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Korean Immigrants in *Native Speaker* by Chang-rae Lee and *Clay Walls* by

Ronyoung Kim

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Závěrečná diplomová práce se zaměří na zobrazení problematiky korejské imigrace do Spojených států ve dvacátém století, jak je zachycují romány Chang-rae Leeho Native Speaker a Clay Walls Ronyoung Kimové.

V úvodu práce studentka definuje pojmy, s nimiž bude pracovat, jako např. assimilation (and a language shift), ethnic attrition, integration, segregation, discrimination, minorities, identity, the Yellow Peril a stručně nastíní historii a specifika korejské imigrace do USA. Studentka objasní svůj výběr děl, případně je zařadí do širšího dobového literárního kontextu.

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Závěrem své analýzy přehledně shrne, obě díla porovná a vysloví obecnější závěry o způsobu zobrazení problematiky imigrace, kulturní odcizení, odlišnosti mezi jednotlivými generacemi přistěhovalců.

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Tsou, Elda E. "Allegory: Native Speaker and Deceit." *Unquiet Tropes: Form, Race, and Asian American Literature*, 128-60. Temple University Press, 2015.
a další.

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ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá zobrazením korejských imigrantů a Američanů korejského původu během 20. století, jak je zachycují romány *Native Speaker* Chang-rae Leeho a *Clay Walls* Ronyoung Kimové. V obou románech jsou analyzovány koncepty jako identita, akulturace, diskriminace či problém vzorové menšiny. Generační rozdíly imigrantů jsou také součástí analýzy. Oba romány jsou v několika bodech srovnány za účelem zjištění rozdílů v zobrazení životů Američanů korejského původu během rozličných dekád a míst na území Spojených států amerických, především pak v Kalifornii a New Yorku. Cílem práce je zachytit strasti a jiné faktory ovlivňující životy Američanů korejského původu.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Američané korejského původu, imigranti, Chang-rae Lee, Ronyoung Kimová, *Native Speaker*, *Clay Walls*

ANNOTATION

This master thesis deals with the portrayal of Korean immigrants and Korean Americans in the 20th century as captured in *Native Speaker* by Chang-rae Lee and *Clay Walls* Ronyoung Kim. Both novels are analysed mainly in terms of identity, acculturation, discrimination and model minority issues. Generation differences are also analysed. In several aspects, the novels are compared to assess the differences in Korean American lives in various decades and different places of the United States of America, particularly California and New York. The aim of the thesis is to describe the struggles and other influences on the lives of Korean Americans.

KEY WORDS

Korean Americans, immigrants, Chang-rae Lee, Ronyoung Kim, *Native Speaker*, *Clay Walls*

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Introduction

This thesis deals with the depiction of 20th-century Korean immigrants and Korean Americans in Chang-rae Lee's novel *Native Speaker* and *Clay Walls* by Ronyoung Kim.

Both novels are practically unknown to Czech readers but in Asian American studies, they are deemed valuable. For *Native Speaker*, Lee has received various awards and is considered the first Korean American author to have his work published by a mainstream publisher. Kim's novel was chosen because it is the only novel depicting the struggles of Korean American immigrants in detail. Also, the fact that one novel is written by a male and the other by a female was also taken into consideration. Kim's novel is partially autobiographical, and it follows the life of the Chuns, who emigrated from Korea during the Japanese occupation, from 1919 until the end of World War II. Lee's novel is set in the 1990s and it focuses on Henry Park, his parents and subjects of his espionage. The characters of both novels are to be analysed and appropriately compared. Since both novels are not known to the Czech public, short summaries of both novels are provided in the appendix of the thesis.

The first chapter introduces the historical facts of Asian immigration into the U.S. and the subsequent limiting immigrant laws. Apart from Korean immigrants, also Chinese and Japanese immigrants are to be mentioned, particularly the numbers of immigrants, their education and hierarchy in the U.S. society. The Chinese are considered the pioneers of Asian American immigration and some of the facts concerning them apply to Koreans immigrants as well. The immigrant laws are mentioned because they were the cause or result of animosity towards Asian minorities in the U.S. and are, thus, necessary to understand the context of Asian immigration fully. Furthermore, different immigrant generations are to be described.

The second chapter deals with Asian American literature, namely Korean American literature. Different definitions of Asian American literature are to be presented, as well as, important writers of various origins. Then, the Korean American literature specifics are to be described. Relevant and necessary biographical information of Lee and Kim are to be mentioned. Concerning the novels, they are also characterized in terms of their genres, particularly historical genre and espionage thriller. Also, the flouting of the strict genre definitions is mentioned and analysed, particularly concerning *Native Speaker*.

Chapters three through seven are the core of the analysis. Even though the thesis is divided into chapters, some concepts are present and important throughout the whole thesis. Thus, they are mentioned across the paper multiple times and cross the boundaries of individual chapters.

Chapter three deals with identity issues. First, the concept of identity is to be defined. Next, gender identity and its presence or omission in the novels is discussed, as well as feminist tendencies of both novels. The feminist differences of the first- and second-generation immigrants are also present in the thesis. The following features of identity are class and ethnic identities which are closely connected to Confucianism. Class and ethnicity are discussed in a Korean-specific context, mainly discussing the portrayal of Korean upper-class and its struggles as immigrants in the U.S. Confucianism is then defined and its portrayal in both novels analysed, mainly the collective nature of the Korean community and the fact that the Korean language also contains features of Confucianism. The clash of Confucian collectivism and American individualism is also to be discussed.

Chapter four deals with diaspora and acculturation, concepts altering the identity of Korean immigrants in the U.S. Firstly, diaspora is defined and highlighted in *Clay Walls*. Here, the different viewpoints of different generations are also under scrutiny. As for acculturation, it is defined and the characters are then assigned the different stages of acculturation. General evaluation of whether the characters are acculturated or assimilated is also to be provided.

Chapter five focuses on the identity of one character from *Native Speaker*, Henry Park. It might seem an odd decision to isolate the analysis of his character, but it serves a purpose – he himself is isolated from other cultures (so it fits to isolate him in the analysis too), the concepts influencing him are different from that which were mentioned in previous chapters. Furthermore, the analysis will not be interrupted by the analysis of other characters and, thus, will be more comprehensive.

Segregation and Discrimination are discussed in chapter six. Both concepts are described and analysed in the novels with relevance to Asian American studies.

In the last analysing chapter, Yellow Peril and model minority are to be examined. Both concepts are described and the changing attitudes towards Asian minorities are also characterized. Furthermore, the Black-Korean conflict of 1992 is also described and analysed in *Native Speaker*. In *Clay Walls*, relationships between African Americans and Korean Americans are also analysed.

The goal of the thesis is to capture the portrayal of the above-mentioned issues or concepts concerning the Korean American minority in *Clay Walls* and *Native Speaker*, as well as the comparison of some aspects in the novels. Mainly, the changing or static attitudes of first- and second-generation immigrants are to be expressed, as well as the struggles of immigrants and their reactions to the situations are to be discussed with references to primary sources, along with viewpoints of critics.

1. Asian Immigration to the U.S. and immigrant Acts

The 1850s mark the beginning of systematic Asian immigration, particularly Chinese immigration, to the United States of America. The number of Asian immigration waves is varying based on the source. For instance, Ronald Takaki distinguishes two waves: the first wave dating from 1850 to 1965, the second one is considered “post-1965”. Takaki’s distinction is mainly based upon the motivation to leave one’s homeland (diaspora and poverty influenced immigration until 1965, versus the desire for better education and freedom of the second wave).¹² A similar view is shared by Uma A. Segal who in general terms also adopts the two-wave distinction.³ Other scholars, for example, a sociologist Pyong Gap Min, distinguish three waves based on the immigrant regulation Acts: the old immigration period (1850–1942), the intermediate period (1943–1964), and the contemporary period (post-1965).⁴ Yet, the combination of the two approaches – involving both the motivation to migrate and also the US regulations – should be applied when characterizing the Asian immigrant waves as both approaches play an important role in the identities of immigrants and hyphenated Americans.

The first immigrant wave began in the 1850s and included Chinese labourers. They were called ‘wah gung’ which Takaki explains as migrant labourers or sojourners.⁵ In the late 19th century, about 46,000 Chinese arrived in Hawaii and 380,000 in the mainland since the 1850s until 1930. There were many reasons for the departure from their homeland. The Chinese who settled in Hawaii and the U.S. were mainly from Guangdong, Kwangtung province, which was overpopulated and suffered from poverty⁶. They also fled because of:

the British Opium Wars of 1839–1842 and 1856–1860, the peasant rebellions such as the Red Turban Rebellion (1854–1864), the bloody strife between the *Punti* (‘Local people’) and the *Hakkas* (‘Guest People’) over possession of the fertile delta lands, and class and family feuds within villages.⁷

Yet, they were called sojourners because they were not staying in the U.S. permanently. The first immigrants were mainly Chinese men who left their wives, families, and homes in China and were mainly seeking to earn money either by working at railroad construction sites,

¹ Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 9.

² Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 424.

³ Uma A. Segal, *A Framework for Immigration: Asians in the United States*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 133–134.

⁴ Pyong Gap Min, “Asian Immigration: History and Contemporary Trends,” in *Asian Americans: Contemporary Trends and Issues* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2006), 7.

⁵ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 31.

⁶ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 33.

⁷ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 32.

pineapple plantations in Hawaii or gold mining in California.⁸ Segal also points out that the reason behind their temporary stay may have been the fact that in the 1850s (and also many years to come), the Chinese were not accepted into the American society as equals and thus decided to return back to China. The white workers were hostile towards the Chinese.⁹ Franklin Ng claims that the hostility was often disregarded and the Chinese's decision to return home was often misinterpreted as a simple lack of interest to permanently stay in the U.S.¹⁰

As the Office of the Historian states on the official US government website, historically, the Chinese were prevented from the process of naturalization and owning businesses. They worked for small wages and did not complain or try to improve their conditions, at least not in large groups to cause any kind of revolution.¹¹ The Chinese did earn a lot more than in their home country – in China they earned five dollars a month and, in the U.S., they earned thirty dollars a month.¹²

Contrastingly, American workers did complain and wanted better wages for their families. In short, the American workers would not work under the same conditions and thus felt as if the Chinese cheap labour could replace them and the Americans could quickly lose their jobs.¹³ The reason for no strikes by the Chinese or any other Asian group is, according to Takaki, simple. Business owners would hire multiple races and nationalities as George H. Fairfield said: “Keep a variety of laborers, that is different nationalities, and thus prevent any concerted action in case of strikes, for there are few, if any, cases of Japs, Chinese, and Portuguese entering into a strike as a unit.”¹⁴ Consequently, plantation owners would require multiple nationalities to keep the workforce in order and prevent any casualties or problems with requirements from Asian immigrants. Most of the Chinese migrants were men. Women stayed in the home country due to the Confucian way of life in China. Women had to obey the head of the family – either her father, husband or her eldest son (if she were a widow). When married, a woman left her family to live with her husband's family.¹⁵

Next immigrant group were the Japanese, called “Issei” – the first generation – “[b]etween 1885 and 1924, 200,000 Japanese went to Hawaii and 180,000 to the U.S. mainland.”

⁸ Segal, *A Framework*, 139.

⁹ Segal, *Framework*, 139.

¹⁰ Franklin Ng, “The sojourner, return migration, and immigration history,” in *The History and Immigration of Asian Americans*, ed. Franklin Ng (New York: Garland, 1995), 87–105.

¹¹ “Chinese Immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Acts,” Milestones: 1866–1898, Office of the Historian, accessed February 5, 2019, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/chinese-immigration>.

¹² Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 34.

¹³ Office of the Historian, “Chinese Immigration.”

¹⁴ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 26.

¹⁵ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 36.

They also came because of economic possibilities. The difference between them and the Chinese was that the Japanese were well educated (they even had a higher literacy than European immigrants) and they also were not as poor as the Chinese. This was achieved also because the Japanese government regulated which individual could leave for the U.S. or Hawaii.¹⁶

Asian immigration is usually divided into three waves. The Korean immigration waves, however, are usually divided into two: pre-1965 and post-1965.¹⁷ In 1903,¹⁸ one of the reasons for the introduction of Korean contract labourers into Hawaiian plantations was the fact that they would never gather with the Japanese, who were already present at the plantations, to organize any kind of strike as the two nationalities loathed each other.¹⁹ Also, they were hired because of the shortage of Chinese and Japanese workforce.²⁰ Between 1903 and 1920, around 8,000 Koreans sailed to the US (mainly Hawaii), leaving the kingdom of morning calms, as was then called Korea. This number is way smaller than the number of Chinese immigrants. Patterson claims that the small number of Korean immigrants helped them adapt to American society. The Koreans were not as isolated as, for example, the Chinese from the Western lifestyle since they had to interact with Americans. They could not rely on their small group entirely, as the Chinese did rely on their huge web of immigrants.²¹ In contrast with the Chinese and Japanese, the Koreans came from various backgrounds: “farmers, common laborers in the cities, government clerks, students, policemen, miners, domestic servants, and even Buddhist monks.” They came from cities rather than poor villages and around 70 per cent of them were literate. Many of the migrants were from lower classes, *sangmins*, while the upper classes, *yangbans*, were a minority, yet their presence was still significant, according to Patterson.²² Since the term *yangban* is used multiple times throughout the thesis, its definition is crucial to avoid confusion and a necessity to describe a culturally specific phenomenon. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* explains the *yangban* class as:

the highest social class of the Choson dynasty (1392–1910) of Korea. ... the term came to designate the entire landholding class. ... The *yangban* were granted many privileges by the state, including land and stipends, ... were exempt from military

¹⁶ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 45.

¹⁷ Min, “Asian Immigration,” 230–234.

¹⁸ Segal, *Framework*, 149.

¹⁹ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 26.

²⁰ Wenyang Xu, *Historical Dictionary of Asian American Literature and Theater* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 8.

²¹ Wayne Patterson, *The Ilse: First-generation Korean Immigrants in Hawai'i, 1903–1973*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 5–6.

²² Patterson, *The Ilse*, 7.

duty and corvée labour. They were even permitted to have their slaves serve their own terms of punishment.

As for the term *sangmin*, it refers to “commoners, as a premodern status distinction (vs. yangban)”²³ or a “freeborn commoner.”²⁴ In some journal articles, they are called *sangnoms* (even Duckhee Shin uses this term²⁵) but it has a different connotation: “‘Sangnom’ is a crude, somewhat derogatory reference to commoners.”²⁶ Thus, in the paper, *sangmin* shall be used to remain neutral with regards to addressing the characters of the novels.

Now to return to the topic of the previous page, the Koreans had different reasons for their emigration, in contrast with that of the Chinese or Japanese. They emigrated also because of poverty and cholera,²⁷ yet it was not the most significant reason. Since Christianity was widespread in Korea, the Koreans were encouraged to emigrate by American missionaries who promised them a rich land full of opportunities.²⁸ Segal claims that the reason for converting to Christianity was that by emigrating, a person would disobey Confucian philosophy, which valued family and land. By converting they reduced “the cognitive dissonance evoked by Confucian traditions.” Thus, the emigration was no longer immoral.²⁹ Another significant reason for migration from Korea was due to the Japanese occupation.³⁰ Yet Patterson concludes that the more pressing reason for emigration was starvation and deteriorating living standards in Korea “since the majority of the emigrants originated from the urban poor and working class” and were burdened with providing for their families and the Japanese occupation was, at first, not the most pressing problem.³¹ In *Clay Walls*, Christian missionaries are also present and one of the Christian priests serves a crucial role in the whole book. Reverend McNeil, who employs a young Chun as his “houseboy,”³² is a kind man who supports Chun’s education but still maintains a certain hierarchy between them. For instance, once, Chun sat into Reverend’s forbidden “tapestry covered wing-chair” and Reverend beat him for it.³³ Even though it is not explicitly mentioned in the novel, this conflict might have strengthened their bond as Chun simply broke the rules, Reverend punished him as a consequence and later did not hold any

²³ Nancy Abelmann, *Echoes of the Past, Epics of Dissent: A South Korean Social Movement* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 33.

²⁴ Abelmann, *Echoes of the Past*, 263.

²⁵ Duckhee Shin, “Class and Self-identity in *Clay Walls*,” *MELUS* 24, no. 4 (Winter, 1999): 125.

²⁶ Abelmann, *Echoes of the Past*, 263.

²⁷ Segal, *Framework*, 69.

²⁸ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 53

²⁹ Segal, *Framework*, 69.

³⁰ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 54–55.

³¹ Patterson, *The Ilse*, 8.

³² Ronyoung Kim, *Clay Walls* (Sag Harbor, New York: The Permanent Press, 1987), 151.

³³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 152.

grudge against Chun. This might have reminded Chun of a fatherly figure or he just knew, deep down, that as a servant he has his designated place and rules to obey. Chun trusts him and his actions. Furthermore, McNeil matches Haesu and Chun together, thus negatively affecting Haesu's whole life. It almost seems that the most significant events in Korea happen because of Reverend McNeil. He even hides Chun from the Japanese police and gives him enough money to travel to the U.S. Thus, McNeil might even be perceived as a catalyst of their immigrant family lives and thus shall be seen as the most significant reason for their emigration from Korea along with the Japanese occupation. Pamela Thoma claims that, through McNeil's character, Kim links his character to a real historical figure, a missionary Horace N. Allen, who came up with the idea of Korean immigrants working in Hawaii and other parts of the U.S.³⁴ However, the character could simply represent a white man's influence on the lives of minorities and those who seem to be easily manipulated and used.

As was already mentioned, the Chinese came mainly from several specific regions (e.g. Kwangtung province), the Koreans however, came from all around the peninsula and, thus, were a heterogeneous group.³⁵ As for Korean women, they migrated to the United States too. Takaki writes that "of the 6,685 adults who entered between 1903 and 1906, nearly 10 per cent were women."³⁶ Additional 1,100 women came as picture brides. The term 'picture brides' is closely connected to the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement between Japan and the United States. In summary, the Agreement prohibited emigration from Japan to the U.S. but there was a loophole – the family members of the migrant worker could get entry permits. As Wayne Patterson explains further, this phenomenon was also possible for Koreans. This picture bride system referred to

exchange of photographs between the prospective bride and groom through an intermediary. After both sides agree and the groom pays the appropriate fees, the bride travels to Hawai'i and is married at the immigration station to the man she has only seen in a photograph.³⁷

In *Clay Walls*, Haesu is not a picture bride per se, but her marriage is match made by a Christian missionary. What is similar to picture brides, though, is the fact that to marry Chun she had to travel to California as he already escaped Korea. Still, her marriage is agreed by her parents and

³⁴ Pamela Thoma, "Representing Korean American Female Subjects, Negotiating Multiple Americas, and Reading Beyond the Ending in Ronyoung Kim's *Clay Walls*," in *Recovered Legacies: Authority and Identity in Early Asian American Literature*, ed. Keith Lawrence and Floy Cheung (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005) 285.

³⁵ Patterson, *The Ilse*, 7.

³⁶ Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 56.

³⁷ Patterson, *The Ilse*, 80.

the Christian missionary, thus, Haesu has no control over her life, even though she is a *yangban* and Chun *sangmin*.

Apart from the picture brides, according to Jung Ha Kim, by 1924, around 900 intellectuals, students and political refugees (driven out of Korea because of their anti-Japanese movement) arrived into the U.S. Since 1924 to 1950, the Korean immigration halted and thus, there are no records of Korean immigrants. Kim then goes to discuss the fact that Korean immigrants “were double impacted by racial discriminatory immigration policies of the United States and Japan’s colonization of Korea.”³⁸ This phenomenon is called “‘double colonization’ of Korean immigrants” by Elaine H. Kim. She explains this as a situation when Korean immigrants “could not look to their homeland as a source of merchandise for trade or for diplomatic assistance” due to Japan’s colonization of Korea and additionally, the U.S. were racist towards the Koreans – consequently, they felt hated and abandoned.³⁹ Another catalyst for Korean immigration was the Korean war (1950–1953). In short, Korea was divided into two political units – South Korea chose the rightist political spectrum and was supported by the United States, whereas North Korea chose a communist government backed by the Soviet Union. This conflict is usually called a cold war and is still prevalent even in the 21st century.⁴⁰ The strong U.S. influence on Korea and their military intervention there caused another influx of Korean immigrants in the United States. Min reports that since the beginning of the Korean war until 1964, around 15,000 Korean emigrated and most of them were Korean women married to U.S. soldiers in South Korea or “Korean orphans adopted by American citizens.”⁴¹

The United States of America is often referred to as the nation of immigrants. Paradoxically, throughout history, there have been numerous exclusion acts and laws restricting the immigration of (not only) Asians into the US,⁴² as Lisa Lowe explains in her influential book *Immigrant Acts*. Lowe points out that the exclusion, of Asians particularly, began with “laws against the naturalization of Asians” and these laws and exclusion acts were passed as the Immigration Act of 1882, next was the Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act), and the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934.⁴³ The last act limited mainly Filipino immigration to the US. It is important to mention that the Immigration Act of 1882 was preceded by the Chinese

³⁸ Jung Ha Kim, “Cartography of Korean American Protestant Faith Communities in the United States,” in *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities*, ed. Pyong Gap Min, Jung Ha Kim (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 191.

³⁹ Elaine H. Kim, “Korean American Literature,” in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, ed. King-Kok Cheung (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 158.

⁴⁰ Min, “Asian Immigration: History and Contemporary Trends,” 231–232.

⁴¹ Min, “Asian Immigration: History and Contemporary Trends,” 232.

⁴² Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University press, 1998), 5.

⁴³ Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 5.

Exclusion Act of 1882 which “prohibited certain laborers from immigrating to the United States.”⁴⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* explains that the Chinese Exclusion Act was the first major legislation which “explicitly suspend[ed] immigration for a specific nationality.” The ban included Chinese labourers from legal immigration to the US. Also, the following amendments prohibited such labourers who left the US to return back, also the Chinese labourers’ wives could not emigrate from China to live with their husbands in the US. This approach clearly foreshadowed the racial segregation and “anti-immigrant agitation by white Americans”. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* concludes its entry on the Act by stating that the Act “set the precedent for later restrictions against immigration of other nationalities and started a new era in which the United States changed from a country that welcomed almost all immigrants to a gatekeeping one.”⁴⁵

One might wonder why Americans were so hostile to Chinese labourers. Yet, the reason for the racist tendencies of Americans are quite straightforward, mainly they include the fear of something which is different from the American racial and social group. First of all, the Chinese are a different nation and ethnic group. They look completely different from the average western white man. There was another reason – the social tension which occurred even before the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed. As the Office of the Historian states on the official US government website, in the 1850s, the Chinese came to America because of better wages which they sent to their families in China. Americans felt their land and money were being exploited by an unwanted minority. In 1879, Congress passed a limitation on Chinese immigration to “to fifteen per ship or vessel”. In 1888, the Scott Act was passed which disallowed “reentry to the United States after a visit to China ... even for long-term legal residents.” Even though there was an uproar in China as the Chinese government felt humiliated, they could not prevent the passing of the law on the American soil and those restrictions proved successful as the Chinese immigration declined. There were also other Acts, such as the Geary Act (1892) which renewed the racial exclusion for another ten years, and in “1902, the prohibition was expanded to cover Hawaii and the Philippines, all over strong objections from the Chinese Government and people. Congress later extended the Exclusion Act indefinitely.” The Act was finally repealed in 1943 to boost up morale during World War II.⁴⁶ Most of the above-mentioned regulations involved

⁴⁴ “Overview of INS History,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed February 1, 2019, <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/History%20and%20Genealogy/Our%20History/INS%20History/INSHistory.pdf>.

⁴⁵ “Chinese Exclusion Act,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published May 12, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chinese-Exclusion-Act>.

⁴⁶ Office of the Historian, “Chinese Immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Acts.”

not only the Chinese but most of Asians as well. On top of that, as of 1905, there was a severe limitation which involved mainly Korean immigrants:

Japan made Korea a protectorate, dismantling the Korean military, governmental, and diplomatic institutions and harnessing Korean labor to Japanese militarism and industrialization efforts. After 1905, Koreans in the United States fell under jurisdiction of Japanese consulates.⁴⁷

Regarding the post-1965 Korean immigration, it was caused by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. This Act abolished the quota system and attracted new immigrants. According to Kevin Ray Bush, et al., there are three categories of migrants: “economic migrants (i.e., those who come to the United States seeking better jobs and pay), family migrants (i.e., those who come to join family members already living there), or involuntary migrants (i.e., refugees who are fleeing political violence).”⁴⁸ According to the *National Association of Korean Americans*, most immigrants have settled in California and New York.⁴⁹ Consequently, it is not surprising that *Clay Walls* is set in California and *Native Speaker* in New York as the concentration of Korean immigrants is high even nowadays.

Native Speaker is set in the 1990s and there are some flashbacks to the protagonist’s childhood where the reason for the migration from South Korea is mentioned. It is very different from the motif prominent in *Clay Walls*. In *Native Speaker*, the main reason for coming to the US seems to be that Henry’s father seeks a better financial situation. However, the true reason is unknown. Henry himself even says “I never learned the exact reason he chose to come to America. He once mentioned something about the ‘big network’ in Korean business, how someone from the rural regions of the country could only get so far in Seoul.”⁵⁰ Thus, they were economic migrants. As for the *Clay Walls* characters, since they fled Korea because of the Japanese colonization, they can be characterized as involuntary migrants. Charles B. Keely calls the economic migration as “voluntary” and the involuntary one as “forced.”⁵¹ Scholars also categorize immigrants based on their generations. Bush et al., provide an overview of those generations. Firstly, the first-generation immigrants which are people of foreign origin,

⁴⁷ Kim, “Korean American Literature,” 181.

⁴⁸ Kevin Ray Bush, Stephanie A. Bohon, and Hyoungh K. Kim, “Adaptation Among Immigrant Families: Resources and Barriers,” in *Families & Change: Coping With Stressful Events and Transitions*, ed. Sharon J. Price, Christina Price and Patrick C. McKenry (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010), 285.

⁴⁹ “In Observance of Centennial of Korean Immigration to the U.S.,” *National Association of Korean Americans*, accessed May 15, 2019, <http://www.naka.org/resources/history.asp>.

⁵⁰ Chang-rae Lee, *Native Speaker* (London: Granta Books, 1998), 52.

⁵¹ Charles B. Keely, “Demography and International Migration,” in *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (New York: Routledge, 2000), 50.

immigrating to the U.S.⁵² Contrastingly, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, along with the already mentioned interpretation, shows one more meaning: “born in the U.S. – used of an American of immigrant parentage.”⁵³ Thus, it is important to state which of these meanings is to be used in the thesis and that is the first one. The first definition is to be used since other sources mentioned work with the same interpretation of the meaning. Therefore, the first-generation immigrants are foreign-born, to avoid confusion and to be consistent with the sources. In *Native Speaker*, the first-generation immigrants are Henry’s father, mother and their housekeeper. In *Clay Walls*, they are Haesu, Chun, and the people of the National Association of Koreans. Secondly, the second-generation immigrants are children of the first-generation immigrants and are considered U.S. citizens. This definition is again, for some, unsatisfactory. Sylvie Durmelat and Vinay Swamy claim that the second-generation term is an oxymoron. A second-generation immigrant is not an immigrant at all, at least for Durmelat and Swamy, thus, the oxymoron label. Moreover, they claim that the term denies the immigrant descendants of their assimilation, achievements and are regarded as “second class” citizens.⁵⁴ This is partly true, yet it generalizes the situation of the second-generation immigrants as well. It is true that it may erase certain qualities of the generation but even this generation is not fully assimilated yet. At least not in the novels which are to be examined. All the second-generation immigrants in *Native Speaker* and *Clay Walls* are in between the Asian and American cultures. Thereby, the term second-generation immigrant is to be used in the sense as mentioned by Bush et al. Henry Park from *Native Speaker* is sometimes considered to be the one-and-a-half generation Korean American and more frequently second-generation Korean American. The “one-and-a-half generation” describes such immigrants who immigrated to the new country in their adolescence. In this thesis, his character intertwines majority of the generations as he seems to be in the middle of the two cultures, thus, his character shall be examined not only as a second-generation immigrant or one-and-a-half generation immigrant but also as a first-generation one. Furthermore, several scholars agree that Henry’s occupation and identity issues are a metaphor for immigrants or hyphenated Americans in general.⁵⁵ Thus, as well as in the novel and this thesis, his classification has not strict boundaries. Thirdly, the first-generation grandchildren

⁵² Bush et al., “Adaptation,” 285.

⁵³ “First-generation,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2019, accessed May 6, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/first-generation>.

⁵⁴ Sylvie Durmelat and Vinay Swamy, “Second-generation Migrants: Maghrebis in France,” in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, ed. Immanuel Ness (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 1. https://www.academia.edu/6023540/Durmelat_and_Swamy_-_Second-generation_migrants_Maghrebis_in_France.

⁵⁵ Matthew L. Miller, “Speaking and Mourning: Working Through Identity and Language in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*,” *Asian American Literature: Discourses and Pedagogies* 7 (September 2016): 123.

are called third-generation immigrants. The only third-generation group is present in *Native Speaker* as Mitt. We do not know much about him, only that he is the child of an interracial marriage between Lelia and Henry. Furthermore, we know that he is accidentally killed by young American children whilst playing outside. This incident is the source of Henry and Lelia's trauma and Mitt's death is also the catalyst of relationship issues, even though they were present in the marriage from the beginning but just hidden. After his death, they are brought to the surface of their lives. Since Mitt shall mainly be discussed from the point of trauma studies (which are not the topic of the thesis), his analysis is to be brief and in relation with Korean American issues. The main one concerning Mitt is that Henry feels sorry for him since he is neither fully Korean nor American:

Though I kept quiet, I was deeply hurting inside, angry with the idea that [Lelia] wished he was more white. The truth of my feeling, exposed and ugly to me now, is that I was the one who was hoping whiteness for Mitt, being fearful of what I might have bestowed on him: all that too-ready devotion and honoring, and the chilly pitch of my blood, and then all that burning language that I once presumed useless, never uttered and never lived.⁵⁶

Miller evaluates Henry's viewpoint as "self-loathing" and that he does not want Mitt "to inherit the struggles of living with having not-quite Korean, not-quite American customs, demeanors, and speech."⁵⁷ Henry's stance seems to be an extreme case of caution and fear of having a child between two different cultures, now also with apparent physical differences from the majority culture. Also, the above-mentioned quote from *Native Speaker* signifies that Henry hates his skin,⁵⁸ as Miller points out. This fact is apparent only after Mitt is born, otherwise, Henry was preoccupied with internal differences, such as language or cultural heritage. Lelia herself blames Mitt's death on his complexion: "Maybe it's that Mitt wasn't all white or all yellow"⁵⁹ as if Henry and Lelia both regretted they had a child on the boundaries of both cultures. To sum up, Lee's intention of creating Mitt's character is to show the parents' struggles of interracial children. These children might be fully acculturated but their physical appearance will still deny their full assimilation and damage their identity.

Not only are there different generations of immigrants, but also of Asian American writers.

⁵⁶ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 265–266.

⁵⁷ Miller, "Speaking and Mourning," 120.

⁵⁸ Miller, "Speaking and Mourning," 120.

⁵⁹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 120.

2. Asian American Literature and the genres of *Clay Walls* and *Native Speaker*

Asian American literature is a relatively new field of study that is yet to be fully explored. Daniel Y. Kim and Crystal Parikh claim that only since the 1980s this field of study became widely studied by critics and became a “vibrant field within English and American studies department in the U.S. academy.”⁶⁰ Scholars used to be bored with having to talk constantly about the same authors, yet now, the problem is to include the variety of writers coming from different nations and backgrounds,⁶¹ as King-Kok Cheung points out.

The first Asian American literature anthology, *Aiiieeeee!* by Frank Chin et al., focused mainly on Chinese, Japanese and Filipino American writers. The editors of *Aiiieeeee!* defined Asian American literature at “Filipino–, Chinese–, and Japanese–Americans, American born and raised, who got their China and Japan from the radio, off the silver screen, from television, out of comic books...”⁶² From this quote, one may realize that their point of view excluded some Asian minority writers and instead, chose to study such nationalities which were represented and published in abundance. After the influx of Asian immigration after 1965, other nationalities started arriving in significant numbers and started producing their own pieces of literature, for example, American writers of “[...] Korean, Indian, Indonesia, Laotian, Nepali, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Thai, and Vietnamese descent.”⁶³ Then, Elaine H. Kim proposed a different definition of Asian American literature as “published creative wirings in English by Americans of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino descent.”⁶⁴ Yet again, her definition sparked another debate. The main question was about whether Asian American texts can be of a different language than English or not,⁶⁵ as Wenying Xu informs. She explains that Asian American texts were written in both languages, the English and that of the author’s former home country too.⁶⁶ Even though there were attempts to represent most of the wide variety of works, until the mid-1990s, Asian American studies consisted mainly of a small group of writers and scholars, namely, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese Americans. However, this has

⁶⁰ Daniel Y. Kim and Crystal Parikh, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature* ed. Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), xxi.

⁶¹ King-Kok Cheung, “Re-viewing Asian American Studies,” in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, ed. King-Kok Cheung (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

⁶² Chin et al., *Aiiieeeee!*, vii.

⁶³ Cheung, “Re-viewing,” 3.

⁶⁴ Elaine H. Kim, *Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), xi.

⁶⁵ Xu, *Historical Dictionary*, 1–2.

⁶⁶ Xu, *Historical Dictionary*, 2.

changed in 1997 when a special issue of *Position* was published,⁶⁷ as Xu proposes. The editors Elaine H. Kim and Lisa Lowe called for “the creation and maintenance of solidarity across racial and national boundaries.”⁶⁸ Since then, the East Asian American literature was not at the forefront. Instead, Pan-Asian literature was getting more noticed and valued.⁶⁹

As far as the beginnings of Asian American literature are concerned, it is not possible to list every single author from the late 19th century until now. Firstly, the list would have been too extensive, secondly, in this thesis, only works which were written in English (not translated to English) shall be mentioned to remain concise and still relevant to the topic of Korean American literature. Thus, the details of oral tradition will be omitted. Xu argues that the very first Asian American work was by Lee Yan Phou, a Chinese American, and his memoir *When I Was a Boy in China* (1887), introducing the rich Chinese lore.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it was not until almost a century later that Asian American writers were recognized by the mainstream public. This era started thanks to Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior* (1976), Amy Tan’s *Joy Luck Club* (1989) and David Henry Hwang’s play *M. Butterfly* (1988).^{71 72} Kingston’s novel was “canonized and estimated by some to be the most widely taught work by a living American writer.”⁷³ It suggests that the success of Kingston and other Chinese American writers helped pave the way for other ethnic writers, including those of Korean descent. One might claim so because Korean American literature emerged into the public sphere in the 1980s, only a few years later than writers of Chinese descent, as Elaine Kim emphasises.⁷⁴ Yet, the first Korean American text *Hansu’s Journey* dates back to 1921 and is by Philip Jaisohn and is highly autobiographical.⁷⁵ Xu and Elaine H. Kim report that one of the first generation Korean American writers was Younghill Kang who wrote an autobiographical novel *The Grass Roof* (1931).^{76 77} Ronyoung Kim belongs to the second generation writers along with Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Richard Kim and other influential authors. The third wave of Korean American literature involves the descendants of Korean immigrants who immigrated in the 1970s and the

⁶⁷ Xu, *Historical Dictionary*, 2.

⁶⁸ Elaine H. Kim and Lisa Lowe, *Positions: New Formations, New Questions: Asian American Studies* 5.2 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), xi.

⁶⁹ Xu, *Historical Dictionary*, 2.

⁷⁰ Xu, *Historical Dictionary*, 2.

⁷¹ Xu, *Historical Dictionary*, 3.

⁷² Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong, “Chinese American Literature,” in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*, ed. King-Kok Cheung (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 50–53.

⁷³ Wong, “Chinese American Literature,” 50.

⁷⁴ Kim, “Korean American Literature,” 156.

⁷⁵ Xu, *Historical Dictionary*, 142.

⁷⁶ Xu, *Historical Dictionary*, 142.

⁷⁷ Kim, “Korean American Literature,” 158–159.

writers' primary language is English. To name at least a few authors: Susan Choi, Nora Okja Keller, Patti Kim, and Chang-rae Lee.⁷⁸

Ronyoung Kim is the pen name of Gloria Hahn, a Korean American writer. She was born in 1926 in Los Angeles, for eighteen years she lived in a Korean community. She was the daughter of North Koreans who emigrated to the U.S. At the age of fifty, she was diagnosed with cancer and so decided to write *Clay Walls*. Her first and only novel was published right before her death in 1987.⁷⁹ Elaine H. Kim reveals that it is a highly autobiographical novel not only because Kim is Korean but also because her parents' social standing resembles the main protagonists'. Her mother resembles the character Haesu, who was a *yangban* (a Korean aristocrat), contrastingly, her father was similar to the character Chun, who was a *sangmin* (a commoner). Elaine Kim also provides valuable biographical information in connection to the novel. She reports that her mother was actively participating in the Korean independence movement, raised her children taking in sewing, which is identical to Haesu's situation in the last part of the novel. Also, Kim's father was an immigrant labourer who died and left his wife widowed.⁸⁰ Kim decided to write about Korean immigrants because she thought that "[a] whole generation of Korean immigrants and their American born children could have lived and died in the United States without knowing they had been here. I could not let this happen."⁸¹

One might question the importance of biographical information on authors, especially those who are still producing literary works. Yet, in the case of Asian-American literature, it is usually important to also know the history of the author and his or her family as sometimes the writers' lives shape the themes and characters they write about. This principle applies to both Lee and Kim. Chang-rae Lee was born in 1965 in Seoul, South Korea. In 1968, he, along with his father Young Yong Lee, mother Inja and older sister Eunei, immigrated into Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After six months of living there, they moved to New York. This implies that Lee is a one-and-a-half- or second-generation immigrant because he left Korea as a toddler. According to the *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, Lee's parents wanted him to assimilate to the new culture and so they spoke to him only in Korean so that he wouldn't learn English with a foreign accent.⁸² This fact is important to understand his books fully as, for example, in his

⁷⁸ Kim Foreman, "Korean American Literature," in *Encyclopedia of Asian American Folklore and Folklife: Volume 2*, ed. Jonathan H. X. Lee, and Kathleen M. Nadeau (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 695.

⁷⁹ Shirley Geok-lin Lim, *Asian American Literature: An Anthology* (Lincolwood: NTC Publishing Group, 2000), 427.

⁸⁰ Elaine H. Kim, "'These Bearers of a Homeland': An Overview of Korean American Literature, 1934-2001," *Korea Journal* 41, no. 3 (Autumn, 2001): 167.

⁸¹ S. E. Solberg, "The Literature of Korean America," *The Seattle Review* 11, no. 1 (1988): 23.

⁸² "Chang-rae Lee Biography," *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, Notablebiographies.com, accessed February 6, 2019, <https://www.notablebiographies.com/newsmakers2/2005-La-Pr/Lee-Chang-rae.html>.

very first book *Native Speaker*, he discusses the issue of non-Americans teaching their children English. This issue may be illustrated in the internal monologue of the Korean American character Henry Park, talking about his son Mitt (having Korean American father and American mother): “I feared I might handicap him, stunt the speech booming in his brain, and that Lelia [American] would provide the best example of how to speak.”⁸³ In a different monologue, Henry explains the difference between English and Korean:

Native speakers may not fully know this, but English is a scabrous mouthful. In English there are no separate sounds for L and R, the sound is singular and without a baroque Spanish trill or roll. There is no B or V for us [Koreans], no P or F. [...] I remember my father saying, Your eyes are *led*, staring at me after I’d smoked pot for the first time, and I went into my room and laughed until I wept. I will always make bad errors of speech.⁸⁴

Thus, Henry’s worries are understandable not only because of the differences between English and Korean but also because when Henry meets Lelia for the first time, he admits he is “always thinking about having an accent” and she is immediately capable of recognizing his immigrant history.⁸⁵ Consequently, even though Henry grew up in America, his speech is altered and this might signify that a seamless assimilation into the American culture is not possible.

Returning to Lee’s life, according to some scholars, he took the unexpected route and applied for a Phillips Exeter Academy and after graduation, in 1983, he went to Yale University where he majored in English and began writing stories but did not publish them.⁸⁶ His field of education is seen as unexpected because Asians in America stereotypically focus their studies on math and science, not humanities.⁸⁷ In 1995, Lee’s first novel, *Native Speaker*, was published and also considered “the first novel by a Korean American to be published by a mainstream publisher, G.P. Putnam’s Son’ imprint Riverhead.”⁸⁸ Lee is currently a professor of creative writing at Princeton University. He has published four other books so far: *A Gesture Life* (1999), *Aloft* (2004), *The Surrendered* (2010), and *On Such a Full Sea* (2014). His novels usually deal with identity issues, assimilation, isolation and clash of cultures. *Native Speaker* won lots of awards including the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award. On the Princeton University official website, there are mentions of other awards he received for his usually critically appreciated novels: “the American Book Award, the Barnes & Noble Discover Award,

⁸³ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 223.

⁸⁴ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 217–218.

⁸⁵ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 11.

⁸⁶ Notablebiographies.com, “Chang-rae Lee.”

⁸⁷ Chris Fuchs, “Behind the ‘Model Minority’ Myth: Why the ‘Studious Asian’ Stereotype Hurts,” *NBC News*, updated August 22, 2017.

⁸⁸ Notablebiographies.com, “Chang-rae Lee.”

ALA Notable Book of the Year Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Literary Award, the Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award, and the NAIBA Book Award for Fiction.”⁸⁹ When looking at the extensive list of awards, it is quite shocking that none of his books were translated to Czech and so Lee is basically unknown to Czech readers.

As for the classification of both books, some of their themes are similar but their genres are different. After thorough research, it is certain that both books deal with the immigrant narrative. Nicolás Kanellos defines the characteristics of immigrant literature in the context of Hispanic immigrant literature. Some of those characteristics may be applied to define general immigrant literature:

it serves a population in transition from the land of origin to the United States by reflecting the reasons for emigrating, recording the trials and tribulations of immigration, and facilitating adjustment to the new society, all the while maintaining a link with the old society.⁹⁰

Both novels follow the pattern mentioned in the quote above. For instance, *Clay Walls* is about an immigrant family, their arrival into the U.S. because of the Japanese colonization of Korea, the discrimination they had to endure in the U.S., reminiscing about their homeland but also, the characters gradually realize that they are becoming westernized, and the life of second-generation immigrants. In *Native Speaker*, the reader gets to know about the problems of immigrants, the way they were also discriminated against and also, searching for Korean or American identity. In contrast with *Clay Walls*, *Native Speaker* focuses mainly on the descendants of the first generation, their tribulations and also interpersonal relationships. *Native Speaker* feels more personal because the narrator is Henry himself, thus, the reader gets to view his life from his perspective. Contrastingly, the first two parts of *Clay Walls* are written using the omniscient character and even though the narrator also describes certain situations with the inner characters' feelings, there is still some barrier between the reader and the characters. In the last chapter of *Clay Walls*, the narrator changes and the story of Faye is told from the first-person point of view (Faye's view), strengthening the feelings and viewpoints of Faye. The shift of the narrator's perspective might be done to achieve the credibility of Faye's childhood.

The difference between the two novels is that *Clay Walls* is a historical novel, whereas *Native Speaker*'s genre is not easy to classify clearly. *Clay Walls* is considered a historical novel based on such definitions of the genre as: “a novel set in the past, before the author's lifetime

⁸⁹ “Chang-rae Lee,” Stanford University, accessed February 6, 2019, <https://english.stanford.edu/people/chang-rae-lee>.

⁹⁰ Nicolás Kanellos, *Hispanic Immigrant Literature: El Sueño del Retorno* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 7.

and experience” and additionally “the goal of authors of Historical Fiction is to bring history to life in novel form.”⁹¹ Lynda G. Adamson adds that for a novel to be of a historical fiction, it should be “about a time period at least 25 years before it was written” but also adds that what is more important is that the setting should be “in a time earlier than that with which the reader is familiar.”⁹² These definitions suit *Clay Walls* perfectly, as Kim wanted to record the lives of Korean immigrants so that they are not forgotten – she wanted to keep them alive at least in literature. Also, it is set in the 1920s until 1940s, the novel was published more than forty years later, and some events of the novel are almost one hundred years old in 2019. *Native Speaker* is considered an immigrant novel and an espionage thriller. It is not, however, an ordinary espionage thriller. Saricks defines the protagonist of a typical thriller as a “resourceful protagonist [who] may or may not be trained as an actual spy, but he always has skills that serve this purpose ... the political focus and implications emphasize Espionage and the gaining of information, rather than actual politics. ... The tone and mood are often dark.”⁹³ All of this may be applied to the protagonist Henry Park, particularly the fact that as an immigrant, Henry is a keen observer and collects information on his surroundings. However, if one applied only this particular view, one would not look below the surface of the novel. Tina Y. Chen argues that Lee’s *Native Speaker* is not a typical spy novel. She claims that Lee breaks the spy frame by making the plot or action just a minor piece of the story, also the omission of special gadgets is breaking the usual espionage framework of such stories. She goes even further to claim that Lee is parodying the espionage genre.⁹⁴

In a phrase, we were spies. But the sound of that is all wrong. We weren’t the kind of figures you naturally thought of or maybe even hoped existed. [...] We pledged alliance to no government. [...] Guns spooked us. Jack kept a pistol in his desk but it didn’t work. We knew nothing of weaponry, torture, psychological warfare, extortion, electronics, supercomputers, explosives. Never anything like that.⁹⁵

In this quote, Lee disproves almost every characteristic of a spy.

Concerning other themes, the very first pages of *Native Speaker* by Chang-rae Lee introduce many of them, particularly dealing with identity, the issues of hyphenated Americans,

⁹¹ Joyce G. Saricks, *The Readers’ Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2001), 81.

⁹² Lynda G. Adamson, *World Historical Fiction: An Annotated Guide for Adults and Young Adults* (Phoenix: The Oryx Press, 1999), xi.

⁹³ Saricks, *The Readers’ Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction*, 332.

⁹⁴ Tina Y. Chen, “Recasting the Spy, Rewriting the Story: The Politics of Genre in *Native Speaker* by Chang-rae Lee,” in *Form and Transformation in Asian American Literature*, ed. Zhou Xiaojing and Samina Najmi (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 252–254.

⁹⁵ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 15.

and immigration. Linked with these are the sense of non-belonging, double identity, assimilation, ethnic attrition and other issues which will be elaborated on in this thesis. These concepts are encoded in a piece of paper with the description of the main protagonist, Henry Park – a Korean, composed by his estranged wife, Lelia – an American. She leaves him a note saying: “You are surreptitious [...] illegal alien, emotional alien [...] Yellow peril: neo-American [...] poppa’s boy [...] _____ analyst (you fill in), stranger, follower, traitor, spy.” Later, Henry finds another scrap of paper with “False speaker of language”⁹⁶ written on it. These two quotes clearly signify that the issues of immigrants and their descendants are not easy to classify and define. The issues have multiple layers and implications, varying from one individual to another, sometimes even from one scholar to another. They also manifest the complicated relationship of interracial marriage because even Henry’s wife herself is trying to define him, almost in an encyclopaedic way – providing keywords of her husband, as if to make sure she knows who he is. Thus, one may assume that Chang-rae Lee focuses on identity and immigration issues in a personal way, rather than the national, more general view. Similarly, in *Clay Walls* by Ronyoung Kim, the themes are also the immigrant identity, assimilation and ethnicity. Additionally, the novel also depicts the struggles of an aristocratic Korean as an immigrant in the United States and furthermore stresses the Confucian society and the position of women in the patriarchal Korean community, retaining typical features of Korean society. As it has been already mentioned above, there are multiple immigrant themes contained in *Native Speaker*, but there is one that seems to be the most prominent – the concept of identity. Even though the presence of the themes seems to be straightforward because of its explicit depiction in the above-mentioned quotes, one must also consider the historical background of plots to fully understand the concepts mentioned.

Before the analysis of immigrant themes, it is important to stress that fiction is not necessarily a representation of reality. In the context of Asian American literature, King-Kok Cheung highlights various clashing expectation of Asian American writing. Some expect it to be politically motivated, others socially motivated, and some expect experimental approach or, contrastingly, personal account of events. Furthermore, some scholars perceive Asian American literature as a “material that reflects ethnic experiences.” Cheung raises the question of history itself as “a human construct not to be equated with ‘truth’” and she correctly claims that “the earlier view of Asian American literature as mirroring society has been unsettled.”⁹⁷ Susan Brantly explains that historians may also vary in the representation of facts but only in the

⁹⁶ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 5.

⁹⁷ Cheung, “Re-viewing,” 15.

representation of their importance. They do not and cannot change the facts. Conversely, authors of historical fiction may change the facts to fit their narrative.⁹⁸ Thus, it is important to realise that even though *Clay Walls* and *Native Speaker* present historical events and believable characters, one has to remain cautious and understand the books as fiction, not the account of reliable and ultimate truth. For instance, Jane Phillips locates Roynoung Kim's bias and animosity towards the Japanese even in the style of the prose. Phillips claims that Kim privileges her own ethnic heritage over fellow Asians.⁹⁹ For example, when Haesu speaks in front of a judge (a stressful situation), she speaks with almost flawless English: "Mr. Chun had back luck. We'll be alright. John worried about me. He's a good boy. We'll pay back everything."¹⁰⁰ Contrastingly, Mrs Nagano, a Japanese American, speaks in a fragmented English even in a mundane conversation: "Tall girl, [...] American food, [...] I made Japanese dinner. Too bad you can't stay. You have tea with Jane. I bring to the dining room."¹⁰¹ Furthermore, during one of the English lessons at the beginning of the novel, the omniscient narrator specifically says "The Japanese couple were at the bottom. Their native language seemed to develop a tongue that made forming English words impossible."¹⁰² It seems ironic that the editors of *Clay Walls* did not spot the mistake of "there" instead of "their" in this particular sentence and context. Phillips believes that the Haesu's superiority in speaking English is "an expression of Kim's own value judgement."¹⁰³ One may claim so since Haesu herself does not mention her language skills in comparison with other ethnicities. She even laughs with a Japanese couple in their collective inability to speak English properly.¹⁰⁴ Instead, it is Kim who inexplicitly makes the distinction between the Japanese and Korean language learning abilities. Haesu concentrates more on her hatred towards the Japanese in terms of their colonization of Korea than their different language skills. Thus, the reader must realize that some characters may be described with negative qualities just because the author is not objective and projects her own emotions into the story.

⁹⁸ Susan C. Brantly, *The Historical Novel, Transnationalism, and the Postmodern Era: Presenting the Past* (New York: Routledge, 2017),

<https://books.google.cz/books?id=TUglDgAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&hl=cs&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁹⁹ Jane Phillips, "'We'd be Rich in Korea': Value and Contingency in *Clay Walls* by Ronyoung Kim," *MELUS* 23, no. 2, Varieties of Ethnic Criticism (Summer, 1998): 177.

¹⁰⁰ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 206.

¹⁰¹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 213.

¹⁰² Kim, *Clay Walls*, 31.

¹⁰³ Phillips, "'We'd be Rich in Korea'," 178.

¹⁰⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 31.

3. Identity

Before discussing specific terms, which influence the identity of immigrants (for example, diaspora, acculturation, ethnic attrition, etc.), identity itself is to be discussed. Different methods and viewpoints have been proposed to classify the term identity. Furthermore, the question of whether identity can be uniformly defined seems to be hard to answer. Even for the purpose of this thesis, selected identity approaches shall be mentioned and examined due to the novels' different displays of protagonists' identities. Usually, to define identity, one asks "who am I?", which is a very broad question, and the answer would be very subjective or hard to answer. The question depends on the point of view of the researcher. To illustrate, Kath Woodward asks "who am I?" or "who are you?" in order to determine the group which is similar to us or is different from us.¹⁰⁵ Also, the "you" might be of the second person singular or plural as the issue of identity relates not only to individuals but also groups, also known as collective identity.¹⁰⁶ Woodward stresses the "sense of recognition and of belonging."¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Vignoles et al. evolve the notion of identity further. They claim that identity is not only about "who you think you are" (individually or collectively) but also 'who you act as being' in interpersonal and intergroup interactions.¹⁰⁸ More specific definitions, provided by Sedikides and Brewer, define identity as the individual, relational, and collective self.¹⁰⁹ Firstly, the individual self resides in differentiating of what makes one different from others (e.g. traits, or characteristics) and thus "protecting or enhancing the person psychologically." Meaning, the individual feels the positive emotion of uniqueness.¹¹⁰ MacDonald claims that also religious and spiritual beliefs belong to the concept of individual identity.¹¹¹ Secondly, the relational self comprises of such concepts which are shared with people of close relationships, for instance, parent-child relationship, romantic relationships, and even "specific role relationships" such as the teacher-student relationship. It is based on "personalized bonds of attachment ... [and] relies on the process of reflected appraisal and is associated with the motive of protecting or

¹⁰⁵ Kath Woodward, *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity* (London: Routledge, 2004), 6.

¹⁰⁶ Vivian L. Vignoles, Seth J. Schwartz, and Koen Luyckx, "Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity," in *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Vignoles, Vivian L., Seth J. Schwartz, and Koen Luyckx (New York: Springer, 2011), 8.

¹⁰⁷ Woodward, *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Vignoles et al., "Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity," 2.

¹⁰⁹ Constantine Sedikides, and Marilynn B. Brewer "Individual Self, Relation Self, and Collective Self: Partners, opponents, or Strangers?" in *Individual Self, Relation Self, and Collective Self*, ed. Constantine Sedikides, and Marilynn B. Brewer (Ann Arbor: Psychology Press, 2001), 1–4.

¹¹⁰ Sedikides, and Brewer, "Individual Self, Relation Self, and Collective Self: Partners, opponents, or Strangers?" 1.

¹¹¹ Douglas A. MacDonald, "Spiritual Identity: Individual Perspectives," in *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Vignoles, Vivian L., Seth J. Schwartz, and Koen Luyckx (New York: Springer, 2011), 530.

enhancing the significant other and maintaining the relationship itself.”¹¹² To specify the relational self even more, such an identity does not exist on its own, it has to be recognized by “a social audience,”¹¹³ for instance, a mother recognizes the identity of a child and vice versa, the same goes, e.g. for the identities of an employee and employer. Thirdly, the collective self underlines the need of an individual to be included in a large social group (i.e., the in-group) and contrasting it with out-groups. In contrast to the relational self, the collective self does not “require close personal relationships among group members.”¹¹⁴ Turner et al. underline that there is a “shift towards the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of self as a unique person.”¹¹⁵ All in all, these three concepts exist simultaneously and are considered as social self-representations.¹¹⁶ These concepts can be applied to both novels. Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker* is not as explicit as *Clay Walls* in its identity issues. The character of Henry Park is a mystery throughout the majority of the novel but gradually, one may ascertain the nature of his identity. His individual identity is very hard to grasp. Critics also suggest that the supporting characters are capable of identifying Henry’s qualities, whilst Henry himself is unable to do so.¹¹⁷ As the story develops, Henry’s identity starts becoming clearer. His individual identity is intertwined with the relational one. He is described as a father, son, and husband in terms of the relational strategy. His individuality dwells in being a spy, without race, and alien. Yet some might argue that to be an alien, Henry has to be recognized as one by outsiders, thus, some may classify this trait as relational. The fact that Henry seems to portray an empty vessel of a human or a “shapeshifter” of identities, is not surprising. He even admits that he “prefer[s] versions of things,”¹¹⁸ instead of the originals. Thus, his remark might symbolise his shapeless identity – just one of many.

Ronyoung Kim’s characters also display the three types of social selves. Yet it is important to remember that the concepts are not clearly separated but may flow from one to another. The individual self is highlighted through Haesu’s life story itself, namely her

¹¹² Sedikides, and Brewer, “Individual Self, Relation Self, and Collective Self: Partners, opponents, or Strangers?” 1–2.

¹¹³ Vignoles et al., “Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity,” 3.

¹¹⁴ Sedikides, and Brewer, “Individual Self, Relation Self, and Collective Self: Partners, opponents, or Strangers?” 2.

¹¹⁵ J. C. Turner, M. Hogg, P. Oakes, S. Reicher, and M. Wetherell, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-categorization Theory* (England: Blackwell, 1987), 50.

¹¹⁶ Sedikides, and Brewer, “Individual Self, Relation Self, and Collective Self: Partners, opponents, or Strangers?” 2.

¹¹⁷ Scott Berghegger, “Henry Park’s Identity through Selves and Space in *Native Speaker*,” *Inquiries Journal* 1, no. 10 (2009): <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/22/henry-parks-identity-through-selves-and-space-in-native-speaker>.

¹¹⁸ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 4.

upbringing in an aristocratic family. Additionally, she and her husband follow the Confucian philosophy of family – here, the boundaries of the concepts are blurred, as both of them believe in Confucianism and, accordingly, also follow the roles designated for a husband and wife, thus, their religious beliefs shape not only their individual identity but also relational identity.

When talking about Henry’s shapeless (or varying, depending on the point of view) identity, the question of “multiple identities” logically rises. There are three general distinctions: a singular, unitary, or multiple identities. To explain, a singular identity does not mean that a person has just one identity. It often entails that the single identity is compiled of several domains.¹¹⁹ To illustrate, individuals (within social identity tradition) have multiple group identities which might shift based on the intergroup context.¹²⁰ Most of the identity scholars agree that an individual’s identity is not simple to determine and has multiple layers.^{121 122} Vignoles et al. propose that with multiple identities, problems might arise. Vignoles explains this on an example of a female whose identities are: a musician and a mother. Theoretically, the problem might arise from the fact that the woman might experience these components as two separate identities “and might have difficulty reconciling these into a unitary sense of self ... [as the] fulfilment of her music ambitions [might interfere] with the fulfilment of her role as a mother.”¹²³ Since the multiple identity problem can be applied into every-day life, it is not surprising that Henry in Lee’s novel is (almost as if) damaged by this phenomenon – he has to act at work to fulfil his company goals as a spy and it seems as if it has consumed him even in his personal life. This problem is also prevalent in *Clay Walls* where Haesu identifies herself as a *yangban* and at the same time is a wife of a commoner – this clash of separate identities (*yangban* versus a domestic submissive wife) is prevalent through the story and the reader oftentimes feels the tension between Haesu and her husband as she still did not cope with her new social standing. Also, Haesu insists on learning English and Chun is quick to remind her of her place at home:

“I’ll only be gone one night a week for two hours. I’d be a fool not to take advantage of the course.”

Chun did not answer immediately. He pulled out a cigarette and lit it before saying, “I don’t like you being out at night. Who will do the cooking?”

“I’ll prepare your dinner beforehand. The school is just a few blocks away. I’ll come straight home.”

¹¹⁹ L. Goossens, “Global Versus Domain-Specific Statures in Identity Research: A Comparison of Two Self-Report Measures,” *Journal of Adolescence* 24, no. 6 (December 2001): 681–699.

¹²⁰ Vignoles et al., “Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity,” 5–6.

¹²¹ Vignoles et al., “Introduction: Toward an Integrative View of Identity,” 6.

¹²² Woodward, *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, 7.

¹²³ Woodward, *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, 7.

“I guess there’s no stopping you then,” he said, snuffing out his cigarette.¹²⁴

Chun does not support his wife’s education and is more concerned about his full stomach. Even though the end of the scene seems optimistic for Haesu, when she becomes pregnant she stops going to the classes altogether.¹²⁵ The possibility for such a decision might be either her being discouraged that English is significantly different from Korean (and thus hard to learn) or that she stayed at home to be an obedient wife. The clash of her *yangban* and wifey identity leads to other crucial parts of identity: gender, class, and also ethnic identity.

3.1. Gender Identity

Encyclopædia Britannica summarizes gender identity as “an individual’s self-conception as being male or female” which is not fixed at birth but fluid. It is modified by parental and social reinforcement and also language. The child’s upbringing and parent’s culture heavily influence a “sex-appropriate behaviour.”¹²⁶ All characters both in *Clay Walls* and *Native Speaker* never question their gender identity since they are all certain if they are a man or a woman. However, some characters challenge their gender roles and some abide by them. In *Native Speaker*, there are women who predominantly abide by their gender roles. Henry’s mother and housekeeper both know their place in their home. Henry’s mother is a typical Korean obedient wife who cooks, cleans and takes care of guests whilst not engaging in the men’s conversation. To illustrate she would:

make up the bed in the guest room and prepare a tray of sliced fruit and corn tea or liquor for [the guests’] arrival ... [The guests] used to sit on the carpeted floor around the lacquered Korean table ... My mother would smile and talk to them, but she sat on a chair just outside the circle of men and politely covered her mouth whenever one of them made her laugh or offered compliments on her still-fresh beauty and youth.¹²⁷

The same goes for the housekeeper whose safe haven is the kitchen. Turning to *Clay Walls*, Haesu might be perceived as a feminist because she frequently argues with him and is stubborn. Yet, as Duckhee Shin points out, she despises Chun not because of the way he treats her as a woman but because of her class issues.¹²⁸ One might object that after Chun rapes Haesu, she promises “never to forgive or forget” him.¹²⁹ This instance seems again to be directly connected

¹²⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 26.

¹²⁵ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 32.

¹²⁶ “Gender identity,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published October 17, 2013, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/gender-identity>.

¹²⁷ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 56.

¹²⁸ Shin, “Class and Self-identity in *Clay Walls*,” 129.

¹²⁹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 30.

with her pride of being *yangban* and him *sangmin*, not feminist issues: “He would never have her respect, not after what he had done to her.”¹³⁰ Unexpectedly, Haesu does not criticize the marital rape further, even though it happens twice in the novel. Consequently, one might say that the gender roles are not, in certain parts of the novel, discussed to its full potential. Given the fact that Korean society is patriarchal and by many perceived as sexist,¹³¹ as Young I. Song claims, it is surprising that such an issue was not dealt with more. It almost seems as if Kim wanted to discuss gender inequality but then decided to stress the class difference instead. Lim also shares this view but highlights racial issues:

once the children arrive, the novel concentrates on concerns of racial inequality that Haesu fears will prevent her children from achieving success in the United States. The narrative moves from a discourse and critique of gender relations to a discourse and critique of race relations.¹³²

Shin adds that the feminist criticism of Korean society is perhaps that of the narrator, not Haesu herself who focuses mainly on her class.¹³³ To illustrate, the narrator even recalls Haesu’s perspective on the beautiful life in Korea: “She really had laughed at everything and worried about nothing in Korea; a daughter protected from the world by her parents, groomed in seclusion for marriage”¹³⁴ and Haesu is also positive, without hesitation, when Faye asks her if she is glad to be a woman.¹³⁵ Consequently, it is safe to say that to evaluate Haesu’s part of the novel as a feminist work would be false since, below the surface of the events, the class and racial issues are much more important than gender and feminist issues. The situation of *Clay Walls*’s second-generation characters is not much different. Faye, an American-born daughter, might be expected to follow a different path and realize the inequalities between Korean American men and women. However, she follows her mother’s example of obedience. Even though, at one point, Faye questions the gender roles in relation to her having to do homework whilst her brothers can play outside: “[...] I wondered how she [Haesu] could justify treating me one way and the boys another. I knew it was an argument I could not win. Even Papa and the boys would side with her.”¹³⁶ Gradually, Faye learns her place in the Korean community through her mother’s teaching: “In Korea, children do what their parents say. Parents do

¹³⁰ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 30.

¹³¹ Young I. Song, *Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism*, ed. Young I. Song and Ailee Moon (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 270.

¹³² Shirley Geok-lin Lim, “Feminist and Ethnic Literary Theories in Asian American Literature,” *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 3, *Who’s East? Whose East?* (Autumn, 1993): 586.

¹³³ Shin, “Class and Self-identity in *Clay Walls*,” 129.

¹³⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 10.

¹³⁵ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 202.

¹³⁶ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 201–202.

everything for their children and the children respect them for it. [...] I thought I taught you that.”¹³⁷ And when Haesu scolds her children for being disrespectful to her: “Don’t ever forget that I am your mother. Under no circumstances are to tell me what to say,” Faye feels as if “everything was falling into place again.”¹³⁸ Through the Confucian style upbringing, Faye finds peace and order in the unequal dynamic of the parent-child relationship, she does not question it or rebel against it. What Faye initially rebels against is Willie and his behaviour towards her. At first, if Faye would not have run away, he might have raped her inside his car.¹³⁹ The second time he French kisses her without her consent.¹⁴⁰ Faye is conflicted and feels “excitement and revulsion”¹⁴¹ as she is too young for sexual intercourse (she is around twelve-years-old) but still recognizes that consent is important. Furthermore, Faye blames her mother for the attempted rape: “Willie had helped himself to my body and Momma put my reputation in his hands. I wished I was rid of them both; I could take care of my own reputation.”¹⁴² Gradually, we learn that Faye has to read on pregnancy in a library to understand sex as her mother calls it “that thing.”¹⁴³ This signals that for Korean families, sexual intercourse is a taboo. Consequently, Lim concludes that Kim does not follow the “Euro-American feminist agenda” as it focuses “on the transformation of individuals caught between ethnic cultures rather than between gender roles. Moving from gender to ethnicity the perspective inevitably moves from women’s domestic issues to ethnic social issues.”¹⁴⁴ At the end of the novel, a reader might be disappointed that Faye will have a match made marriage with a man she does not love – the same fate as her unhappy mother.

3.2. Class and Ethnic Identity

Moving on now to consider the frequently mentioned issue of class identity, K. Woodward classifies class as “a large grouping of people who share common economic interests, experiences and lifestyles.”¹⁴⁵ Chris Weedon claims that “class remains a key ingredient of subjectivity and identity” and it plays an important role “as a way of conceptualizing social

¹³⁷ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 275.

¹³⁸ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 207.

¹³⁹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 241.

¹⁴⁰ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 252.

¹⁴¹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 241.

¹⁴² Kim, *Clay Walls*, 242.

¹⁴³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 246.

¹⁴⁴ Lim, “Feminist and Ethnic Literary Theories in Asian American Literature,” 587.

¹⁴⁵ Woodward, *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*, 21.

relations that can lead to an understanding of inequalities within society.”¹⁴⁶ Weedon continues by explaining that class is commonly perceived as a lifestyle which is either inherent or assigned later in one’s life. He also points out “cultural dimensions” of class: “whether people speak with class-specific regional accents or use received pronunciation, or what they do in their leisure time, rather than emphasizing the ways in which class is firmly grounded in economic and educational relations of difference and inequality.”¹⁴⁷ In the context of Korean characters, to understand the class identity fully, one has to also take into account Korean ethnic identity. James B. Palais claims that the Korean class system is at the core of “Korean uniqueness.” Korean society is called “slave society” which Palais classifies as “the most obvious mark of uniqueness” for Korea since no other East Asian country can be called slave society. He then stresses the importance of a *yangban* society who had household and agricultural slaves, even after the slavery in Korea was abolished in 1894.¹⁴⁸ The term ethnicity itself is, as identity and other abstract concepts, hard to define. Furthermore, Werner Sollors claims that lots of scholars prefer the term undefined.¹⁴⁹ Contrastingly, R. A. Schermerhorn provides an extensive and almost all-encompassing definition of an ethnic group:

... a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypal features, or any combination of these. A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group.¹⁵⁰

Thus, the self-consciousness of one’s ethnicity is a crucial part of the definition. When defining ethnicity, one has to also consider “race” and its differences from ethnicity. Milton M. Gordon reports that “ethnic group” includes also racial groups. He claims that “all races, whatever cautious and flexible term we shall give to the term, are ethnic groups. But all ethnic groups, as conventionally defined, are not races.” Meaning, the superior term is ethnicity. Additionally, the race includes physical differences, ethnicity includes cultural distinctions.¹⁵¹ Michael Omi

¹⁴⁶ Chris Weedon, *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2004), 10.

¹⁴⁷ Weedon, *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging*, 11.

¹⁴⁸ James B. Palais, “A Search for Korean Uniqueness,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55, no. 2 (December, 1995): 414–415, 418.

¹⁴⁹ Werner Sollors, “Foreword: Theories of American Ethnicity,” in *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: New York University Press, 1996), xii.

¹⁵⁰ R. A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 12.

¹⁵¹ Milton M. Gordon, *The Scope of Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 119, 130, 131.

and Howard Winant highlight one problem with such a definition. They claim, for instance, that according to Gordon's definition all Blacks would be sorted as one ethnic group which would strip them of their true places of origin and identities. They do not come from one place but, for example, from Jamaica or Africa, thus, they may be influenced in different ways.¹⁵² Hence, for the purpose of the paper, the individual places of origin shall be distinguished for ethnic groups. To claim that Koreans and Japanese are of the same ethnicity would be false and, in real life, might even insult those who have suffered during the Japanese occupation in Korea. Moreover, in *Clay Walls*, the characters deliberately distinguish themselves from the Japanese. Basically, it would be false to intentionally group them together. In *Clay Walls*, the characters often mention "unity" of Koreans as their strength.¹⁵³ They do not talk about the unity of Asians, but Koreans specifically - stressing their uniqueness and shared histories. As the story progresses, the first-generation characters carry their Korean ancestry but also adapt to the life of Americans. To illustrate, Koreans usually sit on floors, only on cushions, not chairs. When Haesu returns to Korea and is supposed to sit on the floor, she must have not one but two cushions and even Haesu herself realized that her perception of comfort has significantly shifted: "It's odd, isn't it? When I first went to America, I wasn't comfortable unless I was sitting on the floor." Moreover, when going to the police station in Korea, Haesu decided to wear "her apple-green floral print dress and black patent leather pumps,"¹⁵⁴ instead of *hanbok*, the traditional Korean dress¹⁵⁵ which in a way represents Korean-specific culture. This indicates that ethnicity is fluid and not rigidly set as with any identity. This fact is, for instance, supported by Jamie Frueh.¹⁵⁶ As for Chun, his ethnic identity is very different from that of Haesu. Even though he was persecuted by the Japanese in Korea, he does not participate in the liberation movement established in America by Koreans. Kandice Chuh goes as far as to claim that Chun's stance towards the movement represents an irony since Chun is the only character (that we know of) who was actually persecuted by the Japanese and yet, he is the only Korean immigrant reluctant to participate in any meetings of the Korean independence movement. Chuh intensifies her claim by interpreting Chun "as representative of a consequence of failing to develop a sense of Korean nationalism; his demise symbolically figures the possible success of

¹⁵² Michael Omi, and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (London and New York: Routledge, 1986), 21ff.

¹⁵³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 34.

¹⁵⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 108.

¹⁵⁵ "South Korea – Daily life and social customs," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published May 30, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Korea/Daily-life-and-social-customs#ref1029885>.

¹⁵⁶ Jamie Frueh, "Studying Continuity and Change in South African Political Identity," in *Identity and Global politics: Empirical and Theoretical Elaborations*, ed. Patricia M. Goff and Kevin C. Dunn (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 63.

Japanese colonialism in the extermination of Korea in the absence of concerted resistance.”¹⁵⁷ Chuh’s interpretation is on point since Chun seems not to care about the citizens on the Korean peninsula and in the end, he dies in total isolation – from his family, friends or culture. Contrastingly, Haesu actively participates in the movement, she works as a secretary for the members and even donates money to help their common cause. Chuh highlights that by Haesu’s activity in the movements, she remains Korean and it “provides [her] with a sense of connection to Korea despite her physical removal from the peninsula”. According to Chuh, such behaviour is “in fact partly the product of the Japanese colonialism that would eradicate that identity altogether.”¹⁵⁸

Concerning the class identity, Haesu is a proud “one hundred per cent Korean”¹⁵⁹ who as a *yangban* had maids and was taken care of, not looked down upon. However, in America, as an immigrant she has to clean toilets:

“You’ve missed a spot,” Mrs. Randolph said, pointing. “Dirty.” Haesu had been holding her breath. She let it out with a cough.

Mrs. Randolph shook her finger at the incriminating stain. “Look,” she demanded, then made scrubbing motions in the air. “You clean.”

Haesu nodded. She took in another breath and held it as she rubbed away the offensive stain.

“Th-at’s better.” Mrs. Randolph nodded with approval. “Good. Clean. Very good. Do that every week,” she said, scrubbing the air again. She smiled at Haesu and left the room.

Haesu spat into the toilet and the rag into the bucket. “*Sangnyun!*” she muttered to herself. “*Sangnyun, sangnyun, sangnyun!*” she sputtered aloud. She did not know the English equivalent for ‘low woman’, but she did know how to say, “I quit” and later said it to Mrs. Randolph.¹⁶⁰

From the quote, it is apparent that Haesu cannot bear to clean someone else’s “filth”¹⁶¹ and feel to be a “low woman” doing so. Her pride and social standing are more important than providing for her family. After quitting her job, Haesu talks with Clara, her Korean immigrant friend, and the reader’s perception of Haesu is strengthened as very proud and aristocratic. Haesu calls herself “one hundred per cent Korean”¹⁶² and when Clara addresses her “Onni”, a Korean honorific title for older sister, Haesu feels her anger has softened.¹⁶³ That is because she is assured of her social status and is reminded of her treasured Korean heritage which is often

¹⁵⁷ Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 95.

¹⁵⁸ Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique*, 95.

¹⁵⁹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 8.

¹⁶⁰ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 5.

¹⁶¹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 9.

¹⁶² Kim, *Clay Walls*, 8.

¹⁶³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 7.

disregarded by Americans. Even Clara herself, in order to show her respect for Haesu, brings to her attention *yangbans*: “Your ancestors were *yangbans*. No one can ever deny that. Everyone knows that children of aristocrats are not supposed to clean toilets.”¹⁶⁴ It seems as if Haesu has to remind herself of her aristocratic lineage, otherwise, she would lose a part of herself and since she did not come to America of her free will, she seemingly wants to resist the urge to blend in with the Korean immigrant role. Instead, she wants to retain the Korean aristocratic self. Chun, on the other hand, does not share her belief and it is understandable – he is *sangmin*, a commoner, whose social standing has not significantly changed. Haesu and Chun have an argument about her quitting the job, which perfectly describes their different views on social hierarchy:

“You’ll get used to the work,” he said.

“Never! I’ll never get used to cleaning someone else’s filth.”

“It takes two minutes to clean a toilet. It won’t kill you,” he said as he climbed into bed.

Haesu felt the heat rise to her cheeks. “I’ll never understand how you do it, how you can remain mute while someone orders you to come here, go there, do this, do that... like you were some trained animal. They call you a houseboy. A twenty-five year old man being called ‘boy’.

“They can call me what they want. I don’t put the words in their mouths. The work is easy. Work for pay. There’s no problem as long as they don’t land a hand on me. Just a job, Haesu. Work for pay.”

[...]

“That’s not good enough for me [Haesu] and I won’t disgrace my family by resorting to menial labor,”...¹⁶⁵

From the quote, it is apparent that Haesu cannot stand being on the bottom of society. For her, taking orders is like being an animal, the lowest of all. It also seems that she is still used to the ways of Korean honorifics – in Korea, ordinary people would talk to her using polite language and special honorifics to address a woman of her aristocratic status.¹⁶⁶ She applies the same approach to Chun, she cannot stand that her husband is addressed as a child, something less than the adult man he is. Contrastingly, since Chun was a commoner in Korea, nothing much has changed for him and his status, thus, it is fairly easy for him to adapt to the American society. He was even doing menial jobs back in Korea. Furthermore, he was doing so for an American missionary serving in there.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, Chun sees his job just as a means of providing for his family. He would even mind suffering from verbal humiliation. He also left because of

¹⁶⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 9–10.

¹⁶⁶ Dániel Z. Kádár and Sara Mills, “Notes,” in *Politeness in East Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 271–272.

¹⁶⁷ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 151.

diaspora but loses his interest in Korean nationality, seizing the opportunities of the relocated land, as he knows that as long as Korea is occupied by the Japanese, he and his family have no chance of free life in Korea.

As was already mentioned, Haesu is proud to be a *yangban*, but for Faye, that is not the case. This is apparent in an argument between the mother and daughter - Faye wants to have a part-time job to support the family. Haesu opposes her by saying:

“Women of the *yangban* class do not work for money.”

“You do.”

“Because I have no choice. But here in my house where no one can see me.”

“In America, it’s all right to work for money, for girls to work like boys. It’s nothing to be ashamed of,” I [Faye] insisted.

She [Haesu] put down her sewing to wave her finger at me. “You are not like other American girls. If you try to be like them, you will be nothing special.”¹⁶⁸

Haesu tries her best to retain Korean social order in their family because for her the Korean identity means they are special. This is also presented in the metaphor of “clay walls.”¹⁶⁹ At first, Chun suggests building a wall around their house to avoid the looks of their inquisitive neighbours:

“Maybe we could put up a fence or a wall of some kind. I’m used to having clay walls around my house.”

“Clay wall?” She [Haesu] laughed. “Can you imagine how that would look? People will really have reason to say, ‘how strange those people are.’”

She turned serious. “No, I prefer it open. If they can see us, we can see them. No one can hide anything.”¹⁷⁰

However, she gradually encloses her family into them by forcing Korean ideals of behaviour on her children. She no longer cares about what Americans think of their family as long as she feels safe at home and she achieves that by retaining her Korean heritage and hierarchy – without those ideals, she would lose control over her life. The clay walls, consequently, represent the Korean way of living as protection for immigrant families. In *Encyclopedia of the American Novel*, Rocío G. Davis interprets the clay walls metaphor similarly as:

the character’s shifting relationship with America: the immigrants’ enforced isolation from mainstream society and their own choice to keep within their community. Because these walls can be easily torn down, however, Kim shows that second-generation children do manage, in different ways, to enter American society and tenuously establish places for themselves.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 231.

¹⁶⁹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 38.

¹⁷⁰ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 38.

¹⁷¹ Rocío G. Davis, “Clay Walls,” in *Encyclopedia of the American Novel*, ed. Abby H. P. Werlock, James P. Werlock (New York: Fact on File, 2015), <https://books.google.cz/books?id=U59bAgAAQBAJ&lpg=PT845&vq=roryoung%20kim&dq=clay%20walls%20metaphor&hl=cs&pg=PT845#v=snippet&q=clay%20walls&f=false>.

This interpretation, however, does not mention that even first-generation immigrants might at first want to assimilate into the relocated country but fail to do so because of racism, discrimination or their own inability to abandon their former culture.

3.3. Confucianism

Another part of Korean ethnic identity is also the Confucianism which involves lots of beliefs, but the family structure and collectivism shall be discussed in the thesis. Lee Dian Rainey describes the Confucian family dynamic as follows:

First it is clear that the family is the centre of life and that the state is modelled on the family. Second, the relationship of father and son is primary and is a model for the others. Third, women play a role in only one of these relationships. [...] each of these relationships was reciprocal: a father cared for, and educated, his son; in return the son showed filial piety and respect to the father. [...] over time all the privileges flowed to the first member of the relationships – father, older brother, husband, and rules – and responsibilities flowed to the second member – son, younger brother, wife, government minister.¹⁷²

The fact that the Confucian influence is dominant mainly in Asia confirms Yuki's claims that collective and relational identities are different from Western and East Asian cultures. Yuki continues that, in contrast with Westerners, East Asians "think about groups as predominantly *relationship-based*" and they "tend to perceive themselves as a 'node' embedded within a network of shared relationship connections [among group members] ... rather than within strict bounded groups per se."¹⁷³ In short, East Asians are considered collectivistic, as opposed to individualized Americans, whose "self-reliance" was at the core of American national identity.¹⁷⁴ According to Triandis, individualists "show less group loyalty; they give priority to personal goals over the goals of collective." Contrastingly, collectivists either blend their personal and collective goals, or they emphasize collective goals over the personal ones.¹⁷⁵ In the context of Asian countries, collectivism is sometimes called "Confucian individualism" which is contrasted with the American "possessive individualism."¹⁷⁶ The "possessive individualism", as Li summarizes Macpherson's findings, consists of three "self-possessive

¹⁷² Lee Dian Rainey, *Confucius & Confucianism: The Essentials* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 28.

¹⁷³ Marilyn B. Brewer, and Masaki Yuki, "Culture and Social Identity," in *Handbook of Cultural Psychology*, ed. Shinobu Kitayama, and Dov Cohen (New York: The Guilford Press, 2010), 310.

¹⁷⁴ "Self-Reliance," Ralph Waldo Emerson *Self-Reliance*, Department of Mathematics Dartmouth, accessed March 20, 2019, <https://www.math.dartmouth.edu/~doyle/docs/self/self.pdf>.

¹⁷⁵ Harry C. Triandis, "The Self and Social Behavior in Differing Cultural Contexts," *Psychological Review* 96, no.3 (1989): 508–511. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/cc90/c4e7d3c7b083796c54a910f6301076b0c59c.pdf>.

¹⁷⁶ David Leiwei Li, *Imagining the Nation: Asian American Literature and Cultural Consent* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 104.

assumptions underlying both the individual human subject and his or her relation to society.”¹⁷⁷ The first assumption entails the notion of an individual who does not own anything to his/her society but labour. The individual is also perceived as self-reliant. The second assumption describes an individual as independent of the will of the community or society and relates himself or herself with groups voluntarily only. The third assumption is the result of both notions –society is seen as an opportunity to be successful in the market.¹⁷⁸

As for the collective identity it is also connected to their national identity as Koreans and, again, religious beliefs:

The terms were clear. They did not originate with Chun. Their roles had been handed down through centuries, made clear by Confucius generations ago, before Haesu was born, before she had a head to think and a voice to speak. ... As long as a man provided for his family, he was beyond criticism. A woman, on the other hand, was measured by how well she served the men in her family; first her father, then her husband and, finally, her son.¹⁷⁹

Meaning, that they collectively decided to follow the rules which are rooted deep in Korean society. Yet, it suggests that if it were up to Haesu, she would not accept such a social order from her free will. Since she was brought up in the Confucian society, she has no choice, it is deeply rooted in her through her upbringing. Nevertheless, she still tries to resist the norms by arguing with Chun, sometimes mocking him: “Gambling is for those who can afford it, for those of the leisure class or those responsible only to themselves. You belong to neither group.” Haesu continues to voice the reason why she defies him despite the fact that she should always cherish her husband. She stresses her upper-class upbringing which she deems as superior to the Confucian way of life: “ ‘It’s my birthright, not yours, to be a member of the leisure class.’ The words were rolling off her tongue, making room for more. ‘It was my birthright to marry a *yangban*.’ ”¹⁸⁰

The collectivist feature of Asian countries is also very explicit in the order they write their names and surnames or, in the case of Korean society, the way of addressing one another using honorifics. Lucien Brown confirms this proposal in his book *The Handbook of Korean Linguistics* where he claims that the usage of Korean language “constantly reflects and perpetuates the hierarchical and relational nature of Korean society, where traditional neo-Confucian slogans such as *kyenglosasang* ‘respecting the elderly’ and *cangyuyuse* ‘the old and

¹⁷⁷ Li, *Imagining the Nation: Asian American Literature and Cultural Consent*, 103.

¹⁷⁸ C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 263–264.

¹⁷⁹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 28.

¹⁸⁰ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 28.

the young know their place' still hold currency."¹⁸¹ Ho-Min Sohn underlines the importance of "address-reference," meaning that in Korean society, lots of professional titles (e.g. chief, company president, taxi driver, nurse) are used as "address terms." He then orders address-reference terms in "decreasing deference and/or distance: ... full name; ... surname; ... given name; ... general title (e.g. *sensayng* 'sir', *matam* 'madam'); ... kinship terms (e.g. *hyeng* (male's) older brother'); ... professional or occupational title ...; highest honorific title..."¹⁸² There are many more titles but these are relevant to the topic of the thesis. The Korean honorifics are used to imply hierarchical roles, contrastingly, English honorifics (e.g. Mr, Mrs) to gender roles and marital status.¹⁸³ Characters in *Clay Walls* also use honorifics. For instance, the honorific "*nu nim*"¹⁸⁴ is used between Haesu and Uncle Samsung, a distant friend of Chun and Haesu. Ho-Min Sohn and Peter H. Lee explain that the *-nim* suffix is used "for one's superiors or distant adult equals"¹⁸⁵ which perfectly fits the narrative. Haesu also calls her children, for instance, "Faye-yah!"¹⁸⁶ but the suffix "*-ya*" is considered to be very informal, used to address children.¹⁸⁷ Even though the novel is written in English, some characters speak Korean but Kim still translates them and only keeps the honorifics in Korean. It is apparent that Kim intentionally keeps the use of Korean honorifics to sustain the characters' Korean identity, as the purpose of Korean honorifics is diametrically different from the English ones. Furthermore, first-generation immigrants use honorifics more frequently than their children. It also stresses the mentality shift of the latter group from Korean to American traditions. The honorifics also serve as an important feature of their collective identity. The honorifics are mentioned in the thesis also because Americans may not comprehend the cultural differences of honorifics. Most frequently, Americans would use a name to address someone, not the honorific of hierarchy. In *Native Speaker*, Lelia does not understand the ways of Korean mentality when addressing Henry's housekeeper:

"So what's her name?" Lelia asked after a moment.
 "I don't know."
 "What?"
 I told her that I didn't know. That I had never known.
 "What's that you call her then?" she said. "I thought that was her name. Your father calls her that too."

¹⁸¹ Lucien Brown, "Honorifics and Politeness," in *The Handbook of Korean Linguistics*, ed. Lucien Brown, and Jaehoon Yeon (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 303.

¹⁸² Ho-Min Sohn, *The Korean Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 409–410.

¹⁸³ Sohn, *The Korean Language*, 410.

¹⁸⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 187.

¹⁸⁵ Ho-Min Sohn, and Peter H. Lee, *A History of Korean Literature*, ed. Peter H. Lee (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37.

¹⁸⁶ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 190.

¹⁸⁷ Sohn, and Lee, *A History of Korean Literature*, 37.

“It’s not her name,” I told her. “It’s not her name. It’s just a form of address.”

The source of Lelia’s confusion is simple – she is not familiar with Korean and so she thinks the address-referential honorific is her name as it is mentioned often; Henry’s monologue summarizes the Korean addressing system and mentality brilliantly:

Americans live on a first-name basis. She didn’t understand that there weren’t moments in our language—the rigorous, regimental one of family and servants—when the woman’s name could have naturally come out. Or why it wasn’t important. At breakfast and lunch and dinner my father and I called her “Ah-juh-ma,” literally *aunt*, but more akin to “ma’am,” the customary address to an unrelated Korean woman. ... I never heard my father speak her name in all the [twenty] years she was with us. But then he never even called my mother by her name, nor did she ever in my presence speak his. She was always and only “spouse” or “wife”...; he was “husband” or “Father.”¹⁸⁸

Lelia is appalled that he does not know the woman’s name and takes it as an insult to the housekeeper. She is apparently not able to traverse the cultural differences and take his perspective into consideration. By the end of Henry and Lelia’s dialogue, she raises doubts about what she means to Henry himself. She is unsure about his perception of her: “‘It scares me,’ she said. ‘I just think about you and me. What I am ...,’”¹⁸⁹ unsure whether she is also just a “wife” or Lelia, the woman he loves and means something more to him. She sees herself as a unique individual, not just a “wife” or Mitt’s mother. Contrastingly, to Henry, he takes honorifics naturally and does not give them much thought. Since he also mentions the address-referents of his parents, he takes honorifics as something natural, encoded into his mind. It is important to note that throughout the story, even we readers do not know the names of Henry’s father and mother. They are simply addressed as father, mother, Mr or Mrs. It seems that Lee wanted to stress the Korean hierarchy mentality and their collectiveness and did so very sneakily. Even Henry admits that it would be hard for him to remember his parents’ names. To illustrate:

And to this day, when someone asks what my parents’ names were, I have to pause for a moment, I have to rehear them not from the memory of my own voice, my own calling to them, but through the staticky voices of their old friends phoning from the other end of the world.

Such a viewpoint would be understandable from a child’s perspective but not from a grown, adult man. To sum up, both novels display a strong sense of Confucianism which is a crucial

¹⁸⁸ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 63.

¹⁸⁹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 64.

part of Korean identity which remains intact mostly for the first-generation immigrants as illustrated in the novels.

4. Diaspora and Acculturation

Now that the identity issues have been discussed, it is time to turn to the ways the identity of immigrants changes in the new culture. *Clay Walls*, an autobiographical novel, is set in 1919 and it follows the events concerning one family of Korean-Americans, and also their Korean community in Los Angeles, California. In this novel, Kim portrays the struggles of an immigrant family in American society. The family left Korea because of the Japanese occupation of Korea and the subsequent oppression of Koreans by the Japanese. This situation should be called diaspora which is a widely used term in the context of immigrant literature. Therefore, the meaning of diaspora is to be specified in this study. Salman Akhtar simplifies the notion of the diaspora to “the breaking up and scattering of people,”¹⁹⁰ yet such definition is too narrow for the purpose of this thesis. The authors of *Diaspora and Memory* give a clear and thorough introduction to the various approaches to the diaspora. One of the approaches is that the diasporic identity may be defined as “a triple sense of belonging: to the other member of a distinctive local diasporic community; to diasporic groups in other locations around the world; and, finally, to the point of origin, the actual or imagined homeland that binds these groups together.”¹⁹¹ Pramod K. Nayar notes that diaspora is the result of “migration, immigration, and exile.”¹⁹²

The characters in *Clay Walls* oftentimes think about their homeland (before the Japanese occupation), their lives there, the foods and customs they miss in the U.S. Furthermore, even those the novel is written in English, characters originally speak Korean within the Korean American community. Usually, only the second-generation immigrants such as Faye, Harold or John speak in English and have to explain certain English words to their parents. Even though Haesu, a first-generation immigrant, learns a little bit of English, she still mostly speaks Korean. She might do so to show her Korean heritage, or that she is Korean (and not Japanese) to Westerners. Majority of the first-generation immigrants remark on the present situation of Korea and mention the atrocities the Japanese did to Koreans, including torture, rape or mass murders. For example, at the meeting of their Korean community, a guest speaker Min shares a dreadful personal story of the Japanese occupation of Korea:

¹⁹⁰ Salman Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity: Turmoil, Treatment, and Transformation* (Lanham: Rowmand & Littlefield Publisher, Inc., 2004), 171.

¹⁹¹ Marie-Aude Baronian, Stephan Besser, Yolande Jansen, “Introduction: Diaspora and Memory. Figures of Displacement in Contemporary Literature, Arts and Politics,” in *Diaspora and Memory: Figures of Displacement in Contemporary Literature, Arts and Politics* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 11.

¹⁹² Pramod K. Nayar, *Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction* (Dehli: Pearson Education India, 2008), 187.

“They burned my mother and sister alive,” he said bitterly. “I saw it with my own eyes.” He told of being there in Kyonggi Province right after the March First demonstration when the Japanese police herded his mother and a score of villagers into a church, his mother carrying his infant sister on her back. He and others were left to witness what was to follow. He was stunned when the police set fire to the church. He was filled with anguish as the searing heat forced him back. His cries of agony matched those of his mother.¹⁹³

Those stories of cruel treatment of Koreans are usually told in order to strengthen the sense of nationalism, of their shared history (or memory) of the Korean Americans as demonstrated in the characters’ immediate reaction to the previous story:

A shudder ran through Haesu; she put down her pen. Tongues clacked and murmurs of indignation rumbled through the audience. Someone yelled, “Those sons-of-bitches!” [...] “Then the Japanese police fired guns at the pyre of human bodies,” Min said. He raised his voice over the obscenities shouted by some of the men in the audience. “I too was enraged. I vowed to destroy every police station in Korea.” Half the audience rose to its feet and shouted, “Mansei!” The other half scrambled to join them.¹⁹⁴

The word “Mansei!” (a transcription of a Korean word) is well explained in an autobiography by Peter Hyun *Mansei!: The Making of a Korean American*: “*Man Sei!* Ten Thousand Years! Long Live Korea! Long Live Korean Independence! Pedro-ya, it means we are free. It means we are not Japanese slaves anymore.”¹⁹⁵ and “the spirit of *Man Sei* always preserved and nurtured our courage.”¹⁹⁶ Interestingly enough, even though the characters are well aware of the oppression of Koreans, Haesu herself still wants to return back home, to the still occupied Korea. This is also part of diaspora as it often includes homesickness and the desire to return to one’s home country.¹⁹⁷ There is also another reason – and that is the fact that Haesu had to leave Korea because Chun was persecuted by the Japanese and, as his future wife, she had to seek refuge with him in the United States. Upon arriving there as an immigrant, Haesu lost her aristocratic status of *yangban* basically overnight and became an outsider of the society – the Asian immigrant. Thus, she might have felt the urge to return to Korea, to improve her social status.

All of the first-generation immigrants loathe the Japanese and also Japanese Americans. The second-generation immigrants, namely Faye, have a different view on Japanese Americans.

¹⁹³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 15.

¹⁹⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 15–16.

¹⁹⁵ Peter Hyun, *Man Sei!: The Making of a Korean American* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1996), 6.

¹⁹⁶ Hyun, *Man Sei!*, xiii.

¹⁹⁷ Baronian, Besser, Jansen, “Introduction: Diaspora and Memory,” 11.

Faye has a friend Jane but when she learns her surname is Nagano (a typical Japanese surname), she is conflicted. Her mother reminds her of their rule: “[n]o Japanese friends”¹⁹⁸ but Faye opposes her by stating the truth that Jane is “the nicest girl”¹⁹⁹ she has ever met and that “Jane could never be cruel”²⁰⁰ as the Japanese in Korea. Faye raises a valid point that Jane, born in the U.S., is not the same as the cruel Japanese in Korea. Haesu is blinded by her loss of home and social class, blaming the Japanese. She does not realize that she applies the same stereotypes and prejudices against the second-generation Japanese Americans as the white Americans do to other American born generations of immigrants. Haesu does not distinguish those born in Japan and the U.S. and yet is angry when her American born boys do not have the same rights and opportunities as whites. Faye, on the other hand, understands the distinction and is frustrated that her mother, fighting for the rights of her children, would not do the same for other minorities adapting to the U.S. society.

Speaking of adaptation, it is important to define it and describe other terms relevant to this theoretical frame of identity issues of immigrants. Adaptation is defined by John W. Berry as “changes that take place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands.”²⁰¹ Furthermore, W. M. Hurh and K. C. Kim summarize adaptation as “the process in which immigrants modify their attitudinal and behavioural patterns in order to maintain and improve their life conditions compatible with the new environment.” They then broaden the term by listing other “modes and resultant conditions such as acculturation, assimilation, segregation, pluralism.”²⁰² Historically, acculturation and assimilation were often considered synonymous concepts. After thorough research on this topic, one would claim that it is not necessarily true. These concepts share some similarities; however, they shall be examined independently of each other. According to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, acculturation is “the process of change in artefact, customs, and beliefs that result from the contact of two or more cultures.”²⁰³ Raymond H. C. Tesker, Jr. and Bardin H. Nelson report that acculturation is a dynamic process involving both individuals and groups and their direct contact with the dominant culture.²⁰⁴ Also, it is a two-

¹⁹⁸ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 211.

¹⁹⁹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 211.

²⁰⁰ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 212.

²⁰¹ John W. Berry, “Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation,” *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 46, no.1 (January 1997): 13.

²⁰² Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, “Adhesive Sociocultural Adaptation of Korean Immigrants in the U.S.: An Alternative Strategy of Minority Adaptation,” *The International Migration Review* 18, no. 2 (summer 1984): 188.

²⁰³ “Acculturation,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published November 20, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/acculturation>.

²⁰⁴ Raymond H. C. Teske, Jr., and Bardin H. Nelson, “Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification,” *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 2 (May 1974): 351, 365.

way process meaning that “acculturation has to do with continuous contact and hence implies a more comprehensive interchange between two bodies of tradition,”²⁰⁵ as Herskovits suggests. Regarding internal changes of acculturation, Tesker, Jr. and Nelson agree that an acculturated group or a person does not “require change in values, though values may be acculturated”, thus an internal change is not required. They also claim that a positive relationship or acceptance by the out-group (the American culture in the context of this thesis) is not necessary for the acculturating group.²⁰⁶

Apart from assimilation, Berry proposes three other acculturation strategies, thus there are four in total: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Integration is defined as a strategy used by individuals “with an interest in maintaining one’s original culture while having daily interactions with other groups— there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time they seek [...] to participate as an integral part of the larger social network.”²⁰⁷ Separation applies to those individuals who “place a high value on holding to their original culture and avoid interaction with members of the new society.”²⁰⁸ Finally, Sam and Berry explain marginalization as an acculturation phenomenon “defined by little possibility or lack of interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss) and little interest in having relations with other (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination).”²⁰⁹

Assimilation shares some of the acculturation characteristics and additionally bears its own distinctive features. By *Encyclopædia Britannica*, assimilation is defined as the following:

the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. [...] [Assimilation] involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society. As such, assimilation is the most extreme form of acculturation.²¹⁰

This definition suggests that acculturation is a general term in regard to the adaptation of one culture to another, and assimilation is considered a stage or a level of acculturation.

Furthermore, for Teske, Jr. and Nelson, in the process of assimilation, a group or an individual must change also their values internally. They also highlight that assimilation requires out-

²⁰⁵ Melville J. Herskovits, *Acculturation: The Study of Culture Contact* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1958), 15.

²⁰⁶ Teske, Jr., and Nelson, “Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification,” 358.

²⁰⁷ David L. Sam, and John W. Berry, “Acculturation: When Individuals and Groups of Different Cultural Backgrounds Meet,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 5, no. 4 (July 2010): 476.

²⁰⁸ Sam and Berry, “Acculturation,” 476.

²⁰⁹ Sam and Berry, “Acculturation,” 476.

²¹⁰ “Assimilation,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published August 19, 2008, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/assimilation-society>.

group acceptance and a “positive orientation toward the out-group” which results in “identification with the out-group.”²¹¹ Robert E. Park comments that

in the United States an immigrant is considered assimilated as soon as he has acquired the language and the social ritual of the native community and can participate, without encountering prejudice, in the common life, economic and political. [...] an immigrant is assimilated as soon as he has shown that he can “get on in the country.” [...] he is able to find a place in the community on the basis of his individual merits without invidious or qualifying reference to his racial origin or to his cultural inheritance.²¹²

This means that the culture of the assimilating group or person is merged with the out-group which accepts the assimilated one. In contrast with acculturation, assimilation is considered unidirectional.²¹³ Siegel writes that “assimilation implies an essentially unilateral approximation of one culture in the direction of the other.”²¹⁴

Hence, in the context of *Clay Walls*, one should mainly focus on acculturation as the characters are not assimilated yet, though they dress in western fashion, speak basic English and want to be accepted into American boarding schools designated for whites. Their assimilation lacks in the acceptance of them into American society as equal citizens – they are still perceived as aliens. The concept of acculturation, particularly integration, is gradually being fulfilled by Haesu learning English, dressing in American fashion, buying American furniture and also the fact that she still considers herself a member of the Korean community in the U.S. The omniscient narrator expresses the importance of learning English – “learning English would make her feel at home in America.”²¹⁵ Haesu even expresses her frustration of not speaking English: “I feel like a duce. I feel like I’m living with blindfolds over my eyes, grabbing at the air and ending with bits and pieces of whatever happens to fall into my hands.”²¹⁶ Thus, the lack of full acculturation is expressed as living in utter darkness (meaning figuratively), representing a passive pattern of one’s behaviour – not contributing to the society, just waiting for someone (e.g. Mrs Thayer) to guide her, being a ‘leech.’ Since Haesu wants to keep her Korean heritage and also learn English, she fits the integration strategy, on one hand. On the other hand, by the end of her chapter, she seems to suffer from “acculturative stress,”

²¹¹ Teske, Jr., and Nelson, “Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification,” 359.

²¹² Robert E. Park, “Assimilation, Social,” in *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, ed. Edwin R. A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930) 281.

²¹³ Teske, Jr., and Nelson, “Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification,” 363.

²¹⁴ Bernard J. Siegel, Evon Z. Vogt, James B. Watson, and Leonard Broom, “Acculturation: An Exploratory Formulation,” *American Anthropologist* 55 (1953): 988.

²¹⁵ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 25.

²¹⁶ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 25.

which is manifested by “uncertainty, anxiety, and depression,”²¹⁷ and which is oftentimes linked to the marginalization stage of acculturation:

But she realized it wasn't Mama; Mama hadn't changed. It wasn't Fisheye or that young officer Yun. Fisheye smelled no better before and Yun wasn't even born when she left Korea. It was she. She was out of sorts in her homeland, homesick in Korea without being homesick for America.²¹⁸

Kim, through Haesu's character, shows the way an immigrant could have changed its perception of “home” and felt lost anywhere he or she went. This realization is very important for Haesu – for most of her chapter, she wanted to return and longed to return home, only to realize that she is in fact “homeless” and, because she is slowly becoming Americanized, she even considers returning to the U.S. which she indeed does. Even though at first, she is not sure what it is she wants, the reader senses that Haesu wants to return to the U.S. Not surprisingly, the following chapter is set already in California. As was already mentioned, most of the *Clay Walls* characters are not assimilated. There is one, however, who tried hard to be assimilated into the U.S. society – Clara. Clara is Haesu's friend from Korea who, at first, lives in better conditions in the U.S. than Haesu does. From the beginning of the novel, Clara mentions that, for her, the biggest obstacle in being American is the fact that her eyes are not as wide as that of Americans.²¹⁹ After the death of her husband, she dates an American and undergoes a plastic surgery: she “[p]eeled her skin; made her eyes and nose bigger.”²²⁰ The characters only really see Clara with her new visage at Chun's funeral: “the veil fell away from her [Clara's] face. I saw her gray complexion. She had meant to have it whitened, but having her skin peeled had left it looking dead. Above her cheekbones, her eyes bulged as if she were frightened. The operation was to make them larger.”²²¹ From the description, it is certain that Clara wanted to look like a western white lady, but the surgery left her with a face which has to be concealed at all times with a veil. The characters think that her white boyfriend is to blame: “She fell in love with the wrong man,”²²² Faye wants to avoid Clara's situation entirely: “I kissed her cheek through the veil and vowed I would never fall in love with the wrong man.”²²³ This signifies that the interracial relationship has ruined her Korean beauty. Moreover, it might be considered as an extreme form of assimilation which means ruining the beauty of the former culture. Kim

²¹⁷ Sam and Berry, “Acculturation,” 473–474.

²¹⁸ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 125.

²¹⁹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 18.

²²⁰ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 128.

²²¹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 225.

²²² Kim, *Clay Walls*, 224.

²²³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 225.

seems to have predicted the mentality of Koreans concerning altering their natural beauty since nowadays, South Korea is considered “the plastic surgery capital of the world.”²²⁴

Chang-rae Lee, on the other hand, deals with acculturation differently. In this part of the thesis, the protagonist’s father and his maid shall be discussed. They are, as Haesu and Chun are, the first-generation immigrants. The protagonist Henry himself is sometimes considered “one-a-half-generation Korean American”²²⁵ and is examined in chapter 5, from a general identity shift perspective – not only from the point of acculturation. Henry’s father does not explicitly state the reason why he chose to leave Korea. However, lots of clues point to business opportunities – even Henry himself says: “I thought his life was all about money.”²²⁶ His father usually talked about the “classic immigrant story, casting himself as the heroic newcomer, self-sufficient, resourceful.”²²⁷ If one combines this quote with the fact that the father sought Korean friends, it seems that he identified with the Korean immigrant identity contentedly – the poor Korean who became a successful businessman in the New World. To apply Berry’s acculturation strategies, Henry’s father fits the integration one. The father values the Korean way of life (the Confucian family life), knows a small number of English words, does business with Americans, “gently and not so gently exploited his own [workers]”²²⁸ and approved of Henry’s American wife. He almost seemingly balanced his Korean nationalism with the new American sense of self to suit his business interests and acculturation – he sees the interracial marriage as a way to help Henry “make [his] way in the [American] land.”²²⁹

The Korean maid, contrastingly, serves as an example of the separation strategy. Even though she is a minor character, she is very interesting to study. She came to the U.S. after the death of Henry’s mother. Upon her arrival, she brought typical Korean foods, such as kimchee, and was appalled when Henry did not know what it was. It appears she brought kimchee as a piece of her homeland, unwilling to let go of it. Henry’s American friends think: “She’s an alien. [...] She’s completely bizarre” because she ate a popsicle in three large bites “like it was a hot dog.”²³⁰ As if the ability to eat a popsicle was embedded in the U.S. culture and not the Korean

²²⁴ Drake Baer, “Why South Korea is the plastic surgery capital of the world,” *Business Insider*, September 22, 2015, https://www.businessinsider.com/south-korea-is-the-plastic-surgery-capital-of-the-world-2015-9?utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=topbar&utm_term=desktop.

²²⁵ Shirley Geok-lin Lim, “Money, Power, and Immigrant Sons in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*: Looking for the American Father,” *Review of International American Studies* 9, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 2016): 47. <https://www.journals.us.edu.pl/index.php/RIAS/article/view/4976>.

²²⁶ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 45.

²²⁷ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 46.

²²⁸ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 50.

²²⁹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 53.

²³⁰ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 72.

one – she is not able to perform such simple tasks an American child could. Furthermore, she is the embodiment of a quiet, submissive and obedient Korean wife/maid and even as time goes by, she remains the same woman who cannot speak basic English - hidden in her little room behind the kitchen pantry. Such characteristic was already described in the Confucian family life and she does not ever complain, as Haesu frequently did. Henry once even proclaims: “In the old Korean fashion, my [Henry’s] presence in the kitchen was unwelcome ...”²³¹ and gives a reason for her behaviour: “I imagined something deeply horrible had happened to her when she was young, something brutal, that a malicious man has taught her fear and sadness and she had had to leave her life and family because of it.”²³² The fact that Henry blames a man for her distant and “zombie”²³³ behaviour strengthens the Confucian influence even more. Lelia then says something significant about the maid: “I know who she is. [...] She is an abandoned girl. But all grown up.” Thus, the housekeeper might represent the narrative of an immigrant who either was forced to leave Korea and suffers in the strikingly different culture or an immigrant who decided to leave from his or her own will and now suffers the consequences of his/her decisions as he or she is unable to acculturate.

²³¹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 59.

²³² Lee, *Native Speaker*, 60.

²³³ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 60.

5. Henry Park's Identity

Most of the basic identity and acculturation traits have been discussed and now Henry's identity should be fully identified. It might seem redundant to make a smaller chapter on one character but since his identity is different from the concepts discussed above, it is appropriate to differentiate him and isolate him (as he isolates himself throughout the novel) to examine his identity without necessary interruptions with *Clay Walls*. It is important to repeat that Lee uses the espionage genre as a metaphor for immigrants. Henry and other employees of the spy company are expected to behave a certain way in certain situations, always acting, never being themselves.²³⁴ The fact that Henry has all identities and none, all at once, leads to the conclusion that metaphorically, immigrants are the spies in a society with "keen powers of observation and recollection."²³⁵ This argument shall be specifically proven in the following paragraphs.

It is also important to mention that the identities of characters in *Clay Walls* are easier to grasp than the identity of Henry in *Native Speaker*. This might be possible because Kim's novel is a historical novel (thus, mostly true to historical events). Additionally, she wrote the novel to record the lives of Koreans in the U.S. and it does record the life events of one immigrant family. Contrastingly, Lee's novel is usually classified as a spy novel with postmodern features²³⁶ which gives him an opportunity to create an unusual character with such a vague sense of self and he also does not have to try to stay true to the historical events, even though he does portray, for example, the L.A. riots and conflicts between Asians and Blacks.

First, Henry is an observer as he himself admits he has "extremely keen powers of observation and recollection" as a spy. Some scholars, for instance, Tina Chen, even claim he is an "invisible man."²³⁷ That is illustrated in one of Henry's monologues:

I wasn't employing a technique so much as my own instant live burial. It's the prerogative of moles, after all, which only certain American lifetimes can teach. I am the obedient, soft-spoken son. What other talent can Hoagland so prize? I will duly retreat to the position of the good volunteer, the invisible underling. I have always known that moment of disappearance, and the even uglier truth is that I have long treasured it. That always honorable-seeming absence. It appears I can go anywhere I wish.²³⁸

²³⁴ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 15.

²³⁵ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 14.

²³⁶ Tim Engles, "'Visions of Me in the Whitest Raw Light': Assimilation and Doxic Whiteness in Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker*," *Hitting Critical Mass: A Journal of Asian American Cultural Studies* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1997): <http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cftde/hcmns.html>.

²³⁷ Tina Chen, *Double Agency: Acts of Impersonation in Asian American Literature and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 152.

²³⁸ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 188.

In this quote, Henry himself realizes his alienation and detachment from his surroundings. He accepts his role as an observer and seems to have made it part of his reality. He also lacks emotions and behaves like an actor in his family relationships:

I did everything well enough. I cooked well enough, cleaned enough, was romantic and sensitive and silly enough, I made love enough, was paternal, big brotherly, just a good friend enough, father-to-my-son enough, forlorn enough, and then even bull-headed and dull and macho enough, to make it all seamless. For ten years she hadn't realized the breadth of what I had accomplished with my exacting competence, the daily *work* I did, which unto itself became an unassailable body of cover. And the surest testament to the magnificent and horrifying level of my virtuosity was that neither had I.²³⁹

This signifies that he realizes his shattered identity in retrospective and he did well enough to fool his wife and family. One might even claim that this is an extreme and scary form of immigrant assimilation when one strips his or her identity and claims the majority identity. As if Lee wanted the reader to realize what it might mean for a person to assimilate – fooling himself and also others and raising the question – Who are the immigrants if they have to adopt a different identity? Aren't they just pretenders? Likewise, Christian Moraru argues that Henry's behaviour includes a sense of "self-betrayal" because it is "part and parcel of immigration and acculturation to the extent that these entail active self-forgetting and self-remaking, the calculated loss of a 'mother tongue,' 'ancestral graves,' customs, mores, and reflexes."²⁴⁰ Interestingly, Henry serves as an observer and does not judge or loathe the Blacks even though they could kill his father. In fact, he does not even comment on the beating of his father – the next paragraph simply states his father's education without any evaluation of the violent scene. He is detached, as if telling a story he heard somewhere or just sharing a mundane reality. In contrast with Henry, his mother shows a variety of emotions when Henry's father comes home injured:

My mother ran to it [the door], pounding on the wood and sobbing for him to let her in so she could help him. [...] She kept hitting the door, asking him what had happened, almost kissing the panels, the side jamb. [...] After a while she tired and crumpled there and wept until he finally turned the lock and let her in.²⁴¹

This might serve as an exaggeration of Henry's fragmented identity as if he did not know how to react because he is a pretender from the start. The multiple identities are also explicitly

²³⁹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 149–150.

²⁴⁰ Christian Moraru, "Speakers and Sleepers: Chang-Rae Lee's 'Native Speaker,' Whitman, and the Performance of Americanness," *College Literature* 36, no. 3 (Summer, 2009): 70.

²⁴¹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 52.

mentioned by Henry: “I had always thought that I could be anyone, perhaps several ones at once. [...] [I] could reside in one place and take half-steps out whenever [I] wished. I found a sanction from our work, for I thought I had finally found my truest place in culture.”²⁴² To explain further, Henry feels best at the borders of the culture which leads to the metaphor that Henry’s position in between cultures represents the nature of immigrants, as presented by Miller and Engles.²⁴³ ²⁴⁴ Kyeyoung Park also suggests that the in-betweenness is usually present for the “1,5 generation” who “practice aspects of biculturalism/multiculturalism involving Korean and American cultures, often with conflict.”²⁴⁵

Second of all, even though Henry’s identity is fragmented and is often described to be a spy, throughout the novel, readers get the sense that the only person Henry truly connects to is John Kwang, a businessman Henry is supposed to investigate. Henry gradually starts questioning his spying on Kwang: “[f]or how do you trail someone who keeps you so close? How do you write of one who tells you more stories than you need to know? Where do you begin, and when are you able to end?”²⁴⁶ Henry slowly assigns his loyalty to Kwang, a fellow Korean American, to whom he connects and represents fatherly for Henry. Moraru cleverly points out that Henry and Kwang are close “by background, ‘appearance,’ and cross-cultural adeptness. It is this closeness that almost makes Hwang Henry’s ‘classical psychological double.’”²⁴⁷ For those reasons, it is not surprising that the only person Henry connects to is a fellow Korean American. Yet he highlights that Henry is more of an insider in the American society than Kwang who still perceives Korea to be his home.²⁴⁸

Thirdly, despite Henry being part of American society more than other immigrants, he is still perceived to be an “alien.”²⁴⁹ Rachel C. Lee describes Henry as “inhabited by an alien body snatcher” which is “normalized as the process of assimilation, of becoming a speaking subject in the American public sphere.”²⁵⁰ Henry is alien and that is most present in scenes with

²⁴² Lee, *Native Speaker*, 118.

²⁴³ Miller, “Speaking and Mourning: Working Through Identity and Language in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*,” 123.

²⁴⁴ Engles, “‘Visions of Me in the Whitest Raw Light’: Assimilation and Doxic Whiteness in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*,” <http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cftde/hcmns.html>.

²⁴⁵ Kyeyoung Park, “I Really Do Feel I’m 1,5! The Construction of Self and Community by Young Korean Americans,” in *Life in America: Identity and Everyday Experience*, ed. Lee Baker (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 133.

²⁴⁶ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 196.

²⁴⁷ Moraru, “Speakers and Sleepers: Chang-Rae Lee’s ‘Native Speaker,’ Whitman, and the Performance of Americanness,” 70.

²⁴⁸ Moraru, “Speakers and Sleepers: Chang-Rae Lee’s ‘Native Speaker,’ Whitman, and the Performance of Americanness,” 71.

²⁴⁹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 5.

²⁵⁰ Rachel C. Lee, “Reading Contests and Contesting Reading: Chang-Rae Lee’s ‘Native Speaker’ and Ethnic New York,” *MELUS* 29, no. 3/4, Pedagogy, Canon, Context: Toward a Redefinition of Ethnic American Literary Studies (Autumn – Winter, 2004): 343.

his American wife Lelia. Engles notices that this is also achieved through the metaphor of islands.²⁵¹ When Lelia leaves for the Mediterranean, Henry says that she is “just trading islands.”²⁵² Engles claims that Henry himself realizes his detachment from Lelia through him using the metaphor – Henry himself is an isolated island. Moreover, he claims that, at the end of the novel, Henry realizes that “as islands, we need to construct bridges of intimacy and empathy between ourselves and others.”²⁵³ Thus, Henry slowly starts finding the advantage of his identity and opens to others.

Henry suffers from a concept called “ethnic attrition,” at least partially. Brian Duncan and Stephen J. Trejo usually describe this term in the context of Hispanics as a state when “U.S.-born individuals [...] do not self-identify as Hispanic despite having ancestors who were immigrants from a Spanish-speaking country.” Furthermore, this description is also applicable to other minority immigrant groups, in this context the Asian minority. They also usually mention that this phenomenon is connected to second-generation or third-generation immigrants.²⁵⁴ Henry is considered a one-and-a-half-generation immigrant or second-generation immigrant who does not refuse his Korean heritage. Yet, he shows signs of ethnic attrition. One of those is his lack of culturally specific knowledge concerning Korea, namely the traditional food kimchee when he was a teenager.²⁵⁵ Moreover, his Koreaness is more present nearing the end of the novel, when he is being influenced by Kwang. Henry also admits that his son Mitt would be influenced by the ethnic attrition: “despite Lelia’s insistence that he go to Korean school on the weekends, I knew our son would never learn the old language, [...] and my hope was that he would grow up with a singular sense of his world.”²⁵⁶ Henry also admits that this is his “assimilist sentiment, part of my own ugly and half-blind romance with the land,”²⁵⁷ meaning that he realises his son will not follow the Korean order of family and society. Henry wishes for his son to have his own sense of family – not be at the border of the cultures as Henry himself is. We do not really witness Henry eat Korean cuisine until his and Kwang’s visit to a Korean restaurant. Here, they order “*kalbi*, *bulgogi*,” drink the traditional alcoholic drink “*soju*” along with Korean beer. Moreover, the narrator describes the Korean

²⁵¹ Engles, “‘Visions of Me in the Whitest Raw Light’: Assimilation and Doxic Whiteness in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*,” <http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cftde/hcmns.html>.

²⁵² Lee, *Native Speaker*, 3.

²⁵³ Engles, “‘Visions of Me in the Whitest Raw Light’: Assimilation and Doxic Whiteness in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*,” <http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cftde/hcmns.html>.

²⁵⁴ Brian Duncan, and Stephen J. Trejo, “The Complexity of Immigrant Generation: Implications for Assessing the Socioeconomic Integration of Hispanics and Asians,” *ILR Review* 70, no. 5 (February 2016): <https://www.nber.org/papers/w21982.pdf>.

²⁵⁵ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 57.

²⁵⁶ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 249.

²⁵⁷ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 249.

dining and the ways the various meats are marinated and grilled.²⁵⁸ It seems as if only with Kwang's influence and presence, Henry acknowledges the Korean cuisine as part of his culture and he himself is in a way teaching the reader of the Korean dining etiquette. Kwang is also the first person of the novel to utter Henry's Korean name "*Park Byong-ho*"²⁵⁹ again, pointing out Henry's ethnic identity, bringing them closer to each other.

Tori Jirousek claims that by the end of the novel, Henry serves as an ethnographer "who observes, records, and analyses cultures."²⁶⁰ This is not only represented through Henry's occupation but also his flashbacks or memories of the past where he introduces his father, son and relationship with his wife. It is also explicitly mentioned that Henry is like an anthropologist: "I witnessed what erstwhile observers—anthropologists and pundits alike—might have called his natural state."²⁶¹ At first, Henry observes his targets in order to report to his superiors. Yet, gradually, he changes his approach to his subjects by acting as a "participant-observer," as Jirousek highlights. Henry begins adapting "a different purpose for his observation and writing" – he includes himself to the immigrant community more and the spy role is just a mere excuse for his involvement.²⁶² Henry's evolution signalizes that from a distant observer, he becomes an insider and that is where he finds his identity – amongst all the immigrants. He is finally feeling sorry for the immigrants who are supposed to be deported because of Henry's last report.²⁶³ In other words, he is becoming human and ceases to be the alien vessel.

²⁵⁸ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 176–178.

²⁵⁹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 255.

²⁶⁰ Lori Jirousek, "'A New Book of the Land': Ethnography, Espionage, and Immigrants in *Native Speaker*," *Modern Language Studies* 36, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 10.

²⁶¹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 164.

²⁶² Jirousek, "A New Book," 13.

²⁶³ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 312.

6. Segregation and Discrimination

The “double colonization” (mentioned in chapter 2) is dominantly present in *Clay Walls* by Ronyoung Kim. The protagonists must escape Korea because Chun is politically persecuted (even though the whole situation is misunderstanding) and thus, the Korean family arrives into the U.S. where the members are oppressed. They are not welcome in Korea where the Japanese rule and also in the U.S. where, for instance, they cannot rent a house without intervention from American friends because they are immigrants. For instance, Mrs Thayer (an American woman) helps Haesu and Clara (both Korean immigrants) house hunting. Haesu and Clara were unsuccessful in finding a house because one of the landlords “doesn’t want ‘orientals’”²⁶⁴ or “some places are for ‘whites only.’”²⁶⁵ Even though the women dressed up, Clara said their eyes were to blame – they look Asian as Clara demonstrated by “popping hers as wide as she could” and sharing that people ask her “if [she] can see with [her Asian] eyes.”²⁶⁶ In one case, the landlord agreed to rent a unit to them but only if they paid more than the whites were supposed to. Mrs Thayer then intervened and assured the women that she would get Haesu a reasonable place to live: “I am going to help you. I will find a place and sublet it to you. No one can refuse to rent to me. You pay me and I pay the owner.”²⁶⁷ Angelo N. Ancheta calls this phenomenon as “housing segregation.”²⁶⁸ Segregation might be defined as “separation of groups of people with differing characteristics, often taken to connote a condition of inequality. Racial segregation is one of many types of segregation, which can range from deliberate and systematic persecution through more subtle types of discrimination to self-imposed separation.”²⁶⁹ Ancheta adds that along with it, racial segregation was very common: “Asian immigrants were often refused service in theaters, hotels, restaurants or they were consigned to areas separate from a whites-only area.”²⁷⁰ Thus, even Ronyoung Kim portrays quite accurately the way Korean immigrants were prejudiced and shows that without intervention from the whites, they had only a little chance of having basic living conditions in the American suburbs.

As a consequence of the double colonization, the characters cannot return to Korea, because they would be at close scrutiny by the Japanese government. Thus, the characters do

²⁶⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 21.

²⁶⁵ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 22.

²⁶⁶ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 18.

²⁶⁷ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 23.

²⁶⁸ Angelo N. Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 22.

²⁶⁹ “Segregation,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published October 28, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/segregation-sociology>.

²⁷⁰ Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American*, 22.

not feel welcome wherever they go. The housing segregation example from *Clay Walls* may be also classified as discrimination which means:

the intended or accomplished differential treatment of persons or social groups for reasons of certain generalized traits. The targets of discrimination are often minorities ... For the most part, discrimination results in some form of harm or disadvantage to the targeted persons or groups.²⁷¹

To illustrate, when Haesu and Chun move to a house, they encounter another obstacle:

“They won’t sell the house to us.”

Haesu grabbed the arm of the upholstered chair and pulled herself to a standing position. “They won’t sell the house to us?”

“They can’t sell the house to us. We’re not citizens.”

“Who says that?” she demanded to know.

“The bank. It’s the law.”

“Even if we pay five thousand dollars?”

“It’s not the money. It’s the law.”

[...]

“... What’s wrong with *our* money? Why can’t it buy for us what it buys for others?”²⁷²

Haesu is pointing out that their money is no different from the Westerner’s money. In a broader sense, this situation serves as a kind of disillusionment. Immigrants often think that America is the land of paradise (as were Haesu and Chun told by Reverend McNeill) and opportunities but the reality hits hard and they gradually realise that immigrants are not accepted into the American public and are seen as alien with lesser rights. Discrimination is also displayed when Haesu wants her sons to attend a boarding school. She decides to do so after an incident in a state school when John is called “chink” which means “Chinese but not in a good way.”²⁷³ In other words, white children at school use a racial slur to derogate the Chinese. Adam M. Croom evaluates the expression as “the most offensive of all natural language expressions” along with the term “gook.”²⁷⁴ Haesu is quick to point out that they are not Chinese and thus it makes no sense for the children to use such a slur. John is quick to point out that “it wouldn’t have made any difference.”²⁷⁵ What the children should have used is “gook” which is used to insult Koreans. The expression “gook” is usually described as “offensive slang,” “used as a disparaging term for a person of East Asian descent,”²⁷⁶ but others claim it is used to address

²⁷¹ “Discrimination,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published December 8, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/discrimination-society>.

²⁷² Kim, *Clay Walls*, 37.

²⁷³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 49.

²⁷⁴ Adam M. Croom, “Asian Slurs and Stereotypes in the USA: A Context-sensitive Account of Derogation and Appropriation,” *Pragmatics and Society* 9, no. 4 (2018): 495.

²⁷⁵ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 49.

²⁷⁶ Bruce Stapleton, *Redskins* (Lincoln: Writers Club, 2001), 30.

all Koreans.²⁷⁷ According to the Philadelphia Bar Association, the term “chink” “originated in the 19th century as a racial slur against people of Chinese descent.” But “is now widely used throughout the United States as a racial slur against people of Asian descent.”²⁷⁸ The fact that “chink” might be used for all Asian ethnicities shows the way in which Asian Americans are stripped off their national identities and considered as a single mass. King-Kok Cheung brings up a harrowing case of such ignorance when Vincent Chin, a Chinese American, was clubbed to death since the killers have mistaken him for a Japanese autoworker.²⁷⁹ In *Native Speaker*, Henry gives his hypothesis as to why Koreans are called “gook”:

“... when the American GIs came to a place they’d be met by all the Korean villagers [during the Korean War], who’d be hungry and excited, all shouting and screaming. The villagers would be yelling, *Mee-gook! Mee-gook!* and so that’s what they were to the GIs, just gooks, that’s what they seemed to be calling themselves, but that wasn’t it at all.”

“What were they saying?” [Lelia asks.]

“‘Americans! Americans!’ *Mee-gook* means America.”²⁸⁰

Henry’s hypothesis seems to emphasize American ignorance as they misunderstood Koreans and did not hesitate to use the wrong term to call a minority. Haesu and Chun, after hearing about the slurs uttered to her boys, do not know how to react to it. Chun just told John to “stay out of fights.”²⁸¹ (Ironically, when Chun dies, in the certificate confirming his death, “[f]or ‘color or race’ they wrote ‘Chinese’”²⁸² and is literally unable to do anything about it.) Not knowing what else to do, Haesu decides to enrol her children to a boarding school since she thinks that “boy attending private schools would surely come from good homes.”²⁸³ One might say that Haesu was naïve to want to have her boys attend a boarding school, but since she expects equality for her American born children, she thinks they would be accepted without any obstacles. However, a powerful scene with the principle would turn otherwise:

He [the principal] sighed deeply when she finished what she had to say. “The school was established for Anglo-Saxon Protestant boys,” he said.

“Yes,” she said. “Presbyterian.”

He gave her a puzzled look, “Anglo-Saxon,” he repeated.

She cleared her throat, “I don’t understand.”

“It means... it means we, that is, the Academy does not accept orientals.”

²⁷⁷ Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War*, (New York: Random House, 2010), 80.

²⁷⁸ “Resolution Opposing Use of Racial Slurs in Business Names,” Policy and Leadership, Philadelphia Bar Association, accessed May 1, 2019, <https://www.philadelphiabar.org/page/ResolutionOpposingRacialSlurs?appNum=2>.

²⁷⁹ Cheung, “Re-viewing Asian American Literary Studies,” 4.

²⁸⁰ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 225–226.

²⁸¹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 49.

²⁸² Kim, *Clay Walls*, 222.

²⁸³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 49.

She smiled. “No, not my sons. American-born. Right here in Los Angeles.”
“Mrs. ... uh ... Please try to understand,” he said, impatience in his tone. “Anglo-Saxon, uh ... Caucasian.” He seemed to be searching for the right word. “White,” he said, finally.

As she began to understand, her face turned hot. She felt her pulse throbbing in her throat, choking her.

[...]

“Mrs. Chun,” he said condescendingly, “your boys would not be happy here. They’ll want to be with boys like themselves. You ask them. I’m sure they’ll agree with me.”

[...]

Disgraceful. She thought that was the only word for it. As disgraceful as having to rely on Mrs. Thayer to find her and Chun a place to live. As disgraceful as having to buy their house in Charlie Bancroft’s name. She had thought it all necessary because she and Chun were not American-born. But that wasn’t it, not all of it. Her boys were American citizens. And they were no better off.²⁸⁴

Understandably, Haesu is beyond furious and wants to discuss the matter with Chun. She is, again, disillusioned by the system of American society which still values looks more than one’s identity. John and Harold are still boys, their identity is still evolving and surely a private school would have a positive effect on them, at least in terms of the Americanizing process. Chun, in contrast with Haesu’s anger, is acquiesced in the discrimination. He just says: “We can’t do anything.”²⁸⁵ The difference in their reactions seems to be again connected to their different classes. Haesu expected to be treated with respect to her (because of her *yangban* identity) and her sons (because they are American-born). It almost seems as if she were living in her upper-class bubble which has just burst. On the other hand, Chun as *sangmin* does not expect any better treatment and thus only feels a slight sense of injustice. He knows that as Koreans they are not equal to Americans.

²⁸⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 51–52.

²⁸⁵ Kim, *Clay Wall*, 53.

7. Yellow Peril and Model Minority

Even though the characters from *Clay Walls* are not acculturated yet, Asian communities have acculturated quite successfully and are considered a model minority. The phrase “model minority” is not as complicated to define as other above-mentioned terms. In short, it describes the expectations placed on the Asian American minority, particularly, being good at technology, science, math, being wealthy, hard-working, obedient, and living “the American dream.”²⁸⁶ At first glance, the definition seems to be a positive one. That is not true, however. Firstly, the word minority itself has more negative definition even for the way minority perceives itself with regards to the white majority. To illustrate, minority means:

a culturally, ethnically, or racially distinct group that coexists with but is subordinate to a more dominant group. As the term is used in the social sciences, this subordinacy is the chief defining characteristic of a minority group. [...] [the minority members] are socially separated or segregated from the dominant forces of a society, [...] cut off from a full involvement in the workings of the society and from an equal share in the society’s rewards. Thus, the role of minority groups varies from society to society depending on the structure of the social system and the relative power of the minority group.²⁸⁷

Thus, historically, until the World War II, Asian Americans were simply considered a minority but after the war (the 1960’s), a few newspaper articles were the catalyst of creating the model minority notion, as Yoon Pak claims. She explains that there were published articles depicting the struggles of Japanese Americans who, despite the Yellow Peril, had shown that they can improve their lives without the help of the government or new legislation.²⁸⁸ Secondly, as the previous sentence indicates, the model minority was pitted against the African American minority,²⁸⁹ as supported Tamar Lewin and as is also portrayed in Lee’s *Native Speaker*. Before showing the conflicts of Asian-Americans and African Americans in *Native Speaker*, the term Yellow Peril has to be explained since it is the situation directly preceding the model minority stereotype. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “yellow peril” was first used in 1895 in the sense: “a danger to Western civilization held to arise from the expansion of the power and influence of eastern Asian peoples.” Later, a second definition was added to the

²⁸⁶ “Model Minority Stereotype,” Model Minority Stereotype for Asian Americans, The University of Texas at Austin: Counseling and Mental Health Center, accessed May 25, 2019, <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/modelminority.html#what>.

²⁸⁷ “Minority,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published October 9, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/minority>.

²⁸⁸ Yoon Pak, “Foreword,” in *The Model Minority Stereotype: Demystifying Asian American Success*, ed. Nicholas Daniel Hartlep (Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2013), viii.

²⁸⁹ Tamar Lewin, “Report Takes Aim at ‘Model Minority’ Stereotype of Asian-American Students,” *The New York Times*, June 10, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/10/education/10asians.html?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=Education&action=keypress®ion=FixedLeft&pgtype=article>.

dictionary entry: “a threat to Western living standards from the influx of eastern Asian laborers willing to work for very low wages.”²⁹⁰ The second definition was, in fact, already discussed in previous chapters, mainly in the first chapter. According to Doobo Shim, the first definition was frequently used to describe the “unassimilable other” and even led to creating, for example, Chinese villains in the entertainment sphere (namely, films and advertisement).²⁹¹ The yellow peril intensified during World War II, after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. Consequently, Japanese Americans were sent to U.S. concentration camps simply because of their origin. Also, according to King-Kok Cheung, during the war, those Japanese Americans who observed Japanese customs, practised Japanese rituals or possessed Japanese art were primary suspects of FBI. In order to avoid unjust suspicion, many people of Japanese descent decided to destroy their cultural possessions. Nevertheless, most of them were sent to camps.²⁹² In *Clay Walls*, there is also shown the problem of the American government failing to recognize not only Japanese Americans from the Japanese but also Korean Americans from the Japanese. Consequently, the government erases the Korean ethnic heritage. After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour a “brown-haired, blue-eyed man” in front of the Korean church shouts “[y]ou stinkin’ Japs. Go back where you came from! [...] You fuckin’ yellow monkeys!”²⁹³ at Korean Americans. Faye and her friends do not understand how anyone could mistake them for the Japanese. Haesu also claims that Faye as “an American citizen” does not have to worry which is false. What they seem to forget is that even though Faye is a second-generation immigrant, she still looks Asian. The whole Korean American community is threatened to leave for the concentration camps with the Japanese but, in the end, the government excludes the Korean Americans.²⁹⁴

The perception of individual Asian ethnic groups, however, was not always the same. The Japanese were loathed during World War II but before that, the American public did not see them as a threat. In *Clay Walls*, the shift in perception of the Japanese is also explicitly mentioned when Uncle Min and Faye discuss the matter:

“A Japanese is always loyal to his emperor. It’s in his blood.”

“Does that make him patriotic?” I [Faye] asked. I could not tell if Uncle Lee was praising them or damning them.

²⁹⁰ “Yellow Peril,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2019, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/yellow%20peril>.

²⁹¹ Doobo Shim, “From Yellow Peril through Model Minority to Renewed Yellow Peril,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 22, no. 4 (October 1, 1998): 388.

²⁹² Cheung, “Re-viewing Asian American Literary Studies,” 5.

²⁹³ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 260.

²⁹⁴ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 263.

Uncle Yang laughed. “Before December seven, it made him a ‘good’ Japanese. After December seven, it made him a ‘bad’ American.”²⁹⁵

Faye asks about the patriotism because the Korean patriotism is treasured in their Korean American community. Thus, one might assume the same about the Japanese American community.

Contrastingly to the perception of Japanese during World War II, the Chinese were fascinating to the white Americans as the Chinese defied the better-equipped Japanese troops,²⁹⁶ according to Wong. As Shim reports, the Chinese situation changed again with the rise of Communism in China, and also when they fought against the U.S. in the Korean War. As a result, the Chinese were again seen as the undesirable and were portrayed in “a series of anti-Chinese communist films ... made during the 1950s.” The Japanese were favourable after their defeat in World War II when they adapted democracy. After the war, the African American movement had the spotlight and wanted to attract the politicians’ attention. Yet the politicians sought to “justify African Americans’ own economic failure” by presenting the model minority of the Chinese and Japanese Americans, later even Korean Americans and Asian Indians. Shim concludes his analysis of the relationships between the U.S. and Asian minorities by stressing that U.S. politicians began comparing the Black and Asian minorities, favouring the latter. They often described the Asians as hardworking, not needing help from the government and self-reliant.²⁹⁷ However, seeing the ambivalent attitudes of American public and politics throughout the decades mentioned, one has to remain cautious and, consequently, it is not surprising when the U.S. attitudes towards Asian minorities changed yet again, this time towards the Korean American community. In *Native Speaker*, the concept of the model minority is portrayed not only in the occupation of Henry’s father who is a businessman but also in the conflict between Blacks and the Korean community, mainly in Los Angeles. Speaking of Los Angeles, there was a conflict called the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, or Black-Korean conflict. It happened on April 29, 1992, as a result of various tense situations between African Americans and Asian Americans. Nancy Kang reports that prior to the conflict, three important event took place. First, the brutal police beating of Rodney King in 1991. Second, the shooting of Latasha Harlins, an African American teenager shot by a fifty-one-year old Korean merchant Soon Ja Du. Consequently, African American activists’ campaigns start targeting Korean American businessowners, as well as boycott their businesses. This is even portrayed in *Native Speaker*, even though the novel takes place in New York:

²⁹⁵ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 262.

²⁹⁶ Eugene Franklin Wong, *On Visual Racism* (New York: Arno, 1978), 127.

²⁹⁷ Shim, “From Yellow Peril through Model Minority to Renewed Yellow Peril,” 392–393.

The boycotts of Korean grocers were spreading from Brooklyn to other parts of the city, to the black neighbourhoods in the Bronx, ... and then also in upper Manhattan. Though he [John Kwang] wasn't having trouble in his own neighborhoods, he was being hounded by the media for statements and opinions on the mayor's handling of them, particularly the first riot in Brownsville, where a mostly black crowd, watched over by a handful of police, looted and arsoned a Korean-owned grocery.²⁹⁸

The fact that the police is present during the robbery seems to signify that the authorities did not deem the conflicts to be much problematic at first, as if they were waiting what will happen next and wanted the whites to remain out of conflict. The fact that Blacks targeted Koreans is also reflected in *Native Speaker*, it is presented in one of Henry's flashbacks from his childhood:

Once he [Henry's father] came home with deep bruises about his face, his nose and mouth bloody, his rough workshirt torn at the shoulder. He smelled rancid as usual from working with vegetables, but more so that night, as if he'd fallen into the compost heap. [...] I [Henry] went to my room where I could hear him talk through the wall. His voice was quiet and steady. Some black men had robbed the store and taken him to the basement and bound him and beaten him up. They took turns whipping him with the magazine of a pistol. They would have probably shot him in the head right there but his partners came for the night shift and the robbers fled.

It is interesting that Henry remains an observer and storyteller even when his father's life is at stake. Strangely, we do not get to know Henry's opinion on the situation.

Third, the shooting of nine-year-old Juri Kang, a child of Korean immigrant business owners during a robbery by a black criminal preceded the conflict. Interestingly enough, the outcome of the first incident prompts the L.A. riots as the police officers are acquitted of "criminal misconduct against King" on April 29, 1992. Moreover, the jury consisted mainly of whites, one Latino, and one Korean – no African American.²⁹⁹ John Lie and Nancy Abelmann view the conflict as "the most destructive U.S. civil disturbance of the twentieth century," and they also admit that the incident was quickly forgotten and became part of history.³⁰⁰ From the historical point of view, one might consider the African Americans as the initiators of the conflict, and that Koreans were just victims – that is false, however. Some Korean Americans also felt animosity toward African Americans. In *Native Speaker*, there are some examples of the attitudes and conflicts mentioned. One of them is connected to the issue of the model minority:

²⁹⁸ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 167.

²⁹⁹ Nancy Kang, "The Los Angeles Riots, 1992," in *25 Events that Shaped Asian American History: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic*, ed. Lan Dong (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2019) 386–387.

³⁰⁰ John Lie and Nancy Abelmann, "The 1992 Los Angeles Riots and the 'Black-Korean Conflict,'" in *Koreans in the Hood: Conflict with African Americans*, ed. Kwang Chung Kim (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 75.

... we [Korean Americans] believed in anything American, in impressing Americans, in making money, polishing apples in the dead of the night, perfectly pressed pants, perfect credit, being perfect, shooting black people, watching out stores and offices burn down to the ground.³⁰¹

Henry's monologue progresses from innocent wishes of assimilation to the racist traits of some Americans, stereotypically speaking. King-Kok Cheung, in her essay on the Black-Korean conflict, evaluated this quote as sarcastic and highlighting the monochrome distinction between the model minority and "the delinquent black," which is true and it is interesting that the protagonist Henry, yet again, serves as an observer, rarely giving his opinions. Other instances of the monochromatic distinction between the two minorities are evident throughout the story. Yet, one of them shows the soft side of the Korean American politician John Kwang when he talks about the segregation of African Americans:

"I remember walking these very streets as a young man, watching the crowds and demonstrations. I felt welcomed by the parades of young black men and women. A man pulled me right out from the sidewalk and said I should join them. I did. I went along. [...] I had visited Louisiana and Texas and I sat where I wished on buses, I drank from whatever fountain was nearest. No one ever said anything. One day I was coming out of a public bathroom in Fort Worth and a pretty white woman stopped me and pointed and said that the Colored in the sign meant black and Mexican. She smiled very kindly and told me I was very light-skinned. 'Orientals' were okay in those parts, [...] I remember saying thank you and bowing. She gave me a mint from her purse and welcomed me to the United States. What did I know? I didn't speak English very well, and like anyone who doesn't I mostly listened. But back here, the black power on the streets! Their songs and chants! I thought this is America! They were so young and awesome, so truly powerful, if only in themselves, no matter what anybody said."³⁰²

Kwang talks about the times around the 1950s or 1960s when the model minority was beginning to flourish to its full potential. As an outsider, he is confused and rightly does not understand the hatred towards the blacks – why is he treated differently if he was also "colored"? Back then, he obviously did not perceive himself as the model minority but as an outsider who may or may not be welcome, hence, his confusion. Also, this stresses the fact that the Black-Korean Conflict arises (at least partially) from the "troubles of white and black people."³⁰³ Asians were thrust into the model minority stereotype and were supposed to show African Americans the way of life – at least, that is what U.S. politicians intended. The fact that Asian Americans are often seen as victims of the model minority stereotype is supported by Viet Thanh Nguyen who

³⁰¹ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 48.

³⁰² Lee, *Native Speaker*, 181–182.

³⁰³ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 182.

said: “ideologically, the model minority becomes a scapegoat, drawing the ire of other minorities for the systemic inequities that they experience.”³⁰⁴ Lee, in a way, acknowledges this when John Kwang says: “It’s a race war everyone can live with. Blacks and Koreans somehow seem meant for trouble in America. It was long coming. In some ways, we never had a chance.”³⁰⁵ Thus, Koreans and African Americans are pictured as victims of model minority ideal and unequal opportunities. Klara Szymańko mentions very interesting observations of the conflict in *Native Speaker*. She shares the idea of the minorities battling against each other as victims, yet stresses the importance of whites as simple bystanders: “so long as African Americans and Korean Americans battle it out with each other away from white turf,” the general public is content with the war.³⁰⁶ She emphasizes the conflict by following the leads mentioned in the text where the United States is described as an orphanage: “It’s an orphanage, [...] and there is a Fagin.”³⁰⁷ Szymańko explains that, in this context, Fagin means Americans and that the allusion to orphanage signifies that America is not a promised land for immigrants or minorities.³⁰⁸ Szymańko also highlights that Korean American merchants have replaced Jewish merchants and became a “middleman minority.”³⁰⁹ Min and Kolodny explain that the “middleman minority” has characteristics such as small business, serving to minority customers, ethnic cohesion, dependence on U.S. corporations as suppliers, and subjection to stereotyping.³¹⁰ Ultimately, Lee shows the Black-Korean Conflict from various points of view and he himself is not taking sides, just as John Kwang or Henry do not want to take sides. Kwang, for instance, understands the frustration and motivation of African Americans because he witnessed their segregation and his privilege just by being “oriental”. Contrastingly, in *Clay Walls*, the tension between Blacks and Koreans is not present until the last part of the novel which is about Faye. In *Native Speaker*, the minority tension appears frequently at different parts of the novel, not just one chapter or event. This signifies that the tension between the two minorities was not present when the Chuns immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1920s. Moreover,

³⁰⁴ Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 147.

³⁰⁵ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 168.

³⁰⁶ Klara Szymańko, “The Conflict between African Americans and Korean Americans in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*,” in *Transitions: Race, Culture, and the Dynamics of Change*, ed. Hanna Wallinger (Wien [Austria]: Lit Verlag, 2006), 68.

³⁰⁷ Lee, *Native Speaker*, 272.

³⁰⁸ Szymańko, “The Conflict between African Americans and Korean Americans in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*,” 67.

³⁰⁹ Szymańko, “The Conflict between African Americans and Korean Americans in Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*,” 67.

³¹⁰ Pyong Gap Min, and Andrew Kolodny, “The Middleman Minority Characteristics of Korean Immigrants in the United States,” *Korea Journal of population and development* 23, vol. 2 (December 1994): 179–181.

in the first two chapters, the characters lived either in a racially mixed neighbourhood with whites and Asians. In the last chapter, however, the family moves to a black neighbourhood and, thus, since the minorities are in direct contact, racial issues arise: “We shared the neighborhood with Blacks, but when they grouped together, it became their territory.”³¹¹ Young Faye is even teased on the street by the teenage blacks, just because she is Asian, calling her “China girl.”³¹² Also, Harold and John are both negatively influenced by the Black. Kim presents the Blacks in a stereotypical way – stealing, not working, having children without marriage – showing a mainly one-sided point of view which is very limiting but may have been used intentionally to signify the viewpoint of Korean Americans as victims of already present minorities.

³¹¹ Kim, *Clay Walls*, 197.

³¹² Kim, *Clay Walls*, 197.

8. Conclusion

Clay Walls and *Native Speaker* both highlight different issues or omit them. To understand Korean immigrants more, it is crucial to read both novels.

They both represent the immigrant novel genre. Yet, they individually represent different genres too. *Clay Walls* is a historical novel because it is set in the 1920s which is forty years prior to its publication and nowadays, the plot is set in times almost one hundred years ago. Also, Kim deliberately wanted to capture the lives of her ancestors in order for them to not be forgotten. One has to remain cautious as some ethnic characters are portrayed as negative which seems to be influenced not by reality but Kim's personal prejudices and tendencies. *Native Speaker* is considered a spy thriller set in the 1990s, but it also breaks the traditional characteristic of the genre. Some even consider the novel as a parody on a spy thriller because the character is not an action movie star hero and there are even instances when the character Henry himself admits that he is not a typical spy – he described himself to be a kind of a boring hero.

In *Clay Walls*, Haesu, Chun and their friends are first-generation immigrants who were involuntary migrants. Henry Park and his family, from *Native Speaker*, are first- or one-and-a-half generation immigrants and they were voluntary (economic) migrants., showing that the different history decades were influenced by different immigrant forces.

Identity issues are omnipresent in both novels. The most significant issues are that of gender, class and ethnic identity. All three concepts are intertwined and, also, influenced by Confucianism. *Clay Walls* shows signs of inequalities between Korean men and women, but the novel is in no way seen as a feminist piece of work. Even though Haesu must be submissive, she is rebelling against her husband not because she wants to be equal in the man-woman relationship, but because she is from the upper-class *yangban* group and Chun is a mere commoner, *sangmin*. Thus, a class distinction is more important to her since it is also part of her ethnic identity. Her daughter Faye at first shows signs of rebellion against patriarchy and realizes she is not equal with her brothers. However, gradually, she also learns the Confucian order of family dynamics and does not question it further. In *Native Speaker*, Korean women are also submissive and are not trying to improve their position in the community. They all accept the Confucian dynamic of a Korean family – a woman is always below a man (either father, husband, or eldest son). Thus, it is apparent that gender or feminist issues are shifted to the background of the story and class is more important for Haesu. Both novels comply with

the patriarchal Korean view of society. Even though there are scenes which are trying to show the inequalities, the feminist agenda is lacking.

Confucianism means not only that a woman is supposed to be submissive to her man, but it also means that collectivism is more important than individualism. This is even reflected in the Korean language and its honorifics which are used in *Clay Walls*. Korean is a hierarchy-based language, contrastingly, English honorifics usually express gender or marital status. In *Native Speaker*, the collectivistic nature of Korean thinking and language is a barrier between Henry and Lelia. *Clay Walls* focuses on language itself but *Native Speaker* even on implications of the collectivistic language and the lack of perceiving

Chapter four deals with diaspora and acculturation. Diaspora is present in *Clay Walls* since the characters had to flee Korea because of the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula. The first-generation immigrants feel homesick and want to return back which is a usual sign of diaspora. Contrastingly, the second-generation immigrants, particularly Faye, do not understand the diaspora which is the source of disagreement between the two generations. With diaspora, the animosity towards the Japanese is also most present with the first-generation migrants and Faye again clashes with her parents who even hate American-born Japanese. Thus, even the first-generation immigrants have prejudices against other ethnicities in the U.S. Concerning acculturation, majority of *Clay Walls* characters are not assimilated. That is because the American public does not accept them as equals. Moreover, some characters want to retain their Korean features which are incompatible with assimilation. The only almost fully assimilated character is Clara who, as a result of her extreme form of assimilation (in this case plastic surgery), loses her Korean beauty and never shows her face again. This seems to signify that full assimilation, including interracial relationship, leads to the destruction of the former culture. In *Native Speaker*, Henry's father represents the integration stage of acculturation – he values the Korean lifestyle but has adapted to the American to his advantage. Contrastingly, the Korean housekeeper represents the separation strategy – she is isolated in her room, does not speak English or communicates with Americans. She represents an immigrant who suffers the consequences of her decision to leave her homeland since she is not willing to acculturate, she dies in isolation, nameless.

To summarize Henry Park's identity, initially, he is an observer who through contact with a fellow Korean American finds his identity. His isolation from others is even presented in the metaphor of him being an island. Due to Kwang representing a father to him, Henry traverses his ambiguous identity and starts appreciating his culture. In the end, he does not proclaim to be a one hundred per cent Korean (as a one-and-a-half generation immigrant he

cannot do so) but he includes himself into the immigrant sphere. He ceases to be just an observer of everyone and everything. Some critics, consequently, see Lee as an ethnographer or anthropologist. He finds refuge in the pluralism of cultures. Additionally, Henry admits that he would want his son Mitt to find his own culture, thus Henry perceives ethnic attrition as a positive feature of shifting immigrant identity. All in all, Henry metaphorically represents the identity shift of an assimilating immigrant.

Segregation and discrimination are also present, particularly in *Clay Walls*. Haesu cannot find a house to rent because the owners do not trust 'orientals' or they would require more money from immigrants for the same unit. Kim shows that only through the help of white Americans (e.g. Mrs Thayer) the immigrants can succeed and own a house. Asian immigrants are also discriminated when talking about education. They are not allowed to enter private schools because they are not Caucasian. Here, the focus of the novel shifts from class issues to racial issues. However, the fact that Haesu is furious (when declined the right to have her American-born children attend such a school), one may claim that it is also her class which suffers. As an upper-class woman, she would provide her children with the best education she could in Korea. This right is not available to her in the U.S. Thus, not only racial but also class issues are again at the forefront of the novel's focus.

To summarize the chapter about Yellow Peril and model minority, it is important to say that throughout the Asian American history, the American attitudes towards Asians have constantly been shifting. In *Clay Walls*, Asians are seen as Yellow Peril because of the Pearl Harbour bombing. At one point, the Americans fail to recognize individual ethnic groups, thus, erasing the Asian ethnic heritage and being unjust even towards Koreans. Furthermore, Faye is the only Korean immigrant feeling sorry for the Americans of Japanese descent. She is the only one realising the stereotypes and prejudices against Japanese and that people, in general, fail to distinguish the Americanness of the acculturated Japanese. *Native Speaker* provides a different point of view, it deals mainly with model minority – contrasting with Yellow Peril. The Asian Americans are pitted against African Americans which results in deaths of people on both sides. It is important to mention that white Americans do not intervene in the conflict. Lee portrays Asians and African Americans as the victims of the political war. In *Clay Walls*, the Black-Korean tension is not much present. The Blacks are only portrayed as a negative influence on the American-born Korean sons of Haesu. This seems to stem from the author's own prejudice, since the sons do not admit that they are at fault when stealing. They always blame the African Americans for it. Thus, such representation stems from Kim's own views or the intention to

show that even in the 1940s, Korean Americans were negatively influenced by other minorities
– being the victims of their behaviour.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá zobrazením korejských imigrantů během 20. století na území Spojených států amerických, především v Kalifornii a New Yorku. Úkolem je představit problematiku Američanů korejského původu a korejských imigrantů, tak jak jsou zachyceni v románech *Native Speaker (Rodilý mluvčí)* autora korejského původu Lee Chang-raeho a *Clay Walls (Hliněné zdi)*³¹³ autorky stejného původu, Ronyoung Kimové.³¹⁴ Hlavní postavou *Native Speaker* je Henry Park, který je považován za člena 1,5generace přistěhovalců. Jelikož ale jeho identita není striktně vyhraněná, je někdy považován jako člen přistěhovalců obecně, bez generačních rozdílů. Hlavními postavami *Clay Walls* jsou členové rodiny Chunových:³¹⁵ Haesu, Chun (oba patří do první generace přistěhovalců) a Faye, která je již z druhé generace přistěhovalců, tudíž potomek té první.

V první kapitole práce jsou představena specifika asijsko-americké imigrace. Z počátku jsou prezentovány informace ohledně čínských přistěhovalců, jelikož jsou první velkou skupinou asijských imigrantů na americkém území. Ti se v Americe, především na Havaji, objevovali od 50. let 19. století. Dále jsou krátce zmíněni japonští přistěhovalci, kteří byli druhou známou skupinou imigrantů a jsou zmíněni také proto, že se v *Clay Walls* několikrát objevují. Co se týče korejských imigrantů, jsou zmíněny dvě imigrační vlny – před rokem 1965, a druhá značí vlnu od roku 1965. První korejští imigranti se na území USA začali objevovat od roku 1903. Mezi korejskými přistěhovalci byla nejen pracovní třída, tzv. *sangminové*, ale i aristokratická třída *yangbanové*. S prvními asijskými imigranty se začínal objevovat protiimigrační sentiment. Toto vyústilo v sérii protiimigračních zákonů, které z počátku (první byl představen r. 1882) omezovaly pouze příliv pracovníků z Číny. Postupně se zavedly kvóty pro jednotlivé země, ty asijské byly ale v nevýhodě, protože jejich počet byl velmi malý. K jejich zrušení došlo až r. 1965. Co se týče přistěhovalců z *Clay Walls*, ti migrovali nedobrovolně kvůli Japonské okupaci v Koreji. Naproti tomu, přistěhovalci z *Native Speakera* byli ekonomičtí migranti, jelikož otec hlavního hrdiny chtěl v Americe podnikat.

V druhé kapitole je krátce nastíněna problematika asijsko-americké literatury: především počáteční zahrnování pouze velkých skupin autorů přistěhovalců asijského původu. Až později se začali do asijsko-americké literatury dostávat i autoři ostatních asijských menšin. Ronyoung Kimová patří do druhé generace korejsko-amerických autorů. Lee Chang-rae naopak

³¹³ Oba romány nejsou přeloženy do českého jazyka, tudíž je překlad názvů můj a není brán jako oficiální. Jejich přeložení slouží pouze k orientaci – v Resumé budou užívány originální názvy v angličtině.

³¹⁴ Jména autorů jsou přepsána podle: <http://nase-rec.ujc.cas.cz/archiv.php?art=4697>.

³¹⁵ Zde je ponechán anglický přepis jmen, který se pouze skloňuje či přechyluje. Je tak činěno z prostého důvodu – nejsem odbornice na fonetiku korejštiny, a tudíž bych nerada špatně přepsala jména hlavních postav.

až do třetí generace. Obě analyzované knihy spadají pod žánr imigračního románu. Navíc je *Clay Walls* brána jako částečně autobiografický, historický román, jelikož v celku věrně zachycuje životy korejských imigrantů a kniha je o době, která je k dnešnímu dni vzdálená téměř sto let. *Native Speaker* je často román zařazený do žánru špionážního thrilleru a ještě žánru postmoderního. Není ale považován za prototyp špionážního thrilleru – kritici se shodují, že v mnoha případech jej spíš paroduje. I tak ale popis hlavního hrdiny odpovídá hrdinovi z takových thrillerů.

Třetí kapitolou začíná podrobná analýza obou děl a rozebírá identitu postav či změnu její změnu. Především genderovou, třídní a etnickou identitu. Tyto součásti identity spojuje Konfucianismus, který je pro korejskou společnost typický. Ohledně genderové identity, v *Clay Walls* se postava Haesu z počátku zdá být pro-feministická, jelikož dává jasně najevo svému muži, že se mu necítí být podřazená. Hlubší analýzou se ale prokáže, že její postoj nepramení z odmítání patriarchální společnosti, ale z třídních rozdílů. Neodporuje Chunovi protože je muž, ale protože je z nižší třídy. Jelikož je Haesu vytržena z korejské společnosti a jejího třídního systému, v Americe se snaží její třídní identitu *yangban* co nejvíce připomínat. Problém nastává v tom, že pro Američany její třída nic neznamena – je považována za přistěhovalce, a tudíž jí nenáleží žádná privilegia. To, že se ztotožňuje s třídou *yangban* značí, že je pro ni důležitá i její etnická identita. V Americe je proto členkou spolku bojující za zlepšení podmínek v Koreji a za vymanění se z područí Japonska. Chun je oproti tomu vůči situaci na Korejském poloostrovu laxní. Toto vyvolává dojem ironie, jelikož to právě on je jedinou postavou, která byla pronásledována a téměř zatčena japonskou policií. Za normálních okolností by čtenář očekával větší zainteresovanost z Chunovy strany.

Konfucianismus je přítomen nejen v submisivním postavení žen v rodinném kruhu, ale také v systému korejštiny a oslovování osob. Postavy *Clay Walls* používají většinu času korejštinu, kterou autorka překládá do angličtiny. Autorka ale ponechává honorifika v kurzívě, což slouží ke zdůraznění hierarchie mezi jednotlivými postavami. V románu *Native Speaker* slouží honorifika ke zdůraznění kulturních odlišností mezi korejskou a americkou společností. O Henryho a jeho otce se dvacet let stará korejská hospodyně. Když se Lelia Henryho ptá na její jméno, není jí schopen odpovědět, protože ji celý život oslovuje „ah-juh-ma“, doslova „paní po třicítce“. Pro Henryho je to přirozené, protože i své rodiče oslovuje zdvořilostními frázemi, ne jejich jmény. Lelia naproti tomu bere neznalost něčího jména jako urážku a naprostou ignoraci individuality, která je pro Američany zásadní. Proto sama začne pochybovat o tom, co pro Henryho znamená – je Lelia nebo jen jeho „žena“?

Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá diasporou a akulturací. Diaspora nespočívá jen v nedobrovolném či dobrovolném odloučení od domoviny, ale také v pocitu sounáležitosti s onou etnickou skupinou. Všichni Korejci v *Clay Walls* jsou hrdí na své etnikum a kolektivně nenávidí Japonce. To se ale liší u druhé generace přistěhovalců. Faye by se chtěla kamarádit s Japonkou, to je ale pro Haesu nepřístupné. Haesu si ale neuvědomuje, že bere všechny Japonce a Američany japonského původu jako jednu skupinu a je tedy zaslepená svou nenávistí. Nechápe, že Japonci narození v Americe mají jen pramálo společného s hrůzami páchanými na Korejcích v Koreji, protože se adaptují do americké společnosti. Co se týče akulturace, jde o změnu tradic vycházející z kontaktu dvou či více kultur – minoritní kultura přebírá specifika dominantní kultury. Akulturace má několik úrovní: integrace, separace, marginalizace a asimilace. Nejdůležitější je asimilace, jelikož je to finální fáze akulturace: osoby změni svou kulturu v tu dominantní a jsou do ní přijati bez předsudků – splynou s ní. Asimilace je v *Clay Walls* dosažena pouze jednou osobou, Clarou, a má na ni negativní dopad. Clara chce totiž do americké kultury zapadnout natolik, že podstoupí plastickou operaci a ta její krásu naprosto znetvoří. Zdá se tedy, že pro Kim znamená asimilace naprosté zničení původní kultury. V *Native Speakeru* jsou některé postavy integrovány – udržují si svoji kulturu, ale také přebírají vybrané součásti dominantní kultury. Je tu také separace, kdy se Henryho hospodyně vyhýbá jakémukoliv kontaktu s americkou společností.

V páté kapitole je rozebrána Henryho identita. Ten je na začátku příběhu pozorovatel či herec. To není způsobeno jen jeho profesí špióna, ale také tím, že mnozí kritici správně usuzují, že Henryho identita je metaforou pro přistěhovalce, kteří jsou také z počátku pozorovateli. Navíc, pokud se asimilují do nové společnosti, vyvstává otázka, zda-li je jejich nová identita pravá či jen dobře hraná. Henry postupem času objevuje svou identitu díky setkáním s dalším Američanem korejského původu, Johnem Kwangem, a nakonec se stane součástí komunity imigrantů. Přestává být jen nečinným pozorovatelem. Někteří kritici se i přiklání k tomu, že Henry představuje etnografa či antropologa, protože všechny a všechno pozoruje a zkoumá.

Šestá kapitola se zabývá segregací (rasové odlučování) a diskriminací (odpírání práv určité skupině). V *Clay Walls* jde o segregační bydlení, kde jsou určité pronájmy k dispozici jen bělochům. Haesu nakonec získá pronájem domu, ale jen za pomoci sousedky bělošky, na kterou je dům napsán. Haesu a její rodina také zažije diskriminaci, když jí není umožněno přihlásit její děti do soukromé školy. V *Native Speakeru* nejsou tato témata nijak zvýrazňována.

V sedmé kapitole jsou popsány jevy Yellow Peril (žlutá hrozba) a vzorová menšina. Yellow Peril je především v *Clay Walls*, kdy jsou Korejci a Japonci spatřováni jako jedno etnikum po útoku na Pearl Harbor a kdy mají být přesunuti do koncentračních táborů pro

Japonce. Vzorová menšina je naopak spíše v románu *Native Speaker*, kdy je asijská menšina vyzdvihována nad Afroameričany. Koncept vzorové menšiny byl užíván k zdůraznění skutečnosti, že i po Druhé světové válce si Asiaté zlepšili své postavení sami. Nepotřebují vládní pomoc jako Afroameričané. Tyto menšiny jsou staveny proti sobě a jelikož z tohoto jevu vznikají i krvavé konflikty, dá se říci, že asijská menšina je obětí machinací americké vlády. Navíc vzorová menšina je nyní spatřována negativně neboť vynakládá psychický nátlak na jednotlivce.

Clay Walls a *Native Speaker* se liší především ve zdůrazňování jiných faktorů imigrace. To je důsledek nejen odlišným zasazením knih, ale také jejich žánry. Aby člověk získal lepší povědomí o korejských přistěhovalcích, je důležité přečíst obě knihy.

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Appendix A – A summary of *Clay Walls* by Ronyoung Kim

Clay Walls tell the story of a Korean immigrant family in California. Haesu and Chun left Korea because the Japanese occupy Korea. The novel is divided into three parts, each devoted to a different member of the Chuns family. The first part is about Haesu, told from the perspective of an omniscient narrator. It shows the struggles of first-generation immigrants. Haesu is unable to find a house for rent because of her Asian complexion. Only with the help of Mrs Thayer are Haesu and her husband able to rent it. Chun begins doing business and they start earning decent amount of money. After the birth of their three children, Haesu wants to return to Korea to buy a land and remain there. On a ship to Korea, she met a Japanese captain who befriends her. By the end of the voyage he reveals his true origin – a Korean spy disguised as a Japanese man. Upon their arrival, Haesu realizes that even though she misses Korea, America is becoming her new home. Moreover, Japanese occupation is still present and her persecuted husband would not be able to join them, he would be imprisoned. She also finds out that the captain she met was killed by the Japanese. Her part of the novel ends with the suggestion of her returning to America.

The second part is from Chun's perspective, again using omniscient narrator. His chapter deals mainly with his gambling addiction and struggles to keep his business running. It is also revealed that when Haesu was on her trip to Korea, he was unfaithful to her and slept with his friend's wife. In this chapter, flashbacks to his past are also important since they tell the story of his life in Korea and the persecution of the Japanese. It is also revealed that a Christian missionary has match made his marriage with the upper-class Haesu and provided him with the money necessary for his escape to the U.S. The chapters ends with Chun losing all of his money in a game of poker.

Faye, Haesu and Chun's daughter, is the narrator of the last chapter. It follows her life from childhood to adulthood. During the chapter, it is revealed that her father (in search of a job) dies far away from home. Haesu is forced to have a menial job of sewing, but she insists to do it at home to be able to take care of her children. Faye tells the story of her boyfriend who, during World War II, dies of tuberculosis. She herself wants to have a job and works in a factory, providing produce for the war. By the end of novel, it is suggested that Faye will marry a Korean American man her community chose for her.

Appendix B – A summary of *Native Speaker* by Chang-rae Lee

Henry Park, a Korean American, is the protagonist of *Native Speaker*. From the very first pages, it is apparent that his marriage with Lelia, an American speech therapist, is suffering and might result in a divorce. Henry works in a spy company gathering information mainly on immigrants. While Henry wants to save his marriage after the death of their son Mitt, he also has to focus on his new target – John Kwang, a Korean American politician on his journey of becoming the first Korean mayor of New York.

At first, Henry works just as an intern for Kwang. Gradually, he gains Kwang's trust and befriends him. During the political campaign, the Black-Korean tensions escalate and later, Kwang's offices are bombed, killing two of his faithful workers. Henry replaces one of them (Eduardo) and does more work for Kwang, mainly keeping records of immigrants, coworkers, their addresses and donations for Kwang's cause. While working for Kwang, Henry has to report on him to his superiors because of possible money laundering involved in the political campaign. When Henry realizes that by his espionage and pretence he is hurting immigrants (the group he belongs to), he decides to quit his job when he is finished with Kwang. After the bombing, Kwang isolates himself and the campaign suffers from that. In a heated argument with Henry, Kwang admits only to him that the offices were bombed because he hired someone to rid him of Eduardo because he betrayed Kwang.

When Henry gives the report on immigrants involved in Kwang's campaign to his superiors, Kwang is involved in a car accident. Kwang's close friends realize that they cannot save his campaign anymore. Furthermore, it is revealed that some immigrants from the report were illegally in the U.S. and thus the public perceives Kwang as a criminal.

At the end of the novel, it is revealed that the Kwangs have returned to Korea. Henry works as Lelia's assistant in her speech therapy office, disguised as the Speech Monster. He pretends to eat the children who can save themselves only by pronouncing the day's phrase correctly.