends there. I did not know the instructor was a Korean American. Some of those who took that class became good friends with me.

For Tera, she was able to gain her stable and positive identity as a Korean American living in the U.S. only after finding community among her fellow Korean American students at her college. This encounter marked a significant shift in her sense of self and opened a way to self-confidence that was not previously available to her. She describes.

We loved the same food, ha ha. I mean I am Korean American, I love America you know, and if I knew more about Korea I would love Korea, too. But I ate Korean. I ate Korean growing up. That's all what my mom knew how to cook. So it wasn't until my adult years that I really ate non-Korean. So we ate the same food and we shared the same language and it wasn't Korean. It wasn't English. It was Konglish sometimes. You know, sometimes like a word here and there would come out and everybody would understand what it meant.... They had similar experiences of being an outcast, feelings of being an outcast from growing up in white neighborhoods. Yeah, having similar experiences definitely contributed.

While Yoon's experience reveals her relationship with her church youth group to be similarly conducive to her identity formation, she also mentions finding a spouse of the shared heritage to be of great importance.

I was part of the Korean-American church setting. I used to go to a church in the city, in New York. So, there I began to show my leadership skills and you know, I began doing a lot of things like leading the praise team or being the president of the class or like being recognized for being a really outstanding kid...on the block. I felt really confident and I felt like I could do anything in this world. Yeah, and after that, I went to college. Right before that, I met someone special and that someone changed my life greatly. In college, I continued to serve.... I served church and a lot of things I have done very proudly. The person that I met, we got married and he's my husband and he's been wonderful and he also helped me to be who I am and be very confident and thankful. I am happy about who I am.

One consistent theme that runs through the interviewees' stories is their almost visceral reaction to interacting with other fellow Korean Americans. This emotional bond with other Korean Americans, though it may seem strange to others, is at the base of the culture of Koreans that fuels their ethnocentricity. Ki explains how a simple communal practice of money-pooling called *Gye* can epitomize the spirit of this we-ness of Korean Americans in the following.

Right, you need to be able to trust your people. That's why you don't do *Gye* with people you don't know. We stuck with the same people. Same people, trustworthy people, it became a social club. We went out to eat, we had social gatherings for our families, and we did a lot of things together.

They were friends. It was not only a way of making money but being with people. Back then, you go to churches to meet other Koreans or do *Gye* for social things. Since I did not go to church, *Gye* worked out fine for me.

You know one of the persons in my *Gye*, had a niece. She saw how hard I worked and was honest, though they knew that I did not have my papers. She had a niece who was in early twenties. She came from Korea recently, too. She introduced me to her niece. We began dating and we fell in love. She's been my wife for the past thirty years, now.

Clearly, these stories confirm the cultural narrative of the affective bond about being Koreans that they hold dear to their hearts. This interpersonal attachment is described to be “all inclusive and at the root of Koreanness.”¹²⁹

6) Imagery and Metaphors of Immigrant Life

The imagery and metaphors describing their immigrant identities and experiences were as informative as the interviewees' stories themselves and proved to be an able window into their worlds of meanings and emotions. As diverse and similar as their journeys have been, the imagery and metaphors reflect many different representations coming together to paint one masterful montage of immigrant life in radiant colors and textures. Four of these were selected to illustrate the interviewees' intimate portrayals of their journey.

Desert and cactus

Gilbert chose the imagery of a cactus growing in a desert to point out the harsh but also earnest and life-giving nature of immigrant life. Gilbert illustrates the following.

Yes, a desert. Like a cactus growing in that desert, immigrants live a life like that. This life is extremely difficult, but this life is lived in earnestness. At the end, the immigrant survives. Immigrants are like that. For example, I think many Jewish immigrants are like that, also Korean, Chinese immigrants. The life of an immigrant is hard, but the immigrant survives ultimately.... Birds come to perch upon it. There's strength in its life. Also, the cactus' thorns describe the difficult things in the immigrant's life, ha ha.

¹²⁹ K. W. Lee, This Thing Called Cheong, *The Korea Times*, Friday, June 21, 1996.

Auto repair shop

Similar to Gilbert's reasoning, Kevin points out all the tough work that goes into making immigrant life work, but he also brings to the surface the joy and the sense of camaraderie that make one's labor meaningful.

I have a great metaphor. My immigration experience is like an auto repair shop. There is a lot going on. A lot of work. A lot of laughter. A lot of enjoying your coworkers. A lot of grease. You get dirty, but it does not make you dirty inside. It means that you are just living your life well. Immigrant's life is like that, I guess. It's not pretty a lot of times. You have to get dirty, if you know what I mean. But it's a fun life. It's good.

Golf

In Ki's reflection, the themes of partnership and community come to the fore. His imagery seems to put emphasis on the process and the journey of immigrant life that necessarily calls for walking, living, and playing together.

I would like to use a golf metaphor. When you go to a golf course alone, you need to pair up with someone. Sometimes it is a fellow Korean. Sometimes it is a white person. Whoever it is, you need to be respectful and play nicely with the person. If you are a better golfer than he, you can him teach a few things about golf. If he is better than you, you need to learn a few things about golf. It's all about mutual respect, humility, and working together. If you have that mindset, then your golf will become better and better and you will be happy every time. I think that's how an immigrant life is. As long as you have that attitude, you know, sometimes your golf game will be terrible for some reason, but it is not what you hit, but it is how you play the game. If you play the game right, then you will be happy no matter what.

Piano

Jennifer's choice of imagery illustrates the multidimensional and often up-and-down discordant nature of immigrant existence. However, the agency belongs to the immigrant who trusts oneself to make a better music out of different harmonies and combinations as one continues on this journey.

There are many keys in the piano. Each key makes a distinctive note. I think my journey has been composed of many keys, many notes for that matter. Sometimes, my life was played in low notes, especially difficult times, but I was making a song out of these notes. Sometimes, my life was played in high notes, the good times, easy, outgoing, a lot of happiness. However, because my journey included both low keys and high keys, I am able to play many different kinds of music on the piano. I can make beautiful music using different harmonies and combinations. The music will only get better as I continue in my journey....

In summary, interviewees' words of wisdom echo, "While doing your best, things will ultimately work out and you will find your way" in your immigrant life.

Summary of Findings

The study set out to answer the following questions.

- 1) What is the impact of immigration on one's understanding of self, the other, and the divine? How are immigrants changed with the experience of immigration?
- 2) What are the cultural narratives within the Korean immigrant community that serve as important sources of informing and shaping their sense of identity and community?
- 3) What are the features of human life that are highlighted in the lived experience of Korean immigrants?

The analysis of data clearly shows there were substantive answers produced by the research. The findings validated many of the initial hypotheses proposed in the beginning of the research. However, some of the hypotheses had to be revised in important ways in light of the findings. The following is the summary of the findings in relation to the research questions.

Self, the Other, God

The picture of self painted by participants' stories reveals a complex being that leaves a state of stability in Korea, experiences a period of displacement upon arrival in the U.S., and reaches a new equilibrium gradually in an on-going process of adaption that takes into account self's interactions with the other and, in some cases, the divine.

Largely, the immigrant self was seen as undergoing a rapid process of socio-cultural revision upon leaving one's homeland and arriving in the new country, and this process of displacement and transition usually included working through the culture-shock, the language barrier, and the sense of isolation. Many participants echoed experiencing a sense of disability in not being able to communicate and conduct daily activities in their new country. More importantly, many participants noted their experiences of being marginalized at school, at work, and in the neighborhoods in which they lived. This experience of racism, ignorance, and apathy by the other had a marginalizing effect on their sense of self and often drove their passivity or reluctance to engage the other further inward. However, some of participants attested to their personal encounter with God as a moment of resolution for their marginalized self and described how this experience of spiritual enlightenment provided the basis for the emergence of an identity stable and flexible enough to include and accommodate other experiences of self within it. For those participants whose stories did not manifest an overt spiritual encounter, as in conversion and enlightenment, their sense of self was able to emerge from underneath the weight of difficult immigrant life mainly through the support they received from their family, community, and other hospitable agents.

Dominant in participants' experiences was their connection to fellow Korean immigrants. Their sense was significantly related to their experience of finding, interacting with, and serving their own communities, both religious and social, and this strong in-group experience provided an environment in which they could experience acceptance, belongingness, and safety that were conducive to their wellbeing. This narrative of finding community among fellow Korean immigrants is further described in the next section.

In participants' stories, the other was experienced both positively and negatively. Many participants clearly presented racism in the society as a major impediment to their adaptation and acculturation in the new country. Unwelcoming neighbors and those members of the dominant culture with prejudicial views toward immigrants contributed to participants' isolation and marginalization. On the contrary, hospitable neighbors and those members of the dominant culture with tolerant attitudes helped facilitate participants' adaptation to the new life and even provided an impetus in their development of cultural competence and sense of belongingness. Some of the participants' hardships, however, were attributed to certain segments of the population as in the case of Min's husband.

One important observation about participants' life stories needs to be mentioned in regard to their sense of self and view of the other. Participants' experience of encountering diverse groups of people in the American society was crucial in the formation of their multicultural awareness and self-understanding as a unique and diverse self. Furthermore, this change in worldviews empowered many participants to engage the other, particularly other minorities and immigrants, in hospitable, compassionate, and empathic manners. One notable narrative that emerged in participants' stories was that of serving and empowering other groups of

marginalized status. It seems participants' self-identity as immigrants provided a basis of solidarity and advocacy for others.

Faith narrative was a prominent feature in participants' stories. Most of the participants found the role of faith in their immigrant journeys to be significant, and even those whose stories lacked an overt religious identification mentioned that their immigrant experiences contained spiritual moments and perspectives that were meaningful and formative in their lives. For participants belonging to Christian faith traditions, God's grace, providence, and presence were found to be important themes, and their faith functioned not only as a religion but more relevantly as a frame of reference informing their worldviews, self-understanding, and ethical standards.

Korean Immigrant Community

Almost all of the participants were heavily involved with other fellow Korean immigrants in some way. The Korean American church as an institution served both as a religious and social community where participants could form meaningful relationships, be part of a network of like-minded people, and find resources for their needs. Other communities in which participants found support included groups of Korean Americans at school and *ad-hoc* social networks such as Ki's *Gye* club. The commonality among all these entities was the strength of the emotional connection that participants felt towards fellow Korean Americans.

This emotional bond, which is conceptualized by the cultural-specific construct called *Cheong* for Koreans, was sufficiently and repeatedly found in participants' stories. This cultural narrative of *Cheong* was often illustrated in participants' experience of feeling at home and finding a deeper connection with fellow Korean immigrants, and its effect spilled over to other

aspects of their lives, providing an enduring sense of stability and groundedness. For participants, it was the shared experience of leaving their homeland, living in the U.S. as immigrants, and facing similar challenges that enabled this group dynamic to take deep roots in their relationships. Though their affection for, and loyalty to, their fellow Korean Americans drove them to be oblivious to certain problems or issues present in their communities, the influence of this orientation and practice of “we-ness” was seen largely seen as constructive and productive in their lives.

On a closer inspection, there seems to be a significant correlation between participants’ inward ethnocentric orientation and their outward commitment to serving others in the larger community. Rather than their in-group attachment being a reclusive strategy of self-preservation and self-protection, it seems to serve as a platform from which Korean immigrants emerge out of their own shells and which energizes them to live as productive and competent members of the society. In other words, their in-group participation extended itself to a life of active service and advocacy for others.

Two cultural narratives prevalent in participants’ stories represented complementary views about the U.S. and Korea. One narrative had to do with the immigrants’ dreams and longings for America, and the other had to do with significant economic, social, and even political challenges in Korea that contributed to their decisions to immigrate. Participants’ positive attitudes toward America included views such as, “There are more opportunities in America,” “America welcomes immigrants,” and “America is a nation where individuality and freedom are promoted.” The inverse views about Korea included, “There are limited opportunities in Korea,” “Korea is a nation still steeped in patriarchal values,” and “Uniformity

is enforced in Korea.” Though many of these narratives had to do with the circumstances surrounding Korea at the time of their immigration, participants to a certain degree continued to live with these narratives allowing them to inform and validate their immigrant existence in the U.S.

Informing Human Life

Immigrant life as portrayed in the stories of participants is one of continual movement and transition. Though many participants would agree that they have achieved some semblance of settlement in the U.S., their sense of continued marginalization and susceptibility to ever-evolving social and political conditions is always with them. This fluidity of their existence is akin to the experiences of other groups of immigrants in that “[there is] the sense of constantly negotiating between here and there, past and present, homeland and host-land, self and other.”¹³⁰ This feature of immigrant life has convinced some researchers that there is no uniform or universal process of acculturation contrary to the popular models of immigrant identity, acculturation, and adaptation in psychology.¹³¹

In my analysis, I would like to go further to propose that this provisional and transitional nature of immigrant life points to the tension that exists between the particular experience of immigrant life and common humanity. On one hand, the uniqueness of immigrant experience shows life on the move and in flux, particularly in terms of self-understanding. No one who has not gone through this process of uprooting and resettlement personally would truly know the depth of existential predicament that is involved in the enterprise of immigration. On the other hand, I perceive immigrant life as a window through which something fundamental about human

¹³⁰ S. Bhatia, “9/11 and the Indian Diaspora: Narratives of Race, Place, and Immigrant Identity,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29 no. 1, (February 2008): 21-39.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 21.

life is gleaned, the dynamism of human personhood. Whether one lives in a city or a rural area, whether one has been born in this country or not, whether one has been here for many years or just arrived, immigrants and non-immigrants share, to a certain extent, the reality of their identities being constantly negotiated and renegotiated by emergent experiences and encounters. This tension becomes interpersonally expressed often in the symbiotic encounters between the immigrant and the local in which both of their identities become impacted by each other's presence. As in Gilbert's story, when the local becomes very much aware of the immigrant's concerns and needs as well as his or her contributions to society, one's center as a member of the dominant culture shifts so as to open up a small space within one's identity to accommodate this new knowledge of the other. In that human connection between the immigrant and the local, both realize they are different and the same simultaneously, and this calls for adjustment as well as acceptance in their attitudes and values toward each other.

Furthermore, participants' stories point to what seem to be of paramount importance to human life and human relationships, namely hospitality, empathy, and compassion. Participants' stories showed that, especially when human life finds itself in existential predicament as in immigration, these practices of welcoming the stranger, accommodating the other, and promoting hospitable interactions become necessary for the survival of both the individual and the community. The sense of crisis that accompanies immigrant life especially in the early years of immigration to a new setting can be resolved significantly through hospitable acts from one's neighbors, colleagues, and others with whom one comes in contact.

Suggestions for Future Research

From a methodological perspective, there are issues surrounding linking small-scale qualitative outcomes to entire populations. Since all of the participants in this research came from the middle-class to lower middle-class Korean immigrants currently living in Richmond, they may differ greatly in significant ways from those living in major urban centers where a greater percentage of the Korean American population is composed of recent immigrants. Therefore, the findings of this research may be used mainly in relation to Korean Americans living in Richmond and other mid-sized cities who tend to exhibit similar characteristics. Moreover, Korean Americans are stereotypically perceived to share common cultural religious beliefs and values. In reality, there are diverse cultural frictions within Korean American communities, which altogether make up a very complex composite of what it means to be Korean American. Future research studies should address various groups within Korean American communities including interracial couples, adoptees from Korea, Koreans from North Korea, Koreans who arrived in the U.S. after spending many years in other countries, and Korean students who were sent here to be schooled at a younger age by their parents.

Lastly, though *Cheong* as a socio-emotional construct readily accepted, articulated, and shared by Korean Americans in their lives was found to be significant in this research, a comparative study that surveys different ethnic groups is warranted to verify the phenomenological uniqueness or similarity of *Cheong* in relation to those ethnocentric practices and concepts of in-group bonding that exist in other cultures.

Chapter 5: Journey through History and Literature

*Pogaji is a wraparound that can contain disparate items.
It can also be laid out to display its rich variety,
its diverse textures, colors, and patterns.*¹³²

When this project was still in the conceptual stage, I was torn as to whether to include a survey of Korean American literature as part of my research. The initial hesitation stemmed from my belief that what is out there in terms of the writings done by Korean Americans would very much reflect my interview data. After all, in my mind, they were the stories of the same people. Particularly, I was hoping to come across a preponderance of narratives of personal and communal triumph that inhabit the stories of Korean Americans more so than the narratives of struggle and failure. What I found instead was a conflicted world where pain and joy exist in tension, and where contradiction, coherence, frustration, hope, fear, and courage coexist without demanding a ready resolution. At times, the reading was so painful that I curled up and cried not so few tears. The picture of the Korean immigrant that surfaces in the Korean American literature is one of the person who carries around on his or her back a *pogaji* full of disparate things; it is heavy at times, but it is still one's own.

The surveyed literature was classified into two groups: 1) autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, essays, and poetry; 2) novels, documents, and works of historians. Following narrative analysis, the first group of literature was canvassed for salient themes and critical incidents

¹³² E. H. Kim and E. Yu, ed., *East to America* (New York: The New Press, 1996).

reported by the authors. The second group of writings were read and studied primarily for historical significance of facts, events, and characters surrounding the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S.

1. Findings from Autobiographies, Biographies, Memoirs, Essays, and Poetry

The editors of a seminal paper on Korean American literature wrote,

One thing that is common in all types of Korean American literature, however, is that, through their stories and songs, we learn about both Korea and the United States, even when authors try not to be concerned with the question of identity and ethnicity. This is why Korean American literature should not fall through the cracks but must be included as an authentic part of both Korean and American literature.¹³³

From *Hansu's Journey*,¹³⁴ the earliest Korean American literary work written in English, to *In the Absence of the Sun*,¹³⁵ one of the latest biographical works in the market, the writings of Korean immigrants, even in fictional works, have been largely autobiographical. Their voice speaks from the past, through the present, and toward the future about the perils, joys, and aspirations of immigrant life and beckons others to understand them, appreciate their stories, and share in their emotions. What they write about, whether it is their ancestors in Korea or more recent incidents such as the L.A. Riot, I realized, could not be divorced from their own history, and they weave these memories into their present understanding of who they are and who they wish to be. In this sense, time seems to disappear and only their voice remains.

The autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, essays, and poetry I surveyed disclose themes that might seem contradictory to a casual outsider but in essence logical from the Korean

¹³³ Y. K. Kim-Renaud, R. R. Grinker, and K. W. Larsen, "Korean American Literature," *The Sigure Center Asia Papers*, The George Washington University 20, (2004).

¹³⁴ P. Jaisohn, *Hansu's Journey: A Korean Story*, (Philadelphia: Philip Jaisohn & Co., 1922).

¹³⁵ H. Lee, *In the Absence of the Sun*, (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2010).

immigrant perspective. This tension-filled existence was echoed again and again in Korean American writings, especially autobiographies.

Following this feature of Korean American literature, the findings from the first group of materials were classified into four thematic groups: 1) Past – Future, 2) Pain – Resilience, 3) Neither – Both, and 4) Anger – Respect. Though these groupings are useful in conceptualizing the experience of Korean immigrants, there are certain topics of importance that need to stand on their own merit such as the racial tension between Korean immigrants and African Americans in the U.S. Some of these themes will be examined in the second half of the chapter.

Past – Future

History was found to be very important in the Korean American writings, especially those authored by the first generation writers. The theme of national heritage was understandably important in the lives of immigrants as they struggled to keep the memory of their motherland alive and pass it down to the successive generations. Peter Hyun recalls in his autobiography, *Man sei! The Making of a Korean American*:

They stared at me enviously, and the shy one said, “You will soon become an American and forget us and forget Korea.” “Never,” I cried. “I’ll never forget you! And I’ll never forget my motherland!” Suddenly bells began to ring loudly announcing the ship’s departure, and all visitors had to get off the ship. The last words of my friends as they were leaving were, “Don’t forget us! Don’t forget us!”¹³⁶

As the *Mayflower* is forever etched on the psyche of Anglo-Americans in the U.S., *S.S. Gaelic*, which brought the first 102 Koreans from Port Jae-Mul in Korea to the port of Honolulu in Hawaii on January 13, 1903, is preserved in the collective consciousness of Korean Americans. Facing the threat of disintegration and dissolution as a group of foreign workers on the sugarcane

¹³⁶ P. Hyun, *Man sei! The Making of a Korean American* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

plantations in Hawaii, the need for telling and retelling of their history as a people from the Hermit Kingdom of Asia¹³⁷ must have served as a means of self-preservation and survival in an environment where the owners of plantations pitted different ethnic groups against each other in an effort to drive wages down.¹³⁸ However, there were other factors named in biographical and historical works that contributed to the centrality of national heritage in the lives of Korean immigrants such as becoming a people without a country when Japan annexed Korea by force in 1910. These social and political factors will be discussed further in the second half of the chapter. What is clear in the Korean American literature is that this undeniable past-leaning historicity was expressed primarily in two ways.

First, the historical orientation of Korean immigrants in the U.S. expresses itself as a form of longing for the motherland. Yearn Hong Choi gives expression to this emotional attachment in his poem, "Journeys to Korea."

Even though only an empty house awaits me, I go.
I beg pardon of my ancestors,
Buried in my family cemetery up in the mountains.
I beg forgiveness; a son living abroad
So long in a foreign land.¹³⁹

Another poet claims a similar longing for her home in North Korea in the poem, "Longing for the Homeland."

Now I know,
Why, when the first flower bud at the foot of Mount Halla burst into a blossom,
All blossoms of the spring face the North...

¹³⁷ It is a label many westerners used to refer to Korea. William Elliot Griffis referred to Korea as the Hermit Nation in his book, *Corea: The Hermit Nation*, in 1882.

¹³⁸ Ronald Takaki states this policy of pitting Asian labor races against each other in order to prevent any one group from becoming too big or organized. R. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989), 26-27.

¹³⁹ Y. H. Choi, "Journeys to Korea," in *Surfacing Sadness: A Centennial of Korean-American Literature*, ed. Y.H. Choi and H. J. Kim (Dumont: Huma and Sekey Books, 2003), 20.

Now I know,
 Why a snowy night of the quiet and forlorn mountains,
 The nightly soft cry of Imjin River,
 Crying and weeping, rising to the top, settling down on my shoulders.¹⁴⁰

Soo-Young Chin, as the biographer of Dora Yum Kim, made the observation that drawing on the past is a way of bridging the recent Korean immigrants with those who came and settled in the U.S. before them. She states,

While (nationalism) is a remote link for Korean Americans, for their elders, evoking this common effort joins recent immigrants with Korean Americans in a “community of memory,” a sense of being constituted by the same past.¹⁴¹

In other autobiographical and biographical works of Korean Americans, the past-leaning orientation has to do with finding one’s identity through reconnecting with the homeland and its culture more than a homeward-bound longing of immigrants. Helie Lee describes how helping her maternal grandmother be reunited with her long-lost family members in North Korea became a journey of self-discovery in her book, *In the Absence of the Sun*.

I could feel my true self emerging, rising. I no longer wished to be what I was not – white...The book began simply as a wish to discover my roots through my maternal grandmother. I was four years old and my sister, Julie was six when we left South Korea in 1968.¹⁴²

The importance of this enterprise of re-connecting with one’s racial, ethnic, or cultural heritage was also found to be associated with second generation Chinese and Korean Americans. Nazli Kibria quotes one of his interviewees:

Growing up, I didn’t care about being Chinese, and I didn’t know much about it. But my mother always said, “It’s in your blood, if you want it, it’s there.” And I feel that’s true.

¹⁴⁰ H. Ja Kim, “Longing for the Homeland,” in *Surfacing Sadness: A Centennial of Korean-American Literature*, ed. Y.H. Choi and H. J. Kim (Dumont: Huma and Sekey Books, 2003), p.28.

¹⁴¹ S. Chin, *Doing What Had to be Done: the Life Narrative of Dora Yum Kim* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).

¹⁴² H. Lee, *In the Absence of the Sun*, (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2010).

Some basic deep part of me is Chinese, and one way or another I'm going to come back to that.¹⁴³

Whether this past-leaning orientation manifests itself in the immigrant's emotional longing for the homeland or journey of self-discovery, Korean Americans are very much defined in their present by their sense of the homeland, which transcends time and distance to reside squarely within their hearts.

Existing in tandem with this sense of the past is Korean Americans' concern for the future. Particularly, the theme of sacrificing for the next generations is almost ubiquitously present within autobiographies, biographies, and essays of Korean immigrants. Dredge Kang recalls the sacrifice his parents made for him and his siblings.

After the stores opened, we never took another vacation. I used to feel so resentful. Since my parents both worked eighty hours a week, I rarely really saw them, even if they were at the store together...I no longer hold any grudges about this, because I've come to realize that my parents were doing everything they could to provide for their children.¹⁴⁴

Another person echoes this sentiment about Korean immigrants making sacrifice to better the lives of their children.

Right now, I feel guilty, since my mom did all that suffering for us to get an education...I'm one of those lucky people who can't complain about their parents. They have always been supportive. I think they raised us really well. If they hadn't built such a solid foundation in our minds, we would have fallen apart in the circumstances that we were living under here...That's what our parents gave us.¹⁴⁵

Though Korean immigrant parents' sacrifices do not always have a positive impact on their children and immigrant children also make sacrifices for their parents, especially to care for them in their elderly years, this theme of sacrifice for the next generations is also evident in other

¹⁴³ N. Kibria, *Becoming Asian American: Second-Generation Chinese and Korean American Identities* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 49.

¹⁴⁴ D. Kang, "Multiple-Box Person," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 84-85.

¹⁴⁵ K. Lee, "Chino," E in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 126-127.

aspects of the Korean immigrant life. The religious institutions such as Christian churches and Buddhist temples heavily invest in the formation of their future generations.¹⁴⁶

The surveyed biographical writings suggest that Korean Americans live within this tension between the past and the future. However, this tension is not dilemmatic but constructive in that it grounds the community from whence they came and to where they want to go. The challenge within the Korean immigrant community, however, seems to be one of being able to find a balance between remembering the past without being burdened and forging ahead without neglecting the past.

Pain – Resilience

Another dynamic of tension was found in the themes of pain and resilience. Hardships of immigrant life were notably present in Korean immigrants' stories of personal struggles, family tragedies, financial difficulties, inter-racial marriages, cultural disorientation, experiences of racism, and lack of upward mobility in the society. Particularly, many authors voiced the presence of inter-generational pain in their lives that pointed to immigrant children harboring, sharing, and participating in the suffering of their parents. Renowned poet, Teresa Hak Kyung Cha, wrote about her mother in her book, *Dictee*, in a way that her mother's suffering became essentially embodied in her own sense of self.¹⁴⁷ Another Korean American, Imjung Kwuon, writes about her family's pain affecting her personhood in the following manner.

I knew I didn't want anything like my parents' marriage. I absorbed all that unhappiness. I felt so helpless in the family unit, absorbing the pain without knowing what to do with it...My sister ran away when she was nineteen or twenty. I think she saw me arguing with our father and figured that it was no use to fight.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ See Tong Sun Lim's remark in "Revitalizing America," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996), 61.

¹⁴⁷ T. H. K. Cha, *Dictee* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

¹⁴⁸ I. Kwuon, "Launched," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996), 61.

Being discriminated against and feeling dehumanized by others in daily activities was another prevalent theme of pain in Korean immigrants' stories. Dong Hwan Ku, who runs a small business in South Central L.A., describes his existence as one of fighting a war.

Last summer, I was badly beaten when I tried to block the doorway as a man who had stolen something before was trying to enter the store. I was alone, and several men beat me up so badly I had to go to the hospital...Life was hard in Korea, but over there, I would not have to endure this kind of abuse. This is war. There's no end to war. It's just continual escalation...People are always saying that anyway: "Fucking Chinese, go home!" I hear that every day.¹⁴⁹

Andrew Sung Park interpreted this experience of dehumanization that minorities often endure in the U.S. through the Korean socio-cultural construct called *Han*.¹⁵⁰ Park describes:

(Both individual and collective *han*) create in victims the spirit of ethnoracial inferiority complex, sourness, desolation, an ethos of a cultural inferiority complex, racial lamentation, racial resentment, the sense of physical inadequacy, and communal shame.

In the lives of early Korean immigrants, these personal and communal experiences of hardship were further extended by the tragic events unfolding in their homeland of Korea. For the first wave of Korean immigrants to the U.S., Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 and the ensuing loss of national identity as a "people without a country" was more traumatic than their personal suffering in some sense. Other events such as the Korean War and the division of Korea into North and South Korea became a deep source of collective pain that still reverberates in their conscience to the point that even some 2nd generation writers such as Suji Kwock Kim find it compelling to write about their significance. Kim writes in her poem, "The Chasm,"

¹⁴⁹ D. H. Ku, "War Zone," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 36-41.

¹⁵⁰ "Han is the suffering of the innocent who are caught in the vicious cycle of violence. It is the void of grief that cannot be filled with any superficial patch. This void is the abysmal emptiness that remains after the wound has been inflicted." A. S. Park's *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 15. *Han* was also explained in Chapter 1.

In the dream vultures circle above my mother's cousin
 Eye the gash blown in his belly
 By Soviet T-34 tanks or U.S. rocket-launchers
 Shooting at each other blind across the Naktong River –
 A million refugees caught in the crossfire,
 Crossing far as the eye can see...

Her mother shouts at her to *leave him*.
 Dig her nails into her arm and drags her on.
 My mother can't see his face anymore...

I know you were real, even if I can only see you in dreams,
 I see
 We'll never meet.
 It's humiliating to wake up
 Alive, fifty years later, when I couldn't have saved you.
 I couldn't have saved a dog.
 For the birds change their faces
 And wear the faces of soldiers.¹⁵¹

In summary, the Korean immigrant experience as expressed in the writings of Korean Americans is one of great pain and lasting suffering. Their country's pain, parents' pain, and their own pain are interwoven into one collective consciousness, but the narrative does not end there. Their pain is seen to be debilitating but not paralyzing. Their pain makes them beaten down, but it never makes them quit. Korean immigrants are portrayed as rising resiliently and courageously out of the depth of their suffering.

The survey of Korean American literature led me to see the intensity of passion evident in the lives of Korean Americans. One trait of Korean immigrants that seems capable of redeeming even the harshest hardship that confronts them is their resilience. Whether in personal narratives or community narratives, observers are invited to understand this indomitable

¹⁵¹ S. K. Kim, *Notes from the Divided Country* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003).

and even stubborn spirit that makes this group of people from a small country in the Far East remarkable.

The theme of never giving up even in the face of the greatest challenge was constantly named in autobiographies and biographies. The books such as, *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America*,¹⁵² *East Goes West*,¹⁵³ *The Cock Still Crows*,¹⁵⁴ *In the New World: The Making of a Korean American*,¹⁵⁵ and *The Golden Mountain: The Autobiography of a Korean Immigrant*,¹⁵⁶ all illustrated Korean immigrants' resilience and stubbornness in overcoming great odds and achieving sometimes truly impossible feats. Easurk Emsen Charr wrote in his autobiography, *The Golden Mountain*, about journeying from Korea to Hawaii in 1905 at the age of ten without his parents, moving to the continental U.S., serving in the U.S. Army during WWII, getting his doctorate, and living a productive life as a civil servant in the U.S. Charr's story is remarkable because of his personal courage to chart his own course of life against all the challenges he encountered. Even when his wife was threatened with deportation proceedings after her student visa expired and the path to naturalization was blocked by the U.S. immigration policy against Asians, he refused to acquiesce to the circumstances and fought to earn the U.S. citizenship that he felt he deserved. In this way, he epitomized the spirit of resilience and courage with which many Korean immigrants learned to live in their lives.

For others, personal and communal strengths were demonstrated in refusing to be dehumanized by the effect of racism and, in its place, radically embracing peacemaking. Paul

¹⁵² M. P. Lee, *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990).

¹⁵³ Y. Kang, *East Goes West*, (Chicago: Follet, 1965).

¹⁵⁴ I. Pakh, *The Cock Still Crows*, (New York: Vantage Press, 1977).

¹⁵⁵ P. Hyun, *In the New World: The Making of a Korean American* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

¹⁵⁶ E. E. Charr, *The Golden Mountain: The Autobiography of a Korean Immigrant* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

Kim, a veteran L.A.P.D. officer, wrote about one particular way in which the Korean community responded in the wake of the L.A. Riot. Contrary to the media's stereotype-casted image of Korean merchants in South Central L.A. as greedy and unable to work with African Americans, Paul Kim witnessed the extraordinary character of the Korean community coming together to march in peace and clean up the riot-torn neighborhoods. Kim writes,

Everybody, including me, thought that they would be very hateful and resentful, and that the potential for violence would be very high. The press was openly negative about Koreans gathering in a large group. The size of the crowd grew from a few hundred to a few thousand and starting overflowing out of the park itself. I heard there were 40,000 people...If you have 40,000 people behind you, it could turn into a major crisis...During the march, I saw clearly that all those negative comments about Koreans are not always true and could be overcome in five minutes...There were Koreans with brooms and trash bags...They cleaned the whole place up, including the park. Does anybody know this? I have never, never seen anybody do this kind of thing in my whole police career. And remember, buildings were still burning. During the procession, there were people from other ethnic backgrounds making a lot of comments like, "Go back to Korea" – that kind of stuff. But the Koreans were not violent at all. They were absolutely peaceful, absolutely respectable.¹⁵⁷

For many Korean American women, resilience was often exhibited in their refusal to remain subservient within the patriarchal Korean traditions and in their commitment to find their own voice. For Imjung Kwuon, it was standing up against her abusive father;¹⁵⁸ for Kathy Kim, it was doing community work for children of many different racial backgrounds;¹⁵⁹ for Kyung-Ja Lee, it was refusing to conform to traditional gender roles and being one's own person.¹⁶⁰

How can one experience pain and yet be resilient? How can one be courageous and still own one's pain? The Korean immigrant experience seems to suggest that, though it is very

¹⁵⁷ P. Kim, "Getting Real," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 209.

¹⁵⁸ I. Kwuon, "Launched," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 42-62.

¹⁵⁹ K. Kim, "Starting From Zero," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 130-138.

¹⁶⁰ K-J. Kim, "A Humble Messenger," E in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 130-138.

difficult, there is a way to hold these two realities in creative tension and it can be done through authenticity. For Korean immigrants, naming pain without falling victim to it, recognizing one's limitations while doing one's best to overcome challenges, and living into what one desires to be even if it means resisting long-held cultural values is an authentic way to be, an authentic way to live.

Neither – Both

Identity is at the heart of immigrant existence for the reason that it is where the interchange of the immigrant's old and new cultures takes place. Whereas many prominent theorists who study immigrant identity-formation stress more or less a binary process of moving toward either integration or assimilation,¹⁶¹ the Korean immigration experience seems to suggest that, at least for Korean Americans, the process of acculturation and adaptation is much more complicated and multimodal than conventionally suggested. In fact, the surveyed literature features an intercultural formation of selfhood of Korean Americans, which allows one to view oneself as belonging to neither Korean nor American culture and at the same time belonging to both cultures on many different levels of identity rather than as moving from one culture to the other in a progressive, integrative, or adaptive process. The following statements show this paradoxical orientation.

I don't belong to either Korea or America. When I was in the U.S., I didn't feel that I really belonged there. Here (in Korea), I don't feel that I belong either. I'm perpetually marginal. But if you look at it from the positive side, you belong to both. Right now, Korea is my home, but my future home is where my children will be, which is the U.S.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ See John Berry's article "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation." *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 46, no. 1 (1997): 5-34.

¹⁶² S. C. Kim, "Perpetually Marginal," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996):336-341.

When I grow to be in my thirties or forties, there will be no specific boundaries or borderlines between countries. I can't be 100 percent Korean or 100 percent American. But at the same time, I can be both 100 percent Korean and 100 percent American.¹⁶³

I've come to learn that my identity is fluid, and nothing can ever truly represent who I am. But I can provide a glimmer of my essence.¹⁶⁴

I always thought I would be a messenger of East and West because I understand both worlds.¹⁶⁵

I adjusted fairly well to immigrant life, but I was always sensitive to the feeling that we weren't wanted in the U.S...Although I could imagine myself living in Korea in the future, I knew I didn't have a natural stable home there either, which forced me to rethink what "home" really means to me."¹⁶⁶

For the past twenty years, I learned a lot about American culture; but when I think about what I do and say, I am much more Korean than I used to think. I try to take the best out of both cultures to form my own identity.¹⁶⁷

This theme of "neither" and "both" is further complicated by a post-structuralist reading of diverse experiences and identities of Korean Americans. In some narratives, instead of a stable emergent Korean or American identity or any combination of these, there only exist numerous identities within a person to the extent that the essentialist distinction of Koreanness or Americanness loses its significance and what remains is just the unique self. The surveyed literature contained the experiences of Korean adoptees; Korean Americans in inter-racial marriages; children of inter-racial marriages; Korean immigrants who were raised in other countries before coming to America; Korean American gay men; Korean American lesbian

¹⁶³ Y. J. Kim, "A Seeker and a Fighter," E in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 174-179.

¹⁶⁴ D. Kang, "Multiple-Box Person," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 81-89.

¹⁶⁵ K-J Lee, "A Humble Messenger," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 164-173.

¹⁶⁶ H. Y. Kang, "No Spokesperson," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 187-194.

¹⁶⁷ J. Ryu, "Hanging Onto My Dream," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 260-265.

women; Korean Americans who grew up in predominantly African American neighborhoods in South Central L. A.; and other Korean Americans with unclassifiable distinctions whose narratives contribute to the ever-widening range of what it means to be Korean American in the U.S. presently.

Anger – Respect

In line with the findings from the interviewed data, the theme of family was proved to be most prevalent in Korean American literature. Particularly, the relationship between parents and children constituted the topic of enduring significance in many writings, and this relational dynamic, in many cases, was represented from the perspective of children's anger toward their parents' failure in providing a stable and nurturing home environment. In their storylines, some eventually and progressively arrive at a healthy respect for their parents. For others, wounds are so deep that they leave permanent scars that never heal. The relational pendulum was seen as, for many authors, moving back and forth between anger and respect in this parent-child relationship.

Stella's sense of self was deeply wounded by her mother's incessant criticism of her. She writes,

Whenever I received a letter from my mother, I would shake as if her letter was screaming. Later when I was a college freshman, I couldn't study because I kept imagining my mother screaming at me. I was a poor student. I thought I didn't belong to this world. I figured I'd better die, I'd better kill myself. Through my teenage years and early twenties, for years and years, I wanted to die... (Mother) never had any idea that I felt this way.¹⁶⁸

Though the extent of Stella's troubles goes well beyond those of most people, the phenomenon of internalized anger manifesting itself against one's own selfhood was shared by

¹⁶⁸ S. S. Koh, "Dirty Laundry," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 25-35.

many authors surveyed. Imjung Kwuon also grew up in an abusive and dysfunctional home. Her conflicts with her father were so intense that she tried to commit suicide on a couple of occasions. She describes one contentious episode with her father in the following.

That was the last time he beat me up. I used to visit my parents' house from time to time, but the next time we had an argument, I just freaked out and ran out of the house. I didn't have any shoes on; I didn't have my purse or my car keys. I just ran into the dark and hid.¹⁶⁹

However, when Kwuon finally stood up to her father as a mature adult, things began to change for the better in their relationship. Later, Kwuon began to understand her father better and developed even respect for him. She states,

My friends asked me why I didn't get him to apologize. I don't need an apology; I just wanted the witnessing and the acknowledgement. He didn't deny it. He didn't say I was a stupid person as usual. That's when I forgave him for what he did to my mother. I didn't like it, but it happened; it was their life...Now I have an advice column. The teenagers who write in are like my substitute brothers and sisters. I want to help them get launched. I know there is such a thing as mutual respect without obligation; I learned that from my father.¹⁷⁰

In many Korean American autobiographical accounts, *filial piety* is seen as playing an important role in engendering both positive and negative family dynamics between parents and children. Irene J. Kim, Luke I. C. Kim, and James G. Kelly explain the role of filial piety in many Korean American families in this way: "Based on Confucian philosophy, the cultural ideal of filial piety establishes an expectation that children will show devotion, respect, and obedience to their parents throughout their life time."¹⁷¹ In dysfunctional family dynamics, however, filial piety seems to have the effect of exasperating children's sense of guilt and shame arising from

¹⁶⁹ I. Kwuon, "Launched," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996): 42-53.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁷¹ I. R. Kim, L. Kim, and J. G. Kelly, "Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families," *Journal of Community Psychology* 34, no. 2 (2006), 149-165.

their struggles to resolve their anger and resentment toward their parents.¹⁷² Hence, many Korean Americans find themselves trapped in feeling angry and guilty toward their parents, and this sometimes causes great strain on the development of a healthy Korean American self-awareness and healthy life-coping skills. James Park's self-evaluation as a successful immigrant hinges on his relationship with his father:

In a way, my story can be called a success story...But it is too early to really say that I am successful, because I still have an unresolved issue, which is my resentment toward my father and my stepmother. I think I forgive my father, but there is still resentment inside me.¹⁷³

Within this relational framework of filial piety, Korean immigrant parents, however imperfect they may be, often leave an ineffaceable legacy in their children's racial and cultural identity, and, for many, this is the greatest inheritance of immigrant life. Daisy Chun Rhodes recalls her memories of her father whom she called *Abagee* in her essay, "My Father's Voice." Deep in her reminiscence, Rhodes pays tribute to her father whose quiet strength kept him and his family grounded in love, despite his difficult life as an immigrant and his deep pain over his motherland's troubles. She writes,

The distinct, forceful sounds of his sing-song manner were clearly heard throughout the house. But I never heard him crying, even though he sang about the time Koreans lost their names, lost their dignity, lost their country. Today, 118 years after the birth of my abagee, I hear his voice of pain in his now frozen stillness. The chants and sing-song sounds are of Chosun, land of the morning calm. He had been connected to his homeland until he took his last step off the ship, *S.S. Korea*, on September 5, 1904, and became part of the Korean community in Hawaii. He married a picture bride who arrived in Hawaii on July 7, 1918, on *S.S. Kawi* from Whang-hae Do, Korea. He never returned to his place of birth.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² For more about the role of filial piety in reinforcing family obligation, see page 156 of I. R. Kim, L. Kim, and J. G. Kelly, "Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families," *Journal of Community Psychology* 34, no. 2 (2006).

¹⁷³ J. Park, "Man of the House," in *East to America*, ed. E. H. Kim and E. Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996), 281.

¹⁷⁴ D. C. Rhodes, "My Father's Voice," in *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings*, ed. Elaine H. Kim and Laura Hyun Yi Kang (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

Therefore, anger and respect toward one's parents are the different sides of the same coin for many Korean Americans. From the surveyed literature, it can be said that, whether positive or negative, the role of Korean immigrant parents is undoubtedly paramount to their children's psycho-emotional, interpersonal, and cultural development, and their legacy continues to occupy a significant place in their children's narratives as Korean Americans in this country.

2. Findings from Novels, Documents, and Works of Historians

In order to understand the Korean American immigrant experience, one must start with the context within which Koreans first began immigrating to the U.S.: the domestic and international factors surrounding Korea that influenced subsequent immigration flow and demographics of immigrants; the U.S. immigration policies toward Asians including Koreans; and critical events that occurred in the U.S. that significantly affected the identity of Korean immigrants as minorities in this country. The following is a list of significant circumstances and events that mark the history of Korean immigration in the U.S. The surveyed documents and works of historians are included in it to give it a more textured and personalized reading.

History and Critical Events of Korean Immigration to America

S.S. Gaelic & Hawaii

The period of time during which the first Koreans began immigrating to the U.S. was a turbulent era in the history of Korea. As foreign powers began encroaching on the sovereignty of Korea at the end of the Yi Dynasty, Koreans began to migrate to Northern China and into the maritime provinces of Russia, particularly at the end of the Sino-Japanese War. Though a small number of Koreans, mostly students and ginseng merchants, had already found their way to the

U.S. by way of China after 1884, it was not until 1903 when *S.S. Gaelic* brought a group of 102 Koreans from the Korean port of Jae-Mul across the Pacific Ocean to the port of Honolulu, Hawaii, that marked the official beginning of Korean immigration to the U.S.¹⁷⁵ This group of first Koreans was recruited as laborers by sugar plantation owners in Hawaii, “who wished to break up Japanese immigrant workers’ organizing efforts there.”¹⁷⁶ Between 1902 and 1905, about seven thousand Koreans, mostly men, signed up to work on sugarcane plantations in Hawaii. However, this in-flow of Koreans to Hawaii became halted after the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905.¹⁷⁷

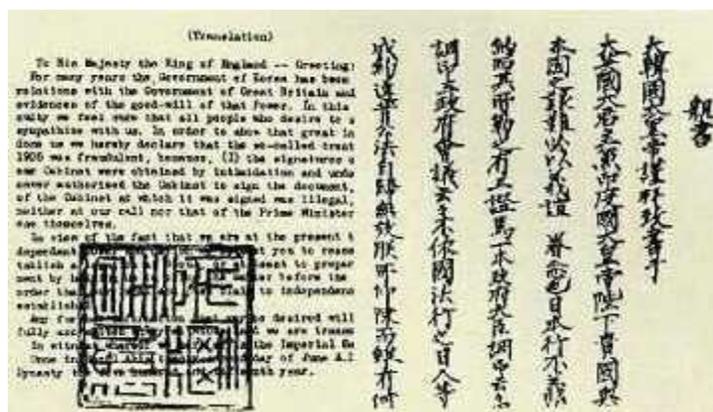
Colonialism and Annexation of Korea in 1910

The Japan-Korean Treaty of 1905 and the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 1907 led to the official colonialization of Korea by Japan. These treaties were signed under coercion from the Japanese whose ambition was to dominate Korea and eventually make way to rule in China. In effect, the first treaty of 1905 did not even contain the seal of approval by King Gojong, the king of Korea. King Gojong protested this by sending three secret emissaries to the second international Hague Peace Convention in 1907, but the powers of the world refused to allow Koreans to even take part in the conference.

¹⁷⁵ Y. H. Choi and H. J. Kim, ed., *Surfacing Sadness: A Centennial of Korean-American Literature 1903-2003* (Dumont: Homa & Sekey Books), xxiii.

¹⁷⁶ E. H. Kim and L. H. Y. Kang, *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 367.

¹⁷⁷ The Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905, also known as Eulsa Treaty, was made between the Empire of Japan and the Korean Empire in 1905. This treaty was preceded by the Taft-Katsura Agreement between the U.S. and Japan made between U.S. Secretary of War William Howard Taft and Prime Minister of Japan Katsura Taro on July 29, 1905, in which the United States implicitly recognized Japan's sphere of influence in Korea and in turn Japan recognized the U.S.'s influence in the Philippines. The Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905 deprived Korea of its diplomatic sovereignty, in effect making Korea a protectorate of Japan, and it paved the way for the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 1907 and subsequent annexation of Korea in 1910.



King Gojong's letter to the King of England protesting the fraudulent nature of the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905.

With Korea's annexation by Japan, Koreans effectively lost their recognition as citizens of a sovereign nation in world affairs, and this meant Korean immigration to the U.S. had to be carried out either through other countries or as Japanese nationals. Between 1905 and 1924, "about five hundred Korean students and exiles arrive(d) in the U.S. by the way of China and Europe. During the same period, about eight hundred picture brides land(ed) in Hawaii and another two hundred arrive(d) on the U.S. mainland.¹⁷⁸ The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 was signed between the U.S. and Japan, in which Japan agreed to halt further immigration to the U.S., and the U.S. agreed to accept the presence of Japanese immigrants already residing in America and permit the immigration of wives, children, and parents.¹⁷⁹ Takaki states,

Korean picture brides entered the United States with Japanese passports issued to them as colonial subjects of Japan under the terms of the Gentlemen's Agreement. By 1920, Korean women constituted 21 percent of the total Korean-adult immigrant population in the United States.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ E. H. Kim and L. H. Y. Kang, ed., *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 367.

¹⁷⁹ R. Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), 206.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

The number of Koreans living in the mainland did not change all that much from 1910 to 1940 due to the immigration restrictions in place and the complications of being a people without a country.¹⁸¹ Living in America as a people without a viable nationhood behind them and being much smaller in number than the Chinese and Japanese, Korean immigrants made up for what they lacked in number and ethnic resources with their strong sense of ethnicity. Korean immigrants united in their opposition to colonialism in Korea and their love for their homeland.

U.S. Immigration Act of 1924

The Immigration Act of 1924 or Johnson-Reed Act included the Asian Exclusion Act that identified Asia as a “barred zone” from which immigration was totally prohibited. Though “about three hundred Korean students were admitted with Japanese-issued passports between 1925 and 1940, no Korean-born person could become a naturalized U.S. citizen.”¹⁸² This federal law effectively stopped all Korean immigration to the U.S. until the McCarran-Walter Act was passed in 1952.

There were exceptions to this exclusion such as the case of Easurk Emsen Charr, a Korean immigrant and a veteran of WWI in the U.S. Army. His efforts to earn the right to become an American citizen led to his petition requesting for an exception under the Asian Exclusion Act, and, to this day, his case continues to be a reference in a long line of legal precedents in determining race in the U.S.¹⁸³ Ultimately, he was granted citizenship based on legislation (H.R. 7170),¹⁸⁴ which allowed certain war veterans to become naturalized citizens.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 270.

¹⁸² E. H. Kim and L. H. Y. Kang, ed., *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 367-368.

¹⁸³ Petition of Easurk Emsen Charr, 273 (Feb. 207, 1921) in Missouri.

¹⁸⁴ E. E. Charr, *The Golden mountain: The Autobiography of a Korean Immigrant 1895-1960* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1961), 281

The following is a copy of the letter he received from his veterans' organization informing him of this opportunity.

My Dear Mr. Charr:

For your information I am attaching hereto a copy of public law which permits the naturalization of certain resident alien World War veterans.

I thought you would be interested in this bill, as some time ago I helped to get for your wife a stay of deportation.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

John Thomas Tayler
Vice-Chairman,
National Legislative Committee, the American Legion.¹⁸⁵

Liberated Korea and WWII

The Korean communities in Hawaii and the mainland U.S. actively encouraged the Korean American participation in the movement for Korean independence from Japan. Notable expatriates such as Philip Jaisohn, Ahn Chang Ho, Pak Young-Man, and Syngman Rhee, who eventually became the first President of Korea after Korean independence, all worked to mobilize Korean communities in support of Korean nationalists in Korea. With the Korean independence in 1945 at the closing of WWII and the defeat of Japan, many Korean expatriates returned to Korea to help rebuild their country.

The following is an excerpt from Ahn Chang Ho's speech given at a reception in L.A. congratulating Korean immigrant students on their graduation from schools in the U.S. on June 22, 1917. Ahn Chang Ho calls upon his fellow Korean expatriates to invest in the education of

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 280.

their young people. From this speech, we can clearly see that the Korean communities in the U.S. found it to be their mission to work together and boost their collective power so as to engender social changes both in Korea and in the U.S.

To now speak of the graduation of the three students, one aspect of the accomplishment is their own power, and the other is the support of righteous people. Although we do not help in the maturation process of one's intellectual power, when we see the support given by the righteous, we naturally have something to think about. If in the past there were such awareness, today we would have seen great results.

When one looks at the past sources of income for the Korean community in the U.S, one was monthly pension, another was relief funds, and the last was educational funds. If we took the educational funds at the time and indeed developed the intellectual power of the people, there indeed would have been great results, but the income was only nominal and there was no actuality, so the attempt to do this only came and went in the daydreams of a few people. In other words, if we Daehan (Korean) people are to gain universal happiness, we must have "my power and our power." The reason I received the position as the president of Gukminhoe Central Chapter is that I fear its disappearance, even if as an empty title, so if you want to grow 'our power,' do not keep the Central Chapter in its name alone for a long time but put it into reality. If we estimate the number of Koreans in Mexico, North America, and Hawaii to be around five to six thousand and if each gave 1 *won* for the educational fund, the foundation for our students' education will be laid. Seen in this way, our power is a great thing. Therefore from now I will, with my colleagues, plan the growth of the people as a whole, so you focus on your business and the common good of Koreans.¹⁸⁶

America and the Korean War

With the liberation of Korea in 1945, the world powers, particularly Soviet and the United States, began intervening in Korean politics to establish their dominance over each other. This led to the division of Korea into two occupied zones divided at the 38th parallel, with the north under Soviet control and the south under the U.S. control. Through separate elections, the north and south each established a government, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

¹⁸⁶ The speech was published in the Korean community newspaper called *Shinhan Minbo* on July 12, 1917. The text was translated from Korean into English by the researcher.

(DPRK) with Kim Il Sung as the premier for the communist north, and the Republic of Korea (ROK) with Syngman Rhee as the president for the pro-American south.

When the Korean War erupted in 1950, the U.S. entered the war on the side of South Korea, and China entered in alliance with North Korea. The war ended in a truce in 1953 after three years of fighting. The cost of the war was heavy. Approximately 3,000,000 Koreans, almost 1,000,000 Chinese, 34,000 Americans, 1,300 British, and 1,900 other U.N. participants lost their lives.

For Korean immigration to the United States during these years, it was a time of steady but still modulated immigration. From 1945 and until 1950, most of the Korean immigrants were from South Korea, including refugees to South Korea fleeing from North Korea's authoritarian rule. After the Korean War, the immigration of thousands of Korean wives of American servicemen and the adoption of Korean children by American families with the U.S. Congress issuing a law allowing inter-country adoption of Korean children were made possible. Holt International Adoption Agency, which grew out of helping Korean orphans, states in its website about its history:

At Holt International, we help orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children to thrive by finding families to love them. Moved by faith and a firm belief that all children deserve permanent, loving homes, Harry and Bertha Holt began their lifelong mission in 1955. Overcoming legal and cultural barriers, they sought families for children orphaned by the Korean War. With this act of love, two farmers from rural Oregon revolutionized international adoption. (<http://holtinternational.org/about/>)

Military Rule in Korea and the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965

After a period of much political instability and corruption during the Syngman Rhee regime, Major General Park Chung Hee staged a *coup de'etat* in 1961 and took power to rule for the next three decades. Despite much economic growth and modernization he engendered, the

military ruled through fear and suspended many democratic rights of its people. In 1962, the Korean government passed the Overseas Emigration Law that allowed immigration of Koreans to various countries such as West Germany, Thailand, Uganda, Malaysia, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay.¹⁸⁷ This law allowed many skilled Koreans immigrate to foreign countries during this period of political instability and economic austerity, many of whom would find their way to the U.S. ultimately.

The biggest impetus in Korean immigration to the U.S. was provided by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. By eliminating racial bias and equalizing immigration policies, the law had the effect of opening immigration from non-European nations, increasing the flow of immigration to an unprecedented pace and shifting immigration focus from Europe to Asia and Central and South America. Simon Rosenberg, the president and founder of the New Democrat Network, said that the Act "is the most important piece of legislation that no one's ever heard of," and that it "set America on a very different demographic course than the previous 300 years."¹⁸⁸

Enabled by this immigration legislation, immigration from Korea rapidly increased, and the population of Koreans in Los Angeles County alone reached 9,000 Koreans and 70,000 in the U.S. in 1970. "By 1990, the official count was 145,500 and almost 800,00 respectively."¹⁸⁹ The U.S. Census lists 1.41 million Korean Americans as of 2000.¹⁹⁰ John Kim writes, "(Those that came after 1965) owe a great deal of gratitude to people who struggled to push for equality in

¹⁸⁷ E. H. Kim and L. H. Y. Kang, ed., *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 371.

¹⁸⁸ P. S. Canellos, "Obama Victory Took Root in Kennedy-Inspired Immigration Act," *Boston Globe* (November 11, 2008).

¹⁸⁹ E. H. Kim and L. H. Y. Kang, ed., *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 371.

¹⁹⁰ S0201 Selected Population Profile in the United States, United States Census Bureau, retrieved 2007-09-22.

employment, education, and social accommodations, eliminate second-class citizenship based on race, and establish a non-discriminatory basis for allowing immigrants to enter the U.S."¹⁹¹

The L.A. Riot and the Present

The transition from the military rule to civilian government in Korea largely occurred in the 1980's and early 1990's. An increasing array of Korean companies establishing bases all over the world, particularly in the U.S., and sponsorship of relatives and family members by Korean Americans have brought a constant influx of Korean immigrants to all the major cities since 1965. One characteristic of these recent immigrants, according to Elaine H. Kim, was that they were largely "unable to find employment in the U.S. commensurate with their education, skill level, and work experience, and this made them become self-employed small business owners in poor and minority communities where start-up costs are comparatively low and where established mainstream businesses and large corporations are reluctant to invest."¹⁹² In major cities such as L.A. and New York, conflicts arising out of cultural insensitivities between Korean merchants and the members of the ethnic communities in which their businesses were located became a growing concern. When racially charged incidents such as Soon Ja Du¹⁹³ in 1991 and Rodney King in 1992 occurred, these events provided a much-awaited excuse for the pent-up racial frustration that had been brewing for many decades due to systematic oppression of minorities to explode and sweep through South Central L.A. There was massive rioting for three

¹⁹¹ J. Kim, "Korea's Multicultural Dilemma: A Reflection from the Historical Experience of Koreans in the U.S.," *Transformation & Prospect Toward Multiethnic, Multiracial, and Multicultural Society: Enhancing Intercultural Communication*, Session 4, "Diaspora 2," Asia Culture Forum 2006.

¹⁹² E. H. Kim and L. H. Y. Kang, ed., *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 373.

¹⁹³ Korean shopkeeper Soon Ja Du killed an unarmed African American teen-aged girl in her South Central Los Angeles store in 1991. When Soon Ja Du was released on probation by a white judge, tensions in African American and Korean communities intensified resulting in some violent confrontations between the two.

days in April of 1992 that resulted in 58 deaths and 1 billion dollars in property damage.¹⁹⁴

Around 2,300 Korean businesses were damaged or destroyed, and the rioting left a permanent scar in the collective memory of Korean Americans in this country.

The L.A. Riot “constituted a turning point in the identity formation of many Korean Americans, especially young Korean Americans for whom America is the home of the heart.”¹⁹⁵ After the riots, many Korean American communities around the country have gotten involved in interracial dialogues and multiethnic consortiums to improve racial relations between Korean immigrants and people in other ethnic communities, especially African American and Latino. Notably, young Korean Americans work increasingly in coalition with other groups against systemic evils such as racism, sexism, and classism. Starting in the 1990’s, a number of young Korean journalists, novelists, poets, film makers, entertainers, and politicians have been expressing new sensibilities and aesthetics about what it means to be Korean American in America. Presently, Korean American participation in many diverse social issues, cultural discourses, and community activism point to a movement away from traditional Korean immigrant issues and toward transnational alliances based on social justice concerns.

Novels

The surveyed novels and historical documents were found to have a great affinity between the two in terms of themes. Novels, though much looser in temporal and spatial sensibilities, reflect Korean Americans’ angst about the time in which they lived and disclose their responses to the major events that were shaping both the affairs of their homeland and their lives in the U.S.

¹⁹⁴ E. H. Kim and L. H. Y. Kang, ed., *Echoes Upon Echoes: New Korean American Writings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 375.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 374.

The web bibliography project of Korean American Literature (KAL), which is one of the projects of minority librarians collaborating to build a web-bibliography of multicultural American literature, lists that there was only one novel in the 1920s, two novels in the 1930s, one novel in the 1940s, three novels in the 1950s, and seven novels in the 1960s, and two novels in the 1970s that were written by Korean Americans, totaling 16 works of fiction. There were 13 novels in the 1980s, 58 novels in the 1990's, and 119 works of fiction in the 2000s. This exponential growth in the number of works being produced is, on one hand, a reflection of the magnitude of Korean immigration that has been taking place in the last four decades and, on the other, a cumulative effect and diversification of Korean American experience.

To summarize my findings, I classified the surveyed literature into three groups of narratives: 1) "We are Korean." 2) "Who are we?" and 3) "We are many."

We Are Korean

The early literary works written by Korean Americans reflected the writers' sense of mandate to express and explain who they were to the American public. *Hansu's Journey*,¹⁹⁶ the earliest known writing by a Korean immigrant written in English, which was written by a famous Korean expatriate, Philip Jaisohn, from an autobiographical perspective, introduces the readers to Korea, a small nation located in a peninsula in Far East, and the political circumstances surrounding the main character's immigration to America. The best known of these early writers was Younghill Kang (1903-1972), and he wrote from a similar vantage point of introducing Korea and Koreans to American readers. In *The Grass Roof*¹⁹⁷ and *East Goes West*,¹⁹⁸ the protagonist Chung-pa Han comes to America during the early years of the Japanese colonization

¹⁹⁶ P. Jaisohn, *Hansu's Journey: A Korean Story* (Philadelphia: Philip Jaisohn & Co., 1922).

¹⁹⁷ Y. Kang, *The Grass Roof* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1931).

¹⁹⁸ Y. Kang, *East Goes West* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1968).

of Korea and struggles as an immigrant in American society, ever wanting to find success and acceptance in his new country. In this way, Han is a purveyor of the unfamiliar as a stranger from a strange Asian nation educating the readers about a new people and a new culture.

Another writer, Richard Kim, who penned *The Martyred*,¹⁹⁹ *The Innocent*,²⁰⁰ and *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood*,²⁰¹ continues this tradition of inviting the readers into learning about and knowing Korea and its beauty and predicament. In *Lost Names*, which is set in the Japanese-occupied Korea, Kim shares the story of a son and a father who participate in resisting the Japanese and its cultural program of forcing Koreans to adopt Japanese names. He commented about his book, *Lost Names*, in the following way.

Koreans have lost so much. Things have been taken away, but we have also lost things ourselves. In Korea, we are always exhorted to rail against the bad guys who take things away. But did we do something dumb ourselves that feeds into our loss? In *Lost Names*, there are Japanese atrocities; but there are also Korean collaborators. My grandfather used to say that he shed no tears over the demise of the Korean royalty because they were rotten through and through; he just felt sorry that it had to be Japanese and not Koreans who got rid of them.²⁰²

These early writers who paved the way for the successive generations of Korean American writers wrote predominantly to preserve their memory, their experiences, and their identity. It is understandable why their writings were so much autobiographical in nature and intent on introducing Korea and Koreans to the world. Korea was in turmoil through Japan's rule in Korea, eventual Korean independence, the tragedy of the Korean War, and the ensuing struggles. These writers held their homeland close to their hearts despite its pain. It was their imperative to let the world read their stories and read about Korea of which so little was known

¹⁹⁹ R. Kim, *The Martyred* (New York: G. Braziller, 1964).

²⁰⁰ R. Kim, *The Innocent* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).

²⁰¹ R. Kim, *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* (Seoul: Sisayoung-sa Publishing Co., 1970).

²⁰² Y. K. Kim-Renaud, R. R. Grinker, and K. W. Larsen, "Korean American Literature," *The Sigure Center Asia Papers*, The George Washington University 20, (2004): 5.

at the time. Richard Kim wrote, “I never intended to be a writer; I wanted to be a student of history. I am obsessed with the past, with all the things we have lost. I want to remember them, to record them, to think about them.”²⁰³

Who Are We?

Starting in the 1980’s primarily, many Korean American writers began to address the theme of cultural dissonance and disorientation that Korean immigrants experienced in the U.S. in their works of fiction. Ty Pak in his book, *Guilt Payment*,²⁰⁴ which is a collection of short stories, highlights the incongruity between a Korean immigrant’s life and his Korean past. In one of the stories, a Korean father struggles to reconcile a memory of his wife’s death during the Korean War as his daughter, being oblivious to her father’s pain, goes about life in a carefree manner like any ordinary American girl at her age would. It addresses not only the issue of the cultural gap between a father and a daughter, but, more importantly, the psycho-emotional discrepancy between what a Korean immigrant’s present life is and what his past has been.

In other novels such as Sook Nyul Choi’s *Year of Impossible Goodbyes*,²⁰⁵ female characters address their struggles with traditional family life and gender roles and the conviction that personal fulfillment and happiness are not possible in Korea. In Choi’s novel, the protagonist, to escape from the cultural restrictions and limitations on women, boards a plane for America. Set in the era of Japan’s rule in Korea, the protagonist leaves Korea for America, ironically as Koreans anxiously await Americans whom they expect to liberate them from Japanese oppression.

²⁰³ Ibid., 6.

²⁰⁴ T. Pak, *Guilt Payment* (Honolulu: Bamboo Ridge Press, 1983).

²⁰⁵ S. N. Choi, *Year of Impossible Goodbyes* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1993).

In another novel, *Clay Walls*, written by Kim Ronyoung,²⁰⁶ a daughter's perspectives on her immigrant parents' life are illustrated. Here, by writing about the main character's parents' changing and conflicted notions about what being Korean in California meant during the first half of the twentieth century, the writer confronts a romantic reading of the Korean immigrant journey and forces the readers to take a critical look at the Korean cultural identity. In the novel, the readers can also see Korean American women living into liberated gender roles and personal agency in authoring their own narratives of selfhood.

Though already mentioned in the first section of this chapter, Teresa Hak Hyung Cha's celebrated *Dictee*²⁰⁷ opens up another interpretive lens into what it means to be Korean in America. Elaine H. Kim explains, "*Dictee* explores the incommensurable, invoking the Korean War as it thematizes the loss of the nation, a loss that is ambiguous and that provides the narrator with political grounds on which to speak simultaneously from a multiplicity of unevenly interpellated subject positions: as woman, as postcolonial subject, and as racialized U.S. immigrant." In this way, Cha rejects the normative narrative of Korean immigrant identity as ideologically nationalist and pro-American and presents an idea of ambiguity and multiplicity as an alternative self-narrative by giving voice to a set of excluded experiences. Elaine H. Kim comments,

By troubling the notion of progress from fragmentation to wholeness or from immigrant to citizen, Cha challenges the U.S. national narrative. And by bringing Korea and Koreans into view after the damage done by Japanese colonization has been glossed over by history, she creates a space for justice as well as for difference.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ R. Kim, *Clay Walls* (Sag Harbor: Permanent Press, 1987).

²⁰⁷ T. H. H. Cha, *Dictee*, (New York: Tanam Press, 1982).

²⁰⁸ Y. K. Kim-Renaud, R. R. Grinker, and K. W. Larsen, "Korean American Literature," *The Sigure Center Asia Papers*, The George Washington University 20, (2004): 10.

Compared to the early Korean American works, the writers mentioned above began speaking about the realities of immigrant life on its own merit and at the same time articulated the immigrant identity as a valuable and valid source of subject matter. No longer satisfied with introducing Korea and Koreans as themes, the next generation of writers began seeing Korean American experience in the U.S. through a historical analysis and provided post-colonial interpretations of what Korean Americans need to be. It was an era of asking difficult questions not only about the past, but, most importantly, about the present and the future.

We Are Many

With an increasing number of young Korean American writers bursting onto the literary scene, their subject matters are continuing the legacy of those who have come before them in different ways. These writers are speaking their voices not only as Korean Americans but also as many different representations of that identity. The theme of hybridity and heterogeneity of Korean American identity is being explored creatively.

Gary Pak, in his book, *A Ricepaper Airplane*,²⁰⁹ writes about an outspoken Korean immigrant movement and union activist in Hawaii during the first half of the twentieth century. In doing so, he uncovers the hidden stories of Asian Americans in Hawaii so as to add to the current consortium of identities that explain who Asian Americans are. Pak writes,

I am a writer, a father of three, a husband, a son, a teacher, a soccer coach, a resident of Kaneohe. I am all of these. When I go to California, people say that I am Asian American or Korean American. I don't mind this, because I am Asian American and Korean American. It would only bother me if being labeled that way were a put-down or a way to exclude me.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ G. Pak, *A Ricepaper Airplane* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).

²¹⁰ Y. K. Kim-Renaud, R. R. Grinker, and K. W. Larsen, "Korean American Literature," *The Sigure Center Asia Papers*, The George Washington University 20, (2004), 10.

Willyce Kim's novels, *Dancer Dawkins and the California Kid*²¹¹ and *Dead Heat*,²¹² also fit this category of Korean American novels whose theme is hybridity and heterogeneity of identity. The main characters in these novels are young lesbians who rescue their friends from danger. Another character in the novels who helps the main characters out is a middle-aged Korean woman who is called "Ta Jan the Korean," and she has reinvented and renamed herself. Though the author thought it was important to give this character an ethnic identity, she gives layers to her identity to make her stand out, and, in this way, she remakes what it means to be Korean American.

There are investigative works such as, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown*,²¹³ by Ji-Yeon Yuh that probe the topic of Korean women who marry U.S. servicemen only to be abandoned as prostitutes in the U.S. and *Sex Among Allies*²¹⁴ by Katherine Moon that traces the role of the U.S. government in Korean military prostitution. Heinz Insu Fenkle's *Memories of My Ghost Brother*²¹⁵ takes a close view at the U.S. military presence in Asia and American racism during a period of poverty and weakness in Korea by privileging the voice of the mixed-race children of Korean women and U.S. servicemen in Korea as the central characters in the book. Korean children adopted by American families during the past four decades are now speaking about their experiences. Anthologies like *Seeds From a Silent Tree*,²¹⁶ edited by Tonya Bishoff and Jo Rankin speak critically about the American adoption story and debunk the myth of a naïve

²¹¹ W. Kim, *Dancer Dawkins and the California Kid* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1985).

²¹² W. Kim, *Dead Heat* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1988).

²¹³ J-Y Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

²¹⁴ . Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in US-Korean Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

²¹⁵ H. I. Fenkle, *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (New York: Dutton, 1996).

²¹⁶ T. Bishoff and J. Rankin, ed., *Seeds from a Silent Tree: An Anthology of Korean Adoptees* (City: Panda Press, 1997).

narrative of adoptees as saved by American generosity, compassion, and largesse. Patti Kim's *A Cab Called Reliable*²¹⁷ challenges the notion of Asian Americans as a 'model minority' and presents a realist view of American society in which immigrants struggle and sometimes downright self-destruct.

In addition to the writers who stay within ethnic genres, there are Korean American writers who are pushing the boundary and knocking on the mainstream readership in the U.S. Acclaimed writer Chang Rae Lee, whose spy thriller, *Native Speaker*,²¹⁸ has gone mainstream as no Korean American writer has ever gone before, opened the door for other writers such as Don Lee to produce his novel, *Yellow*,²¹⁹ to expand Korean American creative expression.

In summary, the works of fiction done by Korean American writers vary in terms of themes and subject matter. The early writers focused on the objective of introducing Korea and Koreans to the world through the main characters' life stories. Mostly, these works have a definite starting place in Korea and aim at a satisfying resolution of their plots. The writers that came between 1970s thru 1980s expand the boundaries of their predecessors, but they remain fixated on resolving the tension in the immigrant's search for identity and cultural integration. With the second group of writers, the questions about being Korean American and an immigrant in the U.S. are posed and answered with varying degrees of success. The latest group of Korean American writers tackles a diverse array of issues from many different perspectives. Some of these writers continue to look back on Korea and the major events of historical significance that came to shape the Korean American consciousness, though their interest is not in arriving at a stable place of self-awareness but in drawing out neglected and hidden experiences of people,

²¹⁷ P. Kim, *A Cab Called Reliable* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

²¹⁸ C. R. Lee, *Native Speaker* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1995).

²¹⁹ D. Lee, *Yellow* (New York: Norton, 2001).

especially the marginalized in women and adoptees. Others in the latest group cross the boundaries of writing about Korean Americans and enter into mainstream genres. However, among all these writers, the commonality is the theme of identity. The Korean American writers, as they continue to cross some boundaries and maintain others, will continue to look at the concerns of identity in terms of the past, the present, and the future. Writing about the Korean American experience will always be about telling stories about who they were, who they are today, and who they wish to be in the future, even if it means changing certain views about themselves and projecting new identities to live into with some level of uncertainty.

Opening New Chapters

In Chapters Four and Five, the findings from the empirical research were presented and discussed. A portrait of the immigrant that emerged from this process of making meaning out of the lived experience of Korean immigrants in this country illustrates the remarkable personhood defined by resilience, resourcefulness, self-discovery, and community-formation that is at the same time juxtaposed with much pain arising out of the hardship of immigrant life and racism in the society. Truly, it is a life of many colors, shades, and textures that defies simple classification.

Now, we turn to the next step in our journey of reflection and imagination. In Chapters Six and Seven, we explore and examine the meanings and implications of the Korean immigrant experience based on the findings from the empirical research through the hermeneutical tools in Victor Turner's concepts of marginality and liminality and Letty M. Russell's ideas of partnership and hospitality in an interdisciplinary conversation. This effort of elaborating and clarifying the human in the Korean immigrant will serve as a means of generating the building

blocks with which to construct a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community. In Chapter Six, the portrait of the human seen through the lens of liminality is presented as a creative neighbor who practices a life of mutuality, creativity, and accountability in interactions with the local. Chapter Seven presents the immigrant as a responsible neighbor whose interactions with the local contribute critically to the formation of both of their humanities. To this task of rediscovering the human, we now turn.

Chapter 6: Human as Creative Neighbor

I have come to know home was not a place. Home is a movement, a quality of relationship, a state where people seek to be 'their own,' and increasingly responsible for the world.²²⁰

In Chapters Four and Five, the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. has been discussed mainly through exploring the narrative themes derived from the interviewed data and the contextual, historical, and literary analyses of the surveyed documents and literary works. In Chapters Six and Seven, I present the hermeneutical tools in the thoughts of Victor Turner and Letty Russell respectively and utilize them to elaborate and clarify the human in the immigrant and the community by conceptually framing the insights gained from the Korean immigrant experience and incorporating them into an interdisciplinary discussion to lay specific categories that will be used in the constructive pastoral theological proposals in Chapter Eight.

In this chapter, I lay out, first, the rationale for the discursive compatibility between Victor Turner's theories of the human and the topic of immigration. As part of this exercise, I present an overview of Turner's major concepts that are pertinent to the discussion of immigrant experience. Secondly, a representation of the immigrant and the community as creative agents in the society, as interpreted through the appropriated concepts of liminality and community, is presented.

²²⁰ N. Morton, *The Journey is Home*, cited in Letty M. Russell, *Household of Freedom: Authority in Feminist Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 67.

Victor Turner and Immigration

The late Victor Turner (May 28, 1920 – December 18, 1983) devoted his professional life as an anthropologist to the study of human beings as ritual-oriented, dramatic, and creatively communal beings. His treatises, which include but are not limited to *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*,²²¹ *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*,²²² *Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes Among the Ndembu of Zambia*, *Dramas*,²²³ *Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*,²²⁴ and *From Ritual to Theater: The Seriousness of Human Play*,²²⁵ contributed significantly to the field of anthropology, and his work as an ethnographer of indigenous cultures brought about innovation in many different disciplines. Turner initially built on Arnold Van Gennep's²²⁶ threefold structure of rites of passage and expanded his theory of liminal phase. Turner's thoughts continue to influence a vast array of scholars and have been adopted and expanded in disciplines such as arts, sociology, psychology, and theology.

While recognizing the domain of Victor Turner's works as situated primarily within the field of anthropology, the fact that his subject matter was the human in community invites appropriately interdisciplinary dialogues between his theories and other fields of study insofar as the integrity of their boundaries is maintained. Victor Turner also engaged in such interdisciplinary conversations himself by discussing religious symbols and liturgical acts in his

²²¹ V. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

²²² V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969).

²²³ V. Turner, *Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes Among the Ndembu of Zambia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

²²⁴ V. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

²²⁵ V. Turner, *From Ritual to Theater: The Seriousness of Human Play* (New York: Performance Art Journal Publications, 1982).

²²⁶ A. V. Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1960).

writings, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian culture*²²⁷ and “Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas.”²²⁸ Presently, many scholars who write on the topic of immigration and the immigrant find much conceptual usefulness in Turner’s theories. Among them are the Asian American theologians such as Jung Young Lee, Peter C. Phan, and Sang Hyun Lee who borrowed heavily from Turner’s concept of marginality in their own efforts at explaining the tenuous socio-political predicament facing Asian minorities in this country.²²⁹

I believe that immigration can be understood as a form of ritual process or a rite of passage on two levels, personal and communal. The immigrant’s personal movement away from one’s established society, culture, and relational context and into a new setting that requires a major adjustment in all phases of life, particularly relational and emotional, prescribes a process of reflexivity and performance. Furthermore, evinced in the historical and contextual analysis of the Korean immigration experience in Chapter Five, often a group of people go through immigration together, thereby triggering a process of shared communal and collective movement, settlement, identification, and differentiation, into which important cultural traditions or actions of symbolic value are incorporated. Hence, insofar as a ritual or rite of passage is understood as the symbolic representation of a subject’s embodied progress from one place to another, both personal and communal narratives of immigration can, if done right, dialogue with and gain clarity from Turner’s theories of the human in community.

Particularly, one useful conceptual framework in speaking about immigration and the immigrant is the dyad of *structure* and *anti-structure*. These terms describe two different modes

²²⁷ V. Turner and E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

²²⁸ V. Turner, “Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious symbols of Communitas,” *Worship* 46, no. 7 (1972).

²²⁹ See the discussion of Asian American theologians who provided the initial research interest for this study in Chapter Two.

of human interrelatedness or “society.” *Structure* denotes the dominant mode in the society where human relationships are found in stratified, organized, and structured manners and as such inherently favor stability and institutionalization. *Anti-structure*, which is characteristic of another mode of interrelatedness, describes “a society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *communitas*, community, or even communion of equal individuals...”²³⁰ These two modes of interrelatedness and human organization do not stand apart from each other, but rather they exist ubiquitously and simultaneously in many forms in the society.²³¹ What is clear is that Turner conceptualizes *structure* and *anti-structure* as the two ends of the continuum of human interrelatedness as well as a cycle. For example, a human organization can move from being structure to anti-structure to structure again in an on-going cycle. In short, *structure* is highly institutionalized and stable whereas *anti-structure* is fluid but internally coherent to a certain extent.

In a way, the process of immigration can be thought of as moving from *structure* to *anti-structure*. From a highly organized network of relationships and support in one’s homeland, the immigrant moves into a highly unsettled state of life where one must start all over again in the host country. This experience of rupture in one’s social network, cultural coherence, and emotional equilibrium that often accompanies the immigration journey is an indication of this transition from one mode of human interrelatedness to the other.

Another rationale for conversing with Victor Turner has to do with his theoretical commitment to the periphery of culture and the liminal nature of this “betwixt and between”

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

²³¹ V. Turner and E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 252.

place away from the ordinary social life.²³² This concept of liminality denotes the temporary state of uncertainty, ferment, and passage out of which *communitas* arises. Turner writes,

There may be a continuous cycle of *communitas*/structure/*communitas*, etc. For example, religious vision becomes sect, then church, then a prop for a dominant political system, until *communitas* resurges once more from the liminal spaces.²³³

Another concept that is pertinent to immigration is *liminality*. This concept was borrowed from Arnold van Gennep's understanding of rites of passage,²³⁴ and it describes the transitional process of a rite of passage as having three steps – separation, *limen* (in Latin), and aggregation. Going through a rite of passage, one experiences the phase of liminality in which one finds oneself to be somewhere in between the two worlds. Nichols explains it this way:

It is the middle phase that interests us, the “liminal” period, when one is neither here nor there, so to speak, in terms of social structure. One is marginal and Turner calls the experience one of liminality. The experience of marginal people, experiencing liminality is one of *communitas*.²³⁵

Expanding the concept of liminality at the societal level, Turner writes,

Major liminal situations are occasions on which, so to speak, a society takes cognizance of itself, or rather where, in an interval between their incumbency of specified fixed positions, members of that society may obtain an approximation, however limited, to a global view of man's place in the cosmos and his relations with other classes of visible entities.²³⁶

Turner perceives liminality as a “midpoint of transition” between a starting point and an ending point, and as such it is a temporary state that ends when the initiate who is undergoing the rite of passage is reintroduced into the social structure. Because Turner's conceptual framework

²³² V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 95.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 252.

²³⁴ A. V. Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1960).

²³⁵ J. R. Nichols, “Worship as Anti-Structure: the Contribution of Victor Turner,” *Theology Today* 41, no. 4 (January 1985): 401-409.

²³⁶ V. Turner, “Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious symbols of *Communitas*,” *Worship* 46, no. 7 (1972), 400.

was derived from his work with the ritual society of the Ndembu tribe of Zambia,²³⁷ he views this liminal phase as being a temporary phase rather than a permanent state. More important than the temporal characteristic of liminal phase, the spatial understanding of liminality is helpful in the discussion of immigration and the immigrant. This differentiation will be further explored in the next section. For now, it suffices to say Turner's concept of liminality can be appropriated for the discussion of immigration and the immigrant as the very language with which to address the process of existential reflexivity for the immigrant in which one often finds oneself on the margins and questions one's place in the overall society.

Understanding the Korean American Immigrant Experience through Liminality

Almost everyone who writes about the immigrant agrees that the immigration journey puts into motion in one's life a process of existential reflexivity. Whether positive or negative, the immigrant experiences a profound impact on one's selfhood, relationships, and other facets of life as the result of immigration. Pearson describes it this way.

Living in diaspora is a complex business. The Australian writer David Tacey reckons that even at the best of times migration is a trauma (Tacey, 1995:36). There is loss of place, status, markers of identity and a basic rupture in personal narrative. There is an inward need to invent a new sense of identity and construct a new social reality. The language is more inclined to be that of 'Where is home?' and 'Who are we?'²³⁸

This study's research findings from the interviewed and surveyed data affirm that Korean American immigrants are not an exception to this phenomenon of displacement and point to the tension-filled existence in which both the pains and joys of life are all the more magnified in the immigrant. Two Korean American theologians attempted to understand the Korean American

²³⁷ V. Turner, *Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes Among the Ndembu of Zambia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

²³⁸ C. Pearson, "Telling Tales: Following the Hyphenated Jesus-Christ," *Studies in World Christianity* 10 no 1, (2004): 6-24

immigrant experience by using the concept of marginality in the tradition of Turner's concept of liminality but at the end arrived at different interpretations.

Sang Hyun Lee, spatially understanding liminality and marginality to be located in the margins of the society from reading Turner, emphasized the perpetual and coerced state of marginality as the predicament presently facing Korean Americans in American society. He writes, “[Asian Americans] are pushed to liminality and are coercively made to stay there by the barriers set up by the racist center.”²³⁹ In taking a realist outlook, Sang Hyun Lee's treatment of racism in the U.S. interprets the immigrant as perpetually remaining on the periphery of the culture, ‘outside looking in.’ The most constructive element in the marginal existence is the prophetic criticism of the dominant culture that the marginalized should voice. This rendition of marginalization is echoed by another Korean American scholar, Andrew Sung Park, who describes,

Our society tends to victimize victims. The powerful receive respect, protection, and appreciation, whereas the victim is further violated and denigrated. Once his or her boundary of protection is broken, it is hard for the victim to restore that boundary again.²⁴⁰

Indeed, the research findings demonstrate the presence of systemic marginalization experienced by Korean Americans in the U.S. Previously in Chapter Four, I reported that all of the interviewees spoke about the difficult nature of immigrant life in two ways. First, they pointed out the stress from having to make linguistic, cultural, and even physical adjustments in the new country. Second, it had to do with the immigrant life's marginalizing impact on their sense of self. The historical and contextual analysis of the Korean immigrant experience further

²³⁹ S. H. Lee, “Marginality as Coerced Liminality.” In *Realizing the America of Our Hearts: Theological Voices of Asian Americans*, ed. F. Matsuoka (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003): 11-28.

²⁴⁰ A. S. Park, *From Hurt to Healing : A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 12.

disclosed systematic discrimination directed at Korean immigrants in the form of restrictive immigrant policies of the U.S. government and historical injuries produced by the past colonization of Korea by Japan and America.

Contrary to Sang Hyun Lee, Jung Young Lee, understood marginality to be different and arrived at a more optimistic rendition of the Korean immigrant's place in America. Instead of the hermeneutics of suspicion favored by Sang Hyun Lee, Jung Young Lee's rendition of marginality was more neutral and constructive. He understood stressing marginality over centrality was a means to restore balance between the two poles of tension. This balance, "which harmony, finds a new center, the authentic center, which is no longer oppressive but liberative to the people located at the center or the margin."²⁴¹ Whereas the classical definition of the "in-between" experience of marginality points to the reality of systemic oppression employed by the dominant culture, which concurs with Sang Hyun Lee's interpretation more or less, Jung Young Lee emphasized the "in-both" definition of marginality for contemporary Asian Americans with which to balance the negative impact of marginality. According to Jung Young Lee, if the negative classical experience of "in-betweenness" was into which the culture forced the marginalized, it was a self-affirming prerogative to stress one's "in-both" perspective as a marginal person.²⁴² Whereas, for Sang Hyun Lee, marginality was a perpetual and coercive state of being, for Jung Young Lee (while not denying the reality of being ambiguously stuck "in-between" the two worlds) the choice was still there for the immigrant to choose the "in-both" identification of oneself in the society. By understanding the negative experience of "in-between" and the positive experience of "in-both" as two different dimensions of the same

²⁴¹J. Y. Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 25.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 42-43.

reality, Jung Young Lee saw the dynamic of marginality as having a creative center and claimed it as a nexus of self-affirmation and transformation for the marginalized.

For Jung Young Lee, the resolution of the tension between the experiences of “in-between” and “in-both” could occur by subscribing to the perspective of “in-beyond.” He explains,

To transcend or to live in-beyond does not mean to be free of the two different worlds in which persons exist, but to live in both of them without being bound by either of them. The marginal person is a liberated person, person who is truly free, because each is a whole person and able to be fully present in the world.²⁴³

By bringing together the positive self-affirming definition of marginality of the in-both orientation and the self-negating definition of marginality of the in-between orientation in the “wholistic definition of marginality” of the in-beyond,²⁴⁴ Lee thought the contradictory aspects of life on the margins could be reconciled. For Jung Young Lee, the epitome of this transcendent marginal personhood was Jesus Christ. Understanding Jesus Christ as the divine immigrant, Lee saw that the marginal could overcome dissonance in one’s marginalized identity and social status and live into a creative and unique personhood. Jung Young Lee states,

Thus, [Jesus Christ] was truly the new marginal person who was not only in-between but also in –both worlds. He was the man who lived in-beyond racial, cultural, gender, and class divisions, but was also the man of the whole world. He was, therefore, the new marginal person *par excellence*.²⁴⁵

Just like Jesus Christ, the image of the immigrant is, according to Lee, one of an authentic reconciler and active reformer of cultures that transcends artificial barriers of ignorance and racism and occupies the place of “in-beyond.”²⁴⁶

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

How can two theologians who seem to speak of the same concept of marginality arrive at two different interpretations? Whose view is closer to Turner's understanding of liminality? Actually, both of them are correct in their own interpretations in the same way the Korean American experience affirms both the negative and positive experiences of marginalization. For Turner, the liminal phase is a creative place out of which something new emerges. A. Droogers, in making an argument for the value of Turner's work states,

He has shown how important the margins of society may be for its renewal, particularly because hierarchical relations are experienced less prominently there. The same happens when society goes through a marginal phase. It can be shown that founders of world religions started out from such marginal situations.²⁴⁷

Charles E. Winquist makes the following remark about Turner's liminality.

The time of the social drama between the breach and reintegration or legitimization has liminal characteristics, characteristics that mark a disorder and openness to new possibilities. It is a time betwixt and between. A gap has appeared that is a space of indetermination. Possibilities can be displayed; new arrangements can be formed; a new order can be established.²⁴⁸

Again, the remarkable achievements and narratives of resilience present in my interviewees' life stories and the surveyed literature show that being on the margins can be prophetic, authentic, and transformative in line with Turner's view.

At the same time, Sang Hyun Lee's realist interpretation of marginality is also correct according to Turner. Turner distinguishes marginality from liminality in one important aspect.

Turner states,

(Outsiders) should be distinguished from "marginals," who are simultaneously members (by ascription, potation, self-definition, or achievement) of two or more groups whose social definitions and cultural norms are distinct from and often even opposed to, one another. These would include migrant foreigners, second

²⁴⁷ A. Droogers, A. "Synchretism: The Problem of Definition, the Definition of the Problem," *Dialogue and Synchretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. J.D. Gort et. al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989): 19.

²⁴⁸ C. E. Winquist, "Theology, Deconstruction, and Ritual Process," *Zygon* 18, no. 3 (September 1983).

generation Americans, persons of mixed ethnic origin, parvenus (upwardly mobile marginals), the declasses (downwardly mobile marginals), migrants from city to city, and women in a changed, nontraditional role... Usually they are highly conscious and self-conscious people and may produce from their ranks a disproportionately high number of writers, artists, and philosophers... Marginals like liminars are also betwixt and between, but unlike ritual liminars they have no cultural assurance of a final stable resolution of their ambiguity.²⁴⁹

Sang Hyun Lee seems to have read Turner's view of marginals of having no final stable resolution of their ambiguity as referring to the place of coercive systemic marginalization into which Asian Americans are pushed by the dominant culture. However, in his works, Sang Hyun Lee does not agree with Turner that liminality, at least in its idealized form, is possible in the real world. Instead, Sang Hyun Lee sees the rightful utility of liminality to be of fomenting subversive political activity through the means of a "strong theologically articulated ideology of opposition to racism."²⁵⁰ Lee writes,

I use the term liminality to name what I have been referring to as the in-between dimension of the marginality experience. Empirically, these potentials do not exist or function in their pure form, but are suppressed and distorted by the second aspect of the marginal situation, namely, the racist barriers.²⁵¹

Though Jung Young Lee's concept of marginality seems closer to Turner's concept of liminality and Sang Hyun Lee's concept of marginality seems closer to Turner's concept of marginality, the difference in their appropriation of Turner's concepts lies in the theologians' intentional efforts at progressing beyond and revising Turner's definitions of liminality and marginality. Jung Young Lee spoke of the revised liminality into which both liminality and marginality are incorporated. Sang Hyun Lee favors marginality over idealized liminality,

²⁴⁹ V. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 233.

²⁵⁰ S. H. Lee, "Marginality as Coerced Liminality." In *Realizing the America of Our Hearts: Theological Voices of Asian Americans*, ed. F. Matsuoka (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 18.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

because it fits the realistic description of Asian Americans better. What is crucial for our discussion of the Korean immigrant experience is that these two theologians believe theology or ideology is the mechanism through which liminality becomes transformed into a locus of prophetic, authentic, and redemptive activity. For Jung Young Lee, it was utilizing an autobiographical theological approach and locating the transcendent identity in the marginal person of Jesus Christ. For Sang Hyun Lee, it is theologically articulating an ideology of resistance against racism. Summarily, they both suggest a theological and ideological enterprise of liminality as being sufficient enough to produce this remarkable impact they describe.

Having recognized the important role of theological and ideological vision in engaging dynamically the liminal process in which the immigrants find themselves, I believe a theological or ideological vision is still not sufficient in and of itself to achieve the suggested outcome without the articulation of the embodied nature of immigrants' sweat-and-blood work of finding themselves and finding community in their lives. In other words, though a theological and ideological vision may guide and inform the dynamism of immigrant life, the dynamism itself has to come from the immigrant's embodied experience of working hard to actualize and carve out a meaningful and productive existence in their new country. What is the source of this dynamic fuel that, when informed by a proper and liberating theological or ideological vision, can empower the marginal existence of the immigrant? To answer this, we turn to the Korean immigrant experience itself.

One of the most salient features of the immigrant life derived from the interview and survey data was that of hospitality. Particularly, the critical events named by many interviewees in which their sense of self and their view of the other were powerfully transformed pointed to

the presence of hospitable strangers. In the case study of Lisa, her marginalized sense of self and experience of isolation in the early years of her immigration life were to a great extent ameliorated by the hospitable reception of her family by a white Christian church. In the interviewed narrative of Tera, her experience of finding a community of likeminded Korean American friends in college allowed her sense of wounded self to become healed. There were also the cases where the immigrant's hospitable acts toward others proved important in developing authentic relationships with the local and other minorities. In the interviewed narrative of Ki, many young employees in his store and their families benefited from his generosity of providing an employer-matching savings fund for their empowerment. In the interviewed narrative of Gilbert, his predominantly white coworkers came to develop a multi-cultural awareness through Gilbert's sharing of his struggles as an immigrant. Again and again, in the experiences of the Korean immigrant, it is not a hollow theological or ideological vision that drives their experience of empowerment and liberation. Rather, it is the embodied experience of encountering the hospitable other and becoming hospitable people themselves that enriches their immigrant life on the margins. Contrary to Sang Hyun Lee's call for subversive theology, it seems to be subversive hospitality that should foremost occupy the liminal space of the marginalized.

I believe the natural need for the immigrant to seek community from their fellow immigrants and their neighbors nudge them toward hospitality. As there was a tendency for those interviewees who experienced hospitality from others early in their immigrant life to reciprocate caring to others in a similar fashion, subversive hospitality that has the power to bring about changes in people's values and attitudes arises out of significant encounters with the

empathic other, becomes replicated in other relationships, and begets greater momentum as it spreads out farther and farther. In this way, what starts as a survival response to their need for relationship and community soon finds itself turning into a viable means of empowerment and transformation.

On the other hand, the effects of racism and other oppressive forces in the society can push immigrants to reject rather than embrace the overture of hospitality in their life. If immigrants feel too disempowered or depreciated or even threatened in their interactions with the other, they would be hard pressed to move toward hospitality. Rather, many would prefer to seek a safer option of insulating themselves from their neighbors and non-participation in the community.

Cheong as a Relational Narrative of Korean Immigrants

With what language can we talk about this embodiment of hospitality that fills the place of liminality for the Korean immigrant? What is the concept that is useful in explaining that place of “betwixt and between” and “neither here nor there” as in Turner’s view of liminality? What is the substance that fuels the liminal space out of which immigrant *communitas* arises? At least in the experience of the Korean immigrant, it is the Korean indigenous socio-emotional construct of *Cheong* that best describes this embodiment of the hospitable spirit and communal practice of mutuality found in their narratives. I. Kim, L. Kim, and J. G. Kelly define *Cheong* as follows.

Jeong refers to emotional bonding, a special interpersonal bond of trust and closeness (L. Kim, 1996). There is no word in the Korean vocabulary more endearing and evocative than the word, *Jeong*. There is no English equivalent. *Jeong* encompasses the meaning of a wide range of English terms: feeling, empathy, affection, closeness, tenderness, pathos, compassion, sentiment, trust, bonding, and love.

Jeong strengthens the bonding of a relationship between two persons. It is a special affection towards an individual. It is not a sexualized or erotic love. Koreans consider *Jeong* to be an essential element in human life, promoting the depth and richness of personal relations. With *Jeong*, relationships are deeper and longer lasting. In times of social upheaval, calamity, and unrest, *Jeong* is the only binding and stabilizing force in human relationships. Without *Jeong*, life would be emotionally barren, and persons would feel isolated and disconnected from others. *Jeong* is more than kindness or liking another, *jeong* brings about the “special” feelings in relationships: togetherness, sharing, bonding. *Jeong* is what makes us say “we” rather than “I,” “ours” rather than “mine” (U. Kim, 1994).²⁵²

Before discussing *Cheong* any further in relation to the immigrant’s experience of living on the margins and its implications for Turner’s concept of liminality in this chapter and Letty M. Russell’s concepts of partnership and hospitality in the next chapter, it is imperative that I qualify my understanding of the term *Cheong* and clarify its conceptual boundaries in order to differentiate from other usages and forms that are out there.

Cheong, as shown in the aforementioned descriptions, is an indigenous Korean concept that describes the cultural ethos of Koreans. It is central to Koreans’ self-understanding and views of their society and is one of the most commonly used descriptors of Koreans’ relationality, psycho-emotional attachment, cultural identification, and behavioral ethics. As many Korean American authors agree, it is very difficult to capture the essence of *Cheong* in English terminology or cross-culturally. There is a variety of explanations and descriptions of *Cheong* even among Koreans, and the term is used differently in different fields and disciplines. Furthermore, there are specific appropriations of *Cheong* that are in vogue in Korean society such as *Ae-Cheong* (love between lovers) and *Wu-Cheong* (affection between friends) that further denote *Cheong*’s multiple and shifting characteristics. For this reason, each writer or

²⁵² I. Kim, L. Kim, and J. G. Kelly, “Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families,” *Journal of Community Psychology* 34, no. 2 (2006):149–165.

researcher who discusses *Cheong* must qualify it in ways that are useful and clear to the readers.

For example, Wonhee Anne Joh defines *Cheong* in her book, *Heart of the Cross*.

Jeong is a Korean way of conceiving an often complex constellation of relationality of the self with the other that is deeply associated with compassion, love, vulnerability, and acceptance of heterogeneity as essential to life.²⁵³

My Definition of Cheong

Though Joh's definition as mentioned above is adequate for a general understanding of *Cheong*, I would like to use a revised definition of *Cheong* that is useful to my appropriation of the concept in my discussion. To do this, I qualify *Cheong* as having two basic components: first, the criterion of common bond or common experience in its relational dynamic; second, the deeply affective quality of its experiential dynamic. Therefore, *Cheong* refers to the mode of personal, interpersonal, and communal relationality that is affectively significant for all those involved and that contains the elements of mutuality, reciprocity, and hospitality borne out of some common traits or shared experiences. Specifically for the purpose of my discussion and based on the findings from my qualitative research with the Korean American interviewees, *Cheong* is then revised as starting from an in-group identification of belongingness and shared experience and progressively moving outward to include others who are not of the in-group in its personal, interpersonal, and communal interactions. My revised definition of *Cheong*, therefore, differentiates the inclusive rendition of *Cheong* that is dynamically tolerant of, and receptive of, the other from the exclusive rendition of *Cheong* that stubbornly remains within the ethnocentric boundaries of the in-group without an outward orientation or outlet for external expression.

²⁵³ W. A. Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), xxi.

Many cultural observers of Korean Americans point critically to their intense ethnocentric orientation that seems to insulate and isolate them from the wider culture and interaction with other minorities. Sang Hyun Lee observes that this is due to, a great extent, the impossibility of “structural assimilation” stemming from systemic racism and marginalization against Asian Americans. He writes,

Recent studies of Korean immigrants in the Chicago and Los Angeles areas show that regardless of the length of their stay in this country, their educational levels, or their professional and economic attainments, “structural assimilation” does not really happen to them, and they tend to gravitate around their ethnic enclaves.... But the primary factor for Asian Americans’ exclusion from the center of white society is the barriers set up by the white dominant group.²⁵⁴

Whether Lee’s analysis of the problem of “structural assimilation” is accurate or not, it is true that *Cheong*, for some individuals and groups, does remain operative exclusively within the ethnic in-group without ever being extended to those outside in the wider society. However, I understand this to be an unhealthy practice and inauthentic expression of *Cheong*. The reason for this is that many, in the Korean society, have misused *Cheong* as a tool of controlling and keeping captive of their members within the confines of their group. Inauthentic *Cheong*, in my mind, manifests itself in self-centered demands imposed on the other rather than self-sharing invitations to open community and voluntary participation. Therefore, I envision the right practice and authentic expression of *Cheong* to first stem from the shared experience of the in-group as a primary means of fomenting survival and safety but, at the same time, dynamically moving beyond the walls of the in-group to invite and include others in a compassionate and neighborly mode of human interrelatedness as shown in the stories of my interviewees.

²⁵⁴ S. H. Lee, “Marginality as Coerced Liminality.” In *Realizing the America of Our Hearts: Theological Voices of Asian Americans*, ed. F. Matsuoka (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003): 24.

Furthermore, I subscribe to an explicitly ethical and liberative definition of *Cheong*. Though I agree with Joh's statement, "[*Cheong*] rooted within the center of power, advocated within the dominant power structure, works as an accomplice in the oppression of people in the name of [*Cheong*],"²⁵⁵ I disagree with her in that *Cheong* practiced from the center is not authentic *Cheong* but a conceited, condescending, and self-serving kind of tokenism directed at exploiting the needs of the powerless in the same way diversity practiced from the center is a politicized form of token inclusivity in the guise of multiculturalism. *Cheong*, when practiced from the center, ceases to be authentic *Cheong*, for I understand authentic *Cheong* to be a language that speaks of mutual concern and shared accountability for the marginalized, which was originally borne out of the struggle of the oppressed to protect and preserve their lives as well as those of others. In the following discussion as well as in the next chapter, I present how *Cheong* can reach this revised state of dynamism and ethics and continue to be reformed so as to maintain its outward and inclusive orientation.

Risks of Using Cheong as a Relational Concept

There are potential risks to utilizing *Cheong* as a descriptor of relationality among Koreans and Korean immigrants. Besides the inward orientation of ethnocentric communal and interpersonal attitudes previously mentioned in relation to the practice of *Cheong*, there have been real injuries resulting from historical, political, and gender-based misuse and misappropriation of *Cheong* within the Korean society. Particularly, *Cheong* has been lifted up as an ideal of self-sacrifice and silent suffering for Korean women by the society to a large extent, leading to both voluntary and involuntary subjugation and diminished capacity of their identity,

²⁵⁵ W. A. Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 41.

status, and roles. From the idealized portrayal of womanhood and motherhood in Shin Saimdang²⁵⁶ to those women who find themselves trapped in abusive relationships, the virtue of *Cheong* has sometimes been misapplied to, and imposed on, women, forcing them to give themselves up for the good of others. In other situations, certain marginalized groups of people such as the working poor and political dissidents were at times stigmatized as *Cheong*-violating members of the society when they began speaking up for themselves and others in the society. Therefore, to speak of *Cheong* in any capacity is to be aware of the suffering of many groups of people and to be responsible in ethically representing *Cheong* in one's writing.

Another potential risk of utilizing *Cheong* as a significant concept has to do with homogenizing and essentializing people. Though it is understood as a significant descriptor, self-narrative, and way of making sense of being Korean, it is important to note that it does not apply to all Koreans, and some find it to be neither as important nor more important than other cultural narratives that Koreans share. I propose that *Cheong*, while understanding and utilizing its constructive and creative values, needs to be held in tension, consultation, and analysis with other important cultural narratives including and not limited to such as *Han* and *Chaemyeon* (the importance of keeping face) so as to provide a diverse view of Koreans, whenever it is discussed as a cultural identifier or characteristic for them.

Lastly, vernacular use of the term “*Cheong*” can potentially discourage the critical analysis by, and engagement of, those that do not share the Korean heritage culturally. If *Cheong* is to contribute meaningfully to a public theology such as this, it needs to be open to the critical discussion of not only its phenomenology but also its implications as it engages other

²⁵⁶ Shin Saimdang was the mother of the Korean Confucian scholar, Yolgok, and has been historically upheld as the model of perfect womanhood and motherhood within the Korean society.

constructs in an inter-cultural or cross-cultural conversation. Therefore, in my estimation, it is important to recognize and maintain its cultural uniqueness, while making clear those points of convergence and tangency with other publically available discourses, thereby maintaining discreet boundaries and stimulating dialogical revisions at the same time.

I think it is helpful to delineate clearly how I use *Cheong* in the next sections of the dissertation. My choice to keep the term “*Cheong*” as a significant interdisciplinary partner in the conversation with Victor Turner and Letty Russell is foremost based on my empirical research data on which this dissertation is built. The self-awareness and significant usage of the term “*Cheong*” and its numerations by my interviewees in their interview sessions granted me the permission to express and theorize it as a central concept. In this chapter and the next, I weave conceptual connections and connotations that *Cheong* as a relational dynamic has in relation to the concept of liminality as espoused by Victor Turner and that of hospitality as espoused by Letty Russell. This decision is to explore and honor the contribution of *Cheong* as an important concept for Koreans and Korean immigrants.

For Chapters Eight and Nine, I transition from using the term “*Cheong*” to using the term “neighborly love” as a way of articulating the new relational dynamics for both the immigrant and the local. This transition is meant to move the discussion from the particular context of Korean immigrants to a wider public forum of inter-cultural engagement by allowing a more widely-shared epistemological venue of neighborly love to speak for *Cheong*’s relational implications and to give rise to a revised understanding of communal and societal symbiosis in the process.

Cheong as Embodiment of Creative Liminality

Now let us continue with the discussion of *Cheong* in relation to Turner's view of liminality. Going back to Kim, Kim, and Kelly's description of *Cheong*, we can see how the authors' description of the ontological context for *Cheong* seems to correspond to the description of Turner's view of liminality. Their words describing the times of "social upheaval, calamity, and unrest" and when "life...[is] emotionally barren and persons would feel isolated and disconnected from others" match Turner's depiction of the liminal phase during which "the state of the liminar becomes ambiguous; neither here nor there, betwixt-and-between all fixed points of classification."²⁵⁷ Thus, in the Korean immigrant experience, *Cheong* is what fills the liminal space to make it meaningful and dynamic.

The cultural narrative of *Cheong* was at the foundation of the interviewees' experience of feeling at home and finding a deeper connection with fellow Korean immigrants, and its effect was seen as spilling over into other aspects of their lives, providing an enduring sense of stability and groundedness. Furthermore, this practice of inward ethnocentric orientation was correlated with their outward commitment to serving others in the larger community. This outward expression of *Cheong* was evident in several interviewees' stories of community outreach, community service, and volunteer activities. Furthermore, many shared a substantial commitment that they and their religious organizations made a difference in the wider community.

This shows that the ideal and practice of *Cheong* is intricately interpersonal, and, though it may start within the in-group, it seems to push outward in its orientation and expression. I

²⁵⁷ V. Turner, "Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious symbols of Communitas," *Worship* 46, no. 7 (1972): 393.

would like to go further to say that, through the interpersonal forum created by the practice of *Cheong*, the immigrant and the local are brought together and enter into the liminal place of shared interaction. Through this meaningful encounter with each other, they become transformed into ethical, concerned, and accommodating neighbors committed to working and living together. Turner seems to have recognized this when he quoted Martin Buber in speaking about community.

Community is being no longer side by side (and, one might add, above and below) but with one another of a multitude of persons. And this multitude, though it moves towards one goal, yet experiences everywhere a turning to, a dynamic facing of, the others, a flowing from *I to Thou*.²⁵⁸

Cheong as Embodiment of Creative Tension

Another utility of *Cheong* seen from Turner's perspective has to do with its capacity to accommodate the dialectical nature of immigrant life. The dialectical narratives of past-future, pain-resilience, neither-both, and anger-respect diadems found in the surveyed autobiographical and biographical writings are a constant in the life of the Korean immigrant in the U.S., and they point to the presence of an inherent threat to the sense of stability and safety of those living on the margins that requires accommodation if not resolution. Pearson speaks on this complexity of the immigrant self.

The relationship between the body and space/place/home is multidimensional and complex. However complex this relationship may be, it is significant for migrants/strangers because of the many strands of the stranger's life that interweave identity, place, home, movement through travel and migration, and the marked body/identity of the stranger. This relationship is complicated further by other identity markers such as race, gender, class, and sexuality.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 127.

²⁵⁹ C. Pearson, "Telling Tales: Following the Hyphenated Jesus-Christ," *Studies in World Christianity* 10 no 1 (2004), 82.

Turner's processional view of society as being created again and again out of the effort to resolve the tension between *structure* and *communitas* allows us to understand the dialectical dilemma of the immigrant life.²⁶⁰ According to Turner, particularly, the church through its ritual life can effectively affirm *structure* and *communitas* in the continual process of becoming the church.²⁶¹ Particularly, the ritual symbols religious communities have are capable of carrying multiple dimensions of significance due to their ability to be defined operationally, positionally, and exegetically. Turner writes,

The properties of ritual symbols are "their multivocality or condensation of many meanings; their power to unify their disparate referents; and their tendency to attract or to absorb meanings around two semantic poles, the one having affective or emotional value and the other pointing to structural and moral norms."²⁶²

Hence, Turner's understanding of the ritual life of religious communities allows for the concurrent presence of a complex network of disparate factors that vie for stability and fluidity within both the community and individual members. In this way, the tension of competing forces of *structure* and *communitas* can be contained in one and the same.

Perhaps, this is why the church figures so prominently in the life of the Korean immigrant. In the interviewees' narratives, church life to a great extent occupied the social, interpersonal, and communal dimensions of their existence as a source of stability, continuity, and identity. For many, the distinction between church life and social life disappeared. Even those for whom the church was not an important feature of life considered their interactions with fellow Korean immigrants to be central to their social identity. *Cheong* in communal life, whether social or

²⁶⁰ See V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 92 for more on this dynamic of tension.

²⁶¹ M. Collins, "Ritual Symbols and the Ritual Process: the Work of Victor W. Turner," *Worship* 50, no 4 (July 1976): 336-346.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 42.

religious, can be understood as the embodiment of creative tension that exists in the dialectical forces of stability and discontinuity. Sang Hyun Lee discusses this potential in the Asian American church's worship life as follows.

What the symbol "household of God" or "home for the homeless" stands for receives a powerful expression in the Asian American church, which is one place in America where Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, or Korean Americans feel like they are somebody. As Asian Americans come together in their ethnic churches, sit next to each other, worship together, eat together, and just be together, they experience an inversion of status, turning upside down the way they are viewed in the society outside.²⁶³

Sang Hyun Lee also reads this empowerment Korean Americans experience in the church through Turner's concepts of liminality and *communitas* in the following manner.

Liminality and *communitas* have a prophetic function vis-à-vis the existing order of human life. Freed temporarily from the existing social hierarchy and statuses and experiencing *communitas*, the participants in Korean American worship become capable of critiquing the status quo and of envisioning a new way of ordering life in the American society in general and in Korean American communities in particular...Korean American churches could have an enormous capacity to empower their members to be agents of social change.²⁶⁴

On the personal level, owning tension creatively without being overwhelmed by it occurs mainly through the supportive holding environment furnished by the practice of *Cheong* within which the individual feels safe and empowered to acknowledge and accept disparate experiences of self. Though the properties of *Cheong* are primarily interpersonal,²⁶⁵ the immediate experience of *Cheong* is primarily emotional and this affect-bound relational quality not only

²⁶³ S. H. Lee, "Pilgrimage and Home in the Wilderness of Marginality: Symbols and Context in Asian American Theology," In *Korean Americans and Their Religion*, ed. Kwon, H. et. al. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

²⁶⁴ S. H. Lee, "Liminality and worship in the Korean American context," In *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. David Yoo (Urbana: Chicago, 2008):107.

²⁶⁵ See I. Kim, L. Kim, and J. G. Kelly, "Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families," *Journal of Community Psychology* 34, no. 2 (2006): 149–165.

fosters interpersonal intimacy but also intrapersonal acceptance of selfhood. Kyung Lee observes,

Jeong also bridges the gap of emotional isolation and separateness from each other, establishing emotional connectedness which Dr. Kim views as antithesis of the American notion of privacy: "This is my space. You leave me alone, and I will leave you alone."...*Jeong*, like love, demands loyalty and complete emotional trust...Some Americans consider *jeong* as encroaching upon one's privacy, Kim observes. "But Koreans feel that connectedness in life is more important and meaningful than the preservation of privacy."²⁶⁶

Hence, the emotionally dense experience of *Cheong* loosens rigidly defined personal boundaries and has a way of opening space within one's worldviews for the inclusion of a certain measure of interpersonal and intrapersonal tension arising out of conflicting experiences of immigrant life. Two of the four conditions in which *Cheong* occurs as described by S. C. Choi and S. H. Choi refer specifically to this tension-accommodating feature personified by *Cheong*.

Co-residence-space: sharing good and bad times, togetherness, closeness, etc.
Concealing-defects-relationship: understanding, acceptance, trust, etc.²⁶⁷

Within the relational topography of we-ness that characterizes *Cheong*, this tendency to tolerate and embrace even those elements of interpersonal and intrapersonal contradictions can be seen as emerging from shared experiences. Within this supportive environment of *Cheong*-filled relationship, one can affirm one's inherent worth and value, despite many difficult circumstances and challenges that occupy the immigrant's life on the margins of the society.

Human as Creative Neighbor

The immigrant from the vantage point of Turner's concepts of liminality and marginality is thus a neighbor, though living on the margins of the society, who can live into a liminal life of

²⁶⁶ K. W. Lee, "This Thing Called Cheong," *The Korea Times*, Friday, June 21, 1996).

²⁶⁷ S. C. Choi and S. H. Choi, "Cheong: The Socioemotional Grammar of Koreans," *International Journal of Group Tensions* 30 no. 1 (2001):69-80.

mutuality, creativity, and accountability with the local. When the embodied experience of receiving and offering hospitality becomes the substance of liminality that fills the marginal space they occupy in the society, the immigrant is empowered to become a prophetic voice unto the dominant culture, an active agent in one's life rather than a victim, and a promoter of tolerance and acceptance. In the Korean immigrant experience, this embodiment of hospitable spirit and practice occurs through *Cheong*-filled encounters. As *Cheong* is articulated, modeled, and owned in the immigrant's life, this inward-ethnocentric orientation pushes the individual and the community outward to invite and include others in an on-going enterprise of life-giving, life-affirming, and life-sharing hospitality. Even the disparate experiences of selfhood and contradictory dimensions of immigrant life come to be held in creative tension within the supportive and safe environment furnished by the interpersonal and communal practice of *Cheong*. At the end, *Cheong* critically pervades and permeates the world of liminality and marginality proposed by Victor Turner so as to deliver hope and resilience to those who are disenfranchised by the dominant culture but nevertheless engage in subversive empowerment themselves.

In the next chapter, the Korean immigrant experience is examined through the lens of Letty Russell and her concept of *partnership* with the aim of generating meaningful categories for constructing an immigrant theological anthropology in Chapter Eight.

Chapter 7: Human as Responsible Neighbor

When you go to a golf course alone, you need to pair up with someone. Sometimes, it is a fellow Korean. Sometimes it is a white person. Whoever it is, you need to be respectful and play nicely with the person. If you are a better golfer than he, you can teach him a few things about golf. If he is better than you, you need to learn from him a few things about golf. It's all about mutual respect, humility, and working together. If you have that mindset, then your golf will become better and better and you will be happy every time. I think that's how an immigrant life is.²⁶⁸

In Chapter Six, Turner's concepts of liminality and community were used as a hermeneutical tool in imagining the immigrant as creative neighbor based on the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. In this chapter, we turn to the feminist theologian Letty M. Russell's concepts of *partnership* and *hospitality* for an elaboration of the immigrant as responsible neighbor whose communal interactions with the local contribute critically and prophetically to the formation of both of their humanities. It is imagined that an ethical relationship between the immigrant and the local can only start from their commitment to the practice of getting together for meaningful cultural encounters with each other so as to incubate shared respect, trust, and future that are the necessary ingredients to mutual understanding and acceptance. Into this conversation, the biblical motifs of hospitality and acceptance of the stranger are brought and explored.

As in the previous chapter, I start with my rationale for the discursive compatibility between Letty Russell and the topic of the immigrant and the community. As part of this

²⁶⁸ From an interviewee's remarks in Chapter 4 of the dissertation

exercise, I explain how I see her works to be pertinent to the discussion of immigrant experience. Then, I bring her concepts of partnership and hospitality into conversation with the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S., particularly in regard to the relational dynamics of *Cheong*. At the end, a composite of the immigrant and the community is presented as they are responsible agents in the society whose relational mutuality and reciprocity with the local are morally and ethically imperative to the transformation of the society.

Letty Russell and the Immigrant

At first glance, it is difficult to gauge the presence of any meaningful connection between the topic of immigration and an Anglo-American feminist theologian in Letty Russell. However, a holistic understanding of Letty Russell's life and work leads to many points of convergence between her thoughts and the task of exploring who the immigrant is. My rationale for choosing Russell as one of my major theorists stems, first, from her commitment to working with the marginalized in society; second, from her commitment to the action-reflection model of theological reflection, which is of particular usefulness to the discussion of immigration and the immigrant; third, her emphasis on speaking to the church as a valuable partner in addressing societal issues and concerns.

First, Letty Russell's life experiences with the marginalized seminally contributed to her thoughts and theological commitments. In many of her books, Letty Russell located much of her theological basis in her personal experience of being a "misfit"²⁶⁹ and an outsider in the Eurocentric male-dominated church setting and her ministry experience of working with diverse

²⁶⁹ Russell uses terms such as "misfit," "outsider within," "insider without," and "outsider" to describe her experience of being in the Eurocentric male-dominated church setting in Chapter 1 of her book, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), which was posthumously published and edited by J. S. Clarkson and K. M. Ott.

groups in an urban setting. She writes, “My experience as an outsider within has clearly led me to...focus on a theology of hospitality that emphasizes the calling of the church as a witness to God’s intention to mend the creation by bringing about a world of justice, peace, and integrity of the natural world.”²⁷⁰ Russell also spoke of her early years in working in the East Harlem Protestant Parish in East Harlem, New York, which she credited with formatively shaping her social attitudes and theological commitments. In *Just Hospitality*, Russell writes,

Coming to East Harlem was like coming home...It was home because I discovered among this marginalized community that in God’s sight no one is a misfit and that it is call to join God in practicing hospitality for all persons.²⁷¹

Beginning with her ministry experience in East Harlem, Russell made a commitment to including people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, particularly women, both as her audience of, and partners in, ministry. J. Shannon Clarkson, in her Chapter, “Translation, Education, and Liberation: A Retrospective,” in the book, *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell*, shares the following anecdote:

Letty’s ministry in East Harlem, for example, would not have been the same had she not employed the technique of team teaching. So that the Hispanic custodian could lead Bible studies in Spanish, Letty took his place as the janitor while he met with the Spanish-speaking parishioners.²⁷²

Other examples of working interculturally and internationally include creating a feminist study group which later morphed into WOW: Women of the World, which was instrumental in influencing the direction of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in subsequent years and

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁷² J. S. Clarkson, “Translation, Education, and Liberation: A Retrospective,” in *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell*, ed. M. A. Farley and S. Jones (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999): 9.

forming partnerships with scholars and Christian workers from all over the world.²⁷³ Both directly and indirectly, it seems that Russell's personal and professional activities intersected with the marginalized, including the immigrant, in ways that came to shape her thoughts profoundly.

While acknowledging Russell's commitment to working with the marginalized, it is also important to note that her social location as a European American does make her privileged compared to those immigrants from non-European countries and, thus, her assumptions and motivations cannot be uncritically enlisted for speaking on behalf of the immigrant. However, her openness toward building partnership with those that are different from her can be used in constructively theorizing about the local's relationship with the immigrant. In this way, Letty Russell's ideas stand to benefit this discussion of the immigrant and the community.

Secondly, Russell's praxis orientation in privileging the pastoral action-reflection methodology shows a conceptual affinity with the discussion of immigration and the immigrant. J. Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott, the editors of *Just Hospitality*, remark about Russell's method of theological reflection as follows:

As in all of her work, a theological method of practice and theory is used. In other words, how we do hospitality (action) is as important as what we think about hospitality (reflection). Both serve to correct and expand traditional or stereotypical meanings for hospitality, challenging each of us to consider our lives as fertile ground for the doing of theology.²⁷⁴

Any discussion of the immigrant should start with the lived experience of immigrants and their interpretations of immigrant life. For the immigrant, furthermore, the embodied nature of

²⁷³ Chapters 1 and 2 of Letty M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), are useful for surveying Russell's works with the marginalized.

²⁷⁴ L. M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), xiii.

their existence and the movements that characterize their immigrant experience necessitate an approach that privileges practical and direct considerations of their needs over theoretical or academic deliberations about them. Because life concerns are where the rubber meets the road for them, the concreteness and immediacy of the immigrant's experience constitute both the end and the means of any credible theological reflection from a liberationist perspective. Since they will be expanded upon in the next section of the chapter, it suffices to say that Russell's concepts of partnership and hospitality are borne out of her commitments to placing human embodiment, relationality, and ethics at the center of the doing of theology, which in turn leads to the promotion of liberating ideals of solidarity, empowerment, and advocacy of the marginalized, including the immigrant.

Lastly, within the theoretical framework of Letty Russell, the church remains an active agent in reforming and transforming the culture. Defining the church as a community of Christ empowered by the Spirit, Russell speaks to and calls on the church to live up to its billing by using the language it understands. Russell writes,

This community is bought with a price because the struggle of Jesus to overcome the structure of sin and death constitutes both the source of new life in the community and its own mandate to continue the same struggle for life on behalf of others (1 Cor. 6:20; Phil. 2:1-11).²⁷⁵

In many immigrant communities, the church remains a central institution, both socially and religiously, and speaking about the community without speaking to and about its church becomes an impossible proposition. Particularly, for Korean immigrants all over the world, as supported in my research, the church is simultaneously a signifier, conveyor, and reformer of culture and tradition, and, as such, it actively arranges the immigrant's life in all of its

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

dimensions, including the personal, social, religious, political, and even economic. For this reason, using the language and symbols that the church can understand to align it with God's design for all humanity as in Russell's efforts, in my opinion, is both a conceptually compatible and practically effective way of addressing the immigrant and the community. In order to achieve this, Russell uses the language and symbols of the Christian faith and calls on the church to adopt a self-critical and reformatory posture about its doctrinal and practical commitments and to understand its central mission to be that of living out Christ's service for humankind and the rest of creation. Again Russell remarks,

For a church in the round that seeks to be partners with those at the margins of church and society, ministry is an expression of Jesus Christ's continuing service in the world. Rather than protecting Christ's ministry by restricting it to church hierarchies and separating it from the needs of the world, the church in the round welcomes the possibility that all may freely serve. Christians share in the ministry of Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve (Matt. 20:25-28). The ways we participate in that ministry are varied and change from time to time, but we are all baptized into it and continue to serve God and neighbor our entire lifetime.²⁷⁶

Having laid out my rationales for choosing Letty Russell as my major theologian in reflecting on the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S., we now turn to the discussion of the two major strains of thought that run concurrently throughout Letty Russell's writings. They are namely the concept of the future's role in shaping the present and the importance of practicing mutuality and reciprocity in human relations, and they are contained in her concepts of partnership and hospitality respectively. These concepts cannot be largely separated from each other because of their conceptual closeness and interdependence in Russell's vision for humankind. In fact, from reading her books, particularly *Human Liberation in a Feminist*

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 17.

Perspective: A Theology,²⁷⁷ *The Future of Partnership*,²⁷⁸ *Growth in Partnership*,²⁷⁹ *Becoming Human*,²⁸⁰ and *Just Hospitality*,²⁸¹ one can see the progression of her ideas of human freedom, partnership, hopeful participation in God's future for humankind, and hospitality over time and their conceptual integration, crystallization, and culmination in her 'hermeneutic of hospitality' in her posthumously published book *Just Hospitality*. However, for the purpose of juxtaposing them with my ideas about the immigrant and the community, I present these two principles in an artificially arranged sequence and frame them through the relational ethics that should, in my mind, foremost inform the relationship between the immigrant and the local if they are to live in community with each other.

Partnership as Ethic of Shared Future

Russell described her methodology not only as having a praxis orientation but also as being eschatological in orientation. She called this "beginning from the other end" and used the eschatological vision of the fully realized creation as God promised in the bible as the hermeneutical lens through which the present and even the past are interpreted and claimed.²⁸² Concretely, this method gives the epistemological primacy to the future in the meaning-making and decision-making enterprises of Christians' present life and privileges the ontological supremacy of God's vision for all creation over human beings' vision for themselves and the rest of creation. Russell remarks,

²⁷⁷ L. M. Russell, *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective: A Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974).

²⁷⁸ L. M. Russell, *The Future of Partnership* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979).

²⁷⁹ L. M. Russell, *Growth in Partnership* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981).

²⁸⁰ L. M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982).

²⁸¹ L. M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

²⁸² L. M. Russell, *The Future of Partnership* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 51; Letty M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 41.

As we have seen, it is characteristic of both Old and New Testament writers to begin from the other end. Not only do they tell us that our identity comes from God and not the other way around, so that we are God's utopia and not God ours, but also they tell us of an expectation of the *new* in God's promised future.²⁸³

Again in *Becoming Human*, Russell writes,

Envisioning or hoping has to go along with planning and action if the "Utopian consciousness" is to make a difference in our world. Together the vision and the concrete plans make possible an anticipation of God's intention for humankind in the present. Together, they point to the intention for the mending of creation, and of us, by raising up signs and anticipations of that healing and wholeness.²⁸⁴

By taking this approach, Russell amplified the importance of subscribing to the eschatological vision of New Creation in the *here-and-now* life of Christians and reframing our identity as God's partners in Jesus Christ whose hopeful participation in this redemptive work of creating beautiful life in the mist of the despairing world is of their utmost mission on earth.²⁸⁵

Partnership between God and us human beings, as exemplified in Jesus Christ, then translates into durable and ethical partnership between others and us. Russell writes,

Immanuel is the biblical answer to our sincere quest for identity. We are those addressed by God to become what God intends us to be: human beings, able to relate in love to ourselves, to others, and to God. We are addressed by God to become partners. In this sense we are God's utopia. We are created by God and set free to become witnesses to a new creation.²⁸⁶

Drawing an existential parallel rather than a spiritual one between Russell's idea of hopeful future in God and immigrant experience, the immigrant can also be understood as participating in a hopeful vision of one's future in important ways. Whether their motive is overtly economic, political, social, religious, or anything for that matter, it is just common sense that people leave their homeland and undertake their immigrant journey in pursuit of something

²⁸³ L. M. Russell, *The Future of Partnership* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 51.

²⁸⁴ L. M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 41.

²⁸⁵ L. M. Russell, *The Future of Partnership* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 15.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

better in a new country. In my research of the Korean immigrant experience, this hopeful vision for the future most often surfaced in two cultural narratives found in participants' stories. One narrative had to do with immigrants' dreams and longing for America, and the other had to do with significant economic, social, and political challenges in Korea that contributed to their decisions to immigrate. Even after settling down and encountering not-so-rosy realities of immigrant life in the U.S., participants continued to live with these narratives of a hopeful future, using them to inform and validate their existence as immigrants.

One might provide a post-colonial critique of the narrative of "American Dream" of Korean immigrants in the U.S. for legitimate reasons such as the reach of American imperialism into Korea during the twentieth century and the ensuing romanticization of America in the public mind. However, such a post-colonial reading does not eliminate the fact that, whether eschewed or not, it is only human for the immigrant to long for a better future for themselves in their new country. Again, whether realistic or not, it is also human for the immigrant to keep trusting and working hard to better their place in the society by holding onto this narrative of hopeful future.

Furthermore, this hopeful orientation was demonstrated in the Korean immigrants' personal narratives about immigration and immigrant life. In Chapter Four, as part of discussing the findings from the interviews, I presented the following narratives found in participants' stories that described their hopeful and resilient attitudes regarding immigrant life. The narratives, "You have to be resilient and hopeful as an immigrant" and "You need to take full control of your life as an immigrant," seem to illustrate the self-understanding that "Though immigrant life is difficult, you can still make your life meaningful and productive to a great extent." Kevin's metaphor of an auto repair shop poignantly illustrates this characteristic.

My immigration experience is like an auto repair shop. There is a lot going on. A lot of work. A lot of laughter. A lot of enjoying your coworkers. A lot of grease. You get dirty, but it does not make you dirty inside. It means that you are just living your life well. Immigrant's life is like that, I guess. It's not pretty a lot of times. You have to get dirty, if you know what I mean. But it's a fun life. It's good.

From the perspective of the immigrant, this hopeful future, however, does not happen with them alone. They are keenly aware that their future is irrevocably tied to that of their neighbors, particularly the local or the dominant majority. As we discussed in the previous chapter in regard to marginality, Asian immigrants presently occupy the place of perpetual and coerced marginality on the periphery of the society, and it is true that they often feel disempowered in their constructive efforts to better their lives in the absence of support from others. From the underside of the society, the immigrant as part of the marginalized segment of the population finds it imperative to work together with the local as partners in articulating and promoting a shared vision of the future.

Here, Russell's concepts of partnership and hospitality are of much usefulness. Within both concepts, Russell appropriates space for the ethic of shared future that can bring the oppressed and oppressor together. Instead of the oppressed demanding liberation at all costs, even the demise of the dominant majority, or the oppressor acting as the unilateral dispenser of rights, both are brought together as partners responsible for discussing, imagining, and putting into practice freedom through recognizing their shared destiny and commonwealth. Russell writes,

By definition, partnership involves growing interdependence in relation to God, persons, and creation so they are constantly in interaction with a wider community of persons, social structures, values, and beliefs that may provide support, correctives, and negative feedback. There is never complete equality in

such a dynamic relationship, but a pattern of equal regard and mutual acceptance among partners is essential.²⁸⁷

By locating freedom and shared future in God, Russell removes the need to opt for an artificial and quantitative definition of equality given by one group of people over that of another and finds a useful starting point in a qualitative pattern of equal regard and mutual acceptance among partners. The following remarks elaborate on this suggestion further.

God's freedom is not a freedom of equal opportunity, but a freedom of justice in community. No one is to have the freedom to be master over others, because all Pharaohs are eliminated. No one is free to compete with the others to establish their individual rights. Rather as Moltmann has pointed out, God's freedom is granted in community with others. The jubilee is an opportunity for new exodus so that God's people can again form a new social community to match the vision of God's freedom.²⁸⁸

In partnership and hospitality, the ethic of shared future takes on a practical dimension of initiating a conversation with the intent of listening to and understanding the other first on the premise that, both the oppressed and the oppressor, the marginalized and the dominant group, were in the same status as strangers before God in need of God's grace.

The basis of this practice of hospitality is that we were once strangers, exiles, nobodies, and are now welcomed by God so that we might welcome others. Christ promises to be present to us through our actions of solidarity with the stranger.²⁸⁹

When we begin from the outsider's perspective, we develop the practice of listening to the pain of others and responding to their initiatives. Yet when we try to begin from the perspective of another, we must remind ourselves that we cannot really "walk in another's moccasins." We can never fully grasp the perspective of someone from another culture, nor can they fully understand the perspective of a colonizer. But this need not stop us from hearing and listening and working together.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 102.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

Then, what can serve as a concrete model for the kind of partnership and hospitality that Russell promotes here? For this, Russell turns to the practice of *koinonia* as exemplified in the New Testament. In *Becoming Human*, Russell explains,

It is a participation in and with Christ that establishes mutual community. Paul and the early church expressed the meaning of their new humanity by pointing to the way Christ was already at work transforming their lives by the power of the Spirit. In this happening of co-humanity they discovered small anticipations of God's intended partnership in New Creation.²⁹¹

This mode of human interrelatedness practiced in the early church in Russell's mind extends to all creation, not just Christians themselves. Without demanding God of Christians to be God of all people, Russell expands the self-awareness and ministerial boundary of Christians to include all creation, most importantly the other, in their ethic of building partnership and sharing hospitality. In short, though it starts with Christ, it expands to include all others in this pattern of human relationality and mutuality.

The Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. can be a useful lesson in promoting this awareness of shared future between the immigrant and the local. As observed from the survey of Korean American literature, the L.A. Riot of 1992 was a pivotal moment for Korean Americans and interracial relations in the U.S. This painful tragedy which incurred the loss of 53 persons and property damages worth roughly one billion dollars did more than any other event in Korean American history to awaken the Korean American community's awareness of the need to start articulating and empowering a vision of shared future with other racial groups and put into motion many multicultural initiatives in urban centers across America. A sharp increase in the number of Korean American civic leaders and the Korean American literary works being

²⁹¹ L. M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 44.

produced since then is evidence of this paradigm shift from a posture of passive survival to an activism of mutuality.

Ethical relations between the immigrant and the local start with their understanding of and commitment to a shared future. For Korean American Christians, this is a call to widen their spiritual, theological, and ministerial horizons to include other minorities and the dominant majority in their prayers and efforts of building meaningful partnerships in the wider culture as specified in Russell's view of partnership and hospitality. Their passionate worship of God must take into account not only God's providence for themselves but more importantly God's call for a just society as in God's original design as well as God's eschatological vision for all of humankind. Russell's vision of God's partnership with people and creation, then, beckons the immigrant and the local to enter into a mutually accountable relationship as responsible neighbors whose shared future is contingent on their partnership. "Beginning from the other end" in this sense is more than a method of theological reflection. It is an ethic of shared future for whoever believes in it.

So far, we have discussed Russell's concept of partnership which constitutes the basis of ethical relations between the immigrant and the local. In the next section, we will explore Russell's concept of hospitality which provides the means of fomenting ethical relations between the two.

Discussing Hospitality

Any in-depth discussion of hospitality as a relational enterprise that goes beyond just being a time of social gathering among friends and acquaintances can be served well by a review of current scholarship on the subject matter. By mentioning several different strains of thought

on hospitality that are currently out in the public forum, I would like to locate Letty Russell's understanding of hospitality within the wider discourse on hospitality.

Both as a cultural custom and political necessity, hospitality has been an invaluable communal and societal practice throughout human history. From an inter-tribal context to that of a geo-political alliance such as the European Union, hospitality touches all levels of human organization and politics. Accordingly, many contemporary thinkers have begun addressing this complexity of hospitality from public perspectives, and the ideas of Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida have been most influential in this area. Here, I present a short overview of how Letty Russell's hospitality compares to, and contrasts from, some of these views on hospitality.

The central question in discussing hospitality is inevitably, "Who is the other?" Particularly, within the context of immigration, this question concerns identifying not only the immigrant but also the local. According to Barbara Hudson, "the tendency in present societies with their fear and hostility towards strangers is that we respond to aliens as if they were monsters."²⁹² This entrenched view of the other as an existential threat unfortunately turned hospitality into relational politics of negotiation and accommodation in the context of competing rights and moral claims. According to Dennis Carlson's reading of Derrida, as long as new immigrants are defined as "foreign," inherently different from the local, they risk being "exoticized and represented as deviant, abnormal, pathological, and criminal."²⁹³

Levinas's idea of responsibility of the other marked a clear turn in moral philosophy, away from "the dominance of the logic of identity in which the self is prioritized over the other," in

²⁹² B. Hudson, "Punishing Monsters, Judging Aliens: Justice at the Borders of Community," *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 39 no. 2 (2006): 232-247.

²⁹³ D. Carlson, "Border Crossed Us: Education, Hospitality Politics, and Social Construction of the "Illegal Immigrant,"" *Education Theory* 59 no. 3 (2009): 259-277.

Hudson's estimation.²⁹⁴ Levina's responsibility to the other, instead, is based on the mere introduction of the other into one's sight and not on the definition of who the other is from the perspective of the local.²⁹⁵ By doing away with any relationship of reciprocity and recognition as being the basis of encountering the other and situating obligation to the other in the sufficiency of his or her presence, Levinas effectively moved away from the politics of difference and toward the relational ethics of *a priori* acceptance. Hudson writes,

Levinas (1969, 1981, 1992) offers a model of ethics where the obligation to the Other – to meet her needs; to satisfy her demands; to deal with her morally – arises simply from her presence within my gaze. A moral relationship is a face-to-face relationship in which I must give, but not expect any return, not even the limited return of understanding. Understanding and reciprocity may be desirable, they may develop, but they cannot be demanded at the outset. Levinas contrasts this moral action with strategic action, which is based on the desire for dominance rather than action to fulfill one's obligation to the Other. Making the stranger conform to our values, express herself in our terms, makes herself useful for our projects, would be strategic rather than moral action.²⁹⁶

Therefore, for Levinas, the mere presence of the other in one's proximity entails the responsibility of hospitable interaction without the prerequisite of understanding and reciprocity.

Derrida takes Levinas's idea of alterity further to speak of absolute hospitality. If Kant's theory of cosmopolitan commits tolerance of the other based on the communal sharing of the earth and Levinas's idea of responsibility to the other based on conscious awareness of his or her visibility, then Derrida requires unconditional or absolute hospitality for the other without "judgment or control with regard to who will receive that hospitality."²⁹⁷ Derrida states,

²⁹⁴ B. Hudson, "Punishing Monsters, Judging Aliens: Justice at the Borders of Community," *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 39 no. 2 (2006): 232-247.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 241.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ I. Ahn, "Economy of "Invisible Debt" and Ethics of "Radical Hospitality," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38 no. 2 (2010): 243-267.

Pure and unconditional hospitality, hospitality itself, opens or is in advance open to someone who is neither expected nor invited, to whomever arrives as an absolutely foreign visitor, as a new arrival, non-identifiable and unforeseeable, in short, wholly other. I would call this a hospitality of visitation rather than invitation. The visit might actually be very dangerous, and we must not ignore the fact, but would a hospitality without risk, a hospitality based by certain assurances, a hospitality protected by an immune system against the wholly other, be true hospitality?²⁹⁸

In other words, Derrida's unconditional hospitality toward the other removed any *a priori* primacy of the resident or the local's rights and replaced it with radical openness to providing the needs of the newcomer "without reservation" or as a "gift" without any expectation of compensation.²⁹⁹ This critique by Derrida is encapsulated in his usage of the term "hostility of hospitality." In his mind, any type of hospitality that is offered by the host from a political position of power is hostile because it is not unconditional but conditional in the sense that a door is being kept ajar through which the immigrant should exit.³⁰⁰ Derrida arrived at this position by deconstructing the Kantian notion of universal hospitality, which he believed excluded the right of residence for immigrants.³⁰¹ Therefore, the key to hospitality is the radical openness to accept the other unconditionally for whoever he or she might be. However, he recognized the impossibility of unconditional hospitality in the present world where nations and people groups resort to identity politics such as border policing and immigration programs, and called for a pragmatic approach to bringing hospitality into the realm of political policy-making and governance. Carson explains,

²⁹⁸ J. Derrida, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicide," in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues With Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, ed. G. Borradori (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

²⁹⁹ I. Ahn, "Economy of "Invisible Debt" and Ethics of "Radical Hospitality," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38 no. 2 (2010), 243-267.

³⁰⁰ G. Leung and M. Stone, "Otherwise than Hospitality: A Disputation on the Relation of Ethics to Law and Politics," *Law Critique* 20 (2009): 193-206.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 194.

All of this means, according to Derrida, that the formulation of a principled politics of hospitality “remains obscure and difficult,” and we must neither conceal the difficulties we face “nor, for a moment, imagine we have mastered them.” The best we can do, he advised, is to carve out a path between an unconditioned hospitality that dispenses with all qualifications and competing claims, and a conditioned hospitality that takes the form of “a law, a politics, a conditional ethics.”

Ilsup Ahn calls Derrida’s hospitality “a gift without gift” and sees it as deconstructing and repositioning of the traditional hospitality based on the economy of presumed debt on the part of the immigrant and its ethical discharge by the local. Ahn writes, “In a nutshell, while the traditional hospitality of the gift paradigm is centered on the giver’s or donor’s perspective, Derrida’s hospitality of the “gift without gift” shifts its main focus from the giver or donor to the give or done.”³⁰² Ahn rejects Derrida’s hospitality as morally inadequate on the basis of being dependent on the voluntary subscription by the local and its inability to account for an invisible debt.³⁰³ Instead, he moves away from any political or relational hospitality that is based on the political or moral economy of debt and gift, whether explicit or invisible, and calls for “radical hospitality” by framing the issue in terms of the common indebtedness to God and obligation to discharge it through mutual forgiveness. He states,

Radical hospitality is distinguished from other types in that it is originally modeled on the paradigm of forgiveness. According to the paradigm of forgiveness, radical hospitality is understood as the creditor’s self-payment of the invisible debt of the debtor. Radical hospitality, thus, presupposes that in order for hospitality to become a true hospitality, there should be elements of

³⁰² Ibid., 251.

³⁰³ Ahn writes, “We have identified the content of invisible debt in the sense of “you owe us your presence” (on the part of the host) and “I owe you my security and success” (on the part of the guest).” For Ahn, this invisible debt is what characterizes the fundamental relationship between the hosting citizens and the migrants. He writes, “Invisible debt thus refers to a hidden, but binding ethos that characterizes the socio-ontological status of an individual either as a creditor or as a debtor.” I. Ahn, “Economy of “Invisible Debt” and Ethics of “Radical Hospitality,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38 no. 2 (2010): 243-267.

“excessiveness” or “madness” that transcend ordinary moral criteria such as reciprocity or equality.³⁰⁴

In this way, Ahn introduces a theological category of forgiveness framed biblically as a solution to breaking the cycle of the moral economy of law, duty, and debt, by locating the origin of hospitality in God’s forgiveness of all human beings. Ahn imagines that this invitation toward grace in radical hospitality can be visualized in two forms – “as the full embrace of the otherness of the strangers, and as the reduction of political, economic, and cultural privileges.”³⁰⁵

In my assessment, Letty Russell’s hospitality also continues the trajectory of Levina and Derrida’s ideas of hospitality in that hospitality cannot be contingent on the assertion of the local’s self on that of the immigrant based on any explicit or presumed criterion of reciprocity or recognition. Furthermore, as in Ahn’s claims, Letty Russell treats hospitality not as an asset, a right, a demand, or even a gift that is transacted between people groups, but only an outcome of responding to God to whom all are accountable. However, in contrast to Ahn, instead of locating hospitality in the common indebtedness and mutual forgiveness, Russell locates the mandate of hospitality in the common humanity as informed by, and shared destiny in, God’s eschatological vision of ‘fully realized creation.’ Therefore, in Russell’s mind, the other is a neighbor, partner, and collaborator in fulfilling this existential, theological, and spiritual enterprise. In the next section, I present Russell’s hospitality and how it converges with the immigrant experience of Korean immigrants to paint a new understanding of relational ethics for all of us who live in a globalized world.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 258.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Hospitality as Ethic of Shared Experience

From my reading of Russell's books, her concepts of human freedom, partnership, hopeful participation in God's will, and hospitality are brought together and integrated in her 'hermeneutic of hospitality' in her posthumously published book, *Just Hospitality*.³⁰⁶ First, it is important to start with her definition of hospitality. By hospitality, she does not mean a time of sharing snacks or any social gathering meant for fellowship in the popular sense of the word.³⁰⁷ Rather, for Russell, hospitality is "the practice of God's welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God's actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis."³⁰⁸ The mandate of hospitable welcome and mutuality is, hence, located within the presence of God and Christ in the midst of human beings and rooted in the biblical commands given to, and the lived experience of, the community of God's people in the world. In her understanding, the biblical passages such as Hebrews 12:2, "Do not neglect to show hospitality, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it," and Matthew 25:31-46 that contains Jesus' promise "to be with those who offer hospitality to the least of our brothers and sisters" constitute the basis of hospitality which can be essentially understood as solidarity with strangers.³⁰⁹ Hospitality, in this way, incorporates welcoming and standing with strangers in solidarity and promotes justice and empowerment for all those who are invited to this ethical and mutual mode of human interaction.

³⁰⁶ L. M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

What is the hermeneutic of hospitality according to Russell? In *Just Hospitality*, Russell explains her reason for moving away from a hermeneutic of the other and toward a hermeneutic of hospitality.

I have decided to move my thinking from “hermeneutic of the other” to a hermeneutic of hospitality because as a feminist theologian I no longer want to use the distancing, dualistic language of otherness. Instead, I want to look within the Christian tradition for ways to affirm the key importance of difference while sharing in God’s hospitality and welcome for all people and for the whole creation.³¹⁰

In her understanding, a liberationist hermeneutic of the other often does not take into account the fact that, as postcolonial subjects, people are neither solely the colonizer nor colonized.³¹¹ People’s history, situation, and social location are so confluent and nuanced, particularly in the context of globalization, that there is a need, by acknowledging the interconnectedness of systemic oppression, to foster a new hermeneutic of seeing the human embedded in their complex realities and weaving them together as ethical partners around a round table of discussion and engagement. Russell comments,

As postcolonial subjects, we are often simultaneously colonizers and colonized; it is necessary for us to analyze critically the sources and practices of privilege, but also to look for liberating spaces in which we can share our commitment to work against both international oppression and gendered oppression.³¹²

Russell credits this reality of *hybridity* of “the familial, cultural, political, and economic contexts in which each of us lives out roles simultaneously as a member of both colonizer and colonized groups” as promoting dialogical and empathic openness with which to listen to “the cries of pain and hope that are offered by our brothers and sisters, and to join them in imagining

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 27.

a different way of relationship that points to God's intention to mend the whole of creating, beginning with ourselves."³¹³

In her hermeneutic of hospitality, then, *emancipatory difference*, which allows a group of people to define and claim their own difference in their effort of reclaiming the power to name themselves, provides an alternative option to *essentializing difference*, which is often used by the status quo to differentiate one group from another based on exclusivist external criteria such as race and gender.³¹⁴ Furthermore, a hermeneutic of hospitality identifies the safety of the marginalized as the most urgent and important task of theological reflection and pastoral action, particularly that of the practice of hospitality. Russell writes,

I invite you to consider the particular problem of safety when offering hospitality, knowing that it is directly tied to our concerns for all manner of safety in the world in which we live and where many suffer and die unnecessarily.³¹⁵

Theologically and biblically, the Hebrew concept of sanctuary as rooted "in the tradition of the cities of refuge (Exod. 21:13; Num. 39:9-11)" and understanding of every person as "a dwelling of God" are identified as the basis of this call to safety by Russell.³¹⁶ Because everyone, including the other or the stranger, is a dwelling of God, and should be afforded safety accordingly, the practice of offering and receiving hospitality becomes a primary concern for human relationality and community. To summarize, this hermeneutic of hospitality can "1) pay attention to the power quotient involved in what is said and who is saying it, 2) give priority to the perspective of the outsider, and 3) rejoice in God's unfolding promise."

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 86-87.

What does the practice of hospitality look like? My understanding of Russell's ideas leads me to three specific action objectives for anyone who is seriously engaged in a hermeneutics of hospitality. First, one needs to extend a welcome to the other in a concrete and respectful way. Second, one needs to listen to the other with the aim of understanding him or her. Third, one needs to stand in solidarity with the other and move toward doing the actual work of liberation and advocacy. With these action plans in mind, I now explore the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. by bringing it into conversation with Russell's view of hospitality and by examining Russell's hospitality and *Cheong* comparatively.

Russell's concept of hospitality has many significant implications for the discussion of the immigrant and the community as she incorporates into it the ethic of shared experience. Most importantly, hospitality as extending God's welcome and providing safety to the stranger becomes an end in and of itself rather than a means to something else. Even if Russell had nothing else in her hermeneutic and theology of hospitality, the practice of hospitality alone and apart from all other endeavors could have become a theologically, spiritually, and ethically sufficient and viable ministry that is worth all our efforts. The ethic of bringing people together, providing sanctuary to those in need, and promoting liberation for the oppressed does not need any other justification or rationale other than that doing so is of absolute necessity for their safety and freedom if all those in community were to become fully human as God intended. In this sense, not only does *orthopraxis* (right action) trump *orthodoxy* (right doctrine), but in Russell's mind *orthopraxis* and *orthodoxy* also converge into one and the same in hospitality.³¹⁷

³¹⁷ I am borrowing the concept of theology as a performative discipline from Hyun-Kyung Chung to explain Russell's orientation. In quoting Chung, Elaine L. Graham states, "Theology is properly conceived as a performative discipline, in which the criterion of authenticity is deemed to be *orthopraxis*, or authentic transformative action,

This is the most important implication Russell's hospitality holds for the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. The practice of *Cheong* as Korean immigrants' mode of relational and communal living involving the orientation of "we-ness" and affectionate mutual concern can be seen in its own merit as a type of hospitality Russell envisioned. The practice of hospitality does not require any condition for receiving the stranger when it is understood as an expression of extending God's welcome; likewise *Cheong* does not require any condition for its development other than those of shared space, proximity, and mutual encounter.³¹⁸ In many ways, this community-building dynamic of *Cheong* does not necessarily denote anything other than the need for people to live, love, and work together. The primary goal and end of *Cheong*, as in Russell's hospitality, is providing security, safety, and belongingness for its practitioners and serving as an incubator of hope and resilience in the midst of harsh immigrant life and the marginalized existence as minorities in the society. This quality of *Cheong* is squarely located within the historical experience of collective suffering that forced Koreans to learn to survive resiliently and care for one another. Many social commentators such as K. W. Lee talk about *Cheong*'s etiology in the following way.

I dare say that it has taken thousands of years for Koreans to cultivate and forge this ethnic core emotion under the oppressive forces of both foreign and domestic rulers. It's baffling, often outrageously so, to outsiders. Even for some natives, it's a paradoxical riddle. To me, it's a fragile and exquisite yet enduring legacy from our ancestors through our journey of tears and sorrows. This thread of Koreanness somehow seems to have survived through generations among overseas Koreans outside that rabbit-shaped peninsula.³¹⁹

rather than orthodoxy (right belief) in *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers 1996), 7.

³¹⁸ S. C. Choi and S. H. Choi in "Cheong: The Socioemotional Grammar of Koreans," *International Journal of Group Tensions* 30, no. 1 (2001) describe *Cheong* properties to be time, relation, space, and personality. These properties need to be considered together and not separately.

³¹⁹ K. W. Lee, "This Thing Called Jeong," *The Korea Times* (Friday, June 21, 1996).

One of the interviewees in my research poignantly illustrates this protective and nurturing quality of *Cheong* as expressed through her church community. The interviewee explained how, in the early years of her immigrant life, her church provided a safe haven for sharing, naming, and expressing fears and frustrations of immigrant life. The interviewee described the communal bonding that took place in her church as “sticky good” and “a medicine for her psyche.” For an example of *Cheong* serving as a locus of hospitality between the immigrant and the local, we can turn to an anecdote found in Sean Suh’s autobiographical reflection in *East to America*. He talks about how his martial-arts master who was not a Korean took great interest in him and was instrumental in helping him get out of trouble.

He always thought I was a good kid. I didn’t want to disappoint him.... He’s not like other adults who just tell you; he talks to you and tries to make you understand.... He made me want to graduate from college and get a good job. He made me realize that the further I get away from the gang, the farther ahead I’m going to go in life.³²⁰

Both Russell’s hospitality and *Cheong*, therefore, make a commitment to sitting down and communing with the other for the sake of protecting, promoting, and providing for life as life is meant to be. Coming to the table with the intention of knowing, learning, and conversing with the other then provides the intercultural, interpersonal, and interpretive encounters that are necessary in forming an awareness of mutual rapport, respect, and responsibility. Therefore, what makes an interface of hospitality and *Cheong* in our daily practice so urgent is the fact that all of us need this forum of interaction with each other to be transformed in our values, attitudes, and commitments. Without the local or the dominant culture entering into hospitality or *Cheong*-informed relationality with the marginalized other, whose experiences on the margins of

³²⁰ S. Suh, “Dragon,” in *East to America: Korean American Life Stories*, ed. E. H. Kim and E-Y Yu (New York: The New Press, 1996).

the society have much to teach them about the oppressive social structures and power differentials that are operative within the society, there would be no significant shift in their actions, let alone self-awareness about the privileged position they occupy as the status quo. For the immigrant or any other marginalized group, without entering into hospitable encounters or *Cheong*-informed relationality with other minorities or the local, there would be no avenue through which to interact meaningfully and substantially with those in the wider culture. Without hospitality and *Cheong*-informed relationality, people's differences would continue to remain as formidable relational, social, and even spiritual barriers in the society, irrespective of their status and power, and fear of the other would continue to prevent any significant improvement in interracial relations and drive misguided public policies in this country. Therefore, entering into a hospitable relationship between the immigrant and the local is not an option but an ethic of shared experience that must be deployed as a strategy of personal, interpersonal, and social progress.

Here, once again, it is important to restate that this hospitality is not based on moral economy of law, duty, or debt between the immigrant and the local as presently practiced in many nations and geo-political alliances such as the European Union or the United States of America. There is nothing that Russell's hospitality or the practice of *Cheong* requires as a prerequisite or condition for its expression and recognition. Rather, both are shared, informed, and prescribed by the need for people to be human together, whether it is in their own backyards, on the border, or over the border.

For our discussion, however, one cannot say that Russell's view of hospitality and *Cheong* as an embodied experience of Korean immigrants in the U.S. can mean the same without

exploring their similarities and differences critically. Notwithstanding their commitments to the ethic of shared experience, there are important differences between the two of which the difference in perspectival orientation is the most significant. Russell's understanding of hospitality is theocentric in that it begins with God's welcome and God's validation of every human being as a subject of inherent worth, which is God-given. Russell states, "Rather the ministry of service to humankind in the ministry of God in Christ reconciling the world."³²¹ Russell locates the origin of the ethic of hospitality within the sacred worth of human life and creative work by God.

The right of protection for all persons is derived from God's holiness and provides the basic theological understanding of hospitality in both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures: Human beings are created by God and are to be holy, and to be treated as holy or sacred.³²²

For this reason, within Russell's conceptual framework, God's partnership with human beings is the basis for human beings' partnership among themselves and with the rest of creation. For Russell, God is a humanist to the extent that God is an "advocate of human beings, who cares about their destiny and shares it with them."³²³ In theological and theoretical conceptualization of hospitality, Russell roots ideas squarely in the theocentric approach to the reading of the Christian tradition and other religious sources.

On the other hand, for *Cheong*, it is a humanist perspective orientation that is employed and takes precedence before all else. The practice of *Cheong* is borne out of its practitioners' commitment to helping others in their mutual struggle of survival and thus is based on the deeply-rooted human response of empathy that all people deserve dignity and protection in the

³²¹ L. M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 15.

³²² *Ibid.*, 87.

³²³ L. M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 43.

face of persecution and oppression. In *Cheong*, one does not need to trust in God's welcome to extend welcome to the stranger but only the realization to do so is fundamentally human and ethically the right thing to do. Therefore, *Cheong* is contingent on a shared proximity among human beings rather than a shared belief in the divine, and phenomenologically it occurs within the boundaries of some commonly shared properties such as ethnicity or language.

Therefore, for a constructive pastoral theologian, these two concepts, hospitality and *Cheong*, which denote neighborly love, must be brought into a critical correlative process so as to use them in relation responsibly. One example of the integration of these two concepts can be found within the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. *Cheong*, for Korean American Christians at least, has been revised and informed by the Christian tradition to take on a more theological outlook and the pastoral implications that Russell described. *Cheong*, which is normally reserved for the in-group community of fellow Korean immigrants, is expressed dynamically in Korean immigrants' efforts of reaching out to other minorities and the local in their acts of service and constructive contribution to society. *Cheong*, an indigenously humanist practice, therefore, has been reinforced by, and incorporated into, the Christian mandate of neighborly love as exemplified in God's welcome and Christ's love. In this way, *Cheong*, informed by theological and religious sources, produces a new form of spirituality and ethics for Korean American Christians that is simultaneously Korean and Christian.

More specifically, the Christian tradition of hospitality, with its theological basis in God, Christ, and the biblical mandates, can function as a norm and align the practice of *Cheong* along the ideals of justice and freedom. The practitioners of *Cheong* are pushed to critically think about their assumptions and aims of their activities to see if justice and freedom are also being

promoted for all in the society. This, perhaps, would mean that, if some *Cheong*-based relationships or practices are found to be favoring one group of people over the other, its practitioners would need to reform it to be more egalitarian and inclusive. This would also mean that one's motive for offering and receiving hospitality should be made transparent.

On the other hand, the Christian tradition of hospitality can benefit from, and be informed by, *Cheong* in similar ways. Christians must embrace the fact that there are many different modes of hospitality practiced in the world which have historically sprung up from people's natural need and concern for fellow human beings, particularly during the times of hardship and suffering, and respect them as a source of much value and local wisdom that can contribute to Christians' practice of hospitality. Particularly, the intercultural and interreligious implications of hospitable traditions such as *Cheong* must be allowed to shape Christian practices and views about the other, thereby creating shared points of entry for discussion and dialogue of solidarity and cooperation between Christians and non-Christians.

One specific contribution of *Cheong* to the Christian tradition of hospitality can be its emphasis on the need to build relational bridges and affective quality of the experience of hospitality. By placing the emphasis on the relational aspect of belonging together rather than the action aspect of accomplishing something in the practice of hospitality, *Cheong* illustrates the messy nature of the work of hospitality and dictates the importance of initiating sufficient and sustained encounters with the other to open up a shared space, even risking the blurring of interpersonal boundaries to a certain extent. As in the Korean linguistic convention of using the first person plural pronouns of "we," "us," and "ours" to refer to even individuals or individual possessions, wherever and for whomever *Cheong* is practiced, clear distinctions among

individual persons fade away in favor of an affectionate collective identity. Particularly, for the marginalized, it might even mean that, before individuals could be empowered to say “I,” “me,” or “mine,” they would first need to go through this process of belonging with, and caring for, each other even as they struggle to just survive. In this way, *Cheong* can help put the communal orientation of “we,” “us,” and “ours” back into the practice of hospitality, because at the end what is accomplished is not as nearly important as what is shared and who we are is not as nearly important as how we are present with each other.

Looking Forward

In this chapter, Letty M. Russell’s concepts of partnership and hospitality were explored as a hermeneutical tool in understanding the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S., particularly in relation to the practice of *Cheong*. Along with the insights from the previous chapter, the notions of partnership as an ethic of shared destiny and hospitality as an ethic of shared experience will be used as the building blocks with which to engage further in a correlative process of interdisciplinary discussion. Immigration as both a public and pastoral issue is examined by bringing the Korean immigrant experience, the Christian tradition, and cultural sources into a process of mutual clarification and criticism in order to expand the theological horizons of the immigrant and the community. Out of this correlational process, constructive pastoral theological proposals that envision new relational ethics between the immigrant and the local are imagined and articulated in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Putting It All Together - Constructive Proposals in Theological Anthropology

Our journey through the experience of Korean immigrants has so far yielded many fertile and deeply meaningful narratives, metaphors, reflections, and discussions about what it means to be an immigrant in community. One particular metaphor used by one of the interviewees provides a powerful vision for weaving a difficult and yet resilient, coerced and yet creative, and painful and yet responsible immigrant life.

Yes, a desert. Like a cactus growing in that desert, immigrants live a life like that. This life is extremely difficult, but this life is lived in earnestness. At the end, the immigrant survives. Immigrants are like that.... The life of an immigrant is hard, but the immigrant survives ultimately.... Birds come to perch upon it. There's strength in its life. Also, the cactus' thorns describe the difficult things in the immigrant's life, ha ha.³²⁴

Whether intentional or not, the interviewee seems to incorporate into his metaphor the imagery of Jesus' parable of the kingdom of heaven as recorded in Matthew 13:31-32 in which a small mustard seed grows into a big and bountiful tree that allows many birds of the air to come and perch in its branches. The interviewee's metaphor of a cactus in a desert, in its original full representation as audio-recorded, actually contains the imagery of the cactus progressively transforming the desert into a livable and hospitable habitat in which many plants and animals come to occupy and coexist. This description refers not to only immigrant life but also the

³²⁴ See the **Imagery and Metaphors of Immigrant Life** section in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

pastoral theological method that is used in this study in imagining the immigrant and the community. Let me explain.

As a pastoral theologian, the lived experiences of individuals and communities become both the substance and context of theological reflection. Reading, investigating, and reflecting on the actual embodied experiences of people living, working, struggling, and imagining in their places of life is central to the content work of generating, analyzing, and discussing data as well as the conceptual work of contextualizing and making conscientious hermeneutical choices. This work is followed by a critical conversation between social sciences and religious sources in a process of mutual clarification and correction. The insights and implications produced come to bear concretely and theologically on pastoral practices of care by naming, framing, and guiding the pertinent issues and decisions involved. What begins as a small mustard seed or even a small cactus eventually transforms itself into an abundant tree through a process of carefully attending to, caring for, and engaging the subject in its environment.

In this journey, we started with the lived experience of Korean immigrants in the U.S. Through the qualitative research design that employed case study, in-depth interview, and survey of literature, the life themes and narratives of Korean immigrants' personal, communal, and historical experiences were generated and classified by a method of inductive reasoning based on narrative analysis. These themes and narratives were compared and contrasted with the researcher's original hypothesis and assumptions about the Korean immigrant and the community, particularly the role of immigration as a central event in an immigrant's life in revising one's identity, relationship, and views about oneself, the other, and even the divine. This process of identity-revision, community-formation, and spiritual-transformation was seen as

occurring within a liminal, constitutive, and interpersonal milieu. In Chapters Seven and Eight, the hermeneutical lenses of Victor Turner's liminality and Letty M. Russell's concepts of partnership and hospitality were employed in further engaging the findings from the Korean immigrant experience, particularly the cultural narrative of *Cheong* as a socio-emotional pattern of interaction for Korean immigrants and the theme of tension between the wounded and resilient self-narratives of the immigrant, in an interdisciplinary discussion to generate the portrait of the immigrant as a creative and responsible neighbor based on the following categories: *Cheong* as the embodiment of creative liminality; *Cheong* as the embodiment of creative tension; partnership as an ethic of shared destiny; and hospitality as an ethic of shared experience. So far, the method of correlation has been employed in these phases of the study as a preliminary and generative process mainly in order to attend to, reflect on, and engage the lived experience of Korean immigrants with my major conversational partners and two Korean American theologians, Jung Young Lee and Sang Hyun Lee, with the aim of establishing the aforementioned meaningful categories as building blocks. In this chapter, I take the correlative process to a higher level of engagement in which theological and religious sources are brought into a conversation with these building blocks and cultural sources in an explicit manner to construct a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community.

To speak of the immigrant and the community, one cannot escape from an interdisciplinary process of reflection, discussion, and decision for the reason that the very subject of discussion is the human in all of its political, social, cultural, and relational complexities. To speak of the immigrant and the community, therefore, is to talk about the human from existential, embodied, philosophical, religious, and public perspectives, and there is

no one dimension that is completely insulated or isolated from another in a further correlative process toward constructing a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community. in a further correlative process toward constructing a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community. Therefore, my intention to speak about the immigrant and the community from the perspective of relational ethics between the immigrant and the local naturally and necessarily orients my overarching hermeneutical framework as a hybrid between the revised correlative method and the praxis method. The revised correlative method allows for a process of mutual interrogation between the sources in social sciences and Christian tradition that speak about the human in the immigrant and the dynamic journey of encountering self, the other, and God in immigrant life. However, in immigration, knowledge comes from the very embodied experience of living as the stranger on the margins of the society and entering into a practical relationship with the local. As such, this epistemological orientation warrants the praxis method that allows for this “practice [as] both the origin and the end of theological reflection” and talking about God with a “commitment to a struggle for human emancipation.”³²⁵ As a way of arriving at a hybrid method between the two, I employ a hermeneutic of *co-authoring* as my methodological framework with which I go about bringing together the correlative and emancipatory qualities inherent in speaking pastorally and ethically about, for, and with the immigrant and weaving a pastoral theology of the immigrant and the community.

A Hermeneutic of Co-authoring

The idea of “co-authoring” or “co-authorship” is borrowed from the psychotherapeutic school of *Narrative Therapy* that was founded by Michael White and David Epston during 1970s

³²⁵ E. Graham, H. Walton, and F. Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, (London: SCM Press, 2005), 70.

and 1980s and expanded by many others. Michael White and David Epstein developed the school of Narrative Therapy based on their appropriation of several social scientists' thoughts, particularly G. Bateson's interpretive method, Victor Turner's concept of ritual process, and Michel Foucault's understanding of language as constitutive. Accepting Foucault's proposals that power and knowledge are inseparable, that it is an exercise of power for people to story their own lives, and "truths are developed and perfected at the local level and are then taken up at the broader levels," White and Epston conceptualized that it is a political act of subversion as well as a relational act of empowerment to write personal and collective stories that help liberate and heal.³²⁶ An important part of their therapeutic model is for the client and therapist to establish a level of partnership in which the client and therapist jointly author preferred narratives for the client as alternatives to the problem-saturated narratives. David Winslade and Gerald Monk explain this process in the following.

The relationship between the counselor and the client aims to establish a special kind of partnership in narrative counseling.... A narrative conversation is based on shared contributions to a process of creation. The counselor cannot do it alone; nor the client.... These include the ability to negotiate the relationship in a way that is inclusive of the client and gives him or her a real say in the counseling process. It should be a real power-sharing dialogue.³²⁷

By appropriating this principle of co-creating preferred realities between the client and therapist discriminately and acknowledging the differences between the setting of therapeutic relationship and the real-life setting in which the immigrant and the local live, a hermeneutic of co-authoring employs a worldview that understands people and communities to be capable partners in dialogue who can co-author preferred realities for their future through entering into

³²⁶ M. White and D. Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 29.

³²⁷ J. Winslade and G. Monk, *Narrative Counseling in Schools: Powerful & Brief* (Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 1999), 30.

authentic and mutual relationships. Instead of seeing the immigrant as the stranger or the local as the hostile in an ever-escalating debate about immigration, a hermeneutic of co-authoring offers a reframing of their relationship by lifting up the necessity and possibility of genuine cooperation and partnership, fosters an ethical option for realigning power and privilege through mutual conversation and engagement, and establishes for an existential and ontological mandate for shared contribution as co-authors of their humanities. The following lists the qualifications with which I utilize this hermeneutic of co-authoring.

First, a hermeneutic of co-authoring employs a postcolonial interpretation in regard to the immigrant and the community. Understanding this hermeneutic of co-authoring as being aligned with Russell's hermeneutic of hospitality, it resists the tendency to "use the distancing, dualistic language of otherness," and it subscribes to the postcolonial view of people as often being simultaneously colonizers and the colonized in their complex and nuanced identities based on the interconnectedness of gender, economic, and political oppression.³²⁸ An example of this is bringing together in an analysis of power the history of Korea as a nation colonized by world powers and its present status of privilege as a major exporter in international commerce and an employer of the poor in many developing nations. Another example is the fact that, whereas Korean immigrants are oppressed as a racial minority in the U.S., they often are simultaneously the oppressor in their status as merchants in many poor communities around major urban centers engaged in an interlocking system of privilege and power. Furthermore, Koreans in Korea are currently dealing with important domestic social issues regarding foreign migrant workers, immigrants, and their human rights in Korean society.

³²⁸ L. M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 24.

In a similar vein, the dominant culture, despite its status and its engagement in the interlocking system of power and privilege in the society, can be seen as being oppressed by their own lack of awareness of racial identity³²⁹ and diminished humanity as the result of their rejection of the humanity of the oppressed, needing liberation from their own historical legacy as oppressors, policies of systemic oppression of the disenfranchised, and commitments to maintaining the status quo.

Second, a hermeneutics of co-authoring gives priority to the perspective of the marginalized. In this study, that means the conceptual categories of *Cheong* furnished by Chapter Six and Seven: *Cheong* as the embodiment of creative liminality; *Cheong* as the embodiment of creative tension; partnership as an ethic of shared destiny; and hospitality as an ethic of shared experience all frame the immigrant and local as creative and responsible neighbors who become transformed by each other's presence and acts of hospitality as they commit themselves as partners bound by a shared future. In this way, a hermeneutic of co-authoring is consistent with the Korean immigrant experience of neighborly love as their cultural pattern of in-group interactions and their communal response to the hardships of immigrant life.

Third, a hermeneutic of co-authoring privileges right practice (orthopraxis) over right doctrine (orthodoxy) in its commitment to speak of God's action and agency over God's essence and identity and the belief in that "Christian practice which inherits and inhabits tradition of practical wisdom that are realized and re-enacted through the purposeful ordering of the

³²⁹ Nancy Ramsay in her article "Navigating Racial Difference as a White Pastoral Theologian" believes that the lack of white racial identity is alarming and that "the most important contribution faculty and religious leaders of European heritage can make to the battle against racism is to become more aware of ways [they] well intentioned white persons unwittingly reproduce racism. *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* 12, no. 2 (November, 2002): 11-27

community.”³³⁰ In this study, a hermeneutic of co-authoring then privileges the ethical mode of relationality between the immigrant and the local, and, after recognizing them as possessors of different histories and complex narratives of power, status, and privilege in the society, it commits them to ethical conversations as partners who must work together to weave new preferred narratives for their individual as well as collective liberation, empowerment, and progress.

Fourth, a hermeneutic of co-authoring is also rooted in the theological commitments to justice, freedom, and peacemaking. Informed by these commitments, I conscientiously subscribe to the vision of God as the ultimate co-author in our human lives who both volitionally and persistently depends on, and is depended upon by, human beings as partners in weaving a preferred future for the whole creation. God is the one who sent Jesus Christ to the world to co-author the narrative of redemption and unconditional acceptance of us, and God continues to send to us strangers in various forms, particularly the marginalized, as our guests whom we must learn to welcome, serve, and protect if we are to live as God’s blessed people.

Last, a hermeneutic of co-authoring privileges the embodied experiences of being human and, as such, takes a holistic approach to understanding the human by emphasizing those dimensions of human personality that have been traditionally ignored such as emotions and intuition. In this discussion, relational dynamics of trust and love are emphasized as the conduit of personal and communal transformation that pervades the shared space of mutual encounter between the immigrant and the local. Trust and love are the dynamic qualities of neighborly love that open up the interpersonal for relational warmth, affection, and satisfaction, and, as such,

³³⁰ E. Graham, H. Walton, and F. Ward, *Theological Reflections: Methods*, (London: SCM Press, 2005), 208.

they create a sense of belongingness, mutual concern, a process change in relationships. The following diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the presence of *Cheong*-filled sphere as the shared space into which the immigrant and the local enter to engage each other in an experientially significant, mutually beneficent, and interculturally transformative encounter. The diagram also illustrates how trust and love function as the conduit of this interpersonal exchange in the relationship.

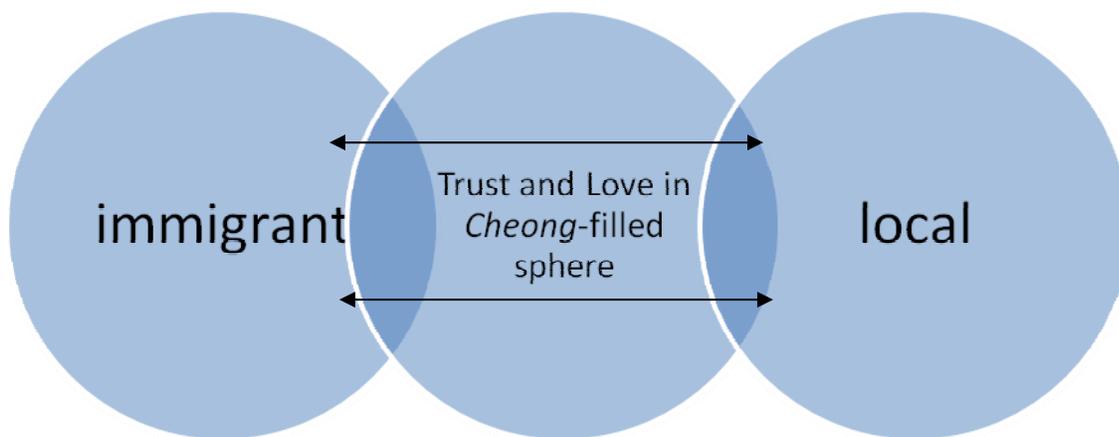


Figure 1

In the next section, the lived experience of Korean immigrants, cultural information in social sciences, and the sources and norms in Christian tradition are brought together in a correlative process of mutual clarification and correction in order to envision a new theological anthropology for the immigrant and the local. The two questions will drive our correlative query: first the question of identity in “Who is the immigrant?” and the question of ethics in “How should the immigrant and the local relate to each other?” These two questions will yield

two movements in the identities of the immigrant and the local: first the movement from “stranger to neighbor” and second the movement from “competitor to partner.”

From Stranger to Neighbor, From Fear to Trust

The first question in our correlative query is then, “Who is the immigrant?” Though this question has been largely answered in our discussion of Victor Turner’s liminality in which *Cheong* was correlated with the creative process of living in the liminal place on the margins of the society from which we derived the image of the immigrant as a creative neighbor, we have to do the work of further engaging the lived experience of Korean immigrants in a dialogical discussion with the cultural notions of the immigrant and those of Christian tradition.

Immigrant as Strange and Undesirable

The wider culture in American society has historically engaged immigrants in a paradoxical manner of alternating between honoring the immigrant heritage of European ancestors by attributing the historical making of America as an ethical and affluent nation to their supposed infinite wisdom and courage, thereby aggrandizing their contribution, and that of resorting to a fear campaign and discriminatory policies against the immigrants of non-western European or non-white heritage. Particularly, in relation to Asian immigrants, the programs of racial formation and ethnic marginalization have been identified for stereotype-casting Asian immigrants and Asian Americans as “strangers” in this country. Ronald Takaki, a third-generation Japanese American, speaks of this predicament of being defined by his appearance, irrespective of his heritage, history, status, and contribution to this country.

My fellow students and even my professors would ask me how long I had been in America and where I had learned to speak English. “In this country,” I would

reply. And sometimes I would add: "I was born in America, and my family has been here for three generations."³³¹

Furthermore, many scholars speak to the history of collective feminization and domestication of Asian Americans by the dominant culture, and this experience has not only turned Asian Americans into "perpetual strangers" but also into "inferior, emasculated, and impotent strangers." Chiung Hwan Chen points to "The Ballad of Little Jo" (1993), a film about a white female who reversed her gender in the frontier West and her secret romance with a Chinese man, as an illustration of the process of feminization of Asian men.³³² Furthermore, Asian women have been stereotypically portrayed as exotic, servile, and loyal in the media to the extent that Tracey Pattern sees Ling Woo, a fictional character in the U.S. comedy-drama *Ally McBeal*, played by Lucy Liu, as the embodiment of the Asian fantasy woman, a conveyor of exotic pleasure unknown to the western cultures.³³³ When Letty M. Russell spoke about the Samaritan woman whom Jesus met at the well of Jacob as recorded in John 4:1-6, she might as well have been speaking about Asian American women and men. "The whole conversation seems very improbable, because she has three strikes against her. She's foreign, fallen, and female!"³³⁴ As mentioned in Chapter Five in relation to the surveyed literature pertaining to Korean immigrant history, the U.S. immigration policies such as the Asian Exclusion Act in the Immigration Act of 1924 targeted Asian countries as "undesirable" and employed as a means of systematic restriction and population control of Asian immigrants. The forced internment experience of Japanese Americans during WWII was a blatant violation of human rights by the

³³¹ R. Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 1998), 3.

³³² C. H. Chen, "Feminization in Asian (American) Men in the U.S. Mass Media," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 20, no. 2 (October 1996): 57-71.

³³³ T. O. Patton, "Ally McBeal and Her Homies: The Reification of White Stereotypes of the Other," *Journal of Black Studies* 32, no. 2 (November 2001): 229-260.

³³⁴ L. M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 24.

U.S. government against its own citizens that further contributed to the oppression and marginalization of Asian Americans. Michael Omi and Howard Winant describe the reality of the processes of racial formation in American society today.

Thus are we inserted in a comprehensively racialized social structure. Race becomes “common sense” – a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world. A vast web of racial projects mediates between the discursive or representational means in which race is identified and signified on the one hand, and the institutional and organizational forms in which it is routinized and standardized on the other. These projects are the heart of the racial formation process.³³⁵

In this way, the racial differentiation and distinction of Asian Americans as “undesirable strangers” are at the base of both public policies and popular attitudes that perpetuate the propaganda of the Asian American’s undesirability in American society.

Stranger as Sacred

However, Hebrew and Christian Scriptures use the term “stranger” for a very different reason. There are two primary ways, according to my reading of the Old Testament and New Testament, the stranger was received by the people of faith. The first mode of reception was to protect strangers from unnecessary harm and unjustifiable injury. God’s mandate to Israelites in Joshua 4 to provide refuge and safety to those in desperate need by building the cities of refuge is one example of protective care based on moral obligation. Joshua 4:1-3 reads,

Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, "Say to the Israelites, ‘Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, so that anyone who kills a person without intent or by mistake may flee there; they shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood.’ (NRSV)

Another example comes from Deuteronomy 10:19. It reads, “You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (NRSV) This also reflects God’s mandate for

³³⁵ M. Omi and H. Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960’s to the 1990’s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 60.

protective care and hospitality for the stranger based on the faith community' experiences of past suffering, which becomes a point of identification with the stranger. In this sense, the stranger is one who needs care and protection from his or her neighbors in times of hardship and facing the danger of annihilation.

The Catholic Church's historical practice of accepting anyone seeking refuge into the "sanctuary" and away from the harm's way is as an extension of the Old Testament mandate. Currently, there are contemporary movements modeled after the biblical model of "the cities of refuge" being carried about by both Christians and non-Christians in the world for the sole purpose of protecting the oppressed and the helpless. The "New Sanctuary Movement" is an effort organized by individuals and grassroots organizations to provide sanctuary to illegal immigrants, particularly those facing deportation.³³⁶ Letty M. Russell incorporated this concept of "safe place" based on the biblical tradition of "sanctuary" into her principle of *Just Hospitality* and located it theologically in the sacredness of every human being as a dwelling of God.³³⁷

Russell quotes Eli Wiesel.

Every human being is a dwelling of God – man or woman or child, Christian or Jewish or Buddhist [or Muslim]. Any person, by virtue of being a son or a daughter of humanity, is a living sanctuary whom nobody has the right to invade.³³⁸

Another way in which strangers were received in the bible was through individuals or communities extending God's welcome as a ministry of hospitality. The biblical examples most frequently mentioned in relation to hospitality are the reception of the strangers by Abraham and

³³⁶ <http://www.newsanctuarymovement.org/>

³³⁷ L. M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 87.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

Sarah in Genesis 18:1-8 in the Old Testament and Jesus' identification with the marginalized in

Matthew 25. Genesis 18:1-5 reads,

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. (NRSV)

Though Abraham and Sarah's offer of hospitality was consistent with the ancient biblical custom of inviting strangers to one's home, the New Testament author of Hebrews credits the extraordinary nature of their kindness and uses it as an exhortation for Christian believers in Hebrews 13:2. "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." (NRSV)

The New Testament examples are mainly based on Jesus' own words and actions. Jesus gives the eschatological vision of heavenly reward contingent on the faith community's treatment of the marginalized in the society in Matthew 25, and he roots this accountability in his identification with the stranger in Matthew 25:34-36:

"Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." (NRSV)

In John 13, after washing the disciples' feet on the night of his arrest, Jesus explains it as setting an example for their new ethics of conduct as the community of faith. John 13:15-17 reads,

For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. (NRSV)

Therefore, whether it is rooted in the biblical tradition of providing protective care or the theological doctrine of *Imago Dei* or Jesus' eschatological vision or personal example and exhortation for new relational ethics of servanthood in the New Testament, Christian tradition toward the stranger and marginalized in the society has consistently been one of radical acceptance and solidarity as an extension of God's welcome and Christ's humanity.

Christian theologians, both Protestant and Catholic, share commitments to the welfare of the marginalized out of their understanding of God who loves and cares for all. For some, this orientation takes on an explicit expression in redefining the politicized terms such as "illegal" and "border." Catholic theologian Daniel G. Groody states,

As pilgrims of faith, Christians are spiritual migrants searching for a true homeland, an identity that should make us more sympathetic to all people on the move today. I said that the word *alien* describes not those who lack political papers but those who have so disconnected themselves from their neighbor that they cannot see in the stranger of an image of themselves, a reflection of Christ and a challenge to human solidarity.³³⁹

For Groody, the tag *alien* as denoting legal status is removed from the immigrant or migrant and is reattached as a spiritual status denoting a condition of human estrangement to anyone who rejects one's neighbor whose humanity is fundamentally connected to that of oneself. For theologians such as William Cavanaugh, the "border" is an inherently oppressive concept that has been employed to manipulate and control human mobility in service of political and economic hegemonies in the globalized world. Cavanaugh states,

Borders regulate mobility, but they do not prevent it. Indeed, it is most accurate to say that the purpose of borders is to control the movement of labor, not to stop it.... The purpose of border is not simply to exclude immigrants but to define them, to give them an identity. That identity is a liminal identity, an identity that

³³⁹ D. G. Groody, "A Theology of Migration: A New Method of Understanding a God on the Move," *America: The National Catholic Weekly*, Feb. 7, 2011, 20.

straddles the border and defines the person as being neither fully here nor fully there.³⁴⁰

The article published under the title “Where Are You Going: Theological Reflections on Migration” *Ecumenical Review* as a portion of the official document of the National Bishops' Conference of Brazil locates the Catholic Church's theological position on migration in the experiences of “migration and liberation in the history of the people of God” as well as the importance of “Eucharist as a pledge for reconciliation and solidarity in Christ.”³⁴¹ In doing so, the article echoes the words of the late John Paul II, “The ministry to migrants is not just the work of chosen missionaries; it is the task of the entire local church – priests, monks, and lay people; it is the entire local church which should look after the migrants, be ready to welcome them, and have reciprocal exchanges.”³⁴²

Deeply rooted in the belief to protect and welcome the stranger is not only an ethical call to do right but also a reflection of who we are as God's creation, a vital mission of the entire church, a mandated code of conduct for the members of the redeemed community of Christ. Those who subscribe to the vision of common origin, humanity, and destiny in God are moved to prophetically critique the historical legacy, the public policies, and political attitudes of exclusion, exploitation, and disenfranchisement of immigrants and migrants operative in the society and to collectively oppose the ideological program of portraying immigrants and migrants as dangerous strangers whom the society must fear and avoid. The contribution of Christian tradition is then to help inform and force the culture to revise its definition of the immigrant or the migrant as the

³⁴⁰ W. T. Cavanaugh, “Migrant, Tourist, Pilgrim, Monk: Mobility and Identity in a Global Age,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 344.

³⁴¹ National Bishops' Conference of Brazil, “Where Are You Going: Theological Reflections on Migration,” *Ecumenical Review* 33, no. 2 (April 1981), 178-185.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 183.

undesirable stranger to that of inherently valuable and sacred human being who deserves protection, respect, and recognition of one's rights in the same manner as those of the most powerful and renowned of the status quo are guaranteed.

Stranger as Blessed Guest

In my opinion, while all the biblical, ecclesial, and theological bases for providing protective care, hospitality, and political aid to marginalized individuals and communities that are on the move are appropriate and cogent, there is yet another way to further inform and enrich the understandings of the immigrant in the society, and that is through rediscovering less emphasized practices of hospitality historically present in Christian tradition and Korean culture that can help reframe the other as one who comes to us as the "blessed guest." As it will be explained in the following sections, the "blessed" identity comes from the other's inherent sacred human worth as well as being envisioned as a representative of God's goodness. The "guest" identity of the other refers to the respect and honor appropriated to one's neighbor in the Korean cultural tradition as well as in the manner in which a pilgrim was received according to the Rule of St. Benedict. The term "guest" in Korean language is "sohnihm" and carries the meaning of the patron of a business or the guest as a visitor to one's home. In the latter sense of the word, any neighbor who visits one's home is called "sohnihm" and is accorded respect and honor by the host. By using this identity of the "blessed guest," I envision it would help revise the one-sided view of the immigrant as someone who only needs protection, safety, and acceptance from church and the local to that of "blessed guest" who comes as God's representative and the bearer

of the “complementary humanity” to meet and bless the local.³⁴³ Through authentic encounters with the local, the immigrant actively contributes to the fulfillment of both of their humanities.

In Genesis 23:1-9, we encounter Abraham in deep grief over his wife’s death. Abraham, as a stranger in the land of the Hittites and not having a proper burial site, goes up to his Hittite neighbors in order to secure burial site for his wife. Genesis 23:1-14 reads,

Sarah lived one hundred twenty-seven years; this was the length of Sarah's life. And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. Abraham rose up from beside his dead, and said to the Hittites, "I am a stranger and an alien residing among you; give me property among you for a burying place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight." The Hittites answered Abraham, "Hear us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold from you any burial ground for burying your dead." Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land. He said to them, "If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me Ephron son of Zohar, so that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as a possession for a burying place." Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city, "No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it; in the presence of my people I give it to you; bury your dead." Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. He said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, "If you only will listen to me! I will give the price of the field; accept it from me, so that I may bury my dead there." Ephron answered Abraham, "My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Bury your dead." Abraham agreed with Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants. (NRSV)

The ensuing conversation between Abraham and the Hittite, Ephron, is one of remarkable earnestness, mutuality, and hospitality between the two neighbors. Abraham

(stranger/immigrant), needing a proper burial place for his wife, which he could call his own

³⁴³ By “complementary humanity,” I mean those aspects of humanity that the local has yet to experience in life that can only be conveyed experientially and interpersonally through one’s intercultural interactions with the culturally-different other.

both literally and symbolically, wanted to buy a cave that belonged to his wealthy neighbor, Ephron, (local). However, instead of naming the price for the cave, Ephron wanted Abraham to take it for free, seemingly a great gesture of generosity. But Abraham insists on paying for it. Ultimately, Ephron acquiesces to Abraham's persistence and gives up the cave and the field for a nominal payment of four hundred shekels of silver, thereby keeping the appearance of his generosity and getting the satisfaction of getting paid for his properties. And for Abraham, he ultimately buys from Ephron his preferred piece of real estate for his wife's burial, thereby owning it properly as his own so as to honor his wife, entering into a relationship of mutual beneficence and acknowledged good-will with his wealthy neighbor through paying him, and properly recognizing his neighbor's generosity. Let us listen to their exchange one more time.

(Abraham) "I am a stranger and an alien residing among you; give me property among you for a burying place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

(Hittites) "Hear us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold from you any burial ground for burying your dead."

(Abraham) "If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me Ephron son of Zohar, so that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as a possession for a burying place."

(Ephron) "No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it; in the presence of my people I give it to you; bury your dead."

(Abraham) "If you only will listen to me! I will give the price of the field; accept it from me, so that I may bury my dead there."

(Ephron) "My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Bury your dead."

An initial look at the exchange might lead one to think that these two neighbors are engaged in a contentious argument. Having two proud and wealthy neighbors discussing a

transaction indeed might entail a shouting match of some sort. The pattern of haggling as in my paraphrased dialogue goes like this.

“I will pay.”

“No, you are not, it’s a gift.”

“No, I will pay, I have the money.”

“I know, but I am giving it to you. What’s the problem?”

“No, you don’t understand, I need to pay for it.” “

All right, here is the deal that both of us can live with.”

This exchange does not exactly exhibit a sign of hospitality, let alone congeniality, to contemporary readers. However, knowing that there indeed was a real chance of request and rejection, a real chance of conflict among the two neighbors, and a real chance of intercultural hostility between the two communities over a matter of honor, respect, and tradition, the resolution of the matter in an agreement by which both parties felt respected and accommodated was indeed an exchange of intercultural, intercommunal, and interpersonal hospitality that should come to us as a pleasant surprise as it was for people back then.

From the Korean cultural perspective, I can understand this dynamic better. For example, it’s the cultural practice of Koreans, informed by *Cheong*, to pay for one’s dinner guest(s). If the dinner partner is another Korean, it usually goes like this.

“I will pay for it, don’t worry.”

“No, I will get it.”

“No, it’s my turn, you paid last time.”

“No, don’t worry, I asked you out for dinner.”

“No, really... Are you sure?”

“Oh, yeah, let me get it. You can pay next time.”

“All right then, make sure you let me pay next time. Thanks.”

To many, it might sound like a big fuss over a small matter of paying for a dinner, but it is really a gesture of hospitality as conditioned by the Korean culture. In this exchange, both are benefited, appreciated and respected. Both Abraham’s story and my Korean cultural illustration

point to the necessity of expressing honor and respect to each other when two individuals or communities enter into a relationship of hospitality. There is no one party that receives assistance from the other unilaterally or exclusively. In every situation and relationship of hospitality, both parties are benefited and transformed by the encounter with each other's humanity. Ed Winker shares the following reflection on hospitality.

Hospitality changes people. When we warmly invite and accept people, it changes them.... When we provide hospitality or help for people, we come to care about them. Providing hospitality changes the person receiving it, and it also changes the person providing it. Hospitality is medicine for everyone.³⁴⁴

L. Gregory Jones in his book review of *Making the Room* by Christine Pohl echoes this belief about the mutually transformative nature of hospitality.

It is probably no accident that those whom we lift up as saints, both those officially recognized and those whom we hold close to our hearts, are typically people who embody powerful habits of hospitality.... As my wife and I discovered afresh in our conversations with our friends, it is a powerful experience to behold the holy glow of people who do not have practiced hospitality, but who have become hospitable people.³⁴⁵

In this way, I believe authentic encounters of hospitality change people's heart, and based on the mutually transformative nature of authentic hospitality, I would dare to say that we can imagine the stranger/immigrant as the blessed guest who comes to bless us by providing this embodied encounter of hospitality on our behalf and graciously offering one's humanity in interaction with us so that we can be fulfilled in our humanity as God intended. In the same way, the immigrant can envision the local as the blessed guest who invites him or her into the host culture and is willing to bless and interact interculturally in an effort to learn, teach, and belong together.

³⁴⁴ E. Winker, "What Monks Can Teach Protestants: Lessons From a Monastery: Hospitality," World Communion Sunday (October 5, 2008), <http://strasburgumc.org/SpecSermons/10-5-08%20Monks-Hospitality.htm>

³⁴⁵ L. Gregory Jones, "Welcoming the Stranger," *The Christian Century* (January 19, 2000): 58-60.

There is one Korean Christian custom that can further contribute to this idea of the other as the blessed guest. When Korean Christians enter a household, they immediately sit down to say a prayer of blessing for the family before doing anything else. Furthermore, whenever a minister makes a visit to an individual or a family, he or she is expected to offer a prayer of blessing for that individual or family. It can be seen as a way of acknowledging God's presence in their midst as well as recognizing the other as a sacred guest from God. Perhaps, this tradition has been influenced by Jesus' own words to his disciples in Matthew 10:11-13, "Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you." Or perhaps, this custom is based on the Korean cultural practice of blessing one another in greeting. For example, on the day of Lunar New Year, Korean children, both young or old, bow to their parents and wish them good health and many blessings in the new year. They also share blessings with their family members, colleagues, friends, and neighbors in a similar fashion. Another example of this is the Buddhist tradition of saying prayers of blessings for the givers of alms. One clear value or attitude about receiving the guest in Korean culture is the belief that the guest is a conduit of blessing for the individual or the household, and it is imperative that one receives a guest properly.

Another example of viewing the other as the blessed guest comes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jesus himself calls the marginalized as the blessed in Matthew 5,

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (NRSV)

The poor, the mourning, the meek, the hungry, the thirsty, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers, in my imagination, can be, I dare to say, the pictures of the immigrant and the local engaged in hospitality. Therefore, subscribing to my vision of the mutuality and reciprocity of the immigrant and the local in receiving each other as the blessed guests, we can re-read these verses as in the following.

Blessed are *the poor and those who feed them*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are *those who mourn and others who care for those in mourning*, for they will be comforted. Blessed are *the meek and those who invite others to meekness*, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are *those who hunger and thirst and those who provide food and water to them*, for they will be filled. Blessed are *the merciful and who call out for mercy*, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are *the pure in heart and those who struggle so hard to be pure in heart*, for they will see God. Blessed are *the peacemakers and those who seek out peacemakers on their behalf*, for they will be called the children of God.

[*Blessed are the immigrant and the local who receive each other as my blessed guests, for they will receive the hospitality of the kingdom of heaven.*]³⁴⁶

The Rule of St. Benedict is another tradition of hospitality that we can rediscover for our contemporary and globalized lifestyle. Cavanaugh describes the Rule of St. Benedict in the following.

The Rule of St. Benedict included special directions for the reception of pilgrims: “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Mt 25:35). It is worth noting that the word *xenos*, which Matthew here attributes to Jesus, can also be translated as “alien” or “foreigner.” The Rule directs that “great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because in them more particularly Christ is received.” The abbot himself is to pray with them, eat with them, and wash their feet. Guests are to be greeted with “all humanity,” either with a bow of the head or complete prostration of the body, because Christ is adored in them. Following Matthew 25, the identity of the stranger is located in

³⁴⁶ This is purely my own addition to the Sermon on the Mount.

Christ. In a very concrete way, the particularity of each person is honored in the universality of Christ.³⁴⁷

Just as receiving the stranger as Christ in all aspects is at the base of the Rule of St. Benedict, the immigrant and the local would benefit greatly from receiving each other as the blessed guests who come from a faraway land to encounter them as Jesus.

I understand that, to many, the term “guest” might connote a temporary legal status of residence as in “visitor,” which dictates a conditional mode of receiving and accommodating the guest by the host with the expectation that he or she would move on and away to a different destination. It might also, as the surveyed scholars on hospitality politics in the previous section argued against, frame the ethical responsibility toward the immigrant in terms of the moral economy of law, duty, and debt, thus bringing a complicated matrix into the relationship between the immigrant and the local. Without downplaying these risks, I have used the term “guest” in the sense of respect and honor that need to be accorded to fellow human beings more so than in the sense of legal or temporal sense of the term. In my imagination, the terms “blessed” and “guest” together define the neighborly relationship into which the local and the immigrant should live.

Trusting God, Trusting the Other

In order to enter into an authentic relationship of hospitality with the other, one is understandably required to be open and vulnerable in many ways, and for this to happen, a great measure of personal trust in God and the other is needed. First, trusting that God is present and at work in the relationship as well as trusting it is God who brought me and the other together in the first place are needed. Second, trusting that, through authentic interactions with the other, I

³⁴⁷ W T. Cavanaugh, “Migrant, Tourist, Pilgrim, Monk: Mobility and Identity in a Global Age,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 353-354.

am blessed by God who is present in the other and that the other blesses me in the name of God are needed. Third, trusting that I am carrying out the work of blessing the other as I serve him or her in the name of God and the other is doing the same for me are needed. Fourth, trusting that what I and the other share in a small act of hospitality here and now will cause ripples of difference in eternity is needed. In this way, when the immigrant and the local enter into authentic encounters with each other in that neighborly space of hospitality, not only are they helping each other author preferred narratives for their respective lives, but they are also co-authoring a shared future together.

In this section, the correlation definitely flowed from the religious sources to the cultural ones. The cultural notion of the immigrant as the “stranger” was criticized and corrected by Christian tradition’s affirmation of the sacredness of each human being, regardless of one’s legal status and circumstances in life, as a person of inherent worth needing respect, recognition, and protection based on the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, Christ’s self-identification with the marginalized, and the faith community’s historical practice of hospitality. However, the tendency of Christian tradition of seeing the marginalized exclusively as the helpless in need was revised by the less emphasized traditions of hospitality of church such as the rule of St. Benedict and the Korean Christian’s custom of blessing the host so that it could include the vision of seeing the other as the blessed guest. In this process of opening oneself to the practice of authentic hospitality, trust in the divine benevolence and the goodness of the other was seen as a pivotal element in encouraging the immigrant and the local to welcome and receive each other as creative neighbors with whom they could co-author new narratives of being, interacting, and belonging together.

From Competitor to Partner, From Self-Serving Love to Self-Sharing Love

The first question in our correlative query, “Who is the immigrant?” led to a discussion of the culture’s perception of the immigrant as the stranger, different and undesirable, and the Christian tradition of acceptance of the immigrant as a sacred human being whose needs for respect, recognition, and protection are just as natural, legitimate, and urgent as those of anyone else. This discussion was mainly one of identity based on the assumption of how we understand the other to be and significantly shapes what we choose to do in our relationship with the other. Now, we turn to our second question in our correlative query, “How should the immigrant and the local relate to each other?” which is one of relational and behavioral ethics. Though the answer to the previous question dealt with this issue already in its discussion of entering into authentic encounters of hospitality for both the immigrant and the local, this section takes a direct look at the ethic of neighborly love in a correlative conversation, examining what sources in social sciences, the lived experience of Korean immigrants, and the Christian tradition have to say to each other regarding this interpersonal, intercommunal, and intercultural relationship that is becoming increasingly important in the globalized world.

The correlation between the lived experience of Korean immigrants as encapsulated in their cultural and communal ethos of *Cheong* and the feminist theologian Letty M. Russell’s concepts of partnership and hospitality has been already carried out extensively in Chapter Seven through the perspective of the ethics of shared destiny and shared experience. This discussion contained a summary of various theological sources informing hospitality – the biblical mandates for hospitable reception of the stranger, the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, Christological interpretations, and the eschatological vision of New Creation – all of which urgently called for

a new form of neighborly love that is dynamic and transformative for Christians and their neighbors living in the post-modern, post-colonial, and globalized world. Then, having already established to an extent the theoretical and theological conceptualizations about the need of neighborly love, we focus on representing this relational ethics of neighborly love in specific lights in this part of the correlation.

The Biblical Mandate of Jubilee

First, I start with the specific sources in Christian traditions that inform the relational



ethics of neighborly love in the biblical mandate of Jubilee and interreligious practice of *convivencia*. Historically, the anti-immigration movements in the U.S. have been forged out of the local's fear of immigrants in seeing them as competitors for jobs and their misguided concern that immigrants would somehow pollute the purity of America as if there really is such thing as an idealized Americana.

The cartoon above illustrates this self-serving attitude of the dominant culture against Asian Americans and the public's generalized fear of immigrants' inclusion in the society as a source of explosive social instability and disintegration. In *Racial Formations in the United States*, Michael Omi and Howard Winant discuss the history of racial formation in the U.S. and charge that the self-serving need to seize territories and goods gave rise to the formation of oppressive programs of racially defining, commodifying, and controlling non-Europeans "as others."

Given the dimensions and the ineluctability of the European onslaught, given the conqueror's determination to appropriate labor and goods, and given the presence

of an axiomatic and unquestioned Christianity among them, the ferocious division of society into Europeans and “Other” soon coalesced... In such a situation, racially organized exploitation, in the form of slavery, the expansion of colonies, and the continuing expulsion of native peoples, was both necessary and newly difficult to justify.³⁴⁸

Therefore, the recognition that, as it has historically been the case, the present attitudes toward immigrants and migrants are largely shaped by this dominant culture’s self-serving need to commodify, market, and exploit capital, goods, and labor is desperately warranted in order to talk about racial relations and public issues such as immigration. The biblical mandate of Jubilee, therefore, is a powerful source in Judeo-Christian tradition with which to point out, criticize, and resist against the systemic oppression of the poor, the powerless, and the foreign that are operative as economic, political, and cultural hegemonies in the world today.

The biblical mandate of Jubilee was also borne out of God’s recognition of need of the people of faith to continuously, self-consciously, and collectively remember God’s call to move away from the oppressive position of self-serving love and toward the compassionate and just position of self-sharing love. As shown in Leviticus 25:8-10, the mandate of Jubilee commands the people of faith to proclaim forgiveness, freedom, and rest unto themselves and the entire society. Leviticus 25:8-10 reads,

You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years. Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the day of atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.

³⁴⁸ M. Omi and H. Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960’s to the 1990’s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 62-63.

The key themes of Jubilee, according to Maria Harris, are Sabbath as in the mandated rest for God's people and all creation, forgiveness of debts, including the release of individuals and communities from financial and economic servitude, and freedom of allowing people to return to their homes and their properties. Harris lists the implications of Jubilee for the contemporary world as in the following.

Forgive everything we can
 Forgive debts
 Forgive trespasses
 Forgive sins,
 Forgive family
 Forgive world debt!³⁴⁹

Harris states that recalling the mandate of Jubilee consists of three dimensions of memory: first recalling dangerous memory, which brings about radical naming and healing of wounds; second recalling liturgical memory, which, in Eucharist, makes the past present to a gathered community; and third, poetic memory, which allows the memory to live on through the poetry of witness.³⁵⁰ Therefore, in these ways, Jubilee remains not as an archaic tradition of the biblical times, which the ancestors of Judeo-Christian faith themselves had difficulty obeying and, as such, remains irrelevant to the people of the contemporary world, but roars back into our consciousness and the place of our lives as a living and urgent call to revalue our priorities, commitments, and practices on both personal and collective levels. Particularly, the commitment to practicing God's vision of freedom, justice, and peacemaking articulated in Jubilee constitutes a cogent basis of moving from self-serving love to self-sharing love in the relational ethics between the immigrant and the local.

³⁴⁹ M. Harris, *Proclaim Jubilee!* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), x-xi.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

Interreligious Practice of Convivencia

Another source of religious tradition that informs neighborly love is the interreligious practice of *convivencia*. According to Kenneth Baxter Wolf,

Convivencia refers to the ‘coexistence’ of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities in medieval Spain and by extension the cultural interaction and exchange fostered by such proximity. The term first appeared as part of a controversial thesis about Spanish historical identity advanced by Américo Castro in 1948. Since then interest in the idea of *convivencia* has spread, fueled in part by increased attention to multi-culturalism and rising concern about religiously framed acts of violence. The application of social scientific models has gone a long way toward clarifying the mechanisms of acculturation at work in medieval Spain and tempering the tendency to romanticize *convivencia*.³⁵¹

Since its origination as a term denoting a social arrangement of co-existence among Jews, Muslim, and Christian communities in Medieval Spain, *convivencia* has come a long way to refer to the practices and values of religious tolerance and interreligious dialogue. Recently, many scholars in social sciences including some theologians have taken up the ideal of *convivencia* in their writings to lift up the importance of peacemaking and creating faith communities based on mutual respect and concern among different racial and religious groups. In particular, Catholic theologians employ the notion of *convivencia*,³⁵² which generally means “to live with or together” in Spanish as a hermeneutical tool to revise the stranger in the immigrant.³⁵³ Though the focus of these scholars tends to be the plight of immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border, their reappropriation of *Imago Dei* in the humanity of the immigrant and

³⁵¹ K. B. Wolf, “*Convivencia* in Medieval Spain: A Brief History of an Idea,” *Religion Compass* 3, no. 1 (January, 2009), 72-85.

³⁵² *Convivencia* is a Spanish term used by theologians to refer to the ethics of belonging together for the mutual enrichment when in writing about the experience of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border. Refer to *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, ed. Daniel G. Groody and G. Campese (University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

³⁵³ R. Fornet-Betancourt, “Hermeneutics and Politics of Strangers: A Philosophical Contribution on the Challenge of *Convivencia* in Multicultural Societies.” In *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, ed. G. Campese and P. Ciallella (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003): 210-224.

the redemptive notion of *convivencia* can further engage the imagination of those who strive to articulate and implement practices of mutual tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and ethical treatments among different racial, religious, and political communities.

The two traditions named above, the biblical mandate of Jubilee and the interreligious practice of *convivencia*, as neglected narratives present in the history of the people of faith, can be intentionally rediscovered and revived to realign the relational ethics between the immigrant and the local from its basis in self-serving love to that of self-sharing love. However, they are still largely predicated on the recognition of mutual needs of people and the imperative of peacemaking as a necessary means, rather than a voluntary instrument, through which positive relational ethics are conceived. In other words, in my opinion, while these sources are capable and sufficient in articulating an ethical vision of shared humanity, shared destiny, and shared relationality for all peoples based on their shared need for safety and coexistence, they are not sufficient enough in and of themselves as the core framework for Christians' response as hospitable and compassionate people who are called to enter into transformative relationships with the other voluntarily and passionately. Christians need to go one more step further from a theological or ethical basis for promoting peacemaking, justice, and freedom to finding a spiritual basis for which they engage themselves in this enterprise of peacemaking, justice, and freedom. For this, we turn to Jesus Christ.

Jesus' Spirituality of Hospitality

Luke 19 contains the remarkable story of Jesus encountering Zacchaeus, in which Zacchaeus finds himself deeply moved by Jesus' presence and does a complete about-face in his life priorities and commitments. Luke 19:1-10 reads,

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Given Jesus' powerful impact on people, Zacchaeus' transformation still seems so sudden and improbable. Taking the story in its face value, one is left to wonder what had really happened to Zacchaeus that he became so eager to proclaim such a radical change for himself and his relationships. In my pastoral assessment of this encounter, I cannot help but think that something remarkable has indeed happened to his heart, his core narrative about himself. The only basis for this transformation of his heart can be none other than Jesus' unconditional, radical, and emancipatory offer of his presence, hospitality, love, and himself. I can say, for the purpose of our reflection, that there was an instant recognition of Jesus' love (*Cheong*) by whose overwhelmingly human and welcoming advances Zacchaeus' wounded selfhood could not possibly refuse. Using the concept of co-authoring, Jesus and Zacchaeus can be seen as having entered that *Cheong*-filled space in their encounter with the mutual recognition of trust and love as the conduit through which Zacchaeus' selfhood became warmed, encouraged, and healed, thereby enabling Jesus' presence to co-author a new narrative of self and life with, in, and for him. A feared, ridiculed, and rejected person in Zacchaeus, the tax collector, found someone in

Jesus who was willing to relate to him by initiating an authentic encounter of hospitality, and was profoundly changed by his self-sharing love as a result.

Another illustration of Jesus' practice of neighborly love can be found in his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob as depicted in John 4. Many readers of this passage are impressed by what happens toward the end of the encounter. However, the most important and improbable part of the encounter, in my assessment, is in the beginning. John 4:6-10 reads,

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." (NRSV)

As alluded to previously in this Chapter, Russell's assessment of Jesus' encounter with this Samaritan woman is improbable because of the woman's status as having three strikes against her for being "female, foreign, and fallen."³⁵⁴ In the encounter, we see that even the woman herself was incredulous about the authenticity of motive behind Jesus' approach. Surprisingly, however, Jesus, prohibited and discouraged by his cultural conventions and religious traditions from associating with such a person, intentionally tears down these barriers and enters into this encounter as a person in need of rest, water, and companionship of another human being. Just the fact that he was there, she was there, and they were both children of God, no matter what the human conventions and political implications were for their encounter, was enough for Jesus to strike up a conversation with her with the intention of sharing himself as *living water*. Therefore, once again we find Jesus in this *Cheong*-filled space of hospitality, as a migrant in the land of

³⁵⁴ L. M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 24.

Samaria with someone who could have been a migrant herself if she were in Judea. The result of this encounter for the Samaritan woman was the same as that of Zacchaeus; she was moved in her heart and changed by Jesus' love.

One remarkable element in both of these encounters is that, though Jesus graced Zacchaeus and the Samaritan by providing them with spiritual, emotional, and relational hospitality they needed, it was he who first approached, initiated the contact, and asked for their hospitality to be offered to him. His words, "Zacchaeus, I must stay at your house today" and "Give me a drink," expressed his desire to meet with them in this exchange of hospitality as co-authors of authentic hospitality, authentic neighborly concern, and authentic self-giving love. In this way, Jesus embodied in his encounters with others the process of relational co-authoring through which all of us, including the other, are moved from the status of competitors to that of partners.

"Sparkling Moment" of Transformative Neighborly Love

Narrative Therapy utilizes a strategy of finding special threads in clients' problem-saturated stories that represent exceptions, which run counter to the patterns of their acknowledged problems. Michael White and David Epston called them "unique outcomes," "the facts or events that contradict the problem's effects in their lives and in their relationships."³⁵⁵ Jill Freedman and Gene Combs in their book *Narrative Therapy* used the term "sparkling moments" to refer to these exceptional moments of competence and self-discovery.³⁵⁶ Here, I borrow this concept to explain the encounters of authentic neighborly love between the immigrant and the local. In the real world, people live their lives with the stories that they have collected and

³⁵⁵ M. White and D. Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 56.

³⁵⁶ J. Freedman and G. Combs, *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996).

developed over the years about themselves and others. Often, the stories about the immigrant as being less than the local or the local being inhospitable are some of the untested stereotypes and misrepresentations that create barriers and prevent people from engaging each other. Hospitable encounters between the immigrant and the local that are marked with neighborly concern and compassion can function as the exceptions to these problem-saturated social narratives and provide “sparkling moments” of exceptional empathy through which openings to a different understanding of each other can be woven into a more hopeful, helpful, and healing relationship between the two.

Encountering the Humanity of God

If the biblical mandate of Jubilee and the interreligious practice of *convivencia* were reflective of the relational ethics of the first order based on the moral, religious, and practical obligation to dispense freedom, justice, and peace with general applicability to all peoples in all situations, then the examples of Jesus’ hospitality are reflective of the relational ethics of the second order based on the spirituality of transformed heart. This implies that the practitioners of neighborly love would want to live courageously and deeply into the thickened narrative of hospitality, expecting to encounter Jesus who comes alive all over again in every authentic encounter with the other. Truly transformed relational ethics arise out of transformed hearts encountering the humanity of God in the very act of hospitable service for the other. Russell, therefore, refers to answering God’s call to serve as the “impossible possibility” that is only made possible by the partnership of God.

Service is God’s gift because it is God who serves us.... In God’s service we see what Karl Barth calls the humanity of God.... Rather the humanity of God is seen in that God chooses to be related to human beings through service (Barth, *The Humanity of God*).

Service is God's gift because Jesus not only calls his disciple to serve but also provides the power and possibility of carrying this out. In Jesus Christ, we have the representation of a new humanity – the beginning of a new type of human being whose life is lived for others.... Jesus helps us to see the humanity of God so that we too can become representatives of new humanity. Here we see what it means to be truly and newly human. This is the image of God – freedom to serve others. This is the image into which humanity is created and redeemed.³⁵⁷

The immigrant and the local must view each other as partners with whom they need to work toward the common good of their shared destiny as discussed in Chapter Seven. For Christians, in addition to the other, God of the biblical witness and Jesus Christ become their co-workers and co-authors in this process of generating preferred narratives of mutuality, reciprocity, and hospitality with the other. Organically and spiritually, this means that only when people's core narratives of life are moved by the core narrative of God's love through the encounters of neighborly love can they truly begin to live into this vision of transformed relational ethics.

Immigrant Theological Anthropology

Russell's description of the Samaritan woman whom Jesus met at the well of Jacob as recorded in John 4 once again becomes a useful template with which to summarize the theological, anthropological proposals that have been generated in this study. The description of being "fallen, female, and foreign"³⁵⁸ by which the Samaritan woman was judged to be inadequate in her humanity according her culture's conventions was based on the criteria of religion, race, and gender. By using the same criteria used for this woman but instead reframing them as liberative categories of identification, I present my constructive proposals for an

³⁵⁷ L. M. Russell in "The Impossible Possibility" in *Sermons from Duke Chapel*, ed. W. H. Willimon (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 153-157.

³⁵⁸ The order was changed from the original sequence of "fallen, foreign, and female" to "fallen, female, to foreign" to fit the order in which the summary is presented.

immigrant theological anthropology with the hope of making a small difference in how people approach the discussion on immigrants and immigration. This task of naming constructive proposals integrates into one summary many significant insights, reflections, and implications about the immigrant and the community that have been named so far in this study.

From Fallen to Sacred

The Euro-centric reading of history, culture, and religion in this country has been instrumental in fomenting, articulating, and maintaining the oppressive social structures from the very beginning of American society. Particularly in relation to immigrants, essentialist approaches to differentiating between citizens and immigrants (pre-citizens or non-citizens) based on exclusivist and objectifying criteria continue to marginalize and keep immigrants, both legal and illegal, in a state of great peril to their rights, relationships, existence, and even spiritual wellbeing. The four forms of systemic evil – classism, sexism, racism, and naturism – according to Eleazer S. Fernandez, are “prime instances of idolatry: worshiping human constructs and living under false securities.”³⁵⁹ Only liberative readings of human worth, that squarely place sacredness back into human worth, can help us break free from such oppressive ideologies and idolatries of power and difference.

From a pastoral theological standpoint, both the humanities of the immigrant and the local are securely resident within the sacredness of life imbued by God and, as such, human worth is not negotiable, changeable, or erasable by any human-made distinctions or standards of differentiation. Whether an immigrant is from Europe or any other part of the world, whether the

³⁵⁹ E. S. Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005), 4.

immigrant is Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, or even atheistic, the inherent value of the newcomer who comes to live in another's neighborhood is not based on that person's similarity with or difference from the neighbor but is only based on the truth that all human beings are created equal and in equal sacredness. Therefore, the only essentialist criterion that can be applied to any human being is the essential and inherent sacredness, which all human beings share. In this sense, the particular human worth and universal human worth, examined from any angle, are the same. Daniel G. Groody states,

Our interconnectedness means that we come to understand what it means to be human only within the context of our relationships, which must be grounded in the dignity given by God to humans and all other creatures, and that the source and grounding of all relationships is God.³⁶⁰

For Christians, this sacredness is theologically and spiritually grounded in the biblical proclamation of God's work of creation; the prophetic witness of the people of God in speaking out on behalf of the marginalized; Jesus' examples of the validation, acceptance, empowerment, reconciliation, and redemption of human life in his life and ministry; and the eschatological vision of New Creation. The humanity of the immigrant who has to leave home, journey a long distance, enter into a new culture, and work hard to achieve some semblance of a settled life in a new country, therefore, is just as valuable, viable, and creative as that of the local who has been born and living in the country as a native for one's whole life. The only major difference between the two in terms human capacity might be the immigrant's ability to empathize and live

³⁶⁰ D. G. Groody, "Globalizing Solidarity: Christian Anthropology and the Challenge of Human Liberation," *Theological Studies* 69, (2008), 266.

into solidarity with other individuals and groups of minority and immigrant statuses that comes from having been through the existential experience of immigration personally.³⁶¹

Immigrants and migrants, for that matter, often find themselves looking to God for assistance and help out of necessity, pressed hard by hardships they face in their journey. The liminal experience of living on the margins open spiritual pathways to understanding God in personally and communally transformative ways. The stories of Korean immigrants interviewed in this study contained many reflections about God's providence that guided their lives, God's grace that made their lives hospitable, and God's partnership that accompanied them in their journey. God comes alive in these experiences of immigrants and is often experienced as someone who participates in their lives, walking and working with them. In this sense, the sacredness of their humanity is not only theologically and theoretically assumed but more importantly experienced and witnessed by immigrants themselves in the very place of their lives.

From Female to Embodied

Here, I take "female" to refer to all of the ways that human life is embodied including gender. The gendered identity of the Samaritan woman was used against her in her culture in that it was forced upon her as a burden and stigma and not as a rightful embodied way of being, knowing, and relating in her life in the way it was originally meant to be celebrated, recognized, and honored. In similar ways, for Korean immigrants, because of their social location on the margins of the society and the effects of oppressive systemic structures, their ethnicity, gender,

³⁶¹ All my interviewees noted that they have been enhanced in their multicultural awareness and empathy for other minorities and immigrants because of their life experiences as immigrants in the U.S. Fumitaka Matsuoka also echoes this ability of the oppressed in his words, "The power to witness to the basic relatedness of humanity, peoplehood, has been demonstrated repeatedly throughout history by those who are both devalued and ignored by a dominant group. "Redemptive tradition" is the familiar term within African American faith communities for witnessing to the fullness of humanity, but the tradition is also embraced by other groups of people," F. Matsuoka, *The Color of Faith* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998), 110.

and language are forced upon them as burdens which they are pressured to overcome in order to assimilate rather than celebrate and own proudly. The stories that my interviewees shared in which their selfhood was significantly altered and affected by the internalized impact of racism illustrate this negative impact, which has been repeatedly confirmed by many research studies.³⁶² However, it has been shown in my study that immigrants' way of living and making sense of their lives through their embodied experiences open up human life to be viewed as contextually situated, embodied in many different ways, and colorfully nuanced in all of its complexities.

Cheong, a mode of interpersonal and communal interaction among Korean immigrants, is one of the ways that the embodied nature of human life can be understood. *Cheong* illustrates the human need to find belongingness and community with others and enter into some form of mutuality, reciprocity, and hospitality without having to defend one's qualification to do so or without having to convince the other of the worthiness of one's selfhood. *Cheong*, as shown in my interviewees' experience, fosters a sense of in-groupness out of the interpersonal elements of shared proximity, repeated encounters, and openness to be together and it promotes an embodied manner of being human in particular contexts and interacting with the other in the particularity and generality of one's humanity.

Cheong also speaks to the experiential, embodied, and relational way of knowing the other and even the divine. As addressed in the correlative portion of the chapter, two elements of *Cheong* that move the immigrant and the local toward each other in hospitality are trust and love. Even without explicitly naming God's love or the theological ground of solidarity with the other, *Cheong* can still serve as an interpersonal bridge among people through its built-in dynamic of

³⁶² Jean Kim's work as presented in "Asian American Identity Theory," in *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development*, ed. C. L. Wijeyesinghe and B. W. Jackson III (New York: New York University Press, 2001): 67-90.

care arising out of the historical and ontological basis as a practice of providing mutual care in the face of oppression. Therefore, trust and love find their expressions in *Cheong* as real and embodied ways of being human.

Furthermore, as shown in the discussion of Victor Turner's liminality, *Cheong* is the substance that fills the liminal place that the marginalized occupy, and, as such, it represents the mechanism through which interpersonal and intrapersonal transformation is engendered in that existential life of in-betweenness, ambiguity, and liminal creativity. *Cheong*, as an embodied way of being and interacting, then becomes a source of comfort and stability through its ability to hold contradictory facets of immigrant life, both pain and joy, in tension, thereby bringing resilience into an otherwise unsettled way of life.

Another way of speaking human through *Cheong* has to do its affective quality. In western cultures, the modern understanding of the human as a rational being has been the paradigmatic anthropological perspective for a long time and influenced the development of sciences to a great extent. With the gradual incorporation of post-modernist and post-colonial orientations into the culture, the rational view of the human has been significantly replaced by the pluralistic and social constructionist views of human personhood, but the emphasis on rationality continues to overshadow the role of emotions in the human. *Cheong*, in its interpersonal and affective qualities, can shift this thinking further to portray the human as being embodied and shaped by emotions as much as or even more importantly than rationality. Understanding human selfhood as being largely afforded by our ability to experience and express our emotions, encountering others in *Cheong*-informed relationality can promote our capacities to assist the construction and maintenance of self-understanding such as memory and intuition.

Cheong experiences of Korean immigrants can engender a new way of understanding the world, the other, and self by lifting up the psycho-emotional and relational dimensions of transformation that necessarily happen in authentic human encounters. Taking this one step further, God can be seen as the divine partner who invests fully and emotionally in God's relationship with human beings and the whole creation.

Immigrants' life, in an analysis of its embodied characteristics, utilizes the post-colonial concept of hybridity in identity. Russell states that, "whether colonizer or colonized, we are all postcolonial subjects continually affected by history and ongoing religious, cultural, and political implications of colonialism."³⁶³ This recognition of the hybrid nature of identity necessarily locates the immigrant self within many complex, complicated, fluid, and nuanced identifies. As the immigrant or the local or any other for that matter, we all come to the table of discussion with a multiplicity of historical, racial, cultural, and political identifiers, descriptors, and realities for ourselves. The immigrant as the marginalized in the society definitely needs to be given priority and voice due to the power differential that exists in the society, but this does not mean that the immigrant occupies only or always the marginalized position in relation to all people. What the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. has revealed is that there are different levels and different types of identity with which they live. One constructive identity of the immigrant is that of a creative and responsible neighbor who enters into intercultural encounters of hospitality with the local with the commitment to building a shared future together. In this way, the marginalized status for the immigrant does not remain a barrier but a platform out of which to

³⁶³ L. M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 25-26.

prophetically engage, invite, and work with the local as empowered partners and co-authors in imagining and creating a better society.

From Foreign to Blessed

One of the most salient themes of immigrant life, particularly in the experience of Asian Americans, is the sense of perpetual mobility or provisional nature of existence. Whether one has been in this country for a few years or several decades, many Korean immigrants feel that they have not been accepted fully into the society or that they themselves do not belong here or there or that they do not know when they could say they have fully settled down. There is always this constant sense of being a sojourner still wanting and waiting to arrive at home like the lyrics of a song by U2, “I still haven’t found what I’m looking for....” If giving priority to the perspective of the immigrant is important and yes, it is, one cannot just explain this existential quandary away as a necessary part of the process of cultural adaptation or integration that an immigrant undertakes in order to reach the state of final equilibrium in the new country. One cannot also rationalize it away by saying this is just the way it is for immigrants or they could never belong here forever. To do so is to legitimize the oppressive social machineries that are in place to disenfranchise, marginalize, and keep immigrants perpetually on the margins of the society. Without choosing one option or the other, one way to resolve this from a theological anthropological standpoint is to follow the example of many theologians by choosing the metaphor of spiritual pilgrimage and understanding immigrants as pilgrims while on earth. William T. Cavanaugh, for this reason, uses the metaphors of the pilgrim and the monk to speak about the church in a globalized age. He writes,

We are, like both the pilgrim and the monk, to hallow the particular and the local.... The humility of the pilgrim and the monk is rooted in the humus of a

particular place. This stability allows us to practice hospitality, most especially for the migrants who must journey out of necessity. To welcome and revere migrants as Christ, to feed them, pray with them, and wash their feet, is to turn migrants into pilgrims and thus to turn fate into destiny.³⁶⁴

Pilgrim, as in his explanation, is a powerful metaphor to use in relation to immigrants or migrants. For this reason, Korean American theologian Sang Hyun Lee uses it as his primary metaphor to describe the Korean immigrant Christians in the U.S.³⁶⁵ However, in my assessment, the metaphor of the pilgrim has its problems for the following reasons. First, the metaphor of the pilgrim runs the risk of shortchanging the immigrant by essentially spiritualizing immigrant life as a stopover in the journey toward the heavenly home and trivializing the immanent and embodied nature of life. Furthermore, the pilgrim is portrayed as a passive participant in one's interaction with the local because one visits, receives hospitality from the local, and then moves on toward one's destination since that is the very nature of pilgrimage. In these ways, the immigrant as the pilgrim yet remains a passive image and lacks a descriptor that addresses the dynamic agency and creative capacity of the immigrant's selfhood.

For me, the better metaphor is that of the guest and specifically, the "blessed guest." As the blessed guest, the immigrant is seen as being sent or representing God or the incarnate Christ. As the blessed guest in the tradition of the bible and in the custom of Korean Christians, the immigrant interacts with the local authentically, respecting the local's space and culture, and reciprocates hospitality by blessing the local through one's presence. Thus, the immigrant can be understood as the blessed guest who comes from afar to engage the local in the shared place of their existence, and their interactions with each other bring about more fulfillments of their

³⁶⁴ W. T. Cavanaugh, "Migrant, Tourist, Pilgrim, Monk: Mobility and Identity in a Global Age," *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 353-354.

³⁶⁵ See S. H. Lee, "Called to Be Pilgrims: Toward a Theology within the Korean American Context," *The Korean Immigrant in America*, ed. B. Kim and S. H. Lee (Montclair: AKCS, 1980).

humanities than otherwise separately. The channel of interaction, sharing, and hospitality is thus two-way between the immigrant and the local, and it acknowledges both the importance of the immanent and provisional features of immigrant life.

Another important feature of immigrant life is that the process of identity-formation is constructive and relational. The immigrant's identity or identities are not transported from one place to another discreetly or wholly. The journey of immigration shakes up the immigrant's world in many different ways that spaces open up within one's understandings of self, the other, and the divine, which come to be filled by new insights from one's experiences along the way. In this process of self-reflexivity and liminality, the immigrant's faith and relationship with others play pivotal roles in shaping perspectives, values, and attitudes. In this sense, the narratives that become generated in the immigrant's life are not produced in one's soliloquy or abstract ruminations apart from life, but they are co-constructed in partnership with God and others. Particularly, through meaningful encounters with God's providence or authentic encounters of hospitality with others, the immigrant's selfhood and relationships become impacted, shifted, and transformed, thereby generating new narratives into which to live.

It will be amiss if I leave this theological anthropology without mentioning the centrality of family in the lives of immigrants. If there is one constant source of support as well as pain in immigrant life, it is one's family. For Korean immigrants whose values have been seminally influenced by the filial tradition of Korean culture that stresses cohesion, trust, and attachment as essential qualifications of family, their lives often revolve around their family of origin as well as extended family. One of the implications of this filial orientation for the immigrant theological anthropology is, perhaps, contrary to the conventional treatment of selfhood based on the

individual as the unit of analysis; we should explore ways to view the human selfhood through the lens of relational ecology with particular attention to family as the unit of analysis. This means, perhaps, there is no good way to discuss the immigrant without first exploring the immigrant in relation to one's family.

Whether in regard to the immigrant, the local, family, God, or anyone for that matter, within this relational context of knowing, living, and relating through hospitable interactions, sin is interpreted as the rejection of the invitation to enter into authentic relationships. Quoting Fumitaka Matsuoka's appropriation of Martin Buber's words, "Evil is both negation of relationship and absence of direction for a collective human life."³⁶⁶ Understanding evil to be inclusive of sin, it is evil unto God and fellow human beings to refuse to enter into relation with the other that is different from oneself for it constitutes a direct refusal of God's image and sacredness as located within the other. Refusal to enter into relation with the other is also the rejection of God's offer of partnership made available through the other. Furthermore, it is also the rejection of the "complementary humanity" as made available through the other's interaction with which one needs to make whole one's own humanity. In all, the other is the blessed guest who comes to me as a gift of God for me to accept, honor, and cherish.

Theological Implications for the Korean Church

Primarily, our theological discussion of neighborly love in this chapter centered on the culturally and racially different other in the relationship between the immigrant and the local. However, it would be of much loss if the discussion left out the other who is culturally and racially similar within the Korean immigrant context. Theologically re-visioning the other

³⁶⁶ F. Matsuoka, *The Color of Faith* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998), 58.

within its own community as sacred, embodied, and blessed and providing hospitality for them is an urgent task facing the Korean church that cannot be ignored or delayed any longer if it is going to live faithfully in its mission as God's instrument of justice and peace.

First, the question, "Who is the other in the Korean immigrant church context?" must be asked. The culturally dominant group within the Korean immigrant church is currently theologically conservative, male-oriented, racially homogenous, and heterosexual. Of all the marginalized groups within the Korean immigrant church context, the sexually marginalized other – as in lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgendered individuals who find themselves presently outside the prescribed parameters of approval and acceptance of the church – poses the greatest challenge to its internal integrity. It is taken for granted that the Korean immigrant church as a whole has established a unified front against pro-homosexual initiatives both in the wider culture and in their own religious caucuses. There is yet to be a prominent Korean minister or an influential local church or a major theologian to come out in favor of accepting the sexually marginalized other theologically. Furthermore, the Korean immigrant congregations across denominations and traditions are mounting a campaign against the ordination of homosexual clergy in their respective religious bodies, further silencing and driving away those that need to be protected the most. For example, in 2000, 350 Korean American congregations belonging to PCUSA sent an open letter to other congregations to accept a certain amendment prohibiting ministers from conducting marriage-like ceremonies for gay and lesbian couples.³⁶⁷ Within this hostile environment, those who practice non-traditional sexual lifestyles constitute the most

³⁶⁷ Y. Cho, "Mapping of Korean American Church for LGBT Task Force," (2005). www.netri.org.

oppressed and vulnerable group within both the larger Korean community and Korean immigrant church.

Another group of people that constitutes the other within the Korean immigrant church context is that of bi-racial or mixed-racial families, couples, and individuals. Though there has been an improvement in the church's attitudes toward them over the years, this group of people still faces significant invisibility, discrimination, and much consternation within the community. Particularly, those with non-white parents or spouses are often treated as undesirable or less desirable than those with white parents or spouses.

By excluding these groups of people from meaningful participation in their community, the Korean immigrant church is perpetuating the very same oppression that their members experience in the wider culture as immigrants. Its refusal to recognize and enter into relation with the sexually different other and those of different heritage poses a direct refusal of their humanity and God's affirmation of inherent worth in them. As such, not only the church's conduct risks unbecoming of its identity as God's extension on earth, but also it risks losing its integrity by defeating the spirit of neighborly love that it has so valiantly and inspirationally embodied in its immigrant life.

What then is the picture of hospitality that the Korean immigrant church needs to practice for the other within its community? In my opinion, the Korean immigrant church has to follow the same mandate of neighborly love that has been laid out in this chapter by accepting the theological openness of God's presence and work in the other. First, in relation to the sexually different other, the church needs to enter into non-judgmental and empathic encounters with them, and this can happen with the suspension of its current theological stance on homosexuality.

Without this doctrinal openness and spiritual humility, the church can only approach the other from a position of authority and prescription. Thus, the church must allow the right practice of respecting, honoring, and blessing the other as God's rightful representative to take the center rather than insisting on right doctrine in its communal life. Second, in relation to bi-racial or mix-racial families, couples, and individuals, the church needs to affirm their identity and presence by privileging their voice and stories so as to enrich the diversity of definitions and interpretations of belonging to the Korean immigrant community.

In both cases, an acknowledgment of past injuries and an authentic attempt at reconciliation on various levels of the church community must take place before any significant change or progress can be made. Hospitality, in this sense, has to mean a process of engendering repentance, forgiveness, and acceptance before God and each other, and it would necessarily be a painful and messy endeavor. Hospitality, in this way, becomes a spiritual exercise of submitting to God's call to love and serve the other without knowing what the outcome would be. It involves shifting the center of Korean Christian culture that has been so rigidly defined until now and making space for new and hidden stories to emerge and take root so as to engender a radical openness toward the future of God's New Creation.

Chapter 9: Becoming Colorfully Human Together – Implications for Pastoral Practice

*God is the one who accompanies us and beckons us to set out. And it is God who, so to speak, waits for us around the next corner.... Even on the false paths we take in life God continually opens up surprisingly new possibilities to us.*³⁶⁸

In my overarching hermeneutic of co-authoring, it is the pastoral concern for the marginalized that starts the theological reflection, which is driven by, and focused on, improving and guiding the pastoral practice of care. In this process of informing pastoral practice, the immigrant, the other, church, society, and God become creative and responsible neighbors, ethically bound to each other as co-authors in constructing hopeful future stories together.

1. For the Immigrant

Addressing the implications of the theological reflection undertaken in this study takes on a two-pronged approach, to speak of implications for the Korean immigrant in particular and the immigrant in general. At times, the distinction between these two groups of subjects becomes sharper or blurred depending on the context or issue, but, every time, it will be duly noted for clarification. This discussion of the implications for the care of the immigrant is based on the five themes of the immigrant theological anthropology derived from the last chapter: 1) the sacredness of humanity; 2) an autobiographical mandate; 3) the provisional nature of life; 4) the

³⁶⁸ J. Moltmann, forward to *The Origins of the Theology of Hope*, by M. Douglas Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), x.

dynamic of self-serving love; 5) the role of the family. Each of these themes is correlated to one of the following dimensions of pastoral practice: 1) advocacy; 2) agency; 3) reframing; 4) hospitality; 5) empowerment. It is important to note that these concepts cannot be treated exclusively of each other but should necessarily be understood as sharing conceptual boundaries.

Lifting Up Humanity

The most important implication of the immigrant theological anthropology is unequivocally the protection of the immigrant and their rights as inherently sacred human beings, and, as such, it necessitates advocacy on their behalf against the dehumanization, exploitation, commoditification, and politization of their humanity. In the world Eleazar S. Fernandez bemoans this predicament facing the marginalized in the following.

How can we be human in a world marred by pervasive disregard for the sacred web of life that sustains our whole inhabited world? How can we be human in a society in which the violation of human life is a daily reality? How can we be human when the idols of death continue to inhabit our world and demand daily sacrifices? How can we be human in the midst of the constant assault of systemic evils at both the local and global level?³⁶⁹

In the context of the globalized world where immigrants face systemic assaults against their personhood from those interests invested in their economic exploitation or in their exclusion from the political participation in the society, pastoral practices that can advocate for the immigrant self as a subject, not as an object, are of urgent importance.

Because the goals of pastoral care and counseling have traditionally left out advocacy for the marginalized, despite its recent emphasis on relational justice and social action, individuals and communities working with immigrants and migrants must recognize advocacy as a rightful ministry and incorporate into their works both the conceptual framework and the specific actions

³⁶⁹ E. S. Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 1.

of advocacy. Though this discussion of advocacy is further engaged in the sections that come later in regard to church and the society, advocacy also has implications for those who interact with immigrants in the normal places of their lives. A businessman who is a friend of mine runs a garment business in New Jersey. He shared that, starting two decades ago, he realized, due to the shortage of workers, that he could not help but fill vacancies in his factory with those that did not have the legal status for employment. However, instead of hiring and hiding them from the law, he assisted them in receiving legal work status from the government by paying for their legal services. These individuals could never have achieved their legal rights without my friend's benevolence and commitment to recognize their humanity as sacred and in need of advocacy.

Advocating for the immigrant's humanity takes on the imperative of cultural self-awareness on the part of those who work with them. Most importantly, those caregivers who are not of the same ethnic group as the immigrant need an intercultural adjustment in their cultural framework to prepare their self-awareness as the culturally-different other and its implications, keep their attitudes open and respectful, and remain mindful of their positioning in the relationship of care in respect to the other. Additionally, in the therapeutic setting, selecting a therapeutic modality that does not injure or hinder the affirmation of the immigrant's humanity through a process of carefully analyzing its anthropological assumptions is an integral part of the care of the immigrant. For this, I believe the therapeutic modalities of psycho-systemic or postmodern orientations are better suited for the immigrant due to their holistic and social constructionist qualities that allow for interactional, socio-cultural, and phenomenological interpretations of meanings and experiences rather than those of intrapersonal and

psychoanalytic orientations that run the risk of pathologizing, misrepresenting, or essentializing the personhood of the immigrant by imposing incompatible categories or oppressive classifications. From an advocacy point of view, those psychotherapeutic modalities such as Narrative Therapy, that emphasize advocacy as part of their process are more ethically and therapeutically compatible with the humanity of the immigrant. Jill Freedman in *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities* articulates advocacy as an important feature of this therapeutic modality.³⁷⁰

In summary, advocacy is an important tool for protecting the humanity of the immigrant and affording them their dignity and rights. If immigrants and locals can join together in the belief that they are indeed sacred beings, then their work of advocacy will force the society to reevaluate and reform those practices of rendering the powerless less than human for economic, cultural and political gains. This work, however, starts with telling the story of immigrants, and to this we turn now.

Lifting Up Voices

The most frequently asked question for the immigrant is, “Where are you from?” This seemingly innocuous question, however, entails an assumption of the immigrant as foreign and different on the part of the questioner, and when asked by a member of the dominant culture, it can come across as a ploy of racial differentiation intended to label the immigrant as an alien with no right to remain in this country. Hurriyet Babacan and Alperhan Babacan identify the “old racism” as that through which ethnic communities were viewed as inferior and the “new racism” as that through which ethnic communities are differentiated as being a ‘threat to the

³⁷⁰ J. Freedman and G. Combs, *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996).

cultural integrity' of the Anglo-European host society.³⁷¹ Within this hostile cultural context, for the immigrant to engage in autobiographical storytelling is an act of political subversion against systemic evils as well as that of constructive witnessing to one's existential identity both in personal and public spheres. Through exercising this autobiographical mandate of remembering, speaking, and sharing, the immigrant's deterritorialized sense of home and depersonalized identity are renegotiated and reinvented.³⁷²

For pastoral caregivers, the immigrant's faith narratives are a rich source of identity and agency as shown in my study. Particularly, the themes of God's providence, God's companionship, and God's love constitute the theological lenses of the immigrant through which one understands God benevolently, immanently, and personally in one's immigrant journey. Furthermore, the immigrant's engagement in the congregational life of one's faith community powerfully shapes one's theological positions, communal values, and social support network. Therefore, the immigrant's autobiographical mandate necessarily interweaves the narratives of identity, family, community, and faith into one mosaic of immigrant life, and, as such, they should not be artificially separated from each other but instead integrated discreetly into the care of the immigrant. One important note regarding faith has to do with the relation between faith narratives and cultural narratives and how they might come together to reinforce patriarchal, sexist, and institutionalized readings of the Christian tradition for some immigrants. It is important for pastoral caregivers to help immigrants discern liberative themes and imageries of Christian sources and at the same time encourage them carefully to disavow the oppressive

³⁷¹ H. Babacan and A. Babacan, "Achieving Social Cohesion: Impact of Insecurity, Fear and Racism on Migrant Integration," *The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations* 7, no. 5 (2007): 218.

³⁷² C. Pearson, "Telling Tales: Following the Hyphenated Jesus-Christ," *Studies in World Christianity* 10, no 1 (2004): 10.

elements in their worldviews without disrespecting their culture or faith. More on the immigrant church will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

In the therapeutic setting, this exercise of one's voice should find expression, not through psychotherapeutic modalities of interpretive frameworks that uncover hidden meanings or unconscious symbolisms from the immigrant's stories such as psychoanalysis, but mainly through those of the social constructionist orientation that take the immigrant's interpretations and meanings in their own right. The narrative process of making sense of one's immigrant journey, in my opinion, is highly conscious, subjective, and self-constructive, and, therefore, to respect and value the immigrant's own perspectives is only fair and conducive to the empowerment of one's identity. In the immigrant's case, the goal of telling one's story does not need to entail other than telling the story for oneself since narration of one's story in the tradition of narrative theory is itself an important meaning-making activity of constructing selfhood.³⁷³ Furthermore, the manner and pace in which the immigrant shares one's story needs to be dictated by the immigrant. Outside the therapeutic setting and in the places of their own lives, immigrants need to be encouraged and empowered to tell their stories in their own ways as an exercise of agency. Chung Hyun Kyung in reflecting on her mother's spirituality remembered how she once danced naked in the woods and stated that she later came to understand it to be her mother's way of subversive expression against Korea's patriarchal and sexist culture.³⁷⁴

One implication for the care of Korean immigrants in respect to autobiographical agency is that their experiences of pain and love in life as embodied in Korean cultural ethos of *Han* and

³⁷³ Andrew D. Lester states, "Human beings do not simply tell stories, or illustrate their lives with storytelling. We construct our sense of identity out of stories, both conscious stories and those we suppress," in *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 29.

³⁷⁴ C. H. Kyung, "Following Naked Dancing and Long Dreaming," in *Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens: Feminist Theology in Third World Perspective*, ed. L. M. Russell et. al. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988): 70-71.

Cheong respectively carry affective expressiveness that arises from deep within. First of all, this recognition needs to ethically bind caregivers to insure emotional and psychological safety of Korean immigrants so as to not re-traumatize or violate their sense of vulnerability. In my interview sessions with the interviewees, I found many of them experiencing deep emotions as they remembered and told their stories. Following the research protocols, I had to confirm my interviewees' un-coerced willingness and consent to continue and intermittently recheck with them so as to prevent any accidental injury to them. Second, for many Korean immigrants, particularly women, who find it difficult to tell their stories because of being largely silenced even within the Korean cultural context, expressing themselves affectively can be seen as a significant step toward healing and recovery of their selfhood. Appropriately and compassionately attending to these affective moments of self-discovery of, and with, the immigrants can be understood as another way of co-authoring the story of empowerment through therapeutic hospitality.

An exercise of autobiographical agency in speaking in one's voice and telling one's story can also be understood as a form of self-hospitality for the immigrant. To engage in the activity of making meaning out of one's immigration journey and existence is to hold oneself in respect and accommodate one's selfhood in a hospitable manner. For caregivers, to hear and attend to the immigrant's story often means to travel interculturally and meet the other in many new ways of perception, experience, and relationship, and, as such, it is a mutually hospitable encounter in which both are transformed in the process. Furthermore, the community and God enter into this plot of self-construction as major agents who co-construct realities for the immigrant. Therefore,

this autobiographical mandate is as much about identity-formation as hospitality and community-formation.

Lifting Up Life

Immigrant life is characterized by fluidity, mobility, and provisionality. To the immigrant, life is what happens as one tries to find stability in all the movements of life. Life does not remain still; life is in an active progression from one place to another; it never stops even if one settles in one place. Even if life were to come to a complete stop, for the immigrant, the journey continues on in its meaning and memory. Immigration is a journey and immigrant life is one of constant movement, if not from a kinetic standpoint of mobility, then at least from a point of identity and acculturation. This necessarily puts one in an existential dilemma; is life meant to be defined by its stability or its provisionality? Is it more human to be settled than to be transitional or provisional? Or is it more human to be transitional or provisional than to be settled? Though all of us seek some level of comfort, stability, and groundedness in life, for the immigrant, to define life in terms of its settledness might not be as useful as perceiving it to be fluid, mobile, and provisional so as to ground it in its dynamism rather than constancy.

There are many aspirations that the immigrant carries into one's life in the new country. Freedom to remake one's life, economic success, educational achievement, relational enrichment, and comfort in life are some of many desired outcomes anticipated by the immigrant. However, the realities of their new life can be far removed from these aspirations, and the unfulfilled dreams can lead to frustration and despair in the immigrant. For those who sacrifice so much to journey to their new life, the pain can be particularly acute and the disillusionment especially

pervasive. In these cases, “reframing” life from one of comfort and stability to that of fluidity, hybridity, and provisionality can serve as a source of imagining life in a constructive light. If life was meant to be fluid and provisional rather than constant and stationary, then the ensuing reinterpretation of the immigrant’s vision of life can bring about creativity and imagination so as to open new narratives for oneself. Andrew D. Lester explains reframing in the practice of pastoral care and counseling in the following.

To reframe, then, is to reshape one’s perceptions, to change the cognitive sets by which one interprets an event or a relationship. Reframing is the process of helping a person, family, or group to transform the way in which they conceptualize a life situation.... The reframing process also is used to aid people in developing a new perception of a current situation, a present story. And...the technique of reframing can be used to help people reshape their ideas about the future.³⁷⁵

There are certain things that the immigrant cannot change due to the dynamic quality of experience, particularly the fact that they have become different as the result of immigration. The immigrant often feels trapped because they are somewhere between the old culture and the new culture, having left but not yet arrived. In the process, the immigrant self experiences disparateness and uniqueness of identity that does not employ a linear or discreet progression of acculturation as some scholars have theorized.³⁷⁶ It is, therefore, important to recognize the messy and disruptive nature of immigrant identity and existence, and pastoral caregivers can give permission to the immigrant to live into the ambiguity of their selfhood as well as the fluidity of life. Bill O’Hanlon’s counseling strategy of including opposites as a way of accommodating disparate aspects of selfhood can be a model of harnessing the tension in immigrant life.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ A. D. Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 139.

³⁷⁶ John Barry postulated four acculturation processes as integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization in “Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation,” *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 46 (1997): 5-34.

³⁷⁷ B. O’Hanlon, *Guide to Possibility Land*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997).

Imagining life as on the move or in the process of coming into being might not be a comforting proposition for those who seek a better life. However, for the immigrant, it can open a future with possibilities rather than restrictions and utilize the tension inherent in immigrant existence as a source of dynamism with which to create new ways of being, living, and belonging. Living colorfully, therefore, is a way of normalizing the multi-panoramic experience of immigrant life without denying the reality of the oppressive structures in the society that complicate its journey.

Lifting Up Love

Any realistic assessment of immigrant life reveals the wounded nature of the immigrant self due to the abuse by the interlocking systems of power and privilege in the society. Life is often difficult and challenging for the immigrant and despair tends to set in even as one tries to do one's best and keep up an optimistic outlook on life. However, it is the presence of self-sharing love in the immigrant and the community that has been an incubator of resilience and hope in the midst of struggles. Self-sharing love as mediated through hospitality can be a core self-narrative for the immigrant in this effort to resist the society's program of dehumanizing the immigrant. Michael and Kenneth Himes write, "The most fundamental human right is the right to exercise the power of self-giving, the opportunity to enter into relationship, for deeper participation in the life of the human community."³⁷⁸

Many ethnographers and sociologists caution against the ethno-centric orientation of immigrant groups. Historically, assimilation as propagated by the metaphor of "melting pot" and *Manifest Destiny* has forced any tendency of ethnic groups to differentiate themselves from the

³⁷⁸ M. J. Himes and K. R. Himes, *Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).

majority to be viewed as a sign of incomplete incorporation into the society. However, as in Korean immigrant experience, an in-group orientation can have its legitimate benefits and strengths. *Cheong*-experiences for Korean immigrants provide them with a sense of belongingness, a stable cultural identity, and an avenue of locating and procuring resources for their needs. The care of the immigrant, therefore, first needs to acknowledge and accept this orientation of “we-ness” as constructive and then move on to extending this mode of mutuality to the immigrant’s relationships with those on the outside as well. Hospitable encounters with the other, as in the in-group experience of love, can benefit the immigrant with providing a pathway to forming relational competence, but, at the same time, it can also provide opportunities of intercultural engagement that come to enrich the immigrant’s life.

What is also important in the care of the immigrant is to use the hospitable experiences of the immigrant to bear meaningfully on the wider culture. Portrayed as different and inferior by the dominant culture, the immigrant can either remain passive or actively engage the culture to teach it many different ways of being human, hospitable, and relational. As active agents in the society in which they live, the immigrant can be a prophetic voice through modeling self-sharing love to many in the dominant culture who are very much self-contained in their dominant ways without knowing how others from the underside of society live and engage life. In this way, self-sharing love expressed through hospitality is a subversive, countercultural, and prophetic endeavor. Martin Luther King, Jr., expressed how he urged an angry mob of his supporters to show love, not violence, on the night his home was bombed.

It was at the time that I went to the porch and tried to say to the people.... We could not allow ourselves to retaliate with any type of violence, but that we were still to confront the problem with love.... I urged people to continue to manifest love, and to continue to carry on the struggle with the same dignity.... I think at

the time the people did decide to go home, things did get quiet, and it ended up with a great deal of calmness and a great deal of discipline....³⁷⁹

Lifting up love should also be a tool for entering into solidarity with other marginalized groups in the society. The immigrant, through engaging other groups of marginalized status, can become self-critical so as to be aware their own prejudices, misconceptions, and lack of understanding about others and undertake constructive changes.

Lifting Up Family

The most important variable that factors squarely into the care of the immigrant is the position family occupies in the immigrant's life. Though it is taken for granted that family is central to almost everyone's life, the crucial role of family in shaping the immigrant's sense of wellbeing, providing a support network, and affecting one's overall outlook in life is all the more magnified in immigrant life. Both the interview findings and the surveyed literature portrayed how family is received by the immigrant as a source of both resilience and pain. The immigrant's commitment to family was expressed in the acceptance of the tension and discord among family members as part of the family dynamic and persistent dependence on each other as a source of support. Often, immigrants come to the United States as family units and continue to maintain family cohesion to a great extent even as they settle into their new life.

In their overview of family dynamics for Korean Americans in the article, "Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families," Irene J. Kim, Luke I. C. Kim, and James G. Kelly highlight the two important types of family processes for Korean

³⁷⁹ M. L. King, Jr., *The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1986):119-120.

immigrants. They are, first, family obligation and, second, parenting.³⁸⁰ The authors used respect for one's family, the provision of current and future support to one's family, and children's obedience to their parents as the operationalized terms denoting family obligation. According to them, the critical importance of family obligation is most apparent where the interpersonal dynamics of saving face and avoiding shame play key roles in one's social status, and one's identity is defined by one's relationship with in-group members.³⁸¹ This process of family obligation, when positively employed, is seen as strengthening familial relationships and promoting resilience against the harsh realities of immigrant life. However, when negatively employed, it is seen as burdening family members in their responsibilities to each other, straining relationships, and causing shame- and guilt-ridden dynamics. Parenting styles, inter-generational differences, and cultural clashes between parents and children are named as other sources of conflict and tension in family dynamics.

Therefore, any approach to caring for the immigrant needs to be not only cognizant of the familial issues involved but also able to include the family in the scope of care. Furthermore, the immigrant's cultural values and ideals must be taken into consideration so as to appropriate, contextualize, and inform the practice of care. For Korean immigrants, indigenous Korean cultural values such as *Han*, *Cheong*, and *Noonchi*³⁸² need to conceptually inform any therapeutic framework employed in the care of Korean immigrants as well as the therapeutic

³⁸⁰ I. J. Kim, L. Kim, and J. G. Kelly. "Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families," *Journal of Community Psychology* 34, No. 2 (2006): 149-165.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

³⁸² I. J. Kim, L. Kim, and J. G. Kelly define *Noonchi* in this way, "It refers to an intuitive capacity to size up and evaluate another person or social situation quickly. With noon-chi, one develops heightened awareness of, and sensitivity to, another person's nonverbal cues, such as gestures, facial expressions, voice, intonation, speech patterns, and body language." In "Developing Cultural Competence in Working with Korean Immigrant Families," *Journal of Community Psychology* 34, No. 2 (2006): 149-165.

relationship between the caregiver and the immigrant. Attention needs to be paid to the family's influence in the immigrant's decision-making process, particularly about how decisions are negotiated and implemented within the family. An assessment of family structure and family roles is also an important tool in developing care plans and strategies that are most effective for that family.

Though many families immigrate together, there are individuals and families that experience the pains of separation and even disintegration of their relationships. Special care needs to be provided for children and women whose welfare might be significantly affected due to the family or a family member's immigration or migration, and caregivers must be ready to assess and address psychological, emotional, and relational implications of prolonged separation and reorganization of the family structure.

To assist the immigrant is to assist the family. To protect the immigrant is to protect the family. Any faithful response to the public debate of immigration needs to incorporate into its comprehensive strategy proposals and resources to provide safety, sanctuary, specific support, and saving grace to immigrant families whose welfare is constantly placed under great public scrutiny, economic stress, healthcare inequality, and relational damage. Therefore, any advocacy for immigrant families must be committed to empowering them as the primary context of belonging, protection, and acceptance by which immigrant life and immigrant communities are strengthened and nurtured. As the most basic unit of social life, the family, both the nuclear and extended, take on a more urgent and special importance for the immigrant, and, as such, it needs to be rightfully given all the tools and opportunities as the strategic center for improving and insuring the care of the immigrant.

2. For the Church

The church is the most important social and religious organization in the society that, in my opinion, can serve as an interface of the immigrant, the local, and the culture, because, as it has been shown in my research and corroborated by other works in social sciences, church occupies a strategic position in the life of many immigrants and their communities. The church is often the first line of assistance and information for many entering this country from other places, and it tries to protect immigrants and migrants from both the legal and illegal efforts by public and cultural institutions to intimate and marginalize them. Historically, the church has been a place of sanctuary and advocacy for immigrants, their families, and their communities.

The implications of the theological reflection undertaken in this study can be summarized in five ways. Using the conceptual framework of co-authoring, I present the implications for the church's care of the immigrant in the following order: 1) pastoral co-authoring; 2) liturgical co-authoring; 3) vocational co-authoring; 4) educational co-authoring, and 5) political co-authoring. The discussion of the church will include both the immigrant church and the non-immigrant church and specify the shared and separate implications for them.

Pastoral Co-authoring

By the term "pastoral," I do not mean the ministry of the pastoral office *per se* or that of pastoral leadership but the general pastoral ministry of care that church and its members carry out on all levels of their congregational life. The most immediate and effective difference church can make is to provide pastorally for the needs of immigrant and their families. Christine D. Phol writes,

Offering welcome is basic to Christian identity and practice. For most of the church's history, faithful believers located their acts of hospitality in a vibrant

tradition in which needy strangers, Jesus and angels were welcomed and through which people were transformed.³⁸³

The impact of harsh realities that immigrants face in their lives can be mitigated and alleviated by the hospitable services and ministries of the faith communities. Particularly, pastoral care and counseling, in this sense, are effective forms of hospitality offered to immigrants and their families who undergo a tremendous level of stress in having to adjust to their new life and complications from social attitudes and political policies that scrutinize their status and livelihood.

For the purpose of assessing and providing for immigrants' psychological, social, relational, and spiritual needs, I believe each faith community has to have internal resources for direct care as well as capacity to refer them to appropriate social resources in the community. This often means that church needs to have on staff someone who can provide pastoral care and assessment of pastoral needs. For Asian immigrants, "pastoral counseling is often viewed as less stigmatic and more acceptable...because it is associated with spirituality and church."³⁸⁴ In a Korean church setting, immigrants often turn to pastors for relational and emotional help, and this necessitates proper training and education for pastors so they can provide capable assistance in pastoral care. In addition, by guiding immigrants to available social service agencies, community-based organizations, and not-for-profit partnerships, church can provide the practical assistance of getting the help many immigrants and their families need. For the immigrant church, social services can extend to providing employment services, day-care for immigrant families, language services, and contacts for other needs.

³⁸³ C. D. Pohl, "Hospitality, a Practice and a Way of Life," *Vision* (Spring, 2002): 34-43.

³⁸⁴ T. D. Nguyen, "Immigrant Asian Youth and Cultural-Identity Challenges: Implications for Pastoral Counseling Practice," *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 60, no. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2006): 59-67.

For the Korean immigrant church, special attention needs to be given to the plight of immigrant women and their concerns. According to social researchers, there is a high percentage of Korean immigrant women being abused in intimate relationships. According to H. Shin, Korean immigrants constitute the majority of the domestic violence victim cases in the Asian American battered women's shelters of Los Angeles.³⁸⁵ One study even found a positive correlation between religious affiliation/involvement and the incidence of domestic violence experienced by Korean immigrant women.³⁸⁶

Many Korean immigrant congregations are also complicit in marginalizing women. Pyong Gap Min states that the "heavily conservative, evangelical orientation of most churches both in Korea and in the Korean immigrant community has contributed to severe underrepresentation of women in church leadership in both places."³⁸⁷ My own experience in the Korean immigrant church context also confirms the practice of excluding women from important positions in church, and this orientation is heavily shaped by the patriarchal traditions and sexism in church. It is of urgent need for the Korean immigrant congregations to reform their practices of marginalizing women and start speaking about the evil of domestic abuse in Korean immigrant families. Taking a self-critical and cultural-critical approach to not only pastoral ministry but more importantly to preaching and ecclesial organization needs to take root in the Korean immigrant church.

³⁸⁵ H. Shin, *Violence and Intimacy: Risk Markers and Predictors of Wife Abuse Among Korean Immigrants*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation (University of Southern California, 1995).

³⁸⁶ E. Lee, "Domestic Violence and Risk Factors Among Korean Immigrant Women in the United States," *Journal of Family Violence* 22 (2007): 141-149.

³⁸⁷ P. G. Min, "Severe Underrepresentation of Women in Church Leadership in the Korean Immigrant Community in the United States," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 2 (2008): 225-241.

Furthermore, church ministry can be specifically tailored to meet physical and health-related issues as well. In the capitalist market-driven healthcare system such as the one in the U.S., immigrants and migrants are often kept out of even the most basic healthcare services due to their inability to pay or their questionable legal status. However, partnerships between non-profit religious healthcare organizations and religious communities such as “Care-A-Van” of Bon Secours Virginia Health System can provide a model for joint ventures between individual churches and healthcare providers that reach the uninsured immigrant communities and provide them with vital healthcare services.³⁸⁸ Many local churches such as the Richmond Korean Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia, utilize physicians who are members of their congregations to provide free physical check-ups and basic healthcare services for their congregants as well as those in the local community. In this way, the church can co-author pastoral ministries with immigrants themselves, resources in the community, and other organizations on behalf of the marginalized.

Catholic charities and ministries located in many border states near Mexico and other urban centers heavily populated by immigrants, migrants, and refugees include in their scope of services welcoming centers for those entering the country. For example, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio, runs an immigrant center as well as a mobile migrant ministry to assist immigrants and migrants in meeting their various needs.³⁸⁹ Many religious bodies partner with community welcoming centers to provide for the needs of immigrants in their cities.

³⁸⁸ “Care-A-Van” is a mobile healthcare outreach ministry of Bon Secours Virginia Health System. Mobile healthcare clinics visit churches located in close proximity with immigrant populations and poor neighborhoods to provide free healthcare services to people in the community. Go to <http://richmond.bonsecours.com/> for more information on this ministry.

³⁸⁹ Go to <http://www.catholiccharitiesyoungstown.org> for more info.

The immigrant welcome center of Indianapolis³⁹⁰ and the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians³⁹¹ are some of the social agencies that work closely with religious groups in such a collaborative partnership.

Rooted in the theological basis of the sacredness of human life and values such as justice and freedom, the church on every level of its structure and ministry can envision and implement liberative pastoral practices that affirm the humanity of, and solidarity with, immigrants and their communities.

Liturgical Co-authoring

For the church of the dominant culture, the most important implication from this theological reflection on the immigrant and the community has to be the mandate for it to become more open, inclusive, and participatory in its fellowship with immigrants and their communities. In speaking of the church's complicity in advancing the racial agenda of the dominant culture, Fumitaka Matsuoka challenges the church to first begin with an honest assessment and naming of their racist attitudes and values in an effort to move forward redemptively.

We need to acknowledge that churches, too, are very much woven into the fabric of racialized America and have been participating in the sin of racism.... Only when we are honest about the reality of the life of Christian faith communities can we begin to witness to the genuine signs of hope that move us beyond the impasse in race relations.³⁹²

Unfortunately, it is my observation that a vast majority of churches belonging to the dominant culture have not yet even begun the work of self-awareness let alone an intercultural engagement with the other. What often amounts to diversity and multiculturalism within racially white

³⁹⁰ Go to <http://www.immigrantwelcomecenter.org> for more info.

³⁹¹ Go to <http://www.welcomingcenter.org/immigrants/service-partners> for more info.

³⁹² F. Matsuoka, *The Color of Faith* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998), 105.

congregations is none other than a token beatification of its demographic exterior and not at all based on substantial spiritual or ecclesial commitments to transformation. Having freedom for the first time in a very long time to visit several churches with a goal of finding a suitable congregation with which to worship, I began attending a local United Methodist congregation that was introduced to me as a growing and healthy congregation by many. Surely, it had many young families, lively ministries, and active participation of the laity, all of which were the characteristics of a growing church. However, it was predominantly white and middle class in demographic makeup with no sign of minorities anywhere. I attended that church for a month just waiting to uncover signs that pointed to its intentionality about welcoming the culturally-different other, and I even engaged a pastoral staff member of the church in a conversation to ask a few questions. At the end, I was overwhelmingly disappointed by the lack of its multicultural commitment, awareness of diversity, and theological sensitivity to God's call for spiritual communion with the other. I felt utterly alone in that multitude of worshippers who seemed to come to gather in the belief that God is only of white color.

For the church to be the rightful community of God and Jesus Christ, then, it must start with its liturgical life and invite the other to be a part of its life. Specifically, there needs to be *koinonia* with the culturally-different brothers and sisters in Christ, including immigrants and their communities. Yes, there are many white congregations that invite other congregations that are racially different in order to worship together, but often it feels as if the white congregations in these so-called multicultural encounters obstinately hold onto the center of power and insist that either the fellowship with the other be of temporary significance without any change to their identity or practice of life or that the opening of their doors to minorities be a way of helping

them from the position of cultural patronage or spiritual superiority. These attempts point to the lack of any critical self-awareness of their own racial identity or any concrete commitment to make lasting structural or paradigmatic changes. For example, even some theological writers who speak about hospitality such as Hans Boersma seem to be color-blind in addressing the implications of the hospitable God. In his article, “Liturgical Hospitality: Theological Reflections on Sharing in Grace,” other than superficially naming “strangers” in relation to hospitality, Boersma goes on to discuss liturgical hospitality mainly in relation to Christians and non-Christians.³⁹³ I think that anyone reading an article like his wants to read about the church’s reception of the culturally-different other with whom the church needs to enter into liturgical hospitality while looking for substantive engagement between the two, but I was once again disappointed by the lack of the discursive treatment of the ‘elephant in the room.’ How can genuine hospitality be discussed without even addressing the marginalized stranger? His discussion is a spiritualized thesis on hospitality that takes all North Americans to be racially white from the perspective of a white God in whose eyes even the marginalized are exclusively white.

To counter these misguided attempts at intercultural fellowship with authentic participation with the other, the church must embrace the principle of liturgical co-authoring in which, they, along with God and the other, worship and enter into communion and embodied spiritual hospitality together, hoping to make sparkling moments of mutually transformative connections in God’s name. For this reason, both the immigrant church and the church of the dominant culture must come together with the intention of invoking God who sees all colors

³⁹³ H. Boersma, “Liturgical Hospitality: Theological Reflections on Sharing in Grace,” *Journal of Christian Theological Research* 8, (2003): 67-77.

beautifully and equally, while engendering substantive changes in their own congregations as well as in their relationship with each other. These endeavors can be initiated in simple activities of getting together without any agenda other than just affirming each other as sacred and beloved members of the family of God. Therefore, any encounter of liturgical significance that brings different communities of people together collaboratively is a spiritual act of worship and communal act of deconstructing the legacy and reality of racism in church. As it is the case in many Korean immigrant congregations, Pohl defines sharing meals with the other as central to Christian worship.

A quick review of Jesus' life and ministry finds hospitality at the center. Jesus is both guest and host, dependent on others for welcome and startlingly gracious in his welcome to outsiders, seekers, and sinners. Meals were central to Jesus' ministry and a shared meal soon became the center point of Christian worship. Hospitality is a lens through which we can read and understand much of the gospel, and a practice by which we can welcome Jesus himself.³⁹⁴

The liturgical significance of communion is of particular importance to immigration and immigrants according to Daniel Groody. He writes,

As one looks more closely at the dynamics of immigration and the structure of the Eucharist, one can observe many connections between the breaking of the bread and the breaking of their bodies, between the pouring of Christ's blood for his people and the pouring out of their lives for their families, between Christ's death and resurrection and their own. Immigrants, I believe, offer a new way of looking at the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn gives many immigrants a new way of understanding their struggles.³⁹⁵

In the liturgical hospitality of communion, Christ also becomes a co-author in the church's mission of affirming human life in its sacredness and dignity. Thus, by engaging in acts of liturgical co-authoring with the culturally-different other, faith communities and religious

³⁹⁴ C. D. Pohl, "Hospitality, a Practice and a Way of Life," *Vision* (Spring, 2002), 34-43.

³⁹⁵ D. Groody, "Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist," *Worship* 80, no. 5 (2006): 386-402

traditions can start naming the sin of complicity in racism, articulating a common identity in God who is just and hospitable, and uplifting a vision of transformed relationships through which enduring partnerships are undertaken.

Vocational Co-authoring

The principle of vocational co-authoring in the contexts of the immigrant and the church of the dominant culture concerns the inequality that exists in the area of vocational development and commissioning of leaders. If it is important for churches to incorporate justice and freedom into their ecclesial structures so as to promote inclusivity, multiculturalism, and equality in the congregational life, then it matters to open up the process of recruitment and development to include those leaders who are and will be committed to emancipatory theological positions and practices.

For the church of the dominant culture, it means first to broaden the pool of ministerial or pastoral staff candidates so as to include people of diverse genders, races, and social statuses. Often, the church has been the church of the specialized clergy of the dominant culture and excluded many of those who did not fit the traditional criteria of being white, male, and heterosexual. In order for any church to become inclusive, culturally competent, and relationally ethical, it must start with developing leaders that are themselves inclusive, culturally competent, and relationally ethical. If any church is serious about not remaining compliant of the status quo and intent on entering into solidarity with the other, then not only the church membership should be open to the different other, but also the church leadership should be open to the different other. Unless there are significant measures of co-authoring of races, cultures, and values in their leadership processes, the church will not become a hospitable agent of God's love in the world.

Furthermore, for the immigrant church, it means to break down the often patriarchal, sexist, and hierarchical structures of leadership that force marginalized people to be further marginalized by the exclusion of women and those of different sexual orientations. The immigrant church, particularly the Korean immigrant church, must live into “God’s justice and righteousness, [which] stands against hierarchy or domination in relationships.”³⁹⁶ If the vision of the church of the dominant group has to include those of different racial, cultural, and sexual orientations in its leadership so as to open it up, then the vision of the immigrant church has to also include those of different racial, cultural, and sexual orientations in their organizational structure so as to open it up and promote substantive multiculturalism.

Vocational co-authoring is based on the premise that it is the people that make the most difference and are God’s conduit of blessing in our churches, and, therefore, it makes a significant difference to be intentional and authentic in the process of vocational development and leadership formation.

Educational Co-authoring

Related to the aforementioned liturgical co-authoring and vocational co-authoring is the implication of educational co-authoring for churches. Another way of engendering a new culture of mutuality and intercultural engagement is to be intentional about what the church teaches and why it teaches in its educational ministry. For too many churches, the educational curriculum lacks any multicultural awareness or intentionality, and, as such, it does disservice by foreclosing on the opportunities to develop its members into relationally mature participants in a pluralistic world in which God calls Christians to live as prophetic witnesses to God’s redemptive love and

³⁹⁶ F. Matsuoka, *The Color of Faith* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998), 51.

justice. For the many years that I spent in the Korean immigrant church context, I have seen many church educators indiscriminately subscribing to *David C. Cook's* Sunday school curriculum that was racially uninformed and neglectful. The immigrant church and the church of the dominant culture owe it to God and to themselves to share the colorful vision of humanity in theologically and relationally ethical ways so as to promote the development of people as responsible Christians.

An important part of this educational process is to re-read and re-interpret Christian traditions and theological sources from liberative and ethical hermeneutical viewpoints and to privilege the perspective of the marginalized in order to shift the center of doing the work of theology and education. Rebecca S. Chopp speaks of this imperative in the following.

To limit ourselves to curriculum reform without asking other substantive questions about how we teach, what we teach, whom we teach and where we teach is simply to keep rearranging and redecorating the deck furniture on an unsteady, if not already sinking, Titanic.³⁹⁷

In a similar manner to which feminists redo the meanings of symbols and the use of tradition, the immigrant church and the dominant church have to rework the meanings of symbols and the use of tradition by using culturally critical perspectives with particular attention to those symbols, meanings, narratives, and traditions through which different groups of people learn to co-exist and cooperate in non-violent, tolerant, ethical, and mutually benevolent ways. For the immigrant church, their theological commitments and spiritual values must be consistent with their immigrant realities and experiences. To teach immigrants and their families to trust in God who is an advocate, protector, and co-worker in their lives means to be accommodating toward other minorities and marginalized groups in addition to being prophetic by living as self-assuredly

³⁹⁷ R. S. Chopp, *Saving Work: Feminist Practices of Theological Education* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 17.

sacred and agential beings in the society. To teach the members of the church of the dominant culture is to help them develop their own sense of racial identity and the appreciation of immigrants and people of minority status as their brothers and sisters in Christ with whom they must enter into solidarity and hospitality. In this way, co-authoring of neighborly love and hospitable practices in church starts with transforming its educational and pedagogical values and commitments.

Political Co-authoring

The church, by extending its mission outside its walls, must be a defender of immigrants and their rights. Whether liberal or evangelical, whether Catholic or Protestant, whether dominant or marginalized, churches cannot remain passive while people's lives are being pervasively and systemically mistreated. If churches believe in a God who is serious about justice and love in the world, then they must be out in the public view working politically to better the estates of immigrants and migrants. It is a moral and spiritual imperative that should drive them to speak up and speak out against the oppressive structures in the society that dehumanize people on the move. The National Bishops' Conference of Brazil issued the following call for its churches.

Liberating action loses its meaning if it does not occur in a climate of communion and participation. The whole Ecclesial Community (basis communities, the hierarchy, laity, family) should participate in this process. Besides exercising effective pressure on the systems producing forced migrations, bearing witness is important as a fundamental and indispensable dimension to any pastoral undertaking.³⁹⁸

In the post-9/11 U.S., irrational policies and fear tactics against immigrants have become entrenched as official strategies continue to create unnecessary pain and criminalization of

³⁹⁸ The National Bishops' Conference of Brazil, "Where Are You Going? Theological Reflections on Migration," *The Ecumenical Review* 33, no. 2 (April 1981): 178-185.

people whose only crime is to work and live in this country. John Tirman, the executive director of MIT's Center for International Studies, states,

The Department of Homeland Security, the most prominent domestic response to 9/11, is now seen as poorly planned and managed. Now it is likely to be given new border security tasks in response to the unsubstantiated concerns about the Mexican border spurred by a few politicians, anti-immigration groups, and supportive news media. DHS will post more border patrols and other highly visible (but ineffective) fixes. And like border militarization, making 11-12 million unauthorized immigrants into felons is a policy that cannot be implemented and would be haphazardly punitive. It is also unnecessary.³⁹⁹

Arizona's racist immigration law sparked civil disobedience by conscientious citizens, immigration rights groups, and community groups calling for the fair treatment of immigrants and the protection of their rights across the nation. On May 17, 2010, a group of 16 prominent New Yorkers protested the law in civil disobedience in lower Manhattan. One of the protesters, Bishop Orlando Findlayter, Chairman of Churches United to Save and Heal, stated the following.

Our current immigration laws are so unjust and so immoral that people of conscience will no longer abide by and be complacent in the injustices committed by the government in our name.⁴⁰⁰

I do not know how many Christians joined him in that act of civil disobedience on that day. My hope is that many did answer the call. When the call of our God who is just, loving, and hospitable contrasts with and contradicts the mandate of the land, churches need to rise up and speak up prophetically even to the extent of committing civil disobedience just as Martin Luther King, Jr., and black churches did not too long ago. Knowing that legal statutes and political decisions can be used as a means of empowering, protecting, and securing the lives of marginalized people in ways that are otherwise difficult to achieve, standing in solidarity with

³⁹⁹ J. Tirman, "Immigration and Insecurity: Post-9/11 Fear in the United States" in *Border Battles: The U.S. Immigration Debates*, published on-line by *Social Science Research Council* (July 28, 2006).

⁴⁰⁰ A. Ruis, "Arizona Immigration Law Sparks Civil Disobedience," *Daily News* (May 19, 2010).

immigrants and migrants politically becomes a form of co-authoring with lasting significance that churches and Christians must initiate in order to stay true to their mission of serving God and fellow human beings.

3. For the Society

By the term “society,” I refer to the dominant majority and the wider culture in American society, which the immigrant encounters upon entering this country. First, I address the implications for the local as the native majority, and then move on to discuss the implications for the society at large.

The theological reflection undertaken in this study is unmistakably clear in its mandate for the local to embrace the immigrant as a human being with sacred worth and inalienable rights as well as their neighbors whose destiny and commonwealth are tied to those of the local themselves. This is easier said than done within the hostile and polarized political atmosphere in which the immigrant and the migrant are vilified and portrayed in vitriolic images and rhetoric. Due to the historical policies of marginalization that have been sanctioned and legalized in this country and the antagonism against the immigrant and the migrant that was often framed racially and even theologically, members of the dominant culture have been conditioned to accept the illegitimacy and undesirability of the other’s presence in their neighborhoods and communities to a large extent. If the dominant culture reacted to the presence and growth of African Americans in this country largely by opposing or neglecting their humanity and rights for much of American history, how much more persistent and stubborn would they be in their rejection of foreigners and their presence in this land? Therefore, even effecting this paradigmatic shift in the dominant

culture's thinking and position on the immigrant and the migrant let alone making significant practical or relational changes would take much work on the part of everyone involved in this venture – the immigrant, the local, church, and society.

The first step toward this change is for the local to start interacting with the immigrant on a personal level so as to get to know and learn from them and their cultures. Realizing that much of the resistance against the immigrant is not based on political reasons but on the local's fear of the stranger who is racially different on a visceral level,⁴⁰¹ meeting and interacting with them as neighbors in the local community, while it seems even silly to propose this, is a way of deconstructing stereotypes and preconceived notions that contribute to the objectification of the other and personalizing them instead as real human beings who are just as funny, silly, affectionate, normal, and trustworthy as they themselves are. As these meaningful interactions and authentic encounters increase in frequency and become significant in their implications, the local then can move to enter into community projects and grassroots initiatives that bring the needs of the local and the immigrant together, thereby effecting changes in their thinking as well as their behaviors. Matsuoka supports this program of finding common interests as the basis of cooperation and partnership between the local and the immigrant.

We all belong to several communities at once, and these multiple members often reflect corresponding interests and goals. Consequently, focusing on the common interests of communities in order to form coalitions dedicated to cooperative action offers the best strategy for social and political change.⁴⁰²

A second step toward this change is for the local to formulate their own racial identity.

Nancy Ramsay speaks of the need for individuals whose heritage is European to develop their

⁴⁰¹ An article that was published on the Nov. 26, 2007, edition of USA Today addresses fear as the biggest factor in driving anti-immigration sentiments and movements.

⁴⁰² F. Matsuoka, *The Color of Faith* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1998), 99.

racial identity so that they would not unwittingly perpetuate racism by locating it outside themselves. She writes,

Our focus needs to be more on changing the self understandings and practices that allow us to avoid our complicity and to adopt proactive strategies available to us. In other words, I understand the uncritical, unreflective way we Whites are White as the core challenge for engaging positively diversity and plurality in our life and work. Our priority needs to lie in deconstructing the internalization of privilege that reproduces racism.⁴⁰³

In other words, as the local gets to know the culturally-different other, they also need to come to see themselves as culturally unique and critically review how their privilege and power as the status quo become operant in the society. Rita Hardiman, whose work has been seminal in the field of white identity development, comments on this imperative as well.

In a society where racial dominance is contested and the expression of social identity (racial and cultural in particular) is part of our culture, Whites have to deal concomitantly with two aspects of our identity: internalized dominance, racism, and privilege, and the search for cultural meaning and identification.⁴⁰⁴

An appreciation of who they are racially and culturally in tandem with an awareness of how white privilege of the status quo functions systemically in the society would further enable the local to move along this path of constructive engagement with the other.

Third, the local needs to perceive their own lives in terms of existential fluidity, mobility, and provisionality so as to have a better appreciation for what the immigrant and the migrant go through in their journeys. In this globalized, transnational, and geopolitical context in which they live, the local needs to see the web of interconnectedness in which one single event in one part of the world affects the rest of the world, including their own existence, and through which

⁴⁰³ N. Ramsay, "Navigating Racial Difference as a White Pastoral Theologian," *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* 12, no. 2 (November 2002): 11-27.

⁴⁰⁴ R. Hardiman, "Reflections on White Identity Development Theory," in *New Perspectives On Racial Identity Development: A Theoretical and Practical Anthology*, ed. C. L. Wijeyesinghe and B. W. Jackson III, (New York: New York University Press, 2001): 124.

American politics and policies factor seminally, operationally, and instantly into those of many nations around the globe. This understanding that would lead the local to recognize what drives immigrants and migrants to leave their own countries and come to America has indeed a close connection to, and a real basis in, the U.S. domestic affairs as well as its foreign policies. Doing so would hopefully allow them to view the needs of immigrants and those of their own against a larger backdrop of interdependent nature of human existence.

This change in perspective, I believe, would necessarily result in reexamining the entrenched social attitudes about immigration in new lights. The Catholic Church, based on Pius XII and John Paul II's teachings, put forth the theological and ecclesial rationales for protecting and promoting the rights of immigrants and migrants. The Catholic Church's obligation of solidarity with immigrants and migrants is built on the rights of people to immigrate in search of freedom and "the right of a family to a vital space or land that is agriculturally productive in order to satisfy proper needs."⁴⁰⁵ John Paul II's teaching on solidarity states that "authentic human development must be achieved within the framework of solidarity and freedom, based on the love of God and neighbor, and must help to promote the relationship between individuals and society or what can be called a "civilization of love."⁴⁰⁶ If the local comes to accept the premises such as the right to immigrate or right to a vital space or authentic human need for solidarity and freedom, then there would come to be a stronger basis on which they could build intentional connections with the other, knowing that it is they who could have been in the other's shoes.

For the society, the most significant implication is to revise its history so as to include and place the contribution of immigrants to the development of this country at the center of the

⁴⁰⁵ P. A. Lamoureux, "Immigration Reconsidered in the Context of an Ethic of Solidarity," in *Made in God's Image*, ed. R. Duffy and A. Gambatese (New York: Paulist Press, 1999):115.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

national narrative. In addition to the historical importance of European immigrants, the history of native Americans and that of non-European immigrants must find expression at all levels of education, social initiatives, and political dialogue. Ronald Takaki echoes the importance of revisiting and revising American history in the following.

But what is needed in our own perplexing times is not so much a “distant mirror, as one that is “different.”... What happens when historians leave out many of American’s peoples? What happens, to borrow the words of Adrienne Rich, “when someone with the authority of a teacher” describes our society, and “you are not in it”? Such an experience can be disorienting – “a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.”⁴⁰⁷

If American society prides itself on being a nation built by immigrants, then its national narrative must include a remembrance (as in re-remembering of its people), recollection (as in re-collecting its history), and recognition of diverse groups of immigrants that had participated in the building of this country in the past, that are participating in the present, and that will participate in the future. It is a matter of identity just as it is a matter of justice.

Another implication for the society is to re-evaluate how it defines and treats its own members. William T. Cavanaugh implies that there is an intentional and self-serving purpose in implementing ineffective border control strategies, resisting comprehensive immigration reforms, and setting inconsistent immigration policies by the government. He states,

Immigrants can and do find ways to enter, return to, and stay in the United States. What they lack is the official recognition and full rights accorded to citizens. The fact that the border “problem” has gone unfixed for decades should lead us to suspect that the ongoing problem serves a purpose. The United States needs a readily exploitable source of cheap labor. The purpose of border is not simply to exclude immigrants but to define them, to give them an identity...an identity that...defines the person as being neither here nor fully there.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷ R. Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*, (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1993), 16.

⁴⁰⁸ W. T. Cavanaugh, “Migrant, Tourist, Pilgrim, Monk: Mobility and Identity in a Global Age,” *Theological Studies* 69, (2008), 340-356.

Therefore, while the society puts immigrants to work, they reject and mistreat them as if they do not want them. This hypocritical stance must be repealed and replaced by authentic, honest, and self-critical narratives of identity and policy in regard to immigration and immigrants.

Politicians, academia, the legal profession, the business community, activists, religious bodies, and representatives from various fields of the society must enter into dialogue with the commitment to developing and articulating national standards for receiving, accommodating, and protecting immigrants along with ethical guidelines for treating those seeking refuge and providing legal avenues for providing employment opportunities to those who wish to come and work in this country without renegeing on their rights and criminalizing them. There is nothing more sinister than allowing people in and letting them stay while exploiting their labor without treating them as rightful residents of this country and as people with sacred worth.

A related implication is for the society to acknowledge its oppressive history against the marginalized groups in this country while being intentionally and stubbornly committed to doing the work of improving racial relations lest it digresses and degenerates back into a society driven by bigotry and racism. One way to counter this pull toward radical conservatism and racial backwardness is to continue to uncover stories from the underside of the society that obstinately speak of liberty, equality, diversity, and dignity for all people groups and to generate narratives of inclusion, tolerance, progress, and solidarity with the aim of continually shifting the exclusivist dominant center.

In summary, it is important to see the society as being malleable and susceptible to both external and internal influences, which is in the constant process of being made and remade by many active actors. For this reason, the immigrant, the local, church, marginalized groups, and

God must work together to continue to pressure the society to accept liberative, just, and emancipatory narratives by co-authoring hospitality, mutuality, and solidarity on all levels and dimensions of social organization and cultural consciousness.

Chapter 10: Becoming Hopeful -

Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

As a new immigrant, the saying goes, “Whoever picks you up from the airport, whatever business they are in is what you will go into.”⁴⁰⁹

As I am writing this final chapter of my dissertation in my office at St. Francis Medical Center in Midlothian, Virginia, a housekeeping employee is coming in to empty the wastebaskets. I can tell that she has come from another country based on her fluency in Spanish and difficulty in speaking English to me. Here, I work as a chaplain in a Catholic hospital in a predominantly white middle-class neighborhood, but inside this small microcosm of American society, I daily interact with people of diverse ethnicities, cultures, religious traditions, and social statuses. I work with many nurses and doctors, who have come to this country from their own in Asia, Africa, Europe, and other Americas. I minister to patients, most of whom are of European heritage, but I know they carry different stories and experiences that make each one of them unique. I work with a surgical technician who is from Russia and a physical therapist who is from the Philippines. I work with a food service employee who is from Bhutan. We all have come here from one place or another; even those who were born right in this town have gone to other places and come back. We are all in one sense or another immigrants, if not in life history, then at least in the existential sense of the word.

⁴⁰⁹ John Kim’s words in “The Korean American Success Story” BBC News On-line Edition (March 30, 2011), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-12888908>.

This study has been borne out of my personal experience as an immigrant in this country. For the past twenty or so years I have lived in this country, I felt at times that I did not belong here and at other times that I did. The most exciting feature of my journey as an immigrant has been the opportunities afforded me to meet people of many different cultures and backgrounds, and I can attest that my life has been enriched greatly as a result. Someone told me once, “It is the people that you meet in life that form you,” and this is truly so. Through this study, hopefully, I have given expression to the lived experiences of many immigrants and immigrant communities whose contributions to this country over the years have not been sufficiently recognized. If America is about people, then America is about immigrants, not just European immigrants, but also those from other parts of the world.

Immigration and immigrants will continue to receive much attention as the world becomes increasingly globalized and interconnected. Despite the history of immigration and its continued importance in the society, not much has changed in how immigration and immigrants are being viewed, discussed, and treated in this country. Unfortunately, while immigrants go about living and working in their daily lives in this country, the society at large does not seem to know what to do with them or how to relate to them. On one hand, the government deals with immigration through inconsistent and even self-contradictory ways. On the other, the members of the dominant culture struggle to embrace them as rightful and legitimate residents of this country, as they themselves are. My dissertation was aimed at presenting concrete proposals from a pastoral theological perspective about how the local and the immigrant could relate to each other. In this way, the study has been as much about the identity of the immigrant as the relational ethics between the two.

Changes Undertaken

In the beginning of this journey of preparing for and writing this dissertation, I did not know if my research and reflections would change how I thought about immigration and immigrants to any significant degree. For example, I thought that much of what I would find in my research of the Korean immigrant experience was consistent with my presuppositions that I over the years came to possess as an immigrant in this country. Hence, I approached this subject with a lot to say but in a stoic manner in which to go about achieving the task. As I mentioned previously, I had the passion for the topic but I also carried internally a sense of quiet pessimism about the current state of immigration politics in this country into this project. In my final reflection, however, I must admit that there have been several significant changes that resulted in my attitudes and values from engaging in this journey.

First, I was moved from a position of quiet pessimism to a place of quiet optimism. The stories of my interviewees confirmed the harshness of immigrant existence but at the same time the beautiful and courageous aspects of the life that refuse to give into external threats. I came upon many stories of personal triumph, neighborly concern, and hopeful engagement with the other that permeated my interviewees' lives as well as those of biographies. My cynicism toward a society that seems to be treading down the wrong path of racism and protectionist politics at the expense of the marginalized began to be alleviated by the efforts of courageous immigrants and locals welcoming and caring for each other. I realized that our hope for a better future does not really lie in political progress but rather in the progress of personal and communal commitments to conversing, working, and living with our neighbors responsibly.

Second, I came to realize that, while immigrant life is remarkably unique and particular in its experiences and circumstances, it is still part of the larger composite of the human life, and as such, speaks to all people. In the beginning, I was preoccupied with uplifting the plight of Korean immigrants through their stories. However, slowly, I began to see their pains, struggles, and aspirations also residing in the experiences of other people groups albeit in different forms. The lived experience of Korean immigrants presented a vision of life that is fluid, mobile, and provisional. Though their experience is substantially different from those who do not leave their homelands, I began to see that there are many fragmentations and disparate aspects of the life of non-immigrants that, in the existential sense of searching for groundedness and stability, share many points of convergence with immigrants. In this sense, immigrant experience is different and yet similar to other human experiences. Within this tension between particular and shared ways of being human, pains and joys of life seem to be all the more magnified and accentuated in the experience of the immigrant. The insecurities, fears, dreams, and hopes of life seem to make the immigrant's life all the more meaningful as well as tenuous. What appears in the portrait of the immigrant is then the full spectrum of colors; colors that make human life what it is. The person of immigrant, just as that of the local, is seen as being in need of mutuality, solidarity, and hospitality with the other. If God had anything to do with immigration, I believe, God's intention was that the immigrant and the local were created as partners whose need for each other was fundamental, mutual, and even spiritual. What is offered in each other, then, is this dynamic relationship that can bring their respective humanity to fullness. Into this relationship of mutuality, God calls the local and the immigrant as creative and responsible neighbors, who work hard to co-author their lives.

Third, though at times my reflections may have sounded overly idealistic and even utopian, I came to realize that the relationship between the immigrant and the local is complex and complicated by many different factors that defy simple and reductionist interventions. While there are measurable improvements that could be made immediately through authentic and hospitable encounters with each other, real life situations are messy, and significant historical, political, cultural and economic realities, injuries, and animosities do exist among people which require a substantial repair and reconciliation before any meaningful work of building bridges can possibly be undertaken. It is always easier to talk about how we need to get along with each other than to clear entrenched barriers toward actually belonging together.

Another implication of this messiness of articulating relational ethics between the immigrant and the local comes from the difficulty in distinguishing clearly who the immigrant and the local are. All of the people groups that arrived in this country over the years, apart from Native Americans, at one point or another have been immigrants before turning locals later. This historical analysis points to the racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic politics of drawing and re-drawing the boundary between the newcomer and the incumbent. In a way, we are both immigrants and locals simultaneously. Therefore, hospitality, in this sense, is better served not by a rigid classification of the local and the immigrant but by a self-awareness and responsible admission of how the society has received different people groups in the past and how the commonwealth needs to be conceived going forward.

Where Does *Cheong* Go From Here?

Korean immigrants, with the best and worst of their experiences, are one of these immigrant groups that currently enrich the tapestry of the U.S. Though their history of immigration, their immigrant experience, the circumstances surrounding their present situation in the U.S., and how they are perceived by others are nuanced differently, they share important similarities and realities as other immigrant groups do and encounter the same problems and concerns with other minority groups in this country. One cultural narrative that is of peculiar importance to Korean immigrants is that of *Cheong*, the mode of interpersonal and communal relatedness that privileges the embodied expression of love and mutual care in their personal and communal life. The narrative of *Cheong* has important implications for engendering new ways of being, living, and relating as individuals and communities who face a many complications, perplexities, and challenges from being placed on the margins of the society. By promoting these “sticky” sort of emotion-rich and relationally “thick” experiences of belonging to, and being cared for by, a group of people unreservedly and unconditionally in *Cheong*, people can incubate hope and resilience, which then empowers them to engage the wider culture with courage and patience. As the local enters into authentic encounters of hospitality informed by *Cheong* with the immigrant, they are also changed, empowered, and cared for by the experience. As both the local and the immigrant live into hospitality as creative and responsible neighbors, their trust and love for each other increase and a conduit of blessing becomes established between the two, eventually leading to greater partnership and solidarity that generate enduring implications for the wider culture. In this way, though the American Dream may not come to fruition in the sense of material success, God’s dream of blessed humanity can come about in

every single encounter of mutuality, solidarity, and hospitality among conscientious, caring, and ethical neighbors.

Cheong has not been empirically researched except by a few in the psychological field. Therefore, there is a great need for research on the topic of *Cheong* in the social sciences beyond generating phenomenological and relational descriptions. In theology, there has been so far one scholarly attempt at utilizing *Cheong* as a theological construct, which was done by Wonhee Anne Joh in her post-colonial Christology, *Heart of the Cross*.⁴¹⁰ I have used *Cheong* in this study mainly as a relational construct without imbuing in it much theological or spiritual significance. *Cheong* was mainly used as a mode of human interrelatedness with implications for interculturally informing hospitality and other models of human social interaction. When *Cheong* was used in relation to God or Christ, it was used as a signifier of self-sharing love, which is best expressed by, and already available in, the biblical term “Agape” for love, and as a way of bringing God or Christ into the context of immigrant experience, rather than as a critical or revisionist theological concept.

The relationship between *Cheong* and another important indigenous Korean cultural construct, *Han*, needs to be further researched. Conceptual and theological works building on the preliminary comparative works done by Andrew Sung Park⁴¹¹ and Wonhee Anne Joh⁴¹² are needed to generate implications for how these two constructs could be further appropriated for cultural and theological reflections.

⁴¹⁰ W. A. Joh, *Heart of the Cross*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

⁴¹¹ A. S. Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004).

⁴¹² W. A. Joh, *Heart of the Cross*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

The Interface of Pastoral Theology and Immigration

Within the field of pastoral theology, I believe more works on the topic of immigration and the immigrant need to be generated, particularly in relation to ethics and theological anthropology. There is a virtual absence of work in the fields of theology, including pastoral theology, that discuss the relationship between immigrants and those of the dominant culture, and, in this sense, my dissertation has broken the ground as a constructive theological work on this interface of ethics and theology. As more contextualized theological works become generated such as those of Peter C. Phan⁴¹³ and Eleazar S. Fernandez,⁴¹⁴ pastoral theologians using actual research on the lived experience of immigrant communities as in M. C. Moeschella's *Living Devotions*⁴¹⁵ need to further engage the topic of immigrant in intercultural and interdisciplinary scholarship.

Theological anthropological works hold particular importance for immigrants because, for the longest time in this country, God and the human have been largely theorized, explained, and articulated from the perspective of the dominant culture, particularly from that of European, male, and heterosexual orientations, and to add one more layer of disconnect, it was presented from the perspective of the citizenry based on nativity and legal status. The time has come for imagining God and human life colorfully from many different political, social, cultural, and legal positions, including those of whom, by the current cultural definition, cannot lay claim to America as their own.

⁴¹³ P. C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face; In Our Own Tongues; Being Religious Interreligiously* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003).

⁴¹⁴ E. S. Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2004).

⁴¹⁵ M. C. Moeschella, *Living Devotions* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2008).

In this effort, pastoral theological works that employ the bottom-up approach of theological reflection, rather than the top-down approach, can play a significant role by uncovering and naming the neglected narratives of immigrants and their communities. Research on diverse forms of pastoral theology of immigration and migration that inform both the conceptual frameworks and practices of care is encouraged. Also, those that examine the experience of illegal immigrants and migrants that can contribute to their particular concerns and circumstances are of urgent necessity.

Related to pastoral care and counseling, there is a serious lack of scholarship regarding the care of immigrants, immigrant families, and immigrant communities. Much of the scholarship on this topic comes from the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, and understandably there is a lack of theological perspective that can generate implications for the care of immigrants based on their religious, spiritual, and theological concerns. It is my wish that pastoral theologians and clinicians start seriously engaging the care of immigrants in their work.

Last Word

Going back to the quote on the top of the first page, I continue to be amazed how the media continues to promote Asian Americans as model minorities without seriously thinking through the implications of this misguided correlation and presentation. The quote came from an article that appeared on the on-line edition of BBC News for US & Canada under the title “The Korean American Success Story.”⁴¹⁶ The descriptions of Korean Americans used in the article might as well have been my own in the sense that they portray those that immigrated to the urban centers in the U.S. during the 1980’s. It’s true that through hard work and sacrifice many Korean

⁴¹⁶ “The Korean American Success Story” BBC News On-line Edition (March 30, 2011), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-12888908>.

Americans achieved much personal and academic success. However, it does not contain any information about the previous generations of Korean immigrants and their experiences in American society. It also does not contain references of different groups of people within the Korean immigrant community or those who came here as adoptees. Without disagreeing with the article's main thesis on the Korean immigrants' emphases on family, education, and small business, I am appalled at the cultural media outlets' continued reliance on the misguided and misinformed premises such as "model minority" and "meritocracy" and its naïveté about the social structures of interlocking systems of privilege and culture that continue to marginalize immigrant communities in this country. Yes, Korean Americans are succeeding in the sense that any hard working group of people can succeed to a large measure in this country. Contrary to the orientation of the article, without recognizing or researching the difficult realities facing immigrants and immigrant communities and the systemic mechanisms operant in the society that keep them marginalized, any portrayal of an American success story results in an unbalanced and unhealthy portrayal of immigrants as it ends up being a vain attempt at providing a feel-good story without any constructive or critical value to it.

The quote points to two realities facing Korean immigrants, one positive and one negative. The positive refers to the presence of the Korean immigrant community through which many Korean immigrants and their families are being helped. To know somebody is waiting at the airport at the time of their arrival in the new country is truly comforting to many immigrants. However, the negative is that, if those that are already here have not had a wide range of opportunities, the new immigrant's experience and opportunities might be just as limited and restricted. In other words, the experiences of the person who picks up the new immigrant at the

airport are as good as it would get for him or her. Korean immigrants experienced and continue to experience much suffering and hardship. Though they have gained a lot, they have lost and suffered a lot. That has been so far the Korean immigrant experience in the U.S. I just hope that my dissertation can be an informed and critical source of information and insights that contribute constructively to the betterment of the racial relations in this country. Borrowing the words of one of my interviewees, I would like to imagine the immigrant and the local saying to each other, “You are as important as I am.”

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APPENDIX

Form A

Recipient's Name
Recipient's Address

Date:

Sungjin Peter Kim
1702 Swift Circle #101
Midlothian, VA 23114

Ref: Study – “Being Human Colorfully” the Korean American Immigrant Experience

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

My name is Sungjin Peter Kim and I am conducting a research study on the Korean American immigrant experience as a Ph.D. candidate in Pastoral Theology and Counseling at Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University. If you permit, I would like to visit your organization with your permission and explain my study to you and meet with your members in the hope of recruiting interviewees for my research interviews and case studies.

The study centers on individual immigrants' stories of immigration and how they understand themselves, others, and their faith in light of their immigrant experience. As the researcher, I am interested in reflecting on the immigration experience of Korean immigrants in the United States of America and developing a pastoral theology of immigration based on the research data in the hope of articulating the experiences of Korean immigrants and generating theoretical and practical applications for the better care of immigrants in this country.

The actual interviewing will be held from April of 2009 through August of 2009. There are no political or cultural institutions or organizations that are affiliated to or funding or supporting this research study. It is strictly for my own academic work and as thus, all the information that gathered will only used for that academic purpose and be kept confidential. To better explain the study, I have enclosed a copy of the informed consent Form with this letter.

I would greatly appreciate if you could grant me an opportunity to visit your organization and meet with your members and explain this research study in more detail. If you can, please respond by phone call, email, or letter and let me know when I can visit you.

Thank you so much for your cooperation,

Sincerely,

Rev. Sungjin Peter Kim, Ph.D. (ABD)
Richmond Korean Presbyterian Church
(804) 355-6033, pastorpeterkim@yahoo.com

P.S. If you want to verify the legality and validity of this research study or my standing as a Ph.D. student or as a minister of the Word and Sacraments in PC USA, please contact the following individuals.

Dr. Edward J. McMahon
Assistant Dean for Advanced Studies, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University
e.mcmahon@tcu.edu, 817.257.5662

Rev. Syngman Rhee
Mid-Atlantic Korean Presbytery of Presbyterian Church U.S.A.
Union-Theological Seminary & Presbyterian School of Christian Education
srhee@union-psce.edu, 804.355.0671

Informed Consent Form

**TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
FORT WORTH TEXAS**

Study: "Being Human Colorfully," the Korean American Immigrant Experience

Researcher: Sungjin Peter Kim
Sponsor: Ph.D. Program in Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling
Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University

Statement of the Purpose and Procedures

1. The research seeks to examine the narrative structures of the stories of immigration of Korean immigrants in the United States. It explores the themes, ideas, images, and meanings attached to the subjects' stories of departing from their counties of origin and settling in the United States.
2. The research involves human participants.
3. The research participation is limited to four separate sessions with each session lasting no more than 2 hours for case studies and one session lasting no more than 2 hours for in-depth interviews.
4. The in-depth interview sessions are tape-recorded.
5. The research with human participants will take place from April of 2009 through August of 2009.

Statement of Risks and Voluntary Participation

1. There is no foreseeable risk or discomfort in this study.
2. Participants might experience an emotional and psychological reaction when recalling personal memories. However, since all material is voluntary, participants are asked to use their discretion in deciding only what is comfortable to disclose.
3. Participation in this study is voluntary and persons who consent to participate may choose to conclude their involvement in the project at any point without penalty.
4. There is no compensation offered for participation.

Statement of Record Keeping and Confidentiality

1. All the collected materials including tapes of interviews are confidential and will be kept safely in a secured location only accessible by the researcher.
2. The materials identifying the subject will be maintained and, following a period of five years, destroyed.
3. The identities of the participants will be kept confidential.
4. The names of the participants will be changed to protect their identities when mentioned in public presentation or written publication.
5. No confidential information will be shared by the research with anyone, except in consultation with the researcher's faculty advisor.
6. Confidentiality, however, can be breached when the subject conveys homicidal or suicidal ideation. In that case, the researcher has the right to contact proper authorities to keep the subject from harming him or herself or anyone else.

Statement of the number of subjects involved

1. The sample size will be about fifteen to twenty people for case studies and interviews combined.

Please read the following and sign below

- You have the right to contact the individuals listed below for answers to questions about the research and the research subject's rights, and in the event of problems arising as a result of the research and if you wish to withdraw from the project.

Contact Information	
The Director of ORSP:	
The Chair of TCU Institutional Review Board:	
The Researcher: Sungjin Peter Kim 804.302.4295	
The Faculty Advisor for the Research: Dr. Joretta Marshall	817.257.7575

- If you are satisfied with your understanding of the information in this document and agree to participate in this research project, please sign and date both copies of the form.

Participant's printed name _____ Date _____

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher Sungjin Peter Kim _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature_____

Date_____

**TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
FORT WORTH TEXAS**

리서치 참여 승인 문서

리서치 제목: 미주 한인 이민자의 경험을 토대로 한 이민 신학

이 리서치를 위해 자금을 제공하는 주는 기관: 없음

리서치 연구자:

(1) Dr. Christie Cozad Neuger, Brite Divinity School, (2) Sungjin Peter Kim (the Researcher) 1702 Swift Circle #101, Midlothian, VA 23114

연구의 목적:

이 연구는 미국에 있는 한인 이민자들이 갖고 있는 이민의 경험 이야기의 특색을 발견해 내는 데에 목적이 있다. 이민자 개인들의 이민 경험 이야기 가운데 반복적으로 나타나는 주제들을 살펴보며 연구해 보기로 한다. 두번째의 목적은 바로 이런 이민 경험담의 이야기가 연구에 참여하는 면접자들의 자아개발 과정과 다른 사람과 신에 대한 이해에서

어떻게 작용하며 어떠한 영향을 주는지 알아보는 데에 있다. 이민 경험이 이민자의 세계관에 대해 상당한 영향력을 행사하는 지 하지 않는 지에 대한 질문을 이 리서치에서는 하고 있다.

이 리서치에 참여하는 사람의 숫자는 몇명입니까?

18 명에서 20 명입니다.

이 리서치에서 참여자로서 해야 하는 역할은 무엇입니까?

참여자로서 해야 할 역할은 자신이 미국에 이민 오며 이곳에 자리잡는 과정에서 경험한 것들을 말씀해 주는 것입니다.

당신이 사례연구의 대상이 된다면 당신이 소유하고 있는 사진이라든지 문서등을 보여 주셔야 할 수도 있습니다.

얼마의 시간을 이 연구에 참여하는데에 소비해야 합니까?

2009 년 **5** 월부터 **9** 월까지가 리서치 기간입니다. 당신의 참여도 이 기간중에 필요합니다.

인터뷰 참여자는 모두 우선적으로 인터뷰 진행 방법과 참여자의 권리를 알리는 **1** 시간의 예비교육을 받아야 합니다. 그 후 한번의 두시간짜리 인터뷰이든지 아니면 네번의 두시간짜리 사례연구 인터뷰에 참여 요구 됩니다.

이 리서치에 참여함으로 격을 수 있는 위험은 무엇이며 그 위험성을 극소화시키기 위해 어떠한 조치는 취하고 있습니까?

이 연구 과정에는 아주 극소의 위험성만 있다고 가정하고 있습니다. 연구과정에서 사용되는 술책이 아무 것도 없으며, 본인이 원하지 않는 자료는 어떠한 것이든지 밝히지 마십시오. 그렇지만 본인의 이민 경험담을 나누시는 과정에서 강한 감정들을 느끼실 수 있습니다. 이것을 위해 연구자는 당신의 심적상태가 어떠한지에 대해 때때로 물어볼 것입니다. 본인이 어떠한 이유로든지 이 인터뷰과정을 중단하고 쉽시면 연구자에게 구두로 표현하시면 인터뷰는 즉각 중단될 것입니다. 이러한 조치를 통해 연구

참여자에게 올수있는 감정적 심리적 아픔을 극소화시키게 됩니다.

이 리서치에 참여하면 어떠한 유익함을 얻을 수 있나요?

이 리서치에 참여함으로 당신의 이민 경험에 대해 깊은 생각을 해 볼 수 있게 되며, 또한 다른이와 나눌 수 있다는 유익함이 있습니다. 또한 당신은 이민자들의 경험을 사회에 알리며 이민신학을 발전시키는데 이바지 할 수 있게 됩니다.

이 리서치에 참여하면 받는 금전적인 배상이 있나요?

아무런 금전적인 배상이 없습니다.

인터뷰에 참여하는 방법외에 이 연구에 참여하는 다른 길은 없나요?

없습니다.

나의 개인 정보와 기밀성은 어떻게 지켜게 됩니까?

이 리서치에 참여하는 그 처음 부터 당신의 개인 정보는 안전하게 지켜질 것입니다. 당신에 대한 아무런 정보나 당신이 인터뷰에서 한 모든 말은 다른 사람에게 알려지지

않습니다. 인터뷰 과정 가운데에서 어떠한 부분에서라도 불만족하시다면 언제든지 인터뷰 중단을 요청하실 수 있습니다.

본인이 원하시는 내용만 인터뷰과정에서 밝히시면 됩니다. 대부분의 인터뷰 질문들은 정해진 답이 없는 질문들이며 본인이 편하신 방법으로 답을 해 주시면 됩니다.

인터뷰 과정에서 수집된 내용과 정보는 연구자 사무실에 있는 자물쇠로 잠겨진 안전한 캐비닛에 보관될 것이며 이 연구가 끝난지 만 3년 후에는 다 소멸될 것입니다.

이 리서치에 참여하는 것은 자발적인 것입니까?

네, 자발적입니다.

이 리서치에 참여하다가 중단할 수 있습니까?

네

어떠한 방법으로 이 리서치 참여하는 도중에 탈퇴할 수 있습니까?

인터뷰 과정 중에 아무때나 원하시면 구두로 참여를 중단하고자 하는 뜻을 연구자에게 표현하시면 됩니다.

이 리서치 참여 승인 문서의 사본을 받을 수 있나요?

네

이 리서치에 대해 질문이 있으면 누구를 연락하면 됩니까?

Dr. Christie Cozad Neuger

Advisor to the researcher, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University

c.neuger@tcu.edu, 817.257.7584

만약 이 리서치에 참여하는 참여자가 갖고 있는 권리에 대해 문제가 있을 때 누구에게 연락을 하면 됩니까?

Dr. Meena Shah, Chair, TCU Institutional Review Board, Telephone 817 257-7665

Dr. Janis Morey, Director, Sponsored Research, Telephone 817 257-7516

이 문서에 싸인을 함으로 당신은 이 문서에 있는 내용 전체를 읽었으며, 당신이 갖고 있는 질문에 대해 모든 대답을 받았으며, 만약 이 연구에 참여함에 관해 질문이 있으면 누구를 연락할 수 있는 지에 대한 정보를 받았으며, 본인이 스스로 자진하여 이 리서치

연구에 참여하기를 원한다는 것과, 참여자로 본인이 갖고 있는 법적인 권리를 아무것도 포기하지 않는다는 것을 표명하게 되는 것입니다.

참여자 성명 _____

참여자 싸인 _____ 날짜 _____

연구자의 싸인 _____ 날짜 _____