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Transforming the Paradigm of Wo/men's Human Rights
Through Intercultural Pastoral Care:
Narratives of Vulnerability & Contradiction
in Korean Wo/men's Lives in the Colonial and Postcolonial Period

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M.Div., Harvard Divinity School, 2001
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Abstract

Transforming the Paradigm of Wo/men's Human Rights Through Intercultural Pastoral Care: Narratives of Vulnerability & Contradiction in Korean Wo/men's Lives in the Colonial and Postcolonial Period

This dissertation seeks to complicate the essentialized trope of the “poor and suffering Asian woman” in the wo/men’s human rights paradigm. More specifically, it critiques the *han*-filled victim subject in Korean feminist the*logical discourse. The dissertation provides a genealogy and critique of a the*logy of *han* that is so predominant in the narratives and theories of and about Korean wo/men’s lives. It examines the historiography of the politicization of *han* within Korean nationalist discourse and look at ways of depoliticizing the concept. In arguing that a the*logy of *chǒng* is troubling as well, it traces its genealogy to the period of Japanese colonial rule of Korea (1910-1945).

In desiring to move towards a post-nationalist trajectory, as well as a post-identity framework for Asian/American feminist the*logical discourse, the dissertation argues for a better understanding of feminist legal scholar, Martha Fineman’s theory of vulnerability. This project argues that the essentialized trope of the “*han*-filled woman” strategically being used by the wo/men’s rights movement perpetuates and substantiates a wounded-victim identity, as well as codifies her powerlessness. Rather than focusing on the essentialized victim subject in the discourse of wo/men’s human rights, this project examines the fluidities of our agency by looking at the vulnerable subject. Post-nationalist, vulnerability analyses of two cases studies, “comfort wo/men,” and camptown prostitution in South Korea are presented. This work demonstrates that under situations of domination from various forms of power such as racism, patri-kyriarchy, colonialism, and imperialism; wo/men have expressed variegated forms of resistance, agency, subjectivity and self-determination.

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This Ph.D. journey began long ago – twenty years ago when I was an undergraduate student at Boston College. Dr. Ramsay Liem introduced me to the field of Asian American Studies and helped me to explore my roots as an Asian and American. Professor Ramsay Liem, thank you also for helping me get my first job out of college in Berkeley, California! It was working in this grass-roots organization that sowed the seeds of my interests in nationalism and human rights in South Korea. I am also indebted to the late Edward Wagner (1924-2001) at Harvard University who founded the Korean Studies program in the United States. He was a brilliant scholar, as well as a great teacher who was incredibly generous with his time. His passion for Korean studies was infectious and his sense of humor was endearing. I am indebted to Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, renowned feminist the*ologian, whose pioneering work changed my world-view and shaped my understanding of the importance of always questioning

dominant power structures. It was because of my exposure to her work in the early 1990s that I chose to go to Divinity School.

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INTRODUCTION

In the initial inquiry of my dissertation project, I have asked the question, “why has *han*, a Korean/American¹ concept of suffering, been the mobilizing factor in helping to create and sustain a national Korean identity and spirituality,² especially for Korean wo/men?”³ I provide a critical, historiographical analysis of the discourse of *han* and its close linkage with Korean wo/men. I examine how an imbrication of Korean wo/men and a the*logy⁴ of *han* has contributed to an essentialized, monolithic view of Korean wo/men in the wo/men’s human rights discourse. In that regard, I want to theorize wo/men’s suffering

¹ David Palumbo-Liu (1999) uses the term, Asian/American, to denote that the slash, “/” signifies the distinction between “Asian” and “American,” at the same time that it can also constitute a fluid movement between the two. Both “Asian” and “American” are unsettled meanings in Asian American discursive historiography. Like Lisa Lowe (1991), Palumbo-Liu argues that the boundaries that have been constructed between the two terms are not as solid and distinct as once assumed. I write “Asian/American” and “Korean/American” as such throughout my dissertation, employing the same understanding of Palumbo-Liu. It denotes the interculturality and hybridity of our identity. Whether here in the United States, or in Korea, we are affected by the dynamics of both cultures and histories, as they have been overlapping since our first ancestors immigrated here in the late nineteenth century. I acknowledge the potential problems that the usage of the words in this way may conjure, as it may conflate the heterogeneity, multiplicity, and fluidity of the category of “Korean,” with Asian and Asian Pacific North Americans in the minds of the reader.

² Spirituality is described as “the totality of a being that expresses itself in ways of life, modes of thinking, patterns of behavior and conduct, and attitudes toward the mystery that surrounds our immediate world and to the depth below depths, and to the light beyond lights” (Song, 1989, p. 295).

³ I utilize the neologism constructed by feminist liberation the*logian, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1999, p. 186). “Wo/man” signifies the limits of focusing solely on a sex/gender identity because we are not a unified social group. Wo/men are a heterogeneous category, fragmented by our multiple subject positions due to race, class, religion, ethnicity, colonial historiography, our family roles, and so on. In using the neologism in my dissertation, I recognize and underscore the constantly shifting position of subjectivity, agency, and vulnerability in a wo/man’s life.

⁴ I write “the*logy, as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has written to designate that “G*d talk” is neither masculine nor feminine. To add to this, I use the*logy in this way to point out how the discourse on the “theology of *han*” is intricately connected to patri-kyriarchal nationalist politics and historiography that elides a liberative feminist critique of violence, agency, and wo/men’s human rights in South Korea. Patri-kyriarchy is also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s intellectual framework and category of analysis that addresses the dualistic conceptualization of gender oppression. Kyriarchy is derived from the Greek words for “lord” or “master” (*kyrios*) and “to rule or dominate” (*archein*), in order to redefine the analytic category of patriarchy in terms of multiplicative overlapping structures of domination. “Kyriarchy means the domination of the lord, slave master, husband, the elite freeborn educated and propertied man over all wo/men and subaltern men” (2000, p. 95). Patri-kyriarchal oppression, then, refers to the multiplicative and complex ways in which oppression occurs, not simply along the binary of male/female. Even among one particular race and ethnicity, we find systematic oppression based on clan, region, religion, education, etc. The neologism, patri-kyriarchy, more realistically addresses situations of power and control over.

and oppression that does not contribute to the current rights discourse that shows wo/men as weak and in need of protection. I see the need to re-frame the rights discourse that does not depict Asian wo/men as a uni-dimensional, homogenous group that is economically, socially, and politically victimized.

A following question that informs this project is, “what would feminist pastoral care⁵ from a Korean/American perspective look like if we did not take *han* as the starting point for engaging in the subject of care?” A critical examination of the discursive politics and nationalist historiography of *han* and wo/men in the current discourse on Asian wo/men in the wo/men’s human rights paradigm sees the need to move towards a non-identity political theoretical framework. Social and individual healing for wo/men need to involve a re-examination of the concept of *han* and its discursive imbrication with Korean wo/men. Instead, we need to engage in a critical analysis that reveals the intercultural and transcultural origins of the concept (that it is not a unique Korean concept) and incorporate a theory of our shared human vulnerability.

Through a pastoral the*logical method that incorporates feminist legal scholar Martha Fineman’s (2008) theory of vulnerability, I argue that the rights discourse can show the complex, multi-faceted, and internally diverse subjects that we Asian⁶ wo/men are in

⁵ I understand the word, “pastoral” throughout my dissertation in the way Dr. Emmanuel Lartey has utilized the term to refer more broadly to a pluralistic, postmodern and postcolonial global context (Lartey, 2003, p. 13). So “pastoral” is not christocentric as I employ it. Pastoral care is the practice of supporting each other in our humanity and vulnerability, and gleaning the theoretical insights that emerge from our practices of care for persons and communities.

⁶ I employ the terms, “Western” and “Asian,” keenly aware of the problematics of using such constructs and reifying binary discourse in their usage. I use the category, “Western feminists,” with the understanding that I am not referring to the entirety of Western feminists. I am aware that there exist variegated movements within western feminism and that the category is not monolithic. I refer to Western feminists and wo/men’s human rights that have seen “cultural divides” between themselves and women in the two-thirds world. I also use the term, “third-world” and “third world wo/men” as a categorical referential to denote the ways in “third world wo/men” have been the subaltern “othered” but also as a category of resistance that they themselves have chosen to use, as they strive to have a voice in

reality. Fineman's democratic vision of society entails giving up the securities based on the 'myth of autonomy' and identity. I examine how we can have a rights framework that takes into consideration an understanding of the human being that is dependent, inter-dependent and vulnerable (that is, we are neither completely defenseless nor are we invincible) without being labeled as weak. I interrogate what it means to have social and individual healing that recognizes structural injustices, state responsibility, individual life circumstances, as well as agency.

Fineman's work relates to a theory of exploitation and domination that a patri-kyriarchal analysis seeks to articulate. Intercultural pastoral care becomes a method with which to address such constructions of power in the wo/men's human rights (WHR) movement as well as Asian feminist the*logical discourse. I argue that the discourse of wo/men's human rights can be transformed by taking a more intercultural pastoral response to injustices that the rights discourse seeks to address. I see the need to complicate and blur the binary of perpetrator/victim essentializations of persons and communities. While this is necessary for the purpose of the law, postcolonial legal scholars and others have noted the inefficacy of such an approach and have pointed to the need to create a new paradigm from which to work in wo/men's human rights.

I argue that, as part of the wo/men's human rights discourse, we need to have a more complex theory of vulnerability that is grounded in the reality of wo/men's lives; a theory that situates the suffering of an individual within the complexities and realities of life's circumstances, as well as institutional structures. I look at two cases in which wo/men are essentialized in the violence against wo/men (VAW) movement of the WHR discourse in

transnational feminist movements. I use "third world" interchangeably with "two-thirds world." I situate myself on the margins of Western feminism, i.e., a marginalized Western-educated feminist.

Korea: “comfort wo/men” and military camptown prostitutes. Both are/have been discursively colonized categories since the issues have been defined, controlled and given legal content by wo/men of the West; and colonization of a category entails something from outside that category governing it (Fineman, 1995). I examine how the complexity of both situations is elided due to essentialized nationalist discourse. Through narratives, stories, testimonials and oral histories of Korean wo/men in the colonial and post-colonial period of Korean history; I argue for a renewed understanding of vulnerability as part of the discourse of wo/men’s human rights.

I have done a literature search on the topic of *han* and have found nothing that comes close to what I am arguing in my dissertation. I have found claims of essentialism by various scholars on the issue of *han*: feminist the*logian Nam Soon Kang (2004), Korean studies scholars James Freda (1999) and Hyang-jin Lee (2001). But there has not been a historiographical, as well as genealogical exploration on the origins of the modern the*logical understanding of *han*, as well as *chông*⁷ and its discursive linkage with colonialism and Korean nationalist discourse. I provide a feminist, postcolonial critique of the concepts, arguing for their interculturality and transculturality.

In my dissertation, I explore how our vulnerability reveals the contradictions and paradoxes in our thoughts, beliefs, relationships, and actions. Vulnerability gives rise to

⁷ Notes on transliteration: I use the McCune-Reischauer system for the Romanization of Korean in this dissertation, except when it comes to proper nouns and names that are traditionally written otherwise (or the individuals themselves have not chosen to write their names in accordance with the Revised Romanization of Korean). The Revised Romanization of Korean has replaced the older McCune-Reischauer system of Romanization of Korean (*han ’gul*) as the official Korean language Romanization. Nevertheless, scholars of Korean studies have criticized the revised system and have chosen to continue transliteration using the McCune-Reischauer system, so I have followed suit. In places where I have used Japanese words, I follow the Hepburn system for transliteration.

ambivalence in the human situation.⁸ In seeing the value of empathy in the human rights discourse, there has not been an acknowledgement of the problems associated with emotions and our vulnerability. As I explain in this dissertation, empathy and an appeal to sentiments can be a colonizing act and problematic on many levels. While we may have the capacity for emotions and feelings, how we empathize on an issue may vary from culture to culture. What may be seen as being empathic intervention in one community may be perceived as arrogant and condescending interference in another. Hunt does not acknowledge the possibility that how we emotionally respond towards an issue can be a neo-colonialist act. We are, therefore, all capable of inflicting harm on others as well. This harm we inflict on others can be intentional or unintentional. A pastoral response to this concern is to be more self-reflexive and better understand the inner place of the other. In that regard, it becomes absolutely necessary to address the shifting realities of humans (we exist on a continuum of good and evil), our institutions, and our subjectivity in various situations that arise out of our vulnerability as humans.

I explore the concept of “vulnerability as an ambivalent condition” (Oliviero, 2012). Our vulnerability as humans bestows us with the capacity to empathize; at the same time, we can be cruel and cause harm to others—intentionally and unintentionally. Binaries such as good/evil are not as clear-cut as the rights discourse would have us believe. This is, to me, the premise of Fineman’s vulnerability thesis and the heart of the issue of a discourse on vulnerability and human rights. Emotions, therefore, should be better understood in its ambivalence and interculturality in the wo/men’s rights movement. I look at the role of empathy, feelings, and emotions in relation to the

⁸ I use feminist the*logian Valerie Saiving usage of the phrase, “the human situation” to point out that there are aspects of wo/men’s experiences that are not made obvious when using the phrase, “the human condition” (1979, pp. 25-42).

wo/men's human rights framework. As vulnerable subjects, we have the capacity to feel and have emotions. We are in pain when we suffer, as well as when we see others in pain.

Method

My project looks at the care of wo/men in the human rights framework. I explore the problem of how human rights are actually inhuman (Cheah, 2006). By that, I mean that the crafting of the self is done by the wo/men's human rights discourse, and not by the wo/men themselves; i.e., it robs wo/men of our/their agency. Cheah states that human rights contributes to "inhuman conditions of the human" (p. 10). So how can we make the discourse of human rights more human (An-Na'im, 2007)? Where is the human in human rights discourse? Legal scholar Abdullahi An-Na'im (2010) states that each person should be able to articulate what human rights means for her/himself and contribute to the on-going discourse. It should not be dictated from above and imposed onto people or communities. He argues that we all have a moral compass that guides our actions and decisions, and everyone needs to contribute to help shape the discourse and its practices. This is what he maintains gives the human rights framework its humanity and its nature of universality. I argue that it is through a pastoral the*logical method and a theory of vulnerability that shows our most genuine humanity in working towards shared participation and co-construction of the rights framework that does not essentialize a particular group.

In this dissertation, I show how the method of pastoral care can translate into that which serves the general public and contributes to transforming the wo/men's human rights discourse (Moon, 2010). I incorporate a pastoral the*logical method to the

wo/men's human rights discourse of violence against wo/men (VAW). I situate the discourse of nationalist rhetorical practices among feminist scholars and activists as a significant problem in limiting the potential for a more liberative wo/men's human rights movement. I illustrate how a pastoral the*logical method of empathic story-listening, along with an analysis of feminist legal scholar Martha Fineman's theory of vulnerability, more realistically highlights the multiple subjectivities and agentic struggles of wo/men who have been portrayed solely as victims in the rights discourse.

Pastoral the*logian Carrie Doebling contends that listening to the story is the first step in the pastoral care process of providing care and healing to the care seeker (2006, p. 15). Deep, empathic listening entails having a relationship with the person or the community. In that regard, my dissertation looks at the significance of care and relationship through story-listening in the human rights movement. Since care work is about building relationships, pastoral the*logy has an integral role in theorizing and contributing to the discourse about care work. My dissertation highlights the importance of narrative, story-telling and empathic listening. Benhabib (1996) points out that one of Arendt's greatest contributions to feminist theory is story-telling. Feminist historians and political theorists have argued for the importance of story-telling as a method and how it can bring new perspectives to feminist theory. The narrator is a moral judge and "historical judgment revealed the perspectival nature of the shared social world by representing its plurality in narrative form" (Benhabib, 1996, p. 89). My case study chapters, then, become fresh narratives of wo/men's agentic struggles in the face of vulnerability. By empathic listening, I refer to methods to which we must be attentive in pastoral care: historiography, diaries, fiction and non-fiction writing, as well as testimonials.

Pastoral Care, Literature and Wo/men's Human Rights

In my chapters, I also engage in a vulnerability analysis of some works of Korean literature that deal with the subjects of Japanese colonialism, U.S. imperialism, and violence against wo/men,—and how the theme of emotions and *han* is manifest in these works. I argue that literary analysis is an important pastoral/ the*logical tool, as it provides the imaginative space to move the reader emotionally and spiritually into the “worlds” and “thoughts” of others they could otherwise not enter.⁹ Verbatims are important methodological tools within the clinical pastoral care educational framework, and I argue that they are just as effective for the communal contextual, as well as the intercultural paradigms of pastoral the*logy. Often times, the text itself is a “living human document” that is representative of and becomes a portal to actual life stories or cases. Fiction, diaries, and testimonials thus become apertures through which to view and “experience” the period of colonial rule in Korea by Japan (1910-1945), as well as the period of American military occupation (1945- current).¹⁰ I argue that literature, provides a ‘window’ to history and events that provide an understanding of the author’s mindset, wishes and desires—in addition to issues that were trending during that particular juncture of time.

⁹ I once worked with a patient whose limbs had been amputated due to an accident during his period of military service. He was very stoic and lacked affect until we started a conversation about his passion for reading cowboy fiction (Western fiction). Once we entered that world of fiction, he was able to share his own experiences as he was able to relate them to the stories and narratives of his favorite cowboy heroes. It was endearing to see how this very stoic, taciturn individual opened up when the narratives became our intermediary. I read stories aloud to him, and I could see how those stories became a portal to his inner mind. As a chaplain, I have used this method of employing fiction to engage patients and have found this to be very powerful in connecting with a person who might not otherwise articulate her/his emotions and thoughts.

¹⁰ U.S. forces set up a military government in Korea shortly after Japanese surrender in 1945.

Literature provides an opportunity to peruse the methodological alternatives to a Western human rights framework (An-Na'im, 2010). An-Na'im argues that "concrete solutions to remedy globalization's tendencies to be Western-dominated" can be found in the voices of literature (2010). He has proposed story-telling as an important starting point for doing human rights work, and I believe that the wo/men's human rights discourse has not utilized this method as central to their work in locating wo/men's agency and voices. By interrogating various works of Korean fiction and other forms of writing during the Japanese colonial period and period of U.S. military occupation in Korea, I incorporate the voices of the marginalized through literature. Literature as part of the human rights discourse (especially since many writers' works were banned and they had to write subversively in Korea during certain junctures of its authoritarian colonial as well as military rule) is a reflection of what it means to be human in the face of oppression. An-Na'im's concept of the inner life is represented in literature because it provides an avenue to articulate and voice that which would have been suppressed and unaccepted otherwise. Many writers were able to show their inner life/feelings that have not been articulated through the traditional human rights paradigm. Literature shows how the human rights paradigm is a field in progress because different periods of literature convey diverse understandings of the inner life of a person, capturing the variegated meanings of what it means to be "human." Literature is able to show the complexities of subjectivity and agency that is not so easily depicted in the contemporary wo/men's human rights discourse.

Pastoral theologians Archie Smith and Ursula Pfafflin (1996) argue for the importance of the case study for helping us think about relevant pastoral care issues, what

questions to ask and what needs to be investigated. Here, I argue that case studies can be in the form of drama, verbatims, short stories, novels, diaries, and testimonials.

Anthropologist Kamala Visweswaran (1994) argues that ethnographic accounts are constructed and tell particular stories. Ethnographic narratives, argue Visweswaran, “is founded on the fiction of restoring lost voices” (p. 15). She wants us to consider the ways in which fiction can be ethnographic. I argue that this is especially true for colonized communities or oppressed individuals, as their stories may not be heard otherwise.

Also, I engage in Korean literature as important texts in the interpretation of character subjects as “living human documents.” Given what feminist political philosopher Wendy Brown (2005) has said about testimonies, speech and its relationship in limiting one’s freedom, I do not want to engage in another ethnographic account of interviews and testimonies where the comfort wo/men and wo/men who provide sexual services around military bases are exposed to the same round of questions and who have to provide another account of their testimonies that have been repeatedly told now for the past twenty years to various researchers, interviewers and students. It seems, in the words of Wendy Brown, to further encode them in the stereotypes and essentialized views of their identities. They become “permanent victims” (Brown, 2000). The stories I analyze may or may not present a more liberative view of wo/men and suffering, but I argue that these periods of literature need to be counted as part of the discursive history of wo/men’s human rights. I, however, attempt to move away from the essentialized identities of the colonial period and U.S. military occupation of South Korea and

incorporate a theory of vulnerability that complicates the notion of what constitutes “the ‘human’ in human rights discourse” (An-Na’im, 2007) through a theory of vulnerability.

Layout/Organization of the Dissertation

PART ONE: The Problems of the WHR discourse, issues within spiritual care, issues within Korean historiography and Asian/American feminist the*logy (chapters 1-4)

Chapter one addresses the current problems and issues extant in the wo/men’s human rights (WHR) paradigm. Although the VAW strategy within the WHR movement has been successful, it has not empowered wo/men nor cultivated a complex understanding of our agency. I examine the “pyrrhic victories” of the international wo/men’s human rights movement, i.e., the successes and limitations of the VAW movement. First, I provide a brief overview and history of the wo/men’s rights movement, which reveals how the current problems are not new ones. I argue that empathy by Westerners has created conditions for repeating neo-colonial acts, what Isabelle Gunning refers to as “arrogant perception” (1991, p. 189). In this regard, I argue that the issue of empathy and feelings is itself not the problem. It is how those feelings have been employed and manipulated. I argue that empathy has been misunderstood in the human rights discourse and further exploration on the topic needs to be done.

In chapter two, I argue that human rights is an important dialogue partner for pastoral care and vice versa, as there has been a recent shift in the field that looks at ways in which pastoral care can engage and transform social systems through understanding and engaging public policy, political theory, as well as other disciplines (Ramsay, 2004). I show how Emmanuel Lartey’s (2003) intercultural care paradigm is crucial for the field of pastoral care if it is to be a dialogue partner for wo/men’s human rights theory and

practice. Lartey employs the term “intercultural” because it most closely captures the “complex nature of the interaction between people who have been influenced by different cultures, social contexts and origins, and who themselves are often enigmatic composites of various strands of ethnicity, race, geography, culture and socio-economic setting” (2003, p. 13). Human rights is an important field of inquiry for pastoral care the*logians and practitioners because of the concrete changes that have come about for wo/men through the work of activists and intellectuals who have utilized and contributed to the human rights discourse.

Pastoral care is about providing empathic, listening support for those in our community and improving the daily lives of people by recognizing and underscoring modes of agency in their lives. By anchoring the theories and discussions in human rights to the intercultural pastoral care paradigm, I hope to broaden the dialogue in pastoral care and contribute to its ongoing paradigm shift on issues of agency, concepts of freedom, and dignity of the human person in a global community. I bring these issues to the forefront of pastoral care in order to help us better address societal concerns, public policy, systemic injustice, etc. in the goal of liberating and caring for those afflicted by societal injustices.

In chapter three, I briefly describe the historiography of Asian/American studies and Asian/Americans here in the United States. Discursive representations of Asian/Americans have involved struggles of various sorts, but we are still seen as perpetual foreigners here in the United States. I argue that even Korean/American scholars have contributed to problems of essentialism and nationalism in the discourse. Asian/American feminist the*logians, while they acknowledge the problems associated

with the discourse of the “poor and suffering Asian woman,” continue to perpetuate essentialism in new ways by using the same methods to construct their the*logies. The discourse of *han* and Korean wo/men places wo/men in a victim-status and elides the variegated ways in which agency has prevailed in their lives. In seeking to provide an alternative to the essentialized concept of *han*, Asian feminist the*logians have now “Koreanized” the concept of *chǒng* (feelings and affection) as an alternative to *han*. A the*logy of *han* has been replaced by a the*logy of *chǒng*. No one in the field of religion has problematized this historiographical misinterpretation of *han* and of *chǒng* in academic and the*logical circles.¹¹ To show how a the*logy of *chǒng* (Korean word for feelings, affection) is problematic as well, I critique the work of feminist the*logian, Wonhee Anne Joh.

Chapter four examines a critical aspect that has been elided in the the*logical discourse of *han* – that of modernity and how its linkage with colonialism has impacted Korean national identity. This chapter critiques the the*logical concept of suffering, *han*, within the cultural-postcolonial nationalist narrative of Korean politics. I argue that we need to problematize the paradigm of *han* as a the*logical concept alleging its uniqueness to Korean culture and is considered to be a national characteristic of the Korean people. Instead, I propose that *han*, as it has been currently understood in Korean *minjung* and feminist the*logy, arose during the Japanese colonial period of Korean history (1910-1945). I also argue that *chǒng* is a concept that was appropriated during the colonial period by literary activist, Yi Kwang-su.

¹¹ Namsoon Kang (2004) has pointed out essentialist discursive constructs of the “victim-woman” within Asian feminist the*logy.

PART TWO: PASTORAL RESPONSE & CASE STUDIES

I argue in chapter five that Martha Fineman's theory of vulnerability (2008), in addition to a patri-kyriarchal systemic analysis, better addresses the concerns for an articulation of a subject's complex subject position, as well as a deconstruction/disruption of the gender binaries that exist in the current human rights discourse. The vulnerable subject replaces the autonomous and independent, liberal subject in international wo/men's human rights discourse. I use Fineman's theory to engage in a critical re-examination of a the*logy of suffering, to re-examine the liberal subject, as well as the monolithic, truncated, third world woman-subject in international wo/men's human rights discourse. A complex theory of vulnerability contributes to the theorization of a more multifaceted subject in Asian feminist the*logical discourse that does not essentialize or stigmatize Asian wo/men as weak, poverty-stricken, and *han*-filled.

In my two case studies in chapters six and seven, I explore how the national rhetorical strategy of empathy has been employed through a the*logy of *han* to have pity on the Korean "comfort wo/men"¹² and the Korean prostitutes who worked around the U.S. military bases in South Korea during the post-liberation period (i.e., post 1945).¹³ Both groups of wo/men were marginalized and ostracized in society until recently. In strategizing and foregrounding the "*han*" of the "comfort wo/men" and camptown

¹² "Comfort wo/men" is an English translation of the Japanese euphemism, *ianfu*, (Korean: *wianbu*) which refers to the young women and girls who were providing "comfort" to mostly Japanese military soldiers by engaging in sexual acts with them during the Asia Pacific War in 1931. The military brothels that were established during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945) were set up as a form of war-time mobilization for the soldiers. The women were necessary for the explicit purpose of providing sex and "comfort" to these men in order to create "war machines." The logic was that such services would boost the spirit of the men and their ego, hence they would be more effective in their war-time fighting. While the majority of women were Korean, there were also women from Japan, China, Philippines, Indonesia, as well as other Southeast Asian countries. This chapter focuses on the Korean comfort wo/men.

¹³ Koreans refer to them as *Kijich'on* (camptown) prostitutes, or *yang-gong-ju* (Western princesses). The dynamics of the ethnicities of the wo/men have shifted significantly since the time period that I examine. Currently, foreign wo/men workers outnumber Korean wo/men around the military bases (Soh, 2008). I have not taken this new dynamic into consideration in my research.

prostitutes, they have been portrayed as victims of Japanese colonial aggression and of U.S. imperial power, respectively. Both issues are much more complex, ambiguous, and messy than the clear-cut nationalist rhetoric that has been employed. The main goal for me in the two case chapters is to underscore this complexity and to foreground wo/men's agency.

Han has become a nationalist sentiment for Koreans. Philosopher Richard Rorty (1989) has emphasized the importance of sentiments and emotions in conceptualizing rights. Through our emotional connection and attachment for/to others, we develop concerns to care for others. We do not necessarily have to know the person for whom we develop such empathic concerns. According to historian Lynn Hunt (2007), feelings and emotions were part of the reason for the emergence and growth of the human rights paradigm. Through exposure to literature and other art forms, a global rights framework co-evolved with the deepening of emotional concern for others (Hunt, 2007). Feelings and empathy, she argues, are a cultural practice. Various groups of Korean feminists, the*logians, and nationalists have evoked much emotion and empathy from the global community by strategically employing the concept of *han* in examining wo/men's human rights (WHR) issues in Korea.

To underscore the subjectivity and self-determining acts of resistance of the Korean "comfort wo/men" and camptown prostitutes, I take up the ways in which resilience to experiences of vulnerability is manifest in variegated ways among the different communities of Korean wo/men who have been the subjects of the VAW discourse. How do they exercise their agency in the face of vulnerability? Resilience is about dealing with the challenges and difficulties of life, which these wo/men have certainly managed to exhibit. In my research, I have seen how the wo/men have come

together through their vulnerability and have provided care for one another and for themselves. The wo/men's human rights discourse has not really interrogated the importance of relationship in the conversation of what constitutes human rights, or what it means to be in relationship with those who suffer human rights abuses.

In my case study chapters, I look at the ways in which agency is intertwined with citizenship and vulnerability. I show the myriad ways in which the wo/men have highlighted their agency by exercising forms of citizenship. Ruth Lister's (1997) definition of human agency and citizenship is helpful here. She states that

citizenship as participation represents an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents, individually or in collaboration with others. Moreover, citizenship rights are not fixed. They remain the object of political struggles to defend, reinterpret, and extend them (1997a, p. 9).

To see citizenship in such a light helps to challenge the notion of the wo/men in my case studies as passive victims. I examine the inter-related role of community, citizenship, and the spiritual/political nature of courage in being pastoral/spiritual sources of resilience to vulnerability – and thus, constituting agency. To summarize briefly here, I argue that forming and sustaining a supportive community has been a source of resilience for each of the groups of wo/men that I have researched. Providing care for each other and creating community is also what constitutes pastoral care work. Pastoral/spiritual care becomes a form of participatory citizenship. The pastoral *is* political.

Rather than stressing the *han* of both of these groups of wo/men, I highlight the multi-faceted nature of agency, multiple subjectivities, and the issue of our shared human vulnerability that is largely ignored in the wo/men's human rights strategies (as well as feminist the*logical discourse) when discussing these two groups of wo/men. I argue

that foregrounding the third world woman's body as a victim of solely imperial and colonial power is too simplistic a framework that elides the complex patri-kyriarchal structures and issues of agency that produce our gendered subjectivities. In both cases ("comfort wo/men" and camptown military prostitution), power over self becomes dispersed, diluted and intertwined with the powers of the state, society and culture in which the wo/men live. In the discourse of wo/men's human rights, it is central that we engage in a more complex patri-kyriarchal analysis that incorporates a vulnerability thesis that does not situate wo/men as subordinate or in need of male protection.

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In summing up my introduction, I would like to reflect on my journey of writing this dissertation and have the readers bear in mind the concept of "vulnerable writing." Comparative literature scholar Angelika Bammer (2012) compels us to think about scholarly writing as "vulnerable writing." She states that

The risks of not only telling an unconventional story, but telling it in an unconventional way, are myriad and evident: we may be misunderstood, we may be trivialized, we may elicit scorn or anger or ridicule.... To duck this challenge is our own loss. For not only are the risks we take in daring to break with convention or resist expectations and write differently worth taking, they are indispensable if we want to think critically and radically—indeed, if we want to do the difficult work of thinking on our own at all (2012, p. 2).

I categorize my own dissertation as an exercise of "vulnerable writing" in how I have chosen to critique the Korean concept of *han* and *chǒng*, as well as the issues of "comfort wo/men" and camptown prostitutes in a very unconventional way. I know my work is vulnerable to critique and that my dissertation will stir up sentiments of anger. Yet, I have chosen to critique the issues from a post-nationalist perspective because I feel that the problems of essentialist discourse

within Asian feminist the*logy and wo/men's human rights needs to be addressed and can be overcome.

My writing is vulnerable on another level: while academia has been promoting interdisciplinarity, most dissertations still remain tethered to one disciplinary method. In order to make my argument of the essentializing discourse of *han*, I needed to piece together my argument by using several disciplines and methods. I hope readers will be accepting of my own vulnerability and courage to write in a way that is certain to provoke controversy in the intellectual, activist, and mainstream Korean/American communities. I want to underscore that I take no sides in the matter, except for the well-being and health of the wo/men in the rights discourse of which I critique. I want my “vulnerable writing” to be part of a new post-nationalist, post-colonial discourse in Asian/American feminist the*logy; as well as contribute to a more realistic, complex understanding of wo/men and wo/men's issues in the wo/men's human rights discourse. I hope readers will see my dissertation in this light of desiring transformation in Asian/American feminist the*logical discourse, and not in such a way that I am trying to denigrate the great work of Korean/American feminist the*logians and activists.

Chapter One: Problems and Issues in the Wo/men's Human Rights Movement

INTRODUCTION: PYRRHIC VICTORIES OF THE WO/MEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Critical feminist theoretical discourse has pointed out the 'pyrrhic victories' of the international wo/men's human rights movement in strategically focusing on violence against wo/men (VAW). The VAW strategy has been the main focus for the international wo/men's human rights movement, and the strategy has had its benefits and consequences. While the impact of the wo/men's rights movement on the human rights paradigm has been significant and transformational for the human rights framework, postcolonial feminist critics have noted its limitations because of the conservative and protectionist ways in which it has responded to VAW that relegate wo/men's status as subordinate to men.¹⁴ Wo/men, therefore, have been further relegated to the margins and seen as weaker than men. The VAW strategy has also reinforced the unitary category, "woman." At the same time, engaging in a gender neutral discourse of wo/men further privileges male interests and relegates the needs of wo/men as subordinate.

In employing the VAW strategy to assert wo/men's rights as human rights, the wo/men's rights movement has used essentialized categories in their campaign of "women-as-poor-suffering-victim" to invoke the sentiment of fear of wo/men's susceptibility to violence by men. The focus of the VAW strategy is to cast "woman" as a victim subject. This has negatively impacted wo/men's subjectivity and further

¹⁴ Legal scholar Dianne Otto (2009) argues that the realization for feminist goals within the international human rights movement have been back-tracked. Gender mainstreaming, while having some positive effects, has also further re-entrenched stereotypes of women as in need of protection. And resolutions 1325 and 1820, in further strategizing VAW in terms of the sexual violence that wo/men encounter, have further disempowered women.

subordinated third world wo/men.¹⁵ The current wo/men's rights discourse mirrors and mimics colonial and imperialist endeavors that sought to rescue the wo/men of "uncivilized" and "underdeveloped" cultures, thereby employing neo-colonial methods that reinforce gender and cultural essentialism. Such discursive strategies have further delineated the divide between the "First" and "Third" worlds. This delineation has resurrected the discursive "native subject" and has justified imperialist approaches and interventions (Kapur, 2002).

A problem of the essentialist discourse in the WHR paradigm is the on-going contentious debate regarding "universalism" vs. "cultural relativism" and how wo/men allegedly are victims of their culture. Ideological underpinnings of "harmful cultural and religious practices" undergird the wo/men's human rights movement, indicating a lack of reflexivity in seeing harmful cultural and religious practices operative in our own Western patri-kyriarchal society. Western feminists have condemned Others' religious practices and have been critical of how institutionalized religion has oppressed and restrained wo/men's freedom.¹⁶

The truncated image of the third world wo/man as de-contextualized, underprivileged, lacking self-determination and agency has been re-invoked in the recent VAW discourse to further "other" them in relation to their enlightened Western counterparts (Kapur, 2002; Otto, 2006). The colonial victim subject is a necessary trope for the wo/men's human rights movement to be successful in combating violence against

¹⁵ By the term, "Third World," Chandra Mohanty refers to the "colonized, neo-colonized or decolonized countries (of Asia, Africa, and Latin America) whose economic and political structures have been deformed within the colonial process...." She uses the term, "third world" as "it intentionally foregrounds a history of colonization and contemporary relationships of structural dominance between first and third world peoples" (1991, p. ix-x).

¹⁶ I discuss this issue further in my next chapter.

wo/men (Kapur, 2002). This, indeed, is a paradox—that in order to provide the very protection for wo/men, we have to use a framework that is not equipped to deal with the complexities of human subjectivities that it further robs wo/men of their agentive power.

Saba Mahmood (2001), Ratna Kapur (2005), Dianne Otto (2005) have argued that feminist theory needs to move beyond the simple binary of resistance and subordination, as has been the case for much of Western feminist discourse on wo/men's human rights. Contemporary feminist theory has shown that the gender category, "woman" is neither completely object nor subject, but is constantly shifting (Moore, 1994; Engle Merry, 2006). Under situations of domination from various forms of power such as racism, patriarchy, colonialism, and imperialism; wo/men express variegated forms of resistance, agency, subjectivity and self-determination. Feminist legal scholar Martha Fineman also points out the inadequacies of the human rights paradigm as well as identitarian approaches in addressing the shifting nature of inequality. In order to be effective, law does not and cannot show the complex fluidities of how wo/men are both targets of violence and abuse, while they are also subjects of resistance and agents of change.

Feminist legal scholar Ratna Kapur (2005) has argued that by strategizing to combat VAW, the wo/men's human rights movement has had to use law as part of its solution to the problem of violence; and while doing so, has had to utilize essentialized understandings of wo/men and culture. She argues that the very nature of law requires such essentialization because it is not "equipped" to deal with more than one social power (i.e., race, gender, class, sexuality, etc) at a given time. Law relies on essentialized categories and does not reflect the multiple subjectivities of a person that are held together in one body (Moore, 1994). Law reinforces essentialist assumptions about

gender, culture, and sexual difference, thus exacerbating the problems it was intended to solve. Instead of positioning wo/men as agents of their own lives, wo/men's rights groups have worked within the narrow boundaries of the law and the human rights framework to address the very challenging and complex issue of violence against wo/men, thereby uni-dimensionally positioning wo/men as victims in need of protection. Even the most well-meaning of feminist emancipatory projects further constrain wo/men's identities as the weaker sex.

At the same time that we engage in this discursive dilemma, we are faced with the reality that wo/men are far from being liberated from violence in that the multiple forms of violence against wo/men have not abated. Wendy Brown articulates the paradoxes of rights discourse well: "rights that entail some specification of our suffering, injury, or inequality lock us into the identity defined by our subordination, while rights that eschew this specificity not only sustain the invisibility of our subordination, but potentially even enhance it" (2000, p. 232). Using this protectionist strategy, conservative religious groups are appropriating the wo/men's human rights discourse to perpetuate existing oppressive norms for wo/men regarding what constitutes the family and sexuality. In other words, they are professing to advance the rights of wo/men through a framework of patri-kyriarchy.

Just as Westerners have raised the issues of religion and culture as an impediment to wo/men's liberation, non-Westerners have also invoked the 'culture' card as a method of resistance to what has been perceived by people in the Third World as neo-imperialist practices to rob them of their right to self-determination. While scholars such as Jack Donnelly (2003) see human rights as having completely Western origins, the on-going

narrative of human rights is also the histories of the struggles of the Third World and the marginalized.¹⁷ A cynical, albeit legitimate critique of the universal human rights framework is that it originated in the West because of its imperialist actions in taking away rights to self-determination of people in the Third World, and the movement seeks to give back what was originally taken away from them (Prashad, 2007). Others interpret the rights project as finishing what the colonialist project failed to do in terms of “development” in the Third World. This practice of “othering” has further marginalized Third World societies as inferior to their Western counterparts. This is a legitimate critique, as I too, have been concerned by the similarities of the early Western imperialist projects and wo/men’s movements, with today’s current endeavors to protect and promote the rights of Third World wo/men. At the same time, I also see the universal human rights framework as equally desired by third world people as it has become a platform to address grievances related to the rights discourse. Yet, this too, has its paradoxes as it has led to forms of nationalism in which wo/men have been co-opted into the discourse at the expense of liberative feminist practices.

The dangers of an essentialized understanding of wo/men in the WHR human rights (i.e., a hegemonic Western feminist human rights framework) have been an important part of feminist discursive history. In the same vein, an equally dangerous movement is the balkanization of the current wo/men’s human rights discourse through a nationalist rhetorical political practice. When examining third world people’s and wo/men’s movements, a significant aspect of its historiographies have been in resisting against colonialism and anti-imperialism. Nationalism—and promoting the rhetoric of

¹⁷ Feminisms nor human rights are exclusively Western values that arose from the West—and subsequently imparted to those in the Two-Thirds world. Such hegemonic understandings of feminisms and of human rights has been a part of the historiography of Western feminism and racism within the feminist movement.

culture-as-national-essence— takes precedence for many feminist communities of color in combatting forms of racism. Geraldine Heng (1997) has argued the ways in which third world feminist movements almost always occur in close relationship with nationalist ones. That is, a critical feminist analysis is colored by the desire to support the nationalist cause in resisting against anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism (Heng, 1997, pp. 30-31). Kumari Jayawardena (1986) also critiques feminist movements in the third world and its symbiotic relationship with nationalist movements. The feminist visions and goals that truly liberate wo/men are subsumed by the alleged “more important” goals of the nation and the males who control those goals. I argue, therefore, for the importance in engaging in a deeper feminist liberative critical analysis of both essentialism and nationalism in feminist discourse as being divisive, as well as a set-back for advancing the goals of the wo/men’s human rights movement.

In this chapter, I explore the pyrrhic victories of the wo/men’s rights discourse. I first provide a historiographical framework for the early wo/men’s human rights movement. I argue that the current issues of essentialized discourse of the third world “woman,” religion, culture, and nationalism that plague the current movement are not new. It is a tautological debate that is reminiscent of early historical struggles of Western wo/men attempting to “emancipate” their third world sisters. Third world wo/men, in turn, have resisted through forms of nationalism, which have been largely unhelpful to the wo/men’s movement. Section two of the chapter examines the discursive divide between feminist studies of religion and secular feminists in the wo/men’s rights movement. There is an explicit overlap between feminist the*logians and wo/men’s rights; yet, the suspicion (and lack of deep understanding) of religion on the part of

secular feminists has precluded deep collaboration and solidarity between the two fields. Section three examines the concerns regarding culture and religion in the rights discourse through practices of what I term, “empathic arrogant perception.” The final section of the chapter is prescriptive: what is needed is a pluralistic framework in the rights discourse that highlights our agency and multiple subjectivities through authentic forms of care for the Other.

1: HISTORIOGRAPHY: NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY WO/MEN’S RIGHTS

While many Western scholars place the official, actual event that commenced human rights in 1945 with the UN Charter, the human rights narrative has existed long before this date (Hunt, 2007). The original framework for UHR was androcentric and was based on Western, liberal concepts of what constituted the human. The UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights pertained to political rights and reflected issues in times of war which were not as relevant to wo/men’s lived experiences. Yet, they contained the seeds of language for an articulation of incorporating the concerns of women and those who were marginalized, as it recognized the equal rights of men and women.

As wo/men have recognized that wo/men’s human rights are not the same as the rights of men, they have diligently mobilized and engaged in activism in the past thirty years. The decade 1975-1985 was a significant time period for wo/men’s rights, as much was accomplished during this period. During this decade of wo/men, CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), which recognized wo/men’s right to equality, became the wo/men’s human rights treaty. The

1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna was another important event for the wo/men's HR movement, as it began to recognize that wo/men's rights were human rights. By 1995, the global wo/men's movement had strategized to use VAW (violence against wo/men) as a way of putting wo/men's issues on the agenda for HR. The VAW campaign was fully utilized at the UN World Conference on Wo/men in Beijing and wo/men's rights were finally recognized as human rights. First wave Western feminists felt they shouldered the responsibility for ensuring that other wo/men have these rights. These same rights discourses have become embedded in national and international law, treaties and covenants. While feminists have noted the limitations set by the masculinist and individualist assumptions informing liberal conceptions of rights, they have not addressed the problems of imposing the same "rights" unto others, thereby perpetuating a colonialist framework.

In historicizing how Western feminists saw their own oppressed status and how Western liberal philosophical traditions did not address the needs of wo/men when framing concepts of rights, it is indeed paradoxical when noting the homogenizing nature of wo/men's human rights and Western feminist cultural imperialist desire to demonize daily and cultural practices of wo/men in third world nations. Wo/men's human rights and feminism evolved and is based on commitments to equality and perspectival realities. Yet, it can be observed throughout the history of Western feminism how efforts to measure the status of cultures by the 'degradation of women' have become standard tropes among those who arrogantly perceive themselves to be "more advanced." Early on in the Western wo/men's movement (18th and 19th centuries), the narrative was one of a Christian "civilizing" mission to assimilate peoples in less "advanced" parts of the

world (i.e., African and Asian countries), whereby progress was measured by European American Christian middle class standards.

In the 1820s, social thinker Charles Fourier was the first to indicate that the condition of wo/men is a ‘barometer of society,’ indicating the ‘level of advancement of a civilization’ (Hawkesworth, 2006, p. 46). Following his observation, efforts to measure the status of cultures by the ‘degradation of women’ became standard tropes among those who constructed themselves as ‘more advanced’ (p. 46). Tied to discourses of Western superiority, such cultural comparisons legitimated social reform efforts within national and colonial transnational projects as the ‘more civilized’ sought to uplift those who were ‘less advanced’ (p. 46). Scholar and activist Mary Hawkesworth notes how nineteenth and early twentieth century Western feminists, as part of their social change strategy, sought to create a discursive politics around the concept of a reconceptualized human rights that encompassed a feminist paradigm that was not tied to the narrow boundaries of a liberal and neo-liberal discursive framework (p. 80). While such feminist imaginations that embraced a non-androcentric framework should be applauded, feminist activists were oppressing and marginalizing third world wo/men simultaneously as they sought to “rescue” them.

As notions of superiority were entrenched in Western mindsets, those of the West deemed it their responsibility to lift up those who were “uncivilized.” The belief that there existed a ‘hierarchy of civilizations’ was a widely held one in the West during the nineteenth century. Human rights language, which Westerners allege precipitated in the West, was tethered by Greek philosophical notions of the self, Christian understandings of the soul and Roman views of the law (Hunt, 2007, p. 20). Capitalism and

Christianity, conduits through which the “civilized West” brought modernity and refinement to the “heathens” of the world, helped solidify in the minds of Westerners that those of European descent were the superior race. Mary Hawkesworth (2006) laments that “although any conception of hierarchy rooted in race and culture is fundamentally at odds with feminism’s professed commitments to equality, claims concerning a ‘civilizing mission’ shaped a good deal of this second strand of transnational feminist activism, marking it as an imperial project.”

Prophetic wo/men in the past have recognized the ways in which we in the West need to be careful about judging third world wo/men and have warned us about the dangers of doing so. As racism was integral to the early formation of feminist intellectual history, the current debate over the potential “colonizing” dangers of Western concerns for the lives of third world wo/men is not a new one. Such conversations were a part of feminists’ fears even as early as the nineteenth century. Louise Otto, nineteenth century German feminist, was prophetic in seeing the hypocrisies of Western feminist critiques of third world cultural practices (Anderson, 2000, pp. 140-142). She argued against a form of racist ethnocentrism surfacing in feminist and non-feminist circles. She condemned feminists who criticized the plight of wo/men in other countries, such as India or China because they overlooked the oppression of wo/men in their own European nations (p. 140). She chastised European wo/men for criticizing practices such as Chinese footbinding and Indian sati, and instead, Otto compared Chinese wo/men’s ‘crippled feet’ with the ‘crippled character’ of German wo/men who ‘remain so underdeveloped that they lost the free use of their mental abilities’ (pp. 140-141). Otto’s prophetic statement

can be made today regarding Western feminists' condemnation of practices of third world wo/men.

Racism and the Early Feminist Movement

While Charles Fourier and the nineteenth century socialist feminists saw equality between men and wo/men as a sign of superior civilization, other feminists argued (as biological determinism gained credence) that different social roles for men and wo/men were the true mark of advanced civilization. Feminist scholar Leila Ahmed notes how the idea of the superiority of European cultures, really gained momentum during the course of the nineteenth century (1992, p. 152). Victorian "womanhood" and mores with respect to wo/men, along with other aspects of society at the colonial center, were regarded as the ideal and measure of civilization. Victorian "womanhood" and sensibilities of domesticity were seen as models of civility. Nineteenth century proponents of what Louise Newman has called 'patriarchal domesticity' argued that in an 'advanced civilization,' men assumed the dual roles of 'financial provider and physical protector,' while wo/men's energies were expended in the home" (1999, p. 96). This shift from gender equality to gender separation as a sign of advanced civilization had profound consequences for wo/men. Working-class wo/men (factory workers, 'mill girls') were urged to conform to the superiority of middle-class standards of domesticity.

If systemic differences between men and wo/men were considered to be the mark of civilization, then erasing such differences contributed to its decline. The separate spheres model construed sexual equality as a sign of barbarism or savagery associated with a lower rung of the evolutionary ladder. The idea that other men, men in colonized societies or societies beyond the borders of the civilized West, oppressed wo/men became

part of the rhetoric of colonialism, to render morally justifiable its project of undermining or eradicating the cultures of colonized peoples. For this reason, the Western Christian civilizing mission required assimilation of peoples in “less advanced” civilizations to bourgeois norms. Like their male white reformer counterparts, white wo/men’s rights activists measured the (lack of) “social progress” of non-white races in terms of their (lack of) conformity to “Anglo-American Protestant middle-class gender relations” (Newman, 1999, p. 7). One wo/man, Donaldina Cameron lamented that “the Chinese themselves will never abolish the hateful practice of buying and selling their wo/men like so much merchandise, it is born in their blood, bred in their bone and sanctioned by the government of their native land” (Pascoe, 1990, p. 121).

When it came to the understandings of the cultures of other men, white supremacist views, androcentric and paternalistic convictions, and feminism; such contradictions of thought actually made complete sense given the time period (Ahmed, 1992, p. 152). White wo/men, therefore, were not able to “see” the systemic oppressions operative in their own patriarchal culture. They believed that third world wo/men were treated terribly because of the primitive culture from which they came. Ironically, however, they wanted to “elevate” the “lower race” through patri-kyriarchal structures of Western modernity, Christianity, and assimilation to European and U.S. culture. White U.S. wo/men, with the goal of ‘saving primitives,’ demanded forms of assimilationist tactics. If successful, they deemed it would eradicate ‘barbaric’ cultures. Feminist Mary Hawkesworth (2006) refers to these early feminists as having “cultural blinders firmly in place.”

Late nineteenth century white feminists did not think that men of different races shared the same masculine nature, or that wo/men of different races shared the same feminine nature (Newman, 1999, p. 10). Rather, they believed that different races were gendered in different ways, or that gender was race-specific. White wo/men's rights activists thought of themselves as widely different from white men in sexual terms yet fundamentally similar to white men in racial-cultural terms. They believed that "primitive" men and wo/men exhibited far fewer sexual differences between them than did "civilized" men and women. Sex differences both accounted for, and were the product of, the development of higher civilizations; to eradicate sexual differences between civilized men and women would mean the de-evolution of civilization back into a less advanced society" (Newman, 1999, p. 10). In other words, evolutionist discourses specified that the sexual differences between white wo/men and men were both the cause and effect of bourgeois patriarchal gender practices and the key to white racial advancement. Those who were excited by the rapid advancement for women saw that the rise of wo/men's status was due to evolutionary progress, again, a sign that Western civilization was higher than the "primitive" cultures of Asia and Africa (p. 22). One biologist noted that "sustained wo/manhood is a Western condition, as degraded wo/manhood is the Oriental condition" (Newman, 1999, p. 22).

Early white feminists questioned the ability for Asians to "Americanize" and raise their own children from the position of an uplifted "civilized" status. They wondered whether permitting the immigration of Chinese wo/men would ... merely accelerate the propagation of a "heathen" race. Louise Newman notes how "the evolutionist discourse of civilization also had profound significance for wo/men of color, who had to

demonstrate that they too were “true women” (pious, virtuous, genteel, refined, soft-spoken, well-dressed) in order to certify that their race already was or could soon become civilized” (1999, p. 8). White wo/men did not see their imperialist mindset and their desire to assimilate non-whites as being a form of racism; rather, they saw it as a positive social vision for “lifting up” those of a lower social hierarchy and promoting goodness for nonwhites. Newman notes that “as a theory that linked biology and culture, social evolutionary theories connected societal change with individual change, equated advanced civilizations with white racial superiority, and anchored both of these in sexual difference” (p. 29).

As whites felt that social evolution was responsible for their superiority to other races, they worried for their future as well. They feared being tainted by racial mixing and that their progress could regress into savagery. Newman notes how “the Chinese threatened evolution’s racial hierarchies sufficiently for whites to pass special anti-miscegenation and immigration restriction laws forbidding their intermarriage with whites,” and laws were passed, making it impossible for Chinese laborers to bring their wives and families to the U.S. until after WWII (p. 47). They were not seen as participatory citizens; rather, they were seen as “servile contract laborers” who would eventually return to China (Takaki, 1989, p. 81). The theories of “racial progress” and “advancement of civilization” were even further imbricated with “sexual difference” out of fear for the emasculation of white men.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Mary Roberts Smith Coolidge, two self-proclaimed feminists, managed to remove “sexual difference” as the defining factor in the evolutionary hierarchy of races, while still maintaining that Anglo-Protestant wo/men

were the best civilizers of racial inferiors (Newman, 1999, ch. 6). Further cultural and racial differentiations were made between white wo/men of the West and wo/men of the “Orient.” Late nineteenth/early twentieth century feminists such as Perkins Gilman and Roberts Smith Coolidge believed that the key to uncivilized peoples’ racial advancement lay in their adopting the gender practices (the cult of domesticity, the separation of spheres, and the ideals of Victorian womanhood) that she, as a feminist, found oppressive in her own life and was determined to abolish from white civilization. Yet, they could not see the cultural ethnocentrism here: they were intent in their beliefs that their “oppression” was a way to “liberation” for the heathens. Perkins Gilman (1898) went on to become the most well-known feminist of her day, after publishing a book, *Women and Economics*, where she argued that white wo/men’s relegation to the home and economic dependence on white men subverted their opportunities for social evolution.

Coolidge sought to rescue the Chinese from the category of the “primitive” – to show that they were a civilized and assimilable people. To prove this, she argued that Chinese parents cared for their children. They “learned English, dressed in Western-style clothing; they fed their children American food; the men cut off their queues to fit in with white middle class notions of masculine appearance; and many families adopted Christianity” (Newman, 1999, p. 153). She wanted to eradicate white prejudices towards the Chinese. She stated that “in no respect have the Chinese in America altered more than in their ideas about wo/men. Wives have a far greater amount of freedom in America than in China.... The wo/men love to live here, they say, because they have so much more freedom” (p. 153).

By the early 1900s due to the work of Margaret Mead that mostly dismissed the critical judgments of other wo/men by Western feminists, the restraints on sexuality were let go. Mead helped cultivate a more liberal feminist critique of U.S. patriarchal culture that oppressed wo/men's sexuality and argued that a "free" society allowed for the freedom of women to make choices in their sexual lives (p. 164). The discourse of Americanism and wo/men's human rights is thus imbricated with the rhetoric of gender, power, and nation.

Such historiographic representations and epistemologies of Asian and Asian American wo/men reveal the legacies of racism within the evolution of Western feminism(s) and the wo/men's human rights movement. In historicizing how Western feminists saw their own oppressed status and how Western liberal philosophical traditions did not address the needs of wo/men when framing concepts of rights, it is indeed paradoxical when noting the homogenizing practices of U.S. feminist movements and the Western feminist cultural imperialist desire to paternalistically demonize third world nations' cultural practices. Early feminism and their understanding of "white" wo/men's differences from that of "Other" wo/men were intricately woven with specific ideologies of imperialism, colonialism, racial hierarchies, etc. Edward Said (1993) notes that neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both, he states,

are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like 'inferior' or 'subject races,' 'subordinate peoples,' 'dependency,' 'expansion,' and 'authority' (1993, p. 9).

Racism must be understood as central to the formation of early feminist epistemological formations and feminist discursive practices towards Asian and Asian American wo/men. I have provided a brief overview of the Western feminist debates in the nineteenth and early twentieth century over the scope of the conditions of third world wo/men and some of the on-going concerns that need to be addressed in the wo/men's rights movement. I now address one aspect of the discursive history of colonialism that continues to impact the wo/men's movement today: religion.

2: RELIGION, CULTURE, & WO/MEN'S RIGHTS

Suspicion of Religion among Feminists in the Rights Discourse

Deep suspicion and animosity towards religion by secular feminists can be traced to the colonizing culture of religious institutions in the recent past. Historically speaking, religion has been linked with colonialism through the involvement of white feminists in early missionary work. Christianity, therefore, has been tied to the discursive history of racism towards third world wo/men. In the nineteenth century, a paradigm shift took place that introduced German scientific research as the new model for higher education. This transformation of the humanities curriculum replaced religion with science as a rational philosophy that claimed to account for the entire universe. The emerging scientific academy that insisted their method was based on objectivist and disinterested

research, displaced the centrality of the Judeo-Christian bible and religion in the discursive history of Western academies.

Feminists working in wo/men's rights issues argue that religion is packed with misogyny and androcentrism, and not one of the religions of the world has been totally affirming of wo/men's personhood. Religion has been the conduit through which gender hierarchy has been culturally articulated, reinforced, and consolidated in institutionalized form. Although religion is not the only channel through which patriarchy has been embedded in society and has oppressed wo/men, it has been especially effective in upholding these values and preventing wo/men from contesting such claims because of its "God-given" nature. Instead of engaging in deconstructive and creative non-patriarchal discursive religious practices, many secular feminists have dismissed religion all together.

Post-Christian feminist the*logian, Mary Daly (1968), wrote a ground-breaking book which addressed and documented each of the claims against Christianity which Simone de Beauvoir (1952) made in her book, *The Second Sex*. She traced the*logical themes that had depicted negative or inferior portrayals of wo/men. Unlike de Beauvoir, however, Daly was initially hopeful for the future of Christianity and wo/men. In her book, *Beyond God the Father* (1973), she pointed out the ways that fundamental Christian symbols (God the Father and son Jesus) were reinforcing wo/men's oppression. Accepting male texts, she stated, was a collusion and co-optation with patriarchy. Her hope for the church was short-lived and in 1975, she separated herself from institutionalized Christianity. She advocated an abandonment of Christianity which she thought would be possible through the wo/men's movement. Many wo/men have left

their faith traditions, feeling that sexism could not be eradicated from the institution of religion.

Historian of religion Ann Braude (2004) contends that the portrayal of religion and feminism as antithetical is not an accurate understanding of America's historical past. She notes how when the first wo/men's rights convention took place in Seneca Falls in 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott included religion as an important topic. Similarly when the second wave of American feminism began in the 1960s, vibrant feminist movements emerged within most American religious groups. With the rise of anti-feminist religious groups, the existence and impact of religious feminism in the public has been buried or lost. Braude warns that if the voices of religious feminists are ignored, "then religion is abandoned to those who would use it to restrict women's possibilities" (p. 3).

The wo/men's movement within religion is described as a "Second Reformation." The interdisciplinary nature of religious studies has allowed the field to develop in response to new scholarship, incorporating feminist theory and wo/men's studies. Feminist the*logians acknowledge and have been critically engaged with all the critiques made by secular feminists, having made most of the critiques themselves. Feminist the*logians and scholars working within the boundaries of religion underscore the importance of differentiating oppression by patriarchal structures and the ways in which these structures interpret religious traditions and hold the power to frame the conversation. They state that religious practices oppressive to wo/men are the result of how those religions are interpreted rather than by the religion itself.

Judith Plaskow (1993), Jewish feminist theologian, has asserted that an explicit connection between feminist critiques and social change has been made in feminist studies in religion from its very beginnings. She points out that wo/men's studies in religion is a variegated and vibrant field that has moved from analysis and critique of male texts toward reconstructing women's heritage in and outside patriarchal religious traditions (p. 11). Recent focus of feminist scholarship in religion has been on the constructive transformation of patriarchal traditions and the creation of more liberative ones. In addition, feminist scholars of religion argue that they have sustained strong connections to wo/men's communities outside the academy, more so than feminist scholars in other disciplines.

Critical feminist theological rhetoric does not try to explain why it is important for feminists to read the bible or to remain Christians.¹⁸ Pragmatically speaking, feminist theologians assert that we have to engage and critique patriarchal interpretations of religious traditions so that religion can be a tool for the liberation, not the oppression, of wo/men. Since wo/men who are practicing religion read and value the Judeo-Christian bible as sacred (and this trend seems to be gaining global strength), the task of feminist theological hermeneutics critically evaluates the meaning and values promoted by androcentric biblical discourses. Feminists in the field of religion seek to transform the intellectual discourses of religious studies and theology that deconstruct hegemonic academic discourses. Since its inception, feminist critique of androcentric religion has focused on the analysis and critique of male texts, institutions and traditions.

¹⁸ I speak from a Christian standpoint since this is my own tradition (I was raised Roman Catholic) and with which I am familiar.

Feminist scholar of religion, Naomi Goldenberg, has rightly critiqued the field of feminist studies in religion “for its tendency to become a parliament of religions in which academics and activists are identified as representatives of this or that faith tradition” (2005, p. 127). Her concern was that the field of wo/men and religion was increasingly becoming defined as a place “in which feminist scholars function as auxiliaries to specific religions” when the purpose was to “produce ideology, discourse and scholarship that can be used to reduce sexism and to highlight women-friendly texts and practices so that the traditions can continue in a less toxic manner” (p. 127). She argues that such a definition of the field limits a serious feminist interrogation of basic categories. Traditional ideological boundaries are not seriously challenged (and are actually reinforced) when we adapt to this rather conservative model of ecumenical conversation regarding feminist reform. She urges wo/men in the discipline to revive the spirit of consciousness-raising in the early feminist movement.

As feminist scholars in the*logy and religion have rightly noted, religion has been a central feature in the oppression, as well as liberation of wo/men in communities throughout the global community. Hence, a major task of feminists who work in the field of wo/men’s rights and the ways in which religion impacts wo/men is to explore the continuing political exploitation of wo/men as well as its active participation in social movements for transformation and change. Feminist scholars of religion who have engaged in and critiqued the*logy and religion, have relied heavily on feminist methods and theory to advance their work and deconstruct patriarchal and colonial understandings of religion (whether it be Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, et al). Yet, secular feminists have had little or no engagement with feminist critiques of religion and

current cutting-edge research in feminist the*logy. I see that this working relationship—between feminist scholars of religion and secular feminists—would have a positive impact for the future of feminist theory and the wo/men’s rights movement in general. Some feminists assume that feminists studying religion suffer from false consciousness and are not “true” feminists but are apologists. I argue that feminists need to study and engage religion because it has played and still plays a key role in the daily lives of wo/men and how it can be both an instrument for wo/men's oppression as well as their liberation.

Feminists Whose Work Intersects with Religion & Wo/men’s Rights

In this section, I highlight the work of two feminists whose work intersects with religion. I argue that while the work of Charlotte Bunch and Martha Nussbaum is contributive to the overall project of wo/men’s studies in religion, their work is paradigmatic of Western feminists who have controlled what constitutes wo/men’s human rights for wo/men in the two-thirds world. I argue that a better understanding of the role of religion and religious practices in the lives of wo/men among secular feminists will enhance feminist theories and the wo/men’s human rights movement.

Political Activist Charlotte Bunch—

Charlotte Bunch has been a feminist activist, leader, organizer and author in the wo/men’s and human rights movement for over four decades. She has been a leader in the wo/men’s rights as human rights movement and is the founder and executive director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University.¹⁹ Although her life paradigm follows that of feminist post-Christian the*logian Mary Daly who ultimately

¹⁹ See website, <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/staff.html>

left the church because it was irreparably sexist, Bunch has utilized the leadership skills she gained in the Church in her feminist activist work and has used her relationships with the Church in building strong coalitions of feminist activism.

She grew up in an activist home environment, steeped in Christian social justice values. Growing up in a small town, her only role models in terms of activist citizenship were the missionaries.²⁰ Her parents, prominent in the Methodist Church, engaged in medical missionary work in the United States. In college, she became very involved in the Methodist Student Movement, and it was through the student Christian movement that she became a political activist. Her understanding of religion was greatly influenced by the Black church in the South (which was involved in civil rights movement), as well as by the global ecumenical movement. Through her involvement in the Student Christian Movement, she came to see religion as being about community and working for justice. Through all of her activities and activism, it was religion that served as her anchor and helped ground her and instill in her the importance of community and collaboration. Her moment of finally ending her institutional life with the church occurred with her coming out as a lesbian in 1971. She states that “I could not be part of a religion or institution that labeled me as a sinner or saw me as unworthy of being a minister, as a second-class citizen” (Braude, 2004, p. 216). Over the next three decades of her work in the secular wo/men’s movement, she states that one of its most important allies has been with progressives working in the context of the church—those wo/men who “have not given up on changing the church, and these feminists are the embodiment of the continuation of that journey of feminism in relation to religion” (p. 217). All the

²⁰ In 2002, she shared her narrative of her early religious activism at “The Religion and the Feminist Movement Conference” at Harvard Divinity School. The twenty-five women who spoke at the conference were part of the early wo/men’s movement that strove to secure equal rights for wo/men.

lessons that she has learned through her religious activism, she has brought into her work in feminist activism.

The salient point in Bunch's narrative is that although she left the institutional church, she was profoundly affected by the values and skills she learned in her religious activism and has brought that into her feminist work. She has continued to build bridges with religious activists because of the shared values that progressive religious feminists have with secular feminists. She left the church but maintained the values she gained through her early years of spiritual activism that had sustained and contributed to her feminist work. Consistently, she has advocated and worked for greater coalitions that are inclusive of diverse perspectives within the wo/men's movement. Instead of collaborating and strengthening existing coalitions, she laments the continued splitting of wo/men's groups. She contends that

learning from a wider diversity of women and making coalitions does not mean watering down feminist politics, as some fear. Rather, it requires engaging in a wider debate about those politics and shaping their expressions to respond to more women's realities (1990, p. 51).

She claims that the sentinel event of 9/11 has raised the profile of issues with which feminists were struggling, one of them being "the rise of extremist expressions of religious and or nationalistic 'fundamentalisms' that threaten progress on women's rights around the world (including in the U.S.) in the name of many diverse religions and cultures" (2002, p. 415). Bunch insists that feminists from all over the world have led the movement in providing the critique that wo/men have been the major target of fundamentalist terrorism.²¹

²¹ The events of 9/11 were conveniently used to target and demonize Islamic fundamentalism, and actions to address the systemic embeddedness of patriarchy within other religious traditions were not addressed by

Charlotte Bunch questions why feminists have not had a greater impact on global issues and foreign policy that affect wo/men and wo/men's rights. She argues that U.S. feminists need to re-examine their strategies at all levels in how to turn our government around. She advocates the importance of wo/men's global networking and international solidarity, as well as the importance of partnering with wo/men involved in religious work. Bunch contends that "women's activism in the U.S. must be both local and global simultaneously to succeed" (2002, p. 420). She acknowledges the huge resources in wo/men of faith around the globe who are involved in coalitions, organizations and similarly progressive movements to improve the conditions of women, locally and internationally. While I praise her work for having had close ties with wo/men outside the academy, Bunch is still part of the camp of Western feminist activists whose work has become central to the narratives that have homogenized international wo/men's human rights norms and its applications.

Martha Nussbaum—

Martha Nussbaum (2000) is a strong proponent of the liberal project. She puts forth a capabilities approach, based off of the work of Amartya Sen's concept of substantial freedoms. Her approach of promoting capabilities of each citizen is based on choice—that each individual needs to have choices on what is best for them, and the role of government is to provide these choices. She addresses critiques of this model for being too individualistic and Western-centric, as opposed to a more heteronomous approach that is characteristic of non-Western societies. She states that by individual, she refers to a wo/man that is able to distinguish her hunger from that of her child. She

the public. By fundamentalism, she refers to conservative religious practices in most religious traditions (Protestant fundamentalism in the U.S., Catholics, etc).

argues that no matter how community-oriented, people should be able to distinguish their bodies from one from another.

Her work has been influential in feminist discussions in U.N. forums, and her list of universal human capabilities has been adopted by thinkers in the field of international development.²² She has a dialogical relationship with feminist the*logians working in the area of practical the*logy, ethics, and philosophy. She rejects relativism, historicism, and deconstructionism as not only false but also harmful to the interests of wo/men throughout the world. In order to protect wo/men from abuses, she advocates a rights-oriented realist ethics. She states that cultural practices that lead to these abuses need to be critiqued and changed.

Ironically, she demonstrates how our needs and emotions are constructed by cultural and linguistic interpretations placed on them; yet, she states that a number of human capabilities are universal and should be cultivated. She argues this despite the fact that many of the items on her human capabilities list are shaped by cultural contexts.²³ She understands that these capabilities are expressed in different ways in different contexts. These human capabilities, she states, should be recognized and actualized by the social protection of human rights.

In her work in India, Nussbaum was confronted with religion as a defining feature of the environment, which she asserted was impeding the implementation of her goals (2000, ch. 3). She notes the conflict between religious rights and women's rights. She argues that religious rights and religious claims have to be taken seriously and examined

²² Nussbaum's capabilities approach to development looks at what basic principles fulfill a life of human dignity.

²³ See the detailed list of her central capabilities (life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; control over one's environment), (2000, pp.78-80).

more thoroughly.²⁴ Yet, she believes it is extreme to say that “religion always trumps other concerns” (i.e., her ten capabilities always trumps over religion). Nussbaum and other feminists (secular and those working in the field of religion) argue that what is highly problematic is the “entrenched conservatism” extant in most religious communities. She states that feminists have had diverse responses on this dilemma between religion and sex equality. She terms the first position, secular humanist feminism, which dismisses and ignores the problem altogether. Many of these feminists see religion as incorrigibly patriarchal and only see the conflict through a practical political lens (2002, p. 220). She criticizes Western secular feminists for the dismissal of religion altogether and for not recognizing the potential that religion has in creating solidarity among wo/men. She advocates more respect for religious practices and for the beliefs that wo/men hold throughout the world. The second approach, the traditionalist feminist approach, also sees this as a non-dilemma. This approach ignores the values of sex equality, as it is suspicious of anything that challenges the roots of traditional religious practices because it threatens sources of value that have been historically beneficial to the community (p. 220). While not really a “feminist approach,” Nussbaum has termed it as such because she claims “there are many women, especially in the U.S., who are traditionalists and who at least like to call themselves feminists” (p. 220). Both groups of feminists (secular humanist and traditionalist) see religious traditions as essentially patriarchal, authoritarian and regressive.

Nussbaum argues that there are deep pragmatic difficulties with secular humanism. She contends that it is not helpful to expect people of a faith community to

²⁴ In this regard, she wants us to further interrogate how religion may be used to justify certain practices. She gives examples of people not working on a certain day of the week because of their religion, or using certain drugs during religious holidays—hashish and marijuana for Holi, an Indian holiday.

take on and adopt a set of external moral demands that are deemed 'better' than that of their religious beliefs (2002, p. 221). In addition, she rightly points out how the secular humanist feminist has not attempted to pursue alliances with the liberal and progressive forces within each religious tradition. She states that "religions have indeed been sources of oppression; but they have also been sources of protection for human rights, of commitment to justice, and of energy for social change. By announcing that she wants nothing to do with religion, the secular humanist insults potential allies" (p. 221).

Although Nussbaum admits that religions can restrict the rights of wo/men, she also sees the complexities and possibilities in many traditions. She recognizes how wo/men in India are working within religion (Hinduism and Islam) for change (2000, ch.3). She, therefore, does not advocate discarding religion; instead, she advocates for changes. She also acknowledges that culture is not static but a constantly changing and evolving discourse. She states,

to leave a culture alone, saying 'that's the way things are'—isn't that just conferring power to the status quo? Are we not letting the dominant voices of patriarchy to perpetuate and continue its influence? (2000, p. 48).

She acknowledges the tensions between religious and cultural self-determination and gender inequality. She also rightly points out that supporting religious liberty may preclude access to other liberties. She is also concerned with the conflicts between claims of religious free exercise and women's claims to other rights (2000, ch. 3).

Nussbaum argues that in addressing the problem between religion and gender equality, one must acknowledge religion's importance in the human search for meaning (including wo/men's search) along with a critical examination of religion when it threatens valuable areas of human functioning (2000, p. 9).

Although her work is useful for secular and religious feminist scholars in religion, Nussbaum has been critiqued for her universalist claims, reliance on the state and for her liberalism. Critics have also said that her ethics lacks depth and that her methodology is insufficient because she imposes liberal Western feminist views on non-Western women (Skerker, 2004, pp. 379-409). Yet, she argues that she would rather be criticized as a Western imperialist than stand around and wait for a time when everyone will like what one has to say! She herself has recognized her own imperialist tendencies and trajectories through a capabilities approach!

Susan Moller Okin

Susan Moller Okin (1999) argues that groups' rights tend to be cultural rights, and the norm in most cultures is an inequality between men and wo/men that works to the overwhelming disadvantage of wo/men. Okin alleges that we have been too quick to assume that feminism and multiculturalism are both good things which are easily reconciled. She further argues that there exists a tension between the two—between feminism and a multiculturalist commitment to group rights for minority cultures. By feminism, she means “the belief that women should not be disadvantaged by their sex, that they should be recognized as having human dignity equal to that of men, and that they should have the opportunity to live as fulfilling and as freely chosen lives as men can” (1999, p. 10). What concerns her about multiculturalism is the ways in which minority cultures and its practices do not ensure the rights of individuals in liberal democratic societies, seeing it more important to bestow special privileges to the group (pp. 10-11). She further states that an important “connection between culture and gender is that most cultures have as one of their principle aims the control of women by men” (p.

16). Multiculturalism, in her eyes, reinforces and perpetuates gender inequality. Yet, many wo/men choose to be ‘anti-feminist’ and feel that they have equal human dignity to that of men precisely because they are living and acting as a ‘woman’ should. So, in her definition of feminism, it can uphold various cultural traditions that suppress wo/men.

Moller Okin states that most of the cultures that argue for groups’ rights are more patriarchal than the surrounding cultures. She argues most of the U.S. criminal cases arguing for the ‘cultural defense’ (i.e., the violation is a readily accepted cultural practice) involves gender, specifically with male domination over wo/men and children (p. 18). She wonders, “when a woman from a more patriarchal culture comes to the United States (or some other Western liberal state), why should she be less protected from male violence than other women are” (p. 20)? She argues that Kymlicka’s defense of group rights stands out among the rest because he is only one of those who defend multicultural group rights to address the connections between gender and culture or the conflicts that arise so commonly between feminism and multiculturalism. He emphasizes the fundamental importance of self-respect in a person’s life. According to Kymlicka, membership in a culture with its own language and history is essential for the development of self-respect and for giving persons a context in which they can develop the capacity to make choices about how to lead their life. Cultural minorities, therefore, need special rights because their cultures may go extinct. She states that those who defend group rights on liberal grounds need to address these very private, culturally reinforced kinds of discrimination.

Moller Okin, however, does not think that minority rights are part of the solution—they may exacerbate the problem. “Indeed,” she states, “they might be much

better off if the culture into which they were born were either to become extinct (so that its members would become integrated into the less sexist surrounding culture) or, preferably, to be encouraged to alter itself so as to reinforce the equality of women” (p. 23). The problem with the premise of her argument is that she sees culture, religion and values as being static and unchanging—not fluid, hybrid and intercultural. Moller-Okin’s comments have been criticized by Bonnie Honig (1999), Sander Gilman (1999), and Homi Bhabha (1999) for divorcing practices from their context, meaning and significance. Abdullahi An-Na’im argues that while we should eradicate discrimination based on sex, we should not show prejudice “on grounds of race, religion, language, or national origin” (1999, p. 60).

The central question that feminist scholars and human rights activists—including Bunch, Nussbaum and Moller Okin—have posed with regard to wo/men’s rights and human rights has been one about “universality” vs. “cultural relativism.” In laying out the foundation for their work, Peters and Wolper (1995) ask the questions which become the central dilemma in their work,

Does the right to preserve cultural and religious practices take precedence over human rights norms? If so, is the very concept of international (universal) rights inappropriate in a multicultural world in which values and practices differ from place to place (1995, p. 5)?

I argue that this is the wrong question to ask and that by foregrounding the discussion of human rights with questions of “universality” vs. “cultural relativism” automatically posits a hierarchy of Western thinking over that of the third world.²⁵ This kind of thinking logically leads to the question of whether culture “differs” from place to place.

²⁵ I do acknowledge, however, that it is the case that many third world nations have utilized the “culture argument” as a trump card to play the political game of international human rights diplomacy, and usually women’s issues become hierarchically marginalized in the name of nationalist self-assertion.

Or is it interpreted in different ways due to the “othering” of cultures and how we choose to look at their practices as distinctly different from that of our own?

To ask the “cultural relativist” question ignores that the West, too, operates out of a cultural model. For all communities, culture is constructed through the process of knowledge exchange, encounters through border crossings or imaginary encounters with others. Historian Lynn Hunt notes that “... the risk is that the history of human rights becomes the history of Western civilization...even the history of the entire world. Do not ancient Babylon, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam all make their contributions, too” (2007, p. 20)?” It begs the question of whether certain aspects of international human rights norms, imbricated with globalization, become merely another conduit for imperialism, for transforming the world into the image of the West. Culture, then, comes to be associated with the nation or state, which differentiates “us” from “them,” almost always with some degree of xenophobia (Said, 1993, p. xii).

Cultural Imperialism and Human Rights

Anthropologist Sally Engle Merry points out how the process of establishing universal human rights law has been uncannily similar to setting up imperial law in the nineteenth- and early twentieth century European and American colonialism (2006, p. 225). She warns that the

proponents of human rights are the former colonial powers of Europe and North America and many of the targets of their human rights initiatives are their former colonies in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific. Like colonialism, human rights discourse contains implicit assumptions about

the nature of civilized and backward societies, often glossed as modern and traditional. Concepts of civilization and savagery, rationality and passion, fundamental binaries of thinking during the imperialist era creep back into debates over human rights and social justice. The practice of human rights is burdened by a colonialist understanding of culture that smuggles nineteenth-century ideas of backwardness and savagery into the process, along with ideas of racial inferiority. Rather than using these clearly retrograde terms, however, human rights law focuses on culture as the target of critique, often understood as ancient tradition (2006, p. 226).

While not entirely the same, there are similarities between the human rights framework and cultural imperialism.

A discourse of social justice is now being articulated mainly through a human rights framework. In this regard, a human rights paradox regarding the theoretical democratic structure of the universal rights discourse is its limitations for many due to economic, social and cultural barriers—precisely the issues that human rights discourse seeks to overcome. The difficulty of non-Western voices from being heard on the global platform of rights discourse arises due to lack of money to travel to international conferences, to invest in writing up country reports, to engage in NGO (non-governmental organization) activities, etc. The issues of language, in addition to issues of familiarity with Western structural practices and procedures in attending conferences become additional barriers. In essence, one has to be fluent in Western modalities of human rights procedures and practices in order to participate in global human rights procedures.

Nationalist Rhetoric in the Wo/men's Human Rights Discourse

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999) has challenged how power is utilized in dominant groups and how these groups impose and assert their perspectives, their beliefs

and practices as that which should be embraced by all of humankind. She carefully nuances the importance of feminism's awareness of its responsibilities towards emancipatory struggles of other wo/men without homogenizing the variegated contexts of wo/men. Mary Hawkesworth laments that "although any conception of hierarchy rooted in race and culture is fundamentally at odds with feminism's professed commitments to equality, claims concerning a 'civilizing mission' shaped a good deal of this second strand of transnational feminist activism, marking it as an imperial project" (2006, p. 46). Knowledge produced about marginalized subjects continues to be situated as subaltern to the study of Western epistemological formations.

The historiography of third world people's and wo/men's movement reveals anti-Western resistance against forms of colonialism—and rightly so. Nationalism takes precedence for many feminist communities of color, and this has been detrimental to wo/men's movements as it prioritizes and co-opts wo/men's desires into that of male-dominated nationalist rhetoric. The feminist goals that truly benefit, i.e., liberate wo/men are subsumed by the alleged "more important" goals of the nation and the males who control these goals. In many ways, nationalism becomes the discursive divide among feminists and influences the actions and choices that wo/men in many communities make. How and to what extent are these women participating in the "construction" of their societies through their "choices?" Are they political actors and agents of social and political transformation of their countries? Nationalism is intertwined with patriarchal beliefs and political propaganda about how one should serve his/her country and how those roles differ according to whether one is male/female. Questions of agency, autonomy, freedom, as well as other concepts of human flourishing need to be considered

in the context of wo/men, nationalism, and the ways in which Third World feminism is imbricated within nationalist ideological origins.

Wo/men's rights and feminism evolved and is based on commitments to equality and perspectival realities. The wo/men's human rights paradigm has been partially successful in recognizing the need to promote the rights of wo/men in Africa and Asia to some extent, at the same time that it has further marginalized and oppressed them in essentializing them as weak victims of their culture and in need of protection. It can be observed throughout much of the history of Western feminism that efforts to measure the status of cultures by the 'degradation of women' have become standard tropes among those who arrogantly perceive themselves to be "more advanced." Thus far, I have examined how Western feminists in the late nineteenth century progressive era saw their roles as civilizers of racially inferior peoples, thereby legitimizing their colonialist practices of Othering. What is disturbing about the discursive history of Western feminist superiority is that prophetic wo/men in the past have recognized the ways in which we in the West need to be careful about judging Third World wo/men and have warned us about the dangers of doing so.

3: EMPATHY RECONSIDERED: CULTURAL IMPERIALISM AND PRACTICES OF CARE

Culture, Religion, and Difference

Uma Narayan's (1998) work underscores the ways in which colonialism, as well as the political visions of contemporary Third World fundamentalisms, depends on "essential differences" between Western and particular Third World cultures. She states that "insofar as versions of relativism subscribe to these colonial pictures of 'essential differences' between cultures, relativism becomes a danger rather than an asset to feminist agendas" (1998, p. 100). Understandings of relativism portray 'cultures' as appearing neatly packaged and distinctly unique from each other. Feminists, she heeds, need to be cognizant of the dangers posed by the insistence on "difference" with respect to other cultures can cause. She argues that relativist depictions of cultural differences are both empirically inaccurate and disadvantageous to the goals of postcolonial feminists. She states that "rather than embracing relativism, an anti-imperialist postcolonial feminism is better served by critically interrogating scripts of 'cultural difference' that set up sharp binaries between 'Western' and various 'non-Western' cultures" (p. 101).

Narayan goes on to say that postcolonial feminists need to resist various forms of cultural essentialism, rather than to endorse "cultural relativism." One needs to regard the ongoing changes in practices in virtually all communities. It is difficult to make claims regarding the essence of any culture, as all communities experience ongoing change due to intercultural influences and the ways in which transnational flows of communication have "imported" and filtered in cultural practices between borders. There are, therefore, cultural differences, but they do not exist in isolation from other cultures. When feminists continue to ponder the "relativist" question, what is universally threatening to children and wo/men across cultures and borders is overlooked. They end

up pursuing problems in the third world in a sensationalist manner, overlooking commonalities in the struggle against various forms of patriarchies and oppressions.

Narayan argues that feminist discourses that have asserted “women’s equality” to be a Western value whose extension to third World contexts is “a culturally imperialist theme imposed by the First World,” risk replicating essentialist notions of “culture” (1998, p. 101). Another example of cultural essentialism emanating from progressive parts of the political spectrum can be found in the argument that “human rights” are a Western concept whose imposition upon the third world is an import of Western values. It is only as a result of political struggles by various excluded groups (groups subject to slavery and colonialism, wo/men, racial, religious and ethnic minorities within Western nations) in both Western and non-Western contexts that doctrines of equality and rights have come to be perceived as applicable to them as well. When feminists claim that “equality” and “rights” are “Western values,” they risk obliterating the vital role that such notions have played and continue to play in resistance movements in the two-thirds world. Narayan argues that “political rhetoric that polarizes ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ values is dangerous in third world contexts in which progressive and feminist agendas often contest policies that are backed not only by Western powers but by local elites and nation-states” (1998, p. 99). She warns feminists to be mindful that a value or practice’s being “non-Western” does not mean that it is anti-imperialist or anti-colonial, nor is it incompatible with feminist visions and goals (p. 99).

Bonnie Honig (1999), for example, questions Moller-Okin’s assumption that Western liberal regimes are less patriarchal than those of minorities. She insists on scrutinizing our own cultural practices. Post-colonial legal scholars Ratna Kapur (2005)

and Leti Volpp (2001), as well as third world feminist scholars Uma Narayan (2000) and Chandra Mohanty (2003) argue that Okin engages in a “death by culture” argument. Narayan (2000) argues that an “essential differences” perspective is necessary for both colonialism and third world fundamentalisms. Cultures are seen as neat packages that travel and go with the person wherever they happen to go. She and Kapur argue that anti-imperialist feminists need to deconstruct this tightly construed notion of what constitutes culture as it is what enabled colonialist endeavors as well as formed resistance movements for change for women’s rights. They all critique Okin’s work for how she has reinscribed the “third world woman-as-victim-of-their-cultures” construct. The notion that third world cultures and men are more patriarchal and oppressive towards “their” wo/men is one that has been historically used in colonialist endeavors.

Third World Wo/men & Western Feminism’s Empathic Arrogant Perception

An interpretation of the “origins” of the modern human rights movement suggests that “rights” evolved very much with our ability to empathize or have feelings and emotions toward other humans who may think or feel the way we do (Hunt, 2007). Historian Lynn Hunt argues that empathy is a cultural practice and depends on the acknowledgment that others feel and think as we do, “that our inner feelings are alike in some fundamental fashion” (p. 29). Hunt suggests that the burgeoning genre of the epistolary novel (narratives) in the eighteenth century helped to draw out empathy and feelings among its readers, contributing to the growth of the human rights movement. She argues that the novel was effective in allowing us to understand and connect with a character’s inner self (2007, p. 43), thereby helping us to change our notions of the self. She states,

I believe that social and political change—in this case, human rights—come about because many individuals had similar experiences, not because they all inhabited the same social context but because through their interactions with each other and with their reading and viewing, they actually created a new social context.... For human rights to become self-evident, ordinary people had to have new understandings that came from new kinds of feelings (p. 34).

While Hunt makes a very important case for how the modern movement for a universal human rights paradigm commenced, it is equally problematic that this understanding of universal feelings and emotions is not further scrutinized from a postcolonial framework.

The capacity for—as well as our understanding of—empathy (or what is considered to be empathic) varies from culture to culture. I argue that while a capacity for empathy does exist in all cultures, it too, is an intercultural concept since what would be considered empathic in one culture may not be considered in others.²⁶ I argue that this practice of empathy in the West was coeval with “arrogant perception” in colonialist Western feminist praxis towards third world wo/men. Isabelle Gunning (1991) uses the concept of “arrogant perception” (i.e., ethnocentrism) in examining the ways in which Western feminists analyze “culturally challenging practices.”²⁷ She states that the “arrogant perceiver” believes that s/he is the center of the world. A key aspect in arrogant perception is the distance between ‘me’ and the ‘other.’ The ‘I’ as arrogant perceiver is a subject to myself with my own perceptions, motivations and interests. The ‘other’ in arrogant perception terms, is unlike me. The ‘other’ has no independent perceptions and interests except for those I impose. I term this form of human rights work as “empathic arrogant perception,” entails subsuming the Other such that the ‘other’ has no independent interests except those that the empathizer imposes. I think we need to

²⁶ Lynn Hunt argues that “the capacity for empathy is universal” (2007, p. 39).

²⁷ Isabelle Gunning has borrowed Marilyn Frye’s term of “arrogant perception.”

re-examine the concept of empathy, emotions and how it has been understood in the human rights discourse. How does it contribute to colonizing discursive practices towards third world wo/men, as well as in their own strategizing in a human rights framework? So while empathy is about feeling compassion for the other, it is really about thinking of oneself and how the world *should* be—not as it truly is in its myriad forms of diversity and practices.

Chandra Mohanty (1991) examines the ways that “women”²⁸ as a category of analysis has been used in Western feminist discourse on wo/men in the Third World, each of which underscores the construction of “Third World women” as a homogeneous “powerless” group construed as victims of their environment. One of the writers whom she chooses to examine is Fran Hosken. Mohanty notes the similarity of assumptions about “third world women” and their effects in all of these ways. Hosken, in describing the relationship between “FGM” (female genital mutilation, as the practice is referred to by many) and human rights in Africa and the Middle East, portrays the wo/men as victims of male violence and a practice which seeks to destroy the sexual pleasure and satisfaction of a wo/man (1991, p. 57). She makes assumptions that through this practice, a wo/man’s sexuality and reproductive capacities are being regulated. She uses an “us versus them” arrogant empathic approach. Mohanty correctly states that feminist writings such as these “discursively colonize” and erase any differences, complexities and heterogeneities that exist in and among wo/men in Third World societies (2003, p. 19). She warns of the dangers that Western feminist scholars must be critical of how their scholarly practices regarding third world wo/men reproduce and reify

²⁸ By “women” as a category of analysis, she refers to the intellectual and popular assumptions that constitute much of feminist discourse that those of the same gender (regardless of class, culture or color) are a homogeneous group.

ethnocentrism, forms of cultural domination/superiority and cultural essentialism (1991, p. 108).

Angela Gilliam (1991), scholar and wo/men's rights activist, also points out the latent racism and colonialist attitudes of Western wo/men with respect to forms of female genital cutting (FGC). Unlike Hosken, Gilliam and others refer to the practice as female genital cutting (FGC) to eliminate any sort of judgment as outsiders on the practice. During the 1980 Wo/men's Mid-Decade Meeting in Copenhagen, she observed the ways in which Western wo/men advocated for this divisive issue, creating a hierarchy of intellectual neocolonialism vis-à-vis Third World wo/men. Western wo/men articulated their understanding of the practice, using words such as "savage customs" from "backward" African and Arab cultures. Many third world wo/men who had advocated against female circumcision for health reasons felt compelled to defend it (Gilliam, 1991, p. 218). They have argued that Westerners have been sensationalist, essentializing, and paternalistic. The practice is usually not contextualized in terms of variations in practices, their distribution, meaning or trajectory. Africa is presented as an uncivilized, monolithic place.

Anthropologist Fuambai Ahmadu, who herself has been circumcised, asserts that most of the studies conducted on FGC are conducted by "outsiders" (i.e., individuals--Western or African--who have no personal experience regarding the practice) (2000, p. 283). Ahmadu observes that those "insiders" (i.e., African wo/men intellectuals who have experienced this initiation practice) are notably silent on the topic or absent from the discussion. This silence, Ahmadu states, is understandable, given the demonizing fervor with which Western feminists seek to address the topic and definitively eradicate the

practice. While Western feminists' opposition to the practice is because of its alleged sexual, psychological and physical consequences, Ahmadu argues that opposition to the practice has more to do with deeply ingrained assumptions regarding universal notions of women's bodies and their "sexuality" (read: Western understandings) (p. 284). It has less to do with the questionable claims made by Western activists that FGC is a public health concern.

Gilliam points out how this issue demonstrates how sexualism can serve as a paradigm or "lens" for Western feminists to measure wo/men in other parts of the world. This sort of condemnation points to a lack of reflexivity by Westerners on what constitutes patriarchy and "harmful" practices. Hosken's approach produced a hierarchical discussion in which the "expert" looks at an aspect of another culture from "up above." That which is universal and threatening to children and wo/men across cultures and borders is overlooked, pursuing problems in the third world in a sensationalist manner, overlooking commonalities in the struggle against various forms of patriarchies and oppressions.

This Othering towards FGC is evident in the case of intersex genital cutting (IGC), operative here in the United States.²⁹ As FGC is a cultural practice, so too, is IGC performed for cultural and social reasons (Fausto-Sterling, 1993, 2000). This denial on the part of first world feminists that the issue of "intersex genital mutilation" is not a cultural practice similar to that of FGC again brings to mind Uma Narayan's "death by

²⁹ Intersex individuals are born with sex chromosomes and genitalia that are neither completely "male" nor "female." According to the Intersex Society of North America, the term, "intersex" has been used in medicine as early as 1923 to refer to individuals with ambiguous sex anatomy (<http://www.isna.org/node/1066>). Intersex individuals usually have surgeries performed for cosmetic reasons, not medical— although some surgeries are medically necessary (Fausto-Sterling, 2000).

culture” argument. Narayan argues that Western feminists interested in the ‘problems of wo/men in Other cultures’ need to think about:

‘violence against Third-World women’ that ‘cross borders’ into Western national contexts, it is an interesting phenomena that ‘alien,’ and ‘Other’ cross these borders with considerably more frequency than problems that seem ‘similar’ to those that affect mainstream Western women. Thus, clitoridectomy and infibulation have become virtually an ‘icon’ of ‘African women’s problems’ in Western contexts, while a host of other ‘more familiar’ problems that different groups of African women face are held up at the border (1997, p. 86).

She contends that issues of Other cultures affect the feminist commitment to attend to the problems of wo/men in a variety of cultural contexts. Also, she warns how ‘culture’ is invoked in explanations of forms of violence against third world wo/men, while it is not similarly invoked in explanations of forms of violence that affect mainstream Western wo/men? She argues that when such ‘cultural explanations’ are given for fatal forms of violence against third world wo/men, the effect is to suggest that Third World wo/men suffer ‘death by culture.” (p. 84).

While one practice is considered to be a human rights issue, where parents are criminalized if FGC is performed on their children (read: harmful cultural practice of FGC), the other practice is considered to be an ethical dilemma of patient autonomy vs. parental consent (read: Western medicine “fixes” and “normalizes”) (Moon, 2010, p. 58). Anthropologist and physician Paul Farmer argues that when two groups of people are treated differently in medicine for social reasons, one should expect that this is the beginning (not the end) of a discursive inquiry into what would happen if both groups were treated equally as human (Dreger, 2007, p. 77). We, here in the United States, view the issue of FGC through the lens of empathic arrogance.

This “empathic arrogant perception” is part of the problem of human rights discourse. That is why many African feminists contend that they are disturbed by Western feminists’ and medical officials’ reporting of FGC, as it has placed the discursive power in the hands of the West. Much of the narrative of FGC has been told through the lens of a Western voice *to* Westerners. Again, I emphasize and acknowledge how there are many African feminists and other members of their communities who hold the belief that the practice of FGC should be eliminated. My pastoral concern here is mainly regarding the possible dangers of colonialist discursive power on the topic of FGC and about who has agency on the topic.

When we see that everyone should “feel” a certain way about an issue, then we are colonizing the concept of feelings and empathy. We, Westerners, are telling and dictating how others should feel based on how a human rights issue makes us feel. Perhaps we could “feel” similarly to others within our immediate community, but when we cross borders and are referring to other countries and places where different languages are spoken, then it is extremely difficult to understand another’s situation. Emotions, while they are part of the human situation, are part of the larger framework of the intercultural ambiguities of life. This is part of the discord of a “universal” human rights framework—what is considered empathic in one community, may be cruel and unusual punishment in another. While I do appreciate the emphasis being placed on feelings and emotions in connection to the rise of the human rights movement, we cannot place such assumptions on thinking that we know how people will feel.

The focus on emotions and feelings in a human rights framework is twofold: one, we need to understand that any form of intervention has to occur on a local, grassroots

level; two, we need to have greater scrutiny on the feelings of empathy that one community (or individual) may have towards another. Feelings and empathy are indeed an intercultural practice and development due to our human situation. So while we may be aware of the impact of our feelings, we need to further explore the meaning of feelings of the Other in human rights discourse. The ways in which we humans have empathized with others, as well as how that empathy has been manifest, have evolved throughout the history of colonialism, imperialism and a discourse of human rights. Human flourishing and modes of agency and subjectivity are denied when we engage in practices of othering and colonizing forms of empathy.

Saba Mahmood's Work on Agency

Saba Mahmood (2005) explores the concept of agency through an ethnography of a Muslim wo/men's piety movement in an Egypt mosque. Her work has been extremely influential in critically nuancing Western concepts of agency. She critically examines and questions Western feminist notions of agency and freedom and what it means for other wo/men in non-Western contexts.³⁰ With the current interest and pertinence of Islam and Islamic practices of wo/men, Mahmood's work has become very important in creating dialogue within academic circles of secular feminists as well as feminists engaging in religious studies. Her research examines "historically specific articulations

³⁰ Political scientist Nancy Hirschmann takes a more complex view of freedom than that which has traditionally been put forth by freedom theorists (2003, p. ix). She argues that freedom from a gendered lens that puts the often invisible and excluded aspects of women's experience at its center can demonstrate the inadequacy of dominant theoretical conceptions of freedom and point the way to new and better ways to think about it.

of secular modernity in postcolonial societies, with particular attention to issues of subject formation, religiosity, embodiment, and gender.”³¹

Mahmood states that in the last two decades, one of the main concerns for feminists is the importance of historical and cultural specificity (2001, p. 202). She argues that while issues of sexual, racial, class and national difference were integrated within feminist theory; questions of religious difference have not been examined in this scholarship. She notes that “the troubled relationship between feminism and religious traditions is perhaps most manifest in discussions on Islam” (p. 202). She problematizes the Western application of freedom as a universal desire and the norm in Western feminist discourse. She wants to highlight the ways in which the feminist liberal discursive framework on freedom and emancipation has become mainstream in academia (p. 208).

Mahmood’s project examines some of the ways in which wo/men’s participation in the Islamic movement is problematic to feminist theorists and gender analysts. She states that

movements such as this one... certainly conjure up a whole host of uneasy associations such as fundamentalism, the subjugation of women, social conservatism, reactionary atavism, cultural backwardness and the rest (2001, p. 203).

She focuses on conceptions of self, moral agency and discipline that undergird the religious practices of this non-liberal movement (p. 203). In addition to giving an “anthropological account” of the Islamic revival, she challenges feminist theorists on their “normative” liberal assumptions about freedom and agency against which such a movement is held accountable (p. 203). She explores how the understanding of human

³¹ See her website: <http://ls.berkeley.edu/dept/anth/mahmood.html>

agency in Western feminist scholarship is used to influence the study of women involved in patriarchal religious traditions such as Islam. Mahmood states that even in moments “when an explicit feminist agency is difficult to locate, there is a tendency to look for expressions and moments of resistance that may suggest a challenge to male domination” (p. 206). Thus, Mahmood sees agency as the “capacity to realize one’s own interests against the weight of custom, tradition, transcendental will, or other obstacles (whether individual or collective)” (p. 206). Mahmood’s ethnographic work creates a space for articulating women’s own understanding of human dignity and formulations of agency that exist outside the dominant Western liberal feminist universalist human rights discursive paradigm. Through theoretical frameworks such as that provided by Mahmood, we need to rethink the boundaries and conditions by which third world women have been further marginalized in having their practices and beliefs condemned.

Culture and religious practices, then, are very important because they constitute the ways in which wo/men derive forms of agency and self-determination in their local communities and these practices help shape relations of kinship, family and community that form their various subject positions. Saba Mahmood has noted how Western feminists have overlooked key modalities of agency in discursive religious and cultural practices which are methods of shaping rights discourses and ethical understandings of what constitutes the human. Dismissing culture and religion as patriarchal and oppressive for wo/men ignores powerful social constructs that potentially contain seeds of agency for wo/men. Through local discourse and conversation, we can unearth multiple narratives and histories (told and untold) of wo/men who have resisted forms of oppression within their cultures and what constitutes agency and freedom for them.

4: PLURALITY, INTERCULTURALITY & AMBIGUITY IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISCOURSE

Ambiguity and Ambivalence of the 'Other'

Condemnation of others' cultural practices shows a lack of reflexivity in our part of the world as to what constitutes patriarchy and "harmful" cultural practices. Pastoral theologian Emmanuel Lartey (2006) argues that the question of how we live with difference is one of the most important issues for pastoral care, as it is also for the human rights discourse. A central concern for intercultural pastoral care, then, is how we can live with difference, given Western imperialist, colonialist historiography in dealing with others. Lartey poses an important question in the world today: "how are persons of different ethnicities, cultures, genders, faiths and socioeconomic circumstances to live together reasonably on one earth, the resources of which are not unlimited, in the light of historic relations of dominance and subjugation" (p. 128)? Lartey's method of intercultural pastoral theology recognizes living in the tension between relativism and essentialism, not a search for "either/or." That is, we need to live respectfully in ambiguity and ambivalence in our global society (p. 127-28).

Regarding otherness and difference, Lartey uses the work of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, whose thoughts, I argue are equally important for the human rights discourse (2006, pp. 130-183). Levinas seeks to understand the relationship between Same (i.e., Self) and Other, which Lartey sees this as *the* central issue in our multicultural world. Levinas

is concerned that the Other in western thought has tended to be seen as only temporarily different from the Self; that, given time, education or development, the Other would come to be as the Self.... The significance

of this in pastoral theology lies in the high view held of the integrity of the Other and the insistence that all attempts to create or construe the other as 'in my image' are futile and costly. (pp. 130-131).

The power driving people and nations to seek unification is self-destructive, according to Larney, and does not allow respect for difference. We do violence to the Other when we try to create him/her in our own image. Empathy as a key to understanding the Other, according to Heidegger, can also be dangerous because it implies that the Other is merely a kind of duplicate of the Self and therefore an inherent part of the Being (Larney, 2006, p. 133).

The concepts of ambiguity and ambivalence are reflected in the work of Levinas. He believed that our relationship with the Other should be one of mystery, instead of knowledge-seeking, as valuing difference and relationality was crucial to Levinas (Larney, p. 134). Larney argues that this, too, is the crux of intercultural pastoral care work: "the difficult, respectful, dangerous and enigmatic encounter between autonomous, different but integrated persons self-aware and vulnerable in their full humanity." (p. 137). These are central, crucial issues in the human rights discourse as well. Larney argues for the importance of self-determination and agency in our struggles to live in harmonious, ambiguous tension with regard to issues of difference. I argue that this method of approaching issues of culture and religion also responds to the challenge of how to provide individual care as well as attend to the public concerns of social justice. This intercultural pastoral method of attending to difference and listening to the life narratives of individuals and communities in ways that are meaningful to that person/community (i.e., spiritual care as cultural care) is the way in which the human rights discourse needs to proceed.

Human rights legal scholar Abdullahi An-Na'im argues similarly: the Other has the freedom and opportunity to speak for herself and on her own terms. Self-determination and agency of every single person are central to a universal human rights discourse. An-Na'im's work on our inner feelings, our inner compass, is central to the rights discourse (2007). Practices of "empathic arrogant perception" do not allow for the understanding of the inner life of the Inner, nor for the emergence of their life stories. It colonizes the emotions of the Other and manipulates them to generate a certain sentiment that the Self feels. Acknowledging the colonization of emotions shows the importance of letting everyone's inner compass be part of the HR discourse—and not just the inner compass of those in the Western world.

Lartey (2006) and An-Na'im (2005) acknowledge the power struggles that occur and how differences need to be recognized when this occurs. The human rights discourse erroneously portrays a pure, fixed, static understanding of culture (culture-as-tradition, culture-as-national-essence argument), rather than a set of practices and values that change and evolve over time (An-Na'im, 2003). Rather than seeing the strict division between universalism vs. cultural relativism, what needs to be emphasized is the on-going fluid and creative tension between the two (2003). There is no purely "universal" value or ethical system. The "universal" is continuously being influenced by various hybrid "cultures" and variegated beliefs and it is constantly being negotiated in a global dialectical process that is grounded in local discourse (2003).

The universal human rights framework is a pluralistic, intercultural, fluid discourse that needs to be recognized as such—by both those who are in favor of a universal human rights framework (universal here means contextual and contested) and

by those opposed to the discourse (those resistant to a UHR need to understand the room for contestation and flexibility for input at a local, grass-roots level). The human rights discourse is a malleable one that is subject to change and accommodation but people need to voice their opinions and exercise their agency, instead of passively sitting back and complaining of being victims of the Western hegemonic system of human rights (An-Nai'im, 2010). The human rights framework can be a very democratic structure that allows for participatory, global civic action. If the current human rights framework is to be a shared, global discourse; then it must be integral to the culture and experience of all societies and not only so-called Western societies that are allegedly "transplanting" the framework of human rights (An-Na'im, 2010).

Plurality In the Human Rights Discourse

Abdullahi An-Na'im (1998) proclaims that the human rights (HR) framework is the product of consensus-building. It is not a universal implementation of a Western built HR framework that has been imposed onto other countries. He challenges claims that HR is a Western project and therefore an alien framework for non-Western countries. An-Na'im (1998) argues that all societies are struggling with how to achieve and sustain a genuine common commitment to the HR discourse and their underlying premise of the rule of law in international relations. He rejects the notion that the only valid model for the universality of HR is set by Western or any other group of societies for the rest of the world to follow (p. 114). In terms of the context of human rights, he argues that the differential power structures deter the possibility for the universality of HR. In the U.S. for example, An-Na'im asserts that the "premise of universality has been repudiated

totally by the fundamental distinction between citizens and aliens,” a categorization that leads to unequal treatment (2007). But paradoxically, it is these power structures and extant differences and diversity among humans that is integral to, as well as necessitates, a universal human rights framework. He states that “the quality of my being human entitles me to have rights” (2007). The best method to deal with such paradoxes, he argues, is through the on-going practice of the contestation, mediation, cross-cultural dialogue, as well as internal discourses, of such assertions (2003). He refers to this method as an “overlapping consensus,” which is vital to communities and to the universal HR framework. Agency and self-determination is a self-determining human (2003). These are the crucial components to building consensus in such a framework.

A universal framework from a feminist postcolonial approach is somewhat contradictory in that postcolonial theory eschews anything “universal” or “grand narrativizing.” I do not refer to the “universal” to indicate timelessness; or the unifying of space, politics, society, material conditions, or identities (such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation). The universal refers to the participatory and contextual (Engle Merry, 2006; Engle Merry & Goodale, 2007). It is situated (Ackerly, 2008), as well as contested and accommodating to change (An-Na'im, 2005). As An-Na'im indicates, “universality” provides liberating conditions for human beings and their communities; it provides a discursive framework for articulating justice, as well as serves as a discursive site for contestation. It is a universal framework in that everyone should have access to voice her/his needs and that these community discourses have a larger framework for comparison and interpretation. The universal, therefore, is not possible without local input and grassroots organizing in the practice and theory of human rights.

CONCLUSION

An-Na'im (2010) has said that there has to be a plurality of voices in human rights discourse for human rights to truly be effective and maintain an on-going dialogue. The human rights discourse is a malleable one that is subject to change and accommodation but people of all backgrounds need to be able to articulate their positions and viewpoints. It is a democratic structure that allows for participatory, global civic action. In that regard, it is crucial for marginalized wo/men's groups to have a greater voice in the international discourse of human rights. Since global inequalities of power dictate the kinds of cultural knowledge and information that feminists use to combat VAW, how can marginalized wo/men's groups have a greater voice in the international discourse of human rights? This is where the story-listening, mutuality, reflexivity and advocacy work of pastoral care can be effective for the wo/men's human rights paradigm in foregrounding agency and subjectivity. I engage in that discursive thread of the human rights paradigm in my next chapter.

Chapter 2: Pastoral/Spiritual Care, Religion and Human Rights

INTRODUCTION

As I have progressed in my PhD work, methodologically, my work has been guided by a set of interlocking questions: what would feminist pastoral care look like when we use the lens/framework of a wo/men's human rights approach? And conversely, what would wo/men's human rights (WHR) paradigm look like when viewed through the lens of a feminist spiritual care approach? How can transformative feminist care exist across cultures and groups in the wo/men's human rights movement? Can such care carefully nuance the dangers in embracing either a Western feminist hegemonic discourse or an essentialist understanding of wo/men that further perpetuates stereotypes of wo/men and robs them of their agentive power? I argue that such an ethic of care is possible by incorporating intercultural pastoral/spiritual care as a method of wo/men's human rights work. In my pastoral practice as well as academic studies, I have seen the crucial importance of pastoral care and human rights to be dialogical partners in that both disciplines seek the integration of theory and practice, as well as argue for the importance of finding creative ways in dealing with social injustice and crises (Couture & Hunter, 1995).

In the previous chapter on wo/men's human rights, I explored the current problems and issues within the wo/men's human rights framework. One discursive problem that is especially important and relevant to my dissertation is the issue of culture and religion and how they impact the WHR framework. In the previous chapter, I examined the ways in which institutionalized religion is seen as oppressive and patriarchal, thereby curtailing wo/men's freedom. The WHR discourse has shown the

ways in which religion controls and dominates wo/men. It has not illuminated the ways that wo/men circumnavigate the institutionalized doctrines to carve out space within their religion which is pastoral/spiritual for them. Wo/men's religious practices and communal practices of care are elided as unimportant in understanding or impacting the wo/men's human rights movement. I argue for the importance of illuminating spiritual and pastoral care in transforming the framework of WHR.

Pastoral the*logians have studied the theories and practices of people's religious lives and have taken into account the layers of complexity that exist in studying religious and cultural practices, in counseling and caring for those whose human rights have been abused (whether in addressing health care disparities, issues impacting violence against wo/men, in treating various forms of addiction, etc.), as well as in thoughtfully examining a multitude of life's painful realities in order to care for those who are wounded and marginalized in our society. The rich work of pastoral the*logians in addressing issues of culture, religious practices, agency, and human flourishing needs to be acknowledged in the human rights community of activists and scholars. Pastoral/spiritual care work is, in many ways, human rights work. I see it as *transformative* care.

The field of human rights is challenged by religion in several ways, few of which have been addressed by those in the field of pastoral care. Wo/men's human rights organizations would benefit by studying and engaging religious practices since they play a key role in the lives of many wo/men. Instead of brushing off religion and culture as being patriarchal and harmful to wo/men, further examination needs to be made in terms of how religious practices can be a liberative force in their lives. An important task of feminists and activists, then, is to see the ways in which religion has been a mobilizing

force for movements for social and individual change. Embedded within the variegated stories of wo/men's religious practices are stories of hope, agency, self-determination and other such liberative struggles to which pastoral caregivers have been privy in their work with individuals and communities.

Human rights organizations-- many times with strict agendas to prove the patriarchal nature of particular religious practices in their staunch desire for implementing human rights—are resistant to seeing any forms of agency in that which they see as monolithically oppressive. Such practices of non-openness and non-listening are not helpful for undoing essentialist stereotypes regarding non-Western wo/men. I argue that this is detrimental to the further growth of the international wo/men's human rights movement because it closes off dialogue on both sides (wo/men who engage in religious practices, as well as secular feminist activists who refuse to be open to “patriarchal religious practices”).

A spiritual care framework that advocates and affirms the importance of a person's religious practices and cultural context is necessary for the human rights framework. Pastoral care practitioners have shown constructive ways of working with wo/men whose religions are oppressive and have helped them navigate through the oppression to find agency, strength and solidarity. So while practitioners of pastoral care have been doing important human rights work, we have been absent in the movement's discourse on religion, culture and human rights. An-Na'im (2005) has advocated for the importance of religion in human rights—he argues the human rights discourse needs religion. I, therefore, argue that human rights needs input from the field of pastoral care that most closely engages understandings of religious practices and forms of care that

involve the individual and community. Understanding how religious practices can give wo/men agency and be empowering is very important as this has been ignored in the human rights discourse. Pastoral the*logians have studied the theories and practices of peoples' religious lives, in addition to engaging in counseling and caring for those whose human rights have been violated. No other group within the field of religion has worked so closely one-to-one with survivors and abusers of human rights, as well as with faith communities, than have pastoral caregivers.

Pastoral the*logy is defined "as a prime place where contemporary experience and the resources of the religious tradition meet in critical dialogue that is mutually and practically transforming" (Pattison with Woodward, 2000, p. xiii). It is interested in people's practices and activities, constructing theories and the*logies that are useful and helpful to the human community (2000, p. 7). Pastoral the*logy is relating theory and practice together so that both are enriched by the dialogue. Spiritual/pastoral care can be agentive, liberative, and creative. In our postmodern age and desire to respect all faith traditions, the Judeo-Christian origins of the word, "pastoral" can be re-interpreted to refer broadly as "care of society itself" (Ramsay, 2004). Pastoral the*logians are keenly aware of its roots with paternalistic practices and beliefs that have justified colonialist and imperialist actions. It does not refer to the ordained Christian (Lartey, 2003). In that regard, part of the revised understanding of "pastoral" takes into consideration the unequal power dynamics that exist between peoples due to colonialism, class, ethnicities, race, gender, sexuality, ordained/lay, and so on. The pastoral recognizes that care *is* political. Pastoral care recognizes the importance of the de-institutionalized religious

practices that emerge from the daily lives of people that exhibit their agency, flourishing, and provide them with hope.

In this chapter, I first examine the on-going paradigm shifts in the field of pastoral care and the issues and concerns that have emerged in the field. I then describe the intercultural pastoral care paradigm and the discursive similarities it has with the human rights framework. I explore and examine the ways in which the field of pastoral/spiritual care can be in conversation with human rights theory and practice. I show how pastoral care practices have been influential in recognizing the agency and subjectivity of wo/men whose agency has typically been elided in the religion and rights discourse. I argue that human rights is an important dialogue partner for pastoral care, as there has been a recent shift in the field that looks at ways in which pastoral care can engage and transform social systems through understanding and engaging public policy.

I lay out the framework for how the field of human rights is essential in contributing to the on-going paradigm shift in the field of pastoral care. Human rights is an important field of inquiry for my work because of the concrete changes that have come about for wo/men through the work of activists and intellectuals who have utilized and contributed to the human rights discourse. Pastoral care is concerned about caring for those in our community and improving the daily lives of people by recognizing and underscoring agency in their lives. By anchoring the theories and discussions in human rights to the pastoral care paradigm, I hope to broaden the dialogue in pastoral care and contribute to its on-going paradigm shift on issues of agency, concepts of freedom, and dignity of the human person. I bring these issues to the forefront of pastoral care to help

us better address societal concerns, public policy, systemic injustices, etc. in the goal of liberating and caring for those who are oppressed, marginalized and Othered.

1: PARADIGM SHIFTS IN THE FIELD OF PASTORAL CARE: A BRIEF HISTORY

Clinical Paradigm

The field of Pastoral Care initially focused on “therapeutic” work with individuals. Anton Boisen, the father of the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) movement, placed more emphasis on the person in crisis, rather than the minister. Seward Hiltner, a student of Boisen, did the opposite and placed the minister as central in the pastoral encounter. The dominant image of the 1950s and 1960s has been Hiltner’s “solicitous shepherd” whose functions were healing, guiding, sustaining. This shepherding perspective has been criticized for its attention only to the individual without putting the individual into a contextual framework. Watkins Ali (1999a) has criticized his work for being paternalistic, individualistic, as well as inappropriate for communities of color such as the African American community. Countless others have criticized his method for being too pastor-centric and dependent on a clinical model of care. His model has perpetuated inequalities of patri-kyriarchy, showing partiality towards Euro-American Christocentrism, and the ways in which the privileging of such discursive constructs of care have been part of the colonizing and imperialism of nonwestern countries. I argue that Hiltner’s shepherding model is part of the colonizing discursive structures of pastoral care that has gone hand-in-hand with Western forms of colonialist aggression.

Communal Contextual Paradigm:

Critics of the Hiltnerian shepherding model have argued that the communal contextual paradigm (term coined by John Patton) was an important paradigm shift because it considered the context of the person.³² Edward Wimberly (1979) has been a pivotal figure who helped shift the paradigm of pastoral care from an individual-focused model to that which recognizes the importance of community and context. Writing ten years prior to the official recognition of the communal-contextual paradigm, he has been a leading prophetic voice for being critical of the dominant therapeutic paradigm. His work has been pioneering in examining the inter-related nature of self and society, as well as introducing the concerns of racism and oppression into the pastoral theological dialogue.

Wimberly was one of the first to be suspicious of the function of reconciling (Clebsch and Jaekle) for the African American community. A community of people who have experienced the history of and on-going exploitation in Africa (ravaging of their land, resources, people, culture, language, laws), as well as inhumane treatment in the United States (slavery, denial of citizenship and other rights, racism, etc) cannot talk about reconciliation, states Wimberly. He courageously stated this in a field that was (and is) heavily dominated by European-Americans. His book, *Pastoral Care in the Black Church* (1979), was one of the first to give importance to socio-cultural contexts and introduced a social power analysis of racism. Healing for African Americans, he argued, still lay in the future.

³² The field gives credit to John Patton for coining the term and to feminists, such as Bonnie Miller McLemore for articulating the “living human web” (that we live in a web of relationships and are interdependent beings, not autonomous ones as androcentric Western thinking would lead us to believe).

The racial climate in America, from slavery to the present, has made sustaining and guiding more prominent than healing and reconciling. Racism and oppression have produced wounds in the black community that can be healed only to the extent that healing takes place in the structure of the total society (p. 21).

He prophetically argued for the need to address these structures of marginalization. His work set the stage for the field to address social justice issues of concern for us today.

Pastoral theologian Archie Smith also recognized the community and the importance of humans living in a “web of social relations” (1982, p.138). “From a relational perspective,” he argues, “psychic liberation and social transformation are dialectically related and interwoven” (p.228). He effectively demonstrated “that emancipatory struggle must seek to strengthen awareness of the interrelatedness and interdependence of human life; this includes the life of the psyche as well as social life” (p. 228). He raised the issue of liberation from oppression and the joint transformation of person and society— inner and outer transformation occurred together, not separately. Personal, individual oppression are imbricated within systems; they are interwoven threads of a web (p. 51).

Wo/men’s Contributions to the Field of Pastoral Care and Counseling

John Patton and Charles Gerkin have stated that one of the most influential factors for the paradigm shift in Pastoral Care was due to wo/men’s contributions and influences of a gender analysis. What is especially obvious in examining the history of wo/men’s publications in the field (in the past two decades) is the lack of presence and influence of wo/men of color. While wo/men in the field have critiqued the androcentric, male-dominated field of pastoral care, their presence in the field has not added much diversity

aside from that of gender. Western influences and culture have continued to shape the methods and its articulations. The voices in the field are that of almost all white European American wo/men—until recently. If pastoral care is genuinely about working with people who are on the margins and are oppressed, we need more critical theories that reflect the work that we are doing with the marginalized and oppressed.

Brief Overview of Wo/men's Publications

The early 1990s was the real entry point for feminist pastoral the*logians publishing in the field of pastoral care. Wo/men's entry into the field has shifted the focus in terms of issues that have been written about in the field. Wo/men in the field have argued that collaboration and community are important when addressing issues that impact wo/men's lives, and they therefore, have engaged in publication projects that examine various issues impacting wo/men through edited volumes. They argue that none of them has the expertise to cover all the issues pertinent to wo/men's lives, and also, they felt a sense of urgency in having publications on the issues. There are, therefore, several edited books of prominence in the last two decades.

Jeanne Stevenson Moessner, indeed, is a pioneer, having edited three books on wo/men in the field.³³ *Women in Travail and Transition: A New Pastoral Care* (1991) was the first edited book in the field that addressed the specific gender needs of wo/men. The book is notable for its diversity in terms of academics and clinicians contributing to the work. Its theoretical component utilized the psychological theories of wo/men theorists. While the book is significant as a first compilation of articles addressing wo/men's pastoral needs, its methodological limitation that the discussion of wo/men is

³³ Maxine Glaz was co-editor of this edited volume.

based solely on gender. Appropriate to its date of publication, however, the authors do not go beyond analyzing the sex/gender binary constructs nor going beyond examining wo/men's issues from the voices of white privilege. For instance, Bonnie Miller McLemore outlines the struggles for wo/men like herself (balancing career, family, community). Like other middle class white wo/men, she has the luxury to contemplate 'quitting' and focusing on family. While this is a dilemma for her, for most wo/men of color, the dilemma is how to 'survive' (Watkins Ali, 1999): manage to work, take care of their children and pay the bills. They do not have the luxury to contemplate quitting their jobs. Another early edited book, *Life Cycles: Women and Pastoral Care* (Elaine Graham and Margaret Halsey, eds., 1993) has similar methodological limitations. Most of the authors in the volume address oppression solely in terms of gender/sex dualism, while ignoring the complex axes of oppressions in wo/men's lives.

The second edited text by Stevenson Moessner (1996) that has been foundational for the field is *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*. While the ethnicities of the authors in this volume are a little more diverse, Euro-American wo/men are still the majority voice. Here is an early work that advocates for the paradigm shift which takes into account the wider web of relationships, including cultural and social contexts. In this volume, Miller McLemore (1996) illustrates how the shift in pastoral care has gone from a focus on care as counseling the individual to care as part of a wider social, economic, cultural context ("living human web"). In her metaphor of the "living human web," Bonnie Miller-McLemore has rightly pointed out the confines of relying solely on a therapeutic model of care. She argues for the need, not only to contribute more actively to theological discourse- but also to be better versed in the study of public

policy, ethics, and other disciplines as it relates to the emotional well-being of an individual. She points out that confronting structural and societal injustices has been pivotal in transforming the traditionally understood work of pastoral care as simply counseling to a broader, more complex awareness of care as including the social, cultural, religious, politico-economic context (p. 41). “In a word,” she claims, “never again will a clinical moment, whether of caring for a woman recovering from hysterectomy or attending to a women’s spiritual life, be understood on intrapsychic grounds alone.... Psychology alone cannot understand this web” (p. 18). There is a clear feminist and wo/manist perspective that challenges us to see the web of relationships and interdependence of the individual to her/his community. Teresa Snorton’s (1996) contribution in this volume is significant as she provides perspectives on African American kinship and community that differs from the dominant image of the white family that we have seen thus far in the field. She examines the image of the African American woman as “matriarch” and replaces this essentialized image with one that is more liberating for African American wo/men.

The third book edited by Stevenson Moessner (2000), *In Her Own Time: Women and Developmental Issues in Pastoral Care*. As the title suggests, the book explores the developmental issues pertaining to wo/men’s bodies and issues of culture. Issues explored range from adolescence, intimate violence, mothering, menopause, widowhood, and end-of-life—to name a few. The book is limited in that intercultural concerns that impact development for wo/men of other cultures are not taken into consideration.

A more comprehensive feminist pastoral care book is *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology*, edited by Bonnie Miller McLemore and Brita Gill Austern (1999).

The authors have addressed contextual issues of the social, political, and cultural in their work. While the authors deal with disciplinary influences for the field in terms of poststructuralism, postmodernism, etc., I am not sure they have engaged the methods on a deeply critical level. Feminist pastoral care in this book still has not addressed issues of religious pluralism that need to be addressed in the field and have seen issues in a very Christo-centric way. The book's engagement with religious pluralism is in the form of a Roman Catholic feminist voice, that of Roslyn Karaban, in a field that is heavily Protestant.

Christie Cozad Neuger's article (1999) provides a discussion on wo/men and relationality. She argues that wo/men's unique ability to engage in relationality is more valuable than masculine values of autonomy. While she acknowledges that such essentialization is problematic, she engages in such essentialist discourse nonetheless. To call it a "unique" quality of wo/men to engage in relationship building is to undermine the ways in which such characteristics of wo/men have further marginalized them as "different" from men and have reinforced gendered stereotypes of wo/men who are "naturally good at carework" because they are "more nurturing," and better able to rear children because they are more relational. This kind of rhetoric is used in public policy to further relegate domesticity to wo/men's realm, and it takes wo/men back a step from liberative discursive frameworks and structures of care for wo/men. Feminists need to ask the question of what masculine forms of relationality look like and what the nuances about variegated forms of "qualities" about wo/men and men say about our society. I was hopeful, however, because in the same volume, Susan Dunlap's work (1999) is helpful in examining how to "undo" gender essentialism. She uses discourse theory to

understand the fluidity of subjectivity. As each of us is a subject-in-information through discursive processes, there is no one way or right way of being a “woman,” which is why I think Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s neologism of “wo/man” is so important.

Also included in this edited volume, is the work of Watkins-Ali (1999b) who notes the absence in the literature of African American wo/men’s experiences. Unfortunately, this is still the case a decade after the publication of this book. Not only does the field need more voices from wo/men of color, but also wo/men of various faith traditions (as noted above, religious pluralism thus far for wo/men in the field has meant Roman Catholic- and even that is in the extreme minority since only one woman has been acknowledged to have written in the field). Wo/men’s voices, like the men’s voices in the field, have been from a Christo-centric, Euro-American-centric perspective on care.

The latest edited volume by Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner (2010) is *Women Out of Order: Risking Change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*. The ethnic and intercultural diversity of authors as well as topics is the most impressive of the edited works in the field thus far. Pamela Cooper-White complicates the category, “woman,” arguing for our multiplicity and multiple subjectivities. There are womanist, Latina, Mediterranean, as well as Native American and Korean/American perspectives, as well as a chapter addressing issues of sexuality, interculturality, and globalism. The variegated voices and issues reflect the growing diversity of the field. For my own work, I was impressed to find that the volume includes the voices of Asian/Americans, the first of any edited volume to include our perspectives.

Single Authored Volumes & Articles By Wo/men in the Field

In terms of single authored books in the field, more attention has been placed upon issues of family, critiques of the public/private divide, as well as concern and advocacy for various forms of violence against wo/men (VAW). Pastoral the*logians have used interdisciplinary methods of feminist theory, feminist psychology, liberation theology, post-structural theory, public policy, et al. in their care work in examining families (Bonnie Miller-McLemore), VAW (Pamela Cooper-White, Jeanne Hoefft, Kristen Leslie, Christie Cozad Neuger), poverty among single mothers (Pamela Couture, Carroll Watkins Ali), as well as other issues such as eating disorders, grieving, aging, etc. In this section, I provide a brief overview of some of the work of feminist pastoral the*logians. In order to focus on that which is relevant to my dissertation, I provide a more critical analysis of a few works.

Pamela Couture's work has been central in the field as having most advanced public the*logy in the form of looking at issues of poverty and children's rights. Because she has been so influential in the field in terms of advocacy for social justice and for her work that deals with marginalized communities, I have chosen her work to critique in my essays because I have found there is a lack of critical analysis of interlocking structures of oppression. Her book, *Blessed Are the Poor* (1991) is a revised version of her dissertation, written under Don Browning. Her work looks at the growing poverty of single mothers, American policy towards the family and its usage of rhetoric regarding self-sufficiency and myths of autonomy. In her book, she wants to know the root of the problem of the growing poverty of single mothers, and she links this with stigma in U.S. public policy rhetoric to the notion of "dependency." She does a comparative analysis of single mothers in Europe who are not the most impoverished group, which she attributes

to good public policy and lack of stigma attached to government subsidies. She uses the revised critical correlational method, describing the situation of single mothers, welfare history, etc. She ties the debate over self-sufficiency to theological discourse of Luther and Wesley who questioned the notion of self-sufficiency. She then proposes recommendations to eradicate poverty of single mothers.

While her questions such as “what causes poverty among single mother-headed households” are good ones, her explanations are inadequate. While I commend her for a fairly thorough analysis of U.S. public welfare policy, I think more attention should have been placed on how race has impacted the welfare discourse in terms of the “feminization of poverty.” While she correctly argued how the sexual and racial division of labor has maintained wo/men’s subordination to men, she has not looked into how racialized discursive structures have subordinated black wo/men disproportionately more so than white wo/men. The subordination of wo/men of color was and is necessary for white, middle class wo/men to flourish (Hill Collins, 1994). Patricia Hill Collins (1994) states that both male domination (father as patriarch) and gender inequality have worked simultaneously with racial domination and economic exploitation to suppress wo/men of color.

Critics of welfare, feminist legal scholars, and feminist theorists have underscored the ways in which the discourse on race has been a major factor in shaping welfare policy in the United States, treating white mothers differently from their black counterparts. Couture has elided this debate altogether. Welfare, originally called a Mother’s Pension, was a racist patri-kyriarchal model that saw a white male as head of the family and discriminated between “virtuous” (white, widowed mother) and those who were not

deserving (single, black). The deserving poor white wo/men were deemed worthy of subsidies because had it not been for the unfortunate death of their husbands, they would not need such assistance. Therefore, they should have the money so that they could stay at home and raise “good” citizens. Black mothers, on the other hand, did not deserve the money since they would not have had it otherwise. They were not deserving of subsidies because they were not raising good citizens and society saw that they should be out working and supporting white women who were raising good citizens. I paraphrase the racist history of welfare to show how racism intersects with gender in the history of welfare and the “feminization of poverty.” The discourse on poverty, therefore, is different for black wo/men than for white wo/men.

Couture has not problematized the ways in which welfare operates in a racist framework (some have called the welfare debate as the race debate in disguise), nor has she critiqued the ways in which it reinforces patriarchal norms. She also includes no discussion of how illegal wo/men of color are ineligible for welfare altogether, creating a sub-category of the most impoverished. These wo/men’s voices are not included at all in Couture’s discussion and analysis of the feminization of poverty when immigrant wo/men of color are most vulnerable to poverty. She does not problematize how the care work being performed by wo/men of color is directly linked to white wo/men’s successes and their “liberation,” as wo/men of color work as their nannies, housekeepers, cleaners, gardeners, etc. That is, they are the ones who do the reproductive labor work so that middle class wo/men are able to have careers. In order for there to be a truly transformative practice, we need to include a more thorough analysis that engages in a

deeper discourse on race, patriarchy and interlocking structures of oppression and how white wo/men have been privileged in the history of welfare.

Even recent wo/men's writings in the field of pastoral care mention that as of 1999, there were no published writings by Asian American wo/men (Greider, 1999). Of the Korean/Americans who have published, most of them have portrayed the "Korean woman" as a unitary, *han*-filled subject. In this regard, the work of Simone Kim comes to mind. In one article of hers (2006), she writes that Korean wo/men experience almost a schizophrenic state of mind between two opposite worlds (Korea and North America), as they try to balance the two cultures within two different worlds. Disappointingly, Kim (2007) writes from a very essentialist perspective with regard to Korean/American wo/men, stating at one point that Koreans are a homogeneous, unique group of people. I argue that contrary to the opinion of most Koreans, we are not a homogeneous group of people.³⁴ Korean culture is heterogeneous, hybrid, variegated, and fragmented, just as are all cultures. Kim's views of culture and Asian and Asian/American wo/men, on the other hand, are monolithic, essentialist, and stereotyping. Kim, like many other Korean American pastoral theologians who have written on the subject of *han*, states that it is a unique, untranslatable characteristic of Korean people, an argument to which I am opposed.³⁵

Carroll Watkins Ali's work, *Survival and Liberation* (1999) is one of the few books in the field that critically addresses the interlocking structures of race, gender and class. She correctly argues that pastoral care has not attended to these axes of

³⁴ In chapter 4, I write about Korean nationalist historiography and how in its desire for unity of spirit among Koreans, perpetuates myths and engages in nationalist rhetoric such as its homogeneous culture and "pure" blood line.

³⁵ I discuss this further in my next chapter.

oppressions. Her method includes a womanist vision that begins with African American wo/men's experiences. She critiques Hiltner's perspective as being too narrow (as I've mentioned above) for the African American community. In addition to the functions of healing, sustaining, guiding, she adds nurturing, liberating, resisting. To do the*logy from the perspective of poor black wo/men is to engage in a mode of survival and resistance. She seeks to link African American pastoral theology with black psychology, along with the process of recovering indigenous African practices and beliefs. The starting point for her method is the cultural context of African Americans, followed by the caregiver's experiences. Her work is a positive step in an advocacy for social justice that foregrounds a complex analysis of race, gender, culture, and imperialist legacies that have shaped communities. We need more feminist publications that follow in her footsteps.

In examining the gaps in wo/men's contributions to publications in the field, Carroll Watkins Ali's work becomes a segue into the next section of my chapter. I have emphasized throughout this part of my chapter that while feminists in the field have made tremendous strides by foregrounding issues of gender in the practices and theories of pastoral care, more critical work needs to be done beyond examination of a sex/gender dualism. We need to address complex power dynamics of race, class, ethnicity, religious difference; as well as examine the ways in which colonialist discursive analyses of gender inequality is intensified by race and class. Wo/men of color are marginalized via multiple axes of oppressions, and feminist pastoral care publications—if they are truly part of the liberatory discursive project—need to give more critical attention to wo/men of color. So in that regard, I argue that Asian/American pastoral the*logians and

practitioners need to further critique the “living human web” through methods such as sharing our past histories and unearthing stories of resistance. I next engage in a discursive inquiry of Bonnie Miller-McLemore’s understanding that we need to have a more complex analysis of structures and systems that undergird society – i.e., the living human web— and that contribute to our vulnerability as human beings.

The “Living Human Web” Revisited

In her metaphor of the “living human web,” Bonnie Miller-McLemore has rightly pointed out the confines of relying solely on a therapeutic model of care. She argues for the need, not only to contribute more actively to the*logical discourse- but also to be better versed in the study of public policy, ethics, and other disciplines as they relate to the emotional well-being of an individual (2005, p.40). She points out that confronting structural and societal injustices have been pivotal in transforming the traditionally understood work of pastoral care as simply counseling to a broader, more complex awareness of care as including the social, cultural, religious, politico-economic context (p. 41). She further contends that “to be taken seriously by people of color and by white women, it [pastoral psychotherapy] will have to include...a social analysis of oppression, alienation, exploitation, diversity, and justice in its clinical assessment of individual pathology” (p. 41). She correctly emphasizes the inter-related nature of human beings, thereby placing importance on “public policy issues that determine the health of the human web” to be fundamentally linked to that of the “individual emotional well-being” (p. 43).

I see Miller-McLemore's metaphor of the "living human web" as a useful heuristic device in further engaging in dialogue as a community. At the same time, I also see the need for a more critical examination of the ways in which the "living human web" embodies patri-kyriarchal and imperialistic structures that have created and sustained multiple levels of exploitation and domination that perpetuate societal, structural, as well as psychic injustices. I see the need to re-imagine the metaphor of the "living human document in the web" in a way that highlights the variegated ways in which we operate as subjects (with multiple subjectivities) in the greater community of intercultural global citizens (Moore, 1994). We are living human subjects in a kaleidoscope of narrative subjectivities (Benhabib, 2002).

I agree with Miller-McLemore that we need to confront the systems of domination and power that our society continues to uphold. I, therefore, want to elaborate on and complicate her understanding of the web metaphor. I argue that the metaphor of a living human web, while an accurate depiction of our culture here in U.S. society, can also be a precarious metaphor for those who have historically been marginalized by the dominant society. Some webs act as barriers or impediments that serve to confound and knock down flying insects, making them more vulnerable to being trapped in the web below. They may also help to protect the spider from predators such as birds and other insects. As a metaphor, this speaks realistically of our society and the institutions that create and cause inequality. To continue the metaphor, the spider is the privileged individual in society whose status or social power (i.e., race, age, gender, and so on) provides protection from institutional and societal inequalities.

The living web, then, is an apt metaphor for our global community—with its obstacle courses and pitfalls specifically designed to marginalize certain people and communities, as well as to create and maintain inequalities in society. While the metaphor of the web was meant to help us imagine our inter-connected nature as persons and as a community; it also evokes images of solitude, individualism and autonomy as a web is typically woven and occupied by only one spider (i.e., one individual). Catherine Keller (1986) used the image of the web to signify the spider's creative potential to spin and weave from her own body. At the same time, the web metaphor calls to mind how the web was built to protect only certain individuals and groups, similarly as capitalist U.S. society values individualism and autonomy. The web was meant to house and protect only the spider that built it, and it was meant as a pitfall for others. In that regard, it is a very self-centered, ego-centric model—as is appropriate for our society here in the U.S. based, as it is, on an autonomous, liberal self. Spider webs create vulnerability, just as capitalist society creates situations of vulnerability. Although not meant to be interpreted as such, the web becomes a metaphor for predatory behavior and survival-of-the-fittest, individualistic society which well-represents U.S. society.

Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (2005) refer to empire as a web of “trade, knowledge, migration, military power, and political intervention that allowed certain communities to assert their influence and sovereignty over other groups” (p. 3). They argue that

these ‘imperial webs’ functioned as systems of exchange, mobility, appropriation, and extraction, fashioned to enable the empire-building power to exploit the natural resources, manufactured goods, or valued skills of the subordinated group. In offering the image of the web, we want to emphasize the interconnected networks of contact and exchange without downplaying the very real systems of power and domination such networks had the power to transport. The web’s

intricate strands carried with them and helped to create hierarchies of race, class, religion, and gender, among others, thereby casting the conquerors as superior and the conquered as subordinate, with important and lingering consequences for the communities they touched. The image of the web also conveys something of the double nature of the imperial system. Empires, like webs, were fragile and prone to crises where important threads were broken or structural nodes destroyed, yet also dynamic, being constantly remade and reconfigured through concerted thought and effort (p. 3).

The web metaphor in pastoral care and the*logy has acknowledged these systems of exploitation and domination and has engaged in work to address the pitfalls in the web, as well as care for those who are vulnerable to inequalities in society. Yet, we still need to hear from the voices of those on the margins. We need to recognize the “living human document” as a subject and the web as a potential structural power to oppress and control. We need to see that the “living human document” has subjectivity, agency, as well as the ability to navigate through the obstacles of oppression in society. In our pastoral care work, we have to create space for subjects’ agency within postcolonial structures and ongoing U.S. imperialism, militarism as well as anti-colonialist measures of nationalism.

Currently, none of the metaphors in pastoral care adequately addresses the experiences and realities of those of Asian descent. We should, therefore, re-envision the metaphor of the web to reflect the lived realities of the kaleidoscope of differences that characterize U.S. society. The web metaphor brings with it notions of victimization, and many w/omen or people of color may not be comfortable with a metaphor that places their life experiences in a hegemonic web of oppression and domination and depicts them as victims of a capitalist society. While not intended, the web metaphor also stirs up images of the spider who represents the ideologies of colonialism, imperialism, militarism and nationalism that sustain the patri-kyriarchal structures that our society maintains—whose threads hold together such structures that create and sustain

institutional, as well as socio-economic vulnerability. In this regard, pastoral theologians need to engage in on-going critical conversation about the colonizing and racializing legacies of its past history—and the ways in which “care” and empathy can be colonizing practices if not attuned to the intercultural pastoral care needs of an individual and her/his community. In that regard, my next section examines the relationship between the fields of pastoral care and human rights. If pastoral care is to be engaged in the human rights discourse, we have to be familiar with the discursive historiography of racism, sexism and imperialism if we are not to re-enact past colonialist actions onto non-Western nations.

2: PASTORAL CARE & HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

The tension that has existed between the clinical therapeutic model of care and the communal contextual in working towards social justice is similar to the struggles within the human rights discourse. The rights discourse is criticized for talking about the individual in a de-contextualized, androcentric way. Yet, in attending to the global discourse on rights, critics of the rights discourse have seen the impossibility of applying a rights framework “unto” an individual without taking into consideration the individual’s context of her community, culture, language, religion, etc. Both the therapeutic model of care and the early human rights discourse were dominated from the perspective of a paternalistic, colonialist, Western-centric model of care that did not take into account the importance of variegated forms of power operative in our lives. The communal contextual model has sought to remedy such problems in the pastoral care discourse, but as I show in this chapter, the field needs to engage in further critical

reflection of the interlocking structures of power that oppress and marginalize. The same is true for the human rights discourse in terms of thinking outside the androcentric, de-contextualized, essentialist discourse that limits the current framework.

There has been specific work done in pastoral care on children's human rights from at least two people of whom I am aware: John Wall (2007) and Pamela Couture (2007). I argue that both have their limitations in terms of a lack of racial and gender analysis with respect to global human rights issues. John Wall engages in a reinterpretation of the meaning of children's rights based on Christian ethics, which he calls a "childist" perspective. He argues for the social participation of children (with an understanding of their developmental limitations in terms of full civic participation) within the framework of a rights language. While I support Wall's critical approach to the transformation of children's human rights, I argue that more work needs to be done from the perspective of other faith traditions, in addition to Christianity. To refer solely to Christianity in global pastoral care is problematic, especially given the historic linkages between colonialism and Christianity. If we want the human rights discourse to be meaningful to people in the global community, we have to allow for the articulation of the rights discourse from the plurality of religious perspectives in our global community (Muslims, Buddhists, Jewish, Native American, those practicing African traditional religions, Taoists, etc.). Again, Dr. An-Na'im's (1992, 2002) overlapping consensus approach is the best method of recognizing the importance of local voices, which supports self-determination and agency, as well as recognizing the importance of cross-

cultural dialogue.³⁶ Especially when it comes to their children, parents and communities want to see that their voices matter in shaping their children's care, not Western outsiders. As I show, Pamela Couture's work, while it is consistent with a Western Christian perspective, fails to engage issues of religious pluralism.

While those in the field of pastoral care have raised up several issues of concern for wo/men's human rights (VAW, family, and health) already in their academic work as well as through forms of counseling for individuals and care for the community, Pamela Couture has specifically addressed the issue of children's human rights in her recent book, *Child Poverty: Love, Justice and Social Responsibility* (2007). In this book, she continues her work of advocating for more social responsibility and the importance of advocacy work in ministry. She looks at global child poverty and advocates for churches to become more familiar with human rights documents, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She argues that caring for children is a spiritual issue and how spiritual care can promote human dignity. She echoes the sentiments of Stephen Pattison (2000) who states that the heart of pastoral care is addressing issues of poverty and inequality.

A major critique I have with her work is her conscious decision not to analyze racism and issues of gender in relation to poverty and children in this particular work. I argue that one cannot elide issues of race and gender—two central interlocking axes of oppressions that lead to the most impoverished—when engaging in a critical examination of poverty. To omit a racial and gender analysis in looking at poverty does not do justice to the situation nor to attempts in trying to find solutions to the problem.

³⁶ An-Na'im's overlapping consensus approach first engages in an internal discourse "within and among different cultural and religious tradition, rather than simply proclaimed through international declarations and treaties" (2005, p. 40).

She purposely does not engage in such an analysis when she has argued in her previous book, *Blessed Are the Poor*, how single mothers of color constitute the poorest group of people, not only in the United States but also in other parts of the world.

When she examines why some nations and communities get assistance while others do not, she looks at how resources are allocated to the “deserving” versus “undeserving.” Yet, she does not unpack what the concept of “undeserving” really means and how it is tied to a very racist discursive history. For instance, her discussion of why Bosnia seemed to get the world’s attention and care instead of the Congo and Rwanda does not mention issues of systemic racism or geopolitical concerns. Instead, she diplomatically states that it is due to “political circumstances” that our attention has focused on Eastern Europe rather than on African countries.

Even in Couture’s discussion and analysis of social systems that impact the lives of children, she does not engage in a critical analysis of Western liberalism and its appropriation of the human rights discourse. For instance, her analysis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is not critical of its Euro-American-centric context and how it has been interpreted predominantly from this Western perspective. Westerners become uncomfortable when non-Westerners interpret the Convention in ways that are more appropriate to their communities, arguing that this is not the meaning of the Convention. Instead of seeing how the various ways of interpreting human rights texts is empowering for non-Western countries and providing them with the tools for agency in the rights discourse, Couture sees this as problematic that the human rights discourse is not fixed and static, but constantly shifting. To me, seeing the human rights discourse as one of

power (and how no one should dominate that power but that it should be a tool of empowerment for the marginalized) is a positive aspect of the human rights discourse.

How communities can negotiate, assert, interpret and transform the discourse so as to have an impact on how the universal human rights discourse is shaped is precisely how we come to a consensus on that which is universal- we start with local self-determination. Pam Couture, however, disagrees and thinks the human rights discourse is problematic because it is a fluid, fragmented discourse. Such a rights structure would not allow for non-Western countries to claim human rights as being inclusive and having meaning for their communities. Inadvertently, she is arguing that human rights needs to be a top-down structure that imposes its ideology onto a community. This has been historically the way in which the human rights movement has operated- in an imperialist, top-down rigid fashion which is why non-Western countries have been opposed to its implementation in their communities.

So while Wall and Couture have seen the importance for spiritual care to be advocacy work in caring for the global community, I critique their work for being uni-dimensional and lacking in critical analysis of systemic oppressions through global power structures and intricate social power constructs of racism, capitalism, and Christocentrism. There is still much resistance to a more intercultural understanding within human rights discourse. Yet, I argue that the intercultural care paradigm can be a bridge for pastoral care and human rights to be in conversation and mutually benefit each other. An intercultural pastoral care approach within a wo/men's human rights (WHR) framework sees the importance of locating agentive power within abusive systemic structures (as aspects of economic, socio-political structures and cultures have shown to

be oppressive towards wo/men). I do believe that using the method of an intercultural paradigm in spiritual care, we can be an essential dialogue partner for transformative care in the human rights discourse in dismantling structures of oppression.

3: INTERCULTURAL PASTORAL CARE IN A POSTCOLONIAL WORLD

Spiritual caregivers have to see that spiritual care is cultural care and that care is a form of power. In that regard, a human rights discourse that incorporates an intercultural pastoral care framework acknowledges that the human rights system is (and has been) deeply shaped by power and resource inequalities between the global North and the global South, as was the imperialist and colonial system. A human rights framework that embraces the field of pastoral care works on de-patriarchalizing its practices and theories and works to respect people's belief systems. A human rights framework that integrates pastoral care acknowledges the landscape of social justice as being embedded within the knowledge base of the community and religion, not just in the law. I have been influenced by the methods and work of Dr. Emmanuel Lartey's intercultural paradigm in engaging the human rights paradigm. Lartey's intercultural pastoral care framework that puts the communal-contextual paradigm into a global framework that critically reflects on the social power constructs of race, class, economics, and so on—in the concern for global justice.

Lartey (2003) argues that care is an issue of power and that Christo-centric pastoral care needs to include a complex analysis of systemic structures of power. The intercultural care model sees the importance of going beyond "Christian origins" if it is truly to embrace a desire for global justice. In the human rights discourse, too, An-Na'im

(2003) has argued that although the universal human rights paradigm has Western origins, the seeds of human dignity are global. He argues that we need to find consensus through acknowledging local cultures and traditions that uphold human rights norms. He (2010) further argues for the need to see human rights as a practice, rather than as a form of global law that imposes rules. Human rights, he argues, needs to be seen as a method of producing new cultural understandings and actions. Lartey, too, sees the importance of authentic participation in modes of care (2006, p. 11). He sees the necessity of rooting models of care in local cultures and religious practices so that we are not importing Western models of care onto nonwestern communities. He argues for incorporating the spiritual care perspectives of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and African traditional religions. His articulation for a widening of the Christo-centric focus of spiritual care is a pioneering move in a field dominated by white Protestants whose history is still tethered to a Hiltnerian shepherding perspective that is adamant about the “uniqueness” of the pastoral care model.

Spiritual caregivers need to embrace an intercultural pastoral care model that is critical of a monocultural, cross-cultural and multi-cultural model of care. No community can be accurately understood in solely using these tools to describe a community. Lartey (2003) argues that these cultural models are reductionist and do not take into account the postmodern, poststructural, postcolonial influences that show how cultures are fragmented, polyvocal and dynamic processes. Cultures are further complicated by the fact that people are influenced by other cultures, contexts and social power structures. In other words, a simple, cookie-cutter pastoral care approach to culture and religious traditions causes harm and is colonialist in its approach. Spiritual

caregivers also need to recognize the variegated ways in which we provide care for people that takes into account the individual person (no person is alike), the community (we are like some others), the universal (we all like all others) (Lartey, 2003, p. 171). Care is manifest in creative moments that are verbal as well as nonverbal such as art, drama, poetry, and a space of silence. Lartey (2006) argues that cultures are constantly evolving, fluid and pluralistic so we cannot essentialize when it comes to care for individuals, care for community, care for global justice. Pastoral care in a postcolonial world is about foregrounding the agency of the subject and allowing for their voices and thoughts to be heard in multiplicity (Lartey, 2006).

I argue in line with An-Na'im's human rights consensus model that issues of culture and religion, as they are concerns for local communities, need to be foregrounded in any discourse regarding universal human rights. The issue regarding cultural and religious difference has become a central point of contention in the human rights debate, especially with regard to wo/men's rights. In arguing this point of respecting difference, I look to Dr. Lartey's intercultural pastoral care paradigm that sees the importance of how practices of care have to be situated in the contexts and communities in which people live and that "outsiders" need to live with the ambiguities and uncertainties in dealing with "difference." Human rights discourse, as I have argued, has been a colonizing, homogenizing discourse, seeking to make Others like us, i.e., Westerners. Critics of human rights have argued that the discourse is another guise for colonialism, that is, neo-colonialism.

Pastoral caregivers can be on the forefront in terms of recognizing the importance of spiritual care in the human rights discourse. The human rights discourse, as well as

spiritual care practice, needs to be ongoing discursive frameworks that are grounded in local communities that are aware of intercultural care by being cognizant of difference. Human rights and spiritual care are about dignity for human beings, and the intercultural model of care underscores the need to live respectfully. Until the intercultural care paradigm emerged in pastoral care, the field had not really dealt with their colonizing historiographical past. It is very interesting that there are hardly any works dealing with the history of pastoral care and the legacies of colonialism, given the ways in which culture and religion have been problematized in rights discourse for generations now, as well as the implications of “Christian care” for the souls of people in the nonwestern world usually meant erasure and obliteration of any native religious practices. We in the field have not dealt with the legacy of colonialism and the ways in which “care” is/can be a colonizing discursive practice, especially when the rights discourse denigrates “other cultures” and spiritual practices.

Part of postcolonial care in human rights is recognizing the intercultural spiritual care needs of a community that promotes human dignity. In engaging in a critical spiritual care reflection of human rights work, I ask how we start the discussion of the relationship between pastoral care and human rights by moving the discourse away from the “problem of culture” to one that recognizes the importance of religious practices and cultures as a way of being human (Smith, 1978). The meaning of “human” in human rights is contested and invariably, we cannot come to a global consensus on its meaning. Yet, even through the fragmented nature of the ways in which the global community embraces variegated forms of religious, spiritual, and cultural practices—despite lack of agreement among humans regarding the wide array of beliefs, practices and cultural

manifestations, this points to the importance of religion and culture for human beings and how it is part of being human.

Culture and religion, therefore, do not take precedence over notions of the existence of universal human rights. Rather, the kaleidoscope of cultures and religions—and recognizing that they are shaped by human agency and how humans are impacted by cultures—are formative for understanding what is universal human rights. So I underscore the importance of embracing subjectivity and agency of the person, at the same time recognizing how she is constituted by her heterogeneous culture. As Lartey (2006) has recognized the importance of maintaining ambivalence in the face of difference, I argue that intercultural pastoral care has much to contribute in terms of an alternative theory for the human rights discourse that takes into account the multiplicative meanings of cultures and religions, as well as subjectivity of the person.

CONCLUSION

In attending to the individual, followed by models to integrate community and context with a concern for larger structural oppressions, the field of pastoral care has been delicately balancing the need to care for individual and community. While this attention to the individual has been criticized in pastoral care (McClure, 2010), more attention to individuals and their stories is necessary in the field of human rights that only examines larger structures of oppression and seeks to find solutions through the law by utilizing essentialized caricatures of wo/men. While anthropologists have been influential in voicing their opinions regarding issues of culture and communities, they have not engaged in individual care work. I argue, therefore, that this aspect of pastoral

care (individual care) is crucial. Human rights organizations have essentialized groups and cultures because they do not have a framework for listening and attending to the needs of individuals. The work of pastoral care in fore-grounding the “living human subject,” at the same time that we recognize the importance of the “kaleidoscope of variegated communities” (Seyla Benhabib) in which the subject is located is important for human rights.

I argue that storytelling, listening, and narrative are central for the work of pastoral care, as they are for human rights work. An ethic of care is possible by incorporating storytelling and deep, pastoral listening as methods of wo/men’s human rights work. While storytelling has been central for human rights workers and those whose rights have been abused, the human rights framework has not taken into account the variegated stories and how narratives highlight wo/men’s agency. Critics of wo/men’s human rights discourse have pointed out how wo/men are essentialized and their individual stories of agency and resistance are not revealed or heard. Storytelling as human rights work embraces the complexities and intricate life realities of the individual, as opposed to seeing the neat packing of meta-narratives and theories that erase differences among individuals. It reveals the intricate power structures that exist due to race, gender, sex, and class between and within nationalities.

People’s stories and histories are being unearthed everyday by pastoral caregivers, whose work it is to engage in reflexive listening. The variegated forms of story-listening that constitute pastoral care work are practices that generate hope, personal dignity, active citizenship, as well as give agency to those viewed as victims. The storyteller creates/produces the knowledge; epistemology is in the hands of the storyteller. The

point of view is in the hands of the oppressed—the storyteller becomes expert and author of her life. We as listeners become privy to an individual’s point of view. This is especially important for those who are marginalized and have no avenue to be heard. Narratives and stories become forms of power, and this then, becomes a form of advocacy and human rights work within pastoral care. Through variegated stories, we are able to un-do the essentialism that “packaged” victim narratives have created in the WHR paradigm. Such narratives have constructed wo/men as helpless victims, rather than agents of their lives. Martha Minow states that “Storytelling invites both teller and listener to confront messy and complex realities” (2008, p. 258). Narratives, testimonials, oral histories, and fiction serve as vehicles for activists and lay people to articulate their “inner compass” (An-Na’im, 2007), to be active agents in telling their own stories. Their stories become the method by which the oppressed can override the colonizing nature of other forms of human rights work. The stories provide epistemologies not available from formal, written research and resources.

In this chapter, I examined the on-going paradigm shifts in pastoral care. In the next chapter, I argue that we need to include the voices of Asian/Americans as our narratives and stories have been absent in the field. I examine the historiography of Asian/American subjectivity in the United States. I also look at the essentializing discursive construct of the Asian wo/man as being harmful to liberative the*logical praxis and the wo/men’s rights movement.

Chapter Three: Asian/American Feminist The*logy: Discursive Politics of *Han* and *Chông*

INTRODUCTION

Interrogating the “Living Human Web”: An Asian/American Pastoral The*logical Perspective

How have pastoral the*logians addressed issues of Asian/American agency and identity? How have Asian/Americans been defined and seen in the field of pastoral care? How have *we* defined ourselves? There has been a lack of representations of the heterogeneities of Asian/Americans, thereby enabling the continuous reproduction of essentialized stereotypes that are reinforced in film, media, and in mainstream society in every generation since early immigration experiences of Asians to the United States. This misleading historiographic representational framework of Asian/Americans firmly entrenches the power to control past, present, and future Asian/American discursive representations in the hands of mainstream European American culture, ignoring the variegated communities of Asians here in the United States. When Asian/Americans are not homogenized or essentialized as a single group, we are assimilated into the dominant culture, thereby eliding our differences altogether.

Asian/Americans, therefore, are either Orientalized as the “perpetual foreigner” or assimilated as “honorary whites.” Asian wo/men are essentialized as the truncated “third world woman” who is represented as “ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.” (Mohanty, 1991, p. 56). Or we are depicted as the exotic, hyper-sexual subservient “woman.” The “Asian” wo/man is a monolithic category in which we are lumped together and seen as undifferentiated from the variegated communities and cultures from which we come. I want to underscore the

importance of recognizing Asian/American heterogeneity in pastoral the*logy so as not to further homogenize and colonize Asian/Americans in our theories and practices.

Rarely in pastoral care do we hear stories that highlight the numerous narratives of Asian/Americans who have demonstrated the variegated forms of agency and subjectivity they have embodied and traversed in order to survive and flourish here in the United States and abroad. It underscores to me, the significance of Emmanuel Lartey's intercultural paradigm for pastoral care, which critiques and problematizes Eurocentric cultural, political and economic hegemony, as well as stereotyping in forms of counseling (2003, p. 32). Lartey rightly points out that

Some well-meaning attempts to inform counselors and other carers about 'ethnic minority clients' adopted in many forms of 'multicultural training,' fall into this trap by perpetuating the myths, for example, about the angry underachieving Caribbean male; the Asian young woman's oppressive cultural role; the African student's problem with communication; the problems of the Asian extended family or the single-parent Caribbean family. As such, far from enabling attention to the particular client in question, these forms fuel stereotyping of the most heinous kind (pp. 32-33).

Intercultural care values and recognizes diversity, hybridity, and the complexity of interacting cultures (Lartey, 2003). The fluidity and hybridity of Asian/Americans are often overlooked due to perpetuated Orientalist stereotypes. Outsiders are not the only ones responsible for the on-going stereotypes about Asian/Americans. We, Asian/Americans, have contributed to essentialized views of ourselves. Stories of *han-*filled Korean/American wo/men oppressed by their culture, Japanese colonialism, and U.S. imperialism abound in the*logical discourse, other disciplines in academia, as well as in popular culture.

If we, Asian/Americans, are not type-cast into stereotypes, we are then made to believe that being Asian/American in the United States is not a concern, that we are very much a part of the American cultural fabric. We are elided in the discussion of difference all together and discursively assimilated into the dominant European/American culture. Derald Wing Sue (1998) argues that “ethnocentric monoculturalism” has been an “extremely powerful, insidious, and pervasive force that [has been] institutionalized in all aspects of society” (p. 46). This has resulted in counseling through an ethnocentric and biased lens, doing great harm to a large number of people who need care. Although there are universal understandings and concerns among human beings, psychotherapist Farhad Dalal (2002) cautions us in essentializing and globalizing cultures (p.202). What does it mean to portray the Asian/American community as part of a “homogenous” United States, when in reality, we have experienced systematic racial exclusion, been denied citizenship, as well as marginalized in racial discourse? This seems to be part of the on-going complacency in Western liberalism that omits or ignores race and racism.

There are those who tend to believe that to ignore or overlook difference shows that people of color are the same as everyone else, when it actually maintains and manipulates the very structures of oppression. Feminist historian Louise Newman states that “the national romance with colorblindness... is a fundamentally misguided strategy—an ineffective way to address the real discursive effects of social hierarchies intricately structured along the multiple axes of race, class, gender” (1999, p. 20). English professor Anne Cheng (2000) warns that “assimilation is never a possibility; it is only an illusion upon which racial melancholia plays and which habitually reinvents itself” (p. 22). She writes, “‘shuttling’ between ‘black’ and ‘white’—the Scylla and

Charybdis between which all American immigrants have had to ‘pass’—Asian Americans occupy a truly ghostly position in the story of American racialization” (p. 23).

The boundaries, cultural practices and the processes of creating identity are constantly shifting and being produced in the context of our environment and our histories (Lowe, 1991, p. 64). Who we are as Asian/Americans depends as much on the past and future, as well as on the present moment in society. Lisa Lowe states that “cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” (p. 64). To be cognizant of our histories and our past, then, is crucial in understanding our identity and the context in which we inter-relate and represent ourselves within our local, as well as global community.

In the communal contextual paradigm as well as the intercultural paradigm, pastoral counselors and theologians have begun to acknowledge the subjectivity and agency of subjects—that *they* provide the knowledge of *how* we should care without othering in the process. Archie Smith (1982) saw the importance of how “the black church can effectively address these themes of the problem of false consciousness by becoming aware of its own historical context and the forces that gave it rise” (p. 228). In the tradition of Smith, then, I see the importance of knowing the history of Asian/American subjectivity. I provide a brief genealogical overview below in the hopes that it will kindle our imaginations to construct more refined pastoral theologies and theories that underscore our multiplicity, hybridity, and heterogeneity. In engaging in such creative work, I think it is crucial that we unearth histories and stories of

Asian/Americans' subjectivity and agency, both here in the United States and abroad, to better understand the reasons for on-going stereotyping and essentialist depictions of Asian/Americans—by the majority society as well as by Asian/Americans ourselves.

In this chapter, I trace the genealogy of the term, “Asian American” and how our identity and subjectivity has been understood and defined. I describe the paradigm shifts in the field of Asian/American studies and the impact that the various shifts have had for understanding issues of Asian/American identity. I then examine the problem of essentialization of Asian/American wo/men through the*logical discourse of the *han*-filled Asian “woman.” In trying to construct the*logies that do not reinscribe such essentializations, Korean/American the*logians have turned to *chǒng* as the concept that counters *han* for Korean wo/men. I argue that this is problematic because they are using the same nationalist, colonialist-derived methods as was employed in constructing the the*logical concept of *han*.

1: HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ASIAN/AMERICANS IN U.S. HISTORY

First Two Periods

Sucheng Chan (1996) argues that Asian/American historiography can be broken down into four periods. The first period (1870s- 1920s) looks at the early wave of immigration by the Chinese and Japanese. Christina Klein notes how “the racialization of Asian Americans...was achieved through a series of laws restricting immigration and naturalization (2003, p. 224). The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prevented the entry of laborers for ten years, and ultimately led to the severe imbalance of Chinese men versus the number of Chinese women in this country. The Exclusion Act was then extended in

1904, which was followed by the 1917 Gentleman's Agreement (p. 224). This created the Asiatic Barred Zone, prohibiting immigration from any person whose ancestry could be traced to the Asian Continent or the Pacific Islands (p. 224). This was followed by the Immigration Act of 1924, which was also known as the National Origins Act, prohibiting entry into the U.S. for permanent residence to all persons whose national origin was within the Asia-Pacific Triangle (p. 224). Klein notes how this was the first and only act of legalized immigration discrimination based on race in the U.S. (p. 224).

The second period of Asian/American historiography extends from the 1920s-1960s (Chan, 1996). The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 prevented any further immigration from the Philippines, which was still a U.S. colony at the time (Klein, 2003, p. 224). Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 allowed for the immigration and naturalization of Filipinos and Indians in 1946, followed by an amendment to the War Brides Act in 1947 (p. 225). Klein notes how under the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, all Asians in the United States were eligible to become naturalized citizens (p. 225). By the 1950's, Klein states that "Asians could begin to claim the status of 'immigrant' at the very moment that it was being held up as a privileged category of American national identity" (p.226). Robert E. Park of the University of the Chicago School of Sociology is the leading figure during this second period of Asian American historiography. This period is characterized by its focus on the "Oriental Problem"—that is, how Asians did not assimilate into U.S. culture (Chan, 1996). Henry Yu's (2001), *Thinking Orientals*, examines in-depth the debate of the "Oriental Problem" during this era that Asian/Americans posed by not assimilating.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) argue that the Chicago School, led by Park, was the first to advance a new approach to race using social scientific methodologies, as opposed to biological categories. Omi and Winant argue that the category of ethnicity emerged during this period to understand racial formation. This approach theorizes that other immigrants to the United States could and should assimilate into American life just as other white ethnic groups did when they immigrated. The problem that sociologists examined is that Asians did not assimilate; hence, the “Oriental Problem.” The first two periods of Asian/American historiography, therefore, framed the question of Asian presence in the United States as a problem—how we failed to assimilate and were seen as deviant from other immigrants who came to the United States. We were “perpetual foreigners” of the “living human web.”

Third period of Asian/American historiography

In the third period (1960s-1980s) of Asian/American historiography, we see the resistance of Asian/Americans to negative portrayals of our presence here in the United States with stereotypes like “yellow peril,” “coolie,” “gook,” which persist today. Sucheng Chan (1996) and other scholars note this period as the beginning of Asian/American Studies as a discipline, resisting the dominant assimilationist paradigm. While the publication of textbooks in this period are crucial, Chan argues that voices from the community in the form of magazines, newspapers and other popular writing were more important from a historiographical perspective. It underscored the political

consciousness of Asian/Americans. The origins of Asian/American Studies can be traced to the student strikes in the 1960s (Chan, 1996). These strikes were pervasive and were the dominant narrative of Asian/American studies, foregrounding political activism that sought social transformation. The 1968 student strikes at San Francisco State University and University of California, Berkeley culminated in the academic institutionalization of Asian/American Studies.

So the emergence of the term, “Asian American,” came to existence in the late 1960s. During this period, the tone of voice among Asian/American activists and intellectuals was angry and the emphasis was on the systemic victimization of Asian/Americans. Michael Omi (1994) notes that prior to this period, there were no people who referred to themselves as such, using the word, “Oriental,” which refers to objects, not people. Until this period, therefore, Asian/Americans were objectified in every sense of the term. Yuji Ichioka coined the term, “Asian American” which emphasized the collective pride of being Asian, at the same time claiming the right to be American (in C. Kang, 2002a). Yen-le Espiritu (1992) idealistically notes how the pan-Asian concept has allowed us to be free from the constraints of nationalism. In historicizing the usage of the strategic term of Asian/American, it was also a reference to our solidarity with other Asians abroad who were reviled by the U.S. due to wars with Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Asian/American Studies grew out of progressive pan-racial and pan-ethnic movements for civil rights, social change, as well as a desire for strength as a political community (Ono, 2005). The field emerged due to Asian/American student protests and desires to be included in academic curricula. Perceived as the “perpetual foreigner,” they

felt that their histories were always left out of the U.S. mainstream historiographical landscape. In many universities across the country, the field continues to be developed through methods of activist struggles and protests for inclusion in academic curricula. Asian/American Studies has, therefore, emerged as more of an activist, praxis-oriented field as opposed to the more theoretical discipline of Asian Studies (Area or Regional Studies). The umbrella term, “Asian American,” serves to denote common experiences as racial minorities in the United States. While there are significant differences and divisions among the many ethnicities that constitute the umbrella term, it is a strategic political term of unity and solidarity to resist dominant structures of anti-Asian and Orientalist sentiments here in the United States. It is a political category of distinction—yes, we are marginalized yet resistant to forms of discrimination and erasure as a community. Asian/American activists and intellectuals have tirelessly sought inclusion as an academic discipline that seeks to create epistemologies and unearth histories and individual stories of Asians in America. At the same time, the movement’s goal is recognition for inclusion in the racialized U.S. environment—that we are, indeed, part of the fabric and kaleidoscope of “Unitedstateseans” (Halley, 2006). The field of Asian/American Studies seeks to integrate the experiences and histories of Asian/Americans as being vitally important to U.S. history. Gary Okihiro (1994) has argued that the dominant values of U.S. society (democracy, civil rights, human rights, etc) emerge from the epistemologies and histories of those on the margins of society. We test the validity of U.S. values and principles of democracy through the struggles of marginalized subjects.

The 1970s is characterized by a more moderate tone of voice in the writings, as opposed to the militant tone in the 1960s. A well-known book in the field that was edited by Frank Chin (1974), et al: *Aiiieeee! An Anthology of Asian American Writers*, promoted pan-Asian identity as an empowerment strategy. The writers of this anthology located their political subjectivity here in the United States, promoting the cultural nationalist paradigm characteristic of this time period. Chin rejects any connection to his Asian identity as a way of rejecting the “perpetual foreigner” image of Asian/Americans at this time. When Asian/American Studies programs were established, most of the students and those writing in the field were Asian/Americans born in the U.S. Many were third and fourth generation “Americans” with virtually no emotional connection to their Asian ancestral homelands. Scholars have pointed out this emphasis of disclaiming their ancestral homeland ties in order to emphasize their “Americanness.” In retrospect, however, this cultural nationalist claim is criticized for promoting an anti-immigrant stance, an aspect which I will discuss later in this chapter. So this period saw a shift from an assimilationist approach to one emphasizing oppression and victimization. I underscore how the origins and usage of the term, “Asian American,” was also a way of showing resistance to racism, discrimination, and non-recognition of Asian/Americans as being part of the fabric of U.S. cultural identity.

Sucheng Chan (1996) argues that the historiography of Asian/American studies has only recently come of age since the early 1980s, and prior to that period, Asian/Americans were objects of writings by missionaries, politicians, journalists, etc., during which time, almost all of the writings about Asian/Americans were Orientalist and biased. Chan (1996) states that the period of the 1980s and early 1990s focused on

questions of agency. The writers have become more nuanced in their analysis of Asian/American subjectivity in understanding the diverse forces at work in racial understandings of Asian/Americans—that both structural forces and human agency contribute to the construction of Asian/American subjectivity. This period of Asian/American historiography saw the creation of an Association of Asian American Studies, an important structural body that has helped to generate theories, ideas, and have lively debates on issues important to the field (Chan, 1996). It was also an important organization for students and faculty (whose institutions did not have any Asian/American Studies programs) to receive feedback on their work. In this period, we also see a shift in the demographics of the students in the field—as opposed to the earlier periods where most of the students and faculty were several generations away from their ancestral Asian heritage, this period sees a greater increase in the number of students who are of foreign-born immigrants. So, while pan-Asian/American identity has been crucial for cultivating the political consciousness necessary to fight against the tides of racism in the earlier decades, the concept of such a non-existent homogeneity among the incredibly diverse and variegated Asian populations is increasingly being critiqued and underscored in the period as problematic.

“Transnational turn” of the 1990s

Since the field’s beginning, Asian/American studies has taken a “transnational turn” in the early 1990s, with a greater focus on the transnationalism and diaspora of Asians in the global community (Okamura, 2003). A point of tension for the field is in the usage and interrogation of the terms, “Asian,” “American,” and “Asian American.”

The phenomenon of “diaspora” and issues of transnationalism have resulted in a critical interrogation of the meaning of “Asian American,” as well as a self-reflection of the field itself. “Asian America,” critics argue, is not a place existing solely in the U.S.—it is a discursive site made up of diasporic Asian and Asian American communities and individuals. Earlier divisions and boundaries of those who are “Asian” and those who are “Asian American” have become more murky, porous, fluid, transnational and intercultural. While Asian/Americanists previously disdained the field of Asian studies as being a by-product of post-Cold War culture, there is growing interest by Asian/Americanists in this more recent period to have conversations and engage in overlapping work with those in Asian Studies. My own dissertation case studies (“comfort wo/men” and camptown prostitutes in Korea) indicate that one cannot simply discuss Korea in isolation when examining Korean history or Korean identity. Korea is understood in the context of global issues, international developments, imperialist and colonialist history; as well as from Koreans’ travels abroad, their absorption of Western culture, and acquisition of intellectual traditions. Asians living in the United States are impacted by foreign policies and what occur abroad, etc. There is tremendous hybridity and a cross-over of ideas, thoughts, material goods, as well as spiritual knowledge that have impacted Asian/American identity.

Lisa Lowe’s (1991) article, “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian Differences,” has become a classic in the field, paradigmatic of the period of the “transnational turn” for later works to come. Lowe argues that rather than seeing “Asian American identity,” as being fixed and established, we should see ‘Asian American cultural practices’ which produce identity that are never complete. The practices

constitute on-going changes in understanding our identity; it is a matter of becoming, constantly in formation and in transformation. While she emphasizes the importance of seeing Asian/American identity as a political organizing tool for solidarity and for asserting our agency in the upstream battle for recognition of various injustices we have encountered; at the same time, she sees the importance of signifying our differences and heterogeneity as a way of disrupting Orientalist constructions and representations of Asian/Americans. Differences such as ethnicity, generations removed from one's ancestral home place, refugee vs. non-refugee, Asian/Americans of mixed race, gender difference, sexual orientation, as well as class differences all need to be taken into consideration.

Lowe (1996) argues that the issue of immigration is the most important discursive element for Asian/American subjectivity and in that regard, she argues for non-differentiation between Asian/Americans who are "American" and those who are of immigrant status. Simultaneously, she argues for recognizing differences within the Asian/American community. The issue of immigration has been one which thoroughly divides us as a community, not only because of the questions of citizenship and the rights that Asian/American citizens hold, but also because of variegated experiences that result from whether one is of the immigrant generation, children of immigrants, or generations removed from the actual embodied experience. In other words, there are power differentials and hierarchies among Asian/Americans due to citizenship status and immigration, both here in the United States and abroad. I understand to a certain degree, Lowe's logic in this since she sees that despite differences, we need to maintain political solidarity. To that extent, she emphasizes the importance of a "collective agency" of

Asian/Americans, a group that would otherwise not adhere to one another as many groups historically have not gotten along outside the realm of a political strategy of resistance to U.S. hegemonic power.

As an example, there has been historical animosity among East Asian groups (China, Korea, Japan) towards South Asians; and among East Asian groups, Koreans have held hostile feelings towards Chinese and Japanese. Yet, here in the United States, the racism that most Asian/Americans have experienced has compelled a united voice for solidarity-building among very different ethnic groups. So while it is crucial to construct an Asian/American cultural identity that takes into account our intra-Asian differences, we need to politically maintain its positioning as a unified (albeit, heterogeneous) group that does not forget the earlier progressive pan-Asian solidarity work that has held us together as a marginalized group—and in Lowe’s eyes, therefore, it is important to see Asian immigrants and Asian/Americans as a collective body. Lowe’s (1991) classic article argues for interdisciplinarity in the fields of Asian, American, and “Asian American” studies which would help us rethink our understanding of Asian/American identity.

In an important article, Sau-ling Wong (1995) uses the concept of a “denationalization,” which includes an increasingly blurred boundary of who is considered to be Asian American and who is “Asian,” as well as between the academic fields of Asian/American Studies and Asian Studies.³⁷ She notes the shift from the domestic American perspective to a diasporic one. All of these changes occurring in

³⁷ Area studies, as well as Ethnic studies programs, are currently experiencing rapid changes and becoming more interdisciplinary to more adequately reflect the reality of what is occurring in our global community. There is a lot of cross-over of knowledge in each other’s disciplines and a blurring of its disciplinary boundaries.

Asian/American Studies as well as the debate in what and who constitutes “Asian America/n” is impacted by changes abroad as well, such as influences of Western imperialism in the cultural, economic, social and political production on Asian countries and its people (Wong, 1995). She argues that it is more helpful to see modalities of Asian/American subjectivity, than to speak of it in periods. That is, unpacking the meaning of Asian/American subjectivity needs to be examined from multiple lenses of the local, domestic, diasporic, transnational, and so on—as not happening in various phases but as occurring in complex ways simultaneously (Wong, 1995).

Numerous other scholars have advocated for a ‘transnational turn’ in the field of Asian/American Studies and argued for greater interrogation of the discursive historiography of “Asian” and “American.” David Palumbo-Liu (1999) uses the term, Asian/American, to denote that the slash, “/” signifies the distinction between “Asian” and “American,” at the same time that it can also constitute a fluid movement between the two. Both “Asian” and “American” are unsettled meanings in Asian/American discursive historiography. Like Lowe, he argues that the boundaries that have been constructed between the two terms are not as solid as once assumed (Palumbo-Liu, 1999). Immigration, border crossings and diasporic communities are part of the American landscape—U.S. culture is significantly shaped by its counters with Asian peoples and countries.

Laura Hyun Yi Kang’s (2002) work also contributes to the ‘transnational turn’ in Asian American Studies that critically investigates “heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity” in identity formation. Like Palumbo-Liu, she also uses the slash in writing Asian/American to underscore the role of immigrant subjectivity. She wants us to

challenge the problems of a disciplinary approach in critically examining the heterogeneity of Asian/American wo/men. She argues that the discursive significance of “Asian American women” arose in dispersed, fragmented moments—not in a coherent, homogeneous way that describes the historiography of pan-Asian ethnic identity. “Asian American women” as a political category became fixed once government organizations adopted the term as a category of existence. Asian/American wo/men were doubly oppressed as being “women” and “Asian American” and have had to navigate the essentialism and stereotypes that both oppressions have thrown upon us. She argues that we do not fit into the dominant feminism of a white wo/men’s liberation movement, nor do we share the dominant Asian/American movement of liberation that has been constructed from a masculinist norm. She argues that we need to challenge dominant paradigms of knowledge and subject formation in the academy which mainly relies on disciplinarity. Such scholarship is problematic in reifying representations of “Asian American women” and limits our possibilities of how we come to know and be Asian/American wo/men.

Kandice Chuh’s (2003) work serves as a novel approach to the question of “Asian America” on which the field should reflect. She argues for a ‘subjectless analysis’ that deconstructs representations of Asian/America as monolithic. She contends that we need to go beyond an identity politics on which the field is currently based. She argues that rather than foreground the problem of race as the primary category of analysis, the field needs to rethink possibilities for organizing itself. She displaces the identity-based model that dominates the field, as well as the nation-state. She argues that Asian/Americanists need to disclaim the United States and imagine another ‘home’ beyond geographic

borders. While she argues for a more praxis-oriented, liberative approach to the problem of Asian/American issues, her work is more theoretical and utopia-focused. Her approach is rather elitist in that it does not address concrete problems that exist for Asian/Americans living in the United States. While she argues for a ‘subjectless discourse’ she does not provide an adequate alternative to a rights-endowed subject. I think she is conflating legal discourse that essentializes an abstract “rights-endowed subject” that does not take into account variegated differences between peoples in a particular identity group because of the very structures of the law, with that of how subjectivity in a rights discourse can foreground agency and political voice for an individual.

In discussing the paradigm shifts of the term, “Asian American” in the field, Jonathan Okamura (2003) has rightly noted how the early Asian/American studies movement was *both* international and nationalist in its origin. The student strikes at San Francisco State University and University of California, Berkeley were partly resistance struggles to U.S. foreign policy in the Third World. The strikes were protests of liberation of Third World people at home, as well as abroad—that is, a concern for the domestic as well as the international community of marginalized subjects. Okamura has interpreted this as seeing the seeds of transnationalism in the early Asian/American movement. His approach is helpful because he sees the two ‘phases’ as being coexistent and interdependent, rather than separate ‘time and space’ occurrences. Like Sau-ling Wong, he argues for the importance of both perspectives: we need to focus on the community and concerns of Asian/Americans living in the United States as primary for the field, at the same time addressing and examining the larger transnational context of

global economic and political forces. He gives the example of female Asian migrant workers as being the focal point of transnational and local concerns for the Asian/American community.

The term, “transnational racism” has entered the vocabulary of Asian/American Studies, as those in the field argue that whether Asians are here in the United States or abroad, the racializing process is in effect. Gary Okihiro (1994) also addresses a similar concern in his work, “When and Where I Enter.”³⁸ He argues that immigrant subjectivity is a process that occurs prior to an Asian even entering the United States. He states,

Asians entered into the European American historical consciousness long before the mid-nineteenth-century Chinese migration to “Gold Mountain” and, I believe, even before Yankee traders and American diplomats and missionaries traveled to China in the late eighteenth century. The “when and where” of the Asian American experience can be found within the European imagination and construction of Asians and Asia and within their expansion eastward and westward to Asia for conquest and trade (p. 7).

As early as the 5th century B.C.E, Europeans were making representational, Orientalist claims about Asians which has informed the colonization and domination of Asians in Asia and in the United States.

Asian/Americans need to see race as the critical category of analysis and continue in the work of coalition-building and community organizing. Pastoral theologian K. Samuel Lee promotes the importance of partnering and creating alliances among peoples of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, et al (2009, p. 4). He emphasizes that all identity groups “promote its stance in alliance, not in competition, with other identity groups if we want to build an inclusive moral, political, cultural, and economic democracy” (p. 9). Americanist George Lipsitz (2000) sees the importance of ongoing

³⁸ Okihiro borrows the title from Paula Giddings’s work on the history of African American wo/men, “When and where I enter: The impact of black women on race and sex in America” (1994).

transnational work and analysis while adhering to the earlier progressive political vision of the field of Asian/American studies. He is one who sees the strategic importance of the political term, “Asian American,” and its necessary existence for offering a prescriptive to ongoing racial injustices in the U.S. Despite its critique of homogenization and glossing over of differences, he argues that it is an important framework for Asian Americans and for the field of Asian/American Studies itself.

Asian/American Wo/men

In historicizing the gendered struggles of Asian/Americans during the time of civil rights activism, many Asian/American feminists have highlighted their “invisibility” and “marginality” within the larger Asian/American movement (Kim & Zia, 1997). Even though many Asian/American wo/men were at the center of these activist endeavors, their work was not recognized as part of a larger struggle of the second wave feminist movement (1960s-1980s) in working towards eradicating sexism and oppression of wo/men. Asian/American feminist consciousness benefited and collaborated with this dual academic/activist endeavor as part of the second wave feminist movement as well. Asian/American feminists utilized the intellectual feminist theoretical framework that was being produced by the Euro-American wo/men’s movement, and they were able to build networks with them.

Asian/Americanist Elaine Kim (1997) notes that Asian/American feminists need to continue challenging Anglo American wo/men in a way that unites, not divides, the U.S. feminist movement. She recognizes the tendency for European American feminists to put forth an agenda, expecting that all wo/men will support this as their community’s

agenda (p. 60). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999), in her work, has challenged how power is utilized in dominant groups and how these groups impose and assert their perspectives, their beliefs and practices as that which should be embraced by all of humankind. She carefully nuances the importance of feminism's awareness of its responsibilities towards emancipatory struggles of other wo/men without homogenizing the variegated contexts of women. Helen Zia asserts that the basis for collaboration is that "even though we can't assume unity with white feminists, we can hope that because of their experience with gender oppression we may be able to reach a common understanding" (Kim & Zia, 1997, p. 61). At the same time, issues of racial oppression and marginalization dominate and influence the work of Asian/American feminists. It has shaped their theories and practices.

Elaine Kim contributes to essentialist discourse about Korean/American wo/men and has not problematized the issues of nationalism and Korean feminism. In fact, she argues that we need to strengthen aspects of nationalism. In her reflection on the Los Angeles upheavals of 1992 and its aftermath,³⁹ Kim (2000) laments how Korean/Americans are made to feel like perpetual foreigners here in the United States. She states that the *han* of Korean/Americans is the result of the racism we have incurred in the United States. Like the Korean nationalist argument, she laments that "the destiny (*p'aljja*) that had spelled centuries of extreme suffering from invasion, colonization, war, and national division had smuggled itself into the United States with our baggage" (p. 271). She portrays Korean/Americans as victims of racism without delving into the

³⁹ Following the verdict that acquitted four white police officers who beat an African American man, Rodney King, violence erupted mainly around South Central Los Angeles area for six days. Koreatown and Korean shops in this area were systematically targeted; shops were destroyed and looting occurred on an extreme level.

complex processes of anger, structural violence, and economic inequalities that erupted in the upheavals. She portrays Koreans as innocent victims, as if they had never harbored racist sentiments and practiced discrimination --- whether here in the United States or in Korea. She argues that “we cannot ‘become American’ without dying of *han* unless we think about community in new ways” (284). To ignore our culture, she argues, is not possible when the dominant society constantly reminds us from where we come (p. 284). Like other Korean nationalist feminists and feminist the*logians, she reinforces the stereotypes about *han* and the collective suffering we have experienced as Koreans living in the United States. She urges us Korean/Americans to release our *han* and find community, strength, and survival by cultivating our Korean nationalist consciousness (p. 284). Like many other Korean feminist the*logians, we Korean/American wo/men are portrayed as *han*-filled victims.

2: THE PROBLEM OF ESSENTIALIZATION IN ASIAN/AMERICAN FEMINIST THE*LOGY

The *Han*-Filled Asian “Woman”

The discursive history of Asian/American feminist the*logy has portrayed the Asian wo/man as a unitary subject, one who is poor and a victim of colonialism and superpower politics (Chung, 1990). The Korean wo/man is almost always depicted as *han*-filled. Korean and Korean American the*logians who have written on the subject of *han*, state that it is a unique characteristic of Korean people. *Han* is seen by many Koreans as the root of Korean culture and spirituality.⁴⁰ *Minjung* poet Ko Eun states, “we Koreans were born from the womb of *han* and brought up in the womb of *han*” (Suh,

⁴⁰ Harvey Cox notes that he has asked Koreans to “help me understand this *han* and they simply smile and tell me it is untranslatable. But they also say it is the indispensable key to understanding not only *minjung* (Korean liberation) theology, but also the Korean soul itself” (1995, p. 238).

p. 58). The word apparently defies easy definition and is commonly translated as regret, resentment, anger or grief in English. It embodies and encompasses a range of emotions, feelings and theological perspectives. *Han* may be defined as an unfulfilled wish of such intensity that even death offers no release from torment. Allegedly, *han* is frozen energy that can be unraveled either negatively or positively. It can exist on the personal, as well as on the collective level. On a personal level, *han* can be caused by family relations, personal traumas, job-related issues, or other interpersonal relations. Collective *han* refers to repressed anger or resentment due to militarism, political tyranny, colonialism, economic exploitation, patriarchy, and various forms of racial and cultural discrimination. So in essence, *han* is a sense of unresolved resentment against injustices suffered.

In his exploration of *han*, Korean *minjung*⁴¹ theologian Hyun Young Hak has explored the feeling of *han*. He states that it is

a sense of unresolved resentment against injustice suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against, a feeling of total abandonment (“Why has Thou forsaken me?”), a feeling of acute pain and sorrow in one’s guts and bowels making the whole body writhe and wiggle, and an obstinate urge to take “revenge” and to right the wrong all these constitute (quoted in Chung, 1990, p. 42).

Han can be understood as a sort of resentment, but it can mean both sadness and hope at the same time. It is the paradoxical expression of the complex feeling that embraces both desolation and hope. The sadness stems from the effort by which we accept the original contradiction facing all living beings, and hope comes from the will to overcome the contradiction. In the present, we accept it; in the future, we will overcome it. The “hope” of *han* has come to embody a more passive resentment and frustrated desire.

⁴¹ i.e., liberation theology. *Min* refers to people and *jung* refers to the masses.

For many Koreans, *han* can be seen as the core of life, the pathway leading from birth to death. Life experiences and events are seen in shades of the tragic, majestic, sad and comic. According to Andrew Sung Park, *han* is the reaction of the oppressed who have been victims of sin. *Han* is the “collapsed pain of the heart due to psychosomatic, interpersonal, social political, economic, and cultural oppression and repression” (1993, p. 16). The reality of *han* is the emotional, rational, and physical suffering of pain rooted in the anguish of a victim” (pp. 16-17). Many Koreans believe that a person who dies with *han* will return to haunt the living, seeking fulfillment or resolution. Koreans talk of the *han* of Japanese colonialism and their divided country, the *han* of their sociopolitical system, the *han* of their too rapid urbanization and industrialization. In addition, many Koreans lament that they suffer from the *han* of their conflicts with family members, relatives and friends. In their prayer meetings and visits to shamans, Korean women speak of their personal *han* and of their helplessness in resolving it. *Han* is the mixture of grief and frustrated yearning, sorrow and sadness. It is the passive acceptance of what one has not achieved. According to Park, *han* is the “inexpressibly entangled experience of pain and bitterness imposed by the injustice of oppressors” (1996, p. 9). He argues that *han* is the “void of grief that the suffering innocent experiences” (p. 9).

Asian Feminist The*logy and Nationalism

The imbricated discourse of *han* and Korean wo/men places wo/men in a victim-status and elides the variegated ways in which agency has prevailed in their lives. While there have been a few scholars in the field of religion who have raised the issue of *han* as

being problematic in academic and the*logical circles,⁴² no one has thoroughly excavated the historiography and misinterpretation of *han*. The majority of Asian the*logians still embrace the injured identity status of the “poor and suffering victim-woman” because of their connection with nationalism. The nationalist paradigm continues to be the method of constructing Korean/American feminist the*logy. So the theories have been tainted by nationalist sentiments and views. A the*logy of *han*, therefore, is androcentric and part of the malestream discourse that has yet to be fully problematized and interrogated by Korean/American feminist the*logians.

Asian feminist the*logian Angela Wai Ching Wong (2000) was one of the first to point out this problem of on-going the*logical discourse that reinscribes and essentializes the portrait of the “poor and suffering woman in Asia” and calls for a renegotiated postcolonial identity. She argues that the

discourse of ‘the poor woman,’ although it reflects a genuine attention paid to wo/men in the lower strata of Asian societies, dominates the literature of Asian theology, including Asian feminist theology, and has become the most powerful postcolonial strategy to fight Western imperialism” (p.7).

She correctly problematizes this discursive construct which has constrained the further development of a nuanced Asian feminist the*logy (p.7). Edward Said (1979) and other postcolonial scholars have argued that internalization of colonialist powers’ assumptions about their colonized subjects is part of the problem of Orientalism. Asian Americans’ own essentialist views and the*logies, therefore, reinforce the Orientalist gaze.

Using the work of Kumari Jayawardena, Wong argues how nationalists made wo/men the embodiment of a national identity. She points out the problem of the dual

⁴² Namsoon Kang (2004) has pointed out essentialist discursive constructs of the victim-wo/man within Asian feminist theology.

notion of national victim/national heroine in Asian feminist theological discourse (2000). Wo/men in Asia have become either the “poor and suffering woman in Asia,” and/or the “fantastic female” (i.e., the heroine). Despite Wong’s plea for a revised postcolonial identity, Korean feminist the*logians, scholars, and activists continue to employ this paradigm of the suffering, poor Korean wo/man and use the concept of the Korean cultural concept of suffering, *han*, as central to their method in constructing their theologies. This is in part, due not only to issues of nationalist identity but also because of the linkage of wo/men’s issues with the global human rights movement and the effectiveness of essentialism in legal discourse regarding the movement to stop violence against wo/men (VAW). She rightly argues that stories of “the triply or quadruply trampled poor women of Asia are being used as a metonym of human suffering in Asia and hence as a motif for Christian political action” (p. 15). Such narratives exist in almost every piece of theological work by Asian or Euro-American theologians—whether “malestream”⁴³ or feminist.

Wong argues that writings foregrounding suffering have become embedded into the psyches of Asian feminist the*logians and have become part of our identity (Asian or Asian American) as a resistive strategy against cultural colonialism and imperialism (p. 18). Of the Korean/American feminist the*logians who have written on *han*, almost all of them put forth a nationalist perspective of *han*, describing the concept as uniquely Korean and inexplicable. For example, Grace Ji-Sun Kim’s work (1999) provides a very descriptive, essentialist understanding of *han* with very little critique or analysis. She depicts the classic stereotype of *han* and a the*logy of Korean wo/men. Kim (2002) also makes generalizations about Korean/American wo/men as a whole, talking about their

⁴³ Neologism of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

oppressions and sufferings, homogenizing their experiences which are based on a Confucian ideological understanding of Korean culture.

I want to underscore the problems of the discourse of identity politics and nationalist rhetoric in the feminist movement. Geraldine Heng argues that “historically, almost without exception, feminism has arisen in the Third World in tandem with nationalist movements—whether in the form of anti-colonial/anti-imperialist struggles” or other movements (1997, pp. 30-31). She states that the character of third world feminisms is influenced and shaped by three factors: their connection to nationalist movements, the role of the state in wo/men’s lives, and feminism’s embrace of the third world’s ambivalence regarding modernity (Heng, 1997, p. 30). In examining the concept of agency, therefore, these three factors must be taken into consideration. Kumari Jayawardena’s (1986) ground-breaking historiographical work in the area of feminist movements in the third world and its symbiotic relationship with nationalist movements is pertinent here as well. She, too, has acknowledged and critiqued the ways in which third world feminism(s) is imbricated within nationalism and nationalist ideological origins (Heng, p. 31).

Feminist the*logian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has astutely noted the ways in which the discourses of gender, religion, and nationalism are intertwined (2005, p. 111). The topics cannot be seen as separate from one another, as they are co-constructed. She states, however, that “in feminist the*logy and studies in religion, nationalism as the systemic kyriarchal structure that determines all of our discourses remains mostly unmentioned and unexplored” (2005, p. 111). When examining third world people’s and

wo/men's movements, significant aspects of its historiography have involved methods of resistance against colonialism and anti-imperialism through nationalism.

Nationalism takes precedence for many feminist communities of color, and I argue that this has been deleterious to wo/men's movements as it prioritizes and co-opts wo/men's desires into that of male-dominated nationalist rhetoric. Geraldine Heng has argued the ways in which third world feminist movements almost always occur in close relationship with nationalist ones. That is, a critical feminist analysis is skewed by the desire to support the nationalist cause in resisting against anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism (1997, pp. 30-31). The feminist visions and goals that truly liberate wo/men are subsumed by the alleged "more important" goals of the nation and the males who control those goals. I argue, therefore, for the importance in engaging in a deeper feminist liberative critical analysis of both essentialism and nationalism in feminist the*logical discourse as being divisive, as well as a set-back for advancing the goals of the wo/men's human rights movement.

The problems of an essentialized understanding of wo/men's suffering as undifferentiated in the wo/men's rights framework have been an important part of recent critical feminist analysis, and it needs to be more thoroughly considered and examined. Wendy Brown has noted that "rights discourse not only reinforces the fiction of a monolithic subject but potentially regulates us through that monolith" (2000, p. 237). When we attempt to write wo/men's experiences into the law, whose experience do we consider to be representative for wo/men (Brown, 2005, p. 90)? What time period do the wo/men represent; and what class, race ethnicity? As Brown has noted, it is impossible to "speak for" and generalize wo/men's suffering without contributing to a unifying

discourse and circumscribing wo/men, thereby depriving them of their agency and identity.

Asian wo/men have been constructed through these “victim” discourses as undifferentiated, deprived and suffering. In this regard, Asian/American the*logians contribute to the stigmatization and prejudice that we accuse Western society for producing and reinforcing about Asian/American wo/men. A discursive framework of Asian the*logy that privileges, essentializes, and universalizes the suffering of Asian wo/men only bolsters and reinforces the problems within a rights framework as a strategy to counter imperialism and patri-kyriarchal domination. Such a discursive construction of Asian wo/men’s identity that is tied to suffering further regulates discourses about wo/men’s inequalities and injustices. Rather than liberating us and redressing the injury, we become further entrenched in the wounds of subordination (Brown, 2000). The injuries become stabilized and engraved as part of our identities. So the concept of *han*, which has prevailed in Korean/American feminist the*logical discourse has contributed to the labeling and encoding of wo/men as weak and in need of protection.

Identity Politics of *Han* and *Ressentiment*

A the*logy of *han* has reinscribed a wounded identity status onto Korean/Americans (Brown, 1995). The*logian Andrew Sung Park confirms this when he argues that *han* “is entrenched in the hearts of the victims of sin and violence, and is expressed through such diverse reactions as sadness, helplessness, hopelessness, resentment, hatred, and the will to revenge” (1993, p. 10). In the*logizing on the concept of *han*, Sung Park states that ‘One of my objectives in this book is thus to free theology

from its parochial enclave” (p. 14). Ironically, however, he has further confined the way in which the concept defines Koreans and produces them as “victims.” Park’s understanding of *han* is similar to Nietzsche’s theory of *ressentiment*, which critiques power from the perspective of the injured subject. In this understanding of victimhood, the pain resulting from our injury is transformed into anger, followed by revenge. Such has been the treatment of *han* in Korean the*logical and academic discourse.

Wendy Brown (1995) argues that the identity sustained through a politics of *ressentiment* does not dismantle the power structures, nor does it free us from our injuries which are the purported goals of such injury discourse. She argues that we never recover from our injured status once the injuries become politically etched into our identities. The persistence of the notion of the *han*-filled Korean wo/man is testimony to the fact that her agency is subject to colonial discourse. So to identify and interrogate the underlying notions of why the discourse of *han* has persisted in Korean/American feminist theology works towards the de-colonization of “injured Korean women” being regulated by such a discourse.

Non-Korean the*logians dolefully discuss the notion of *han* and the suffering of Asian wo/men when talking about Koreans or Korean the*logy as well (Ruether, 1998; Poling, 2012b). Indeed, there seems to be an automatic association between *han* and Koreans. Paradoxically, this essentialist the*logical discourse of *han* has been necessary for the production of the kind of subject required in the wo/men’s human rights discourse. In utilizing a postcolonial feminist critique of *han*, I look at the work of Ratna Kapur who has stated that she wants to challenge feminists who

continue to reinforce the divides between ‘us’ and ‘them’ by constantly scrambling to secure an ‘authentic’ primordial identity to distinguish their

positions from Western feminism. For example, arguments that seek to speak from an 'authentic' Indian feminist position, or a 'culturally distinctive' position, can land themselves in a number of traps, including cultural essentialism, homogenizing the location and politics of Western feminism, reinforcing right-wing agendas and women's victim positions in the postcolonial world.... There is a need to avoid slipping into a 'native' or 'authentic' feminist position of culturally relativist knowledge production, which serves only to erase or marginalize the heterogeneity of the Others (2005, pp. 4-5).

The identity politics of *han* homogenizes and uplifts suffering to a national level. Not all suffering of Korean wo/men is equal. As I have described in chapter one, in order for the VAW movement to be successful, it was necessary to have a subject who is in need of protection from suffering, foregrounding her injuries, rather than her subjectivity. Brown (1995) argues that true democracy, requires sharing power, not regulating it. Our identities as that of "injured" only reinforce the group's (i.e., Korean wo/men's) victimization. Speech, Brown (2005) argues, is not always liberative and can preclude our freedom.

In his analysis on the loss of freedom through regulated discourses, Foucault is concerned with "the ways in which potentially subversive discourse, born of exclusion and marginalization, can be colonized by that which produced it...." (Brown, 2005, p. 89). In that regard, I argue that the discursive history of *han* is a colonizing discourse and has virtually re-colonized Korean wo/men through its power to regulate and control who they are/become. Brown argues that a unified discourse that constantly foregrounds our suffering does not provide us with solutions to overcome it. And if we can imagine the opposite of this, to have variegated methods of silence about our suffering may provide pathways and opportunities that we may not have known existed (2005, p. 93). When discursive subjects such as the "comfort wo/men" and camptown military prostitutes become appropriated and colonized through a discourse of *han*, they become

disempowered objects of control and are further subordinated. To see *han* as unitary and collective elides the diversity, the variegating meanings, as well as the individual and shared experiences of suffering. It essentializes, sentimentalizes, and commodifies our suffering and pain (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1997, p. 19).

Attempts to Correct the Stereotype of the “*Han*-Filled Asian ‘Woman’”

Asian/American feminist the*logians have taken to heart the criticisms put forth by Wong. Feminist the*logians, such as Nam Soon Kang, have followed in her critique of essentialist Asian feminist the*logy. She implores us to construct more critical Asian feminist the*logies that do not romanticize Asian religious and cultural traditions. She rightly points out that a the*logy devoid of criticism “produces theological infantilism” (1995, p. 22).⁴⁴ Kang correctly notes that *han* is essentializing Korean wo/men’s experiences and rightly claims that

There is no such thing as Korean/Asian women’s *han* in general, and furthermore, Korean women’s suffering or anger or sorrow cannot be transmitted from generation to generation because it is a historical product of one’s specific time and location. Claiming *han* as Korean women’s collective experience is, in a way, a product of fictive ethnicity. It may sound very exotic and interesting for Westerners, but it... produces and reinforces false assumptions that the meaning of gender identity and the experience of sexism are the same for all Korean/Asian women.... (2004, p. 112).

A major problem with Korean/American feminist the*logy, then, is its methodological flaw: forms of nationalism are imbricated within almost all aspects of Asian feminist

⁴⁴ And to prove Kang’s point, I provide an example of how Asian feminist the*logy is infantilized by white feminist theologians: I took a feminist the*logical ethics seminar in graduate school, where the reading list was composed of almost all Western, white the*logians. When asked why we were not reading the*logies by Asian the*logians, the prominent the*logian stated that the*logies by wo/men of color needed time to mature, grow and have internal criticism before it could be critiqued by “outsiders.” This form of protectionism is infantilizing to Asian feminist the*logians, and it is critique from the outside that will help dismantle existing Asian feminist the*logies that perpetuate the “victim-subject” discourse.

the*logy. Partly, this is a problem we have created as we have historically been colonized, as well as marginalized in the academy and in the greater society. Nationalism, as Ranjoo Seodu Herr (2003) states, is about “wounded pride,” a form of resistance for nations struggling for independence. We have desired, therefore, to find a distinctive, unique the*logical voice to move out of the margins and overcome insecurities.

Asian feminist the*logians have continued the disturbing trend of seeking “authenticity” and “uniqueness” in our various communities and religious traditions that seek to counter the colonizing practices of Western influences of religion and culture. Partha Chatterjee argues “that colonial and postcolonial societies maintain their autonomous space by separating their worlds into an inner spiritual domain and an outer material domain and that, while they may concede the outer domain, they preserve their spiritual one” (1993, pp. 6-7, in Kim Haboush, 2001, p. 199). In a desire to find our own the*logical voice, we use our “unique,” “cultural” roots. So the problem of essentialism and/or nationalism is pervasive in almost all of the writings that purport to undo the stigma of the victim subject in Asian feminist the*logical discourse. Kang rightly points out that “Asserting Asian cultural uniqueness, based on the old dualism of Asia as the Orient and European and American countries as the Occident, becomes the core of Asian theological discourse” (103). This desire to construct a unique Asian the*logy that resists Western domination has been—and continues to be—a major goal of Asian the*logians, and they continue to employ a nationalist paradigm as a method of constructing their the*logies.

Concept of *Chǒng*⁴⁵ 情

The most recent and well-known attempt by Asian/American feminist the*logians to deconstruct the essentializing discourse of the *han*-filled “woman” has been by feminist the*logian Wonhee Anne Joh. *Chǒng* has replaced a the*logy of *han* for Korean/American feminist the*logians. *Chǒng* refers to feelings and affection (the Chinese character means “heart” and “blue” 情). In Chinese, *ching*, refers to affection, sentiment, feelings, and genuine love. Joh uses *chǒng* to refer to “agape, eros, and filial love with the compassion, empathy, solidarity, and understanding that emerges between connected hearts” (2004, p. 152). *Chǒng*, in its colloquial usage, is referred to as an intimate connection that a person develops to another person over time or through a relationship (an attachment, a bonding). Asian/American feminist the*logians have employed the concept of *chǒng* without fully interrogating the concept from a genealogical or historiographical standpoint. I argue that Joh employs similar nationalist rhetoric and methodological framework that nationalists have used in formulating a the*logy of *han* in constructing her the*logy of *chǒng*.

In my exploration and research of the colonial period of Korea (1910-1945), I have found that the modern concept of *chǒng* in Korean was appropriated from Western literature and psychology by literary activist Yi Kwang-su. During the colonial period (1910-1945), Yi Kwang-su’s understanding of *chǒng* was quite the opposite of what Joh argues. Rather than emphasizing filial love, he thought it was okay to disobey parents if it meant finding true and romantic love—he argued that Westerners find “true love.” So *chǒng* was very “Western” in how it was appropriated from Western cultural practices of

⁴⁵ I am using the McCune-Reischauer spelling of the word, although in much of the the*logical literature, the spelling most commonly used is *jeong*, following the Revised Romanization of Korean.

romantic love. Joh has really created her own meaning of *chǒng*. She depicts the concept to be very different from that of anything in the West, when, in reality, it is a Western ideal that was unfamiliar to Koreans during the colonial period. This underscores the coeval power of colonialism, colonial modernity, and the transcultural flow of ideas. Prior to Yi's appropriation of its Western understanding, the original meaning and understanding of *chǒng* in Korean was derived from Confucian and neo-Confucian discourse. I discuss how the concept was originally understood in my next chapter and how its meaning has evolved. Here, I examine how the concept is currently being understood and used by Asian/American feminists.

Joh employs the “Korean concept” of *chǒng* that, for her, replaces a the*logy of *han*. Rather than critique or problematize the unitary, nationalist sentiment of suffering, she argues that the “power of *jeong* is what dissolves the hardened heart of *han*” (2004, p. 155). Overall, her work is troubling from a scholarly standpoint and disappointing because she has become an expert on *chǒng*, but she does not cite any sources as to where she derives her knowledge; nor does she disclose from where her authority on the topic comes (she does not cite books, articles, or references). Her epistemological authority on the topic is colloquially-derived and based on the fact that she is “Korean.” She has not engaged in any ethnographic or field work. But especially troubling is that she provides no context as to what time period in which she is describing her concept of *chǒng*. As Nam Soon Kang stated, “The Hegelian perception of Asian ahistorical stagnancy still remains true in various discourses on Asia” (2004, p. 103). Joh gives no historical framework for how its current meaning came into existence. It becomes a timeless

concept—static and fixed, as is the Asian feminist understanding of the Orientalist discourse of the *han*-filled “victim woman” who is static, frozen and fixed.

While Joh does not argue for *chǒng* to be a unique Korean concept, she still argues that it is a concept from which Westerners can learn. She disappointingly tries to point out the divides between Koreans’ understanding of relationality and Western individualism:

The active calling of *jeong*,⁴⁶ through the recognition of the Self in the Other, is a definite form of collaborative compassion. This collaboration with compassion is not one that seeks to maintain the status quo or to perpetuate oppression. Rather, such collaboration, born out of connectedness, seeks to work toward emancipatory praxis for all. Collaboration for liberation from oppression, as one of many manifestations of *jeong*, is intimately linked with solidarity. One of the popular sayings and sentiments in Korea precisely embodies this collective solidarity that might be uncomfortable for the Western individualistic sensibility. The popular phrase, “You die- I die; you live- I live” reflects an extreme sense of *jeong* that emerges within relationality (2004, 155).

Historiographically speaking, such a phrase is not a reflection of Koreans’ unique relationality. Rather, it is the result of a resistance strategy involving nationalist rhetoric that argues Koreans as a collective body that is united against colonialist/imperialist forces. This propagandistic phrase attempted to show Koreans their homogeneity. This has colonialist roots as the Japanese initially used this rhetorical strategy during the colonial period, and especially in the 1930s, to show that Koreans and Japanese were one. *Naisŏn ilch’e* in Korean (and *naisen ittai* in Japanese) referred to Korea and Japan as a single body. This was a state initiated forced cultural assimilation policy to obliterate Korean identity by colonizing the Korean consciousness and imposing Japan’s worldview onto

⁴⁶ Joh’s choice of transliteration for the concept of *chǒng* follows the Revised Romanization of Korean.

Koreans. It is especially paradoxical that Joh argues that the linkage between *chǒng* and collective solidarity may be incompatible within a Western individualistic framework since the meaning of *chǒng* during the colonial period was appropriated specifically because Yi saw its connection to the cultivation of the individual (Shin, 1999, p. 256). Yi lamented how Koreans never had a clear understanding of individuality because they ignored emotions. So *chǒng*, for Yi, signified the scope of individual human emotions.

Joh seems unaware of the colonial roots and origins of the appropriation of this concept during the Japanese colonial period in Koreans' effort to engage in a "civilizing Christianizing mission." She attempts to bridge the concept of *chǒng* with Christology, when in reality, *chǒng* was already imbricated with Christianity in Yi's appropriation of its meaning. He incorporated a Christian framework into his understanding of *chǒng* in the hopes that it would bring progress and growth for Korea, just as Christianity did for the West. So rather than contribute to a more complex, nuanced Asian feminist the*logical discourse, she substitutes the essentialization of the "*han*-filled woman" with a glorification of *chǒng*.

Joh, therefore, romanticizes and idealizes the concept of *chǒng*, its meaning, and roots. A historiographical, postcolonial analysis reveals the hybridity, mimicry and the transculturality of *chǒng* and how its modern concept was Western-derived. While I am not trying to entirely disprove Joh's work on *chǒng*, I argue that the concept is not "Eastern" or "Western" per se, nor is it Korean or bound to any culture. I want to emphasize the importance of including historiographical method when engaging in postcolonial analysis so as not to further Orientalize and romanticize in constructing

Asian feminist the*logies. No culture is pure as many Koreans purportedly believe about Korean culture. We are a hybrid, heterogeneous community where many of our traditions have been fused, blended and imported. Cultures and languages are fluid, porous and constantly changing, as well as adapting to changes within a country or community. Most troubling is how Joh and other the*logians have argued (with *han* as well) that the concept of *chǒng* (and *han*) are intranslatable. *Chǒng* and *han* have multiple meanings. This is partly due to the nature of the Chinese characters, but also because of the evolution of languages and meanings of words over time, as well as the evolution of its meaning over the centuries due to the changing socio-political context.

CONCLUSION

In order to locate us on the pastoral the*logical discursive web, I have examined the trajectory of Asian/American subjectivity by providing a brief genealogical context of the term, “Asian” and “Asian American” within U.S. society. In this chapter, I have highlighted scholars’ works that successfully piece together a representation of Asian immigrant subjectivity. Edward Said (1993) stated that narrative is crucial to hegemonic discursive power, and that “stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history” (p. xii). Miller-McLemore (2005) insists that those within the web who have not yet spoken must speak for themselves. She contends that “if knowledge depends on power, then power must be given to the silenced” (p. 46). She states that “we must hear the voices of the marginalized from within their own context” (p. 46). The power to narrate is significant,

especially in the web where the dominant voice is the European American voice. The current web metaphor, then, is limited in stimulating our imaginations to construct theologies that do not victimize or stereotype Asian/American communities or other persons of color. Through discursive concepts such as *han* and *chǒng* to construct Asian the*logies, we have reinforced Orientalist notions and confirmed that power is still in the hands of the colonizer. We have not escaped colonializing practices of internalizing and resisting neo-colonialist power structures.

If Orientalism is a ‘Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient,’ (Said, 1979, p. 3), then, unfortunately, Orientalism is still operative in the Asian the*logical discursive web. Current feminist postcolonial the*logians are still operating out of a colonialist, nationalist framework. Korean/American feminist the*logians have yet to critique this idealized, unchanging, timeless concept of *han*—and now, *chǒng*. They continue to use the same methods of nationalist Korean historiography that were developed during the colonial era. As I explain further in my next chapter through a historiographical analysis of the colonial period, I describe a genealogy of *chǒng* and *han* as a modern “invention of tradition” (Hobsbawm, 1992) that points to its colonial origins.

Chapter 4: Genealogy of the Modern The*logical Understanding of *Han* 恨

INTRODUCTION

This chapter critiques the the*logical and intellectual mythologization of the Korean the*logical concept of suffering, *han*, within the cultural-postcolonial nationalist narrative of Korean politics. I argue that the motive for associating *han* with wo/men's issues is also tied to the Korean nationalist discourse. I argue *against* the existing paradigm of *han* as a the*logical concept that is unique to Korean culture and that is considered to be a national characteristic of the Korean people. Instead, I propose that *han* is transcultural, intercultural, and extant in all human communities. Indeed, *han* describes the multi-faceted dimensions of suffering that are pervasive in all cultures and histories because of the human vulnerability to suffering.

Han, as a word, may be expressed uniquely (or inexplicably, as many Koreans have argued) in the Korean language and culture due to the country's individual cultural and socio-political history, but what the concept refers to is not unique to Korean culture.⁴⁷ Instead, I argue that the modern the*logical concept of *han* is a hybrid understanding that developed during the colonial period, and it has become part of the genealogy of Korean nationalist historiography. Suffering is a psycho-social, historical, cultural, political, as well as religious construction that is shared by all humans. I trace the origins of the emphasis placed on emotions to the literary works of the controversial writer Yi Kwang-su during the Japanese colonial era. I problematize the the*logical significance placed on the concept of *han*, arguing that the modern concept conveys the opinions of the Japanese colonialists about Korean subjects during the Japanese colonial period of Korea (1910-1945). While the

⁴⁷ *Han* in the Chinese character— 恨—is *hen* (in Mandarin Chinese) which means hatred. In Japanese, it is *urami* which means to “bear a grudge” and “show resentment.” *Enkon* or *urami* characterizes the unplaced spirit of the deceased.

concept of *han* emerged in an attempt to reflect the oppression experienced during colonialism, political governmental authoritarianism, as well as Western imperialism; it shows how the agency of Koreans is still subject to colonial discourse and has been shaped by it.

This chapter seeks to identify and address the colonial origins of a nationalist discourse of *han*. I first provide a brief overview of Korean identity formation and nationalist historiography. I then examine Korea's intellectual history during the colonial period (1910-1945). By briefly looking at the diary of Yun Ch'i-ho, a Korean activist during the colonial period, I show the ways in which Western ideas and practices were highly regarded as that which would help Korea to modernize. I then examine the colonial discourses of power in the form of *chǒng* and *han*. I discuss the work of literary activist Yi Kwang-su and his adoption of Western understanding of emotions, *chǒng*. I then investigate the historical emergence and on-going articulation of the Korean the*logical concept of suffering, *han*. I argue that the current the*logy of *han* emerged during the colonial period of Japanese colonization of Korea (1910-1945) through the influence of Japanese scholar and art collector, Yanagi Muneyoshi. I believe we can strive to have a more pluralistic, complex, liberative the*logical discourse—one that moves away from colonized, nationalist methods, as well as addresses the suffering of a community without essentializing and stereotyping Koreans as a group.

1: THE COLONIAL PERIOD, KOREAN IDENTITY FORMATION, & NATIONALIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

The topic of nationalism in Korea since the late nineteenth/ early twentieth century is multi-layered, complex, and fragmented. It certainly has not been monolithic in modern

Korean history. The concept of nationalism is amorphous, as national identities can and have changed over time. It is a process. Nationalism is a tool, an instrument with which to give strength to a group of people, at the same time that it can be used to manipulate and justify certain actions that impact a people collectively. During the colonial and postcolonial period, there have been—and are—several competing discourses of nationalism in Korea.⁴⁸ Yet, the nationalist movements have been unified and grounded in the same narrative of purporting to be one homogeneous race that was distinct and separate from that of Japan (Pai, 2000).

Edward Said (2005) argues that national identity usually takes into account narratives of its past, as well as its “founding fathers” (p. 257). Nationalist narratives and historiographies usually entail incorporating “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm, 1990). Collective memories, states Said, are not necessarily authentic; they are, however, functional and helpful to shaping and forming a national identity (Said, 2005, p. 257). In this regard, nationalist historian Sin Ch’ae-ho has been noted for one of the most successful postcolonial inventions of tradition in the founding father narrative of Tan’gun. He advocated for a *minjok* (people) centered history and re-wrote Korean historiography based on Confucian moral judgments (Em, 1999). He argued for the ethnic/racial unity of the Koreans by locating the origins of the Korean race in 2333 B.C. Sin reconstructed Korean history as a story of a single people that was distinct from China and its other neighbors. Allegedly, we have existed as one homogeneous race (*tan’il minjok*) since the founding of the country by Tan’gun, who was born of the union between a female bear and the son of heaven, Hwan’ung (Pai, 2000, p. 58). Tan’gun is seen as the spirit of the nation.

⁴⁸ The so-called conservative nationalists have focused on nation-building and the anti-government movements that have opposed foreign influence and have focused on resistance strategies, anti-Japanese colonialism and U.S. imperialism.

History has been re-written to codify the suffering and victim-status of Koreans into its history. Korean archaeologist Hyung-II Pai argues that “A Korean identity was thus forged out of this racial history of suffering by instilling in all Koreans a collective sense of destiny as victims of superpower politics and foreign invasions since time immemorial” (2000, p. 2). In this regard, historian Kyu Hyun Kim (2004) emphasizes the overwhelming continuity in the colonial and postcolonial periods of Korean history. The suffering of Koreans—their *han*—has become the backbone of the “culture-as-national-essence” and “culture-as-tradition” argument. I discuss nationalism to better understand the postmodern Korean obsession with *han*.

A genealogy of the concept of suffering, *han*, was coeval with nationalism and with the emergence of an ethno-nationalist historiography of modern Korea.⁴⁹ Nationalism is a sentiment, a feeling (Robinson, 1988). And I see *han* as a sentiment of nationalism that evolved through the colonial and postcolonial period. Koreans accept *han* as the core of their national spiritual identity that has allegedly existed since time immemorial. To argue that Koreans’ *han* is a national sentiment prior to the twentieth century—which is what many Korean the*logians have argued—is anachronistic since no “nation” existed. It is almost impossible to say that a concept of “nation” existed in Korea prior to the introduction of Western concepts of nations and nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century. Prior to this time period, there was not a strong sentiment of loyalty or sense of belonging to Korea as a nation-state; rather, it was more accurate to say that people felt deep connection and bonds to their community village, kinship ties, or region (Em, 1999, p. 338). Historian Henry Em argues that the word, *minjok* (idea that

⁴⁹ 1876 is seen as a turning point year in Korean history. Crucial events, such as the Treaty of Kanghwa with Japan, eventually led to Korea’s eventual annexation by the Japanese in 1910. This period is an important period for Korea’s transition from the traditional to the modern history period.

Koreans constitute a nation), is a modern construct emerging in the late 1890s and was derived from the Japanese neologism, *minzoku*, created in Meiji Japan (p. 337).

Historian Carter Eckert states that “the nationalist paradigm is so deeply rooted in the mental life of the community that it has become in effect an *a priori* discursive framework for interpreting historical events that brooks no opposition” (1999, p. 364). He argues that any other possible historical interpretation that challenges the nationalist paradigm is refuted because almost all topics have been subsumed under the nationalist framework (p. 366). This nationalist paradigm is not only relevant to the method of historiography; it also speaks to the method employed for the field of religion and the*logy as well, as has been evident in the discursive history of *han* and *chǒng*. Eckert, moreover, argues that nationalism has functioned as a religion in the “postcolonial nation-building process” and it has become a form of civic virtue (p. 369).

Understanding the Colonial Period (1910-1945): An Intellectual History

Korean historian Michael Robinson and others have implored the need for a more complex understanding of the colonial period, one that does not solely catalogue the oppressive and exploitative abuses of the Japanese, nor on the opposite end of the spectrum, focus exclusively on heroic Korean resistance. Instead, we need to understand and unearth the paradoxes and ambiguities extant in Korean colonial history (Robinson, 2007, p.4). In spite of the desire of colonized peoples to regain agency and to be unfettered from the chains of colonialism, Robinson astutely points out how “one of the insidious legacies of colonialism is how it colonizes the consciousness of the subjugated political and social

elites” (p. 5). Being colonized by Japan has profoundly influenced and shaped Korean individual, familial, as well as national identity formation.

An important developing theme in Korean studies is that Korean nationalist historiography has very much been influenced by Japanese opinions about Koreans. Koreans have internalized Japanese beliefs and ideas about Koreans and it has been formative in the Korean nationalist discourse. Not surprisingly, then, Korean nationalist historiography has unconsciously relied on methods and propaganda employed by the Japanese during the colonial era. Historian Hyung Il Pai states that

early colonial intellectuals like Yu Kil-chun, Kim Ok-kyun, Yun Ch'i-ho, Sŏ Ch'ae-pil, Yi Kwang-su... identified more with their colonial ruler's view of Korea under the late Yi dynasty as being in decline and needing moral and racial improvement. They had internalized the Japanese attitude of blaming the entrenched conservative Chinese-influenced yangban for the plight of the Korean people. Therefore, even the concepts of “Korean” progress and “Korean” decline were derived from the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century Japanese colonial racial perspective that saw all non-Japanese in Asia as lagging far behind in the cultural evolutionary spectrum as “primitive” and therefore “prehistoric” (2000, pp. 257-258).

To provide an example of the ways in which Koreans had internalized Western, as well as Japanese beliefs about them, I examine the diaries of colonial intellectual and activist Yun Ch'i-ho. He embodies the paradoxes, contradictions, and passions that are being addressed in Korean colonial historiography.

Yun Ch'i-ho's Diaries (1865-1945)

I have examined the eleven-volume diaries of Yun Ch'i-ho, a rare jewel for the Korean historian, as it provides us with a daily record of events, insights about people, as well as his critical but often times humorous opinions about political figures and historical

incidents. He was confronted with some of the most significant issues during a major turning point in Korean history from the 1880s-1945. The diaries give us a personal dimension to the colonial period and shows us how he viewed colonialism. The diaries, therefore, provide us with an incredible opportunity to see his perspectives, observations and opinions on many of the crucial events during the colonial period that led to fundamental changes in modern Korean social, economic, cultural, and intellectual history.

Yun's diary, written from January 1, 1883 until July 3, 1906, is significant as a primary source during the colonial period. We are able to read and witness the life account of someone who has lived and was actively a part of the making of Korean history. We are able to share Yun's experiences and see the changes that he as an individual underwent through his encounters with the West and its ideas. Through his diary entries, we get first-hand accounts of the 1884 Coup, the Tonghak rebellion, the murder of Queen Min, the birth and death of the Independence Club, the Korean Conspiracy Trial of 1911, and the March 1, 1919 movement. And of course, it is an understatement to say that it is an invaluable source for understanding these events in the context of Japan's occupation of Korea in 1910. Yun states at the beginning of his diary that one of his main life goals is to preach the Gospel, and the inter-weaving of his understanding of Christianity in Korea is present throughout the diary entries.

Yun was well-read in Western philosophical thought; democracy; as well as the social contract theories of Locke, Hobbes, and Rousseau. Yun attached importance to the supremacy of law, and he actively sought to have the people aware of laws and their rights. He saw the solidarity of the government and the people as an essential element of an advanced nation. It is clear from his diary entries that Yun saw the key to Korea's salvation

as being Westernization. Although many Koreans were adamantly opposed to Christianity during this time period, Yun's denunciation of Confucianism was shared by a section of society that advocated a thorough condemnation of Confucianism. Confucianism was seen as an obstacle to progress.

For many Korean activists during this time, those Western elements that would aid Korea on a road to progress were Christianity, literature, and philosophy. Koreans refer to the initial period of colonization by Japan (1910-1918) as the "Dark ages" (Wells, 1995, p. 22). Religion became a powerful symbol for Koreans during this period as many nationalists felt that religion—specifically Christianity—provided a way for Koreans to have hope for their nation. It became a form of enlightening and modeling Koreans to be like the West. As a convert to Christianity, Yun saw the faith tradition as a link to Western civilization and progress. He believed that it made the West wealthy and strong, and he saw U.S. independence as a result of people's religious faith (vol. two, *passim*). Strong religious overtones are manifest throughout the diary, where he professes his personal faith, conviction and love of God. He was attracted to Christianity because of its pragmatism and practicality. Yun's desire for Korea to become as "civilized" as soon as possible was a partial explication for his receptivity to Christianity. Yun strongly believed that Koreans should absorb every aspect of the West's social and political ideas and institutions if Korea is going to come out of her allegedly abysmal situation and gain dignity from other nations (vol. two, p. 158).⁵⁰

His sincere desire to have a greater society in which to live is palpable in his writings. Yun's diaries show us the complex and often contradictory mindset of the human

⁵⁰ What is important to note in his diary entries is the repetition of his thoughts, feelings and opinions on topics such as his disappointment in and lack of confidence in Koreans and Korean society, the superiority of Western society, Christianity as a tool for Korea's economic prosperity.

being situated in a place of vulnerability—i.e., the colonized consciousness. His life embodied the contradictions of a person who was simultaneously seen as a patriot and Japanese collaborator. In his passionate desire for modernity, we see him unconsciously adopting ideas that are Western or Japanese; and in turn, desiring a Korean identity that is “unique.” While he greatly admired the West and all of its achievements, at the same time, he acknowledged Anglo-Saxon arrogance and chauvinism. His support for (and collaboration with) Japan was partly due to his support for the idea of pan-Asian nationalism against Western racism, which was an important discourse during this period (Schmid, 2002).

He easily absorbed, incorporated and assimilated Western ideas and concepts. Social Darwinism and its understanding of progress exerted great influence on Korean society, and Yun was readily persuaded by its ideas. The idea of Social Darwinism was closely connected with the concept of progress and was imported into Korea by Yu Gil-Chun who first studied it in Japan under Fukuzawa Yukichi.⁵¹ The influence of Darwinism in Korea contributed to a strong political consciousness dedicated to national salvation. Imperialism to Yun, therefore, was a method for well-governed nations to help those less-fortunate countries. Although he felt “Corea” to be oppressed, he felt it was better for Koreans to be under Western rule than to be under China, especially if the country were not strong enough for self-government (vols. 2-5, *passim*). Again, I note the contradictions of his thought-processes: Yun wanted independence and sovereignty for Korea; at the same time, he saw no problem with England controlling and guiding Korea. He felt that Korea could not progress under China’s influence due to her backwardness. Yun respected Western

⁵¹ Yu was the first Korean to study in the United States in 1883 (Eckert, Lee, Lew, Robinson, & Wagner; 1990, p. 204). Fukuzawa is considered to be one of the founders of modern Japan.

civilization, progress and culture. Western imperialism and colonialism, therefore, were means to the end goal of Korea becoming like the West.

In his diary entries, Yun constantly refers to the concept of “might is right” and that for a nation, there is no greater crime than that of weakness. While he felt it is evil, he accepted the fact that a weak nation should be obliterated by a strong one. He wrote, “Justice and peace will never be established on earth until either the stronger races and nations shall have destroyed all the weaker ones or the latter shall have gained strength enough to protect themselves” (vol. 2, p. 239). In his later diary volumes, he appears to be less optimistic and patriotic; he has become more realistic and argued that patriotism is not enough for Korea (vol. 3, p. 6).⁵² He believed that through foreign influence, Korea would come out of its stagnation and change for the better. He displayed much enthusiasm in Western ideas of education and strived to improve education in Korea. He believed that education would foster a sense of individual self-reliance, eventually leading to national independence.

Another interesting aspect to his diaries is his intercultural experiences here in the United States as one of the first Asian/Americans. He was one of the first Koreans living to live in the heart of the South, prior to an understanding of racial tolerance there. He was living in the heart of the South where racism was a part of life. His racial consciousness was shaped by his observations of the attitudes of Southerners towards African Americans (vol. 2; p. 53, 146), as well as his own experiences of racism (vol. 2, p. 52).⁵³ Paradoxically as he experiences racism in the South and is angered by such treatment, he harbors racist sentiments and feelings against Koreans in Korea. In 1895, he visited Korea after ten years

⁵² Again, this is just one example of many such sentiments regarding patriotism.

⁵³ Such experiences and observations of racism are peppered throughout the volumes of his diaries, as they are not just one single incident. I just provided a few page numbers as examples.

of living abroad, and he was disappointed at the inefficiency of Koreans and almost embarrassed after having lived abroad (vol. 4, p. 18). He writes

But, alas! I have seldom been as sad as I am now. The Korean coolies with white and clumsy clothes black with dirt, the native hovels rising no higher than the ground they encumber and compared to which the Chinese huts of the dirtiest sort are palaces, the horrible smell from the accumulated filth all around, the abject poverty, ignorance, stupidity of the people, the naked and unattractive hills sadly emblematic of the defenceless state of Korea—this sight is enough to make any patriotic Korean sick.... (vol. 4, pp. 18-19).

He laments the poor conditions of his native country. While he feels sorry for Koreans, he is full of shame for them and criticizes Koreans for their lack of patriotism (vol. 4, p. 23).⁵⁴

I bring up Yun's thought processes to show the mindset of those seeking transformation for Korea. He, along with other intellectuals and activists, had idealized the West. They felt that the only way to achieve transformation for Korea was through the help of Westerners and those aspects of the West that helped it to flourish. Korean colonial modernity was therefore a hybrid understanding of the old (Korea) and the new (West and Japan). New cultural ideas and styles were introduced and appropriated not only through foreign cultures; traditional Korean culture was being transformed and adapted (p. 88).

After 1910, Japanese colonialism brought "colonial modernity" to Korea (Robinson, 2007, p. 77). Robinson argues that this form of modernity is distinct from that of the West because it was directly affected by the colonial encounter (p. 77). He states that "to be part of modernity will therefore mean adopting the culture of the ethnically distinct and advantaged colonizer community. This engenders cultural hybridity because it forces the colonized to adopt the colonizers' language and values if they want to participate in the new modernity" (p. 78). Through Yun's diaries, we see

⁵⁴ Again, I provide just examples of his disappointment in Korea. For instance, in volume 2, p. 158, he discusses similar feelings he had about Korea in 1891.

this intercultural and transcultural flow of ideas, thoughts and movements in early twentieth century Korea. The modern the*logical construct of *han* and *chǒng* arose out of this environment of cultural modernity and the juxtaposition of the modern and the traditional (Robinson, 2007, p. 78).

In this next section, I examine the intercultural “borrowing” of Western concepts that merged with the Korean concept of *chǒng* that is currently being employed by Asian/American feminist the*logians. It is, therefore, impossible to argue the purity of Korean ideas or that there is a purely indigenous Korean emotion. At the same time, one cannot say that *chǒng* and *han* are not “Korean” because they arose out of the colonial period. What I argue, instead, is to see the complexity, hybridity and transculturality of both concepts that does not argue its uniqueness. Our cultural, historical circumstances and how we have interpreted *han* through unique forms of music, arts, literature and drama have made it uniquely Korean in its creative understanding and interpretation. This, too, is platitudinous to state since all cultures are uniquely interpreting their own *han* in creative ways.

2: CHŎNG: A WESTERN UNDERSTANDING

As I have written in the previous chapter, *chǒng*, like *han*, is currently being employed by Korean/American feminist the*logians as a method in constructing their the*logies. While the*logian Wonhee Anne Joh argues that the West could learn from such supposedly Korean concepts, I argue that it was derived and appropriated from the West during the colonial era. Rather than claim its uniqueness, I have implored us to engage in deep interrogation and examination of how its current understanding

contributes to ongoing colonizing the*logical discourse in Asian feminist the*logy. Without such questioning of its meaning and usage, we are practicing a form of self-Orientalizing and idealizing of *chǒng*, just as we have been engaged in a form of reverse Orientalism with a the*logy of *han* (Said, 1978).

The meaning of *chǒng* has evolved throughout Korean history. There was, however, an abrupt transformation of its meaning for Koreans through the conscious efforts of colonial activist and intellectual, Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950), during the Japanese colonial period. He is considered to be the first Korean modern novelist. Yi Kwang-su—a scholar, writer, and activist—saw that following the West was important to improving Korea as a nation as well. He saw that modern literature, as it burgeoned during the colonial period, was central in the formation of a Korean national identity, both of which he felt Korea had lacked (Shin and Robinson, 1999, p. 12). He believed that feelings (*chǒng*), the central element that distinguished pre-modern from modern literature, was lacking in Korean literature (Shin, 1999, p. 254).

Yi felt that modern literature failed to take root in Korea because classical Chinese was predominant in Korean literature. Chinese literature, moreover, put priority on morality over emotion. *Chǒng* was considered to be inferior to that of knowledge (*chi*) and will (*ui*); whereas in the West, *chǒng* was central and highly regarded. Yi believed that the reason for the great literature of the West was because they were able to convey their thoughts and emotions and put centrality on feelings, whereas Chinese and Korean literature did not (Shin, p. 257). Yi's work—while it was heavily influenced by Tolstoy—diverged from Tolstoy's in that Yi's was interested in connecting literature to the nation, and using it to improve the nation.

Historians Cho Tong-il (1978) and Kim T'ae-jun (1994) acknowledge that Yi's understanding and usage of the concept of *chǒng* was a “modern invention rooted in new psychological definitions of the term rendered from translated Western sources” (Miyoshi Jager, 2003, p. 23). The Western meaning of *chǒng* had little similarity to the traditional understanding of the term as it was used in the Confucian Classics. The classic, well-known Four-Seven debate of 1559 in Korea was concerned with the many feelings of a human being and how they originated (Kalton, 1994, p. xxvi). It was concerned with issues of metaphysics and how it related to our feelings and human nature that became central to Korean Neo-Confucian theory. In the debate, the “four” described the four innate good qualities of a human being that if properly nurtured, will be cultivated into the qualities of “humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom” (Kalton, 1994, p. xxviii). The “seven” referred to our seven feelings: desire, hate, love, fear, grief, anger, and joy (p. xxvii).

Yi Kwang-su's usage of the term, *chǒng*, was more of a Western psychological understanding and utilization of it than it was the classical Chinese usage of the term (Miyoshi Jager, 2003). During the colonial period, Koreans were actively trying to disengage their cultural development from anything that was associated with being Chinese because they felt as though being under Chinese sovereignty was the reason for their country's downfall. They adhered to that which was Western and ironically, Japanese, in a desire to ‘catch up’ to the West and to shed their past from the shadows of being under Chinese influence and allegedly stifling their development. Yi argued that Korean literature was not able to flourish like other literatures of the world because Confucian morality had stifled the ability for people to express and articulate their feelings (Miyoshi-Jager, 2003, p.

24). And the goal of a writer was to be able to liberate ‘feeling’ from oppressive structures of Confucianism.

Yi believed that feeling, *chǒng*, was given a special place in Western literature and it was missing in the Korean intellectual tradition, which placed more emphasis on moral ideals. He believed that *chǒng* did not mean the absence of morality; rather, it was the foundation for the cultivation of ethics and morals. According to Michael Shin, most of Yi’s stories are about an intense desire for love. The stories involve lonely men wanting love and acknowledging that they can only attain it through a discovery of interiority (1999, p. 267). None of the characters in Yi’s short stories seem to have discovered interiority. For Yi, this interiority was especially important since the concept of spiritual regeneration was crucial to achieving national liberation and attaining a sense of cultural nationalism (Jager 2003; Wells 1990; Robinson 1988). Yi’s novel, *Mujǒng*, was the first of his works that does discover this concept of interiority.

For Yi, *chǒng* encompassed a range of individual human emotions and feelings of love, hope, rage, sorrow, and courage (p. 256). Shin points out the similarities between Yi’s views on the importance of emotions in literature with that of Tolstoy’s views, who stated that ‘whereas by words a man transmits his thoughts to another, by means of art he transmits his feelings’ (Shin, 1999, p. 256). Miyoshi Jager points out that “the possession of national uniqueness was conditioned by the acceptance of a new universal ‘civilization’ now centered on the West” (2003, p. 21). To Yi, highlighting and possessing *chǒng* is a way of attaining spiritual regeneration for the individual, which was necessary in order to have national liberation. As Westerners valued individuality, so Yi felt it was important to cultivate Koreans’ individuality.

Novel, *Mujǒng*,⁵⁵ by Yi Kwang-su

Mujǒng was serialized in a Korean newspaper, the *Maeil Sinbo*, starting in 1917, and it was subsequently published into book form (Shin, 1999, p. 277). *Mujǒng* means *heartless*—literally, it means “without affection.” In the story, Yi makes the point that one cannot fully appreciate the beauty of emotions when adhering to tradition and that one can awaken one’s interiority through life’s sufferings (Shin, 1999). The plot follows the classical literary tradition of good-versus-evil moral didactic teaching; and the characters are more allegorical than complex, multi-dimensional human beings. The plot is similar to a famous Korean love story, “The Tale of *Chun-hyang*.” *Mujǒng* was considered to be part of the genre of the *sin sosŏl* (“new novel”), a stage of literature that signified the end of the period of classical literature.⁵⁶

The story is a prototypical love triangle story about a young scholar, Yi Hyǒng-sik, who has obligated himself to the daughter of his former mentor, Scholar Pak, who passed away while in jail. Scholar Pak is devoted to nationalist causes in Korea. Yongch’ae, his daughter, represents the old: she became a *kisaeng* in order to raise money to release her father from jail, an act of filial piety. Consequently, she has lived her life to serve men. Being unaware of Yongch’ae’s whereabouts, Hyong-sik is betrothed to Sǒnhyǒng, the daughter of a wealthy church elder to whom he is teaching English. She represents the dreams that “enlightened” Koreans possess and what Korean citizens allegedly need: to study English and go abroad to be enlightened by the West. She was raised as a Christian

⁵⁵ I have used the transliteration that the translator of the story has used. The McCune-Reischauer transliteration would be *Muchǒng*.

⁵⁶ The transitional period of literature between the classical and modern was 1905-1910, prior to the onset of the colonization of Korea by Japan in 1910.

and studied the Christian bible, memorizing passages about good and evil, as well as studying English so that she could study abroad. Yi emphasized the ‘civilizing’ benefits of Christianity in early colonial Korea (Miyoshi Jager, 1998, p. 121). He argued that it was due to the blessings of Christianity that wo/men’s status in Korea was uplifted. Yi didactically writes,

However, she [Sŏnhyŏng] had not received the fiery baptism of life. Had she been born in a ‘civilized’ nation, she would have received the baptism of life through poetry, fiction, music, art and storytelling from the early ages of seven or eight, or perhaps four or five, and now that she was eighteen years old, she would have been a woman who was a real human being. Sŏn-hyŏng was not yet, however, a human being. The human being within Sŏn-hyŏng had not yet awakened. No one but God knew whether or not she would awaken (Lee, 2005, p. 136).

Yi Kwang-su alludes to the fact that Koreans’ inner self is awakened when they discover modernity and all things that are Western. Youngch’ae in the story was not able to awaken her interiority because she lived by traditional morality. Seeing the suffering of Youngch’ae, Hyongsik realizes his lack of *chŏng*. Through this realization, he is able to cultivate it. Sufferings (*han*), he believes, allow for the realization of our feelings, our *chŏng*.

In the novel, the image of the “new” Korean wo/man, according to Yi, was not the loyal, chaste wife and obedient daughter—i.e., she who conformed to Confucian tradition. Rather, the *sin yŏsŏng* (“new woman”) was educated and “enlightened.” She was Christian, modern, knowledgeable of the West, and in touch with her feelings. The “new woman,” Pyŏng-uk, a young wo/man whom Yongch’ae befriends, is the epitome of the discursive Western liberal subject- she is autonomous, seeking freedom, untethered to traditional Korean ways, and well-educated. In contrast, Yongch’ae is the embodiment of the truncated, third world wo/man. That which represents true love and feelings is equated with

modernity, whereas that which is considered to be dutiful and loyal is considered to be tradition-bound and stifling. Yi considered the uplifting of wo/men as essential in uplifting the status of Koreans. In this novel, there is also a sentiment for the importance of wo/men's human rights. At one point, Pyŏng-uk states that a "woman is a human being, too.... There are many ways she can fulfill her role in life, whether through religion, science or art; or work for society or the state" (Lee, 2005, p. 272). Pyŏng-uk states that wo/men are human beings and not possessions of men. Through her encounter with Pyŏng-uk, Yongch'ae has been enlightened and feels that she has been resurrected.

The story ends with the young students, who have studied abroad, returning to Korea. Upon their return, they note how Korea has made "substantial progress in education, the economy, literature and media and in the spread of modern civilization" (p. 347). Yi Kwangsu writes how Korea, once a dark and weak nation, is growing stronger every day. He writes that "We will finally become as sparkling and bright as any other country" (p. 348). This, in his propagandistic message, is achieved by embracing our emotions and feelings and adhering to Western ways.

Analysis of Yi and the Search for a National Essence

Yi Kwang-su highlighted the importance of literature for cultivating Korea's national identity. He believed that Korean literature needed to focus on the future, because its past was not noteworthy (Shin, 1999, p. 260). His passionate focus on emulating Western literature and desiring to transform Korean literature is part of his genuine belief that Korea could be like the West if we adhered to its ways. For Yi, the desire for cultivating one's emotions and interiority, therefore, was for the sake of

developing a national identity. Of the three aspects of the human mind—knowledge (*chi*), emotion (*chǒng*), and will (*ui*), *chǒng* was the least valued; it was considered to be inferior to the two other factors (Shin, 1999, p. 256). Westerners, thought Yi, were able to express their emotions and it was highly regarded as an aspect of one’s freedom (p. 256). Yi’s understanding of *chǒng* had a very heteronormative meaning: he saw it as the spiritual union of husband and wife, not the physical or sexual aspect of the marriage. He thought that embracing the concept would help to cultivate a Korean spiritual identity—a national essence— that could compete with/be like the West.

It is ironic, however, that Yi places such great emphasis on *chǒng* and feelings since genuine feeling comes naturally and spontaneously from the heart. On his part, it was contrived for the sake of developing a national identity. It seems that this contrived emphasis on *chǒng* is for the sake of appearances. Historian Sin Chae-ho wrote that Koreans suffered and succumbed to other nations because they failed to develop a strong nationalism. He urged Koreans to “cultivate their nationalism through the rediscovery of their nation’s spiritual essence” and to “define exactly what this essence was” (Miyoshi Jager, 2003, p. 6). Yi Kwang-su was aware of Korea’s lack of a distinct identity and of modern literature (Shin, 1999, p. 285). For Yi, only through modernity and modern literature would Koreans be able to embody the emotions of interiority and cultivate an identity that was uniquely Korean. Modern Korean literature, therefore, played a significant part in helping to cultivate and develop a Korean national character (Miyoshi Jager, 2003, p. 20).

Korean historian Sin Ch’ae-ho argued that Koreans needed a complete recovery of their ‘national essence’ as that being separate from China if they were to survive as a

nation (Miyoshi Jager, 2003, p. 6). Searching for a ‘national essence’ by highlighting one’s spiritual distinction is a common theme among colonized peoples (Chatterjee, 1993). Nationalist Korean historiography, therefore, has elided the processes of the formation of its national essence—through the hybridity, mimicry and translation of cultures that has produced Korean colonial and postcolonial society. Given the historical realities of the shifting meaning of *chǒng* and how Yi appropriated it from Western literature, the*logian Anne Joh’s work on the topic confirms that the desire for a national essence of Korean culture is still prevalent and problematic in Korean/American feminist the*logy. My next section looks at another aspect of this on-going search for a national Korean essence by examining the colonial origins of the the*logy of *han*.

3: COLONIAL ORIGINS OF *HAN*

While the concept of *han* is not new, the modern Korean the*logical concept of *han*, as it was developed in *minjung* liberation the*logy, was also shared by the Japanese during the period of Japan’s colonization of Korea (1910-1945). One person in particular, Yanagi Muneyoshi (1889-1961), was a Japanese connoisseur of Korean art and religious scholar during the colonial period. He is well-known for describing Koreans with the phrase, “the beauty of sorrow” (Brandt, 2007; Nakami, 2011). The formulation for the notion of *han* was not necessarily drawn from his writing, but his ideas on Korean art show some striking similarities to the notion of *chǒng-han*, the idea of an attachment to one’s suffering, as well as acceptance.⁵⁷ Yanagi was not only the founding father of the Japanese folk craft

⁵⁷ The word, *chǒng*, expresses the idea of a kind of passive beauty and bond that is created over time between people. *Chǒng-han* conveys the notion that a relationship is formed between people, despite (or due to) arguments, misunderstandings, and animosity that is experienced in the relationship. It signifies

movement (*mingei*); he also established a Korean Folklore Art Museum (*Chosen Minzoku Bijutsukan*) in Seoul in 1921.⁵⁸ Korean and Japanese historian Kim Brandt states that “It has become a truism among chroniclers of the movement that Yanagi was led to discover *mingei* as a result of his enthusiasm for Korean arts and crafts. The origins of *mingei* are acknowledged to be Korean” (2007, p. 8). He appropriated it from Korean culture. Yanagi founded the museum to encourage Koreans to take pride in their native culture, as he himself was going through serious struggles in conceptualizing Japanese national identity. While he saw Koreans as inferior, he was still impressed by their art and its adherence to Asian concepts that were devoid of Western influences. He sought to appropriate it for Japan.

At the same time, modernity of the West became the goal for which Japan, their colonies, and semi-colonies (i.e., China) wanted to strive and emulate. Nakami Mari (2011) argues that Yanagi, while masking an inferiority complex vis-à-vis the West, had pride in Japan that the country was gradually becoming a major global military power as recognized in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). Yanagi began studying and doing research on William Blake and the post-impressionist art movement in the West, which helped him to take pride in “Oriental” ideas (Mari, 2011). Through his Western studies, he realized how the West sought to counter its loss of power (because it was placing too much emphasis on science and reason) with the power of imaginative thinking and art. Yanagi saw how William Blake placed great value on intuition, which he saw as central to Oriental art, especially that of Korean folk art. Through this revelation—that there was value in Oriental art that was akin to greatness in the West, Yanagi was able to overcome cultural insecurities

that Koreans are one and therefore, despite the negative energy that exists in human relationships, there is a strong bond that creates harmony and *chōng* between people.

⁵⁸ In Korean, it would be *Chosŏn Minjok Bang-mul gwan*.

vis-à-vis the West. He, therefore, saw value in “primitive” art, i.e., the art form which he attributed to Koreans. He consciously sought to uplift cultural elements that were considered specific to Asian societies as that which could contend with the West (Nakami, 2011, ch. 3). East Asian historian Kim Brandt argues similarly: she states that

During the Taisho era (1912-1926), Yanagi was only one among a number of cosmopolitan Japanese who partly turned away from Western high culture to celebrate the artistic and spiritual traditions ascribed to the ‘Orient’ (Toyo)... The ‘return to the Orient’, as later scholars have referred to this fascination with the idea of an ancient Oriental civilization, represented a complex adaptation of Western ideas about the non-West. Yanagi and others accepted and employed Western systems of knowledge, including those mechanisms that, lie the very idea of an Orient, the implied Western superiority. At the same time, however, they sought to refute Western dominance by asserting indigenous Oriental value, and Japanese autonomy in particular (2007, p. 10).

So interestingly, as Western influence became more prominent on a global level, there was growing Japanese interest in all things Asian to counter Western hegemonic power.

In desiring to find those cultural elements that were unique to Japan, Yanagi was disappointed to learn that almost all of the folk art of Japan, even among the national treasures, were made by Koreans, or were imitations of Korean art, and some of which were made by Chinese. He came to the realization that there had to be some clear cultural distinctions between Japan and that of Korea and China. He wanted to find distinctions of which he could boast to the world. He referred to Korean art as the “beauty of sadness” (*hiai no bi*) and this was, as Kim states, “the result of attributing characteristic features to Korean art through linking it to its people and history” (4). The fact that he was one of a handful of Japanese who was bold enough to criticize and speak out on Japanese colonial policy in Korea was probably a strong reason why the Koreans would embrace such a labeling as the “beauty of sorrow.” Through his own desire to promote “Oriental” aesthetics

and its art, Yanagi uplifted Korean art that promoted it on an international level. To refer to Korean art as the “beauty of sadness” had a sophisticated sensibility and calmness associated with it. Many Koreans, especially the cultural nationalists, respected Yanagi so it was easy to accept his views about themselves and their country since they felt he was uplifting their culture and art (p. 25). Yanagi urged Koreans to focus on promoting their cultural identity, rather than their political freedom (Brandt, 2007, p. 25).

The ideas that closely resemble the modern Korean concept of *han* can be found in Yanagi’s essay, “Letter to a Korean Friend.” In the letter, he stated how he appreciated Korean art for its simplicity and spontaneity, which was especially well expressed in the strong linear elements of folk art and in pottery products. Yanagi argued that these characteristics were the result of Korea’s unfortunate geopolitical situation, which was seen as the main cause of the country’s tragic history, leading to sorrow, melancholy and fatalism as the main elements of Korea’s national character.⁵⁹ He described the art of Korea as the “beauty of sorrow,” (*hiai no bi*).⁶⁰ In his description of *Chosôn* dynasty pottery, he states that they were drawn obviously without the least knowledge of technique.⁶¹ The pottery, he argues, was not the result of any knowledge of the nature of beauty but was produced before there was any question of knowing or not knowing (Soetsu, Y. 1972, pp. 142-143).

The Korean notion of *han*, as seen by Yanagi Muneyoshi, stressed the more sad, melancholy and passive aspect of resentment in its meaning and perception of human suffering. He portrayed Koreans as being naïve and unaware that the pottery they were producing was beautiful or had any aesthetic value. He understood it as the nature of their

⁵⁹ Postcolonial scholar Ranjanna Khanna (2004) argues that almost all colonized nations experienced such colonial melancholia .

⁶⁰ In Korean, it is *piae-ui mi*.

⁶¹ The *Chosôn* Dynasty period began with the end of the Koryo Dynasty in 1392 and lasted until 1910 when the Japanese colonized Korea.

suffering that created such aesthetic beauty in their art. Yanagi was a nationalist in his own sense and had his own reasons for wanting to instill pride into the “suffering” of the Korean people. In characterizing Koreans as passive sufferers, he emphasized the strength, vitality and assertiveness of the Japanese. In an article he published in the magazine *Shinchō* in 1922, he argued that Korea’s geo-political history was replete with subservience to foreign powers and invasions, making “the Korean essence lonely, sorrowful, and spiritual” (Brandt, 2000, p. 734). Kim Brandt argues that while there were differing opinions of Koreans among Japanese collectors during the colonial period, this notion of “essential Korean sorrow” was a widely held belief. This sorrow, which was

brought about by a national history of unceasing disaster was consistent with both scholarly and popular Japanese views of Korea.... In short, the basic argument promoted by Japanese scholars who wrote on Korean history during this period was of the tragic impossibility of independent Korean development. Publications on Korean art and culture by critics and collectors such as Yanagi contributed to a larger discourse that naturalized Japanese colonialism as a normal and even inevitable product of history, geography, and essential Korean identity. The idea of melancholy as a central aesthetic principle of Korean culture was accepted by many (Brandt, 2000, p. 735-736).

Koreans were the colonial object, while the Japanese assumed the position of colonial master. Japanese writers depicted this metaphorically by comparing Korean wo/men and ceramic objects or seeing Korea, the “colonial object as child” (p. 736). Japan engaged in similar strategies as the West employed strategies of infantilizing “lesser” nations that needed guidance, and positioning themselves as the stronger nation.

The “beauty of sorrow” rhetoric further justified Japan’s colonization of Korea and how Korea could not be independent. One collector, Kurahashi Tōjirō, describes the sentiment of *han* which has almost become a script that Koreans themselves later use: “Their feelings did not turn outwards but rather went deeper and deeper inside, and as a

result... Korean crafts call strangely to people, they are lonely, and this is why they were taken up by the [Japanese] tea people” (Brandt, 2000, p. 32). Korean pottery was characterized as embodying qualities of melancholy quiet, while the Chinese works were seen as filled with strength. This characteristic of Koreans and Korean objects is one that emerges repeatedly in various Japanese texts about Korean material culture during this time.

It is precisely this framework of consciousness and mindset that was operative in Korea that has led to Koreans’ obsession with *han*. The label of the “beauty of sadness,” therefore, became Koreans’ cultural and spiritual identity and became intimately connected with Korean national identity. Yanagi was genuinely praising Korean art and attaching significance to its beauty, a result of Koreans’ suffering. The concept of *han* was partially sustained and constructed through Japanese colonial power and Japan’s own desire to differentiate themselves from Koreans. It was through Japan’s own vulnerability of inferiority vis-à-vis the West that Koreans came to be associated with their *han*. Edward Said (1983) astutely noted that governing cultural production is one of the most powerful ways to control societies. The desire to maintain a cultural “purity” of that which is uniquely Korean, was a way of grappling with the loss of culture—robbing of a cultural identity and agency that is imposed on the colonial subject—through colonialism and imperialism.

Postcolonial Period & *Han*

The colonial origins and influences of the modern the*logical concept of *han* is reinforced by Korean writers, such as Ham Sôk-hôn (1985), whose aesthetic and cultural awareness was the result of the Korea’s colonial period. The concept of *han* existed before the colonial era but not until the Japanese were writing about Korea during the

colonial period was the term used to describe the national character of the Korean people as a whole. In the desire for modernity during the colonial period, Koreans fused tradition with the modern. Tradition was re-invented for the sake of constructing a national identity (Hobsbawm, 1983). Shin and Robinson show how “Under colonial rule, Koreans were also searching for indigenous sources from which to formulate or reformulate Korean national identity. Research on folklore, shamanism, and mythology that could reveal indigenous Korean roots on Koreanness constituted a key part of the Korean nationalist project during the period” (1999, p. 16). Koreans turned to the West as well as tradition in their identity formation.⁶²

The concept of *han* rose to prominence during the 1970s with the rise of the *minjung* movement and with the re-writing of Korean history in the colonial and postcolonial periods through efforts to achieve spiritual regeneration.⁶³ Korean historian Theodore Yoo has asserted that “*minjung* history relies on essentialized social categories like woman, worker, and peasant to highlight the relationships between these groups; it rarely if ever examines differences within these categories” (2008, p. 9). Most *minjung* the*logians elide the complexities and nuances of suffering and put forth a victim/perpetrator binary perspective when speaking of suffering and the complexities of humans, which I discuss more in-depth in chapter five. The term, “*minjung*” itself is problematic because it is not adequately defined. It has meant different things depending on the time period of Korean history. In the 1970s and 1980s, the South Korean democratization movement was referred to the *minjung* movement. Although “*minjung*”

⁶² Even as early as the fourth century B.C.E., Aristotle made observations about Asian who apparently lacked spirit (Okihiro, 1994, p. 8).

⁶³ For a more thorough account on the socio-political origins of the *minjung* movement in South Korea, see the work of Paul Chang (2008).

referred to the downtrodden and exploited/oppressed, many middle-class business owners and nationalists started to refer to themselves as the *minjung* to designate their suffering status under authoritarian political rule and/or oppression suffered under U.S. imperialism (Yoo, 2008).

The belief in this unique and superior concept that constitutes the essence of Korean spirituality is the product of internalized Japanese opinions about Koreans. Although the label, “beauty of sorrow,” conjures up poetic images of an idealized understanding of *han*, acceptance of such a label confirms Japanese colonial beliefs about Korea’s weakness and passivity. Edward Said and other postcolonial scholars have argued that such internalization of colonialist powers’ assumptions about their colonized subjects is part of the problem of Orientalism. Robert G. Lee (1999) notes how

Orientalism, like other theories of domination and difference, relies heavily on establishing authority over the Other through knowledge of and access to the Other’s language, history, and culture as a privilege of the colonial agent. The power of knowledge lies in the authority to define the colonized subject and determine its fate (1999, p. 114).

Henry Em states that colonized peoples, in the very act of resisting such domination, end up speaking the language of their oppressors (1999, p. 349). Em notes the paradoxical dilemmas of nationalist thought: even as it seeks to distinguish itself from the parameters of colonialism and create new opportunities and avenues for itself; it nevertheless cannot escape from its yoke (199, p. 349). The nationalist discourse that emerges from the colonial period, therefore, uses the language and knowledge of the colonizers.

The concept has been a formative part of the cultural-postcolonial nationalist narrative of Korean discursive politics. To argue that *han* forms the core of Korean spirituality is to co-opt the beliefs of what colonialists have said about Koreans: that they

suffer from “the beauty of sorrow” due to their unfortunate geopolitical situation. It foregrounds fate over human agency. This idea of sorrow as an aesthetic guiding principle for Koreans was part of the justification for colonizing Korea. Historian Michael Robinson states that

After a colonial experience, nations are driven by the desire to excise the remnants of colonialism and to resurrect agency and self-respect for their formerly subjugated people. But as postcolonial studies have shown, one of the most insidious legacies of colonialism is how it colonizes the consciousness of the subjugated political and social elites (2007, p. 5).

Gayatri Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” best illustrates the ways in which Korean activists who have been privileged by the process of colonization such as Yun Ch’i-ho and Yi Kwang-su—have paradoxically reinscribed conditions of exploitation that they purport have put them into the situation of oppression and colonization. Yi Kwang-su and other liberation activists erroneously had an inferiority complex vis-à-vis Japan and the West. They assumed the opinions of the Japanese that Korea is a backwards country and must modernize. They, therefore, were co-opted and were complicit in the colonization process, not just physically but mentally. In addition, postcolonial activists and intellectuals who continue to reinforce the same rhetoric as that of the colonial period are guilty of on-going oppression and self-Orientalizing. They are co-opting the opinions that originated during the colonial period. We allow colonialist and imperialist discourse to “speak for” Koreans and constitute their/our national identity.

This acceptance of *han*, therefore, gives power to colonialist opinions about colonized subjects. As Uma Narayan states, “anticolonial national movements added to the perpetuation of essentialist notions of national culture by embracing and trying to revalue, the imputed facets of their own culture embedded in colonialists’ stereotypes”

(2000, p. 1084). The identity politics of *han* has homogenized the suffering and experiences of Koreans. Edward Said (1983) and other postcolonial scholars (Benhabib, 2002; Bhabha, 1994) have argued that such internalization of colonialist powers' assumptions about their colonized subjects is part of the problem of Orientalism. Western missionaries were one of the earliest groups of people to study, write and objectify Koreans, their customs, history, and culture. Their early Orientalist works has sustained the literature on Korea as a strange and curious place. That Koreans continue to Orientalize themselves is testimony that there is not a completed past to colonialism. Rather, the legacies, ideas and thoughts of colonialism reverberate and linger into the present (Bhabha, 1994), especially in the on-going effects of the colonization of the mind.

Transculturation & the Topic of Suffering in Literature

East Asian scholar Karen Thornber (2009) has written on the transcultural flows and sharing of creativity in literary works and the arts between the colonizer and the colonized in the Japanese empire between the period of 1895 and 1945. Sociologist Fernando Ortiz created the term “transculturation” in the 1940s to refer to the process whereby a subjugated people selectively pick or invent aspects of a dominant culture they would like to assume for their own community (Pratt, 2008, p. 589). While subordinated people do not get to control all aspects that are derived of the dominant culture, Pratt argues that transculturation occurs on a conscious level; that is, subordinated peoples determine what gets taken into their culture. The concept of transculturation as Pratt describes is a form of colonial mimicry (Bhabha, 1994). Despite the unequal power dynamics between Japan, China, Korea and

Taiwan; nevertheless, these East Asian countries borrowed, shared and appropriated cultural and artistic works from each other.

Thornber expands upon the work of Mary Louise Pratt (2008) who has described the phenomenon of the ‘contact zone,’ a cultural space where cultures intersect (2009, p. 1). Homi Bhabha (1994) points out the productive, creative hybrid place of the “Third Space.” Pratt refers to “contact zones,” as those “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (2009, p. 1). Thornber articulates the term, “artistic contact nebulae” as that creative space where artists and writers from cultures of uneven hierarchies of power mutually struggle to acquire the cultural resources of one another (p. 2).

In the first book of its kind to excavate the complex and intricate relationships among the Japanese and her colonized and semi-colonized neighbors, she explores the intra-East Asian literary contact nebulae in the Japanese empire during the period of 1895-1945. Thornber explores the intricate, interconnected cultural and social networks between occupier and occupied. As we have seen with Korean folk art and Yanagi Muneyoshi, it was not simply the colonized being exposed to Japanese culture and language; Japan was impacted and influenced by Korean and Chinese creative cultural output just as much. Indeed, Thornber asserts that

Part of what makes the cultural flows of the Japanese empire unusually fascinating and separates them from those of most European empires is Japan’s long engagement with and often times adulation of Chinese and Korean creative products (2009, p. 6).

There is no doubt that such transculturality and hybridity existed between Japan and Korea. Thornber therefore argues that distinctions and differences between oppressor and oppressed

are artificially created (p. 5). The boundaries and borders between cultures and countries are not as clear-cut; they are more porous and permeable than assumed.

The literary works of Chinese, Korean and Taiwanese writers during the colonial period gave new meaning to the understanding of suffering (Thornber, p. 26). Arguing that there would be no literature without the discursive topic of suffering, Thornber calls attention to its universality as a central focus for literature (p. 251).⁶⁴ Koreans argue that *han* is somewhat untranslatable but that is the case for much of suffering and in attempting to articulate pain—whether pain of self or of others. Thornber muses that in “attempting to translate seemingly untranslatable pain, literature in some sense compromises the unfathomable. But it also illuminates anguish in ways other discourses cannot” (p. 251). So it is not the uniqueness of *han*; rather, it is the uniqueness of the suffering itself that gives it its untranslatable quality—no matter what language, ethnicity, culture, time or space. Thus, it is forms of literature and art that are able to “translate” or articulate the suffering in a way that gives it meaning. The arts become a method to articulate and express the ineffable suffering. Thornber states that intertextualizing Japanese narratives of suffering were widely practiced in the early twentieth century literature of Korean, Taiwanese, and Chinese writers (p. 252). Such writings of the “beauty of suffering” were, therefore, more commonplace among colonized and semi-colonized peoples than Korean the*logians would like to believe.

An important aspect of the meaning-making of suffering for the colonized peoples of Korea and Taiwan (as well as the semi-colonized of China) was raising questions about

⁶⁴ David Morris (1993) explicates the various social and cultural meanings of pain and human sufferings. He points out the variegated ways in which we attempt to articulate suffering in the way of religion, novels, art. As I have argued, as well, he sees pain and suffering as culturally, historically and psychosocially constructed.

human agency in light of their suffering. The literature shows resourceful and creative agency that reveals itself in the face of life's challenges, which reinforces our conviction that in most life situations, there is a certain amount of responsibility and the ability to create or bring about change, despite harsh circumstances/situations. In each of my case study chapters that follow, I examine works of fiction, testimonials or oral histories that reveal and confirm this. While there is no doubt suffering of the colonized, the creativity of the literature and the ideals of the suffering were shared or borrowed from the works of Japanese literature.

Thornber underscores the nature of interconnectedness of the nations of East Asia—not just today, but in the early twentieth century and as well as prior to that period. What I want to take from her comprehensive work is the emphasis on the rhythmic and fluid cultural exchange between Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China. It is not a linear, straight-forward process but an intercultural and transcultural movement that transcended national boundaries and creative artistic output. It was not simply the colonized and subjugated peoples who were in adulation of Japanese culture and literary texts; as I have shown above with Korean folk art during the colonial period, Japan was in great admiration of Korean and Chinese cultural output (p. 6). Korean cultural influence on Japan was significant. Pre-colonial Korea was not only a conduit for transmitting Chinese culture to Japan; Korean culture, their intellectuals and artists were respected by the Japanese as well.

The hybridity of Korean, Japanese and Chinese culture—along with Western influences—shows how the interculturality and transculturality of *han* and *chǒng* are irrefutable. The distinctions and divides between colonizer/colonized, as well as the resulting cultural products, are artificially constructed. Leigh Gilmore's description of

the Freudian understanding of melancholia sounds uncannily similar to a postcolonial the*logy of *han*:

melancholia signifies frozen grief, even a loss of temporality, and an inability to know fully what has been lost: not only the loss of a person can initiate melancholia but some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on. While melancholia describes for Freud a morbid state of deadened passions, it has been embraced by some critics who see in melancholia's persistence a fidelity to the unspecified losses of history, culture, and the psyche, even a tragic and valuable signifying practice in the face of trauma" (2005, p. 105).

The notion of melancholy is not unknown in the world of colonialism and postcolonialism. The concept of *han*, therefore, has to be understood in this context of intercultural, transcultural, intertextual movement; with the blending as well as crossing-over of ideas, beliefs, and meanings of other cultural works and ideas. It took an intercultural village to cultivate the concept of *han* and *chǒng* as we know it today.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that the concept of *han* has been a formative part of the cultural-postcolonial nationalist narrative of Korean discursive politics. I argued that *han* is both transcultural and intercultural. I also demonstrated that the Korean concept of *han* (as it is used today in the theological discourse of suffering) as a national characteristic of the Korean people originated during the period of Japanese colonization of Korea (1910-1945). To argue that *han* forms the core of Korean spirituality is to internalize the beliefs of what colonialists have said about Koreans: "the beauty of sorrow" due to their unfortunate geopolitical situation. This idea of sorrow as an aesthetic guiding principle for Koreans was part of the justification for colonizing Korea. This acceptance of *han* reifies colonialist opinions about colonized subjects.

Korean historian Carter Eckert urges us to construct a more “liberal, postnationalist historiography of Korea” (1999, p. 366). Nationalist discourse does have liberating aspects; in addition, it benefits many interests in the community (p. 364). At the same time, it distorts reality and essentializes identities, in addition to hindering intellectual and spiritual creativity, as well as limiting the complexities and intricacies of almost all topics that have been tainted by nationalist perspectives. Anything or anyone attempting to challenge the nationalist paradigm is refuted. Eckert is hopeful that “the new postnationalist historiography gives hope at last of exorcising the stubborn ghosts of Hegel, whether of the idealistic or materialistic variety, that have haunted scholarship on Korea for so long” (p. 375). In order to have a liberal, postnationalist historiography of Korea, we need to have a more complex understanding of the Japanese colonial period of Korea (1910-1945)—with all of the paradoxes and contradictions, and the ambiguities that existed during this period. Recent research on the *minjung* movement by historian Namhee Lee (2011) reveals that the grand-narrativizing discourse of the *minjung* has shifted to one of a more pluralistic, fractured *simin* movement (citizen movement), recognizing the heterogeneity of subjectivities and the participatory citizenship culture of South Korea. While not necessarily postnationalist, the post-*minjung* discourse recognizes the plurality of voices in a society that is not as homogeneous as Korean/American the*logians have portrayed. The next chapter explores ways in which a pastoral the*logy of vulnerability can make an impact in allowing the flourishing of human dignity in all communities without essentializing or stereotyping in the ways that the*logies of *han* and *chǒng* have done.

Chapter 5: A Web of Vulnerability and Subjectivity

“To be alive is to be vulnerable” Dorothee Soelle *The Window of Vulnerability*

INTRODUCTION

I employ Martha Fineman’s theory of our shared vulnerability in addressing the essentialized notion of *han* which has been used as a label for Korean/American wo/men. I also use her theory in providing a prescriptive to the problem of how current wo/men’s human rights strategies elide the complexity and fluidity of subject formation and the many subversive forms of agency that wo/men exhibit when oppressed. I use a vulnerability theory to engage in a critical re-examination of Korean feminist the*logies of *han* and *chǒng*. I argue that a theory of vulnerability becomes a prescriptive in re-constructing and complicating the essentializing Asian feminist the*logical paradigm of the ‘poor and suffering woman.’ I use Fineman’s theory of vulnerability to contribute to an Asian feminist discourse that theorizes a more multifaceted Asian (Korean) wo/man that is not weak, pitiable, and *han*-filled. It is time we dismantle existing stereotypes about Korean wo/men that characterizes them as ‘poor,’ ‘suffering,’ and ‘weak;’ as well as being co-opted into nationalist discourse that makes us/them ‘victims’ of men from other countries.

The first part of the chapter describes Fineman’s theory of vulnerability and how we are all susceptible to varied forms of harm throughout our lifetime, albeit impacting people and communities differently and unevenly. Fineman’s vulnerability analysis can help us work towards a post-identity framework. I then re-examine the liberal subject, as well as the monolithic, truncated, third world wo/man victim-subject in the wo/men’s human rights framework. The vulnerable subject embodies and expresses complex

emotions and feelings, as well as ambiguity in life situations of which, a liberal or victim subject has been void. In other words, the vulnerable subject is a more realistic understanding of the human.

In part two, I argue that a pastoral the*logy of vulnerability for the wo/men's rights discourse, focusing on generativity and liberative growth, better addresses our shared vulnerabilities and the shifting realities of our subjectivities as wo/men. I re-envision the metaphor of the living human web as a narrative web of vulnerability, creativity, and subjectivity. I examine the*logian James Poling's work on economic vulnerability and the*logical ambiguity which, in many ways, parallels the work of Martha Fineman. I then show how spiritual care can be a form of resilience in responding to our vulnerability. I examine the concepts of community-building, courage and participatory citizenship as spiritual practices that demonstrate agency for wo/men who have typically been portrayed as helpless, pitiable victims in the wo/men's human rights discourse.

1: FINEMAN'S THEORY OF VULNERABILITY

Feminist legal scholar Martha Fineman points out the limitations of the human rights and anti-discrimination approaches in addressing the shifting nature of our inequalities. She wants to probe the possibilities of re-envisioning justice that extend beyond our current approaches based on our identity, rights, and nondiscrimination through a concept of vulnerability (2008). A vulnerability approach, she argues, would help us to reformulate our conceptions of justice, equality and global responsibility. Fineman (2008) explains the term, 'vulnerable' as a shifting, constant aspect of the

human situation that serves as a heuristic device to re-examine earlier understandings of its meaning in our culture.

She uses this term in contrast to the medical discursive usage of the term of “vulnerable populations,” which stigmatizes a group of marginalized people and is traditionally associated with “victimhood, deprivation, dependency, or pathology” (2008, p. 8). Used in medicine, “vulnerable populations,” promotes an erasure of any difference that exists within any identity category. Vulnerability was also used by early discourses on wo/men’s rights to argue for the protection of wo/men as a vulnerable population vis-à-vis their male counterparts. Thus, previous meanings of the term, “vulnerable,” have been essentializing, derogatory and objectifying. Vulnerability has formed our opinions about a group (or certain population) and who we have seen as victims in need of protection. The labeling of vulnerable populations distances individuals and communities and further “others” them in the process (Fineman, 2012, p. 119). It has produced a “spectacle of suffering” that has triggered either extreme pity or revulsion towards an issue or group of people (Oliviero, 2012).⁶⁵ People have responded to such spectacles of suffering with strong emotions. Such essentialist constructions of vulnerability have necessitated paternalistic protection. Fineman’s vulnerability theory, therefore, is a feminist revisionist theory of the traditionally derogatory ways in which the term has been employed, understood and theorized. Like queer theorists, who reclaimed

⁶⁵ Feminist theorist Katie Oliviero (2012) describes three genealogies of vulnerability in the works of feminists. She describes the work of Judith Butler (2004) on the precariousness of our subjectivity and relationality; followed by Fineman’s (2008) work, as well as that of Bryan Turner (2006) and Peadar Kirby (2005) as the second genealogy. The works of wo/men of color feminists such as Audre Lorde, bell hooks, and Kimberly Crenshaw, constitute the third genealogy. Fineman denies that her work is a part of what Oliviero refers to as a “genealogy of vulnerability.” Her work is part of her own genealogy of dependency (1995) and the myth of autonomy (2004). I argue that Butler’s work on precariousness and Fineman’s work on vulnerability are somewhat overlapping but very different.

the pejorative usage of the term, “queer;” Fineman has refocused the concept to allow us to see its usefulness as a shifting human situation that is applicable to *all* of us.

Vulnerability that has a more contextual application and one that is disconnected from its negative stigmas has the potential to be a powerful conceptual tool in terms of theorizing the state and how we can employ the state for greater equality. Because the renewed theory of vulnerability can be essentialized as well, it cannot become an identity. It has to be theorized and seen as a condition that is shifting, constant, and fluid. While the concept of vulnerability is still “masked and manipulated” by nation-states, groups, as well as individuals; it shows how the concept is fluid. It is not fixed or static. Queer theory scholars have argued that queering is about breaking down the binaries that essentializes (Cheng, 2011). For example in queering the*logy, the*logians Lisa Isherwood and Marcella Althaus-Reid note this:

theology that has incarnation at its heart is queer indeed. What else so fundamentally challenges the nature of human and divine identity? That the divine immersed itself in flesh, and that flesh is now divine, is queer theology at its peak.... The divine is early, messy and partial and is to be found there in all its glory, not in splendid doctrine stripped of all humanness (2004, p. 5).

To queer is to blur the boundaries and see reality for all its messiness. Clear-cut boundaries and binaries are unrealistic and unattainable. In that same way, Fineman uses the concept of vulnerability to queer and complicate the existing binaries that lock us into our identities, as well as to show that our lives are more fluid and ambivalent than discursive identity paradigms have portrayed.

Embodied Vulnerability

Fineman's salvaged understanding of vulnerability is that of an uncertain, shifting, precarious situation in which humans exist. It can be understood "as arising from our embodiment which carries with it the ever-present possibility of harm, injury, and misfortune from mildly adverse to catastrophically devastating events, whether accidental, intentional or otherwise" (2008, p. 9). We are always under the threat—due to our embodied humanity—of dependency due to disease, epidemics, resistant viruses, natural disasters, or other biologically-based catastrophes. Furthermore, we may succumb to additional economic or societal difficulties should we encounter any physical illness or damage (Fineman, 2008, p. 10).

Yet, there is a tremendous amount of individual variation and disparity in terms of the size/scale of our vulnerability due to our varied locations on the social, political, economic web (2008, p. 10). Indeed, while there is a shared, communal component to vulnerability (as a human being, we will succumb to some forms of vulnerability in our lifetime); it is also a unique, individual experience that is determined by the quality and quantity of resources to which we have access (2008, p. 10). What further determines our individual experience in a situation of vulnerability is who we are as individuals (our personalities, how we decide to make certain choices within our prescribed socio-cultural-economic locations, etc.) and how we navigate through various crises in our life paths. So it is the universal, the particular and the specific (similar to Larney's intercultural understanding, which I discuss further into the chapter) aspects of who we are that determine our vulnerability.

Hannah Arendt (1958) argues that humans are born as equals; yet, we need to take into account our uniqueness and our individuality. It is through this coming together of

individuals that creates a plurality in how our actions matter. We engage in actions (words and deeds) that are unique to each situation and person, thereby showing our individuality. These actions reveal who we are in the world. She argues that political activity is that which reveals our humanity the most because each action is individual and specific to that human. Arendt writes, “in acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world” (1958, p. 179).

Hannah Arendt understands the human condition as being different from human nature (1958, p. 10). She explains the difference by stating that “if humans were to colonize the moon or some other planetary body, they would live under new conditions. Their human nature would remain intact. Human nature is located within human beings; the human condition is not.” In other words, the human condition is “conditioned,” and socially constructed. Feminist theologian Valerie Saiving has pointed out the androcentric construct of the “the human condition.” She uses the phrase, “the human situation” to point out that there are aspects of wo/men’s experiences that are not made obvious when using the phrase, “the human condition.” Using the phrase, “the human situation” reveals understandings of the human in ways that were previously ignored or overlooked by taking into account both wo/men’s and men’s experiences. Every experience we encounter shapes who we are and we become impacted by it. The human condition is perspectival, having mostly been influenced by male perspectives until recent feminist critiques. Because our vulnerabilities exist within the socially constructed androcentric realm of the “human condition,” some of the socially constructed “conditions” to which we are vulnerable, *can* and *should* be mitigated.

Understanding vulnerability begins with the realization that many events are ultimately beyond human control. For Fineman, vulnerability is understood to be similar but not identical to our inevitable dependency as human beings. Fineman's vulnerability theory has evolved from her earlier work on dependency and its inevitability as a human being. Seeing dependency as an inevitable, universal fact of human life, she deconstructs the stigma surrounding the term.⁶⁶ By deconstructing the meaning of dependency, Fineman (1995, 2004) has shown how dependency is a universal, inevitable fact of life. We are all dependent on a caretaker early on in life and eventually, most of us will need care and support in the last few years of our lives. We all become dependent on others or institutions at different points in the trajectory of our lives when we rely on others for care (Fineman, 2008).

Derivative dependency refers to the need for resources by caretakers in order to perform the caretaking work (1995, p. 163). Fineman argues that caretaking produces a public good and therefore warrants support from government and other institutions, including accommodation of caretakers' needs by employers. She gives us a theory of dependency which is a "claim of 'right' or entitlement" to support from the state and its institutions on the part of caretakers. Whereas both inevitable dependency and vulnerability are universal, inevitable dependency is episodic, sporadic, and largely developmental in nature. Vulnerability is a constant, shifting situation because of the influence of outside forces that are unpredictable. The institutionalized aspects of vulnerabilities that are produced calls for a more responsive state. Because of our derivative dependency, there is the need for greater strengthening of our institutions to

⁶⁶ Political theorists Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon trace the changes of the term and write a genealogy of dependency (1994, pp. 309-336).

provide better frameworks for caring for our society. At the same time, we need to be cautious of providing paternalistic protection for the people (it has to be done on local levels where people have a voice in transforming the institutions).

Pastoral theologian Jeanne Stevenson Moessner (1996) describes a model of care that is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37). The parable is based on the theme of a loving God through care of both self and neighbor. Moessner highlights the fact that the Samaritan did not abandon his own journey in order to care for the suffering man cast aside in the ditch. She is quick to point out an important point of the story: “the Samaritan finished his journey while meeting the need of a wounded and marginal person” (1996, p. 323). He did not neglect his own needs while caring for the wounded person. Instead, he relied on his available resources along with the community resources represented by the inn and its host (p. 323). The inn becomes the metaphor for the government/state and its responsibility for supporting caretaking work. In analyzing the metaphor, Steven-Moessner points out the collective responsibility of caretaking. In order for the caretaker to be able to care for the one in need, s/he must have many available resources (spiritual and material) from which to draw. This derivative dependency of caretakers becomes a shared, public responsibility. Caretaking is a collective, societal endeavor.

While this metaphor is useful in demonstrating the beauty and strength of communal responsibility, the story is still an androcentric one. In our society, the burden of caretaking falls on the shoulders of those who are marginalized, i.e., those without the necessary resources: wo/men of color and immigrant/migrant wo/men of color. As wo/men of color feminists have noted, until poor wo/men of color are liberated, we all

continue to suffer in our efforts to be liberated from patri-kyriarchy. If care is to embody a wider social, economic, and cultural context that consists of a web of relationships, then our the*logical reflection needs to engage in a deeper analysis of the interdependence of the vulnerable subject with the greater community and its institutions.

Post-Identity Politics

Fineman developed the vulnerability thesis so as not to further essentialize us nor root us into our identities the way the current discourse on race and gender is doing. In other words, the vulnerability thesis does not lock us into our identities, as identity politics has done. Fineman argues that a vulnerability analysis transcends traditional identity politics and can get us towards a post-identity paradigm. The vulnerability analysis, therefore, “concentrates on the structures our society has and will establish to manage our common vulnerabilities. This approach has the potential to move us beyond the stifling confines of current discrimination-based models toward a more substantive vision of equality” (2008, p. 1). The problem with identity and identitarian rights claims, Fineman asserts, is that they assume a basic sameness around some difference. So in terms of Crenshaw’s work on intersectionality, Fineman departs from Crenshaw because she sees not identities, but rather, institutions intersecting to produce inequalities. Fineman argues that we need to examine the interlocking structures of power and privilege that produce structural and societal inequalities (p. 16). A vulnerability analysis engages in institutional analyses in understanding inequalities that are produced (p. 16). In order to better understand how governmental and social institutions need to respond to

the institutionalized aspects of vulnerabilities, it focuses on the ways certain people or groups are privileged (p. 18).

An understanding of our shared vulnerability as human beings helps us to see that our identities can ‘overlap’ with that of others, despite differences. The theory is premised on the understanding that we possess multiple subjectivities and that all of us have moments or periods of dependency in our lives (some of us have longer periods or on-going vulnerabilities). It challenges the delineation of “us/them” and the “we/they.” Fineman’s theory embraces postmodern feminism’s understanding of subjectivity as contradictory and reconstituted due to precariousness in life’s struggles. Such precariousness and our ability to navigate through our vulnerability give rise for opportunities to exercise our agency—albeit at times limited, shifting, and constrained due to structural forces. The vulnerabilities in our life can be seen as generative and desirable as it creates opportunities for our agency to emerge (Fineman, 2008; Oliviero, 2012).

The Vulnerable Subject

In looking at the genealogy of the female subjects of international law, legal scholar Diane Otto argues that there are mainly three female subjectivities in the human rights discourse (2005):⁶⁷ 1) mother and wife who need protection during times of both war and peace, 2) “woman” who is “formally equal” with men, at least in public life (i.e., the liberal subject), and 3) the victim subject who is produced by colonial narratives of gender, as well as by notions of women’s sexual vulnerability. Fineman and other feminist legal scholars

⁶⁷ Legal scholar Diane Otto focuses on the lineage of the dualistic production of sex/gender in human rights discourse (Otto, 2005).

have critiqued the notion of an autonomous liberal subject in Western theoretical discourse as being unrealistic and unattainable for us humans. Feminists have all but eschewed liberalism due to the ways in which it engages in heavy theoretical frameworks and not enough of the context and practices of wo/men's lives. At the same time, the values that liberal feminism represents—equality, rights, autonomy, etc.—are those that wo/men in many societies aspire to having. The problems associated with liberalism persist; and its goals are unrealistic, unattainable and undesirable for community-building.

Equally problematic is the essentialized discursive victim subject. Feminist legal scholars have problematized the ways in which current strategies of gender essentialism focus on the victim subject in law, substantiating the image of the “third world woman” who is incapable of self-determination or decision-making (Kapur, 2002). Chandra Mohanty has argued that the truncated third world wo/man is represented as “ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.” (1991, p. 56). This is in stark opposition in the ways that Western wo/men represent themselves as well-educated, and therefore, able to make self-determining, well-informed decisions about their bodies (Mohanty, 1991, p. 56). In human rights discourse, the victim subject is presented in opposition to the liberal subject who is autonomous and independent.

Ratna Kapur argues that one of the reasons for the success of the VAW discourse is because of its appeal to the victim subject (2002). Kapur argues that the employment of the victim subject has been instrumental in allowing for wo/men of different cultural and social backgrounds to participate in the HR discourse; the wo/men that are depicted as victim subjects have had access to otherwise inaccessible venues to “speak” and seek redress on the injuries inflicted on them. In the process, they have utilized essentialized understandings of

gender, culture and sexuality to seek their claims of redress. They have reinforced existing stereotypes of their victimhood and added force to the belief they are in need of being saved. The victim subject stereotype casts the third world wo/man as undereducated, underprivileged, as well as incapable of self-determination. It elides differences between and among wo/men. The WHR movement that reinforces the victim subject perpetuates colonialist and imperialist attitudes towards the two-thirds world.

Mohanty claims that notions of progress within feminism cannot be equated with assimilation to so-called Western notions of agency and political mobilization. She argues that basing agency on universal claims made by first world feminists is misleading and erasing the complex aspects of agency in wo/men's lives. In the following case study chapters, the wo/men's narratives reveal how they have been neither completely victim, nor autonomous, but have embodied varied subject positions at different times (Moore, 1994; Engle Merry, 2006).

Kapur (2005) claims that the VAW strategy within the human rights movement has further dichotomized and reinforced the divide between wo/men in the first and third worlds. The liberal subject and victim subject are de-contextualized, abstract, and extreme caricatures of, respectively, the Western "woman" and the third world "woman."

Interpersonal relations and ties existing between people (that help to create who we are) are not taken into consideration. Nor are differences that exist among wo/men such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, education, sexuality, and occupation. Even with the establishment of international wo/men's human rights and CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Wo/men), the three female subjectivities—mother/wife in need of protection, the liberal subject, and the victim subject—remain. The VAW strategy has

reinvigorated the discursive female victim subject. Otto laments that “women’s full inclusion in universal representations of humanity may be an impossibility as long as the universal (masculine) subject continues to rely for its universality on the contrast with feminized particularities” (2005, p. 107). She believes that using the current legal framework to enable the liberation of wo/men will further leave wo/men at the margins. She argues that we need strategies that disrupt gender dualities and hierarchies and that consciously reject socially constructed frameworks of sex/gender dualisms. She argues that

Women’s histories of resistance may provide the basis for new strategies that will produce empowered and emancipator female subjects to take the place of the injured and marginalized subjectivities of the present era, which serve to reproduce masculine, racial and other forms of privilege, in the guise of universality (2005, p. 107).

Otto believes in the importance of resurrecting wo/men’s untold narratives and undocumented histories of local resistances to oppressive and controlling forms of power.

I argue that Fineman’s vulnerable subject replace the liberal subject and the victim subject in the wo/men’s human rights discourse. A complex theory of vulnerability contributes to the theorization and construction of a more multifaceted subject in Asian feminist the*logical discourse that does not essentialize Asian wo/men. The vulnerable subject can be discussed within the human rights framework if we can think about the rights discourse from the perspective of relationality and care. Aoife Nolan (2010) states that embodied human vulnerability is a basis for human rights. Our desire for human dignity is a foundation for human rights. A framework of vulnerability is a better way to talk about social justice and the multiple subjectivities that a subject possesses in the human rights discourse. The vulnerable subject is a more realistic conceptualization of the embodied reality of vulnerability for all humans and how our bodily vulnerability relates to economic,

societal and relational vulnerability. While I am not arguing that differences among wo/men do not exist, we Westerners have consistently put ourselves on a platform to point out exaggerated dichotomies between “us” and “other” wo/men. The vulnerable subject approach, on the other hand, “does what the one-dimensional liberal subject approach cannot: it embodies the fact that human reality encompasses a wide range of differing and interdependent abilities over the span of a lifetime” (Fineman, 2008, p. 12).

A theory of vulnerability is useful in addressing concerns of identity and agency as it attends to the complexity and fluidity of subject formation and the many subversive forms of agency that wo/men employ when oppressed. I believe the vulnerable subject addresses Kapur’s vision of formulating a complex subject position in the wo/men’s human rights discourse (2002). If we are to have a more progressive WHR movement that does not regress to one of protectionism and conservatism, we need to find new ways of articulating women’s concerns and find new ways of support/intervention for women. Wendy Brown argues that

To treat various modalities of subject formation as simply additive or even intersectional is to elide the way subjects are brought into being through subjectifying discourses, the way that we are not simply oppressed but produced through these discourses, a production that does not occur in additive, intersectional, or overlapping parts, but through complex and often fragmented histories in which multiple social powers are regulated through and against one another (2000, p. 236).

We need to relocate the vulnerable subject into one whose multiple subjectivities are taken into consideration.

A theory of vulnerability addresses the multiple subjectivities that an individual can have; subjectivity is not unitary, coherent, nor static as post-structuralists have pointed out (Moore, 1994, p. 142). Because we are vulnerable to violence, harm, and

injury; our subjectivity is constantly shifting, contradictory, and adapting to situations in which we find ourselves. We are not fixed, static beings. The theory reflects and focuses on the reality of humanity: we are all vulnerable in some form or other at some point in our lives. We are neither completely agents of our own lives (structural forces partly determine our actions and the directions of our choices), nor are we completely passive. Our agency is in a dialectical relationship with structural forces, in concert with how we direct ourselves through those structural forces. How one thinks about, and then acts upon, her/his vulnerabilities are unique since we humans are unique.

Feelings, Love, and Empathy in the Vulnerable Subject

The vulnerable subject best expresses and articulates the dialectical relationship between structural forces that control our actions, and how we are able to act as subjects and make choices to navigate our way through the institutions and structures that were created by human action. According to Arendt, our highest human activity is our capacity to think. Following this capacity to think is our ability to speak. Speech acts make us political, thereby constituting political activity (1958, p. 3). Our speech and actions are variegated and differentiated, depending on the issue at hand. In that regard, our activities can be contradictory to another aspect of who we are. In other words, our thoughts and actions can and will address different vulnerabilities at different times in our lives.

The capacity to have emotions and feelings differentiates the vulnerable subject from the paradigm of the liberal subject and victim subject, both of whom are de-humanized as subjects. A theory of vulnerability sees the importance of the human's capacity to feel and

love, not necessarily to think, as the most important capacity. Fineman states that “Human beings are vulnerable because as embodied and vulnerable beings, we experience feelings such as love, respect, curiosity, amusement and desire that make us reach out to others, form relationships and build institutions. Both the negative and positive possibilities inherent in vulnerability recognize the inescapable interrelationship and interdependence that mark human existence” (2012, pp. 101-102). Rather than emphasize human’s capacity to rationalize, philosopher Richard Rorty (1989) argues that humans are primarily sentient beings. We should, therefore, improve our communities through “sentimental education,” that is, teaching compassion to our young. This understanding of the vulnerable subject as a sentient subject transforms the current discursive dilemma of the liberal subject and the victim subject as being inhuman or non-human in the rights discourse.

The vulnerable subject becomes the interdependent being that is humanized through the understanding that s/he is sentient, compassionate, interdependent, vulnerable to suffering and has the capacity to problem-solve if the necessary resources are in place. S/he is seen within her immediate context and not detached from history, community, or her own individual circumstances. Therefore, the vulnerable subject is a more realistic understanding of who wo/men are in the human rights discourse. And re-conceptualizing the victim/liberal subject allows us to see where we need to put the emphasis: on institutions and resources that would support the needs of the vulnerable subject.

Traditionally, feelings and emotions have not been linked to our vulnerability, but emotions have been linked to the cultivation of the human rights paradigm. Historian Lynn Hunt (2007) asserts that autonomy and empathy were cultural practices that symbiotically developed in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Part of the problem

of the victim/liberal subject dichotomy is the way in which we, as “liberal” subjects, tend to create conditions for repeating neo-colonial acts by “taking care of” individuals that are allegedly less fortunate. The alleged victim (discursively powerless and without agency) is “cared for” by the autonomous liberal subject wo/man who can “rescue” the victim, who is supposedly less fortunate, through a Western liberal human rights framework.

We need to rethink the overgeneralized liberal/victim subject dichotomy in human rights discourse. The vulnerable subject framework counteracts this dichotomous discourse and puts everyone on a more equal footing. We do not gain freedom and liberation from oppressive practices through human rights law and legal strategies (which reinforces the artificial dualistic divides of completely victim and completely autonomous subjects), but redressing the paradigm through a framework of pastoral care and a theory of vulnerability helps us to see the subjectivity, creativity, and courage of wo/men conventionally viewed as pitiable victims without agency.

The moral importance of human rights discourse is to recognize compassion and the need for treating others with respect, dignity, care and concern—without it turning into sympathy and protective paternalism. Underscoring and manipulating the suffering of wo/men for nationalist goals (or to promote the human rights of wo/men through protectionist measures) has elicited responses of extreme affect: either strong compassion or repugnance. Focusing on suffering creates feelings of the need to rescue and discipline a group of people. It becomes a situation of pity and rescue. Richard Rorty’s (1989) assertion that we have an obligation to mitigate cruelty in the world has to be critically understood in the context of neo-colonialism or acts of arrogant perception. Yet,

a vulnerability framework shows ambivalence in terms of who is seen as vulnerable and who *is* vulnerable. We are more alike than we know or thought (similar situations can be seen, despite outward differences or how it has been perceived). We see the fluidity of our own humanity and the shifting conditions of vulnerability.

It is arrogant to think that we would ever be able to empathize with another person completely. We can never fully understand or know the inner mind of another human. The most we can do is to support the person, provide deep listening, and help the person feel understood. Our actions are less important than allowing the other person to act, be self-determining, and journeying with them on her/his spiritual healing. At best, we need to accept ambivalence and find out what are the needs of that person. As Lartey (2006) has said, “it is learning to live with difference” that is the crucial issue. Learning to accept difference is itself an acceptance of ambivalence and ambiguity.

Vulnerability & Ambivalence

Vulnerability is recognizing that I can be harmed, caring for others who will be harmed, as well as knowing the possibility that I can and will harm others (*vulnerare* in Latin means “to wound”). It is the fluid understanding of power that a subject possesses. Our vulnerability brings out our feelings and our love allows us to care for one another, feel connected. A theory of vulnerability is about an ethics of care. Yet, the paradoxes of being a sentient, vulnerable human being are the capacity for evil and harm that humans possess. In situations of human rights abuses, research studies have demonstrated that ordinary people have been influenced to inflict harm, commit murders and perform torturous acts in Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia (Powers, 2003), as well as Abu Ghraib

(Hunt, 2007). Human rights legal scholar and former Balkan war correspondent Samantha Powers documents the problems of genocide and the ambivalence of good and evil, as well as the problem of apathy in reacting to situations of evil. So Lynn Hunt asks two related questions, which to me, are at the heart of the significance of the human rights paradigm: “what can motivate us to act on our feelings for those far away, and what makes fellow feeling break down so much that we can torture, maim, or even kill those closest to us?” (p. 211). The very issues and problems within the human rights movement are due to situations of our vulnerability as humans and the ambivalence that surround our lives.

A theory of vulnerability highlights this ambivalence within each of us.⁶⁸ While our vulnerability creates feelings of empathy and love, as well as generate care towards others; it also can invoke extreme hatred and lead to a form of dehumanization, domination and an abuse of power. Humans have an intense desire for connecting with others and being relational beings; at the same time, our imperfect humanity means that we cause others to suffer as well. The problem with the current human rights paradigm of the liberal/victim subject dichotomy is that the perpetrator is seen as Other—dehumanized so that we loathe them when the boundaries between who wounds and is wounded are more ambiguous and less clear-cut. We need a more thorough analysis that situates vulnerability as a shared, shifting condition that creates greater conditions of precariousness. A theory of vulnerability shows the interconnected nature of vulnerability, relationality and an abuse of power. Things do not occur in isolation. The

⁶⁸ Feminist scholar Katie Oliviero (2012), too, implores us to think of vulnerability’s ambivalence and to see it as an ambivalent condition.

current WHR paradigm does not explain the complex power dynamics and relations that exist between and among people that contribute to a person's vulnerability.

2: PASTORAL THE*LOGY OF VULNERABILITY

Fineman provides five resources that would enhance outcomes of our vulnerability. These are: physical, human (human capital affects our material well-being), social (social networks, family, political parties provide identity characteristics), ecological (related to the natural environment), and existential (provided by systems of belief, such as religion and art). The spiritual resources that can support us in our vulnerability are what can be generative, desirable, and creative. In that sense, spiritual care is an essential part of alleviating and caring for our vulnerability. In the midst of our vulnerability, we do not necessarily become victims to a particular situation. So a the*logy of vulnerability focuses on our agentic struggles as humans and how we navigate through life's suffering—by neither denying, glorifying, nor essentializing our suffering—as a theology of *han* does; but by embracing the resources we have (and can create) to manage our vulnerabilities. Lartey states that 'For pastoral care to be real it has to arise in the midst of genuine human encounter where carer and cared for are both vulnerable and open' (Lartey 1998, p. 49 in Lartey, 2003, p. 171). Pastoral the*logy needs a theory of vulnerability because it is vulnerable by its very definition. Pastoral caregivers are "wounded healers" which signifies our capacity to be open to being wounded as well as causing some of the wounds. Vulnerability is the starting point from which we can construct the*logies around our humanity.

A the*logy of vulnerability foregrounds and understands the importance of commonality between and among human beings. Through their practices, pastoral the*logians are all too aware that no one is always the oppressor/perpetrator, the other one always being oppressed/victimized. To be aware of our shared vulnerability and our ambivalent place in society to have the capacity to harm (and be harmed) strengthens us as a community. A pastoral the*logy of vulnerability would help cultivate a richer, more sophisticated and realistic understanding that recognizes how human beings are imperfect, finite beings—that some things that happen to us are out of our control.

While acknowledging the variegated ways in which people suffer unevenly as well as differently (we all have a life story that is unique), a the*logy of vulnerability tries to find common ground to find creative solutions to their problems/vulnerabilities. Lartey stresses that in order to have a good grasp of humans, we need to take into consideration the unique components of an individual and her story, take into consideration the universally shared aspects, as well as the contextual influences that have shaped the person and her experiences. He states that “Every human person is in some respects (a) like all others (b) like some others (c) like no other” (2003, p. 171). In the first statement, Lartey recognizes the many developmental traits all humans have in common that shows how we are all dependent on other persons at the beginning few years of our lives as well as later on as we get older (p. 34). We are all finite beings that die (our vulnerability to death). The second part of the statement sees that we are part of a social community and will be influenced by the cultural practices of that community (p. 34-35). The third part of the statement recognizes the uniqueness in every human person: “Each person has a distinct life story, developmental history and particular lifestyle. No

other person will ever see, think, feel, celebrate or suffer in an identical way” (p. 35). An intercultural approach to pastoral theology recognizes and respects the universally/collectively shared, cultural/societal, as well as the individual/unique aspects of persons (Lartey, 2003). Lartey argues that “Each of these three elements needs attention and must be held together in creative, dynamic tension” (2002, p. 1). Similarly, Fineman’s theory of vulnerability sees this contextual commitment to analyzing a person’s location within the broader aspects of the universally and communally shared aspects of our human situation, as well as our individual circumstances.

At the same time, pastoral theologians are aware of the concepts of generativity and hope so that we can take into account issues of accountability and be open to transformation. Care requires spiritual justice—I believe a theology of vulnerability can radically reconstruct the human rights framework and how we care and relate to other communities, as well as larger social structures. The concept of care merges the personal, moral and the political. Lartey states that pastoral care “seeks to foster people’s growth as full human beings together with the development of ecologically and socio-politically holistic communities in which all persons may live humane lives” (2003, p. 30-31). Care helps us to re-envision and to see human beings as interdependent.

Our vulnerability highlights our need to receive and give care. Pastoral care work is about forming and cultivating relationships among one another in a community. The way in which relationships are structured: there are some who are privileged and others who are less privileged. Different aspects of society and people in communities need care at different times (we are all vulnerable to care at various moments in our lives—

Caring is relational, fragmented (different aspects of who we are require care at different times), yet holistic.

James Poling's Work on Vulnerability

Pastoral theologian James Poling has eloquently theologized on the concept of our vulnerability and ambivalence as human beings. Through his years of counseling experience, he has gained profound insight about the ambiguities of humans and their propensity for good and evil as “moral ambiguity—the ability to tolerate the knowledge of good and evil in the self and others” (2012a, p. 5). He defines ambiguity as the “ability to tolerate the knowledge of good and evil in self, others, and God. I now know that my social context, my important relationships, and my religious life are all ambiguous to their core. And I wonder even whether God is ambiguous” (2012a, p. 1). I argue that it is not just in oneself but understanding this about society—our vulnerability—that we have a better understanding of the “human” in human rights discourse.

Through his counseling work, Poling has seen the strength of the human spirit in situations of vulnerability (2002, 2012a). He sees religion as a resource of support for those experiencing vulnerability and violence. He states that “there is the resistance of survival and revolt: many people manage to survive in spite of the dehumanizing conditions of their lives....” (2002, p. 5). He describes economic vulnerability as “the limits of the resources and adaptability of the community or an individual when faced with potential threats, which in other words means a community’s ability to absorb the changes that a disaster causes in its particular milieu” (Rocha, 2000, in Poling, p. 13).

Regarding vulnerability, Fineman's theory of it parallels that of Poling's the*logy. He states that

A community's risk of being affected by [an event] is defined by calculating the potential action of a given threat in the light of the region's particular conditions of *vulnerability*. The risk will be determined by the extent of the threat to [the community] and by its vulnerability to that threat. It is the reduction of vulnerability that explains why different [communities] have different risks when faced by the same threat...Disasters occur when extreme...events create situations that exceed a given [community's] capacity to absorb and survive the ensuing upheaval." (Rocha & Criostoplos, 1999, in Poling, 2002, p. 13).

He too acknowledges that "vulnerability does not mean weakness, since some vulnerable people have survived threats that would destroy other people" (p. 14). Vulnerability, he argues, results when communities are lacking the resources to manage their vulnerability. Like Fineman, he acknowledges that vulnerability is experienced differently and unevenly. Vulnerability exists because we are human. Vulnerability, he argues, is what the*logians refer to as our mortality and finitude. We are limited because of our bodies and the precariousness of life's unknowns, (p. 14).

While Poling also theorizes how people experience vulnerability unequally and unevenly (p. 14), his focus is on economic vulnerability, which he defines as a lack of material and financial resources that "threatens people with the loss of their humanity" (p. 15). Yet, I argue that economic vulnerability is intertwined with other forms of vulnerability (the social, class, racial and political are intertwined and cannot easily be separated out as a patri-kyriarchal analysis has shown). While Poling foregrounds an economic analysis in understanding vulnerability (thereby placing importance on state responsibility), he still shares Fineman's understanding of how it can impact all of us. In

reflecting on his many years of counseling and working with sex offenders, Poling confesses that he shares a common humanity with them:

They were faced with rigid dichotomies of good and evil and could not keep their spiritual balance on the roller coaster that was their life. Likewise, I lived in denial of my own struggles with knowledge of good and evil in myself (2012a, p. 6).

Poling needed to find strength for the part of himself that could feel empathy for the perpetrator. He became aware that while he was vulnerable to harm as a victim; at the same time, he also had the propensity for devastating another being (p. 6).

This ambivalent tension to which Poling refers is necessary in better understanding the “human” in human rights. The “human” in human rights is the vulnerable subject who is ambivalent, relational, emotional, dependent on others as well as community, resilient, and creative. If we have a universal human rights framework that recognizes this type of subject, we are able to sustain a justice-oriented framework that sees the need to recognize the agency, fluidity, and ambivalence in the subject. It opens the pathway for many new possibilities for those who have traditionally been seen as “victim” or those identified as “perpetrator.” We are able to have a more pastoral understanding of the “human” in human rights discourse when we accept the ambiguities of good and evil in ourselves, others and God as Poling has articulated (Poling, 2012a, p. 6).

An Asian/American Pastoral The*logy of Vulnerability: Understanding Contradictions

In light of Bonnie Miller-McLemore’s metaphor of the “living human web” and my critique of it in chapter three, I propose to re-envision the metaphor as a narrative web of vulnerability, creativity, and subjectivity that more adequately addresses the

experiences and realities of subjects in our global, intercultural community. We need to recognize the “living human document”⁶⁹ as a subject and the web as a potential structural power to oppress and control, as well as provide modes of generativity. We need to see that the “living human document” has subjectivity, agency, as well as the ability to navigate through the obstacles of oppression in society. We should, therefore, re-envision the metaphor of the web to reflect the lived realities of the kaleidoscope of differences that characterize our hybridity, plurality, subjectivity and vulnerability. Such a metaphor also acknowledges the vulnerability of our institutions (i.e., the web) and its precariousness.

While the spider is representative of the cruelties of capitalism and neo-colonialism; it, too, is a vulnerable subject. The spider has the potential to harm and be harmed. The web is incredibly fragile, and our own fragility compels us to be resilient and generative. We are dependent and interdependent in our need for one another; at the same time, we also generate and sustain hierarchies and privileged webs of power, suffering, pain and evil. Even in situations that were meant to generate our empathy and compassion; upon greater examination, we are culpable for maintaining the layers of inequalities that sustain structural violence, as well as for creating situations of ambivalence. In other words, we are the spider who creates ambiguities and vulnerabilities, at the same time that we are impacted by the very structures and situations we helped to craft and maintain. We are at different places on the web at different times in our lives. Our lives, thoughts and actions are full of contradictions and paradoxes.

⁶⁹ Anton Boisen, founder of the clinical pastoral education movement, coined this term to refer to the study of humans as “texts.”

Catherine Keller (1986) brilliantly used the image of the web to signify the spider's creative and generative potential to spin and weave from her own body. Using process the*logy, she understands the creative process of “spinning oneness out of many and weaving the one back into the many” (in Miller-McLemore, 1996, p. 17). While the spider engages in predatory behavior, it is, at the same time, the vulnerable subject trying to weave together her/his own self. Our generativity is a result of our resilience to our fragile existence. The spider, then, is an apt metaphor of Fineman's vulnerable subject discourse which shows vulnerability as “desirable” in creating resources.

The web is generative—as Fineman has pointed out about the human in situations of vulnerability. This metaphor of a web of vulnerability and subjectivity allows for a more human subject to materialize: one who emerges through agentive struggles in the human rights discourse through narratives, dissent, conversations and involvement in the community—or though other creative ways to emerge as anything but helpless victims. So a metaphoric “narrative web of vulnerability and subjectivity” reveals the realistic ambivalence of who we are as humans—our vulnerability, fragility, as well as our ability to adapt and be resilient. We are constantly changing, moving, shifting, and adapting. We embody multiplicity, reflexivity, fluidity and heterogeneity.

Reconstructing Sin in Light of a The*logy of Vulnerability: Contradictions (矛盾)

I have the*logically reflected on Poling's work on moral ambiguity, both divine and human; as well as my vision of the “living human web” as a narrative web of vulnerability, creativity, and subjectivity. In light of my above reflections, I argue that a the*logy of *han* that *minjung* the*logians have constructed to explain sin is too simplistic, unrealistic and

one-sided. The*logian Andrew Sung Park (1993) articulates a the*logy of *han* as resulting from sin, whether personal or collective sin. He argues that sin is the root of all evil, generating more sin and *han* in the global community (1993, p. 45). Such a the*logy of sin connotes “evil” as existing on one end of a spectrum with “good” on the other. It highlights a victim-perpetrator binary divide and does not elaborate on the complexity of accountability. It elides the nature of moral ambiguity on which Poling elaborates. I see sin as existing on a continuum, constantly fluid in movement as is our vulnerability. Sin, is a cause and result of my/our vulnerability, as well as that of the other. Sin, too, should be understood as an intercultural process. A better way to understand sin, therefore, is through our vulnerability.

Mo 矛 (*máo* in Chinese) in Korean refers to a spear, and *sun* 盾 (*dun* in Chinese) in Korean means a shield. Hence, the Chinese characters (Sino-Korean) for the word, contradiction, embody and symbolize the very meaning of vulnerability and an understanding of sin: having the capacity to harm and to be harmed.⁷⁰ The fact that they are paired together signifies the incongruity and ambiguity, as well as a lack of definitive boundaries between the two characters. To me, it symbolizes how harm, power, and sin exist on a spectrum. The meaning of the word, contradiction, in Chinese characters conveys how vulnerability and sin are fluid and subject to change. Contradiction, by its very meaning in Korean, suggests relationality and ambiguity in the face of opposition (i.e., in the face of vulnerability). This concept of *mo-sun* more adequately explains the

⁷⁰ This is my own reflection of the Chinese symbols based on the sword and shield. As far as I know, it has no reference to vulnerability. I have found no meaning of such on record. The widely-known legend of the origins of the word’s characters states that a merchant was selling a sword and a shield. He told everyone in a village that he had a sword that could pierce anything. At the same time, the merchant told others in another village that nothing could pierce his shield. Then, a person asked him what would happen if someone tried to pierce his shield with the sword. He had no response.... Hence, a contradiction. I heard this colloquial story from my Chinese language teacher at Harvard (2000).

vulnerability experienced by Koreans during the periods of colonial and imperial oppression.

My previous two chapters have shown the vulnerabilities and paradoxes extant in Korean nationalist historiography. Colonial mimicry and transculturation are contradictory practices that were adopted and practiced in the face of subordination, vulnerability, and feelings of inferiority. The ambivalent emotions of envy and emulation felt by many Koreans towards the Japanese and Americans, while simultaneously despising them, are well-known sentiments ubiquitous in other colonialist and imperialist discourses. The symbols of shield and sword well-describe the sentiments of Koreans' personal and national struggle with finding a balance between respect and loathing for the colonizer, a feeling still prevalent today. Feelings of vulnerability are also responsible for Japan's appropriation of cultural elements from its colonized countries, as the country felt inferior to the West's power of imperialist practices in its country.

Colonialism and nationalism, therefore, are manifestations of vulnerability—by Japan, the colonizer as well as Korea, the colonized. Colonialism is about an unequal power relationship. It is difficult to understand the dynamics of such a relationship, why it endures, and how it continues to affect people under subjugation and colonize their consciousness. It has a lingering presence. It is a contradiction and paradox of the processes of power constructs. Nationalism, states Ranjoo Seodu Herr (2003), is about 'wounded pride, a form of resistance for countries. The contradictions and ambivalence arising from our vulnerabilities are not adequately addressed in a the*logy of *han*. It only perpetuates the victim/perpetrator binary divide and glorifies victimhood.

Responding to Vulnerability: Spiritual Care as a Form of Resilience

In light of the paradoxes and contradictions that arise from our vulnerability, our focus needs to be on theorizing agency that we exhibit in such situations of vulnerability. The method of spiritual/pastoral care can help theorize agency, thereby being a resource for—and responding to—situations of our vulnerability. Pastoral care is a resource for our vulnerability by helping us connect to our community's resources, as well as our own inner resources (prayer, meditation, inner strength, etc.). I examine how wo/men practice care and derive agency through relationships that are built around our embodied and institutional vulnerabilities. Emmanuel Lartey articulates how the interculturality (Lartey's neologism) of a person suggests that the division between economics, the political, social, cultural, psychological, the spiritual are artificial divides (2006). We compartmentalize our worlds into politics, economics, culture and the spiritual—when in reality, they *are* all interconnected. Thus, the intercultural pastoral care paradigm shows how pastoral care attends to the complex, overlapping realms of situations of vulnerability which exist in society in order to make us whole (spiritual restoration). Thus, responding to vulnerability involves spiritual care and is a policy response to vulnerability and healing. It is a way of being resilient to life's precariousness.

Poling's work (2002, 2012) is similar to that of Fineman and other recent vulnerability scholars, such as Bryan Turner (2006) in his focus on people's inner resources as resilience to vulnerability. He recognizes the agency and spiritual strength of survivors and how more research needs to be done in this area of economic vulnerability and family violence in pastoral care (2002, p. 57). Vulnerability is our ability to suffer and to be exposed to damage (Turner, 2001). The concept of resilience

is, therefore, crucial to understanding our vulnerability as humans and what we can do to alleviate it. The goal of a vulnerability analysis is to better understand and foreground our resilience (generativity, creativity, etc. – that which are pastoral theological tasks), as well as find ways to increase our resilience. A the*logy of *han* talks about the suffering, to which all humans are exposed (in varying degrees); yet it does not address the rich and creative ways in which we, as humans, have the capacity and resilience to overcome suffering. Healing our wounds is a communal, interdependent process, whereby our agency and strength of the human spirit are revealed. Whether we rely on human, environmental, or institutional resources, we do not exist in isolation (solipsism, in existential philosophical terms).

In her work in a post-conflict society of Liberia, historian and wo/men's studies scholar Pamela Scully (2011) talks about how the term, capacity, is being used in development work discourse. Capacity refers to the ways in which a particular community can measure up to the standards of Western society (i.e., when they receive aid, the donor knows it is legitimately received b/c the community knows how to do spreadsheets, run conferences, accounting, know how to prevent corruption, etc.). In other words, capacity becomes the standard by which the particular community is on par with the West (or, how communities must speak the same language if they want to be involved in the international development discourse or receive aid of any sort from the West). Deciding whether a country has good governance that can be measured upon Western standards/methods is a neo-colonialist practice because many non-Western countries do not engage in similar Western business/corporate practices.

Scully (2011) argues that resilience has little to do with “capacity” and has more to do with coping with the many challenges of life. Resilience is not about a Western-derived understanding of capacity, which sadly becomes another form of neo-colonialism. Environmental studies scholar Lance Gunderston sees resilience as understanding instability as part of social and ecological life (Scully, 2011). Resilience is developing or coming up with survival strategies in the face of vulnerability. Capacity can have a more powerful meaning than the way in which it is currently used in development discourse: to have the capacity (the inner strength and spirit) to act upon life’s challenges. This type of capacity is a spiritual practice. Resilience, then, is a spiritual practice.

Scully (2011) has thus observed that the best practices in a community to bring and build resilience are what I see to be spiritual and pastoral in nature. Those practices that have aided wo/men in recovering from violence and war in their communities have not been quantitatively measurable by any means.⁷¹ She argues that there are three practices in a community of bringing and building resilience to vulnerability: talking and conversation, spiritual work of breathing, and embracing the courage to have the perpetrators apologize. Similarly, Saba Mahmood sees agency as those “capacities and skills required to undertake particular kinds of acts (of which resistance to a particular set of relations of domination is one kind of an act): and as ineluctably specific disciplines through which a subject is formed” (2001, p. 210). The wo/men of Liberia talk, drink coffee together, and care for one another. This is developing *chǒng*, bonds, and affection.

⁷¹ Also look at Annie Hardison-Moody’s dissertation on Liberia which examines wo/men’s religious practices as a method of coping with violence. Annie Hardison-Moody, “When Religion Matters: A Practical Theological Engagement of Liberian Women’s narratives and practices of healing post-conflict”, Unpublished PhD dissertation, Emory University, 2012.

It is listening and allowing the other to speak, have the opportunity to be heard and be understood. They engage in spiritual practices of loving and caring for another. The interconnection they have with others is a spiritual journey, a spiritual connection. These aspects are usually overlooked in human rights discourse and policy-work because it is not really measureable, quantifiable or fundable. Yet, such spiritual practices are significant in bringing about healing and growth in a community and in an individual.

CONCLUSION

Charles Gerkin states, “pastoral counselors are more than anything else, listeners to and ‘interpreters of stories’” (2005, p. 30). Stories and oral histories are powerful methods through which personal dignity may be strengthened, hope is generated, and empathy is cultivated. Catherine Fosl has stated that “Telling one’s own story has a collective purpose and can work as a consciousness-raising, even a community-organizing tactic” (2008, p. 220). Storytelling and empathic, intercultural pastoral listening respond to the challenge of how to provide individual care as well as attend to the public concerns of social justice (Moon, 2010, p. 61). Psychiatrist Richard Mollica (2006) also sees the importance of storytelling as a form of healing. The on-going work of pastoral caregivers and pastoral theologians has been about understanding the importance of narrative in all of its various forms to give agency to – as well as cultivate methods of resilience in—the person and community.

Building resilience, therefore, is a layered process, not a specific measureable outcome. Overcoming and acknowledging our shared vulnerability is to listen and allow the other to speak without othering. It becomes a matter of moral integrity to not

condemn practices that are not a part of one's own culture. It becomes a matter of judgment, bias, stereotyping, and paternalistic colonialism—that which the intercultural pastoral care model strives to eradicate and undo (Moon, 2010, p. 61). This shows the importance of spiritual care in responding to humanity's vulnerability. Human rights practice is about valuing each person as sacred and that is what pastoral care aims to do in our work. So in that sense, the way in which we build resilience (or sustain it) is through spiritual practices, and being resilient is a spiritual practice. Vulnerability and spiritual care are very much linked and interconnected. I, therefore, argue that community, courage and participatory citizenship—acts of resilience—are spiritual practices.

I further examine these concepts of spiritual practices in my following two chapters on comfort wo/men and camptown military prostitutes. In the next two case chapters, I address the dilemma of how a theory of vulnerability relates to a theory of exploitation and domination that a patri-kyriarchal analysis seeks to articulate and how a pastoral the*logy of vulnerability addresses such issues. My next two chapters reveal the intricacies of vulnerability and contradictions that I have described thus far.

Chapter 6: Korean “Comfort Wo/men” In the Wo/men’s Human Rights Movement: A Pastoral Care Analysis⁷²

INTRODUCTION

The so-called “comfort wo/men” issue has been a “silent” topic until 1991 when a Korean wo/man, Kim Hak Soon, first publicly came forward and spoke out about her ordeal as a “comfort wo/man.” Following Kim’s courage, many former “comfort wo/men” also came forward with their story. Since 1991, it has emerged as an extremely controversial topic. Many different private, governmental, non-governmental organizations have become involved in the settlement of the issue, not to mention the tremendous interest the issue has generated in academia and the media on a global level. The issue has been explored, researched, and debated by all of various interest groups. It has been a galvanizing issue for various wo/men’s groups (conservative, progressive, radical, nationalist, the*logical, intellectual); human rights organizations (Korean grass roots, as well as international); as well as the Japanese, Korean and U.S. governments. Quite disappointingly, the issue has been manipulated by many groups to fit their nationalist interests. These polyvocal nationalist “groups” have included the issue of “comfort wo/men” in their discursive strategy to point out the horrors of Japanese colonial rule, at the same time that the Japanese government denies the horrific sex crimes committed during the war in their own national strategy of protection from demonization. None of these nationalist strategies and positions is helpful in working towards a truly liberative wo/men’s human rights framework.

⁷² I first wrote about this topic of the imbrication of nationalist historiography and “comfort wo/men” for Professor Carter Eckert at Harvard: “Sounds of Silence: Voices of Comfort Women,” (Spring 1994). I also presented a version of my argument at the Graduate Students’ Association for Asian Studies Conference at Harvard University (Spring 1994). I then explored the topic and *han* for my M.Div thesis at Harvard (2001).

The term, “comfort wo/man,” is an English translation of the Japanese euphemism, *ianfu* (Korean: *wianbu*), which refers to the young wo/men who were providing “comfort” to mostly Japanese military soldiers by engaging in sexual acts with them during the Asia Pacific War (1931-45). The reported number of young wo/men that were recruited varies widely (from as little as 20,000 up to 400,000), with the majority of the young wo/men being Korean (Soh, 2008, p. 23). The military brothels that were established were set up as a form of war-time mobilization for the soldiers. The wo/men were necessary for the explicit purpose of providing sex and “comfort” to these men in order to create “war machines” (Enloe, 1990). The logic was that such services would boost the spirit of the men and their ego; hence they would be more effective in their war-time fighting (1990). While the majority of the wo/men were Korean, there were also wo/men from Japan, China, Philippines, Indonesia, as well as other Southeast Asian countries.⁷³

In this chapter, I incorporate a pastoral the*logical method to the wo/men’s human rights discourse of Korean “comfort wo/men.” I situate the discourse of nationalist rhetorical practices among feminist scholars and activists as a significant problem in limiting the potential for a more liberative wo/men’s human rights movement. I argue that the essentialized trope of the *han*-filled “comfort wo/man” strategically being used by the wo/men’s rights movement perpetuates and substantiates a wounded-victim identity as well as a sense of their powerlessness. Such categorization is detrimental to respecting their agency and recognizing their flourishing as survivors who have navigated their way through tragic life situations. I illustrate how a pastoral the*logical method of

⁷³ In my dissertation, I focus specifically on Korean “comfort wo/men,” as each country’s situation, historical context and method of recruitment differs.

story-listening, along with an analysis of feminist legal scholar Martha Fineman's theory of vulnerability, more realistically highlights the multiple subjectivities and agentic struggles of the Korean "comfort wo/men."

I argue that intercultural pastoral care, together with vulnerability analysis, as a method can contribute to a more complex and three-dimensional understanding of the person that recognizes a person's multiple subjectivities—a perspective currently lacking in the wo/men's human rights discourse. Individual counseling and therapeutic care, as well as a lack of analysis of socio-cultural context have been critiqued in the field of pastoral theology (McClure, 2010). More recently, however, the communal-contextual and intercultural paradigm sees care as including the social, racial, cultural, religious, politico-economic context of a person (Miller-McLemore, 2005, p. 41). Utilizing this intercultural pastoral method is vital in terms of analyzing the complex and myriad ways in which the "comfort wo/men" have exhibited agency in the context of their vulnerability. I don't propose 'care as counseling' but more generally, care as listening, and care as attention to discursive subject formation. Deep listening contributes to generating theories about vulnerability and wo/men's human rights (Otto, 2005), as well as disrupting gender essentialisms and stereotypes of wo/men. So here, I allow the testimonials of the Korean "comfort wo/men" to be central in my pastoral analysis. In my analysis of their struggles, I have identified how the spiritual practices of community-building, courage and participatory citizenship helped them to navigate through life's vulnerabilities.

I also provide a literary analysis of Na Hye-sŏk's (1896-1948) novella, "Kyŏnghŭi," which was written during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). During

this period, Korean wo/men were being exposed to Western literature vis-à-vis Japan and Western ideals of feminism (women who went abroad to study or travel), as well as through Christianity and were demanding equal educational opportunities for girls and boys. This new sense of “feminism” was reflected in Korean wo/men’s writings during this period (Hyun, 2004).⁷⁴ Writers such as Na Hye-sok were influenced by her travels in Europe and her own Western heroines who embodied feminist beliefs. Wo/men desired to be educated and overcome traditional barriers- and this attitude was similar to Korean wo/men across class divides. Therefore, it is not surprising to find this attitude among many of the narratives/testimonies of the comfort wo/men, whose resistance to patriarchal norms and a fervent desire for education is reflected in privileged classes. I choose to engage in an analysis of Na’s work, as well as Na the person to highlight the emergence of “new woman” ideals during the colonial period. Women were intent in “crafting modern selves” (Soh, 2004). At the same time, the “new woman” was resisting traditional Korean cultural understandings of wo/men’s “place” in society as either “good mother/home,” or “bad woman/kisaeng (prostitute)” roles.

In my analysis of the issue, I certainly do not want to sound like an apologist for the Japanese government or have my argument misconstrued that the “comfort wo/men” should not deserve an official apology from the Japanese government. As I have already mentioned, the “comfort wo/men” issue is an extremely complex and politicizing one, and the issue has been utilized to serve the interests of different constituencies in Korea, Japan, as well as in the United States. Within these countries, there are further fragmented perspectives and opinions on the issue. Treatment of the issue underscores

⁷⁴ Theresa Hyun (2004) describes the role of translation of Western literature that was influential in promoting feminism in Korean society during the colonial period and contributing to the ideal of the “new woman.”

the complexities of the collective memory of the colonial period and its legacies on Korean society.

1: KOREAN “COMFORT WO/MEN” & *HAN*

The successes and limitations of the wo/men’s human rights framework are evident in the discursive historiography of the Korean “comfort wo/men” issue. The Korean “comfort wo/men” are almost always depicted as having a life filled with *han*.⁷⁵ In other words, the *han* of the Korean “comfort wo/men” is an unquestionable label in Korean post-colonial the*logical and public discourse. The Korean the*logical concept of suffering, *han*, and “comfort wo/men” are usually paired together, thereby essentializing Korean “comfort wo/men,” further stigmatizing and victimizing them. This kind of discourse reinforces the victim subject trope onto the wo/men. They become a product of the postcolonial narrative that elides the complexity of each “comfort” wo/man’s story, as well as her agency and resilience in the face of vulnerability.

Han has been closely associated with Korean wo/men, and this has further contributed to an essentialized view of Korean “comfort wo/men” as well as more closely tied the issue to the Korean nationalist discourse. Korean feminist the*logian, Chung Hyun Kyung, states that “*han* is the most prevalent feeling among Korean people, who have been violated throughout their history by the surrounding powerful countries. This feeling arises from a sense of impasse” (1990, p. 42). The Korean “comfort wo/men” issue has been a silent subject, but it has emerged as a controversial topic in the past two decades or so, both in academia and in public discourse. The issue has been examined by and has become a

⁷⁵ In pastoral the*logical discourse, Heesung Chung (2010) recently contributed an article to the *Pastoral Psychology* journal that reinforces the essentialist discourse which I seek to disrupt, discussing the “*han*-ridden Korean sex slaves.”

galvanizing issue for wo/men's groups; human rights organizations; the Japanese, Korean, and U.S. governments; as well as the global community. It has degenerated into a sensationalized phenomenon for the media because of the popularity of the subject matter. The silence of these "comfort wo/men" for over five decades has been attributed to Korean Confucian culture, which not only formalized the oppression of wo/men's rights, but it also created a situation which prohibits sexually victimized wo/men to speak out because of the alleged 'shame' and 'embarrassment' the act would cause to the wo/men and their families.

Various Korean nationalist groups have supported the "comfort wo/men" issue to make further diatribes regarding the horrors of Japanese colonial rule. This subject matter has provided further support for the nationalist dialogue in South Korea, especially since the issue has gained international sympathy and recognition. The realities of the Korean "comfort wo/men" issue are far more complex than is commonly viewed. While the issue of the "comfort wo/men" is a local problem unique to Korea and Japan in a specific juncture of history; it is also representative of the on-going commodification of wo/men and their sexuality, structural violence, and the systemic patri-kyriarchal devaluation of wo/men in society.⁷⁶ Yet, Korean nationalists and nationalist scholars and activists argue that the issue of the "comfort wo/men" is unique to Korean history in order to further demonize Japanese colonialism.

The situation and circumstances of vulnerability may be unique to Korea due to the circumstances in which the events occurred under Japanese colonialism (1910-1945), but the violence and abuse which the wo/men incurred were not due solely because of the Japanese. The structures of institutionalized gender violence and practices of abuse towards the wo/men were already in place in Korea, prior to their becoming comfort

⁷⁶ Many of the wo/men's groups in Korea continue to demand monetary reparations from the Japanese.

wo/men. The tragedy of the “comfort wo/men” is an example of structural violence, communal and kinship relations, as well as individual vulnerability that is associated with gender inequality, education, and class. In order to transform the suffering of the “comfort wo/men,” the wo/men’s movement in Korea needs to address the relationship between larger structures of patri-kyriarchal oppression that exist in societal and kinship relations, colonial economic historiography, militarism, and the sexual exploitation of wo/men. Again, I underscore that my point is not to condone the heinous crimes committed by the Japanese government. I want to highlight the importance of understanding the complexity of gender and sexual violence in Korea during the colonial and postcolonial periods.

In her work on violence against wo/men (VAW), Sally Engle Merry notes that many of the wo/men with whom she worked “attributed their injuries to their relatives’ failure to abide by the norms of kinship and care. Local activists and reformers encouraged them to see their injuries as violations of their rights that the state is obligated to protect” (2006, p. 180). To that, I would also add that the community has obligations and responsibilities as well. The human rights framework allows for people to have an additional frame of reference in terms of thinking about VAW. Yet, rights are clearly not the only way to think about injuries and how to have justice (p. 180). Adhering to such a model means that “victims do not abandon their earlier perspectives but layer the rights framework over that of kinship obligations” (p. 180). So Engle Merry argues that these wo/men experience a double subjectivity “as rights-bearers and as injured kinsmen and survivors” (p. 180-81). Similarly, with regard to the Korean “comfort wo/men,” we need to incorporate a rights

framework that is layered by the care of the greater community, family, as well as state responsibility.

Rodriguez Velasquez vs. Honduras: Collective Responsibility in Wo/men's Human Rights International Law

The well-known human rights case of *Velasquez Rodriguez vs. Honduras* (1988) was momentous for the wo/men's rights movement in that it demonstrated how states should be accountable for politically oriented disappearances even if such acts were not carried out by the state (Charlesworth & Chinkin, 2000, pp. 148-149). The case has been a success for the VAW movement in that it indirectly demonstrated that states *should* also be accountable for VAW, even for violations occurring in private spheres.⁷⁷ Given such developments in the international wo/men's human rights movement, it is surprising that Korean feminists have not sought to use this approach to hold the Korean government equally accountable for what happened to the "comfort wo/men," considering the government and the people knew about the issue long before it came to public light in the early 1990s. Since the Korean government has known about the "comfort wo/men" issue since (or perhaps prior to) the liberation of Korea in 1945, does that not count as having committed acts of accommodation and indifference?

In addition, recent evidence has revealed that the Korean government engaged in and established similar brothels and abused Korean wo/men to comfort Korean soldiers during the Korean War.⁷⁸ So even now with the feminist awareness of parallel abuses of

⁷⁷ Velasquez Rodriguez v. Honduras Case (Inter-American Court of Human Rights) 1988.

⁷⁸ The first scholarly paper to address the use of military comfort wo/men by the Korean military during the Korean War came out in 2002. Korean sociologist Kim Kwi-ok presented her paper in Japan, using memoirs of retired generals, testimonial narratives, as well as the official record of the military, *Hubang*

violence against wo/men by the Korean military, as well as around the U.S. military bases in South Korea and the systemic disciplining of wo/men's bodies around the military bases in the form of bi-monthly VD checks, there has not been a complex patri-kyriarchal and vulnerability analysis of the comfort wo/men issue.⁷⁹

If Korean nationalists argue that the Japanese committed the most heinous crimes towards the Koreans, does that not make the Koreans who were involved in the activities just as guilty of sinful acts as the Japanese? How do Korean nationalists and Korean wo/men activists explain the active Korean male role in the participation of recruiting the wo/men and acting as pimps and organizers in the brothels during both the Japanese colonial period (and with the American military bases in South Korea)? Are the Korean men not guilty of exploitation as well? In addition, since Koreans have known about the comfort wo/men since the liberation of Korea in 1945, does that not count as having committed acts of accommodation and indifference? Once again, the wo/men's human rights movement relies on the strategy of explaining violence from a patriarchal perspective that relies on binaries of the hypermasculine, strong male and the weak, powerless "woman." Feminists who use patriarchy as a framework depend on this binary as well (Engle Merry, p. 18). We need to work on complicating and disrupting this binary. While not justified, the perpetrators' behaviors and actions are responses to their own vulnerability in economic and social terms and to the structural violence embedded in a patri-kyriarchal framework. We create our own webs and networks of oppression, deception and situations of vulnerability.

Korean Wo/men and Nationalism

Chōnsa (War History on the Home Front), in Sarah Soh (2008). I discuss this further in my next chapter on military prostitution.

⁷⁹ I discuss the issue of military prostitution in my next chapter.

By making the association between *han* and “comfort wo/men,” wo/men’s issues are only further being co-opted into the Korean male nationalist discourse. So the discourse of *han* and “comfort wo/men” becomes part of a colonized patriarchal nationalist discourse. The issue has been framed from a “masculine subject position” (Yang, 1998, p. 134). I choose to narrate an event that is representative of the limits of nationalism and the rights paradigm and how we need to have an understanding of transformative care for the rights discourse. The example shows how the wo/men’s human rights framework was used to advance nationalist issues in Korea, while purportedly advancing the rights of wo/men. For approximately two years in the mid-1990s, I worked for an umbrella human rights organization, as well as volunteered for a wo/men’s rights organization, in South Korea. My experiences with Korean human rights groups and wo/men’s rights groups as a Korean American there made me engage in serious reflection on the various positions and strategizing involved in coming to the platform of a universal wo/men’s human rights framework. I want to describe a critical incident which occurred at the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. I attended the NGO forum held in Hairou, China as an English interpreter/translator and writer for the Korean women’s delegation.

One day during a protest in which I participated on behalf of the “comfort wo/men” at the conference, the Korean wo/men’s delegation— in the midst of chanting phrases about holding the Japanese government accountable—yelled out, “Kill the Japanese! Kill the Japanese!” The phrase was repeated several times by many of the Korean wo/men, confirming to me that it was not an aberrational outburst by one participant but was more of a systematic chant by the delegation. I was mortified by this

and it validated for me that the issue had been turned into a nationalist issue of Koreans demonizing the Japanese for the heinous acts committed against Koreans during the period of colonization of Korea by Japan (1910-1945). The subject of “comfort wo/men” has been transformed into a nationalist issue of what Wendy Brown (1995) refers to as Nietzschean *ressentiment*.⁸⁰ Although two decades have passed since the public revelation of the horrific stories of the “comfort wo/men’s” survival, only a few scholars have put forth critical perspectives of the “comfort wo/men” issue beyond a perpetrator (read: Japanese government) /victim (read: Korean society) binary divide.

While the “comfort wo/men” issue does represent an atrocity that occurred at a specific juncture of history, it is also representative of the on-going commodification of wo/men and their sexuality, structural violence, and the systemic patri-kyriarchal devaluation of wo/men in society. Wendy Brown notes that “rights for the systematically subordinated tend to re-write injuries, inequalities, and impediments to freedom that are consequent to social stratification as matters of individual violations and rarely articulate or address the conditions producing or fomenting that violation” (2000, p. 239). The issue is an on-going exploitation of wo/men and their sexuality, the hyper-masculine culture of militarism, and the systemic patri-kyriarchal devaluation of wo/men in society.

I realized that, for the majority of Korean wo/men activists, the “comfort wo/men” issue

⁸⁰ Anecdotally speaking, I had run into an enormous open tent when it started to downpour one afternoon. The workshops had concluded for the day and the Conference site was desolate. Another woman followed me and ran into the tent as well. Being the only two people in the tent, we slowly moved towards each other and started a conversation. She, a Japanese wo/man, saw my identification badge which stated that I was part of the South Korean delegation. Out of the blue, she started apologizing to me on behalf of the Japanese nation for the “comfort wo/men” issue. She went on about how horrible her nation was for kidnapping and raping the wo/men. I sensed nervous energy and an almost contrived, rehearsed apology. Out of curiosity, I finally said to her that while I was with the Korean delegation, I was an American and that she did not have to apologize to me. She immediately changed her apologetic tone of voice to me and stated how she feared reprisal if she did not apologize for her country’s behavior. It was interesting how the sincerity of her apology had shifted once my nationality was revealed and she knew I was not expecting an apology.

has become one of being co-opted into nationalist rhetoric in desiring retribution from the Japanese for the “evil” acts appropriated on Koreans during the period of colonization of Korea by Japan (1910-1945). How could I engage in activist wo/men’s rights work, specifically in regard to “comfort wo/men,” without reinforcing or being co-opted into similar structures of nationalist rhetoric? How could I engage in a critique of the “comfort wo/men” issue without offending Koreans for not being in the same mode of Japan-bashing?

The topic of “comfort wo/men” has been a crucial one in the wo/men’s human rights movement as part of the VAW campaign. It has received tremendous amount of care and attention in the wo/men’s human rights movement. The problem has also been an integral part of Korean colonial historiography that has been inextricably tied to Korean nationalist discourse. It has been treated as an essential component of the nationalist rhetorical strategy to further justify Korean claims of the abusive nature of Japanese colonial rule and Korea’s victimization.⁸¹

Korean human rights activist and scholar In Sook Kwon contends, “today, six decades after the end of Japanese imperial rule, there persists a strong anti-Japanism that helps to sustain powerful Korean nationalism” (2006, p. 44). She states that the “comfort wo/men” issue is one of two major issues during the period of Japanese colonialism (1910-1945) that has continued to fuel this nationalist anger (Kwon, 2006, p. 44). Kwon rightly argues that

the complicated relationship between women and nationalism shapes not only current politics but also memories that lead and direct the lives, desires, and

⁸¹ Hyun Sook Kim (1997) discusses how the South Korean government maintained a masculine stance towards its sensationalist approach to issue of “comfort wo/men,” ignoring the wo/men activists who sought to reveal the crime. At the same time, the wo/men are seen as the ultimate objects of sacrifice in Korean nationalist historiography.

practices of people now and in the future. In constructing collective memory, it is never easy to present alternative gender views in relation to a colonial age, given the domineering power of nationalism and the lack of feminists' languages and discourses (2006, p. 59-60).

It is interesting to note that Korean (as well as Japanese) wo/men's rights activists stress the peculiar cruelty of Japanese colonialism and moral culpability of the Japanese government.

I raise this concern of nationalist feminist discourse, not to condone the behavior of the Japanese military and government; but rather, to underscore the fact that the commodification of wo/men's bodies and sexual violence against wo/men continues to exist in Korea—despite the end of Japanese colonial rule— and that there are layers of culpability within different arenas of Korean society as well with respect to the “comfort wo/men.” The issue has also been an integral part of Korean colonial historiography that has been inextricably tied to the Korean nationalist, anti-imperialist discourse. It has been used as an essential component of the nationalist rhetorical discursive strategy to further justify Korean claims on the abusive nature of Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945) and Korea's victimization and suffering during this period.

Angela Wai Ching Wong calls for a renegotiated postcolonial identity of the “poor and suffering woman in Asia” and the “fantastic female” (i.e., the heroine). She points out how nearly every piece of feminist the*logical writing about Asian wo/men employs a story of the poor, Asian wo/man victim (Wong, 2000, p. 13). The Korean “comfort wo/men,” therefore, have materialized as the ultimate nationalist symbol of the suffering, *han*-filled victim/heroines of the Japanese colonial period. Korean feminists and nationalists have evoked empathic support from the international community by strategically elevating the *han* of the “comfort wo/men” into a global wo/men's rights

issue. Such discursive constructions of suffering being employed in the wo/men's human rights movement has played a role in buttressing nationalist claims that wo/men are in need of paternalistic protection by the masculine state, as well as other conservative protectionist measures. This creates an essentialized identity of suffering to which the wo/men are invariably associated, regardless of time and space.

Some Testimonies of the "Comfort Wo/men"

A compilation of testimonials by former "comfort wo/men" has revealed some intriguing evidence which hitherto have not been critically examined in the debates. The individual and personal memories that reveal anomalies and unique circumstances for each wo/man indicate the complexities in the situation behind the "comfort wo/men."⁸² Collective memory, on the other hand, functions to simplify the private, individual histories to create a neat package of information for the readers to digest. While these testimonies do not provide an indisputable, definitive conclusion regarding the "comfort wo/men" issue and only reflect the memories of a handful of wo/men, the testimonies are nonetheless important in that they constitute subaltern discourses which partly undermine and deconstruct the conventional understanding of the Korean "comfort wo/men" issue as well some of the realities of the Korean colonial period (1910-1945). The divergent plots and narratives of these stories highlight the multi-faceted nature of the "comfort wo/men" issue. In the wo/men's testimonies, several of them *chose* to leave their homes in search of a better life, and there is no unified opinion as to who is at fault.

⁸² See Chôngsindae yôn'gu hoe. (Ed.). (1993). *Kangje ro kküllyŏ kan Chosŏnin kunwianbu dŭl jŭng'ŏn'jip*, Seoul, South Korea: Hanul Publishing Co. The English translation of this book: Keith Howard. (Ed.). (1995). *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women*. New York, N.Y.: Cassell Press. I have read both the original Korean testimonials and the English translation.

I have chosen to use these particular testimonials in the dissertation over others because it provides a counter-argument to the mainstream media accounts, as well as feminist the*logical discourse of the “comfort wo/men” issues that depicts the wo/men as a homogeneous victim-group, having been brutally forced to become sexual slaves to the Japanese soldiers. The narratives I share show agentic choices being made, resisting oppression in their lives, as well as depict the complex layers of culpability that resulted in the tragic outcome of the wo/men being “comfort wo/men.” My testimonials are but a handful of stories that reveal vulnerability and agency of the wo/men, as well as complexity in the institutional and familial structures during the colonial period. There are many life stories of the “comfort wo/men” that are vastly different from these Korean accounts as well. As all human beings and our life trajectories are unique, so too, are the wo/men’s stories extremely variegated. My main goal here is to share some of the details of the wo/men’s stories that have hitherto been silenced because it does not fit the dominant “comfort wo/men” narrative in the WHR movement. I want to underscore the strength and resilience of the “comfort wo/men” in the face of vulnerability, whether it was during the colonial period or the post-colonial period when they were still marginalized in society because of their status as former “comfort wo/men.”

Hak Soon Kim, one of the first wo/men to publicly speak about her life as a “comfort wo/man,” had endured many hardships throughout her life (Howard, 1995, pp. 32-40). She was raised by a single mother, who had to beg from her own siblings in order to survive and take care of her daughter. She was given to a foster-family to be trained as a *kisaeng* when her mother remarried because she did not get along with her

stepfather nor her stepbrother.⁸³ Her mother had even told her that her biological father had died because she brought bad luck to the family. Later, she went to Beijing with her new foster father in search of “work,” where she was taken as a “comfort wo/man” by some Japanese soldiers. She served Japanese soldiers in the stations, but later ran away with a Korean man who had somehow found his way into the house in which she lived. He raped her as well and of him, she states, “Japanese or Korean, men all seem to be the same” (1995, p. 38). She traveled with him in China for several years and had two children with him. He died from an injury at a construction site when they returned to Korea after the end of the Korea War (1950-53). Of her time with him, she states the following:

I had suffered so much, living with this man who had supposedly been my husband. When he was drunk and aggressive, because he knew that I had been a comfort woman, he would insult me with words that had cut me to the heart. After we had returned to Korea I had wanted him to come near me. My life seemed to be wretched. I had refused to do as I was told and I had received more and more abuse from him. When he called me a dirty bitch or a prostitute in front of my son, I cursed him. Now, though, once my husband was cremated, my son and I lived alone. He had tortured me mentally so much that I did not miss him a lot (p. 39).

Her son died a few years later when he was in the fourth grade and that is when she fell into deep depression to end her life. She worked hard to survive, living miserably, until she finally decided not to pity herself and live with inner peace. She has had a deep need to share her story and talk about her anger towards the Japanese (p. 40).

One wo/man, who chooses to use a pseudonym, argues that the Korean government is also responsible for her plight (Kim, D.J., 1993, pp. 45-57). Her father had died when she

⁸³ *Kisaeng* are considered to be female entertainers trained to please men and sing, dance and recite poetry for them. Many were usually taken as concubines or second wives by men of the ruling class.

was very young and her family had been extremely poor. When she was twelve years old, she decided to leave home and find work as domestic help so there would be one less mouth to feed in the family. She describes the inarticulable agony she endured in doing back-breaking labor for the family which she would not finish until 1 a.m. in the morning. She was not paid for three years. In 1937, at age seventeen, she was recruited by a Korean man who was allegedly looking for young wo/men to work in a Japanese factory. Desperate for money, she took the man's offer and was shipped to Nagasaki. She was then taken to Shanghai, where she met many Japanese wo/men who had been former prostitutes. She recounts that she had never been beaten nor brutalized by the soldiers. Since she was attractive, she was selected for high-ranking officers. A Japanese officer, Izumi, "took a liking" to her and after three years (1940), he used his position to send her, and four others, back to Korea. The Korean "master" complained to Izumi, but the "master" was overridden by Izumi's firm promise to the woman. Izumi had allowed her to take a few of her friends with her and even gave her 100 yen of his own (Kim, 1993, p. 55). She argues that "Japan was bad, but that the Korean 'master' was worse (Kim, 1993, p. 57)." In her narrative, she stated that she harbored more resentment towards the Koreans who were working for the Japanese than the Japanese themselves and argues for the Korean government to be accountable as well (Kim, 1993, p. 57). Her situation of vulnerability did not begin when she became a "comfort wo/man;" she had experienced situations of vulnerability because of poverty and her family situation.

Another testimony by a wo/man named Mun P'il-ki, states how she left home without her parent's knowledge (1993, pp. 107-120). She describes the main thing that stood out about her childhood was that she wanted an education very badly. Her father did

not believe in the idea of a girl studying and would not let her go to school (1993, p. 109). When she did manage to attend school with her mother's help, her father found out and beat her and burned all of her books. When she was eighteen years old, a man approached her and stated to her that he would take her to a place where she could study and earn money. She eagerly followed the man so she could study (Mun, 1993, p. 110). It is significant to point out that she voluntarily left a home situation that was an unhappy one for her; she had wanted a better life for herself and not to be restricted by the patriarchal beliefs of her father. She was taken to Manchuria, during which time she even had a friend write a letter to her parents since she could not write herself. She asked her parents to allow her younger sisters to attend school so that they, too, would not run away from home. She has so much anger towards her father that she refuses to visit her father's gravesite to this day (Soh, 2008, p. 85). Her situation reveals that her torment and anger originated in her being devalued as a girl by her father and her desire for education; her suffering did not begin when she became a "comfort wo/man."

Yi Yong-nyô describes how her family was so poor, she had to beg for food as a child in order to help feed the family (1993, pp.215-225). When she was fourteen, she was sold off by her father to a wo/man to repay her for the debts he had incurred while building his house. After about a year, the wo/man told her that if she went to Japan, she would earn lots of money.⁸⁴ Lured by the thought of more money, two of her friends also went with her. She describes how she was taken first to Pusan and then to Burma by a Korean man and several Korean wo/men. Another account by Kim Tae-sôn also acknowledges how she was taken to Burma by a Korean man, who had lied to her by telling her that she would be working in a factory (1993, pp. 227-238). Placing blame on her ancestors and the *Chosôn*

⁸⁴ This indicates that the woman sold Yi Yong-nyô off to go to the comfort stations.

dynasty for her ultimate problems, she believes that the basic problem which resulted in her becoming a “comfort wo/man” was the fact that Korea was too poor.

Another woman, Yi Yǒng-suk describes her hardships growing up as an orphan in Japan (1995, pp. 50-57). She was treated badly and decided to return to Korea, where her life was not any better. She took jobs as housemaid, but because she was badly abused, she tried to commit suicide (p. 50). She decided to return to Japan upon being promised work there (p. 51). Instead of being taken to Japan, however, she was taken to China and had to serve as a “comfort wo/man.” After two years there, she became familiar with the operation and was told by a friend that her contract time had expired (p. 54). One evening, she became intoxicated and brazenly told her proprietor that she would report being abused and refused to serve any more soldiers (p. 55). She was then moved to a new station with the money she earned after her contract had expired. Her new station was much more comfortable. She states that “the Japanese were bad. But the Koreans were just as bad because they put their own women through such terrible ordeals for personal profit” (1995, p. 57).

Oh Omok describes how a Korean man lied to her about working in a factory in Japan, only to end up to a village in Manchuria where Japanese troops were stationed (1995, pp. 65-69). She and her friend, Okhŭi, went together. She states she was paid whenever she slept with the soldiers (p. 67). She was able to develop a friendship with one of them, Lieutenant Morimoto, who arranged for her to only serve high-ranking officials, making her life more bearable. She reported that the soldiers used condoms and were all required to wear condoms (p. 67). After the war,⁸⁵ she was able to return home and be reunited with her family (p. 68). She, however, lied to them about her life in China. She later married a widower with five children, whom she subsequently left. She adopted a baby girl and lived

⁸⁵ She is referring to the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945).

on her own, working and struggling. She and her childhood friend and survivor, Okhŭi, have met up often and supported each other (p. 69).

One very disturbing testimony comes from Pak Pok-sun (1921-2005), whose narrative is not included in the testimonies that were compiled by the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (Soh, 2008, pp. 96-98). Pak was extremely critical of the way the Korean Council had conducted the redress movement. According to anthropologist Sarah Soh, she asserted “with anger and disgust that some of the registered victim-survivors are ‘imposters’ and that they are telling ‘lies’ about life at comfort stations” (p. 97). She became very isolated in Korean society and received many death threats because she was speaking up, contradicting the information that the Korean Council was putting forth. Sim Mi-ja, another former “comfort wo/man,” stated that eighty percent of South Korean “comfort wo/men” survivors had been prostitutes, a figure she based on a private investigation she conducted by talking to the fellow survivors individually (Soh, 2008, p. 97). The Korean Council meanwhile has deemed her testimonial narrative as unconvincing and has not included it in the multivolume series of collections of survivors’ testimonials (Soh, 2008, pp. 97-99). I include the narratives of the last two wo/men to point out that care for the former “comfort wo/men” certainly has not been equal. If the stories of the wo/men were not in compliance with the Korean Council for legal redress purposes, they were not given the emotional and communal support that the other wo/men were receiving. In Spivakian terms, these “comfort wo/men” (Pak and Sim) are the true subalterns of Korean colonial history since they were not able to “speak,” and when they did speak, they were silenced through marginalization and alienation (1988).

2: PASTORAL THE*LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE “COMFORT WO/MEN” ISSUE

Theory of Vulnerability & “Comfort Wo/men”

A pastoral the*logical analysis reveals the dimensions and situations of vulnerability extant in the circumstances of the Korean “comfort wo/men.” The testimonials by the former “comfort wo/men” suggest the overwhelming dilemma of the existence of the dual nature of memory: that of private and collective memory. Vera Schwarcz states that history is a “complicated compromise between public and personal mythologies” and that the “memories, however fragmented or fragile, become the bedrock that anchors the disparate details of the lived experience” (1994, p. 134). The individual, personal stories which reveal unique circumstances for each wo/man, indicate the complex situations of their lives. While collective memory basically simplifies and homogenizes the private, individual histories and creates a neat package of information for the reader to digest, the details revealed in each wo/man’s recollection complement, but also subvert, the larger paradigm of the historical narrative.

Veena Das (2000) argues that the problem with memory and a personal account of the historical events is not just with the personal recollection and accuracy if it; the problem lies with the ways in which the recollection of the story is impacted by the public desire for a certain type of representation. Dai Sil Kim-Gibson states that “the well-meaning supporters and researchers had re-objectified the wo/men, as if the grandmas had not yet been sufficiently objectified by the conditions of their exploitation in military sex slavery” (1997, p. 28). In her encounters with the surviving “comfort wo/men,” Kim-Gibson notes how they have learned to tailor their stories for “maximum political impact” and give her the exact information she wanted (1997, p. 28). To

paraphrase Seyla Benhabib, our individual stories are affected and persuaded by the many narratives in our lives, especially that of the family and the role of gender within our various communities (2002, p. 15).

The narratives of the Korean “comfort wo/men” raise several concerns. We are confronted with testimonials that impart painful realities and heinous gender abuses committed during the colonial period in Korea (1910-1945). Several of the former “comfort wo/men” have noted in their testimonials how they ran away from unhappy home situations because of the abuse they incurred in their family for not being boys, or how they were sold by their parents because they were girls, in addition to the family being too poor. The narratives vary from wo/man to wo/man, some stating how horribly they were treated, while others share how some of the Japanese men were very kind to them and that not all of them were “bad.” A significant common theme among the testimonials is the angst and emotional suffering that the w/omen endured for decades until it had become a public issue.⁸⁶ One wo/man lamented that “all the apologies in the world will never be enough for me” (Yun, 1993, p. 298).

It would be unjust, therefore, to argue that it is simply a case of Japanese exploiting Koreans as conventionally portrayed. Rather, the human rights abuses against wo/men cut across national boundaries. This is not to say that the Japanese government should not make reparations or apologies to the wo/men for the crimes committed against them. Rather, I underscore the patri-kyriarchal familial and institutional structures

⁸⁶ The South Korean Government has known about the “comfort wo/men” since the liberation of Korea in 1945 but has kept silent in order to establish Diplomatic Relations with Japan in 1965. Because of the economic dependence that South Korea has had on Japan until the early 1990’s, the South Korean government has been careful in its diplomacy with Japan. Anecdotally speaking, when I first learned about the issue in 1993, I remember talking to my mother, who told me that the issue had been known by the Korean people long before it became public.

contributing to the gender violence against “comfort wo/men” and how this aspect is elided in foregrounding a nationalist strategy of Japanese condemnation. Historian Yun Hae-dong argues that in critically reflecting back on the colonial period (1910-1945), we need to acknowledge the existence of a “gray area,” i.e., the ambiguities and inconsistencies that may have existed (Kwon, 2006, p. 51). The responsibilities and accountabilities should not be directed solely towards the Japanese, but they should also be acknowledged by Korean society. The “comfort wo/men” have been vulnerable not only because of the Japanese men with whom they were forced to have sex, but also because of the patri-kyriarchal society that has oppressed them. The exploitation of wo/men and their sexuality for profit and national goals has not abated after the liberation of Korea from Japanese rule, which is indicative of a hyper-masculine military culture by which South Korean society has been influenced.

The situation of the Korean “comfort wo/men” is an example of structural violence, communal and kinship relations, as well as individual and societal vulnerability associated with gender inequality, education, and class, as well as colonialism and militarism. Anthropologist Sally Engle Merry argues that an important aspect of violence is the structural violence: the unnoticed, indiscernible violence which becomes part of the routine, quotidian lives of people (2009, p. 5). She maintains that structural violence becomes normalized because it is well-hidden in the commonplace of daily practices. She states that “Interpersonal gendered violence and structural violence... are deeply connected” (2009, p. 4-5). Violence, therefore, is culturally constructed. (pp. 4-5). Instead of seeing violence as separate, isolated occurrences; she argues that we also need to see

those entrenched processes of ordering the social world and making (or realizing) culture that themselves are forms of violence: violence that is multiple, mundane, and perhaps all the more fundamental because it is the hidden or secret violence out of which images of people are shaped, experiences of groups are coerced, and agency itself is engendered” (p. 239).

With respect to the testimonials of the “comfort wo/men,” one truth that emerges is that none of the wo/men wished to speak about the matter until it had become a public issue. They have lived with the stigmatization in Korean society and have faced opposition from family members not to come forth with the “embarrassment.”

Vulnerability & Privilege During the Colonial Period (1910-1945)

Martha Fineman’s vulnerability theory is compatible with a feminist pastoral response to inequalities and injustice in society, such as is reflected in the issue of the Korean “comfort wo/men.” That is, we need to more thoroughly examine the human situation and re-evaluate our understanding of what true equality means and this means going beyond nationalist and identity politics. Fineman insists that we need to focus on privilege (2009, p. 457). She states that “when we only study the poor, the rich remain hidden and their advantages remain relatively unexamined, nestled in secure and private spaces where there is no need for them or the state to justify or explain why they deserve the privilege of state protection” (p. 457).

During the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), young Korean wo/men who were educated and from privileged middle class backgrounds were more likely to be ‘protected’ from becoming a “comfort wo/man” and instead, would be recruited into factory work (Faison, 2009, p. 28). Education and class, therefore, were significant factors in a young girl’s fate of becoming a “comfort wo/man.” Only a small percentage of young Korean

wo/men that had been educated in Japanese-run ‘national schools’ (*kokumin gakko*) were deemed eligible to work in Japanese factories (Faison, 2009, p. 28). They were also among the few who were seen as prospective ‘good wives and wise mothers’ (Faison, 2009, p. 28-29). The wo/men most susceptible to being recruited as “comfort wo/men” were the ones who had little formal education, came from poor families, and had less Japanese acculturation than the wo/men from middle class backgrounds. They were not “valuable” in the eyes of Koreans as well as in the opinions of the Japanese colonial government. These young Korean wo/men were not seen as valuable in their own homes, or in society. Korean society and the government, prior to Japanese colonization, are accountable for the devaluation of wo/men and their education. Education was emphasized during the Japanese occupation of Korea (for the benefit of Japanese war efforts to have wo/men work in the factories); yet, literacy rates for wo/men remained especially low (Faison, 2009, p. 32).⁸⁷ Elyssa Faison states, “Examining the recruitment of comfort women... allows us to see more clearly how these issues of class and gender determined Koreans’ relationship to the state, and thus the types of violence, coercion and labor to which they might be subject” (2009, p. 36-37).

A patri-kyriarchal and vulnerability analysis would show how some Koreans were more oppressed than others during the colonial period. Korean Studies scholar Carter Eckert points out how this view of unequivocal oppression of the Korean people as a whole by the Japanese ignores the differential class treatment that the Japanese bestowed on the Koreans (1991), as well as among the Koreans themselves. It certainly was not across-the-board suffering of Koreans as the literature portrays. Through their vulnerability of being subjugated under colonialism, some Koreans were given new opportunities or sought out

⁸⁷ Also see the work of Historian Theodore Yoo (2008).

improved lives for themselves. Colonial Korea was a very hybrid place: those Koreans who were privileged were able to mingle in-between Korean and Japanese cultures. Economic changes within Korea afforded new opportunities for Koreans—many who actively sought to be among the privileged.

While there is evidence that internal economic changes were taking place in Korea prior to Japanese colonization, the research still points to the impact of colonization in terms of the building of infrastructure as well as other forms of industrial growth.⁸⁸ Eckert notes that “While the process of bourgeoisie development was thus gradual and complex, it all began in 1876 with the impact of the international market and the hitherto inconceivable opportunities for capital accumulation” (1991, p. 6). The Japanese in Korea were active enablers *and* oppressors. They were agents of modernity, while also being oppressors and imperialists. The cultivation of a group of wealthy Koreans was for the benefit of Japanese rule.

Michael Robinson also notes the reality of Japanese colonialism, which brought new prospects, as well as subjugation for Koreans (2007, p. 74). The opportunities were due to Korea’s inclusion in a global capitalist economy, which resulted in new socio-economic patterns in Korea. Robinson states,

Liberation from traditional ways of being did not mean life would necessarily be easier, but movement to the cities, working in industrial settings, and even leaving the country to seek employment in Manchuria or the metropole itself changed peoples’ consciousness of life’s possibilities. The expansion of the educational system, however its message was twisted to justify imperial rule, brought literacy, new skills, and a widened consciousness to the hundreds of thousands of Korean who

⁸⁸ Most Koreans even today are reluctant to acknowledge the work of scholars such as Korean historian Carter Eckert (1991) who states that capitalism in Korea had its origins during the Japanese colonial period. The mainstream view, however, still argues that due to colonization, native capitalist development and modernization within Korea were suppressed and stifled. To boldly suggest that the beginnings of capitalism for Korea began under the Japanese is considered heresy in Korean society.

heretofore had no access to even a rudimentary education. Educating women was particularly revolutionary (p. 80).

Modernity provided many Koreans with the opportunity for education, employment and exposure to cultural patterns hitherto unknown in Korean society. So Japanese colonialism—while it made Koreans vulnerable to feelings of inferiority, oppression and domination—it provided opportunities that were not present without the framework of opportunities that came with it. At the same time, I certainly do not want to undermine the gravity of suffering that Koreans experienced under colonial rule. The majority of Koreans who *benefited* from Japanese colonial rule were those who passively collaborated with the oppressors.

In understanding and confronting the nature of shared vulnerability, it reveals that the suffering of Koreans is not as clear-cut as it has been portrayed. There were shades of vulnerability as colonialism affected Koreans differently, depending on their class and education. Modernity and colonialism, while oppressive, provided liberative avenues for wo/men through opportunities for education, travels abroad and work. Contrary to Asian feminist the*logical discourse that foregrounds the “poor Asian woman,” research has shown that during the colonial period, wo/men’s role and place in society were strengthened in certain ways. The opportunities available for some wo/men, created patri-kyriarchal structures of oppression for others, such as the “comfort wo/men.” A theory of vulnerability shows the interconnected nature of vulnerability, relationality, and an abuse of power on many levels. Oppression was not homogeneous during the colonial period as a the*logy of *han* suggests. Fineman’s vulnerability thesis, therefore, is a good heuristic tool to examine such aspects of patri-kyriarchy extant in Korean society during the colonial period. We need to examine the ways in which privilege in Korean society has been a factor in deciding

who became a “comfort wo/man” in colonial Korean society. So, contrary to current feminist nationalist discourse that targets Japan as the sole perpetrators in the situation of the “comfort wo/men,” an intercultural pastoral analysis that examines our shared vulnerability shows that the issue is more complex than generally revealed.

Korean Comfort Wo/men & Agency

The “comfort wo/men’s” narratives reveal how they have been neither completely victims, nor autonomous, but have embodied varied subject positions. The variegated stories of the “comfort wo/men” constitute subaltern discourses that reveal how family situations and personal choice were significant factors of each wo/man’s fate. Sarah Soh (2008) states how several of the “comfort wo/men” have shown an unprecedented pattern of independent decision-making and risk-taking behaviors found among the wo/men in colonial Korea. A theory of vulnerability, therefore, is useful in addressing concerns of agency as it attends to the complexity and fluidity of subject formation and the many subversive forms of power that wo/men employ when marginalized or oppressed. Thus, a complex pastoral and vulnerability analysis makes public wo/men’s agentive struggles as part of their survival during the period in which they were oppressed, not only by Japanese soldiers but by Korean patri-kyriarchal society as well. Their narratives reveal how there is no unified opinion as to who is at fault in terms of their situation. Some blame the Korean government, Korean society, their families, poverty, the war, etc. Their stories show how there was complexity and resistance by the wo/men to oppressive acts by not only the Japanese, but by Koreans and Korean society as well.

The public narrative of the Korean “comfort wo/men” does not deal with the manifold dimensions of power dynamics extant during the colonial period. It does not take into consideration the interpersonal relationships and human dynamics at work. We need to see the binary of perpetrator/victim in a more complex framework. The perpetrator’s behavior is in many situations, a response to their own vulnerability in economic and social terms and to the structural violence embedded in a patri-kyriarchal framework. In confronting the “colonial-victim-woman” trope, anthropologist Sarah Soh has shown that, indeed, many of the “comfort wo/men” made active choices in their lives. Some chose to run away from home, or they were enticed by the thought of making money and being independent, thereby contributing to the family income (Soh, 2008). Soh states that several of the “comfort wo/men” have shown an unprecedented pattern of independent decision-making and risk-taking behaviors found among the wo/men in colonial Korea (2008). Like their privileged counterparts, many of the “comfort wo/men”—in their narratives—have shared how they wanted to have some economic independence and be able to support themselves or their families, as well as have a desire to be educated. Yet, their desires were tragically thwarted by being taken away as “comfort wo/men.” For many of them who *chose* to leave their families in search of a better life, they had charge of their own destiny/fate, albeit with severely devastating consequences. The “comfort wo/men’s” narratives show that, despite class, they were critical of patriarchal familial, economic, and social structures.

Anthropologist Dorinne Kondo argues that selves are constructed in relationship. They are constructed within our shifting identities and power structures (1990, p. 10). In other words, our identities are fluid. So at one time, comfort wo/men were vulnerable to

sexual exploitation or familial abuse, while at other times in their lives, they were able to make choices or take action. The construction of selves, i.e., who we are, is an on-going process within discursive frames of power. Kondo, like other poststructuralist theorists, states that identities should be seen as various subject-positions, not a single subject (1990, p. 46). Our identity is not fixed or static; rather, it is on-going life process (p. 48). We need to speak of the self in the plural. Anthropologist Henrietta Moore (1994) has also argued for recognizing the multiple subjectivities that one person embodies. We are held together by our physical bodies, as well as by our individual experiences. The gendered, raced, classed, sexualized, and historical subject, Moore argues is, “an internally differentiated subject, constituted in and through discourse” (1994, p. 144).

Kondo goes on to say that “crafting selves implies a concept of agency: that human beings create, construct, work on, and enact their identities, sometimes creatively challenging the limits of the cultural constraints which constitute both what we call selves and the ways those selves can be crafted” (1990, p. 48). Kondo points out that the family is a crucial [space] /place where selves are crafted. So while crafting of the self implies agency, it is not a matter of simple choice. Our multiple subjectivities are crafted and understood within multiple interlocking power structures such as family, community, as well as other issues of time and space. These power structures shape the choices we make. The “comfort wo/men” made conscious decisions that went against the family and their obligations in a traditional Korean Confucian society. This is a huge risk-taking endeavor by young, marginalized wo/men during an especially oppressive period of Korean history. So “if agency can be conceived of as acting within the realm of culturally and socially given possibilities in one’s perceived best interests (whether

individual or communal)” (Bauman, 2008, p. 25), then we can certainly say that the Korean “comfort wo/men” exhibited agency in their lives. They overstepped the authority of family in the search of crafting who they aspired to be in Korean society. So the desire to be ‘independent women’ was not just among the upper/middle class of Korean wo/men.

Wo/men in the Colonial Period

While we mainly have access to the writings of well-educated, elite Korean wo/men during the colonial period; the narratives of the “comfort wo/men” give us a glimpse into the lives of those Korean wo/men who were on the margins of society during the colonial period. We are able to get a better understanding of their experiences, way of thinking, desire for autonomy and the ways in which they have demonstrated agency. Their narratives provide a window into the colonial period of the wo/men whose lives certainly were not privileged—yet, they had fierce mindsets against patri-kyriarchal structures in society and looked for ways of ‘crafting’ ‘modern selves.’

Historian Theodore Yoo argues that during the colonial period, “although rural and migrant voices found few expressions in print, they nonetheless challenged society to reconsider the roles of women who struggled to balance work and family” (2008, p. 4). He shows how the *yŏgong*, or factory girl, emerged as a new social category during the colonial period that dramatically impacted Korean family life and society. Further, Yoo argues that despite the standard belief that the *Chosŏn* Dynasty era (1392-1910) was a time of stagnant growth and harsh oppressive patriarchal conditions for wo/men, recent

historiographic evidence shows that many Korean wo/men resisted such situations of oppression. There was internal dissent among wo/men in the desire for greater freedom (Yoo, p. 56-57). Further delving into the writings of wo/men shows how feminist ideas of gender inequalities, importance of education, and familial structural injustices were topics of significance during the colonial era. While the colonial period was undoubtedly oppressive, there was a burgeoning of feminist ideals and literary activity by Korean wo/men writers that have been largely ignored until recently. We see the generative and creative aspects that were cultivated as a result of wo/men's vulnerability to patri-kyriarchal and colonial oppression.

In contrast to images of the pitiable, pathetic, and oppressed Korean "woman victim," recent historiographic research by Korean studies scholars reveals the rise of the "new woman" (*sin yŏsŏng*) in the public sphere during the Japanese colonial period. Mostly privileged Korean wo/men, during the Japanese colonial era (1910-1945), were being exposed to understandings of independence and autonomy via education and travels abroad to Japan and the West (Yoo, 2008). There were on-going discourses of the "new woman" (*sin yŏsŏng*) and the traditional woman (*ku yŏsŏng*), similar in meaning to the liberal subject and the victim subject, respectively. The ideal of the "new woman," that had gained fashion in Japan, had been known and spread grassroots-style as it underwent changes in political implications.

Whether writing fiction or nonfiction, a generation of modern wo/men writers wrote about issues of gender inequalities that became a form of public activity during the colonial era. They were not only pioneers and rebels for going against societal norms; but also because of the oppression they experienced because they were writing during the

period of Japanese colonialism. Kim Wŏn-ju came out with her own magazine, *Sinyŏja* (*New Woman*) in 1920, the first feminist Korean magazine (Kim, Y.H., 2002, p. 3). Many of these wo/men writers, however, have been neglected until recently. One reason for this is that there have been negative stereotypes associated with these “new women” in Korean society. They were stigmatized in society for “their unconventional lifestyles, love relationships, failures in marriage, and other tragic misfortunes in their lives, sensationalizing and often trivializing them as notorious examples of *sin yŏsŏng* (“new women”) and negative role models to be eschewed by any sensible Korean woman” (p. 5).

Wo/men Writers During the Colonial Period

Writing during the Japanese colonial period, Na Hye-sŏk (1886-1948) was one of the first generation of modern Korean wo/men writers. Na was an exceptionally gifted student, intellectually and artistically. She graduated at the top of her class and then attended college in Tokyo, arriving on the scene when wo/men’s public activities were thriving there (p. 6). Na was influenced by various feminist activism and intellectual thoughts being circulated in Tokyo during the early 1910s (p. 7). She was strongly influenced by Swedish feminist Ellen Karolina Key whose work focused on love-centered marriage (p. 8). She rejected society’s expectations of the “womanly” role, as well as the “good wife/wise mother” ideal (*yangch’ŏ hyŏnmo*). She stated that modern wo/men needed to be in charge of their own fate and make choices in their lives. Influenced by Ibsen’s *The Dollhouse*, Na felt that Korean women were child-like for their dependence on men (p. 13). In a series of articles that she wrote for *Tong’a-Ilbo* (June

24-30, 1926), she implored Korean wo/men to discard their passiveness, obedience and self-sacrifice. Instead, they should respect and love themselves. This, she argued would be important for national improvement as well.

Na married and had three children, and her career was impacted by these life events. During a year-long sojourn in Europe, she was more aware of the patriarchal oppressiveness of the Korean family system (p. 19). Upon her return to Korea, Na was re-acquainted with the conservative Korean societal and familial structures. Na's public and private life changed dramatically when it was discovered that she had had a love affair in Paris. Her husband divorced her, granting her no access to her children, despite the fact that he himself had engaged in extramarital affairs and had been living with another wo/man at the time of the public revelation of her affair (p. 20). The public scorned her for her immoral actions. In the process of trying to redeem herself through a series of public articles, Na became further upset by Korea's seeming archaic ideas about male and female relationships, as well as its oppressive family system, (p. 25). She excoriated the institution of marriage, commenting in one essay she wrote in 1935 that "defined marriage as a transaction for sexual gratification, promoted licensed prostitution for both single men and women to satisfy their sexual needs before their marriage, and advocated extramarital relationships for couples in order to avoid conjugal boredom" (p. 25).

Na, a most celebrated artist and writer at the peak of her life, ended up dying alone without support, in a charity hospital in Seoul. She made choices in her life that ostracized her in Korean society. Na, a *sin yŏsŏng*, was vulnerable to patri-kyriarchal structures, double standards, and criticism in society. Many of the *sin yŏsŏng* were held

up to scrutiny for their “unconventional” ways and thoughts. In this sense, Na was not much different from the “comfort wo/men” who were initially ostracized in society for the sexual violence they experienced. So not only were the “poor” wo/men exhibiting agency in the face of vulnerability due to patri-kyriarchal structures in society; privileged wo/men experienced vulnerability in that regard as well. Na, the well-educated, independent, liberated wo/man—i.e., the epitome of the liberal subject—is in fact, a vulnerable subject.

The Discursive Liberal Subject v. the Victim Subject (the modern vs. the traditional wo/man):
Na Hye-sŏk’s Novel, “Kyŏnghŭi”

The novel, *Kyŏnghŭi*, projects the new breed of Korean wo/man during the colonial period who cannot be neatly categorized into either of the two usual stereotypes—“modern-educated woman” (*sin yŏsŏng*) or “tradition-bound woman” (*ku yŏsŏng*). In fact, the story depicts the protagonist, Kyŏnghŭi, as a complex person who embodies both qualities of the two extremes (Kim, 2002, p. 29). Since the novel was written as a response to negative public discourse of the “new woman,” the author attempts to dismantle the negative qualities associated with both *sin yŏsŏng* and *ku yŏsŏng*. Yung-Hee Kim states that ‘*Kyŏnghŭi*’ dismantles existing models of Korean wo/men, introducing in their place a new figure of an idealized modern woman” (p. 29). Kyŏnghŭi is Na’s metaphor for the ‘new woman’” (p. 30). Na Hye-sok and the character of Kyŏnghŭi are the epitome of the vulnerable subject. She is neither completely “new woman” nor the truncated third world victim subject. Vulnerability impacts the rich as well; the comfort women were not the only “victims” during the colonial period. So it is

not just the poor who are vulnerable in Korean society. It is the web of relations that form a patri-kyriarchal society, i.e., the contradictions and complexities of vulnerability and suffering.

Na makes it very clear that such a ‘new woman’ can only be produced through a wo/man’s awakening to her subjugation to masculinist supremacy, which was to be followed by an unsparing self-critique and by acquisition of a new individual consciousness. The author stresses that kind of *sinyŏsŏng* she has in mind is not the flippant and thoughtless woman of her times popularized by media and uncritically accepted by the masses. To the contrary, she insists “that becoming a *sinyŏsŏng* means a deadly serious battle with one’s self and an unflinching will to follow the dictates of one’s own soul” (Kim, 2002, p. 48).

While I am not arguing that the Korean “comfort wo/men” were a part of the ‘new women’ genre during the Korean colonial period, many of them had a desire to improve their lives through education, work, or by leaving their home environments. They were not passively accepting of the patriarchal oppression they experienced. They were challenging it through their actions by leaving home. Soh states that “industrialization and the modern capitalist economic system opened new doors for women into the public sphere when they found themselves subjected to domestic tyranny under battering fathers, bullying brothers, and/or unsympathetic mothers” (2008, p. 3). Through the narratives of the “comfort wo/men,” we are able to get a better understanding of their lives, mindset, desire for autonomy and the ways in which they have demonstrated agency. Their stories provide a window into the lives of wo/men during the colonial period that were not necessarily

privileged—yet, they had fierce mindsets against what they perceived to be unjust and navigated through systems of oppression in desiring to ‘craft’ new selves and lives.

Through the testimonials of the “comfort wo/men” as well as novels, we get the sense that Korean wo/men during the colonial period were passionate and knew the important aspects of humanity and what it means to be human. In other words, whether rich, educated and enlightened or poor, uneducated and unaware; many of the “comfort wo/men” had their own understanding of what human dignity entailed. In the story by Na, Kyŏnghŭi asserts to the lady-in-law (with whom she is defending her right to an education) that

First of all I am a human being. Then I am a woman. This means that I am a human being before being a woman. Moreover, I am a woman who belongs to the universal human race before being a Korean woman. I am God’s daughter before being the daughter of Yi Ch’orwon and Lady Kim.... (p. 51).

Despite situations of vulnerability, Kyŏnghŭi is articulating the importance of human rights. In fact, she seems to be saying that human rights and dignity is so important, we should pursue it in spite of the fact that we may experience vulnerability in its pursuit. The “human” in human rights is a self-determining human, and she is articulating her understanding of *her* own rights (An-Na’im, 2007). The “comfort wo/men,” too, exhibited the Foucauldian notion that power can only been understood in the context of resistance.

3: VULNERABILITY & RESILIENCE

The “comfort wo/men” have exhibited amazing resilience which has allowed them to survive such physical violence and emotional trauma on many levels. They have managed to deal with the challenges of life and survive—and in many ways, flourish. While poor and mostly under-educated, the “comfort wo/men” exhibited agency to make choices and decisions that impacted their own fate to a certain extent. While the structures of sexual abuse were in place and the wo/men suffered a violent fate, they made agentic choices. Spiritual care is important in having resilience in life’s circumstances. Learning how to withstand shock and cope, as well as adapt to changing circumstances is overcoming our experiences of vulnerability. In this section of my chapter, I examine the interconnected role of community, citizenship, and the nature of courage in being pastoral/spiritual sources of resilience to vulnerability – and thus, constituting agency.

Community

I want to highlight the importance of relationship and community in the lives of the “comfort wo/men” as part of their resilience to vulnerability. Philosopher Susan Brison has argued (2001) that

in order to recover, a trauma survivor needs to be able to control herself, control her environment (within reasonable limits), and be reconnected with humanity. Whether the latter two achievements occur depends, to a large extent, on other people (Brison, 2001, p. 60).

Some relationships have been uplifting and liberating for the “comfort wo/men,” while others have been oppressive. As we have read in their narratives; their relationships with one another, with some of the soldiers and proprietors, with family, as well as the greater community have partly been responsible for the outcomes of their lives. So paradoxically,

relationships can help foster resilience to vulnerability, at the same time that some can be accountable for sustaining/maintaining the conditions for it. Their involvement in activism and creating relationships with others have certainly aided in giving them a sense of agency and fostering resilience to the suffering they have endured in their lives. The wo/men in the narratives have developed their own relationships with people that have “helped” them in various situations.

A community of judgment (in Arendtian terms) is important in understanding how issues garner importance, not only locally but globally. With respect to the “comfort wo/men,” there was a process that happened when the first wo/man spoke out about her experiences. When one wo/man spoke out about her situation, others felt the courage to share their experiences. A community formed and they received support from a global community of those who cared about their situation. The wo/men have since been involved in various forms of activism to let their cause be known as well as to demand an apology from the Japanese government.

Dissident Citizenship, Vulnerability and Agency

The wo/men have engaged in over 1000 protests as of February 2012. Their practices of protests constitute a form of “dissident citizenship,” which certainly challenge the notion of seeing them as simply passive victims or objects of Japanese male violence. It allows us to critically reflect on the importance of recognizing how the wo/men were able to form a community, exercise their agency, and engage in political participation. In other words, their acts of resistance shows how a theory of vulnerability relates to a theory of exploitation and domination that a patri-kyriarchal analysis seeks to articulate. Feminist

scholar Holloway Sparks theorizes dissident citizenship as “practices of marginalized citizens who publicly contest prevailing arrangements of power by means of oppositional democratic practices that augment or replace institutionalized channels of democratic opposition when those channels are inadequate or unavailable” (1997, p. 75). Sparks distinguishes courage as crucial to participatory activism. She argues that instead of traditional democratic activities such as voting, “dissident citizens” employ unconventional practices in public spaces such as protests, sit-ins, marches, drama and street theatre (Sparks, 1997, p. 75). “Dissident citizenship,” she argues entails creative resistance and struggles, either by choice or because they were marginalized from mainstream traditional methods of participatory activism (p. 75).

Sparks argues that we need to theorize citizenship that takes into account an understanding of courage that goes beyond the masculine notion of it as an important aspect of participatory democracy (p. 76). The topic of fear is usually elided in the discourse of political activism. Sparks surmises that the reason for this may be due to the fact that fear is not a masculine characteristic. Courage is the “commitment to persistence and resolution in the face of risk, uncertainty, or fear” (p. 92). Sparks understands courage in the Aristotelian sense: in order to have courage, one must also have judgment and action.

When one has courage to engage in public action, one understands the possible repercussions of exposing one’s *vulnerability*. It is this unveiling of oneself that courage becomes such an important trait in civic action. Vulnerability does not take away nor diminish a person’s courage. Indeed, the courage of the Korean “comfort wo/men,” especially of those who testified (including the ones whose statements were not included in the compilation by the Korean Council) and shared their painful past with the global

community, demonstrates agency. Rather than reinforcing their “poor-Asian-woman-victim status,” we need to see the complex ways in which vulnerability (or exposing one’s vulnerability) can help ignite a form of political courage and civic activism. Courage is a key political practice that needs to be theorized when discussing the issue of “comfort wo/men.”

Even their running away from their family situations is a sign of dissident citizenship and courage: it shows their desire to be respected as wo/men, to be educated, etc. It shows their understanding in a way of their social rights- rights to education, right to work, right to dignity as a person, etc. It becomes a public protest because now the stories are public. It shows how their acts of dissent are a sign of their agency. Protesting is a form of religious practice for them. Koreans would engage in religious practices through political activism. Religion provided an avenue for activism as they did not previously have access to participatory citizenship. When marginalized people are able to tell their own story (storytelling as human rights work) that is shared with the public (public protest), it is public pastoral care.

CONCLUSION

As we contemplate the issue of “comfort wo/men” and its relationship to global social justice and wo/men’s human rights, I certainly do not wish to downplay the gravity of the suffering of the “comfort wo/men.” What I *do* want to emphasize, however, is the importance of engaging in a more systematic analysis in seeing how the concept of *han* has become politicized in the postcolonial nationalist politics of Korean society. The way in which *han* has been argued as a national characteristic of the Korean people ironically

has disguised the agency and resilience that the wo/men who faced sexual violence during the colonial period have exhibited in their earlier lives—during the ordeal, as well as in life thereafter in Korean society.

The essentializing discourse of *han*-filled “comfort wo/men” is an impediment for wo/men’s liberatory praxis within the human rights framework, as well as for Asian feminist the*logical discourse. While “rights appear as that which we cannot not want,” we also must be wary of how they have not eliminated VAW (Brown, 231). Wendy Brown has succinctly summarized the ironies and paradoxes of the rights framework: “the more highly specified rights are as rights for women, the more likely they are to build that fence insofar as they are more likely to encode a definition of women premised upon our subordination in the transhistorical discourse of liberal jurisprudence” (2000, p. 231). It reifies the colonialist gaze on the Other and further regulates discourses about wo/men.

I *also* want to emphasize how the individual stories of the “comfort wo/men” underscore their agency, subjectivity, and creativity to adapt to life’s struggles—which is often overlooked in the public “comfort wo/men” discourse. Instead, what is underscored is the collective *han* of the “comfort wo/men.” Arthur and Joan Kleinman have argued that “it is important to avoid essentializing, naturalizing, or sentimentalizing suffering. There is no single way to suffer; there is no timeless or spaceless universal shape to suffering.... The meanings and modes of the experience of suffering have been shown... to be greatly diverse” (1997, p. 2). As pastoral the*logians and counseling practitioners, we have heard a multitude of stories and know that within each story, there are universalizing tendencies, at the same time that the stories are situated within

particularities for that individual. We know that while suffering is a shared human condition, the experience of it is unique for each of us.

A discourse of the “*han*-filled woman” denies agency to the individual; it gives agency to the concept of suffering. Such a discourse of *han* objectifies the suffering experienced by subjects. Legal scholar Janet Halley has argued that women’s suffering (for instance, in rape) is objectified and it (i.e., the suffering) insists that a raped wo/man has suffered an injury from which she is unlikely to recover (2006). Yet, the numerous narratives regarding their experiences as “comfort wo/men” have demonstrated the variegated forms of resilience, strength and courage they have embodied in order to survive such violence. Their narratives highlight what has been elided in the human rights discourse on the subject of comfort wo/men: that they are, indeed, agents of their own lives. They have had the creative energy and strength to adapt to their life struggles as well as ostracism in society. They took enormous risks by sharing their testimonies with the global community. The “comfort wo/men’s” individual stories are neglected because the law does not take into account individual narratives of agency. Through the method of pastoral care, story-telling and deep listening; we in the field of pastoral care are able to un-do the essentialism that has been problematic in the WHR discourse.

I believe that Fineman’s theory of vulnerability more completely theorizes the lived reality of the Korean “comfort wo/men” and the institutions that impacted their lives than a the*logy of *han*. To foreground and essentialize *han* in the lives of the “comfort wo/men” disguises the agency and resilience that the wo/men who experienced sexual violence have exhibited in their earlier lives, during the ordeal, as well as in life thereafter in Korean society. A theory of vulnerability addresses the complexity and

fluidity of subject formation and the many subversive forms of agency that wo/men employ when oppressed within oppressive institutional structures. While they were vulnerable to abuse and violence, they nevertheless, had the courage to express their feelings and the truth of what had happened decades earlier through their testimonials, as well as speeches in different communities in speaking about the situation. They have been true to who they are by coming forth with the truth, despite the mores of a very conservative Confucian society.

Chapter 7: Camptown Prostitutes: Gendered Citizenship, Nationalism, & Pastoral Care

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the issues of vulnerability and resilience in the lives of the Korean wo/men who provide sexual services to American GIs around the U.S. military bases in South Korea during the post-liberation period (post-1945).⁸⁹ Called the *kijich'on* prostitutes, their lives have been most impacted by the military, post-Cold War period, as well as the on-going Korean War climate of South Korea.⁹⁰ Until recently, camptown prostitutes were demonized in society; but in the 1990s, anti-U.S. protests have sparked new examinations regarding the role of the *kijich'on* prostitute and the relationship that has existed between the United States and South Korea. As with the “comfort wo/men,” there is a similar dualistic ideological portrayal of “victim-heroine” with the *kijich'on* prostitutes who are euphemistically referred to as the *yang-gong-ju* (Western princesses) by South Koreans.

While still considered whores in the eyes of many South Koreans, they are now seen as victim-heroines of the U.S. presence in South Korea (Moon, 1997). Unlike any other time in South Korea’s period of modernity, the lives and deaths of military camptown (*kijich'on*) prostitutes have captured the public’s attention and galvanized collective outrage against both real and perceived U.S. military abuses of power and privilege in their host country. Korean activists continue to criticize the United States for

⁸⁹ My research does not take into consideration the changing demographics of the wo/men workers, where foreign wo/men outnumber the Korean ones (Soh, 2008). My work only looks at *kijich'on* prostitution of Korean wo/men prior to the 21st century.

⁹⁰ Katharine H.S. Moon (2007) defines the Korean term, *Kijich'on*, as “military base village.” It refers to the local towns and areas adjacent to U.S. military compounds. As she and other Korean scholars have used the terms *Kijich'on* and *camptown* interchangeably, I too, substitute the terms.

degrading and violating Korean wo/men's dignity and human rights. The number of Korean wo/men prostitutes has declined since the arrival of wo/men from the Philippines and the former Soviet countries to Korea.⁹¹ Nationalist groups that are focused on reunification of South and North Korea have shaped the movement's course of action, influencing wo/men's organizations and human rights groups.

The violence and suffering endured by the Korean wo/men who have provided sexual services to U.S. soldiers have provoked and contributed to sentiments of anti-Americanism in South Korea. There have been crimes committed against *kijich'on* prostitutes throughout the period of the 1950s through the 1980s. Yet, only recently in the 1990s have the deaths of these wo/men captured the public's attention and galvanized collective outrage against both real and perceived U.S. military abuses of power and privilege in their host country (Moon, 2007, p. 137). The deaths of the wo/men from earlier decades have "remained largely unacknowledged and unclaimed by the larger Korean society" (p. 137).

Nationalism and anti-Americanism are forces that have aided the citizens of Korea in seeing the abuses inflicted on them vis-à-vis the U.S. government's policies. With anti-American sentiment on the rise in South Korea, Korean citizens have defended camptown prostitutes against the abuses they have incurred from the U.S. soldiers. While still seen as whores, they have now become "victims" of U.S. hegemonic force in South Korea. Korean activists continue to criticize the United States for degrading and violating Korean wo/men's dignity and human rights. There is the sense of urgency to address the rights and needs of the very wo/men whose lives are most intimately affected

⁹¹ The majority of wo/men coming into contact with U.S. soldiers these days are foreign nationals, often illegal (undocumented) and therefore lacking legal rights and political legitimacy in Korean civil society.

by the presence and conduct of U.S. troops and their condescending arrogance towards the Korean wo/men. Another phenomenon is the Korean wo/men who have married American servicemen, raising concerns among Korean feminists of race-based oppressions as well as feminist understandings of Asian/American wo/men as victims of Orientalism and patri-kyriarchal sexism.

Rather than solely blame U.S. militarism and imperialism for the violence incurred on the *kijich'on* prostitutes, I argue that there are layers of culpability and oppressions that have contributed to their vulnerability in Korean society. Just as the narratives of the “comfort wo/men” reveal, the issue is much more complex than conventionally portrayed. In addition to Western imperialism as a source of their vulnerability, we also need to take into consideration the ways in which the rights and needs of these wo/men’s lives were most intimately affected by the Korean government’s policies as well. As I have mentioned in my first chapter on wo/men’s human Rights, Geraldine Heng has argued that the character of third world feminisms is influenced by three factors, one of which is the role of the state in wo/men’s lives. The state benefits from the exploitation of wo/men and is an active agent structuring the exploitation itself (Heng, 1997, p. 32).

The formation of the state does not exist outside of the patri-kyriarchal structures, and Koreans have failed to address the harmful role of its government in exploiting the camptown prostitutes themselves. Nationalism is intertwined with patri-kyriarchal beliefs, practices and political propaganda about how one should serve one’s country. Those roles differ according to whether one is male or female. The camptown prostitutes have been just as vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (or more so) from their own

government than from the foreign power(s) from which their government have purported to “protect” its citizens.

Part one of the chapter focuses on the ambivalent aspects of vulnerability in their lives (Oliviero, 2012). I argue that the issue is more similar that of the “comfort wo/men” to one another than nationalists or wo/men’s groups would like to admit. They experience not only vulnerability by foreign powers, but also by the state, their families and society. I critique the ways in which the management of the female body is important in maintaining social order and stability in military, as well as civilian society. I look at organized military (both U.S. and Korean) practices through which the camptown prostitutes’ bodies are governed and disciplined.

Part two examines the relationship between gendered citizenship, agency, and governmentality with regard to militarized prostitution in South Korea. This section of my chapter is a postcolonial, feminist critique of the gendered citizenship of military camptown prostitutes in South Korea. It looks at the gendered societal membership of the *kijich’on* prostitute’s lives. There have been feminist critiques of gender, militarism, and the state with regard to militarized prostitutes. Likewise, there have been analyses with regard to gendered citizenship and militarized modernity in South Korea. Yet, there has been little written with regard to how militarism, U.S. imperialism and the post Cold War state have affected the trajectory of citizenship for the military prostitutes that work around U.S. military bases in South Korea.

Part three also examines the agentive struggles and the practices of care in the community of *kijich’on* prostitutes. I see this as part of their participatory citizenship, an aspect of their agency. I provide the life narrative and agentive struggles of one

camptown prostitute, Kim Yeon Ja, who has navigated through the vulnerability. I also look at the subjectivity of these wo/men—their protests and resistance came in various ways in the form of hunger strikes, demonstrations, educational outreach, etc. It shows the creative endeavors of humans—that despite the suffering, camptown prostitutes have managed to survive and make choices of how to live their lives in ways that, to a certain extent, *they* have dictated; not necessarily by society's standards. They have helped to fuel anti-American sentiment among Korean citizens in relation to issues regarding violence against wo/men.

1: VULNERABILITY, GOVERNMENTALITY, & GENDERED CITIZENSHIP

Nationalism, Vulnerability & the Body

The wo/men who prostitute themselves around the U.S. military bases in South Korea are necessary for the explicit purpose of providing sex and “comfort” to U.S. soldiers in order to create “war machines” (Enloe, 1993). The masculine logic involved in such rationale is that these sexual services would boost the fighting spirit of the men and their ego, hence allowing them to be more effective in their war-time fighting. The existence of such systematic prostitution around the U.S. military bases in South Korea conveys the notion that these wo/men are indispensable for sustaining hyper-masculine, war-time identities.

Political Scientist Katherine Moon argues that the relative weakness of a small state leaves its wo/men unprotected and vulnerable to violence, abuse, and exploitation by the stronger state and its agents (Moon, 1997, p. 49). In other words, Moon contends that the power of a state, such as the United States, over a country like South Korea has

led to the foreign domination (economically, politically, and sexually) of Korean wo/men as well. Koreans believe that U.S. imperialism and militarism are responsible for the sexual exploitation of and physical violence perpetrated on Korean military camptown (*kijich'on*) wo/men (Moon, 1997, p. 49). Korean activists continue to criticize the United States for degrading and violating Korean women's dignity and human rights.

The wide-spread exploitation of female sexuality, however, is not a restricted practice of American soldiers; the South Korean government has also been culpable in this regard. As part of Korea's diplomacy to the U.S., these wo/men have been instrumental in the Korean government's strategy for maintaining national security. *Kijich'on* prostitutes were utilized as instruments of foreign policy by the Korean government (Moon, 1997, p. 84). The wo/men, therefore, have been vulnerable on multiple levels as citizens: they have been betrayed by their own government and ostracized by Korean citizens for their status, as well as exploited by the U.S. government and military hierarchy.

Moon argues that there has been a history of sexual privilege over Korean wo/men by foreign men in uniform, but I argue that this privilege has also been wielded by Korean men—military, as well as civilian.⁹² In the larger context of limited rights and protections for regular citizens, those of military prostitute wo/men were almost nonexistent. The Korean government has viewed military prostitution as a necessary evil to accommodate the social and sexual needs of U.S. servicemen, and the government has been regulating the wo/men systematically since the early 1970s (Moon, 1997). Until a recent shift in public attitude, it is interesting to note how Korean Confucian values come

⁹² Here, I refer to the prevalence of prostitution in Korea that goes beyond the boundaries of American military bases.

into play in how these prostituted wo/men were viewed in society. While the “comfort women” were viewed as “pure” and “innocent” victims of Japanese military aggression and colonial imperialism; the camptown were seen as “unchaste,” voluntary participants in sexual activity.

Comfort Wo/men, Military Prostitution and the Wo/men’s Human Rights Movement

Conspicuous parallels can be drawn between the Japanese exploitation of the “comfort wo/men” and the so-called “naturalized” prostitution practiced around U.S. military bases in South Korea. What is usually omitted regarding military prostitution in feminist analyses of the situation is how the Korean military has also benefited from the existence of such “comfort” (Soh, 2008, p. 52). Soh argues that the “general operational methods for the South Korean army comfort system are strongly reminiscent of the Japanese system” (Soh, 2008, p. 53). The first scholarly work to reveal the issue was that of sociologist Kim Kwi-ok in 2002 (Soh, p. 215). She argues that the Korean military comfort systems were the result of the ill-fated Japanese colonial comfort system. The military brothels that were established during the colonial period, as well as the camptowns that were set up during the post-colonial era, were set up as forms of war-time mobilization for the soldiers. Both are systematic, regulatory practices established by the Japanese government (in the case of “comfort wo/men”), and the Korean and U.S. governments (with respect to the camptown prostitutes). Both systems of “comfort” have involved systematic medical examinations to prevent the spread of STDs. In both situations, the wo/men were vital for providing sex and “comfort” to the soldiers in order to sustain masculine identities associated with militarism. Historian Bruce Cumings argues that prostitution has become

an integral part of Korea's subordination to Japanese and American interests through most of this century; the military base in the Itaewon area, after all, was Japan's for four decades, and now it has been ours for four decades. In 1945, the camp towns just switched patrons.... Furthermore, from the horny adolescents out of Arkansas to the leaky old American ambassadorial residence, the web of subordination is seamless (1993, p. 174).

Here, Cumings does not explain the active Korean male role in the participation of recruiting the wo/men and acting as pimps/organizers in the brothels, both during the Japanese colonial period and currently with the U.S. military presence in South Korea.

Another troubling comparison can be drawn between militarization and the governing of sexuality in the colonial period and the economic exploitation of contemporary marginalized Korean wo/men. When looking at the economic exploitation of contemporary Korean wo/men in disturbing terms, the market (i.e., the American GIs) was there and the Koreans desired to profit from it. Similar situations of poverty existed for the camptown prostitutes and the "comfort wo/men." Many were "forced" to work here out of dire economic need. In the situation of "comfort wo/men," I have noted how many of the young wo/men left home situations (or family members sold them) because of economic need. Soh notes that "Under grinding poverty, working-class families in colonial Korea sold unmarried daughters for 400-500 won for a contractual period of four to seven years. The parents received 60-70 percent of the money after various expenses involved in the transaction had been deducted, such as the mediator's fee, clothing, document preparations, transport, and pocket money" (2008, p. 10-11). Similarly, many of the camptown prostitutes have engaged in sex work as a way out of their current existence. Many of the wo/men have relationships with American GIs and marry, hoping for a new life in the United States. Marriage to an American soldier is one of the few

paths out of the camptown life for these wo/men (Yuh, 2002, p. 39).⁹³ Jeon, a 71-year old former camptown prostitute who would reveal only her surname, states that she came to one of the camptowns (Dongduchon) as an 18-year old orphan due to hunger and a need for work (Choe, 2009). She became pregnant and later had to put her son up for adoption in the United States, thinking that he would have a better life there (Choe, 2009).

The testimonies of the former “comfort wo/men” and the stories of the Korean prostitutes reveal how sexuality was, *and is*, an important component of the intricate network of relationships among the Korean, Japanese and U.S. masculine military cultures. Politically, economically, militarily and – to a large extent—socially, South Korea has been subject to U.S. occupation and control since its decolonization from Japan after World War II. Korea’s citizens, therefore, have had to succumb to U.S. domination throughout most of their lives. In GI towns, one can see the intersection of the forces of gender, race, class, nation, militarism, as well as international capital. In her analysis of military prostitution, Katherine Moon notes that it is an international system of political and economic subjugation, both of wo/men and weaker nation-states (1998, p. 141). She points out how wo/men’s bodies are the recipients of the power disparities that exist between nations (1998, p. 141).

Prior to the incident of the “comfort wo/men,” wo/men were raped and taken as sex slaves throughout Korean history in all classes, especially during the Koryo Dynasty Period (918-1392). Sarah Soh examines the state regulated prostitution that has been in existence for centuries in Korea and Japan. According to her, licensed prostitution

⁹³ Ji-yeon Yuh (2002) states that it is difficult to ascertain exactly how many Korean military brides were camptown prostitutes in Korea (since many of them never admit to having done the work and try to maintain their lives in Korea a secret).

commenced after Korea was forced to sign the Kanghwa Treaty of 1876 with Japan (2008, p. 8).⁹⁴ Due to concerns of venereal disease, systematic surveillance of prostitution in Korea went into effect in 1916. She argues that

Although licensed prostitution was officially abolished in southern Korea in November 1947 under the United States of America Military Government in Korea, a private system of women's public sexual labor euphemistically referred to as 'customary business' (*p'ungsok ŏp*) continued to prosper in a variety of manners and places in Korea. In fact, since 1945 the US military in postwar Japan and postcolonial Korea has had easy access to the sexual services of 'comfort women' in numerous local camptowns in the two countries, despite the Japanese and Korean laws against prostitution legislated since then. The historical euphemism 'comfort women' initially referred to tens of thousands of women who were subjected to forced prostitution and sexual slavery for the Japanese military during the Asian-Pacific War (1931-45). However, the term was also used in both postwar Japan and postcolonial Korea to refer to women sex workers servicing the military (2009, p. 44).

Soh notes how the contribution of wo/men's public sexual labor to Korea's economy has largely been ignored. In other words, sex work has been seen as care (or comfort) work, whether it has been under the Japanese—or the Americans—both with Korean government approval.

Soh argues that because the Korean government needed the foreign currency, it allowed for the commodification of sex via young Korean wo/men known as *kisaeng*, even though the traditional *kisaeng* system had been abolished in 1895. By the late 1960s, the Korean government realized the foreign currency-earning potential of the prostitutes as an economic contribution to Korean society. Apparently, therefore, the anti-prostitution laws

⁹⁴ 1876 is seen as the year that set the stage for the eventual annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910. The treaty of Kanghwa forever changed Korean society in its efforts to adapt to the West and its beginnings to be an independent nation. There was a decline of Korea's dependency within the Chinese tributary system and the beginnings of Korea's place in the new East Asian order. The treaty became a catalyst for change in Korea and for the emergence of conflicts in ideology with respect to political and social change.

were no longer applicable to sex workers serving foreigners, nor to American soldiers living in the military camptowns (Soh, 2009, p. 44).

With the tacit approval from the Korean government to continue providing “comfort” to American soldiers (for the purpose of gaining foreign currency and establishing friendly relations with the American military), the practice of exploiting impoverished wo/men to provide sex to foreign soldiers has continued unabated for over fifty years. Soh states that

Pimps and other sex trade entrepreneurs continued their fraudulent and coercive methods to recruit impoverished young wo/men. Published materials have also shown that some surviving wartime ‘comfort women’—both Japanese and Korean—found themselves selling sex to the foreign soldiers that landed in defeated Japan and liberated Korea” (2009, p. 46).

Likewise, the Japanese government established comfort facilities to prevent U.S. soldiers from raping Japanese wo/men. But the difference in Japan, states Soh, was that the comfort stations were set up, not to make money off the U.S. soldiers; rather, it was to protect middle class Japanese wo/men from sexual attack by the demonized Other (2009, p. 28).

Sarah Soh (2009) describes four phases of *kijich'on* prostitution in South Korea. During the first phase (1945-1958), the American military government abolished licensed prostitution, privatizing the sex trade. The prostitutes from these establishments, as well as former “comfort wo/men,” then came together around the American military bases (2009, p. 50). According to Soh, *kijich'on* prostitutes were routinely called *wianbu* (“comfort wo/men”) by the South Korean media until the early 1990s (2009, p. 50). During the third phase (1971-1980s), tensions between the U.S. and Korean governments were mounting.

Following the 1980 Kwangju massacre,⁹⁵ the image of the United States as a benefactor to Korean society was tainted. Korean nationalism began to strengthen, and the citizens became more defiant of U.S. control over Korea and its people. So in order to prevent the further withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, President Park put forth a policy of a “clean-up” campaign—a systematic medical examination and monitoring of not just prostitutes, but all wo/men seen in the military camp towns. I describe this in further detail below.

So once again, prostitution became “licensed” and controlled by the government. Soh notes that just as the “comfort wo/men” during the colonial period were moved around to accompany the soldiers; the *kijich'on* prostitutes were similarly moved around when Korean and U.S. troops were conducting joint military exercises called “Team Spirit” in the 1980s (Soh, 2008, p. 51). Soh notes that the fourth phase of *kijich'on* prostitution (late 1980s- the current period) has witnessed new types of sex work (such as massage parlors and bathhouses). In addition, there has been an influx of foreign wo/men that outnumber native Korean wo/men in the bars and clubs around the military bases during this fourth phase (Soh, 2008, p. 51).

Monitoring of Wo/men's Bodies Around Military Bases

The management of the female body has been important in maintaining social order and stability in military, as well as civilian society. I look at the organized military structures and practices (of both U.S. and Korean) through which the *kijich'on* prostitutes' bodies are governed and disciplined. In this section, I look at the centrality of bodies to nationalism by which the body becomes a metaphor for citizenship and nation.

⁹⁵ → use my notes on Kwangju massacre and give a general description here.

I also look at how race, gender and class were used in molding the different kinds of citizens the Korean government desired. I argue that by foregrounding the third world wo/man's body, bodies become the place through which imperial, colonial, as well as national power has been wielded. In the case of *kijich'on* prostitutes, it becomes transparent how the third world wo/man's body is seen as 'other', exotic and different. Agency and citizenship, therefore, are inseparable from governmentality.

Saundra Sturdevant and Brenda Stolfus (1993) provide us with a detailed description of the monitoring of sexual activity and the strict precautions taken around the military bases in Korea. *Kijich'on* prostitutes were used as instruments of foreign policy by the Korean government (Moon, 1997, p. 84). They were seen as personal ambassadors who contributed to the improvement of U.S.-ROK (Republic of Korea) civil-military relations. Joint US-ROK control over their bodies and behavior, through venereal disease (VD)⁹⁶ examinations and supervision of their interactions with GI customers, became an indicator of the status of base-community relations and the willingness of the ROKG (Republic of Korea Government) to accommodate to U.S. interests. The South Korean government (fearing that the U.S. military would pull out of Korea and abandon the country if the daily lives of U.S. soldiers were not improved) led a campaign to "clean up" camptown areas and wanted the prostitutes to be the center of the clean up.⁹⁷

The wo/men became transnational actors through their indispensable participation in the Camptown Clean-Up process (Moon, 1997). Korean wo/men and their sexuality (within the boundaries set by the military and local authorities) were considered

⁹⁶ The term, STD's (sexually transmitted diseases) was not in use until the 1990s.

⁹⁷ The "Camptown Clean-Up" Campaign refers to the ROK government's endeavors to 'clean up' the problem of venereal disease on and around the Korean military bases.

necessary to the smooth operation of the U.S. military organization in Korea (Moon, 1997, p. 85). Cynthia Enloe (2004) observes that wo/men have been employed to facilitate relations among men and ‘soften’ the harsh and impersonal political environment in which men perform their public duties. Their sex work has been crucial to the national security of South Korea, and their work was seen as a form of patriotism. Marginalized Korean wo/men were expected- and praised- for selling their bodies. It was a form of sacrifice for the nation (Choe, 2009).

In 1971, the USFK (United States Forces Korea) succeeded in pressuring the Korean government to systematically and strictly regulate the bodies/health of camptown prostitutes through regular and effective VD (venereal disease) examinations and treatment. Ideas of bodily health and sexual hygiene became infused with nationalistic motives. Joint U.S.-ROK coordination and cooperation on this issue led to dual state control over the bodies and sexual labor of the wo/men, thereby improving the relations between US and Korea (Moon, 1997, p. 92). The Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare have operated these clinics with the help of the Korean police. All club and bar wo/men were required to carry a VD (venereal disease) identification card, which were issued by the VD clinics. In fact, any Korean wo/man walking with a GI soldier had to present a VD identification card. Even if the wo/man were married and working in a club, she had to carry the VD card with her at all times. The wo/men were tested once a week for VD, gonorrhea, and syphilis; in addition, she was given an AIDS blood test every three months. Male sexual activity was monitored as well.

Military base personnel, Korean authorities, and the Civilian Military operations had VD spot checks every two weeks. A wo/man on the street that did not have her VD

card with her could receive up to one year in jail for not carrying it. With such meticulous monitoring of the prevention of venereal disease, how could the Korean government argue the ignorance of such happenings? Are not the existence of such clinics evidence for the Korean government's permission and tacit approval of the sexual activity to take place? A former government official, Kim Kee-joe, admitted that "the idea was to create an environment where the guests were treated well in the camp towns to discourage them from leaving" (Choe, 2009).

In order to reduce the STDs among U.S. military personnel, the USFK were required to participate in the management of prostitution (Moon, 1997, p. 100). The Blue House Political Secretary stressed that camptown prostitutes needed to be taught how to work correctly.⁹⁸ He advocated that Korean prostitutes imitate the spirit of Japanese prostitutes who sold their bodies to the post-1945 U.S. occupation forces because they were concerned with the survival of their country (Moon, 1997, p. 103). He declared that the patriotism of the Japanese prostitute spread to the rest of the society to help develop Japan. This view firmly established the camptown prostitutes' sex work as a vital form of patriotism. They were asked to sell their bodies as a form of national support (Moon, 1998, p. 154).

The camptown prostitutes were considered to be an essential 'citizen' in the making of the modern nation-state of South Korea. While they were othered by society and demonized as yankee whores; at the same time, they were "necessary" for the South Korean government's foreign policy towards the U.S. As citizens, these wo/men were praised for their patriotism as civilian ambassadors, yet condemned as whores. A former prostitute, Kim Ae-ran, stated in a recent interview that "Our government was one big

⁹⁸ The Blue House is Korea's White House equivalent.

pimp for the U.S. military” (Choe, 2009). Maintaining control of camptown wo/men’s bodies and their sexual health was crucial to improving deteriorated USFK-ROK relations in the early years of the Nixon Doctrine. The Clean-Up Campaign helped to alleviate tensions between the ROK government and the USFK (Moon, 1997, p. 103).

Camptown prostitutes, therefore, have been a vital part of Korean diplomacy to the United States. Control of these wo/men’s bodies and sexual health were essential for the Korean government’s strategies for maintaining national security on the peninsula (Moon, 1998, p. 154). Those camptowns that controlled the VD problem to the satisfaction of local U.S. command leaders had embraced a “spirit of mutual cooperation and had excellent civil-military relations” (Choi, 1998, p. 155). The wo/men, then, have been doubly vulnerable to society’s exploitation: they have been betrayed by their own government and people, in addition to being exploited by a foreign (i.e., the U.S.) government. When interviewed, several of the wo/men confessed that the greatest threat to their security was not from perceived North Korean invasion; rather, it was protection from the abuse by “clubowners/pimps, local Korean police and VD clinic officials, and the power of the U.S. bases” (Moon, 1998, p. 165-166). Jeon, 71-year old former prostitute, states “The more I think about my life, the more I think women like me were the biggest sacrifice for my country’s alliance with Americans. Looking back, I think my body was not mine, but the government’s and the U.S. military’s” (Choe, 2009). Feminist theorist Wendy Brown (1995) warns feminists of the problems of being indifferent to state domination and to be aware of the dangers of whole-heartedly supporting state power. Brown articulates the desire for a radical political vision to guide democratic activism and to share power rather than be protected from it.

This section of my chapter underscored the multi-layered culpabilities extant in the exploitation of *kijich'on* prostitutes. The anti-American campaigns have ignored crucial information about the complicit nature of Korean society in the mistreatment of camptown prostitutes. Portraying the suffering of camptown prostitutes as a result of the United States army has incited extreme nationalist anger among the citizens to rally against the powerful presence of U.S. troops in Korea. We need to further explore the ways in which wo/men's suffering has been exploited by Korean nationalists, as well as by the Korean government—in order to serve their own goals of demonizing U.S. imperialism.

Foucault's concept of power includes not only hierarchical, top-down power of the state, but also forms of power such as knowledge and social control in disciplinary institutions. Power can manifest itself positively by producing knowledge and certain discourses that get internalized by individuals and guide the behavior of populations. This leads to more efficient forms of social control, as knowledge enables individuals to govern themselves. The very concept of governmentality is patri-kyriarchal in its organization of power. As previously stated, an understanding of patriarchy solely in terms of male supremacy and misogyny cannot articulate the interaction of racism, classism, and heterosexism operative in contemporary society. "Kyriarchy," then, refers to the intersecting levels of oppressions that affect not only wo/men but marginalized, subaltern men (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994, p. 214). Parti-kyriarchy understands that the interlocking systems of domination make it possible for women to dominate other wo/men as well as certain men.

Feminists need to reframe the conversation to focus on the vulnerabilities that result due to patri-kyriarchal structures, not the *han* of the wo/men due to U.S. imperialism. The issue here is the need to critically examine the current feminist discourse that essentializes who is sexually violated (and the complexities of the exploitation) in times of war *and* peace. With regard to the “comfort wo/men” and camptown prostitutes in the wo/men’s human rights discourse, there needs to be a more complex pastoral analysis that situates a feminist theory of vulnerability in a wider spectrum of society— not limited to only the allegedly *han*-filled Korean wo/men who were “injured” by Japanese men during the colonial era and the military prostitutes under U.S. imperialism. So we need to further theorize the ways in which the state can be responsible for—and responsive to—our vulnerability.

It is time Korean feminist the*logians construct a more complex theory of female sexual subordination by an institutionally grounded masculine, militarized intercultural society, regardless of national identity. We need to see the *kijich'on* wo/men as political “actors” in world politics. Korean feminists tend to overlook the problems of how *their* citizens and government (i.e., Korean) have been culpable for violence against wo/men in their own country. They place blame on the United States (i.e., imperialism and U.S. militarism), Japan or other nations for what is a much more complex problem of masculine and patri-kyriarchal power that condones the sexual domination of wo/men.

2: VULNERABILITY, RESISTANCE & GENDERED CITIZENSHIP

The sex acts of the *kijich'on* prostitutes are a blend of the public/private, variously recognized depending on how it suits the Korean government. Their sex acts were seen

as civic acts of diplomacy by the Korean government in helping to foster better relations with the American government. Yet, when there were abuses enacted towards them, these acts are ignored as private acts occurring within personal relations between intimate people and should not be seen as state responsibility. So while the state acknowledged their sex acts as constituting diplomacy, it ignored violence against them as their relationship then ‘turned’ private. This argument of diplomacy by the Korean government also very much speaks to the argument put forth by Carole Pateman in the *Sexual Contract*.

In her work, *The Sexual Contract*, Carole Pateman (1988) states that the sexual contract is a story of subjection in which men have orderly access to wo/men’s bodies and nowhere is this more clear than in examining militarized prostitution. She states that at the heart of the original pact, the issue was men’s domination over wo/men and the right of men to enjoy equal sexual access to wo/men (1988, p. 2). She states that the “most dramatic example of the public aspect of patriarchal right is that men demand that wo/men’s bodies are for sale as commodities in the capitalist market; prostitution is a major capitalist industry” (1988, p. 17). She argues that prostitution is one of many ways in which men are ensured to have access to wo/men’s bodies; it is an integral part of patriarchal capitalism (1988, p. 189). Pateman states that prostitution is usually seen as a private enterprise between buyer and seller, but militarized prostitution shows that prostitution is state-sanctioned as well. The story of the sexual contract provides clues to the dilemma of the commodification of wo/men’s bodies, especially during times of war and militarized modernity. Until recently, the Korean wo/men who became prostitutes

were mostly blamed and were seen to be at fault, not the state-sanctioned systematic abuse and control of wo/men.

The camptown prostitutes are representative of the blurring of boundaries between the private and public. In the centrality of bodies to nationalism, the camptown prostitute's body becomes a metaphor for citizenship and nation. By foregrounding the third world wo/man's body, bodies become the place through which imperial, colonial, as well as patri-kyriarchal power has been wielded—and again, I argue that such abuses incurred by the camptown prostitutes are not just the culpability of the U.S. military presence in South Korea. While research has been done on the relationship between prostitutes and the state, very few scholars have looked at their relationship with the greater community in understanding the public/private sphere that has partly determined their practices and lives. I look at how they have navigated the oppression through acts of resistance that constitute political acts. They have formed community and have shown political and spiritual courage. I argue that wo/men's agency is complexly linked to how the gendered citizen is cast in order to best fulfill government's policies. In other words, power over self becomes dispersed, diluted, and intertwined with the powers of the state.

Dissident Citizenship

Anti-American sentiment in South Korea was exacerbated with the violent deaths of several Korean camptown prostitutes. In 1992, *kijich'on* prostitute, Yun Kŭm-i, was brutally murdered by an American soldier.⁹⁹ Her death became a “symbol of the collective suffering of the nation” (Kim, 1998, p. 191). Following this incident, many of

⁹⁹ She was found in a pool of blood, with a “bottle stuck into her vagina, an umbrella stuck into her rectum, matches pushed into her mouth, and detergent powder spread all over her body” (Kim, 1998, p. 189). Yun's story is one of many accounts of violence endured by the camptown prostitutes.

the camptown prostitutes themselves gained consciousness and became actors for change and justice. They protested vehemently to change the systematic oppression and vulnerability of their situation around the U.S. military bases. Korean citizens also began supporting the camptown prostitutes in their protests and began to feel the injustice of U.S. military occupation in South Korea. Anti-U.S. protests in the early 1990s (i.e., nationalism and anti-U.S. sentiments) have forced Korean citizens to see them in a new light as victims of the U.S. government's policies. Violence against these wo/men were seen as crimes against the nation as a whole.

While there was a wide spectrum of those considered to be marginalized and oppressed in South Korea—including factory workers, peasants, the poor, the disabled, and wo/men—camptown prostitutes were not included in the group. They were not seen as oppressed because of their social stigma- it was not until anti-American sentiment became very pronounced that they came to be seen as victims by many local Korean residents. Their suffering suddenly became national, collective suffering. Their perceived vulnerability to U.S. power highlighted the need to create coalitions and work together as an intercultural community of difference to work towards eradicating such injustices.¹⁰⁰ This, combined with other public protests regarding the denial of their human rights, became a method for camptown prostitutes to exercise their citizenship and assert their agency through forms of resistance. Their sense of dignity was asserted, as they felt manipulated by their communities and by the Korean and U.S. militaries.

The protests led to prostitutes gaining more attention and support, as they became an important group within camptown politics. Modeled after the unions led by Korean

¹⁰⁰ Note that I do not say Korea is a homogenous community as is asserted by many Korean and Korean American theologians. Lartey's understanding of intercultural and how we share some characteristics, yet are unique in others.

working-class wo/men, they organized sit-ins, hunger strikes, and educational rallies to alert citizens to their issues. They even protested and had demonstrations regarding the wages that the GI's were paying them (Moon, 1998, p. 160). And in defiance of the Korean government, they asserted that their work was not a form of patriotism nor integral to the security of the Korean nation—it was pure economic need (Moon, 1998, p. 160). Due to such public protests by the prostitutes, the U.S. government insisted (with the support of the Korean government) on initiating the “Clean Up Campaign,” restricting the freedom of the *kijich'on* prostitutes. At the same time, however, they exhibited tremendous courage through their political acts of defiance. The *kijich'on* prostitutes represented one vulnerable group within Korean society to U.S. imperial power. The local camptown residents, as well as the larger Korean community, were in support of the prostitutes because of their own vulnerability to imperial superpower politics and the racism they experienced from the U.S. military.

Their actions embodied an active and participatory notion of citizenship through protest and resistance. Active citizenship involves local people working together to improve their own quality of life, as well as for others in their community. This can be accomplished through public policy proposals, through dissident citizenship acts such as the ones described above, or through acts of care I shall describe in part three. Feminist political theorist Holloway Sparks describes dissident citizenship as the “practices of marginalized citizens who publicly contest prevailing arrangements of power by means of oppositional democratic practices that augment or replace institutionalized channels of democratic opposition when those channels are inadequate or unavailable” (1997, p. 75).

Dissident citizenship embraces the innovative resistance movements by those who have been excluded from traditional modalities of opposition (year, p. 75).

Sparks calls attention to such praxis of courage to contest oppressive forms of power needs to be acknowledged and counted as participatory citizenship (1997, p. 76). She sees the vital importance for incorporating courage as a political practice for wo/men (p. 98). So while the protests resulted in stringent actions against the prostitutes (i.e., the Clean Up Campaign), I agree with Wendy Brown that “A courageous deed is one which sets identity and security at risk in order to bring forth new possibility” (Brown, 1988, p. 206 in Sparks, p. 97). The identities and dissident acts of the *kijich'on* prostitutes threatened traditional Korean notions of wo/men’s sexuality and femininity; yet, they were able to convince the majority of Korean society of their ill-treatment and abuse. Their oppositional practices of resistance helped to bestow human dignity to their situation and to aid in transforming how Korean society had seen them and treated them as marginalized citizens.

Gendered Citizenship

The topic of citizenship is encountered with mixed reactions by feminists; many are ambivalent about it and reject it as being a masculinist concept. I argue, however, that gendered citizenship does not mean a co-optation of a patriarchal right. Indeed, re-configuring the notion of citizenship is a necessary step in tackling the masculinist discourse of nationalism, militarism, and citizenship. In addition to its formal status as those rights and obligations one has to the state, I employ Ruth Lister’s notion of citizenship for this chapter. At its core, Lister sees citizenship as: an expression of the

human agency to transform oneself and the social world governed by the nation-state (1997b, p. 28). She asks that in providing a feminist critique of citizenship, can it give full recognition to the different and shifting identities that wo/men simultaneously embody? Lister's (1997a, 1997b) feminist perspective examines the ways in which wo/men are socially included and excluded from public and private spheres of life, by differing ideas about what constitutes political involvement.

Rainer Bauböck (1994) makes the connection between citizenship and human rights. She states that the right to citizenship is a form of basic human rights. She further points out that human rights and citizenship rights share a common language: human rights is the foundation for citizenship rights (Bauböck, 1994, p. 247 in Lister, 1998, p. 9). Human rights, when respected in a person, become a form of global citizenship. Lister states that "citizenship rights derive from human rights as the necessary condition for human agency, so that the former could be said to represent the specific interpretation and allocation by individual civil nation-states of the more abstract, unconditional, and universalizable human rights" (1998, p. 10).

There has been little research done on Korean wo/men's incorporation into nation-building and the trajectory of wo/men's citizenship. From that small body of work, that of sociologist Seung-sook Moon emerges as the most prominent feminist critique of gendered citizenship in South Korea. Seung-sook Moon defines citizenship as "a democratic membership in the body politic characterized by active struggle and negotiation to give substance to formal rights and redefine their boundaries" (2005, p. 9). Despite her feminist critique of gendered citizenship, her work describes only two distinct paths to wo/men's citizenship: the factory workers' labor movement, which was

actively supported by interclass autonomous wo/men's associations; and the inter-class wo/men's movements to obtain life-time equal employment for women of all classes. Moon omits any discussion of the camptown prostitutes' role in creating/contributing to the development of the democratization of—and resistance to—the militarized modernity of South Korea.

Moon argues how wo/men workers were crucial to South Korea's economic contribution, yet she fails to analyze or give any attention to the critical role the camptown prostitutes played in U.S./South Korean diplomacy, military modernity, as well as contributing to the economy (Moon, 1997). Although wo/men laborers were marginalized as workers in Korea; camptown prostitutes were not only marginalized as workers (thereby ignoring their financial contribution to the economy); they were deemed unimportant in society for their role as prostitutes (their depraved lifestyle and embarrassment to Koreans). Just as the wo/men laborers were called on to be dutiful nationals by performing patriotic forms of 'women's work'; so too, were the camptown prostitutes called on to be patriotic citizens by the government in best serving the U.S. soldiers so as to maintain harmony between the United States and South Korea.

South Korea's prolonged war situation with North Korea has "contributed to the development of a postcolonial state that has exploited anticommunism as national orthodoxy and imagined modernity in terms of building a strong military to protect the nation" (Moon, 2005, p. 9).¹⁰¹ The Korean War provided justification for a strong military in South Korea for decades to come. There was unfettered acceptance of anticommunist ideology among South Koreans. Korean men and wo/men were

¹⁰¹ The Korean War officially lasted from 1950-53, at which time an armistice was signed. Technically, however, the two countries are still at war as a peace treaty was never signed.

mobilized during the period of militarized modernity (1963-1987) as “dutiful nationals” in the process of building the modern nation. The anti-communist national identity was critical in the ideological justification of Foucauldian disciplinary control over its people (Moon, 2005, p. 20). Moon notes that

the development of militarized modernity as a sociopolitical and economic formation in the period of military rule resulted from the coordinated use of various techniques for discipline and punishment that have existed in Korea and elsewhere in an effort to build a modern nation under the peculiar combination of historical conditions of national division, war and military confrontation, postcolonial ambivalence to modernity, and the urgency to catch up with advanced nations (Moon, 2005, p. 18).

The ‘gender politics of membership’ has been intertwined with the desire for modernity. Members of a militarized modernity are reduced to efficient tools of a machine producing national wealth and safeguarding national security (2005, p. 19).

Disciplinary power over social groups, states Seung-sook Moon, is “exercised in the form of knowledge designed to improve individuals... and maintain control over them to maximize their productivity and utility and minimize their resistance” (2005, p. 28). Disciplinary power, therefore, requires no physical violence; in Weberian terms, it is rationalized power (2005, p. 28). Postmodern South Korea has been subject to Japanese imperialism, U.S. neo-colonialism and militarized modernity. Going beyond the liberal notion of what constitutes the individual citizen, as well as the notion of the collective citizen, the camptown prostitutes’ practices of resistance highlights the intersubjectivity of the citizens who are located at the nexus of variegated hierarchical social relations. Through various forms of dissident citizenship practices (Sparks, 1997); these wo/men were strengthening and exercising their agency, as well as helping to shape various international policies and agendas.

3: VULNERABILITY, RESILIENCE, & PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral The*logical Analysis

Carrie Doehring names three main goals for pastoral care: “establishing safety and stability; mourning and holding accountable those structures and processes that cause harm; and helping the care seeker reconnect with the ‘ordinary goodness of life’ (2006). This third part of my chapter looks at the ways in which the *kijich’on* prostitutes have sought to be in community with one another: finding practical solutions to their difficulties and caring for each other through community. I argue that pastoral the*logy needs to see the Hiltnerian shepherding model more broadly.¹⁰² While there is value and strength in being guided, I argue that this can also be paternalistic.¹⁰³ Psychiatrist Richard Mollica (2006) believes in the possibility of self-healing. He focuses on the relationship between personal healing and the healing of collective wounds.

Just as the human situation is constructed response to our experiences, so too, are our the*logies shaped by our vulnerabilities and experiences. Our the*logy is a response to our vulnerabilities and making meaning of our suffering. In that regard, the*logy is a socially constructed response to the suffering, challenges, and resilience in our lives. The*logizing is agentic and therefore, political. The pastoral *is* political. The *kijich’on* prostitutes’ show how, through their dissident practices, they have acted upon and made meaning of their situation. Religious scholar David Kyuman Kim understands that “at the core of contemporary quests for agency lie dimensions of the religious and spiritual

¹⁰² In this postmodern age of anxiety and confusion, pastoral theologian Seward Hiltner sees the need for guiding and guidance in ministry.

¹⁰³ The camptown prostitutes are guided and supported by mentors in the community, so I am not saying that there is no benefit to the shepherding and guiding. But the guiding and shepherding have to be done in a way that is not condescending, judgmental or taking pity on the wo/men.

life, the heart of which is to transcend circumstances and conditions of constraint and limitation of varying kinds” (2008, p. 4). These agentic acts are pastoral and spiritual.

The human rights discourse has addressed the economic, political and societal needs of a person; but it has not taken into consideration the spiritual needs of a person (religion is discussed in essentializing ways). I argue that the discourse of human rights needs to include the relationship between citizenship and spiritual care. A central concern of pastoral theology is the “dynamic of power and difference” that exist within a web of relationships. Survivors of human rights abuses are in need of spiritual healing. In the midst of struggles, inner spiritual resilience is crucial. Nancy Ramsay looks at care of persons “as part of a wide cultural, social and religious context” (2004, p. 45). “Pastoral care is care of society itself” (p. 55). In spiritual care, it is important to go beyond the individual and understand that the individual’s needs are met within a community and that the needs of the entire community impact an individual. Spiritual care focuses on peace, justice, forgiveness through accountability, truth, dignity and self-determination. A focus on these aspects brings about well-being and healing.

Spiritual care is a creative means of resisting disciplinary control. It has been said that religion is the opiate of the masses and while it can be controlling, it also provides an outlet and avenue to be creative and break free from disciplinary power. And it was through a community of support from other wo/men that helped the camptown prostitutes to become advocates for themselves. Marginalized wo/men, too, can be healers of their communities. I want to highlight the importance of relationship in the lives of camptown prostitutes as well. Their relationships with one another, with some of the soldiers, with family, etc. have been influential for their life trajectory. While we mostly are responsible

for our own actions (agency), we act in accordance with the events and people that are involved in our lives. Some relationships have been uplifting and liberating for them, and others have been oppressive and there should be some accountability in terms of how some relationships have caused their vulnerability. So paradoxically, relationships are responsible for creating resilience to vulnerability, at the same time that some can be accountable for sustaining/maintaining the conditions for it. Their involvement in activism and creating relationships with others have certainly aided in giving them a sense of agency and resilience to suffering they have endured in their lives.

I, therefore, emphasize the importance of community for the camptown prostitutes: we craft choices and decisions through feminist methods of consciousness-raising, having spiritual and political courage in situations of vulnerability, and being in community (supporting, caring for one another, building relationships)—not through the method of being shepherded and guided. In the following section, I provide modes of resilience through spiritual care in the form of a case story, a place of support, and writing (fiction). Writing, story-telling, and reading are creative expressions and forms of agency, thereby constituting a form of participatory citizenship.

Case of Kim Yeon Ja

A former camptown prostitute in Korea, Kim Yeon Ja's story of resilience portrays the complex ways in which agency, political activism, and gendered citizenship are intertwined (Enloe, 2000, p. 89). After having been a sex worker for years in the military camptowns of Korea, she is now a minister who teaches the children of Korean wo/men and American male soldiers. Kim was active in the Women's Campside

Protection Council, a bar woman's association, urging young wo/men working in GI camptowns to seek a new life (Kirk, 1995, p. 40). She also does educational outreach, informing people around the world of violence against Korean wo/men around military base communities. As a child, she was abandoned by her father. She was raped by several different relatives throughout the course of her childhood. As her economic situation became more precarious in her young adulthood, she eventually began working as a prostitute in one of the GI towns. Like the other camptown prostitutes, Kim had to succumb to weekly vaginal examinations, which she states was one of the most humiliating experiences of her life (Enloe, 2000, p. 92). In 1972, she became involved in one of the first prostitute protests in Korea, where they called for a reform VD exams: that which deprived them of their autonomy and dignity (Enloe, 2000, p. 92). By the mid 1970s, the prostitutes around base towns had organized and become noticeable to the larger Korean community.

Kim Yeon Ja utilized the power of dissident citizenship and agency to make changes in her life, or at least attempt to make changes and make a difference in what she felt were unjust situations. She resisted against forms of government control over her body. She gave a trenchant critique of Korean society in publicly stating that it is not enough to eradicate the American military bases in Korea (Kim, 1998, p. 192). Rather she argued that the role of the Korean government and police in monitoring the prostitution is at issue as well. She vehemently spoke out about her own experiences of the violence she experienced due to Korean patriarchal society (192). She further expressed anger at the thought of being labeled as *han*-filled, pitiful, or pathetic (193) because of American militarism and imperialism. Her story is one of many that

underscore how power over self becomes dispersed, diluted and intertwined with the powers of the state—but how that power is continually resisted and negotiated. Her narrative shows how she has lived her life to the best of her abilities, shunning labels inscribed onto her because of nationalist sentiments. Her spiritual practices and beliefs have been resources for her resilience.

Durebang

One such organization that has provided healing and community for the camptown prostitutes is Durebang (My Sister's Place). Two progressive wo/men Protestant ministers, Yu Bok-nim and Faye (Hye-rim) Moon, started the place in one of the camptowns, Uijongbu, as a counseling and advocacy center in 1986. While it is a place for the prostitutes to gather in community to support one another, it also engages in the practical care work of teaching work-related skills to the wo/men so that if they can and want to do so, they may leave and find new forms of work. Many of the wo/men suffer from depression and other health issues, as well as suffer early childhood abuse prior to becoming camptown prostitutes. Many are afraid to venture out of the camptowns for fear of being ridiculed by civilians.

Durebang offers meals, skills classes, teaches English, offers counseling support, provides arts and crafts time, runs a bakery, as well as space for wo/men to gather to support one another (Durebang 2007). One of the greatest sources of support for them is each other, and Durebang offers a place of communing with one another (Durebang, 2007). When I met Yu Bok-nim in 1992, she shared with me her ministry background and her desire for radical love for the wo/men which entailed support and solidarity, not

judgment and paternalism. She did not want the wo/men to see her hierarchically as superior in any way, so she tried to blend in as much as possible and dress like them as well. Durebang seeks to be a space of intercultural pastoral support in the lives and practices of the *kijich'on* prostitutes.

Pastoral Care, Vulnerability, & Fiction

Fiction can be an important avenue for healing, especially for a society like Korea where “talking” about certain subjects is taboo. Especially during the 1970s, 80s and early 90s, the authoritarian political climate—in addition to social norms—meant that sex, sexuality and issues regarding violence against wo/men were not discussed publicly. Anthropologist Kamala Visweswaran (1994) asserts that fiction can be and is feminist ethnography. It gives validity to the understanding that “silence be a marker of women’s agency” (Visweswaran, 1994, p. 51). Agency privileges speaking but is not reducible to it. She argues that ethnographic accounts are constructed and tell particular stories. She wants to better understand the politics of representation, how different narrative strategies may be authorized at specific moments in history by complex negotiations of community, identity, and accountability. I agree with her in that most “ethnographic writing is founded on the fiction of restoring lost voices” (1994, p. 15). She argues that there are “demonstrable fictions of ethnography in the constitution of knowledge, power and authority in anthropological texts, and that we may also consider fiction as ethnography” (p. 51).

Even as I acknowledge anthropologist Kamala Visweswaran’s assertion that fiction can be and is feminist ethnography, I acknowledge the problems with such an

assertion as well. While fiction can be auto-biographical and/or biographical, authors can invent or exaggerate details that are out of place of the specific nuanced cultural contexts. At the same time, however, it is equally possible for ethnographers and anthropologists to observe and recount details of an event with equal exaggeration and/or with colored and blinded lens because of their unique relationship with their subjects. I argue that fiction, therefore, provides a ‘window’ to history to give us an idea of the author’s mindset, wishes and desires—in addition to issues and ideas that were trending during that particular juncture of time. I argue that literary analysis is an important pastoral/the*logical tool, as it provides the imaginative space to move the reader emotionally and spiritually into the “worlds” and “thoughts” of others they could otherwise not enter.

The two stories of camptown prostitution that I explore should be regarded as ethnographic parodies. While they depict a certain reality, it flips and subverts certain power structures. I chose these stories because they are tragicomedies signifying the ambivalence, contradictions and paradoxes that exist in situations of vulnerability. I also chose these stories because they can be seen through a lens of humor and irony towards a very grave, serious issue. Lartey (2006) contends that some of the most liberating forms of discourse are through forms of art, and I argue that these stories can be seen as part of the paradigm of resistance in the wo/men’s human rights discourse.

Korean studies scholar Bruce Fulton states that *kijich'on* fiction, while not a well-known genre within modern Korean literature, offers a glimpse into how not only is national identity shaped and strengthened through interaction with other cultures; so is one’s individual personhood negotiated through such encounters (1998, p. 199). He states that Koreans living in the *kijich'on* “often undergo a transformation of identity as

they negotiate sexuality, contraband, and labor in return for an uncertain future. Though rarely repudiating their Korean identity, *kijich'on* people... embrace the ways of the foreign power only to realize they have isolated themselves from any one national identity, and ultimately forge a more realistic view of themselves as members of two cultures yet full participants in neither” (p. 200). Their vulnerability, in a way, has given strength to their humanity—their human struggles, distinct from any “national” category.

“Granny Flowers in Those Heartless Days” (1978) by Pak Wansŏ is a well-known short work of *kijich'on* fiction, comprising of two separate stories. The stories depict the ability for humans to experience vulnerability due to war and what happens to an entire town undergoing its stresses. The first story centers on an older matriarch as the main character: a “granny.” The stories have similar themes: both stories depict villages whose men are off at war. In the first story, American soldiers roam the village to find a young wo/man (*saeksi*) with whom they can have sex. The young wo/men in the village are all terrified and hide together in one big house. The eldest wo/man of the group, the matriarch granny, offers herself up to the soldiers as a sacrifice so that the younger wo/men can be spared the devastation. The young wo/men in the house do not think this can work. One wo/man argues,

We know you’re doing your best to keep the young ones from being violated, but think about your age. Your age. I mean, those Yanks aren’t blind, are they? Makeup can only go so far....” (1999, p. 146).

She is in a fit of laughter before she finishes speaking. The granny ignores her and dresses and makes herself up, all the while shaking in terror. She then leaves the gates of the house and offers her body to the young American soldiers.

When the soldiers realize they have a very old wo/man, they laugh hysterically at her and take her back—unharmd—to the house in which they found her. They bring her back, sending with her boxes of U.S. goodies (cookies, candies and other sweets). The old wo/man tells the younger wo/men that thank goodness the men had been Americans. The granny reports back to the group of young wo/men,

It's because they were Yanks that I came back alive, and with so much food. If they had been Japs, they'd have shot me dead the minute they found out they were tricked. And if they had been not Japs, but Russians, they wouldn't have cared how old I am. They'd have jumped on top of me and I would have been done for. They wouldn't even have wasted a bullet; they'd just have done me until they crushed me to death (1999, p. 150).

This comment shows the nationalist sentiment involved in sexual violence against wo/men. There have been several testimonial accounts by the comfort wo/men that have stated how the Korean men were “worse” than the Japanese and how some of the Japanese soldiers were treating them well, etc. Yet, due to nationalist sentiment of hatred towards the Japanese, such nuances are not taken into consideration at all. The story shows a bit of humor in how the granny generously offers herself up to the soldiers. We sense vulnerability and uncertainty of life for the wo/men when the American soldiers come into town, depicting the reality of quotidian life for most wo/men in the camptowns. The wo/men in the story are in solidarity and are connected to one another due to their shared vulnerability and ambiguity of the situation. We see the multiple subjectivities, fluid identities and power structures at work in the story.

The second story involves the vulnerability of Korean soldiers' masculinity. A rumor is started that virgin soldiers would be more likely to die by enemy bullets. The virgin soldiers are so distraught by this rumor that they are noticeably uncomfortable and

the others take notice. The commander of the troop, therefore, his men have time to go to a nearby village and lose their virginity. One soldier, Private Kim, goes to a village and meets an elderly wo/man who has recently been widowed. The two of them exchange stories and feeling comfortable around her, he tells her about the rumor regarding virgin soldiers. When Private Kim starts to leave, the old wo/man grabs him by the crotch of his pants and insists he lose his virginity with her. She turns out the lights and Kim loses his virginity. After the incident, the man is repulsed by what just happened. He

shuddered to shake off a feeling of pollution. He felt as if he had been drenched from head to toe with dirty dishwater. For a long while afterward he could not shake off that feeling, and it turned to disgust and, ultimately, to an absolute loathing for women (p. 154).

His masculinity has been raped. In this story, the author, Pak, gives power to the elderly wo/man who has used the man for her sexual pleasure. The man, in turn, becomes the vulnerable one who feels tainted.

The story illustrates what Cynthia Enloe (1993) has said that the dependence of soldiers on socially established norms of male masculinity in order to maintain the wartime “spirit.” She argues that war and militarized peace are times when sexual relations take on particular meanings. The story depicts the sexist culture of the military, as Kim initially goes out to have sex with a wo/man to lose his virginity (and hence enhance his own masculine identity) to a young wo/man—not an old widow. So this double standard in society is a parody and a twist to the VAW scenario of wo/men who are sexually abused. In this story, the man becomes the victim—albeit, while he set out to do the exact same thing that ended up happening to him. He would not have felt polluted had the wo/man been young and attractive. Vulnerability in these two stories exists on many layers: vulnerability for the elderly in society who are no longer desirable;

vulnerability for soldiers who have to prove their masculinity through their sexual prowess; vulnerability for wo/men in general. The protagonists do not adhere to the essentialized identities of wo/men typically depicted in the VAW paradigms.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the vulnerability, as well as resilience, in the lives of the camptown military prostitutes around U.S. military bases in South Korea. This chapter also examined the inter-related topics of gendered citizenship, agency and governmentality with regard to militarized prostitution which the current feminist literature does not address. I have looked at the ways in which camptown prostitutes exercised their dissident citizenship and agency through protest and resistance, despite the government's attempt to transform their sex work into a form of patriotism as a means of maintaining national security in South Korea. I also examined the subjectivity and agency of these wo/men—their protests and resistance came in various ways in the form of hunger strikes, demonstrations, educational outreach, etc. I have shown how camptown prostitutes have exhibited agency in the context of vulnerability in a patri-kyriarchal society. Rather than depicting them as han-filled victims of U.S. imperialism, feminists need to unearth their quest for agency—their resistance to the vulnerabilities in their lives.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This dissertation first examined the successes and problems of the wo/men's human rights discourse. By focusing on the "violence against wo/men" (VAW) strategy, the status of wo/men has been positioned to be subordinate to that of men. The VAW strategy has used the campaign of "woman-as-poor-suffering-victim" to assert wo/men's susceptibility to violence by men. Because the WHR movement has focused on law as part of its solution to the problem of violence, it has had to utilize essentialized understandings of wo/men and culture (Kapur, 2002). Law cannot reflect the complexity and multiplicity of a subject. Wo/men, in the process of trying to assert their power and secure their rights through the VAW movement, are further robbed of their agency. These are the "pyrrhic victories" of the WHR movement. I also argued that we need to re-frame the current discourse of wo/men's human rights in order to avoid the dangers of continuing the pathway for the homogenizing, colonizing and commodifying aspects of the rights discourse. I also examined the problems of nationalism within the rights discourse.

In chapter two, I showed how intercultural pastoral care contributes to the human rights paradigm without essentializing wo/men. I argued that we need to take a more pastoral response to wo/men's human rights work by engaging in more story-telling and listening. When one's story is heard and her words become validated through the act of listening, one no longer becomes "subaltern" per se. The act of listening and journeying with a person creates a space to validate the person's dignity. We are recognizing the human rights of that person. Spiritual care work, therefore, becomes human rights work (Moon, 2010). Journeying with a person and being in solidarity with someone through

presence, deep listening, and validating a person's feelings and emotions is recognizing their agency. In their work with survivors of human rights abuses, pastoral theologians and practitioners recognize the complexities, contradictions and messiness in our lives due to our vulnerability. Through their practices, pastoral theologians are contributing to a more complex understanding of the rights framework.

The paradoxes of human rights are what make the human rights paradigm to survive and grow. The paradoxes constantly challenge us to seek new solutions and it leaves open room for negotiation, discussion and contestation. The excitement of the human rights paradigm is its room for expansion and transformation in the paradoxes and conundrums which become liminal spaces in striving for a consensual process to achieve social justice and better the lives of people. We need deep listening, discord, as well as contradictions in legitimizing the rights discourse. Emmanuel Lartey's intercultural pastoral care paradigm fosters such a space of affirming human rights through authentic participation of each voice, as well as honoring the varied perspectives and contexts of those voices (2003, p. 33).

In chapter three, I examined the discursive representations of Asian/Americans and the problem of the essentialized trope of the "poor and suffering Asian woman" in Asian feminist theological discourse. In attempting to rectify the problem, Asian feminist theologians have replaced one essentialist concept, *han*, with another, *chǒng*. In chapter four, I traced the genealogy of the concepts of *han* and *chǒng* and traced it back to the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945) and argued that methods of nationalism are central in constructing both theologies. Korean feminist theologians unconsciously

engage in the same processes of nationalist rhetoric when constructing their the*logies, romanticizing aspects of Korean culture and searching for a national essence.¹⁰⁴

The work of Asian/American feminist the*logians still does not complicate the subjectivity of wo/men. We need to construct more refined, nuanced the*logies that reflect our multiple subjectivities. Playwright David Henry Hwang (2003) laments that stereotypes of Asian/Americans continue unabated, even when the particulars change.

He states that he has become

Less interested in seeking the Holy Grail of authenticity and more convinced of the need to create characters who burst from the page or stage with richness, complexity and contradictions of real people. At its core, a stereotype is bad writing: a one- or two-dimensional cutout devoid of humanity, and therefore prone to demonization (pp.xiii-xiv).

I hope these two chapters on *han* and *chǒng* have stimulated our imaginations to construct more complicated Asian/American the*logies that underscore our subjectivity, heterogeneity, and agency. Through variegated forms of agency, I hope we, Asian/Americans, can metaphorically participate in weaving threads of justice on the “web” where all communities of color can flourish with equal dignity.

In chapter five, I argued that Martha Fineman’s work on vulnerability (2008) is a better method for articulating a wo/man’s complex subject position than a the*logy of *han* or *chǒng*. In my pastoral care work with survivors of various types of violence and abuse, I have come to see the importance of having a more complex understanding of vulnerability and all of its contradictions. A complex understanding of vulnerability is revealed by examining the myriad ways in which it is manifest in the lives of wo/men whose stories have been essentialized in feminist the*logical as well as human rights discourse. Acknowledging our shared vulnerability makes us more aware of our need for

¹⁰⁴ It is psychologically embedded in their minds to constantly seek that which is unique to Korea.

each other, our similarities, as well as how we become more fully human because of our vulnerability.

A theory of vulnerability needs to be included in a discourse that seeks to transform the human rights paradigm. If the goal of the human rights paradigm is to achieve social justice, provide dignity to every human, and to alleviate suffering in the world; then, we need to better understand the paradoxes that exist in our lives, our institutions, as well as within our own inner selves. If we understand that humans are paradoxical, vulnerable beings, we can better address the tensions and ambiguities. We can better understand what sorts of institutions and frameworks are necessary to reinvigorate the rights discourse.

I followed up with post-nationalist, vulnerability analyses of two case studies, “comfort wo/men” and camptown prostitution in South Korea, to show the complexities, contradictions and messiness of the issues regarding violence against wo/men in the wo/men’s human rights discourse. The issues are not as clear-cut as nationalist rhetoric would have us believe. Through this research project on Korean/American wo/men, I have come to see how religious/spiritual practices constitute participatory citizenship. Saba Mahmood has already shown how religious practices are forms of agency for wo/men. What I have shown is how practices of community-building, dissident citizenship and care are pastoral practices and how they become resources for our vulnerability. Examining how pastoral practices contribute to a theory of agency and political participation contributes to a more complex discourse in religion and human rights. A vulnerability approach recognizes that agency can be located, not necessarily within abusive patri-kyriarchal structures themselves, but in terms of how wo/men

‘choose’ to be in relationship with particular aspects of patri-kyriarchy by exercising agency within their context of vulnerability. And I argue that the wo/men in these case studies found creative ways of locating agentive power, that is, their internal compass, as Dr. An-Na'im has argued (2007) in situations where wo/men have been portrayed solely as victims in the WHR discourse.

My dissertation itself has been a pastoral exercise of my own “vulnerable writing” to formulate what wo/men’s human rights means to me, as well as what the discourse should be—it is empathic listening to and gaining an understanding of the problems and issues affecting wo/men and sharing their narratives that go beyond a nationalist framework. As we contemplate the issue of VAW and its relationship to global, social and political injustices, I certainly do not wish to undermine the suffering of the wo/men in the rights discourse. What I *do* want to emphasize, however, is the importance of engaging in a more systematic, post-nationalist analysis in seeing how the concept of *han* has become politicized in the postcolonial nationalist political rhetoric of Korean/American feminist the*logical discourse. The way in which *han* has been portrayed as a national spiritual identity of the Korean people ironically has disguised the agency and resilience that the wo/men who have faced sexual violence have exhibited during the ordeal, as well as in life thereafter in Korean society.

Feminist Wendy Brown critically responds to identity politics which stabilizes the meaning of feminism that normalize or reify fixed notions and actions. For Brown, claims of injury assume the ideal of the full participating citizen. Yet, many of the Korean wo/men to which I have referred in my dissertation have been marginalized in such political participation in Korean society. So for Korean feminists to condemn one type of state-

sanctioned systematic sexual violence against wo/men, while being blind to other forms of violence that have impacted their lives is, in the words of Brown (1995), succumbing to the politics of *ressentiment*. We need to reframe the conversation to focus on the problems, *not* the identities. The problem here is to critically examine the current feminist discourse that essentializes sexually exploited wo/men, in times of war and peace. With regard to the wo/men's human rights discourse in Korean society, there needs to be a more complex analysis that situates vulnerability in a wider spectrum of society—one that is not limited to only those *han*-filled Korean wo/men who were “injured” by Japanese men during the colonial era or by U.S. military men in the postcolonial period.

I was warned that my chapter on comfort wo/men may be misconstrued and that the Japanese government could possibly get a hold of my work and manipulate it by taking it out of context in order to promote their own nationalist interests and further negate their own crimes and wrongdoings regarding this issue. I sincerely would not want something like this to happen to my work or have my main argument of foregrounding complexity of the subject in the WHR discourse. To that, I simply argue that if this were to occur and the Japanese government or Japanese nationalists were to use my work to their advantage, then the voices of the comfort wo/men that I have included in my dissertation—those stories which have been elided in the comfort wo/men movement within the WHR discourse—will be foregrounded and told on a global level. Others will hear what many of these wo/men have felt and thought – those wo/men's voices who have not been a part of the mainstream discourse of CW because their stories do not necessarily fit the paradigm of the Japanese redress movement. My argument is

not necessarily my argument; it is the argument of the comfort wo/men—it came from their testimonials.

And by telling the story of the “comfort wo/men” and camptown prostitutes in the way that I have does not show that it was any less of a crime on the part of the Japanese. Rape is crime, and it should be criminalized. The crimes committed during the colonial period should be acknowledged. And, rape is rape whether it is committed by Japanese soldiers, Korean soldiers, or U.S. soldiers. So the crimes will not be any less severe whether the conditions of patri-kyriarchy and structural violence were there or not. No one would argue that a man who commits a crime of rape would get any less of a sentence here in the United States because the wo/man left her home of poverty, was abused by her father and was seeking a job. A crime is a crime. I am not arguing that the issue of “comfort wo/men” should not seek redress from the Japanese government. What I want to highlight, once again, is how the wo/men’s testimonials themselves show the many different circumstances of how the wo/men became “comfort wo/men” and how the mainstream voice of forced kidnapping is too simple. The situation is extremely complex.

If, by my argument, I am revealing the evils of patri-kyriarchy and abuse within Korean society, this is unfortunate but I feel I will not change my story so as to protect any nationalist perspective or out of fear that my story will be misconstrued. Rather, this story was told in the way that it was in order to transform the paradigm of WHR – from one that has nationalist agendas and essentialist identities that further deny wo/men of their agency, as well as the dominant voices that control and manipulate the discourse, to one that shows the complexities of structural abuse, multiple subjectivities and reveal subaltern voices. The

“comfort wo/men,” whose stories I share in my dissertation constitute the “human” in the human rights discourse (An-Na'im, 2007). Their voices and stories are the marginalized narratives within the “comfort wo/men” redress movement. Their stories show that they are self-determining subjects.

Intercultural pastoral the*logy has revealed and acknowledged the common threads and connections of vulnerability extant in our humanity, as well as agency of the individual that would contribute to a more complex and nuanced wo/men's human rights discourse. The current wo/men's human rights discourse, as well as the discourse of *han*, that perpetuates the victim-status of wo/men and essentializes our suffering denies us our full humanity. We need to reconstruct a the*logy of suffering that incorporates a theory of vulnerability, locating agency and struggle in wo/men's lives. I see this as central to getting over the impasse currently extant in the Korean wo/men's rights movement. Subjects in the rights discourse are one-dimensional.

There is a Vietnamese proverb that a tiger that comes into a village alone will be killed (Hanh, 1998). This shows the contextual and shifting nature of our vulnerabilities, for both victim and perpetrator. Metaphorically speaking, the tiger and villagers can be both targets of violence as well as be perpetrators, depending on the context. The proverb also underscores how our vulnerabilities are mitigated through our relationality and community—for both perpetrator and victim target. That is to say, no matter how strong we are as an individual, we are supported and cultivated by our community and our loved ones. Even when we are vulnerable, we are strengthened by the energy of humanity. I see the main goal of pastoral/spiritual care to foster a person's strengths and

forms of resilience – by being in solidarity with the individual and allowing for spiritual healing to take place with the support of others and through the community.

Through the methods of intercultural pastoral care and a vulnerability analysis, we are able to have a more critical liberative the*logical praxis that transcends a nationalist the*logy of *han*. Instead, we can acknowledge the interculturality of suffering, as well as the complexity of vulnerability, agency and resilience in wo/men's lives which Korean/American feminist and *minjung* the*logy have yet to fully address. By examining the current problems in the WHR discourse through an intercultural pastoral analysis and a theory of our shared vulnerability, I believe my dissertation contributes to a renewed discourse of care for wo/men in the field of pastoral care, Asian/American feminist the*logy, as well as wo/men's human rights.

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