

Exploring literary negotiations of culture and identity from the journal, *Cultura Tropical*
(열대 문화) and how Korean Brazilians construct a hybrid cultural identity

By

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Abstract

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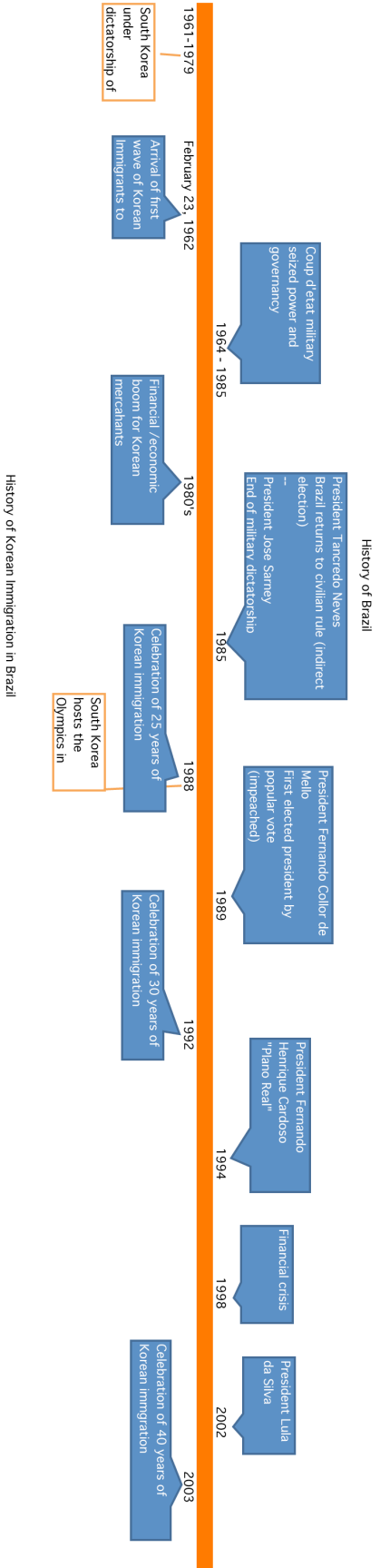
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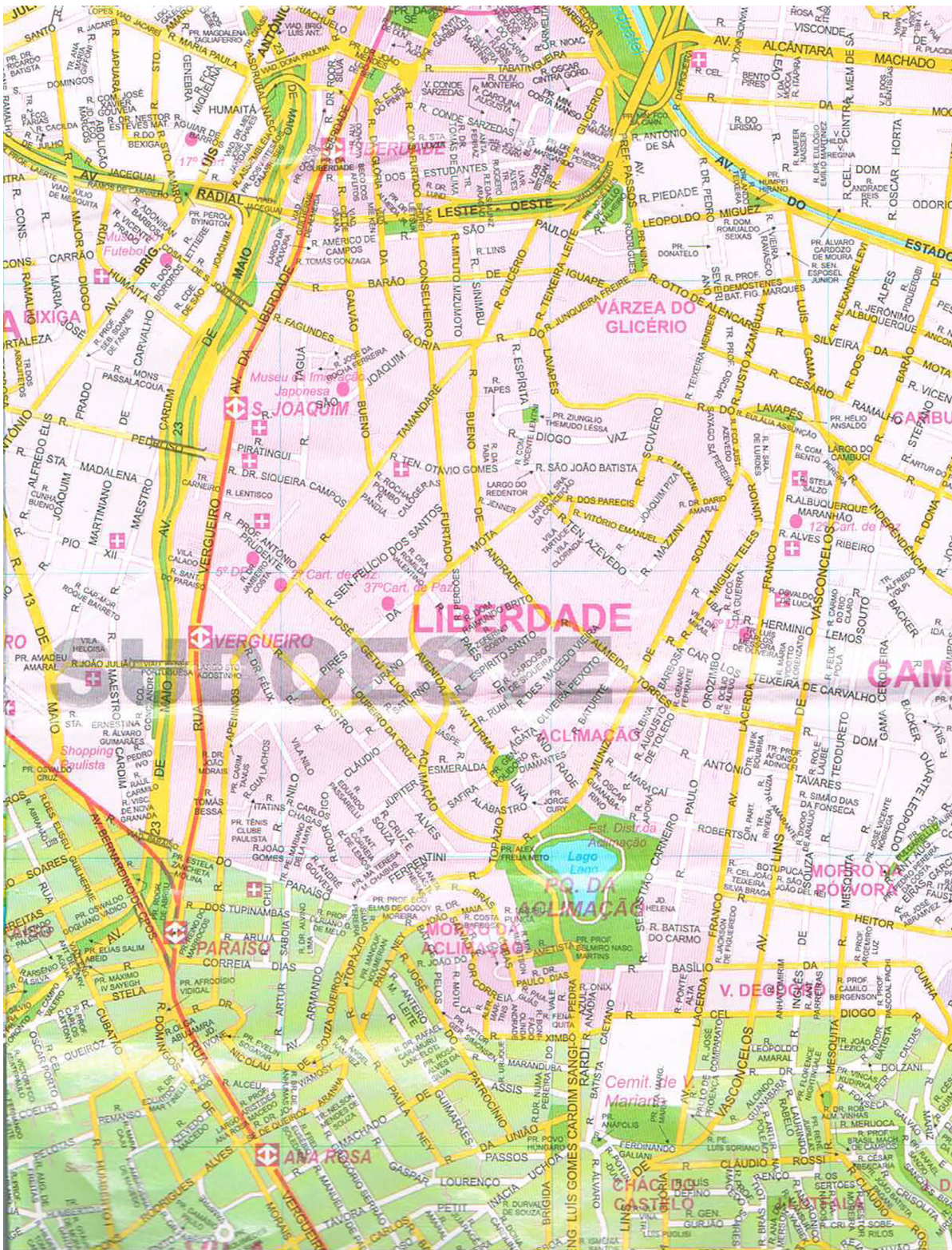
The dissertation explores the negotiation of culture and identity from the literary production of Korean immigrants in Brazil. The dissertation also explores how Korean immigrants begin a process of diasporic narrative as a way to construct an alternative space and a Korean Brazilian identity. By following the status of Self through the writings of *Cultura Tropical*, a Korean Brazilian identity evolves through three stages of negotiation. The Korean community of 50, 000 is a small minority group but rapidly growing in socioeconomic sectors of Brazil. Their narratives and cultural discourse convey experiences of tension and cultural affiliation. They create a literary space to debate and contemplate how Korea or Brazil is a sanctuary to mix languages, literary genres, voices and reflections related to the Brazilian immigrant life.

The study of this dissertation presents the search and the trace of new Asian voices in Brazil for further understanding of how they view themselves within Brazilian culture and what it means for them to claim “Brazilian” as part of their identity. The focus of this piece will concentrate on Korean immigration in Brazil and thus far the only existent literary journal by the community known as *Cultura Tropical*. Finding themselves, quickly building a business and social space in São Paulo, their experiences are embodied as short stories, poems and essays in which they manifest a new and contemporary relationship between the Korean and Brazilian cultures. Can the notion of Asian ethnicity pose to be included or excluded in Brazilian society and literary culture? From this, we will be able to further identify if Korean immigrant discourses can be part of the current framework of Brazilian foundational literature and cultural studies.

Table of Contents

HISTORY TIMELINE.....	ii
MAP OF BOM RETIRO & BRÁS.....	iii
MAP OF LIBERDADE & CAMBUCL.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	xv
CHAPTER ONE: DIVIDED CUTURAL IDENTITIES BETWEEN KOREAN AND BRAZILIAN CULTURES.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: THE ACT OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE FOR KOREAN BRAZILIAN DISCOURSE.....	17
CHAPTER THREE: ETHNIC AND IDENTITY CONCERNS OF 1.5 AND SECOND GENERATIONS OF KOREAN BRAZILIANS.....	33
CONCLUSION.....	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	54
REFERENCES.....	57





Introduction

This dissertation explores the literature of *Cultural Tropical*, a journal written and published by first generation Korean immigrants in Brazil. I analyze how these narratives identify and explore dual cultural identities that are constantly shifting between Korean and Brazilian cultural frames, eventually defining their identity to be *Korean Brazilian*. For the purpose of this project, the Korean Brazilian identity is to be understood when an individual has a stronger affinity towards either Korean or Brazilian culture while still remaining fluidity between the two cultures. I use the term *Korean Brazilian* as opposed to the hyphenated *Korean-Brazilian* as a representative form of the relationship between the two terms: Since these two cultures are in constant state of flux for the immigrant, at times Korean culture is prioritized over the Brazilian whereas in other instances, the Brazilian element is preferred over the Korean.

Korean Brazilian identity is a simultaneous mixture of both Korean and Brazilian cultures, occupying the liminal in-between cultural spaces that emerge when read through the perspective of diaspora and hybridity theory¹. Within Latin America, and in particular Brazilian studies, cultural productions often portray Asian subjects as peripheral and liminal characters but rarely as an integral part of the discourse of the nation. The traditional ethnic and cultural matrix of the Portuguese-African-Indigenous has been widely discussed since the literary movement of *Modernismo*. On the other hand, the Asian, more specifically the *Japanese* appears as a transparent, and an unimportant part of the national discursive landscape. Before the nation can imagine a homogenized culture, it must recognize and document representations of hybrid, heterogeneous people.

I explore the construction of the Korean Brazilian identity in three stages. Each chapter of the dissertation will represent each of these stages correspondingly. In Chapter One, the first stage of identity the immigrant realizes that a negotiation exists between Korean and Brazilian cultures. The narratives studied in this chapter are written in the Korean language.² In Chapter Two, the second stage identifies a new insight of dual identity as these immigrants realize that they must acknowledge and understand both Korean and Brazilian cultures as part of their identity. The chapter explores narratives and poems that display the mixture of Korean and Portuguese languages spoken by the immigrants. Finally, in Chapter Three, as the third stage of identity, I discuss the contradictions of cultural negotiations of Korean Brazilians, demonstrating how each

¹ According to Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, “diaspora (studies) forces us to rethink the rubrics of nation and nationalism, while refiguring the relations of citizens and nation-states” (7). Diasporic studies disjunctures and challenges to traditional, rigid definitions of identity by forming new points of “becoming” for the nomadic/migrant subject. This field also studies the role of national formation and the constitution of imagined communities in the 21st century. In addition, hybridity theories such as that of Homi K. Bhabba, emphasize that we now find ourselves with consequent new zones of contact of “vernacular cosmopolitans of a kind, moving in-between cultural traditions, and revealing hybrid forms of life and art that do not have a prior existence...”(xiii)¹. The key idea here is the ‘hybrid’ form of life that contemporary subjects now find themselves in.

² Since most of the literature of *Cultura Tropical* is in the Korean language, I have provided translations to cited texts.

generation of the immigrant community (first, 1.5³ and second) reflect differently on their Korean Brazilian identity. Each stage reveals a shift in the cultural perspective of the Korean immigrant and the dissertation examines the formation of the Korean Brazilian identity by exploring the depictions of immigrant experiences in dual cultural contexts.

Although the Korean Brazilian community inaugurates its immigrant history since 1962, its presence and cultural influence in a large urban center such as São Paulo becomes apparent with its rapid growth and socio-cultural interaction. This dissertation introduces and undertakes an initial exploration of the narratives of *Cultura Tropical*, revealing an aspect of the Korean Brazilian community that has not been fully analyzed in academia. *Cultura Tropical*, illuminates the Korean immigrant experience in Brazil. These writers describe in vivid language how it feels to be displaced and misunderstood, to tumble in status, to even be despised—and yet to be free to reinvent or rediscover oneself, to adapt in unforeseen ways to a new environment, and to become the complex hybrid known as the *Korean Brazilian*.

Further, the journal is a representative mouthpiece from the community as it contains personal reflections related to immigrant history in Brazil, essays on how to define dual culture identity as an Asian immigrant in a Latin American space and how their narratives negotiate a Korean Brazilian identity. This study proves to be an essential addition to Brazilian cultural studies as it focuses particularly on Korean Brazilians because the Korean immigrant history to Brazil is different from the Japanese-Brazilian. The Korean immigrant experience in Brazil begins differently from the Japanese-Brazilian as Korean immigrants transition from a brief experience with agriculture to be *vendedores* and own retail stores of clothing and consumer goods in the city of São Paulo.

Japanese immigration to Brazil began in 1908 as these immigrants arrived as contract laborers for sugar and coffee plantations. Due to a political agreement between Japan and Brazil, a special quota for emigration from Japan began in 1908. The first generation was composed of farmers whose land were re-possessioned by the government, others were samurais whose roles were antiquated for a modernizing Japan and other migrants were from feudal families in bankruptcy. Members of the group shared the desire to search for a place where they could begin a new life as they were beginning to be marginalized socially and economically in Japan.

Japanese immigrants first arrived in Brazil from 1908 until 1920 with a recorded population of 1,714. Brazil had seen an increase in exports of raw materials such as coffee, cocoa, cotton, iron and steel and Japan was in need of mobilizing their stagnant rural economy and workers. By 1924, several factors led to a dramatic increase of Japanese entry into Brazil as “immigration policies in the United States further closed doors to Asian immigrants, culminating with the 1924 National Origins Act. Japanese-Brazilian economic relations were expanding quickly” (Lesser 95). Most of the Japanese immigrants were initially concentrated in the states of São Paulo and the Amazon. Since the 2000 survey done by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), almost

³ For the purpose of this project, 1.5 generation refers to immigrant children or young adults who followed their parents to immigrate and assimilate to a new culture. See Charles Ryu, *1.5 Generation, Asia American Experience in the U.S.* Ed. Joan F. J. Lee (Jefferson: McFarland, 1991).

fifty percent of the 1.5⁴ population of Japanese-Brazil are concentrated in the state of São Paulo, and their next highest population centers are in the state of Paraná and Pará. With long history of immigration, the Japanese have a stronger literary tradition.

Japanese-Brazilian literature has been studied by Juan Ryusuke Ishikawa in his dissertation, *Tácticas de aproximación hacia formas representativas de la presencia asiática en la literatura latinoamericana: Trayectoria del chino-culi y el haiku (China, Spanish text)* (2005) and Zelideth Maria Rivas in her dissertation, *Jun-nissei Literature and Culture in Brazil: Conceptions of Memory, Adaptation and Victimization* (2009). Ishikawa studies haikus written by José Juan Tablada and members of the Brazilian Grêmio Haicai Ipê, arguing that since haiku is an imported form that depends on Latin American space to manifest its poetic value, placing Latin America as the object of representation through an adopted Japanese literary tradition.

Equally important, Rivas explores the literature of the Japanese-Brazilian jun-nisei, people who were born in Japan and who immigrated to Brazil as children. Her study uses memoirs by immigrants Kiyotani Masuji, Hironaka Chikako, and Okuyama Kotaro; short stories by Onodera Ikuko and Yajima Kensuke (penname of Umezaki Yoshiaki, and poetry from the tanka anthology *Koronia man'yosh u* (Colonia Man'yoshu, 1981). Another example is Shanna Lorenz's work, *Japanese in the samba: Japanese Brazilian musical citizenship, racial consciousness, and transnational migration* (2007), an ethnographic of musical culture among Japanese Brazilian in São Paulo. The study of Japanese-Brazilians through Jeffrey Lesser's work, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (1997) has also been groundbreaking for studies related to Japanese-Brazilians. There are also Japanese critical works, such as those by Maeyama Takashi and Handa Tomo that have explored the Japanese-Brazilian experience through anthropology and history.

Korean immigrant history

Korean immigration to Brazil cannot be understood without knowledge of past historical ties between Japan and Korea. Foreign policy relations during the early twentieth century led Korea to open emigration of its citizens to other countries as the country began to reconstruct itself after the devastating Korean War (1950-1953). In fact, the Korean civil war was an effect of the country's struggle to free itself from Japanese colonialism (1910-1945) and the country's attempt at political and cultural reconstruction as a new modern nation. Ideological divisions led to two separate and contradictory points of view as to how Korea should rebuild, which consequently led to the devastating Korean Civil War; a war between a communist and new republic, democratic ideologies. As Korea continued in its foreign affairs and, one occasion several of its government members brought about a chance meeting between Korea and Brazil. During May 16 until June 19 of 1961, Captain Jung In Kyu attended a friendly world shooting match. At this meeting, he was approached by a Brazilian ex-soldier (veteran) about the immigration situation in Brazil. The government of Jânio Quadros was undergoing a review of its nation's immigrant quota. According to Yoo Na Kim in *A Jovem Coréia*:

⁴ Currently, according to scholar Zelideth M. Rivas, "the Japanese population in Brazil has grown to be the largest population of Japanese immigrants, descendants, and nationals outside of Japan, with an estimated population of 1.6 million" (5).

Era uma vez, entre 1923 e 1926, uma Coréia dominada pelo Japão. Nessa época, alguns coreanos vindos do Japão munidos de passaportes japoneses aportaram aqui no Brasil fugidos da repressão. Em 1956, 30 anos depois, em plena Guerra da Coréia, alguns prisioneiros do conflito vieram para cá [Brasil]. Esses prisioneiros, com intervenção da ONU, poderiam optar pelo repatriamento ao país de origem ou pela ida a um país neutro [...] cinquenta homens chegaram ao Rio de Janeiro, no dia 6 de fevereiro de 1956 (48).

These 50 members of the Korean government arrived in Brazil on February 12, 1963, after boarding the Dutch ship, Tjitjalengka at Pusan (Korea) as the first group of Korean families arrived in Santos and upon their arrival in Brazil, under the accord and policy of buying farmland in Capão Bonito, the families began their new lives in Brazil.

According to Keum Joa Choi in *Além do Arco-Iris: a Imigração Coreana no Brasil*, the first immigrant group was composed of “procedentes da Coréia do Norte, muitos militares, elementos das classes média e alta da sociedade, com razoável nível educacional, tendo, no mínimo, o equivalente ao curso ginásial completo” (5). Since much of the first immigrant group was composed of educated persons who were unfamiliar with agriculture, the next logical step was for them to start a new life as small business entrepreneurs.

By knowing both the history and the socioeconomic background of Korean immigrants, we further understand their position in Brazil. Three historical waves emerge as critical to an understanding of the Korean immigrant experience in Brazil. The first wave was that of ex-Korean war prisoners. The second immigrant wave arrived mid 1960s until the mid 1970s. The third and final wave of Korean immigrants arrived from the late 1970s and the decade of the 1980s.

On January 6, 1956, Korean immigrants arrived in Rio de Janeiro as farmhands under an international diplomatic accord between Brazil and Korea. Two major farms, *Fazenda Arirang* and *Fazenda Seul*, welcomed these immigrants. According to Choi, *Fazenda Arirang* was “localizada no município de Mogi das Cruzes, noroeste do Estado de São Paulo” (65), and *Fazenda Seul* was located, “30 km de São Paulo, nas proximidades de Guarulhos” (66). While most of these initial immigrants belonged to the highly-educated middle class, they arrived in Brazil registered as agriculturists. Although, they dedicated themselves to cultivating the land, most failed in agriculture and soon began to search for other professional opportunities.

About 1400 Koreans arrived to Brazil in 1971. Although Brazilian laws began to restrict immigration, the flow of Korean immigrants continued. While most arrived to

⁷ The term contact zone is borrowed from Mary L. Pratt’s concept in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*: “a contact zone is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect, a contact perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other” (7).

work in the agricultural sector, about ninety percent of them had moved to the city of São Paulo. Choi states, “São Paulo abrigava imigrantes de diferentes países, e o crescimento anual de sua posição era superior à casa de 300,000 pessoas, o que permitia melhores condições de vida” (79). Rather than continue to work in the isolated countryside, Korean immigrants sought business opportunities in the city. Their general lack of agricultural experience accounted for much of this shift to urban centers. The farmlands proved difficult to cultivate, resulting in meager profits and poor conditions. Brazil’s growth as an industrial nation beginning in the 1960s offered additional opportunities for these immigrants. While the history of Korean immigration raises various questions such as how and why Koreans moved to Brazil, this dissertation focuses on their adaptation to Brazil as they negotiate between Korean and Brazilian culture.

This adaptation to their host country concerned early Korean immigrants in Brazil. In the 1980s, however, a trend began within the Korean immigrant community. By working as *vendedores* (house-to-house merchants) and as seamstresses, both men and women saved money for their families. With these savings and basic experiences in clothing manufacturing, Korean immigrants began to lease stores. Korean storeowners began to dot neighborhoods such as Brás and Bom Retiro during the 1980s and came to dominate the second-tier fashion sector of São Paulo. As more immigrants settled into managing businesses, certain members of the Korean community wanted to further express their cultural interests. They created the literary journal, *Cultura Tropical* (열대 문화), which serves as a repository of stories of the Korean immigrant experience in Brazil from 1986-1995. *Cultura Tropical* provided an intellectual and creative outlet for the Korean community to reflect on the process of adaptation and inclusion of Brazilian experiences into their Korean cultural frame. The narratives explore the life changes brought about by immigration. The experience of living in a contact zone⁷ between Brazilian and Korean cultures leads to a construction of a mixed or hybrid⁸ identity.

Since there are scholars currently researching and discussing Japanese-Brazilian cultural production, my project continues in the spirit of adding valuable and previously unknown information about Asians in Latin America by focusing on the literary production by Korean immigrants in Brazil. This study of *Cultura Tropical* introduces a new narrative voice of a small ethnic population in Brazil that has made its own distinct impact in Brazil during the last fifty years. Knowledge of Korean Brazilian immigrants and their cultural identity provides a better understanding of their community, as their language and customs are different from the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture. *Cultura Tropical* has a plethora of narratives and poems depicting Koreans in Brazil with their experiences of acculturation and assimilation and essentially constructing a Korean Brazilian identity through its discourse.

This journal, dating from 1986 to 1995, is the only known literary publication by Korean immigrants in Brazil. During my research in São Paulo the summer of 2006, Professor Yum Im Jung suggested that I search for the small journal called *Yuldae Munhwa* or *Cultura Tropical*. However, no one in the Korean immigrant community seemed to have a copy. The Korean Association of Brazil (*Associação Coreana do Brasil*) only had a brochure about Korean immigrant history but no knowledge or record

⁸ The usage of “hybrid” in this dissertation refers to having two or more axes of cultural references that operate continuously and simultaneously.

of the *Cultural Tropical* journals. During research trips to São Paulo in 2007 and 2008, I located Ahn Kyung Ja, one of the writers of *Cultura Tropical*. During a brief personal interview, she discussed the history of the journal and her writings. She subsequently gave me copies of *Cultura Tropical* numbers, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9.

Each edition of *Cultura Tropical* features a Brazilian cultural reference on its front cover and a Korean element cultural reference or drawing on its back cover. These cover images serve as dual reference, intentionally representing the journal's mission of recognizing and interpreting cultural production influenced by both Korea and Brazil. In the table of contents for each journal edition, a preface, an essay, poetry, a *crônica* (*chronicle short stories*), a *conto* (*short story*), a special guest article or essay, a feature article, a critical review or commentary, Korean poetry, and an afterword is included. The journal is a hybrid construction of discourses from the Korean community and writings from famous Brazilians writers such as Machado de Assis and Carlos Drummond de Andrade translated into Korean so that readers could familiarize with Brazilian literature and culture. *Cultura Tropical* was written in Korean but later editions included bilingual (Korean-Portuguese) poetry by 1.5 writer generation. Members of this generation have significant direct contact with the homeland and culture via language and customs, but are also young enough to adapt to the new host country's language and customs as well. Many are fluent in both Korean and Portuguese languages or can communicate fairly successfully in both languages. Due to their language skills and relatively quick adaptation, 1.5 generation writers become culture brokers⁹ for their parents still struggling with language and understanding the cultural values of the host country.

Writers of *Cultura Tropical* belonged to the 1.5 generation and included graduate students at Universidade de São Paulo (USP), bilingual lawyers and teachers. These individuals served as culture brokers for the Korean immigrant community. Freelance writers and business entrepreneurs also contributed to *Cultura Tropical* whenever possible. While steeped in Korean literature, these writers also explored Brazilian literature and those genres (especially the *crônica* and the short story) that capture experiences of immigration. According to Ahn Kyung Ja, one of the contributors of *Cultura Tropical*, the editors covered the cost of production with community donations. Small business entrepreneurs and local associations such as the Korean Mother's Choir/어머니 합창단, Korean Alumni Association, and the Korean Chamber of Commerce donated money to for printing and free distribution of *Cultura Tropical* in order to promote biculturalism through literacy among the Korean immigrant community.

The History of the Literary Journal: *Cultura Tropical*

On March 1986, nine members¹⁰ of the community met to discuss the birth of the Korean literary journal, *Cultura Tropical*. They wanted to establish a Korean language literary magazine as an outlet for future generations to continue to communicate in Korean. The journal would provide a forum to discuss the experience of Koreans living

⁹ M.C. Szasz defines culture brokers as those who bridge, link or mediate between groups or persons of differing cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change (12).

¹⁰ The first contributors of *Cultura Tropical* were: Hwang Un Hun, Chu Song Kun, Kim U Jin, Yun Byung Won, Lee Change Jae, Muk dong Kyun, Kwon Oh Shik and Ahn Kyung Ja.

in Brazil, a climatic and cultural landscape quite different from their homeland. What was life like for Koreans in Brazil? They hoped to address these initial themes and questions. After additional meetings on September 1st and October 6th of 1986, the collaborators of *Cultura Tropical* organized themselves to run a journal with financial donations and literary contributions from volunteers. They aimed to print between 500 to 1000 copies per semester, which meant they needed 20,500 to 26,650 *cruzeiros*¹¹ from the community. Local immigrant businesses donated to the journal. In exchange, they received advertising space on the journal covers as well as public acknowledge of their donations in the editorial section.

The initial collaborators had prior writing and publishing experience with university newspapers in Korea. Most were already accomplished poets and writers with publications familiar to the public:

전 경향신문 문화부장으로 언론인이자 시인인 황운현씨, 예리한 수필로 필명을 날리던 안경자씨와 그 부군 이찬재씨, 여러 신문에 컬럼을 연재하여 유명해진 김우진씨, 주로 일본 신문에 단가를 발표하던 시인 주성근(오리)씨, 한국에서 시를 발표했던 목동균씨 그리고 생활 담당 법률 컬럼을 쓰던 나 그리고 도중 사퇴하신 두 분이 더 계셨다.

Hwang Un Hun was an acknowledged poet. Ahn Kyung Ja was an established short story writer. Kim U Jin had become famous from the various published articles that she had written. Chu Song Kun was an established poet with published poetry in various Japanese newspapers. Muk Dong Gyun had published a poetry book in Korea and there were two additional collaborators who were editors for lifestyle and social columns. [my translation. Personal interview, October 2010]

From their experience of publications and immigrant experiences, these writers considered *Cultura Tropical* as an appropriate title:

동인지를 하기로 하니까 이름을 무엇으로 하는가 하는 갑론을박이 있었다. 인류 문명 발생지가 전부 열대 지방 입에도 불구하고, 솔고 브라질 하면 열대, 더운 지방은 전부 미개인 취급을 하는 사람들의 인식을 불식 시키고 싶어서 <열대 문화>란 이름을 만장 일치로 채택했다.

We were considering titles for the journal. We couldn't deny the fact that we were living in a tropical climate and next to a tropical culture such as Brazil. It was a warm environment, and we needed to discuss Brazilian civilization in order to inform ourselves. So we decided to call the journal *Cultura Tropical* to address both Brazil and Korea within the discourse of culture. [my translation, Personal interview, October 2010]

In addition, from the interview with Yun Byung Oh, I inquired as to how the material was processed and printed; and how the journal was managed:

¹¹ During the 1980s, Brazil experienced high inflation of 10-15% per day at times. The closest estimate of this value in dollars is 200 to 250 at an exchange rate of ? *cruzeiros* per dollar in 1986.

타이프는 마침 내가 서울서 사온 워드 프로세서를 쓰기로 하고 막상 일을 시작하니 원고도 원고지만 재정이 제일 문제였다. 몇몇 독지가들의 도움으로 창간호가 고고의 탄성을 지른 것이 1986년 말로 생각된다. 창간호가 내 수중에 없어서 자세히는 말할 수 없지만 각자 생업에 매달린 몸임에도 불구하고 우리는 학생 시대 교내 신문을 만들던 열정을 가지고 일했다. 열대 문화의 총 지휘는 고 황운헌 선생이 맡고, 우리는 그냥 원고나 던져주고 찬조금 후원에 약간의 힘을 보태면 되었지만, 원고를 정리하고 편집을 해서 책이 나오도록 하는 데에는 안경자씨와 이찬재씨의 노고가 컸다. 창간호가 나가니까 우리 교민 사회는 물론 본국 언론 기타 해외 교포들의 반향이 뜨거웠다.

I had a word processor that I had brought from Korea so we used this application to process all of the writings into a word document format. After a few conflicts, we had the vision to print the journal in 1986. Although most of us were busy with our own daily responsibilities, our background from working in newspaper publication during college helped us get a general organized structure. Our main editor and manager was Hwang Un Hun, while the rest of us provided any projects and themes to add to the journal when necessary. Ahn Kyung Ja and Lee Chan Jae put together the journal, page by page, which was essential for the continuation of the journal from one edition to another. The warm reception by the community itself was a great encouragement [my translation. Personal Interview, October 2010].

I conducted extensive research in Brazil between 2006 and 2008 to find the first two editions of the journal but was unsuccessful. After multiple interviews with the collaborators of *Cultura Tropical*, I placed announcements in Korean Brazilian newspapers and agencies in São Paulo inquiring about copies of *Cultura Tropical*. I gave a personal interview to the journal of the Association of Koreans in Brazil sharing my personal story as well as my scholarly research in 2007, yet I remained unable to obtain a physical copy of these editions. Fortunately, after establishing a network within the Korean immigrant community through my research, I tracked down one of the collaborators, Yun Byung Won, who currently lives in New York City. Mr. Yun generously shared an outline of the essays and a chronology of the editions with me.

The first edition of *Cultura Tropical* began to circulate on December 20, 1986. The Korean immigrant community raised 30,000 *cruzeiros* (roughly US\$300) to print 1,000 copies. The first edition had a total of 100 pages with two main themes: “Koreans Living in Brazil” and “What are our Conflicts between Reality and Imagination?”

Writing in their native language of Korean, they provided literary and social discussions about life as Korean immigrants in Brazil. They also decided to include literature by Machado de Assis such as “The Golden Clock,” since Brazilian literature was relatively unknown by Koreans not only in the homeland, but also in Brazil.

According to Yun:

The literature of Machado de Assis had already been translated to English and many other languages but his work was unknown to Koreans. I had read one of his *contos* in the Brazilian newspaper and decided to translate it since he was an important and symbolic figure in Brazilian literary culture. I appreciated Machado de Assis’s work as it reminded me of Marcel Proust’s *A la recherche*

du temps perdu, Kafka and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. I appreciated Machado's tremendous talent and felt it was necessary to share such a national treasure to Koreans living in Brazil (Personal Interview, October 2010).

In the preface of the first edition, collaborators of *Cultura Tropical* noted:

We have our long history of Korean customs, and Brazil has its unique set of traditional customs as well. As Koreans living in Brazil, we need to learn to negotiate between these two cultures. For the future, our journal needs to be a space of discussion and reflection that relates to both Korean and Brazilian cultural production. We need to educate ourselves about Brazil as a nation and its intellectual cultural while not forgetting where we came from and who we are. We also want to teach our children and future generations about Korean culture while helping them to lead a prosperous life in Brazil.

In accordance with this mission, they published the second edition on April 29, 1987, printing and distributing 102 copies. Contributors wrote about Brazilian jokes and the history of its colonial period. This edition contained primarily short stories (nine in total), as well as one poem, one *conto* by a Brazilian writer, and two Portuguese texts in translation.

Cultura Tropical continued to publish twice a year until the distribution of its ninth edition on July 30th, 1995. The journal stopped publication mainly because its collaborators became busy with other personal responsibilities. They could not find participants from younger generations. According to Mr. Yun Byung Won and Ahn Kyung Ja, recent discussions have raised the possibility of publishing *Cultura Tropical* again in the near future.

The publication of the literary journal emphasizes the need of the community for self-expression and recognition. The diverse articles and literary genres suggest that Korean Brazilians are searching for a way to convey their own experience. The changing emphasis and shift of preference from one culture to another, displays a heterogeneous immigrant community. Studying narrative allows for an observation of how humans construct their experience. Narratives illuminate experiences and reflections shared by the community. Through the study of situated discourses, cultural and social meanings become apparent to both insiders of the community and those who feel like outsiders. Korean Brazilian writers of *Cultura Tropical* present a diasporic subjectivity that allows for contextualizing historicities and depicting modern paths of displacements.

My dissertation examines how Korean immigrant writers in Brazil began a process of diasporic narrative as a way to construct an alternative cultural space and a Korean Brazilian identity. By following the status of the "self" through the reflections of immigrant experiences, the subject of *Cultura Tropical* manifests three stages of identity negotiation.

In Chapter One, I introduce the history of the search of *Cultura Tropical* as a background to understand the socio-historical complexities of the Korean immigrant community in Brazil. Information regarding Korean Brazilians at the moment is sought through personal introductions and interviews. The second half of the chapter emphasizes the writers' uneasy oscillation between Korean and Brazilian cultures. The first stage of cultural identity for Korean Brazilians is the literary exploration of their realization that

cultural identity no longer remains homogeneous. The shock and tension of dual culture faced by these writers' reveals a new voice within themselves. Bang Kong Mo's "브라질 무질서 속의 질서" (Brazil: Disorder within Order) positions Korea as an idealized, distant homeland, utilizing Korean cultural values as a standard of measure in comparison to Brazilian values. The second narrative identifies how immigrants struggle with the concept of *exclusion* and *inclusion* between Brazilian and Korean cultural spaces in "Rua Sem Saída" by Ahn Kyung Ja.

In Chapter Two, I examine the diverse literary genres published across the editions of *Cultura Tropical* to highlight the writers' construction of dual-culture narratives and poems as a way to represent their heterogeneous identity as Korean Brazilians. In this chapter, I argue that the second stage of identity of Korean Brazilians situates Korea as a sense of home and comfort while accepting Brazil and the Portuguese language as an essential part of their identity. Home for the Korean immigrant is the negotiative process between affiliating and identifying or de-identifying relationships to *home*. The immigrant subject constructs his sense of home and cultural identity through the notion of cultural exchange between Korean and Brazilian languages and customs.

In Chapter Three, I argue that the variety of narratives and topics addressed by Korean Brazilian writers' have contrasting views to what constitutes their Korean Brazilian experience and cultural identities. These views vary across the generations (first, 1.5 and second), adding a new level of complexity to hybrid identities. In addition, I further examine how *Cultura Tropical* as a journal includes perspectives of other Korean immigrants from the United States and Europe of the Korean Brazilian community and literary production as a way to emphasize *Cultura Tropical* writers' need of recognition. Finally, this chapter examines the shift of cultural affiliation and preference for second generation Korean Brazilians; their recent interaction and social experience between Brazilian school settings and Korean churches, provides a different cultural identity experience to the first and 1.5 generation of Korean Brazilians.

It is important to note that there remains a great amount of information, history and resources—an infinite universe yet to be constructed and found from the Korean immigrant community in Brazil. However, through this humble and scholarly contribution, it is as fellow scholar Juan Ryusuke Ishikawa observed "algún día se podrá hablar del elemento asiático como parte de nuestra tradición literaria ya sea 'canonicamente' o 'contra-canonicamente.'" (3) The study is a presentation of the presence of Koreans in Brazil, whose presence and influence cannot be visually and conceptually ignored in large urban centers such as São Paulo. The study is a gateway to learn about a new community, in its non-imagined condition and witness the progression of the construction of their identity.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my immigrant family who has lived an interesting life, full of challenges but much more filled with accomplishments and joy. An even more special dedication to the memory of my sister, Michele.

Chapter One

Divided Cultural Identities between Korean and Brazilian Cultures

Behind the many tired and serious faces, behind the sounds of Korean heard while walking through Brás or Bom Retiro, a community drifts on its own and reflects on the cultural tensions and differences of its experience. Perhaps a sociological essay turns into a socio-cultural reflection and a short reading provides a cultural lesson about Brazilian versus Korean customs that clarifies misunderstandings and creates empathy between these seemingly disparate groups. Poetry might serve as a refuge for the reader, or the reader might have read articles about Brazilian literature could help readers understand their children's school lessons. All of these things were possibilities at which *Cultura Tropical* aimed.

This chapter demonstrates how Korean immigrants negotiate between nostalgia for the homeland and adaptation to Brazil. The process of negotiation evokes a discourse of difference that distinguishes between Korean and Brazilian customs and values. In this first stage of cultural identity, immigrants express a greater affinity to the homeland than to the host country. They recognize their state of marginal inclusion in both cultures. The cultural identity of Korean immigrants transforms over time as a historical construction involving the negotiation between multiple cultural references. This negotiation occurs in diverse cultural settings where multiple cultural references help shape the distinct cultural identity of immigrants. As Stuart Hall explains in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, "Like everything which is historical, they undergo a constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by" (236).

Korean immigrants experience multiple cultures, which reveal tensions and fragments within their identity. These fragments signify a dynamic cultural relationship with multiple languages and cultural references. The Korean immigrant constructs a hybrid discourse of identity, rather than a fixed one. This hybrid identity exists due to the immigrants' unstable identification with a particular discourse and their embodiment of cultural fragments. Koreans in Brazil operate simultaneously and continuously on at least two axes of cultural references, resulting in their hybrid identities.

The first stage of cultural identity from *Cultura Tropical* No. 3 (August 1987) and No. 4 (April 1988) reflects a stronger Korean alliance and comfort level with Korean culture versus Brazilian culture. The text "브라질 무질서 속의 질서" (Brazil: Disorder within Order) by Bang Kong Mo exemplifies a Korean immigrant's interpretation of differences between Korea and Brazil. The second narrative identifies how immigrants struggle with the concept of *exclusion* and *inclusion* between Brazilian and Korean cultural spaces in "Rua Sem Saída." As the story's protagonist Yunki (윤기) wrestles with a fragmented sense of identity, discourses of exclusion and inclusion inform his negotiation and construction of identity as a Korean immigrant in Brazil.

Narratives and opinion pieces represent a Korean immigrant who does not belong comfortably to either the Korea of the 1960s-1970s nor the Brazil of the eighties. During

the decades of the 1980s, the Korean immigrant did not yet feel at ease with the Portuguese language and Brazilian customs. This edition of *Cultura Tropical* represents an identity transformation of Korean immigrant identity as the community commemorated 25 years of immigration to Brazil. The writers of *Cultura Tropical* pay careful attention to the differences observed in their own physical features, speech, and expression of respect, love, gender relations and family. Korean immigrants recognize their presence in Brazilian culture, and in essence understands the role that *Cultura Tropical* plays into the history.

To understand the stronger alliance to Korean culture in the first stage of cultural identity, it is necessary to know how the Korean community viewed Brazilian society during the late 1980-1990s. Although many of the immigrants worked and lived with Brazilians for years, their lack of integration into Brazilian society led them to transform robberies and quotidian crimes into sources of paranoia. By the mid 1990s, a sense of fear entered the Korean community as their business and homes became targets of crime. At times their own employees collaborated with friends to target them, which often lead immigrants to become suspicious of Brazilians. Most Korean immigrants maintained a closed social circle limited to Korean churches, Korean local organizations and family outside of work. This restricted socializing occurred mostly due to their limited comfort with Portuguese. They learned the language relatively haphazardly and only felt comfortable interacting with Brazilians if they had attended a Brazilian school or university and therefore had stronger language skills. Since Korea has a long history of being an isolated nation, their culture encouraged a more cautious, clan-like closeness among people. Koreans immigrated to Brazil as a large family unit. They came together with their elderly parents, married sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews, which allowed them to keep within the family unit and maintain Korean language and customs within the home and community.

Many Korean businesses began to grow in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Korean Brazilians became financially successful and enjoyed more material success, dressed better, bought homes, and traveled more. Rumors of immigrants storing money at home resulted in their residences being ransacked while at work. Paranoia settled in more with children at home, a kidnapping for ransom instilled great sense of fear within the community. This reality did not help immigrants adapt to Brazilian society. Alternatively, Brazilians did not know much about Korean customs and values. The discovery and study of *Cultura Tropical* thus proves essential to Brazilian studies since it highlights a perspective scarcely known and minimally understood in Brazil. In the next section, I briefly discuss the search for *Cultural Tropical* and how the social navigation through the Korean immigrant community proved to be a challenge. These observations will help us to understand the basis for the first stage of cultural identity among immigrants.

Cultura Tropical: A Korean Immigrant Literary Journal

My search for Korean immigrant discourses in Brazil began in the summer of 2005. While searching for the history of Korean immigration, I discovered one Master's thesis at USP¹, which gave me an understanding of the history of immigration and the motivation to continue my pursuit. I remained eager to find more articles, pictures and information about the Korean community. The local Korean language newspapers were the only available print expression of the immigrant community at the time.² My attempt to inquire about these newspaper archives met many challenges. I visited the press offices for Korean newspapers and each director noted that he did not maintain an archive. The papers were *print and go* materials consisting of translations of important news from Brazilian newspapers and advertisements for local businesses.

At the time of my initial research, recent kidnappings of Korean immigrant children and stories of robberies targeting Korean immigrants filled the news. A general state of fear and distrust spread through the community. As an expatriate visiting family in São Paulo, I received advice to not wander around the city by myself or speak with strangers. Since I did not share their fear, I continued my search resulting in my discovery of *Cultura Tropical*. My second visit to Brazil a year later, proved more fruitful thanks to already established contacts. For instance, my return to newspaper publishing offices such as *News Brasil* led to a personal interview with the editor. According to editor Kim Jong Nam (김정남), *News Brasil* provides notable news clippings from *Folha de São Paulo* and other Brazilian news sources, since many Korean community members do not speak Portuguese, the community newspapers function as linguistic bridges.

As I continued to contact different newspaper editorial houses to gather information on how these publications came about, most did not seem eager to open their doors and share information. In contrast to my brief interview with editor Kim, another press office treated me as an intruder. Once, I waited until two individuals appeared. However, as I spoke Portuguese, the older Korean woman walked back inside after realizing she did not recognize me, leaving the younger woman, her daughter, to attend to my requests. She asked me, "Coreana?" and when I said "Sim," she opened the door so I could enter. Immediately, it became apparent that if I did not speak Korean communication would be resisted. Eventually, as I sat in an office with the Korean woman, she clicked away on her computer from behind her desk. Her body language made it clear that my presence did not interest her. She seldom made direct eye contact as I continued to speak in Portuguese with the daughter to explain my position as a researcher and my desire to conduct interviews with writers of the Korean community.

The older Korean woman seemed reticent. Although her daughter attempted to translate, the mother just kept asking in Korean, "Where did she come from? Why is she here? Did she already talk to other newspapers?" When I answered yes, she said that she

¹ *Além do Arco-Iris: A Imigração Coreana no Brasil* by Keum Joa Choi.

² According to the Korean-Brazilian Index of Businesses, there were four print houses at the time: 조순일보, 남미동아일보, 중앙일보, 한국일보 (Choson-Ilbo, Nammidong-a Ilbo, Jung-a Ilbo Hankuk Ilbo).

⁴ Park examines Korean immigrants who have two migratory histories, usually one from Korea to a Latin American country (Argentina or Brazil) and then a second immigration from Argentina or Brazil to the United States. Their immigrant trajectory, qualifies them to be referred as remigrants.

did not want to do an interview with me if I had already contacted other print houses. The younger woman also refused to speak with me, even when directed to do so by her mother. During this moment, I knew I could start speaking Korean with them but something held me back. Their hostile attitude surprised me and made me wonder if there was prejudice or a level of discomfort on their part if Korean was not spoken or if non-Koreans could have any insight into the community. I could not bring myself to stay longer and endure this hostility. I thanked them and explained that they should not feel obligated to aid me in my endeavor. This encounter made me wonder whether a distinct separation existed between the Korean community and their host country. I could not understand why these individuals did not want to explain the function of their work. Access was not easy for a person who was not known to the immigrant community. challenges of narrative discovery and research from the Korean immigrant community reveal how immigrants were more concerned about working and establishing an inner circle within the community.

Cultura Tropical provided an outlet of expression for the Korean community where its members could think about the evolution of ethnic identities as well as their status as immigrants in a tropical country. The writers of *Cultura Tropical* wanted the journal to facilitate discussions of the first twenty years of immigration. Although they attempted to resist Brazilian customs, writers found themselves becoming comfortable with particular things in their host country. This analysis will now focus on the genesis of Korean immigrant discourse in Brazil. For instance, what were their initial impressions and understanding of Brazil as a nation and culture? Did some view themselves as transiting or fluctuating between two different cultures? Or was there a clear cultural and ethnic divide between themselves and Brazil?

Finding a new voice

In 1987, José Sarney was the president of Brazil, the telenovela *A Gata Comeu* was the eight o'clock showing, and Korean immigrants were celebrating twenty-five years of immigration in Brazil. While many still worked as door-to-door peddlers or salespersons (*vendedores*), other immigrants functioned as a family unit in sweat-shops, saving money in order to open their own small stores. The Brás and Bom Retiro neighborhoods began to have blocks of retail clothing stores owned by Koreans since it was the most promising manner to earn money and establish a comfortable life in the new host country. Often, clothing manufacturing and retail seemed to guarantee financial success and a better quality of life more quickly than other professions. Due to this boom, other immigrants were able to supply their community with additional services such as Korean food markets, camera/photo shops, restaurants, churches, and travel agencies. Despite these new forms of growth, Korean immigrants in Brazil were not well-integrated socially and at times remained isolated within the immigrant community. The more assimilated immigrants felt divided between the expectations of the Korean immigrant community and Brazilian social norms. In other words, did they see themselves strictly as Koreans or as Koreans in Brazil? What were the factors that shifted their way of seeing things?

The opening essay of *Cultura Tropical* No. 3, "O Encontro," is a symbolic narrative of how Koreans began to see themselves. "O Encontro" describes a group of pigeons happening to meet by (physical proximity) to the old man at the same location

and time. The old man did not need to feed the pigeons nor see them on a regular basis, but did so because he wanted to and because he felt that he should be the one to whom they could always return. The narrator relates how the writers of *Cultura Tropical* were like these lost pigeons; they knew where to return but did not have a set home. They envisioned themselves as a community or people that shared a vision of home as wherever one chooses it to be. The writers of *Cultura Tropical* were representatives of the community who shared a nostalgic view of Korea and its past history. They also viewed themselves as wandering travelers with new perspectives. *Cultura Tropical* became a space to reveal their doubts, reflections, and experiences, a space where they could express themselves freely. By writing within their own space, the writers saw no need to acculturate by conforming to a particular cultural norm.

귀여운 열대문화, 우리가 낳은 보람인데 강냉이면 어쩐가, 강냉이 쌀이면
어쩐가 빵 부스러기면 또 어쩐가, 우리 모두 출출한 길손인데, 제 나름대로
홀홀 뿌려주면 그 어찌 후련하지 않겠는가.

Dear *Cultura Tropical* members, we try to find the seeds that are thrown our way, so what if it is rice or bread that is given to us, we're wandering travelers, is it not refreshing that we encounter different things. [my translation] (6)

Instead of viewing their cultural displacement by immigration as a loss of history, the writers of *Cultura Tropical* used the journal to discover, discuss and reflect upon their emerging cultural identity. These writers shared their literary reflections with readers in similar situations of identity transformation. The writers and readers lived between cultural signals, floating from one frame of reference to another. Shifting between Brazilian and Korean social mannerisms and language became second nature. Living within multiple cultural frames and signals cultivated distinct separations in people's mind.

Ever since I can remember, my father Myung Kun Lee treasured his memories of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. It represents one of the most important places in his life. My father spent his youth traveling through the state as a peddler. He saved money for college and a return to São Paulo without depending on his parents and older siblings. I always knew that Rio Grande do Sul had been significant in his life but I never fully understood what he saw or whom he met during that period.

In 2009, I finally traveled to Rio Grande do Sul with my father. I saw the roads down which he had driven by himself during his twenties. He was only nineteen when he came to Brazil with his elderly parents, four married brothers and their families, and his younger sister. With limited Portuguese and no financial support, my father worked in sewing factories for a few months to save money for a small car and merchandise. He soon traveled south, wandering through backroads and isolated towns as a *vendedor*.

In Porto Mauá (Rio Grande do Sul), my father showed me a tiny piece of terrain he had purchased thirty years ago in the hopes of eventually retiring there. It was a different part of my father—one I had forgotten or perhaps never really known. It was the experiences and memories of his Brazilian cultural personality. As I looked out the window of the car during our road trip, trying to imagine a youthful image of my father, I realized he was also a displaced individual who had experienced many moments of not

fully fitting into one culture or another. On the surface, he seemed to fit in as he spoke the relevant language and shared similar mannerisms depending on whether he was with Koreans or Brazilians. Yet, at other times, I witnessed my father return home from a meeting with friends or business partners to sit quietly in contemplation. He would ask my mother if his words or actions were culturally inappropriate and he would feel downcast for a few days.

Immigrants such as my father spoke more Korean than Portuguese and maintained close ties to Korean social groups such as churches, business associations and family. As immigrants maintain connections to Korean culture, they also expand their perception to Brazilian mannerisms. This first stage manifests itself as the immigrants discover these uneven cultural frames. For instance, Korean immigrants note differences in their perception of and behavior in public spaces such as school and business. In the following section, an observation of a Korean taekwondo teacher and Brazilian students demonstrates his awareness of behavioral differences due to distinct cultural backgrounds.

Facing Differences

The writers of *Cultura Tropical* construct their community and literary subjects as individuals fluctuating between Korean and Brazilian frames of reference before interpreting their experiences. According to Kyeyoung Park, who studies Korean remigrants⁴ from Latin America to the United States, immigrants floating from one cultural frame to another are in a “trajectory [which] involves deconstruction and reconstruction of Koreanness: a new reading of Korea, but from many different angles” (668). Korean immigrants learn to build a new Koreanness that does not represent “Korea,” but rather Koreanness amalgamated with some elements of Brazilianness or as I argue, they become Korean Brazilian.

Despite a stronger allegiance to Korea, the discourses in the journal indicate an uneasy oscillation between cultures, often within the same text. References to both cultures combine into the space of a singular discursive voice. The narrative becomes the unifying figure for the Korean Brazilian. Kyeyoung Park identifies this moving between different cultural references as “floating.” According to Park, immigrants identify themselves as floating to indicate that they are:

feeling adrift like buoys, moving in any and all directions, floating begins as a negative experience related to being uprooted from a homeland and continuously relocated in new lands. Yet, at a certain point, the remigrants transform their concept of floating from something negative into something positive. They reconceptualize their experiences. (691)

Korean immigrants confront displacement from the homeland and the misunderstood cultural tension experienced when Brazilians interpret and perform Korean cultural values in a different way. In the following example, “브라질 무질서 속의 질서” (Brazil: Disorder within Order) by Bang Kong Mo, the Korean immigrant positions Korea as an idealized, distant homeland. Speaking of Korea preserves the homeland as part of his imagination. By providing knowledge about Korea, the immigrant makes a claim to an ethnic individuality rather than become grouped into a generalized Asian culture.

Bang, the Taekwondo master, perceived different behaviors and responses from his group of students while teaching in his martial arts studio. He noted a general conflict

between his Brazilian students and the philosophy of Korean martial arts. His students did not fully accept instructions nor follow standards of respect. The lax attitudes of his students created tension between them and Bang. Before long, however, these different cultural backgrounds in his studio helped him to realize that he lived between two cultures.

As a young student in Korea, Bang actively pursued knowledge of other cultures, their language, history and customs. Once in Brazil, culture gained a different meaning for him. Bang briefly explains:

철학을 바탕으로 하며 표현되는 것이든, 가장 간단한 일상 생활의 자그만 생활철학으로부터 비롯되는 것이라고 생각한다.

The simplest way to think about culture is to consider everyday routines and lifestyle as the forms and boundaries that help collectively mold a social group of people. [my translation] (30)

Bang's perspective about culture changes because of his immigrant lifestyle and firsthand experiences of cultural differences:

한 달 후부터는 그렇게도 즐기던 술도 한 모금 마시지 않고 개미 철학에 몰두하기 시작했다.

Within a month after I arrived in Brazil, I found myself unable to enjoy leisure times such as drinking with friends. Instead, I became absorbed into the ant's way of life. Work, work, work. [my translation] (29)

To survive as an immigrant required work and sweat. Immigrants like Bang often forgot to consider notions of culture, history and identity until a clashing moment forced them to realize that their own norms were not easily understood by Brazilians. In Bang's case, he noticed an immediate difference that bothered him at his taekwondo studio. When students entered the studio, they greeted each other with handshakes, tapped each other on the shoulder and began talking amongst themselves. Bang considered such behavior disrespectful--a lack of courtesy from a philosophical and cultural perspective.

Taekwondo is a Korean martial art based on values of order and propriety. In any Taekwondo class, students line up quickly in order of rank and respectfully await instructions from their instructor. Bang remembers feeling annoyed at the student's lack of understanding. He often yelled at them to line up and to wait respectfully for the teacher's instruction. Usually, he spent ten minutes lecturing his students about the importance of respecting elders including their teachers and parents. One day, a student raised his hand and said:

사범님을 senhor 라고 부르고 싶지만, 어쩐지 거리감이 있는 것 같습니다. 나는 이세상에서 가장 존경하고 사랑하는 나의 아버지도 você 라고 부릅니다.

Master, as you have requested, I would like to call you as senhor but I feel that calling you senhor produces distance between us. The person that I respect and love the most is my father and I address him as você and not as senhor. [my translation] (31)

Bang told the student that he understood his point of view. However, in his class, a student should show respect to his master and other colleagues. The student then asked:

학생과 교사사이에 거리감이 있는데, 어떻게 더 잘 할수가 있을까요?
거리감이 없을 때 더 잘 배울수 있지 않겠어요?

If there is distance between the teacher and the student, how does he really learn better? I feel that without such a distance, the student and the teacher can communicate with each other rather than maintain such a distant sense of propriety. [my translation] (31)

After hearing his student's comments, Bang immediately remembered the younger days when he was still in school in Korea. Often when he had a question or did not understand something in class, he did not raise his hand to ask because teachers would yell at him and accuse him of not knowing the subject material. Although he kept to himself at moments rather than ask questions or talk with his teachers, he and his colleagues still learned. In both countries, learning was possible, yet they followed very distinct modes. In short, the method or the path that Koreans and Brazilians go through in order to learn is different:

브라질인들과 단지 그 방법론-기본 생활 철학-의 차이가 있었을 뿐인 것으로 생각된다. 문화를 생활 철학의 행동적 표현이라 볼 때, 이 같이 방법론이 다른 두 나라는 문화에 있어 커다란 차이가 있는 것이 당연하다 하겠다.

Brazilians had a different method. Their life principle was a different center and it was different from ours. Cultural thought was displayed differently by them. Therefore, it only makes sense that there are large differences in method and behavior between our two countries. [my translation] (31)

In reality, the conversation between Bang and his student was a matter of cultural difference rather superior or inferior cultures—and not intended as a sign of disrespect as they are different cultural methods of learning and demonstration. Bang's discourse is a site of evaluation of the known and au courant with Korean cultural references versus the new and the still unfamiliar Brazilian culture. He identifies negative and positive aspects of both Korean and Brazilian cultures. The articulation of these cultural differences subvert the rationale of the hegemonic. The immigrant begins to relocate himself into an alternative, hybrid site of cultural negotiation.

This site is one where Bang and his Brazilian students continue to practice traditional Korean Taekwondo but their mindsets revolve around an awareness of the need for openness and proximity. In the end, Bang feels that Taekwondo is a good match for Brazilian students because of their openness to learn about the martial art as well as to contribute as an exchange for cultural values. He closes his essay by sharing how happy and satisfied he feels when he sees even a small group of students:

브라질이라는 커다란 공간에 우리 한국민의 발자국이 한 점한 점 뚜렷이 찍힐 수 있도록, 우리집 뒷방에서도 ‘아야 어요’ 가르치는 처의 목소리와 배우는 아이들의 소리가 듣기 좋게 어울려온다. 가슴이 훈훈해 온다.

Brazil is a large space where Koreans can find a place to hear in our room, the children repeat the Korean alphabet after us, is a wonderful sound. It's a harmonious sound. My heart flutters. [my translation] (32)

This example reveals how the different mode of expressing cultural values caused a disruption in the traditional expectations for the teacher and the student. The tension and difference experienced between Bang and his student was a moment of instability that led to an open observation of different interpretative values. As minimal as it may seem, Bang's perspective on the teacher's role changes through his experience of teaching Taekwondo to Brazilian students. The title of his essay "Brazil: Disorder within Order" suggests his cultural perspective. Although Brazilian customs may seem to lack coherence for Bang, he realizes that an alternate order exists in Brazil. Although individuals in Brazil express cultural norms quite differently than in Korea, Bang feels he can still openly have Korean customs such as Taekwondo given the room that exists to move between Korean and Brazilian cultural references. Bang's essay not only explores the definitions of Korean culture by immigrants, but it also reveals the particular position of the Korean immigrant. As a community living and raising children in Brazil, Korean immigrants have found it necessary to make changes and to adapt to cultural differences rather than to criticize them.

By recognizing differences and changes, Korean immigrants construct new points of identification as *Korea Brazil* or *Korean Brazilian*. Bang's narrative depicts the immigrants' sense of self as a new cultural identity. They begin to be transformed by noting differences of cultural values and norms. The perception of difference directs immigrants to a destabilized border that forces them to see what constitutes the identity of Korean immigrants. This cultural identity revolves around the positioning and the transformation of the subject. Bang's brief observation of his martial arts studio in São Paulo reveals an emerging awareness of multiple cultural modes and social values unequally performed.

Where do I belong? The Experience of Exclusion and Inclusion

In the preface of *The Location of Culture* (2004), Homi Bhabha states that "a question of belonging to a race, a gender, a class, a generation becomes a kind of 'second nature', a primordial identification . . . creating new modes of agency, new strategies of recognition"(xviii). For immigrant and in particular for Korean immigrants in Brazil, the question of belonging is apparent in daily encounters. While limited by language skills, immigrants nonetheless build their own small business, work with Brazilian employees and train them to facilitate interaction with clients. Immigrants desire to send his children to the best private schools and universities possible so that their children can become more integrated into Brazilian society. They want to interact with other Portuguese speakers from minority communities in Brazil, as well with Brazilian co-workers, neighbors and friends. Despite the attempt of immigrants to become a part of Brazilian society, immigrants feel out of place at times and experienced dissatisfaction as they try to belong to both Korean and Brazilian social circles. Experiencing differences with both cultures at the same time lead immigrants to feel excluded and included.

The narrative "Rua Sem Saída" (A Street Without an Exit) recounts the story of Yunki (윤기) revisiting his options as a Korean immigrant in São Paulo. The story explores an individual's loss of center as an immigrant experiencing cultural and spatial

disorientation. The immigrant begins to face boundaries within both the Korean and Brazilian communities. The first part of the narrative introduces Yunki, a Korean immigrant questioning his sociocultural identity. Yunki begins a psychological journey as he faces three pivotal moments of *ruas sem saída* that serve as metaphors for the immigrant experience. When Yunki confronts the street sign *rua sem saída*, he immediately enters a state of blurred vision and mental disorientation. He sees only the sign: *rua sem saída*.

Every time Yunki faces that sign, readers perceive Yunki's loss of bearing and accompany his journey. It seems as though readers enter a psychic drowning composed of disconnected and confused thoughts through the attempt to understand the meaning of the sign *rua sem saída*, facing Yunki's condition of displacement. He follows the path of an immigrant without knowing his destination. The narrative questions whether immigration was the right decision for the protagonist and reveals the frustration surrounding the search for meaning. The story suggests how a member of the diaspora once displaced from his homeland no longer feels connected to either his native or host country. As he tries to adapt to a new language and setting, the immigrant searches for a sense of belonging while his recognition of the self seems to become more obscure.

Yunki is a hard-working employee whose company relies on his skills. One morning, his co-worker Raimundo tells him that the company plans on firing an employee. In their conversation, Raimundo asks Yunki if he intends to return to Seoul again. Yunki responds that, although Korea is his homeland, it has changed greatly since he left and he doubts he would fit into contemporary Korean society. Readers also learn about Yunki's desire to escape from his reality. Expressing dissatisfaction with daily life, Yunki reveals to Raimundo:

이럴 때 없나요 당신은? 모든 것에서 헤어나오구 싶을 때,
아무것으로부터두 방해 받구 싶을 때.

Don't you at times want to escape to another moment or space where nothing can interrupt you whether it be your mind or heart? Don't you just want to feel cleansed and untouched by everything that surrounds us? Although I try to achieve this internal state, it is not that easy to do. [my translation] (117)

Yunki searches for meaning more than what his reality offers yet these alternatives do not seem to provide much of an escape. Eventually the company fires Yunki. He drowns the bad news with a few drinks before heading home:

그런데 바로 그날밤이었다. 모든것의 시작은 바로 그날밤이었다. 집으로
꺾어 들어가는 어느궤에서 그는 갑자기 멈춰 버리고 말았다. 이상한 팻말을
본 것이었다. 팻말에는 이런 글씨가 있었다. *Rua Sem Saída*. 후아 쟁
싸이다. 그는 큰 소리로 그것을 읽어 보았다. 출구 없는 길이라구? 분명 뜻은
그러했다. 갑자기 머리속으로 찬바람이 불어왔다.

It was that very night when things began to change. Yunki was turning the street to go home but he suddenly stopped. He thought he had seen a strange sign. He looked again and on the sign it was written, *Rua Sem Saída* (Street without Exit). He read out the words on the sign, *rua sem saída*, yes that's definitely what it says. Suddenly, Yunki felt a very cold breeze enter his head. [my translation] (132)

He contemplates the meaning of “*rua sem saída*” and convinces himself that no such road exists. How can a road without an exit be possible? Is it not the point of a road to provide a path from one point to another? Yunki decides that this road must be different. The passage represents a metaphorical crossroad that Yunki faces in his own reality. Yunki is a paradoxical and multidimensional character. He embodies the literary representation of Asians as a hard-working employee compliant to social conventions, just another face within a sea of many.

Conversely, Yunki searches for deeper meaning. He desires to escape his present. Yunki is a disoriented immigrant in a process of internal transformation and reorientation. He struggles to live within the expected social norms of Brazilian colleagues and members of the Korean community. He is lumped together with other immigrants to form a collective identity that plays on stereotypical ethnic images. Yunki’s thoughts and values allow the narrative to transition from the collective notion of the Asian man to his individual experience marked by an internal turmoil and exploration that is also universal. The story uses cultural references to reflect on points of disjuncture of the immigrant experience. The immigrant exists between languages, customs, and culture as he manages the disparate quality of these elements in his workplace, among family and friends, and within himself.

The second part of the narrative shifts to Yunki’s decision to start his own business in the clothing industry. New plans and financial opportunities were abundant until Yunki sees the sign “*rua sem saída*” again. He pauses to ponder his focus on these words but represses further thoughts about the sign. This episode serves as an omen that seems to shadow and follow Yunki. This period represents a moment of transformation for Yunki. In a few months, his business begins to flourish, but not without hard work and a lot of stress. Although Yunki’s wife was happy with their new prospect, as they became more experienced with their business, they also faced complicated and sophisticated fashion details. With each additional detail, Yunki becomes more impatient and he begins to get angry at each question or matter addressed to him. Everything makes Yunki resentful and angry. He hates his business neighbors because they only talk about money: how much to make, how to use it, and how to live well. Yunki thinks to himself:

이웃들은 오히려 태연해 할뿐아니라 돈의 무게에 대해서 조금의 증량암을 느끼지 않는다는 사실에도 괘씸한 마음니들었다.

Money is useful to have in order to provide but not compete with one another.
[my translation] (138)

He hates when his wife’s family comes by his business to help because he has to listen to them talk. Many times he want to scream, but instead forces himself to remain quiet. It is clear that his new life situation as an entrepreneur has become a *rua sem saída* for Yunki.

In the third and final part of the narrative, Yunki’s ex-company notifies him to come by the office to receive his severance check. He takes it as an opportunity to escape from his business and Korean friends. When Yunki arrives at his old company, he notices that not much seems to have changed except for how his ex-coworkers curtly greet him. It becomes apparent that they do not remember or care for him. He feels stung as if he no longer belongs there. He feels lonely and realizes that his link to the company, which kept separated from the Korean community for years, no longer exists. Leaving with the

severance check in hand, Yunki murmurs a silent “아데우스” (Adeus) (140) and walks away. He cannot mold organically into any social circle. Yunki epitomizes cultural conflicts as he experiences dissatisfaction due to his tensions with both the Korean and Brazilian community. He becomes a more fragmented individual as he becomes more unsatisfied. He is displaced and feels lost, not knowing which cultural mode of communication is right for him.

Yunki exemplifies hybridity as his cultural identifications are no longer associated with only one culture. His hybrid identity is a space of mixed signs and meanings, which unintentionally cause contradictions and fragmentation within him. Like other immigrants experiencing multiple cultures, Yunki realizes that he is unable to properly assess his surroundings such as home, workplace, friends, self and identity. He moves between two distinct socio-economic spaces, the Brazilian company and his Korean business. In the beginning Yunki strives to be part of one or the other, but he soon realizes that he belongs in neither one. He constantly shifts between these two spaces. He conforms to expected conventions as a hard-working socially compliant individual. In his private and interior persona, he fosters different thoughts and expectations. After several rejections resulting in a general sense of unhappiness, Yunki decides that he needs to “이제는 철저히 나 자신으로 돌아가자” (return to who I really am) (142). Yunki embarks on a new life as he leaves his house with the intention of returning to his “true” self. As he drives out of his street, he glimpses the signpost but refuses to look back. However, when turning the corner, Yunki sees those ominous words: *rua sem saída*.

“Rua Sem Saída” presents a portrait that defies the image of the Korean immigrant as a passive figure in the background or as a peripheral, shadowy figure. Through the narrative, Ahn constructs Yunki’s internal voice and contemplation. The narrative does not leave the Asian man to the imagination nor does it reinforce the stereotypes through which Asians are often viewed. Yunki is a complicated, multilayered man abiding by social convention yet deeply unsatisfied with his life, first as an immigrant and second as a modern man. This narrative exposes readers to the daily interactions of a 20th century Korean immigrant in Brazil and allows us to enter his psychological struggles through his sense of self confronted signs of *rua sem saída* where such moments are reminders of challenge and also of difference. The more disoriented and trapped Yunki feels, the stronger the image of his encounter with the sign *rua sem saída*. Yunki’s experiences of inclusion and exclusion with both cultures represent the frustration of the immigrant. He further reveals the resentment and lack of resolution that one might face once displaced from one’s homeland’s customs and values and unable to easily fit into the host country.

The East and the West co-exist in Korean immigrants and their community. They become paranational⁵ as they define themselves differently from a national ethnic identity and immigrants have a transformation. They have consciousness of an evolving self and

⁵ The definition of paranational comes from Azade Seyhan in *Writing Outside the Nation*: “I understand transnational literature as a genre of writing that operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for those in what I call ‘paranational’ communities and alliances. These are communities that exist within national borders or alongside the citizens of the host country but remain culturally or linguistically distanced from them and, in some instances, are estranged from both the home and the host culture” (10).

integration to the host society. They belong to an alternative space not connected to a fixed unit of cultural identity. Yunki, for instance, becomes pessimistic and occupies an unsatisfied psychological state, imperfect, unhappy and disoriented with the new opportunities that immigration might have promised.

The immigrant is no longer positioned as *the other*, nor is he expected to be perfect. Instead, his condition is one of fragmentation and ambivalence, of exclusion and inclusion, of dissatisfaction and imperfection. These elements of his cultural identity do not end nor disappear. In fact, the problem of identity does not originate from the immigrant, but is instead connected to the outside in the idealizing of the homeland perpetuated by immigrants and in the ignorance of Korean culture among Brazilians. The narrative thus conveys a perspective of the Korean immigrant experience that focuses on socio-cultural displacement of Korean immigrants as they adapt to Brazil yet remain unwilling to let go of their Korean culture.

Foundation for a new cultural identity

The first stage of cultural identity involves positioning immigrants between cultural frames as their identity transform. Discourses of identity and culture need a history. In this case, the first 25 years of Korean immigrant history reveals a desire among community members to organize themselves and explore their memories of immigration. In his essay “The Culture of Diaspora,” Robert B.H. Goh explains that the type of discourse or literature produced by immigrants “work across the fixities of location (nation, city, home and away) to articulate the tensions inherent in these multiple affiliations and contested relations” (9). After encountering cultural differences in themselves and their surroundings, immigrants begin to build a foundation for their dual identity.

The diverse literary expressions represent different angles of the immigrant experience in Brazil. The journal features discourses about cultural tension, nostalgia of the homeland but also nostalgia of early immigrant history. One of the essays by Yun Byung Oh, who immigrated to Brazil in 1964, describes his first impressions of Brazil. A nostalgic memory of Korean immigrant history establishes the foundation for Korean Brazilian cultural identity. The journal depicts this early account of “discoveries” by Korean immigrants in Brazil.

Yun Byung Oh’s essay, “낭만이 넘쳐 25년 전의 상파울로” (Romantic memories of São Paulo 25 years ago), presents a nostalgic description of São Paulo as the narrator remembers the city and its people when he first arrived from Korea. According to Yun:

추억은 언제나 아름답게 생각되는 것인가 보다.

Thinking about the past, things always seem to have been more wonderful [my translation] (3).

This romanticized memory of Korean immigrant history portrays the relationship between the immigrant and his surrounding space. It sets the stage for additional memories of immigrant experiences explored and expressed in the text. Yun’s romantic discourse contextualizes Koreans in Brazil.

Oh notes that, despite the architectural and logistical growth of São Paulo over the last 25 years, Koreans have become more trusted, a helpful development for their sense of self. The discourse serves as an overarching tone for Korean immigrant experiences in

Brazil. Although Korean immigrants share many struggles and identity crises, discourses like the one of Yun Byung Oh illustrates a sense of acceptance and assimilation of Brazil as part of their history and nationality.

Another example, Kim Uh Jin's essay "Organizing 25 years of Korean Immigration" (4 반세기 이민사회의 정리: 그 방법에 대한 제언), reveals a different tone and content. Kim's essay briefly outlines Korean immigrant history in São Paulo. He describes how early immigrants expanded their community. Koreans first lived in Liberdade on Rua da Glória. By situating their homes near the Japanese community facilitated communication for these Korean immigrants since many knew Japanese from their childhood under the Japanese colonial rule. As a result, these immigrants felt closer to the more familiar Japanese culture than to the Brazilian culture that surrounded both. According to Keum Joa Choi:

Assim, sendo, tivessem, ou não, parentes, possuísem, ou não, dinheiro, conterrâneos, para diminuir o impacto de que eram vítimas ao entrar em contato com costumes tão diversos daqueles a que estavam habituados. O desconhecimento do Português, a esperança de manter ali uma cooperação mutual e o alívio sentido em conviver com pessoas da mesma origem foram fatores importantes que levaram os coreanos a se congregarem. O grande papel desempenhado pela Vila foi o de ser o veículo de transmissão de técnicas de sobrevivência para os recém-chegados à nova terra. Vale dizer que a 'Vila Coreana' era a fonte a que recorriam para se informar sobre a situação econômica do país, sobre as possibilidades de trabalho que lhes eram oferecidas, sobretudo no ramo da confecção, ao qual os coreanos se dedicaram desde o início de sua presença na cidade. (100)

Communication was easier with Japanese immigrants in Liberdade. Moreover, the neighborhood's proximity to downtown made for a convenient commute. From Liberdade, Korean immigrants began to move to Aclimação, further west of Bom Retiro and the center of the city. Eventually, the community expanded into Bom Retiro and Brás as they established businesses and needed more living space. Kim's essay provides a brief overview of Korean immigrant history, yet mainly focuses on two institutions—the office and the church—that helped to shape the immigrant community. He highlights the importance of offices that helped with legal documentation, laws, citizenship and cultural centers. Albeit small and minimal in their functions, these offices brought together essential services needed by Korean immigrants. The church emerged as the second supportive institution. Generations of families gathered at the church and shared faith, language, and an appreciation of Korean culture while providing assistance to one another.

These early accounts of Korean immigrant history in *Cultura Tropical* record the experiences of Koreans in Brazil. Their voices become imprints of their history, memories and diasporic presence in Brazil. Through the journal, immigrants establish a foundation for their community that eliminates inaccurate images of Koreans in Brazil.

Instead of posing as a hero, the Korean immigrant guides readers through his cultural exploration and expression, which establishes a sense of solidarity. *Cultura Tropical* explores the first stage of cultural identity through discourses of difference. The journal provides a foundation by revealing a complex intersection of identifications that

serve to construct a hybrid cultural identity. Korean immigrants in Brazil embark on a simultaneous process of distancing and of perpetuating connectivity. This duality results in cultural tensions that surround the formation of identities among Korean immigrants.

Publishing this collection of writings inserts a representation of immigrant experiences into the community. The cultural discourses constructed by Korean immigrants challenges a concept addressed by Jeffrey Lesser in “Looking for Home in All the Wrong Places” where the displaced subject faces questions such as, “Is it a home or a state of mind?” “Is it both?”, “Does a person have multiple homes or just one?”, “Can home change rapidly, like the weather, or is the process of homemaking and home breaking a constant one?”(1). Lesser addresses the process of negotiation that 20th century immigrants, including Jews, Lebanese and Japanese, had to experience. He concludes that, “Brazilian ethnicity is not an *é* (form the verb to be [ser] in its nontransitional usage) but an *está* (from the verb to be [estar] in its transitional usage)” (Lesser 4).

Similarly, in *The Korean Brazilians: a People in Transition*, Kathyne Jeun Cho notes that “Korean Brazilians” came to Brazil due to “global interchanges . . .drafting an extremely interconnected world with a new ‘world culture’, while disrupting local cultures” (1), which caused them to have “conceptualized identities, localities, spaces, sites, margins and borders, being drawn and redrawn constantly, proving that cultural identity is a shifting as the continual drift of migration” (2). Korean immigrants were not merely isolated minorities in Brazil. By viewing the immigrants from their own perspective, it becomes evident that they were trying to internalize the points of intersection that they encountered daily at work and in their personal and private relationships. In order to organize the multiplicity in their lives, the immigrants compared similarities and differences between Korean and Brazilian customs. They tried to document the history of Korean immigration, especially the early memories and impressions of Brazil, through their own subjective interpretations. These interpretative possibilities make the narratives and, more broadly, the discourse of the Korean immigrants distinct. These immigrants seem to adopt Brazil as a new home, hoping and expecting future generations to have a stable position within Brazilian society. In spite of their displacement, the immigrants want their efforts to impact heritage in Brazil.

As a literary journal, *Cultura Tropical* introduces many perspectives striving to discuss these issues. This spirit of exploration is not limited only to the pages of the journal. Members of the community have shared the struggle to balance their homeland and the host country. One of remaining immigrants from the first wave of immigration considered by the community as one of the first immigrants to Brazil is Kim Chang Duk. Mr. Kim arrived in Brazil in 1964 with his wife, six children and 800 dollars. He explains that the Korean government in the late 1960s allowed immigrants to take only \$200 out of the country. Whereas Yun Byung Oh romanticized his memory of São Paulo during the 1960s, Mr. Kim paints a different picture. In an interview, he states that he moved to the smaller city of Campinas, where he set up a small kiosk selling fruits and household commodities inside a small, desolate public market. The first six months seemed grim and he had a few customers. In time, however, his kiosk became a well-known location for buying salt, beans, sugar and oil among locals. With limited Portuguese vocabulary, Mr. Kim shares an impression of Brazil that he formed in those early years:

People who live in Brazil, work hard and live hard. This benefits Brazil. In Brazil, the cultural prejudice held by its society is not the same as Koreans. When I see a Brazilian struggling, I feel compassion towards him. I ask myself, “What can I do to help him, to help my neighbors?” When I first came and struggled with barely any money, or much knowledge of the language and customs, my Brazilian neighbors helped me. [my translation. Personal Interview, May 2010].

Mr. Kim moved to São Paulo where he launched a successful algae import/export business. As he began to profit financially, he remembered that he had been able to grow in Brazil through the help of its citizens, his neighbors and friends. He wanted to contribute back to Brazil. In order to do so, he taught his children to be socially conscious and also proud Brazilians. When asked to define his identity, Mr. Kim responded:

This is how I understand my identity-my cultural identity. I used to think that I wanted my grandchildren to marry Koreans when the time came but now my idea has changed. I realized that after living, by sharing and receiving, all of these years in Brazil, neither my family nor I needed to be around only Koreans. As we live here, now with the third generation (a total of 15 grandchildren), we need to incorporate and integrate organically into Brazilian society. I believe that if you live here, you need to be Brazilian. This means that we speak Portuguese and not only Korean, that we send our children to learn about Brazil as their nation but also of their Korean heritage at church or at home. To me, Brazil is first and being Korean is second. So . . . I’m a Korean who left my homeland but I didn’t forget it. I left one home and just went to another. [Personal Interview, May 2010]

Each *Cultura Tropical* edition and its various reflections illustrate what Mr. Kim has aptly described in reference to immigration and displacement: transitioning from one home to another.

Chapter Two

The Act of Cultural Exchange for Korean Brazilian Discourse

This chapter focuses on the shifting identities as revealed in narratives from the fifth (1988) and sixth (1989) editions of *Cultura Tropical*. In the fifth edition, editors and contributors share an interest in reforming the journal. As stated in *Cultura Tropical*:

열대 문화 문은 항상 열려있다. 생활속에서 걸러지는 이 생각을 모았다
가 보내주시기 바란다.

The door to *Cultura Tropical* is always open. We welcome any writing or interpretation lived and experienced by the Korean immigrant. Any thought or reflection collected during one's daily life, living between Korea and Brazil, is welcome. [my translation] (145)

This edition makes a strong statement by opening with two essays addressing themes of cultural exchange. In the first essay “무엇을, 어째서, 어떻게 할 것인가?” (What, Why, and How Will Things Be Done?), Hwang Un Hun discusses the meaning of the word “culture” for Korean immigrants, as well as his understanding of cultural exchange. Similarly, the second essay, “그 실제와 문제” (*Reality and problems*) by Cha Dam Hwe, presents a discussion of eight Korean immigrants; including contributors to *Cultura Tropical*, a representative of the Korean Association of Brazil, a musical conductor, and small business entrepreneurs. They identify points of intersection and cultural negotiations undergone during the immigrant experience.

Through cultural intersections, immigrants learn that certain Korean cultural values do not function in the same way in Brazil. Korean immigrants continue to associate values of the homeland to their living and working situations in Brazil. In interactions with Korean or Brazilian people, they do not feel comfortable with either group. Immigrants face a unique transition from Korean to Korean Brazilian. In order to facilitate this transition, they must engage in a cultural exchange with both Korean and Brazilian cultures. The journal's content represents this cultural exchange. For example, the poetry section contains four Korean language poems by Park Jong Ha and three Portuguese language poems translated into Korean. The integration of Brazilian poems in translation indicates that immigrants in Brazil want their poetic voices represented on the same page with Brazilian literature. The sixth edition of *Cultura Tropical* features a significant change in content and structure. The writer Im Yun Jung, fluent in both Korean and Portuguese, uses her linguistic and cultural knowledge to translate Korean and Portuguese language narratives for a bilingual audience. Im wrote journal articles explaining the literary history of the *crônica* and she also translated Brazilian literature into Korean for readers who could not fluently read Portuguese language.

During this second stage of cultural identity, Korean immigrants constantly intersect with Brazilian cultural values and experience a sense of displacement and a fragmentation of ethnic identity. Immigrants realize that they no longer fit completely into one singular culture. Korea emerges as a place of cultural identification by virtue of being their homeland but daily habits of immigrants have changed with their adaptation

and further integration into Brazilian society. The 1980s become a significant period to study as it is the time period when first wave of immigrants from the 1960s and 1970s begin to enter this second stage of identification. During this decade, many immigrants opened businesses in ethnically diverse neighborhoods such as Bom Retiro and Brás and worked with Brazilian employees⁶, and entrepreneurs of Jewish and Lebanese backgrounds in the fashion industry. Once they felt more familiar with the Portuguese language, daily food staples like *feijão e arroz* (beans and rice), and the informality of Brazilian communication consisting of kisses on the cheeks and drinks with the boss after work, immigrants began to think more about the meanings of culture and home. An accumulation of cultural knowledge and social organization within the immigrant community emerged. They began to actively evaluate what it meant to live as Koreans in Brazil. After living ten to twenty years in Brazil, they begin to redefine the location and meaning of home from their perspectives as displaced individuals. The meaning of home extends beyond the homeland to the new bicultural environment in which they find themselves. They know both places “*intimately* yet without being wholly of either place” (Hall 490). Immigrants alternatively seek a process of cultural exchange that establishes order in their world by constructing an independent sense of home. This cultural exchange suggests a greater acceptance of Brazil as a home and a place of residence, as well as a place of belonging to which immigrants can relate.

To begin to define their own sense of home, immigrants must acknowledge the necessity of mutual cultural understanding. Koreans and Brazilians continue to trade in stereotypes of one another even after twenty-five years of Korean immigration. In Korea, people often imagined Brazil as a vast Amazonian landscape where people listened and danced to samba. Brazilians could not differentiate between China, Korea or Japan, ignoring differences between these countries and identifying these immigrants collectively as Asian. Each ethnicity, however, has its own distinctive history, language and culture. According to Hwan:

벌써 여러 해전 일이지만 언젠가 레쁘블리카공원의 샤빼우 도 솔 나무
그날 벤치에 앉아 좀 쉬고 있었는데, 옆 자리의 노인네 한 분이
‘단신 어느 나라에서 왔어?’ 한다. 그래서 ‘나 꼬리아노요’ 했더니 ‘꼬리
아에 서도 양복을 입소?’ 라고 묻질 않던가. 정말이지 기가 찼다. 그 말이
농담이라면 먼드러진 블랙 유무다.

A while ago, I was resting on a bench beside a man under a tree at the park of República, when the gentleman asked where I was from. I answered that I was Korean and he replied with the question, “Do people in Korea wear suits?” I was stunned by his question. If his words were a joke, then it must have been a type of dark humor. [my translation] (4)

⁶ About 500, 000 Brazilians work for Korean immigrants in Bom Retiro. See Jung, Yun Im. “Exploring the roots of culture shock of Koreans”. (Los Angeles: Department of Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, 2009).

Hwan further comments:

한국에서 이 번에 올림픽을 한다니까 [...] 한국 사람이 본격적으로 브라질 땅에 이민을 시작한 26년이나 되는데 무엇보다도 시급한 것이 서로의 이해를 증진시킬 수 있는 여러 단계의 교류인 것 같다. 그 가운데에서도 갖가지 문화교류가 선행해야만 한다.

It's been 26 years since Koreans immigrated to Brazil. . . it is critical to know more about each other and understand each other as we co-exist in one space. It's important to actively proceed with our cultural exchange. [my translation] (5)

Hwan's comment reveals two aspects of his Korean Brazilian perspective. First, he wants Brazilians to know more about Korean society. After two decades of Koreans living in Brazil and establishing a clear economic and social presence in urban centers like São Paulo, Hwan thinks that Brazilians would have become more familiar with Koreans, their origins, and their characteristics. Also, he recognizes that Korea has changed and grown rapidly as a country since the immigration of many Koreans to Brazil in the 1970s. The once-poor country that struggled under a harsh military dictatorship of president Park Jong Hee during the 1960s and 1970s⁷ emerged as an economically strong country capable of hosting the 1988 Summer Olympics. Korea became a source of inspiration and pride for its citizens at home and abroad. According to Hwan, Koreans and their culture should be perceived in a positive manner given the good aspects of social values and traditions for other to learn.

While Korea experienced these advancement and economic opportunities, a spirit of modernization and renovation swept through Brazil as well instilling a sense of optimism. According to Brazilian scholars, Henrique Altemani de Oliveira and Gilmar Masiero in “Estudos Asiáticos no Brasil: Contexto e Desafios”:

O Brasil apresentou alguns ajustes em suas estratégias de inserção internacional. Dentre estas estratégias, a Ásia do Leste passou a ser vista como uma área de expressão no processo de inserção internacional brasileira, com conteúdo tanto econômico quanto político. O interesse não é só do lado brasileiro, mas também do asiático que até então contava com o acelerado desenvolvimento econômico japonês e demais economias em rápido processo de industrialização, tendo a Coreia do Sul, por exemplo ultrapassando o Brasil em termos de renda per capita no início dos anos 1980. (56)

With many social and economic transitions throughout the world, especially in Brazil and Korea, mutual benefits of economic and cultural exchange were set into motion. Korea began to export goods and industrialize rapidly, while Brazil opened its market to Asian goods. In these years, Korean immigrants encountered different socio-economic conditions than existed when the first group of immigrants arrived in the 1960s.

⁷ Park Jong Hee was the president of the Republic of Korea Army general and the President of South Korea (the Republic of Korea) from 1961 to 1979. Under his governance, Korea began an era of industrialization through export-led growth.

According to Choi Keum Cho:

em meados de 1980, a atividade era considerada relativamente fácil, apesar de muitos deles nunca terem tido experiência em venda. Na luta pela sobrevivência, muitos chefes de famílias se iniciaram no ramo da confecção executando todas as tarefas: desenhavam, cortavam, levavam os tecidos para as oficinas, empacotavam e vendiam pessoalmente as peças. (103)

As Korean immigrants grew in numbers, they familiarized themselves with Brazilian customs and advanced economically, especially as they profited in the sector of clothes manufacturing. Korean immigrants were more financially stable and better adapted than their predecessors, which allowed them to reflect on the changes to their cultural identity.

Cultural Exchange in *Cultural Tropical*

The second stage of identity shows that Korean immigrants express a desire to remember the homeland, as which they associate with a particular values. Since many immigrants left Korea to search for a better life, they left a poverty-stricken home whose political future seemed uncertain. These immigrants display a desire to adapt to their host country and culture. Customs, language, and cuisine are part of their expression. This transitional phase for Korean immigrants in Brazil corresponds to a conscious construction of the community and culture. They could no longer ignore certain components of their experience and cultural identity as immigrants.

Within *Cultural Tropical*, a much deeper construction of cultural discourse lies beneath the surface as the narrative of immigrants progresses from the first stage of identity⁸ to the second stage of identity. Korean immigrants enter a process of negotiation between two different cultures. As the journal's texts will demonstrate, cultural exchange reveals that Korean immigrants relate to the *thought of the outside*. According to Michel Foucault, the *thought of the outside* is a thought related to the interior philosophical reflection and of knowledge, yet also an attempt to retrace its path to find out its origin and its direction of movement (Foucault 425). This experience involves going outside of oneself "ultimately in order to find oneself, to wrap and gather oneself in the dazzling interiority of a thought . . .discourse, even if it is the silence beyond all language and the nothingness beyond all being" (Foucault 426).

For Korean immigrants, discourse represents knowledge of both the homeland and the host nation, but also identifies ways of communication that can help achieve a balanced identity. Whether through fiction or personal reflections, the narratives of *Cultura Tropical* in this second stage disclose a "discourse that constitutes its own space as the

⁸ As observed in the previous chapter, the discourse of the first stage of identity occurs when the migrant expresses a greater sense of affinity and loyalty to his/her homeland while beginning to re-discover oneself in the new host nation. The immigrant realizes that he/she is marginally included in both places. The discourse of the first stage of cultural identity appears initially in *Cultura Tropical*. The journal displays a struggle of immigrants to find their positions and logically make sense of situated loyalties.

outside toward which, and outside of which, it speaks . . . [it is a discourse that] is an incessant advance toward that whose absolutely fine-spun light has never received language” (Foucault 428).

This literary cultural exchange manifests itself in the physical juxtapositions between Korean and Brazilian poems in the fifth edition of *Cultura Tropical*. The Korean section includes poems by Park Jong Ha with the following titles: “밤은 깊어는데” (Deep into the Night), “고국이 그리워” (Nostalgia for the Homeland), and “남미로 오는 기상에서” (Reaching South America in the Rising Hour). The Korean poems are first printed in Chinese characters and then followed by the Korean alphabetical form. The Brazilian poetry section opens with “prelúdio no. 2” by Guilherme de Almeida, continues with his other poem “Essa que Eu Hei de Amar,” and concludes with Manuel Bandeira’s poems “momento num café” and “o último poema.” The juxtaposition between the poems “남미로 오는 기상에서” (Reaching South America in the Rising Hour) and “prelúdio no. 2” attracts the readers’ attention because the poems dialogue with one another.

The very trajectory of narratives in this edition of *Cultura Tropical* suggests the intentional act of cultural exchange. The first half of the journal consists of essays written in Korean about the meaning of the Korean diaspora in Brazil given the community’s increased assimilation two decades after its arrival. Soon, the journal transitions to poems in Korean by Park Jong Ha, sharing a sense of longing for and memory of the homeland. The poetic voice begins with a memory of the homeland in order to contemplate her separation from it in “밤은 깊어는데” (Deep into the Night):

밤은 깊어는데: 밤이 깊었는데/눈은 소리없이 뜰에 내리고,/바람은
소리내어 창을 흔드어//옛날에 무산선녀는/아침엔 구름되고 저녁엔
비가 되어/초왕외 궁전엘 나들었는데,//이 밤에 당신은/눈이 되어
살짜기 오는 것일까, 아니면/바람이 되어 조금하게 노크하는 것일까.
Deep into the night/ my eyes fix themselves on the fields/ the window quivers
wildly as the wind passes by// a long time ago, the property-less young lady,
would turn into clouds in the morning and pour herself as rain in the evening as
she passed by the great King’s palace// Tonight, you darling/ seems like you
want to let out a smile or perhaps not/ come by as the wind and knock on my
door. [my translation] (87)

In “고국이 그리워” (Nostalgia for the Homeland), the poetic voice reflects on her foreign status in a new and unfamiliar location distant from her homeland:

고국이 그리워: 이곳 잇심이 좋다고들 하지만/언어가 안통하니 친할 수가
없구요./동천의 달을 보면 임의 얼굴 떠오르고,베개를 의지하면 추억이
꼬리 물어,/구름은 시름 빚어 산 위에 피어나고,/돛배는 꿈을 싣고 바다로
떠나간다./한양의 시친구들 내 소식을 묻거들랑/낮 설은 이 땅에서 바보
처럼 지낸다고.

They say that this place is wonderful, however/since I cannot speak the language,
I cannot seem to befriend this place/Gazing at the moon, I see my face on her/My
pillow is my comfort as I treasure my memories/The foggy clouds rise above the
mountain peak/and the ship of dreams sails off from ashore/Back home, my

friends ask about how I am doing/They say that I'm a fool and a simpleton in the foreign land. [my translation] (90)

These poems represent the immigrants' awareness of their displaced condition. They linger in the connection to the homeland but also face the reality of the new circumstances: loneliness, confusion and helplessness.

The next poem “남미로 오는 기상에서” (Reaching South America in the Rising Hour) reveals a direct identification with the displaced Korean subject. The poem states that:

비행기에 몸을 실어 하늘을 나니
구름이 가로 막혀 지구마저 이별인가.
두고 온 조상 산소 한이 맺히고,
눈을 짓던 임의 얼굴 역력히 떠오른다.
국의로 가는 길이 내 뜻 아닌대
하늘가 어느 곳이 내 고향인가.
빌고 바라노니 기적이 일어
서울의 시친구와 다시 함께 하기를.

(Placing the body in the airplane, one reaches the sky
Shrouded by the clouds, the earth seems just like another star.
Having left behind my ancestors and their tombs, I carry the guilt within me, And
before I realized, tears were falling down my face.
Taking the road to another place was not what I had desired
As my homeland is somewhere between Heaven and Here.
After many prayers, a miracle has happened
I found my friend from Seoul and now we are together. [my translation] (91)

The poem depicts the struggle of an immigrant leaving behind his or her homeland with its comforts and known history. The poet remains emotionally attached to this home as he tries to discover the cultural and linguistic signals that define him. Although the poem begins with a melancholic tone, it constructs a hopeful representation of this immigrant's circumstance by the end he or she meets a friend in this new and strange place. As long as a familiar face of a friend can be found, life in the new country no longer seems so overwhelming and unmanageable.

Guilherme de Almeida's “prelúdio no. 2” continues with a similar hopeful sentiment. More specifically, it functions as a response to Park's earlier poem. Almeida writes:

Como é linda a minha terra!
Estrangeiro, olha aquela palmeira como é bela:
Parece uma coluna reta reta reta
Com [sic] um grande pavão verde pousado na ponta,
A cauda aberta em leque.
E na sombra redonda
Sobre a terra quente.....
(Silêncio!)
.....há um poeta. (92)

The second line's statement "Estrangeiro, olha aquela palmeira como é bela" (Stranger, look how beautiful is that palm tree over there) serves as a call to immigrants desperate with nostalgia for their homeland to look at the good things this new land has to offer. The physical and thematic juxtaposition of these two poems provides an example of active cultural exchange. Martha Medeiros aptly explains that the role of poetry is to:

serve exatamente para a mesma coisa que serve uma vaca no meio da calçada de uma agitada metropole. Para alterar o curso do seu andar, para interromper um hábito, para evitar repetições, para alegrar o seu dia, para fazê-lo pensar, para resgatá-lo do inferno que e viver todo santo dia sem nenhum assombro, sem nenhum encantamento. (45)

The poem gives immigrants the opportunity to relate their frustrations, hopes and feelings of loneliness. Poetry in Korean and Portuguese provides a moment of quiet reflection for the immigrant souls.

In *Cultura Tropical*, I find the first Portuguese language poem authored by a Korean Brazilian as a further example of cultural exchange. Titled "opus I" and written by Kim Tae Rang, the poem employs Portuguese since it is the language of this Korean Brazilian immigrant language:

Encontros e desecontros
Entre amor e odio
Nos momentos insuportáveis

.....
Da rosa branca,
Da noite branca,
Da areia branca,
Da neblina branca,
Da luz apagada,

Fecho os olhos
E esqueço.

Escuto as palavras que
Não anunciam nada,
Abro as janelas que
Não passam sete cores,
Exibo minha'lma que
Não cantam as sonatas,

Fecho os olhos
E repiro [sic]
No seu
Silêncio.

(68-9)

This poem depicts the movement of contrasting images and actions ("encontros e desencontros"), ("amor e ódio"), as well as and negation or deconstruction ("escuto as palavras que não anunciam nada/abro as janelas que não passam sete cores..."). The

poetic voice occupies a void where concrete feelings, whether physical, realistic or truthful, neither come into existence nor enter a state of disintegration. The lyrical voice pauses for a moment of reflection, by repeating “fecho os olhos” (I close my eyes) twice. The movement and non-materialization of an actual image by the lyrical voice leaves the poem open to interpretation. Its central theme could be about broken love, self-reflection, or a process of deconstruction. Including poetry written in Portuguese by a Korean immigrant in the journal suggests the Korean community’s transition into Brazilian culture since Korean no longer remains their only language for expression.

The texts from *Cultura Tropical* show a level of consciousness of their in-between stage by “imparting a part of the complex intersection of identifications” (Palumbo-Liu 280-2). The immigrants’ possession of their personhood, independence, and own interiority constructs a sense of self-appropriation. Korean Brazilian identities constructed in the narratives by Korean immigrants in Brazil represent the diversity of experiences found in the community, which contributes to a broader understanding of Asian immigrants in Brazil.

In Ahn Kyung Ja’s narrative “The Son’s Island” (아들에 섬), a father searches for his son in the Amazon. His son Toni (또니) traveled to the Amazon to escape from his life in São Paulo. Although a part of Brazil, the regional landscape and local culture of the Amazon represents an unfamiliar new world for Toni and his father. Toni left São Paulo in a hurry after a disagreement with his church pastor and his parents. The narrative reveals an implicit criticism of the social pressures experienced by many in the Korean community. As the son of Korean immigrants, Toni finds himself forced into his parent’s social world. Toni and his parents pursued a life integrated socially between their clothing business and their Korean church. At one point in the narrative, it becomes evident that Toni is at a crossroads between the church’s expectations and the complex social pressures imposed upon him. Toni has to volunteer much of his time at church functions while he devotes many hours to his studies and to helping his parents at their store. Between these religious and familial obligations, Toni reaches a point where he can no longer bear the pressure so he runs away to the Amazon in search of a space of his own. By escaping to a remote island, Toni has the opportunity to be himself and to do as he pleases. This sense of isolation either of not fitting in or not getting along with other community members--suggests fissures of culture and identity within the Korean community. These individuals and subsequent generations find themselves in an *in-between* condition. Neither their Brazilian traits nor its Korean components should be treated as a past intended to be forgotten. Instead, identity must be acknowledged as a constant evolution and synthesis between these experienced contradictions. The narrative reveals the journey of immigrant identity; the characters exist in a state of instability with an increased awareness of identity. Each character shifts from one role to another, as if entering and exiting different stages yet embodying all of these identities at once. I have noted how Koreans in Brazil immigrants as a separate immigrant community have experiences similar to other diasporas as they share the reality of being displaced from the homeland, it is what Palumbo-Liu describes as, “the simultaneous experience of alienation and affiliation to country of residence and homeland and a sense of collective consciousness” (Palumbo-Liu 280). *Cultura Tropical* aims to establish a diasporic imagination and foundation for the community by making its pages a performative stage for the Korean Brazilian voices. Negotiating between Korean and Brazilian cultural

references forms an intrinsic part of the construction of immigrant identity. As further explained by Kathryn Jeun Cho in *The Korean Brazilians: A People in Transition*, Korean Brazilians find themselves in “global cultural interchanges, between global cities which are drafting an extremely interconnected world with a new ‘world culture’, while disrupting existing local cultures” (1). The cultural identities of these immigrants become spaces of constant production. Korean immigrant identity exists in an interstitial condition because “they are located between recent immigrants and old timers, their position is oftentimes elided” (Cho 5). As the narratives examined in this chapter indicate, contemporary identity is not as transparent given the impacts of the new global economy and continued immigration. Hybrid identities in general and specifically of Korean immigrants in Brazil are *in* production and never complete. These identities cannot exist without their past, present and future cultural influences.

A Conscious Attitude Toward Cultural Exchange

In a 1988, *Cultura Tropical* collaborators discussed briefly art, food, business, Taekwondo, and music. Discussions of cultural exchange and conclusions drawn by these immigrant writers are particularly interesting. The group’s president Ahn Kyung Ja explained:

브라질은 이민으로 이루어진 나라이고, 큰 나라입니다. 세계 각 민족의 문화가 모두 함께 살고 있어 독특한 이민 문화를 내고 있어요. 낯선 문화를 대하는 자세가 보다 부드럽다고 보는데요.

Brazil is a country of immigrants, it is large country. In Brazil, you can find a diverse community of citizens, which provides a multicultural setting. Rather than something strange and unfamiliar, multiculturalism proves to be a pleasant condition. People seem to adapt to Brazil as second generation immigrants; they find themselves to have a strong sense of nationalism. Although there are distinct cultures, mixed languages and customs, Brazil shows that its culture is no longer strange and unfamiliar to many new immigrants in a short period of time. [my translation] (34-5)

Korean immigrants, who came from a diverse spectrum of social values and philosophies, soon found themselves more integrated into and accepted by Brazilian society. Writers of *Cultura Tropical* appreciated how performances of Korean musical traditions, such as the *p’ansori* (*Korean Folk Opera*), received wide applause by Brazilian audiences when performed at annual Korean cultural festivals. The Korean community valued such positive responses as it shows two developments of cultural exchange. *P’ansori* is typically performed dramatically by a vocalist and accompanied by a barrel drum. The singer uses a fan to emphasize certain parts of their storytelling, unfolding it to announce scene changes. The drummer provides rhythm not only through the beats, but also with verbal sounds. With the *p’ansori* performance, the audience engages with shouts of “*Oh-huh*,” similar to the shouts of *olé* in flamenco. Having Brazilians appreciate a different form of artistic expression is significant for Korean Brazilians as they begin to feel that Korean culture is becoming acknowledged.

The roundtable raises two main points. The first issue revolves around *Cultura Tropical*’s perspective on homogeneity and the second considers the vision of future generations of the Korean immigrant community. Panelists question decisions they would

make regarding their cultural identity. The discussion reveals that second generation Korean immigrants in Brazil desire to assimilate as Brazilians. When second generation children go to Korean language schools on weekends, they question their parents about why they must learn a language that they will only speak with their parents. They ask, “Why can’t I be Brazilian?” Members of the third generation tend to ask, “What is my identity?” They draw comparisons to other minorities, including Afro-Brazilians and Japanese in Brazil. As stated by Ahn Kyung Ja:

일본 이민의 경우에도 자기 나라로 유학가는 역현상이 강한데 ‘도대체 나란 무엇이나’ 즉, ‘나’를 찾자는 까닭입니다. 지난 번 노예해방 100주년 때, 한 흑인이 자신을 불질인이라는 하지 않던데요. ‘난 니그러다’ 절대로 니그러라는 겁니다. 민족이 갖는 동질성이란 무서운 것입니다.

With Japanese immigration, when their children study abroad in Japan, they find themselves asking, “How is the nation defined?,” and they begin to search for the “I.” In the recent centennial celebration of abolition in Brazil, a black man said that he did not consider himself Brazilian but rather a “negro.” These examples, different in their own ways, show that people question and search for their identities. [my translation] (38)

These comparisons with other ethnic groups in Brazil indicate that Korean immigrants view themselves as part of Brazil. They situate the Korean immigrant community in the same social landscape as their Brazilian neighbors. Particularly for second generation immigrants, the experience of loneliness with respect to their identity represents a real struggle. Since homogeneity no longer constitutes part of the Korean immigrant experience, the community begins to realize that boundaries of language and cultural identity exist between the first immigrants and subsequent generations. Children of immigrants speak Portuguese more comfortably since they attend school and make friends with other Brazilians. Their parents, however, often desire to maintain the Korean language by watching Korean television shows and participating in Korean church groups and local associations. By observing these minor differences, the voices of *Cultura Tropical* express the necessity of cultural exchange for understanding and gathering knowledge so that immigrants, their children, and the broader Korean community can discover their ethnic and cultural roots within their given socio-cultural environment.

The attitude of writers of *Cultura Tropical* towards cultural exchange displays a level of maturity within the immigrant community. Instead of denying their experiences and observations, they directly face the reality of these cultural intersections. As Lee Ui Won said, the diasporic experience of the Korean community in Brazil is like a soup where the characters and flavors of distinct ingredients combine to make a seamless final product (41). During the previous stage of identity, Korean immigrants engaged in a process of adaptation to their new cultural environment. However, as many immigrants yet struggled to feel complete in one culture or another, their means of survival consisted of constructing a unique hybrid identity. In this second stage, an awareness of the construction of a hybrid identity informs the discourse of immigrants as the discourse uncloaks the responsibility of knowledge and of balancing ethnic or cultural roots and socio-cultural relations. In order to construct a balanced cultural identity, immigrants and future generations ideally need an equal base in Korean and Brazilian languages and cultures. A genre particular to the hybrid identity discourse is the *crônica*.

Crônicas as a Linking Discourse in Cultura Tropical

Crônicas are journal-like entries that combine travel observations, introspective reflections, brief essays and simple anecdotes. Brazilian *crônicas* are similar to the Spanish American *crónica*, which “assumes its purpose to express the contemporary culture of the city in its manifold manifestation. It often draws imagery from popular and mass culture, which it incorporates in its language and form, and from emerging social movement” (*The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* 130). However, Brazilian *crônicas* are distinct because they depict various aspects of daily life in Brazil, provide a sharp social commentary at times and share an uncannily Brazilian sense of humor that addresses the ironies observed by writers (Preto-Rodas, HLAS, Online Source).

As immigrants become more established in their new country, they begin to insert themselves into the Brazilian cultural milieu rather than remain on the margins. The inclusion of *crônicas* in *Cultura Tropical* reveals an effort to adapt with local culture and discourses. Given its fundamental nature as a literary genre, the *crônica* typically provides a window onto observations of daily life in Brazil. This format brings forth a relationship between immigrant readers and the new cultural setting of Brazil. Korean immigrants who read *crônicas* by Rubem Braga and Carlos Drummond de Andrade relate not only to the content, but also to the cultural context since they have lived in Brazil for a period of time.

One *crônica* included in the sixth edition of *Cultura Tropical*, “O Padeiro” by Rubem Braga, merits further attention. “O Padeiro” tells the story of a baker who delivers bread outside his customer’s door with his usual: “Não é ninguém, é o padeiro” (It is no one, it is the baker). One day, the narrator notes that he did not understand why someone would say that he is no one and asks the baker why he always says that it is no one. The breadmaker explains:

aprendera aquilo de ouvido. Muitas vezes lhe acontecera bater a campainha de uma casa e ser atendido por uma empregada ou outra pessoa qualquer, e ouvir uma voz que vinha lá de dentro perguntando quem era; e ouvir a pessoa que o atendera dizer para dentro: “não é ninguém, não, senhora, é o padeiro”. Assim ficara sabendo que não era ninguém. (63)

It is important to note here how the *padeiro*’s attitude touches the narrator:

Ah, eu era rapaz, eu era rapaz naquele tempo! E às vezes me julgava importante porque no jornal que levava para casa, além de reportagens ou notas que eu escrevera sem assinar, ia uma crônica ou artigo com o meu nome. O jornal e o pão estariam bem cedinho na porta de cada lar; e dentro do meu coração eu recebi a lição de humildade daquele homem entre todos útil e entre todos alegre: “não é ninguém, é o padeiro!” (63)

The narrative voice engages with the figure of the breadmaker in a transformative process of thought and association. The familiar figure of the baker with his humility becomes contrasted with the narrator’s own value of work. Through the figuration of an Other, the *crônica* constructs a social identity and its associated value. According to Cláudio Márcio do Carmo:

O texto [*O Padeiro*] constrói-se também a partir da contradição entre um discurso de valorização do trabalhador e outro que não o percebe, convergindo para uma desvalorização feita não só pela sociedade como um todo, mas, sobretudo, por uma desvalorização interna ao grupo dos próprios trabalhadores, refletindo o que um pensa do outro e o que cada um pensa de si, bem como da situação em relação ao seu ofício e à sua identidade, caracterizando um jogo de imagens . . . [Online source].

The narrator relates to the *padeiro*. This literary discourse establishes a conscious connection, which poignantly represents an insertion of the self into Brazilian society rather than the maintenance of distance or a liminal position. The relationship between immigrants and the socio-cultural space does not follow a vertical organization that separates communities by ethnicity. A horizontal model now balances influences of Korean and Brazilian culture among immigrant communities.

Inclusion of this *crônica* in *Cultura Tropical* reveals the multiple cultural systems constructing the immigrant identity. Incorporating *crônicas* like “O Padeiro” occurs as a conscious choice of re-alignment for Korean immigrants in Brazilian social cultural landscape. Displacement and fragmentation of ethnic identity transform immigrant by changing the fluidity of their identity. The identity of the immigrant no longer conforms to the homogeneous categories of ethnic identification. Instead, this generation of Korean immigrants constructs a relationship with *crônicas* and other aspects of Brazilian culture allows for the internalization of Brazilian and Korean cultural systems. As Homi K. Bhabha asserts in his essay “The Question of Agency”:

The epistemological is locked into the hermeneutic circle, in the description of cultural elements as they tend towards a totality. The enunciative is a more dialogic process that attempts to track displacements and realignments that are the effects of cultural antagonisms and articulations-subverting the rationale of the hegemonic moment and relocating alternative, hybrid sites of cultural negotiation. (255)

The relationship of the immigrant to national identity breaks away from the hegemonic language of vertical categorization of ethnicity. Through the sixth edition of *Cultura Tropical*, literary discourse provides Korean immigrants with an outlet to publicly express nostalgia and confusion, to question identity, and to document the history of immigration. Incorporating Brazilian culture into the journal indicates the process of Korean cultural assimilation to Brazil. The journal sets in motion a syncretic formation of identity mixing old with new, and east with west.

Cultural Exchange of 1.5 Generation of Korean Immigrants

The 1.5 generation refers to immigrants born in Korea that came to Brazil as adults or children. These immigrants still strongly identify with the Korean language and culture. For example, journalist Yoo Na Kim recently published a photo book *A Jovem Coréia* (2008) (The Young Korea).⁹ Yoo Na was born in Korea but moved to Brazil in 1988 with her family at the age of six. Her biography states:

Quando iniciou sua pesquisa sobre a comunidade coreana no Brasil [viu] que pela falta de documentação e registro histórico, as páginas deste almanaque são compostas por entrevistas feitas pela própria autora, que, inclusive, foi até a Coréia para enriquecer este trabalho e passou até para fazer treinamento com o exército coreano. (i)

Yoo Na Kim notes that she wanted to create a book with enticing visuals representing different aspects of Korea for a Portuguese speaker. Readers could learn about the unfamiliar Korean community and its culture through the printed information and the images. The book is divided into two sections. The first part focuses on Korea and its customs, especially its modern economic, artistic, and culinary development. The second part of the book provides a brief history of Korean immigration to Brazil with a chronology of key dates and profiles of different community members who have been successful in Brazil. This beautiful book expresses pride not only for Korea but also for



Brazil. Yoo Na describes Koreans who have established Brazil as their home while still maintaining ties to Korean customs. This book exemplifies Robin Cohen's observation that "diasporic communities are committed not only to the restoration and maintenance of the homeland but to its very creation. The latter refers to the notion of imagined homelands that only resemble 'the original history and geography of the diaspora's natality in the remotest way'"(11). Yoo Na's book restores and maintains knowledge of the homeland in order to avoid erroneous conceptions of Korea, its people and its culture. Her book describes Korean culture, food, New Year's traditions, and wedding customs. She links the Korean immigrant community in Brazil to these cultural traits through a brief historical section explaining the reasons for Korean immigration to Brazil in the 1960s.

The earliest notable immigrants mentioned in Yoo Na Kim's book are Mr. Kim Chang Duk, Dr. Young Man Lee, and Mr. Kwang Sun Koh. As presented in the previous chapter, Mr. Kim Chang Duk's immigrant story reveals interesting perspectives on family and cultural identity. The tales of the other two immigrants provide further insight into the Korean community experience. Dr. Young Man Lee is well known in the community since he attended to those who were unable to speak Portuguese in need of medical attention:

Comecei numa casa caindo aos pedaços, feia..mas fiz uma reforma com as minhas próprias mãos e coloquei uma placa que comprei num ferro velho, pintada por um amigo. Assim começou uma história de serviços prestados à população, não apenas aos patrícios mas também aos brasileiros . . .O dr. Lee distribuía os remédios para os pacientes com envelopes, com a dosage exata que o paciente necessitava- esse é um método coreano de prescrição. (Kim 58)

Mr. Kwang Sun Koh or Sr. Carlos was a member of the cultural delegation that arrived in Brazil in 1962. Koh explained that he came to Brazil because the country seemed to present a new promise after he had suffered and struggled from war in Korea:

Vivi como fugitivo. Embora queria pagar aos políticos para garantir a estadia segura de minha família. . . Aos 90 anos, Sr. Carlos não se arrepende de suas escolhas. Ama o Brasil, a liberdade conquistada e considera o país um lugar seguro, território para as futuras gerações se desenvolverem livremente. (Kim 59)

These early immigrants reveal what Brazil meant to them as they adapted to living in a new country. Similar to the literary discourses of *Cultura Tropical*, these profiles serve as further examples of how Korean immigrants construct a community within Brazil. The diasporic experience consists of simultaneous affiliations and de-identifications with both the homeland and the current place of residence. This dual process helps perpetuate the continual displacement of diasporic subjects. These tensions of displacement within the diaspora emerge as the discourse of the second stage of cultural identity, as evidenced in the fifth and sixth edition of *Cultura Tropical*.

Living in the Diaspora

The elements composing this diasporic identity differ from earlier considerations of national identity. For modernists such as Oswald de Andrade, who wrote in his 1928 “Manifesto Antropófago”: “Tupi or not Tupi...that is the question,” Brazilian national identity consisted of indigenous, African and European components. Korean immigrants in Brazil must construct a new composition of identity that does not hinge on the question of “to be or not to be,” but rather necessitates an acceptance of both their Korean and Brazilian cultures. This duality of culture characterizes the experience of a diasporic subject.

According to Rhacel S. Parreñas and Lok C.D. Siu in *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions*, to be part of the Korean diaspora as well as a diasporic subject implies a “way of reformulating one’s minoritized position by asserting one’s full belonging elsewhere . . . it seeks to redefine the terms of belonging” (13). Immigrants attempt to establish a balance of power for their own representation. The shift between cultural frames represents a passage from one entity to another. Both cultures exist within the inevitably hybridized immigrant identity. As explained in this chapter, Korean immigrants begin to establish themselves in their new home through affiliations and de-identifications. This process marks a moment of immigrants finding meaning in themselves relative to their space. The discursive examples from the fifth and sixth edition of *Cultura Tropical* reveal the necessity of both Korean and Brazilian elements. Immigrants are no longer confused as to whether they are Korean or Brazilian. Instead they identify with both cultures.

After working on these narratives, what are the lived experiences like of Korean Brazilians? How is the life of the Korean community in Brazil? What do they do, what do they like to do, and where do they live? There are local markets in neighborhoods such as Bom Retiro filled with Korean food items and products imported from Korea and locally made *kimchi*. Outside of these Korean markets or *mercearias* are vegetable stands in *feiras* (farmer’s market) selling items commonly used in Korean recipes such as garlic, green chili peppers, and green onions. *Papelarias* (stationary stores) are filled with Korean stationary, pens and pencils, while cosmetics stores feature Korean brand cosmetics such as Amore and other needs for feminine vanity. Economic success played a large factor for many in the Korean community to feel more established in Brazil. Without the economic growth, journals such as *Cultura Tropical* would not even have existed since donations from Korean business community was paid for every edition. Considering the period’s social context, Korean immigrants populate economically in Brazil but also saw himself as a success story.

An example of cultural exchange and hybridity are weddings. Many weddings within the Korean community embrace Korean and Brazilian customs. After a church wedding ceremony, the reception is held at a *churrascaria* (Brazilian bbq restaurant). The *churrascaria* has become an expectation of Korean guests. In Korean tradition, abundant food given to guests means a return of abundant blessings for the new couple. The hosts find the *churrascaria* practical since their invited guests, whether Korean or Brazilian, can enjoy the meal. In Korean wedding ceremony (*honrye*), the wedding couple wears traditional Korean clothes and follows the steps of blessings exchanged with the elders of the family. Usually, the couple bows to the elders of the family and receives dates, nuts and money on a decorated cloth panel held by them. To close the wedding day, the young

couple heads to a dancehall and parties until dawn with friends. Cultural moments as these are like another tile that is added to the construction of who they are as hybrid subjects.

On the whole, the first stage of cultural identity is about establishing an individual's positioning and situated loyalties. Diaspora theory defines this phase as a condition where "migrants express a greater sense of affinity and loyalty to the place from which they are geographically displaced" (Parreñas and Siu 15) and differences "are experienced intersectionally but central to processes of diaspora making" (Parreñas and Siu 19). The second stage is about home for Korean immigrants as they negotiate between affiliating, identifying and de-identifying relationships to *home*. The question of home now becomes "a source of anxiety and a site of creativity and refuge. It is both a place one left behind and a place one currently inhabits" (Parreñas and Siu 15). Immigrants construct their sense of home and cultural identity from Korean and Brazilian elements. Finally, the third stage of cultural identity as explained in the next chapter, demonstrates the transition from considering Korean immigrants in Brazil as an exclusively ethnic immigrant enclave to viewing them and future generations as an integrated community with ties to both Brazil and Korea.

Chapter Three

Ethnic and Identity Concerns of 1.5 and Second Generations of Korean Brazilians

In 1992, the Korean community celebrated their thirtieth year of immigration to Brazil. The first generation of immigrants left a very isolated and homogeneous society. Living in a Latin American country constituted a distinct reality for Korean immigrants. Lytton L. Guimarães explains “Cultural Interaction with Korea: From Silk Road to Korean Waves” that “Korean communities in other countries [have] an extreme attachment to their home country, society, and culture. Korea has a rich and traditional history dating back to more than 5,000 years. Also Koreans have one of the most homogeneous societies in the world” (6). Members of the Korean community became more successful in the 1990s as they became more acculturated to the Portuguese language and Brazilian customs and their businesses. Living in a multicultural society had become a part of their reality, which contrasted with their homogeneous life of family and friends in the homeland.

The Korean community initially overcame economic challenges that changed their perspective. For instance, Guimarães states that for Koreans “to break into the garment industry, which had been dominated by Jews and Arabs, and to help new arrivals in Brazil, they contracted labor among their own compatriots . . . due to the process of liberation of imports, especially from China, many Koreans have gone into other economic activities (tourist agencies, grocery stores, restaurants, etc...)” (9). The business community grew as it continued to provide services in the Korean language, which meant that immigrants could frequent local Korean businesses and thus avoid speaking Portuguese. Moreover, during the 1990s, commercial exchange between Korea and Brazil increased. Investments of Korean companies investment in Brazil expanded from US\$ 630 million in 1990 to over US\$ 4 billion by 2005 (Guimarães 1). The change demonstrates a gradual expansion in exchange between these two countries, which situated Korea favorably as it became a source of cultural pride for Korean Brazilians. As Brazilian economic reforms resulted in inflation and subsequently socio-economic instability for small business owners, the successful Korean economy presented opportunities for potential growth.

¹²Anthropophagy signifies the eating of human flesh by human beings. Oswald de Andrade used it as a metaphorical concept in the 1920s. He proposes the ingestion of all positive elements, whether European, national or indigenous aspects like the pre-colonial emblems of the Amerindian. *Antropofagia* implied a cultural digestion and regurgitation of continental and Amerindian components into a distinctly Brazilian identity.

The Korean community's construction of its own cultural image in Brazil emerges as another key factor in these years. Although contributors to *Cultura Tropical* attempted to negotiate between Korean and Brazilian cultural identity, their daily experiences led to a communication gap between this Korean community and other Brazilian residents of Bom Retiro. According to Professor Yun Im Jung in "Exploring the Roots of Culture Shock of Koreans," the "relationship Koreans develop with Brazilians and their judgment about the Brazilian culture relies heavily on their employees and customers, since their weekends are spent in churches and golf clubs, which does not help in cultivating horizontal bonds with Brazilians" (5). Many Koreans in Brazil preserved their culture by attending Korean churches or other ethnocentric activities and maintaining minimal contact with Brazilians. Their self-segregation caused other sectors of the population to view the Korean community negatively. Koreans in Brazil shifted from viewing adaptation to Brazilian culture as a necessity to wanting associations with countries beyond Brazil, including Korea and the United States. By returning to the narratives of *Cultura Tropical*, I will consider how the discourses of the Korean community represent these new perspectives.

The collaborators of *Cultura Tropical* had published seven editions of the journal for the Korean community in Brazil, scholars and other interested readers in Korea by 1990. The publication facilitated an active exchange of discourses in Brazil and Korea. Part of the eighth edition explores recurring tensions among Korean immigrants focusing on their life as Koreans in Brazil after thirty years of immigration. The eighth edition features discussions of Brazil as a common thread. The overarching theme is "내가 본 브라질" (The things I have seen in Brazil). Many of the essays present perspectives from different regions of Brazil such as the Pantanal and the Amazon. Fictional stories base their plots in the Amazon or in the city of São Paulo. These pieces reveal how the lives of Koreans changed with their experiences in Brazil. Soon, Korea existed only as a distant memory. For instance, Koreans found the *amigo* (friend) culture unique when first living in Brazil. Oh Won Kyung observes that:

우리로서는 처으엔 잘 이해하기 어려운 문제였지요. 이 아미고 (amigo-친구)의식은 이것 하나만으로도 브라질 사람들을 표현하기에 충분하다 할만치 브라질적이라 봅니다.

When we first began living in Brazil it was really difficult to adapt to the idea that someone could call me on the street and refer to me as a friend, especially when I did not even know him that well. [my translation] (10)

The discussion surrounding this topic notes how unique and unfamiliar the *amigo* culture was to Koreans given the radical stratification of their society due to its Confucius basis. Obeying the hierarchies of Confucius was a social and moral value crucial to Korean society. Clan name, noble class, and profession maintained the strict social boundaries between castes and historical families. To be a close friend in Korean society, one must know a person's background in order to establish trust and friendship. In order to understand the origins of and reasons for these cultural differences, *Cultura Tropical* collaborators engage in an open dialogue.

This edition featured the addition of guest writers, including professor Lee Sang Kwan and Pastor Lee Jung Kun who both visited São Paulo in the early 1990s. Each

received a copy of the *Cultura Tropical* journal and subsequently shared outsiders' perspective about Korean immigrants in Brazil. As immigrants to Europe and the United States, these guest writers actively participated in communities of the Korean diaspora. Professor Lee Sang Kwan taught law at the University of Vienna (Austria). Pastor Lee served as head pastor of the Union Mission Church in Los Angeles at the time. By including the perspectives of these guest writers in the journal, the collaborators of *Cultura Tropical* hoped to expand its dialogue with the diaspora. Rather than limit their journal to the small immigrant community in Brazil, the collaborators wanted to connect with other Koreans .

Professor Lee Sang Kwan's essay "내가 본 브라질" (The Brazil that I Saw) depicts his impressions of Brazil from his Korean-Austrian perspective. He first noticed the complex network of highways and concrete buildings constituting the city of São Paulo. Upon his arrival, Kwan states that the ethanol fumes from cars made him feel as though he were in a scientific experimental room (46). While visiting São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Professor Kwan noted differences between the socio-cultural attitudes of Brazil and those of Austria and Korea. He explains:

브라질 사람이삼바 춤에 몸을 맡기고 있을때 그들은 인생의 모든 걱저을 잊어버리는 것 같다. 그들의 낙천은 생화의 여러극면에서 나타난도 . . .또 시간 관념도 칠저하지 않은 것 같다. 일이 밀리면 아마냥하면 끝나고. Brazilians seem to forget every problem that they might have when they move their bodies to the rhythm of samba. This easy-going attitude is apparent in many aspects of their daily life . . . how time is conceived a pivotal thing. There is no timeliness, if people have work that they have not finished one day, they leave for *amanhã* (tomorrow) and move on. [my translation](47)

Professor Lee found the optimistic and relaxed attitude of Brazilians refreshing and particular to their society. Daily problems of crime and corruption are undeniably a part of Brazilian reality, yet the professor's positive perception reveals how distinct cultural traits and social mentalities distinguish one culture from another.

Further, Korean Brazilians noted other distinct cultural habits that posed difficulties for adjustments. In her study "Exploring the Roots of Culture Shock of Koreans," Professor Yun Im Jung recognizes the difficulties Koreans had adjusting to Brazil given that they were accustomed to the Korean culture of *pali-pali* (hurry, hurry). Yun explains that the culture of *pali-pali* is tied closely to historical factors: "Korean haste is an outcome of a generation submitted to a military dictatorship simultaneously with the imperative of accelerated economic development amid a post war social environment" (9). While Koreans in Brazil find a commonality based on their ethnic and cultural heritage, individual perspectives on culture and identity differ. Living between the Brazilian optimistic sense that things can be returned to *amanhã* (tomorrow) and the Korean culture of *pali-pali*, immigrants develop a cultural mindset that can be viewed as either the social source of identity or as the autonomous realm of the self. The essential self does not correspond to an expected stereotype but rather emerges as a performer in an ongoing drama (Lie 8).

Pastor Lee's essay "Warm Culture and Cold Culture" presents a comparison between Korean immigrant experiences in Brazil and in the United States. According to Pastor Lee, the warm, tropical weather of Brazil parallels the warm social dynamic of its

people. In the United States, people tend to be more individualistic and independent with a social mentality often characterized as cold. Pastor Lee observes that Koreans in Brazil were warmer and friendlier than the immigrants at his Los Angeles church. The fact that the *Cultura Tropical* collaborators voluntarily invested their time to meet, discuss and write about Korean immigration to Brazil and Brazilian culture is a welcome surprise for Lee and members of the Korean diaspora. The journal provides an opportunity to share experiences understood by other immigrants. This global effort elucidates how cultural affiliation continually changes and shifts for displaced subjects, which affirms the hybrid nature of their cultural identity.

Moreover, the inclusion of these essays by guest writers discourses in *Cultura Tropical* exemplifies cultural cannibalism¹². Oswald de Andrade's 1928 "Manifesto Antropófago" explains transformative spaces in texts as meanings that do not readily come emerge as crucial nodes of depoliticization. This manifesto uses cultural elements and historical emblems to construct an allegorical and playful attempt to contest European influence in Brazilian identity and propose an alternative definition of Brazilianness. The elements that escape context transfigure and defamiliarize experience while complicating relations to the past and opening new paths for interpretation.

Lee Su Jun's poem "Palavra" in the journal's eighth edition captures this spirit of the anthropophagus, as it frames the poem to the Brazilian *concretismo*¹⁴ form:

Preciso parar
 Para a palavra me palavrear
 E ela me comeu vivo

Viva a palavra
 Para que a palavra me viva
 E lavo-a me lavrando
 Lava lava palavra lava lava
 P a l a v r a
 Balaralaaladavarada r a r a (106).

The poem does not conform to any particular rules of form as the poetic voice negotiates and constructs his or her identity. A freedom of enunciation emerges in the individual's thought and experience. This poem states that there is no need to conform to a given form. It grants the person and his or her words freedom to be alive, rather than oppressed and hidden. This poem manifests a co-existence of different lineages or, in other words, a hybridized culture. This hybridity involves a dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology and the impulse to create an independent local identity.

¹⁴ *Concretismo* is a poetical form that denies traditional poetics due to usage of repetitive morphemes and sounds. This poetical form values fragmented forms of words and positioning since through this method, the poem transforms into a visual object. The language of the poem is synthetic and dramatic, characterizing it as objective and concrete.

Additionally, this eight edition features the invention of new forms of subjectivities and of relationships that imply a continuous renewal of a bi-cultural system of cultural values. Focusing on the different stages of cultural identity illustrated in the discourses of *Cultura Tropical*, allows us to study immigration and displacement of individuals as lived and experienced human phenomenon. The third stage of cultural identity proposes the question of how a person determines if he or she belongs to a group or society. The narratives from *Cultura Tropical* suggest that members of the Korean community no longer limit themselves to being either Korean or Brazilian. Instead, Korean immigrants' of belonging crosses traditional ethnic, cultural and national boundaries.

Thirty-years of Korean Immigrant History in Brazil and the 1.5 Generation

The ninth edition of *Cultura Tropical* coincides with thirty years of Korean immigration to Brazil. The opening essay explains that:

오늘의 주제는 [브라질] 또는 [가장 브라질 적인 것], 브라질에서 만나게 되는 특별한 것에 대한 이야기가 되겠습니다.

Today's topic will be about Brazil as well as what is particularly Brazilian and the Brazilian experiences we have encountered face to face that have made an impact on us. [my translation] (6)

For immigrants who arrived in the early 1970s, life in Brazil was full of challenges. Yet, the new country provided many opportunities for their children, the 1.5 or second generation, who were able to live more comfortably in Brazil. Brazilian scholar Guimarães states:

In general the first generation of immigrants have to work very hard and not only fulfill their job obligations to support themselves and their families, but also because of the absolute need to adapt to the new cultural environment, diverse customs and traditions, and to integrate to the new society. The language barrier is particularly difficult and at the same time very important since it is necessary for the process of adaptation, integration and eventually acculturation. (6)

The first generation of immigrants made efforts to solely maintain the Korean language for themselves and their children but the Korean community in Brazil realized the importance of cultivating both languages and cultural references for future generations.

By 1995, the editors struggled to continue publishing *Cultura Tropical*. As stated in their epilogue:

이번 열대문화 제 9호를 펴내는데 있어, 여느호 보다도 갑절의 든 것 같다 [...] 그로나 한번 끊어질뻔 열대문화 의 맥칼이다시 이어져 이렇게 다시 햇빛을보게되었으니...

The publication for this edition was more challenging than our previous editions; it took us some time [...] However, we are happy to provide one more journal to our collection...[my translation] (187)

The struggle occurred both internally among collaborators and more broadly within the Korean community. Ahn Kyung Ja explains that the economic downturn in Brazil during the early 1990s affected many Korean immigrants. With the currency change from the *novo cruzado* to the *real* under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, inflation rose drastically which negatively impacted small entrepreneurs in the community. People who had saved enough money from their earlier ventures immigrated to the United States or other countries. For example, one of the most prolific contributors to *Cultura Tropical*, Yun Byung Won, immigrated to New York City and continued his law practice there. The journal collaborators who remained in Brazil struggled to find writers from the 1.5 and second generations interested in literature and social thought. Finding young writers sufficiently fluent in Korean and Portuguese also proved difficult. Due to the economic downturn, there was less financial support for the publication of *Cultura Tropical*. After publishing a final edition in 1995, the editors could no longer produce *Cultura Tropical*.

This shift in identity relates not only to *Cultura Tropical*, but also to the broader community. Kim Jong Nam, the editor of *News Brasil*, describes how early attempts to include Portuguese language articles in his newspaper received poor reception from his readership. He did not continue the publication of these articles given the low interest. Instead, he maintained the newspaper in Korean for first generation readers who wanted information about current events yet could not fully understand Brazilian newspapers. The younger generations did not share this same perspective. The study now turns to a consideration of the concerns of the 1.5 generation and, in particular, their perspectives on culture and identity.

The Vision of 1.5 Generation Korean Brazilians

Although born in Korea, members of the 1.5 generation moved to Brazil as children or at young adults. They did not choose to immigrate, but rather came with their parents. Forced to adapt to the language and customs of the host country, they functioned as cultural bridges for their first generation parents. Their ability to speak both Korean and Portuguese, and to more easily adapt to Brazilian customs allowed them to become involved in either Korean or Brazilian cultures, or both. They attended school, university or work with other Brazilians yet they would spend time at home with their families, speak Korean, and attend Korean church services and retreats. If involved in a Korean church group, they spent their weekends mostly with other Korean Brazilian friends.

This generation had a strong connection to Korea, especially as Korea became more influential both economically and culturally. The presence of Korean in Brazil increased due to the media influences of *Hallyu* (The Korean Wave)¹⁵, and an increased business profile in the international economy. Companies including Hyundai, Posco, Bank of Korea, Samsung, and LG had invested US\$5.5 billion in Brazil. The Korean corporations needed employees linguistically and culturally fluent in Korean and Brazilian Portuguese. The position of this generation is exemplified by the granddaughter of the first president of the Korean Association in Brazil, X¹⁶ Lee. Raised in Brazil and

¹⁵ *Hallyu* refers to the significant increase in the global popularity of [South Korean culture](#). Beijing journalists coined the term in [China](#) in mid-1999 due to their surprise with the fast growing popularity of Korean entertainment and culture in China, Japan, other East Asian countries and throughout the Asian diaspora.

¹⁶ X Lee did not want to be identified with her real name, so this study will refer to her as X Lee.

educated in business administration at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC-SP), she initially worked with her husband in their garment business. Ms. Lee currently works for the Korean electronic company LG. Her cousin, who already worked at LG in São Paulo, needed a Korean Brazilian to fill a position and requested Ms. Lee to submit her résumé to LG. The LG company hired her and she began working for them within a few weeks while her husband continued to run the family business. Ms. Lee enjoys the prestige of working for a multinational corporation like LG, where both her Korean and Brazilians connections prove beneficial.

The essay “1.5 세대의 의식과 체험” (Experiences of 1.5 Generation) documents a conversation between six members of the 1.5 generation.¹⁷ They begin the dialogue by sharing their early experiences in Brazil. At the time of arrival, their ages ranged from seven to sixteen years old. Those between the ages of twelve and fourteen quickly learned Portuguese and made friends in school. Those arriving after the age of sixteen struggled to learn Portuguese and to excel in school. At times, a private tutor or home schooling proved more effective in learning basic Portuguese. Their parents instilled in them the need to excel in school and to go to college. Education, respect for elders, and devotion to family, are fundamental values of the Confucius base of Korean society—indeed, they could be described as the “holy trinity” of Korean values. Learning Portuguese, allowed these individuals to better understand Brazilian customs and culture. In order to achieve success and be accepted, many realized that they had to acculturate¹⁸ when interacting with school colleagues and friends.

At home, children of the 1.5 generation had to abide by their parent’s values and expectations. They spoke Korean, invested their time in studies rather than socializing, and respected their elders. Shim Ji Yun remembers that her school colleagues would have parties every weekend. She did not attend any of them because her parents did not allow their daughters to go out in public nor wander about parties. When she was eleven, she went with her brother to one of these parties, and confesses that she felt out of element because they were unfamiliar with this particular social setting and had spent little time with the other more relaxed Brazilians.

Shim Ji Yun and other members of the 1.5 generation express an undeniable experience of negotiating cultural identity. This group believes that the first generation should not hold a critical view of Brazilian customs but rather learn more about the culture. Instead of staying home to watch Korean dramas on video and limiting their interaction to Korean business colleagues and church members, they should try to learn Portuguese in order to communicate more efficiently with employees and Brazilian neighbors. Rather than anticipate a move to the United States or a return to Korea, they should establish a foundation in Brazil (28).

¹⁷ Kwon Ji Ho, Kim Kyu Yul, Kim Myung Ho, Kim So Young, Kim Yung Jung and Shim Ji Yun.

¹⁸ For the purpose of this study, acculturate is defined as a cultural change resulting from contact between cultures.

Representatives of the 1.5 generation express how their experiences differ from those of the first generation of Korean immigrants:

Shim Ji Young:

저는어른들이 브라질은 한심하다브라질 사람들은 형편없다는 식으로 말하는 것을 들을 때마다 속상해요. 잘 알지도 못하고 말하는 것이 싫다는 것보다 괜히 싫은 거예요.비판의 눈으로 보는 1세대에서 끝나야 해요.

I feel frustrated when I hear the older generation keep saying that Brazil is a frustrating country and a lost cause or how Brazilians behave according to their customs. To me, it seems that they don't know or understand the culture very well and I don't like it. I think that they need to stop their hypocritical attitude. [my translation] (39)

Kim Myung Ho:

학교 다닐때 브라질 친구들이 초대를 하면 가서 대접을 잘받고 오면서도 그애들은 우리집으로 데려오지도 못하는 것이 늘 마음에 걸렸어요...저는 '모국은 한국이다. 그러나 브라질 사회에 더 기여하며 하지 안겠는가' 생각을 합니다.

When I was in school, my Brazilians friends would invite me into their homes and treat me warmly. I always felt bad when I headed back home because I was never able to invite them over to our house [...] I think that I consider Korea as my motherland but Brazil is my society and I will undoubtedly become more immersed into the Brazilian culture...[my translation] (39-40)

These examples illustrate differences and contradictions within the diasporic community. Cultural values varied among individuals, family units and the broader community. The vision of first generation immigrants no longer corresponded to the reality of life in Brazil.

The third stage of cultural identity is an extended process of negotiation for immigrant and their descendants. As Cordella Forbes explains in "Immigration, Integration and Anxiety in Germany," immigrant communities experience a sense of cultural identity fluidity:

The communal commitment and global perspective that characterized the discourse from the beginning are equally evidenced in the intersections among these various, seemingly contradictory ideologies, which recognizes the heterogeneity of the region [or community]...its globalized collectivity or its constitution as the product of multiple diasporas. (17)

The cultural fluidity of the immigrant becomes more noticeable due to shifts in global economic development. For Korean Brazilians, Brazil represents home because of the presence of family and their greater familiarity with the place and daily life. At the same time, they also begin to perceive greater economic and personal opportunities in Korea and other countries.

Imaginary Identifications and Differences

Brazil is a country composed of multiple levels of identity with a culture that revolves around social and economic opportunities. For immigrants in an environment with inherent diversity and hybridity, identity can only unfold as multiple or split. Korean immigrants live in Brazil as Korean Brazilian with Brazilian names, daily routine and mental adaptation to Brazilian society. They also maintain their Korean cultural identity and name. Their families and friends in Korea remember how they were when they lived there. Immigrants begin to play dual roles in each cultural space. With Koreans, especially friends and family from Korea, immigrants display their Korean identity. When among Korean Brazilians and Brazilians, they perform their immigrant identity as Korean Brazilians. This duality of identity can cause confusion. At times, immigrants will not know how to approach their own identity. Ahn Kyung Ja's narrative "O Inverno de São Paulo" illustrates this conflict of dual identities faced by immigrants.

The narrative uses a husband and wife, Park and Lu, to mirror this split identity. Park searches for Lu's split identity as he tries to remember her after she dies. The story begins with a description of Park's disoriented emotions after his wife's funeral. The figure of the recently deceased Lu becomes the medium of contemplating the immigrant's split identities. From one day to the next, Lu goes from bustling about her daily activities to dying:

어제 아침 함께 우유를 마시고 식탁에 흩으러진 빵 부스러기를 손바닥으로
 쓸어 모으던 루우가 오늘은 땅 속에 있다니 . . . 어떻게 이러날 수 있을까?
 Yesterday morning, we were drinking milk in this room; Lu was cleaning up
 after the bread crumbs, sweeping them onto her hands but today she's buried . . .
 How can this be? [my translation] (186)

Park feels extremely lonely after returning from the funeral. He asks himself, "What now?" (186) For the past four years, Park and Lu had their daily routine established at work and home, but now "세삼 천지에 그냥 하나로 남은 나" (the once small living room literally felt like an endless field to cross with each step). Park is now by himself in the entire world (185).

Lu worked hard as an immigrant in Brazil with barely any time to stop and consider the significant moments. The narrative captures their last moment:

그때 나는 좀 부끄러운 생각이 들었다. 돌아서는 루우의 몸가짐이 너무
 무거웠고. 쿿등에 송송 배어나온 땀들이 모두 나를 보고 있는 것같이
 느껴졌기 때문이었다. . . 그것이 마지막 장면이었다던가. 찌라텐찌역
 앞에서 우리는 헤어졌다. 마음 속으로는 멀지 않은 빠라이조의 병원까지
 가도 되는데 하면 서도 워낙 당호한 루우의 태도에 그냥 멈춰도 루우는
 무거운 몸을 아무렇지도 않은척 내렸다.

As Lu and I parted ways, Lu to the hospital for her prenatal checkup from
 Tiradentes metrô and I to Guarulhos to pick up clothes from the seamstress. . . I
 somehow felt something different at that very moment. When Lu told me to go
 ahead to finish work, I suddenly felt embarrassed as she said those words. I

watched Lu turn around, watching her heavy body and each drop of sweat of her face seemed to be watching me alertly. I felt aware and embarrassed for some reason. Was the awkward feeling an omen or sign of what was going to happen to Lu? In the past, Lu's monthly visit to the doctor seemed to have been a part of their daily routine, but that day, it felt different since it was the last time I would see Lu alive. [my translation] (188-9)

Park's depression and grief form part of a suddenly disoriented protagonist's journey in search of his origin. The construction of his life and identity as an immigrant has depended on Lu. Without her, Park enters a psychological black hole characterized by emotional numbness. His grieving of Lu's death symbolizes the immigrant's disorientation and breakdown upon losing a cultural anchor. The connection between death (Lu) and grief (Park) symbolizes dependence at the foundation of their relationship, which also characterized their immigrant identity:

나는 그돈, 그 미불들의 그 달러들이 어디에 어떻게 숨겨져 있는지를 안다. 아파트에도 강도가 들었하는 얘기를 들을 때 마다 우리 부부는 온갖 머리를 짜내요 가장 안전한 곳에다 정성껏 갈 무리해 놀았으니까. 그럴 때면 얼마 나 의기투합되는 한쌍의 부부가 디곤 했었는 지.

I arranged for the process of manufacturing clothes while Lu was the front of the business, managing sales and our money. Every *cruzeiro* that she had her hands on was turned into dollars and we worked day and night to save every single penny we could. I know the secret hiding place of all of those dollars. Every time we heard about robbers breaking into apartments to steal, we analyzed every possibility to decide on the best hiding place for our "future". Whenever we figured out a brilliant hiding place, we were no longer just a couple but we would evolve into a unified, courageous spirit. These were the experiences that formed us and made who we were as we built our immigrant lives. [my translation] (187)

Accordingly, when one part of their immigrant identity broke, the fragmentation understandably results in Park, the other element, feeling dislocated.

Park initially mourns his wife and reflects on all the "what ifs" by calling her Lu. When he receives a call from Lu's aunt in Chicago who calls her by Jiyon (지현), her Korean name, Park begins to cry with Lu's aunt. This crying seems to be a salvation from the fear and pain he has been feeling. He begins to feel again and enters into a new cycle of emotions. After their brief conversation, Park has an awakening: "루우 >지영이 >현지영>서울식구..." (Lu=Jiyon=hyun jiyon=family in Seoul...) (193). Lu was not only Lu. She was also Jiyon. He knew and lived with the immigrant Lu, her Brazilian name used by workers and clients. Yet Lu also had a family and other memories related to Korea. He discovers that his memories of Lu do not necessarily provide a complete portrait of his wife's identity. Her family and friends in Korea knew her by as Jiyon. Before coming to Brazil, she had a life in Korea. The grieving process must include the memory of both Jiyon and Lu, which allows for the separation and unification of her cultural identities.

After experiencing the epiphany of Lu's split identity, Park feels as if he were emerging from underwater to catch his breath. Lu was Jiyon, yet he had forgotten about Jiyon. Now he remembers that Lu was also Jiyon, the sweet young woman he dated in

their younger days who loved winters. Park emerges from his mourning to realize that, although his wife had passed away, she continues to live in his memories as the beautiful, gentle Jiyon and the hardworking immigrant Lu. The cycle of death-memory-life is a parallel construction of immigrant identity as a pattern passing from one cultural identity to another where neither is lost. Living in another place allows immigrants to maintain a dialogue with their other identities, as they mix but never disappear.

This narrative provides an alternative view of how to interpret immigrant identities. By describing Korean immigrant identity as hybrid combination of both Korean and Brazilian components. In order to re-define his identity, Park has an emotional meltdown. Through his memory of Lu as Jiyon, he discovers the split that exists in their immigrant identities with distinct ties to Korea and Brazil. Lu's split identity indicates the emotional and psychological crossroads encountered by immigrants. Lu's death in conjunction with Park's grief and remembrance of her Korean name and life symbolize the contentious relationship of Korean immigrants with their homeland. The construction of Lu's split identity represents a transcultural identity at the interstices between her Korean and Brazilian names and cultures.

For Korean immigrants, identities become fragmented yet unified. They share certain traditions, languages and customs, but do not have as complete or as homogeneous of a cultural identity as residents of the homeland. Each individual undergoes a unique experience of duality or multiplicity with national loyalties, languages, mannerisms, and self-perceptions that cannot be accounted for in a singular identity. Immigrants' sense of self becomes precarious yet essential to maintain. Immigrants' identities within the diaspora are distinguished as identities across time rather than fixed at a given moment, which results in a complex, multilayered notion of self.

Possibilities and Paradoxes Faced by the Second Generation

In 2003, the Associação Brasileira dos Coreanos celebrated forty years of Korean immigration to Brazil. At a commemorative event, members of the Korean community, the Korean consulate and key figures from São Paulo's municipal government shared their perspectives on the presence of Koreans in Brazil. As a part of this celebration, ABC printed a forty-two page brochure with congratulatory words from various representatives of the Korean Embassy in Brazil, members of the Brazilian legislature, and São Paulo's governor Geraldo Alckmin and the city's mayor Marta Suplicy. It also included a brief narrative of the immigrant history and cultural customs of the community, titled "Resumo da História da Imigração Coreana."

In an essay in the ABC brochure, Augusto M. H. Kwon, president of the Brazilian Association of Koreans states:

Fazemos a comemoração para resgatar memórias, homenagear os ancestrais, premiar os esforços benevolentes e transmitir os nossos valores e oferecer a nossa nova identidade a nova geração mestiça. . . feijoada é nosso prato predileto tal como o Bul Go Gui; Há esposa e marido brasileiros, o netinho mestiço e orgulho dos avós; nossas igrejas fazem cultos também em português; amigos brasileiros apreciam pratos coreanos; Bul-Go-Gui e Bi Bim Bap; Torcemos juntos pelo Penta do Brasil e quarto lugar da Coréia na Copa-2002. (15)

Kwon's statement depicts a hybrid lifestyle and identity shared by Koreans in Brazil. The local Brazilian community became introduced to and begins to appreciate elements of Korean food, customs and culture. These interactions occur in Korean restaurants in Bom Retiro. Strolling along Rua Prates at lunchtime, one finds Korean restaurants next to *lanchonetes* (snack bars) serving sandwiches and the *prato do dia* (dish of the day). In these restaurants, Korean food such as *kimchi*,¹⁹ *japchae*, *bul-go-gui*, and *sushi* lines the buffet tables. At the opposite end of the restaurant, one finds a salad bar, *feijão* (bean stew), rice, and pasta. An equal mix of Koreans and Brazilians enjoy their lunch inside the restaurant. A small Korean market Ottogi on Rua Três Rios in Bom Retiro employees mostly Brazilians, who count and shout out orders in Korean as they serve their clients and converse with their employers.

The growth of the Korean community and its integration into the social fabric of Bom Retiro exists due to the uniqueness of the city of São Paulo. As Mayor Marta Suplicy stated in the celebratory brochure:

São Paulo é a Cidade de Mil Povos. Sua miríade de culturas, que convivem e enriquecem o cotidiano multicolor da metrópole, com seus restaurantes, lojas, feira livres e templos, constroem a identidade da maior cidade da America do Sul. Os bairros de São Paulo que recebem a comunidade coreana tiveram sua feição remodelada, com as modernas instalações de suas lojas e fábricas dando-lhes grande enfoque comercial, atraindo comerciantes e consumidores e transformando-os em uma referencia no segmento...a comunidade coreana vem se destacando pela beleza de sua cultura e por seu enorme potencial de trabalho, gerando riquezas e empregos para a nossa cidade. . . (13)

The commemoration acknowledged the mixture of hardship, language barrier and cultural tensions that characterized the past forty years of Korean immigration. According to the ABC brochure, the growth of the Korean community followed a specific social organization. Although most of the Korean community is concentrated in Bom Retiro, Brás and Aclimação, many lived during the decades of the sixties and seventies in Liberdade, also known as São Paulo's Japantown, especially in the area of Rua Conde de Sarzeda due to its cheaper rentals. Living conditions in Liberdade contrasted sharply with the hygienic and social customs to which they were accustomed in Korea. Early immigrants have stories of walking by a building and suddenly being drenched by urine thrown from its top. Despite these questionable conditions, the Korean community managed to earn a living in this unfamiliar territory.

Korean involvement in the clothing industry started in the late 1970s. Enterprises like Seiki and Nagaja exemplify the business model of selling retail merchandise door-to-door, referred to as the *bendê*. According to the ABC brochure:

¹⁹ Kimchi is a Korean traditional and staple made of fermented cabbage and red pepper. Japchae is a crystal noodle dish served with vegetables and beef. It was originally a royal dish that was only known to exist and served to the royal family of Korea until the early 20th century. *Bul-go-gui* is thinly sliced beef, grilled with onions.

Logo depois da chegada ao Brasil e sem conhecimento do idioma nacional, se atiravam para aventura de *bendê*,²⁰ vendiam roupas de patrícios, perucas importadas da Coréia, o que pudesse se transformar em valor (na época, a moeda coreana era muito fraca em relação à nacional). Esta agressividade esbarrou em muitos assédios sexuais e até estupro, levando a ruína as famílias ou o relacionamento íntimo, embora camuflado no subconsciente. (36)

Despite these challenges, members of the Korean community continued to support each other through loan systems known as *guê*,²¹ churches, and Korean language schools such as the bilingual Colégio Polilogos in Bom Retiro. Colégio Polilogos developed due to an effort of the Korean government to promote Korean language to Koreans abroad as well as Brazilians interested in learning Korean. Local entities such as TV Coréia and four Korean language newspapers also provided Korean language services for the community to maintain informed of current events and in contact with Korea.

The history of Korean immigration reveals efforts to construct a self-sufficient community in the face of great challenges and also to earn a living and to establish a home. From the mid 1980s until the present, a critical historical and global intersection develops in both Korea and Brazil. As Brazil struggled under the presidencies of Fernando Collor and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Korea grew rapidly with multinational corporations like Samsung, Posco and LG. Economic growth allowed Korea to manufacture quality products. Their revamped media produced engaging entertainment known as the Korean Wave, including soap operas, pop songs, and films. With the rise of the Internet, the younger generation had access to new media technologies and greater exposure to multilingual and multicultural interests from their homes in Brazil. Recognizing their physical association with Korean pop idols and soap opera stars, many members of the second generation became increasingly drawn to Korean culture. Children of the second generation often went to Korea during school vacations to learn Korean and to become more familiar with Korean culture. Those who already spoke Korean and Portuguese fluently, such as attorneys Su Jung Ko and Han Yu Suk, attended a Korean cultural course through the Korea Global Network²² and hoped to extend their

²⁰ Korean immigrants in Brazil use the term *bendê* to refer to *vender* or to selling. This term describes the ambulatory sellers of products. Many Korean immigrants earned their living this way when they first arrived in Brazil.

²¹ *Guê*, another Korean term, describes a collective gathering of money by a small group of friends, associates and family members. Each time the group collected a *guê*, each member contributed an equal amount and one member would receive the total gathered and would repay the group by their next meeting. The process repeated itself the following meeting.

²² The Korea Global Network is an organization sponsored by the Korean government and diaspora communities to promote a network among Koreans. Each year they select six to twelve applicants from Korean professionals from around the world to travel to Korea for a one-week cultural course. The selected participants meet members of the national congress, attend literary and political conferences, and travel through Korea to become familiar with its urban centers and countryside. They meet local legislative members, get a one-day military training, and travel to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) or the demarcated 38th parallel that separated North and South Korea. All of these activities serve to promote Korean culture and history to Korean descendants living abroad who never had much contact or opportunities to learn about modern Korean society.

network beyond Brazil and Korea. Through the Korea Global Network, they met other members of the Korean diaspora living in the United States, Australia and Japan. Han Yu Suk, a bilingual attorney in São Paulo mainly working for the Korean community in Bom Retiro explains that her family immigrated to Brazil in 1982 due to her father's poor health. His health improved by living in a tropical country. Her family first lived in Argentina, but due to difficulties experienced in Argentina, her family decided to move to Brazil. After arriving in Brazil, they followed in the steps of other Koreans by working in the clothing industry. Yun shares: "foi difícil, principalmente por causa da saúde do meu pai trabalhamos em quase todos os ramos da confecção, tivemos loja (que acabou falindo), oficina de costuras, casear, bordado. . . participamos de feira no interior vendendo roupa" [Personal Interview, December 2010]. The skills of Yun's family did not match the clothing industry, so they began to pursue other careers outside. Yun realized that she enjoyed school and studying law. She eventually pursued her law degree at UNIP-Campus Paraíso, which led to her and her brother, also an attorney, working with the Korean community in Bom Retiro. Yun further states:

os coreanos deram muito duro para chegarem aonde chegaram, conseguiram com muito esforço, dedicação e abrirão mão por muitos anos de descanso, saúde, acompanhar o crescimento dos filhos, dentre outras coisas. Eu não tenho objeção de ser brasileiro, coreano ou de outra nacionalidade, mas prefiro coreano pela cultura, mas sei que 100% coreano não vou me adequar, pois tenho um lado brasileiro e me expresso melhor em português. [Personal Interview, December 2010]

Yun's statement illustrates not only the inclusion of both cultures as part of her identity but also the fluid mentality applied to her relationship with these cultures. Yun is a representative figure of the 1.5 and second generations given her recognition of multiculturalism. She capitalizes on her bilingualism and her multicultural virtues and further uses these values to associate herself as a hybrid subject of the diaspora.

In *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*, Arjun Appadurai discusses relationships in the new global cultural economy, especially the circulation of peoples and capital around the world. Appadurai provides a framework to think about how cultural flows have shifted and altered the creation of imagined national communities:

The image, the imagined, the imaginary...[is] no longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses elsewhere), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people), and no longer mere contemplation . . . the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (both in the sense of labor and of culturally organized practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency ("individuals") and globally defined fields of possibility. (30-1)

It also provides an opportunity to form friendships and social networks with other professionals who share an interest in maintaining a connection between Korea and their place of residence.

The past notion of specifically categorizing ethnic communities and cultures no longer represents an effective and realistic mode of thought, especially for new groups found within the intersections of the global economy and distinct cultures. Identity markers have become slippery among diasporic communities with the increased fluidity of transnational communication.

However, not all new relationships and identity negotiations are positive for members of the diaspora. While granted new opportunities, they also encounter paradoxes within complex cultural and economic networks. Recent studies, such as Im Yun Jung's work on the cultural shock of Koreans in Brazil, claim that Korean immigrant communities isolate themselves to enculturation²³:

it seems that the Korean community is drawing further and further away from enculturation . . . The perspective or the will for enculturation seems even more distant, for the 'new' rediscovered Korea, as it was now seen, was much better than that remembered by the elders or that imagined by the youngsters. And, more importantly, it was seen as being richer and more fashionable than Brazil. (12-3)

This observation suggests that an inverse interest of culture and location began due to the recent of Korea. Several factors contribute to this "Koreanization" among second generation Korean Brazilians. In 2008, a joint study by the UCLA Center of Korean Studies and The Korean Immigration in the Americas Center conducted interviews of 106 Korean Brazilian high school students in São Paulo. The study concludes that 66% of students had suffered some type of discrimination due to their ethnicity (46%) and to cultural difference (45%). The study further explains that these students experienced discrimination in public institutions (37%), at school (32%), everywhere (15%), among neighbors (7%), and at work (2%). A high percentage of participants stated that they experienced discrimination in public spaces of Brazilian society. Perhaps this discrimination exists due to the division of Korean immigrants into two groups. While one group has tried to adapt to and learn about Brazilian culture, the other has limited their cultural contact by isolating themselves within the Korean community. Although they worked and had Brazilian employees, they were perceived as withdrawn due to their tendency towards isolation and separation from other employees. The majority of the Korean community has contact with local Korean religious institutions. According to the UCLA study, 90% of the second generation attend Korean religious institution and go on weekend retreats. These ethno-centric church activities separate Koreans from the parties or other events held by Brazilian school friends and neighbors. As noted in the study, "one key strategy for this self-segregation is the church, which provides them with the Korean language education, a rigid moral education against 'overly liberalized Brazilians', and control over their weekend time" (UCLA Center of Korean Studies, 23).

The second group perpetuate the image of Koreans in São Paulo as isolated and non-welcoming to outsiders. The high percentage of Korean businesses in Bom Retiro illustrates this tendency towards isolation. Koreans run 2,600 commercial establishments in Bom Retiro or 60% of businesses in the neighborhood. As Im Yun Jung states:

²³ Enculturation is a "bipolar process of cultural transmission and transmutation operating in the preadult and adult levels of human growth" (Shimahara 143).

The kind of relationship that Koreans develop with Brazilians and their judgment about the Brazilian culture relies heavily on their employees and customers. . . . Brazilian interviewees made frequent mention of their discontent: “they have dominated the local commerce and treat Brazilians as slaves;” “they think we are less than they are;” “they think they are more intelligent than us;” “I don’t have any prejudice against them, but I am sure that they have it against us;” “they yell at employees; they are too demanding and not kind at all when they ask for things.” (5)

The second generation of Koreans in Brazil would argue that the above statements illustrate reverse discrimination. The UCLA study states that, “The second generation of Koreans in Brazil consider themselves Koreans, do interact more intensely among themselves and feel discriminated by the Brazilians” (23). More importantly, members of the second generation, in spite of this discrimination, express satisfaction with their lives in Brazil.

By analyzing the progression of discourses in *Cultura Tropical*, this study shows that Korean immigrants struggled to negotiate between Korean and Brazilian identities. The issues of discrimination and new opportunities faced by 1.5 and second generation Korean Brazilians challenge their sociocultural relationship in Korean Brazilian spaces as well as Brazilian settings. The challenges are similar to experiences of other diasporic communities such as Chinese Americans in Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior*. According to R. Radhakrishnan analysis of Kingston’s work, both the homeland and the country of residence become mere “ghostly” locations. The only possible result is a double depoliticization (123) where the immigrant views cultural and economic associations as relational. Diasporic subjects or Korean Brazilians will benefit from any economic and cultural opportunity that they face.

The insights observed in *Cultura Tropical* serve as dense transfer points found in the proximities of socialization and crystallized in the distance between proper sentiments and misdirected affections (Stoler 7). The phenomena of Korean Brazilians serves to Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz’s definition of acculturation. Ortiz states that acculturation “is used to describe the process of transition from one culture to another, and its manifold social repercussions” and transculturation is used “to express the highly varied phenomenon . . . that results in complex transmutations of culture that have taken place here . . .” (98). Instead, Korean Brazilians understand the complicated boundaries between Korean and Brazilian culture. They learn to live with the contradictory strains of languages (Bhabha X) that surface from their dual liminality by progressing forward with their multicultural values. The notion of being part of and of being outside of the Korean and the Brazilian community: As Edward Said said:

But to be on the inside is also not to be yourself on the outside: you have to participate in and speak the language of the outside world, which means that you have to use “their” codes, but to mean something quite different . . . To be on the inside, in this sense, is to speak from, be in, a situation which, paradoxically, you do not control and cannot really be sure of even when you have evolved special languages-sometimes evasive, always idiosyncratic-that only you and others like you can understand. The structure of your situations is such that being inside is a privilege that is an affliction, like feeling hemmed in by the house you own. Yes,

an open door is necessary for passing between inside and outside, but it is also an avenue used by others to enter. (270-1)

With immigrants and diasporas, identities become fragmented yet unified. They share certain traditions and languages, but do not have as homogeneous of an identity or as complete of a cultural understanding as those in the homeland. One's sense of self and existence becomes precarious yet essential to maintain. These contradictions, fragments, disconnects, bridges and overlapping elements make one's identity.

In conclusion, textual material such as *Cultura Tropical* challenges, fragments, and dispels the hegemonic structure into which Korean Brazilians currently insert themselves. It also functions as an act of empowerment and a discursive reconditioning of the social relations of power. Generations of Korean Brazilians resist standardized ethnic notions and instead initiate a process of construction of identity. Silence and generalization are no longer an option for Koreans in Brazil. Instead, they must produce new social configurations and notions of identity.

Conclusion

Korean Brazilians possess a dual-cultural identity that allows them to maintain a connection to Korea while adapting to Brazilian culture. This dissertation has examined the negotiation of the Korean Brazilian identity through an exploration of the narratives of *Cultura Tropical*. I have identified the distinct stages of cultural identity, revealing the elasticity of identity and the overwhelming task of registering such distinct cultures. With the journal's socio-cultural perspective and the increased presence of Korean Brazilians in São Paulo's garment industry, these immigrants began to construct their own hybrid cultural space.

This dissertation has suggested that the Korean cultural contribution to Brazil is best understood through everyday life and culture. Today, although the Korean Brazilian community consists of about 50,000 people, its presence cannot be ignored when walking through the neighborhoods of Bom Retiro and Brás in São Paulo. Recognizing the existence of Korean Brazilians and their importance within contemporary Brazil can contribute to a reexamination of Brazilian and Latin American studies and also the interdisciplinary fields of immigration, cultural, and ethnic studies.

Cultura Tropical offers one important entry point into the lives and experiences of Korean Brazilians. This study of the journal has uncovered a new kind of literary practice – a duality of cultures combining an Asian Latin cultural frame with a literature distinct from either Korean or Brazilian literature. The impact and importance of my dissertation has gone beyond the study of *Cultura Tropical*. I have shown that Korean Brazilians are more comfortable with their position between cultures and also within the physical spaces of Bom Retiro and other neighborhoods that have Korean stores, restaurants, markets, churches, schools, and immigrant organizations. The preceding chapters suggest that these immigrants fluctuate between Korean and Brazilian cultures without commitment to one or the other, selectively operating in each cultural space when necessary. These immigrants did not view their reality as marked by boundaries. Instead, they had a sense of empowerment and entitlement due to the fluidity of their identity.

This study of Korean Brazilians has revealed a hybrid identity that is unique to a community living between cultures with very different geographies, histories, languages and traditions. In this dissertation I have argued that writings of *Cultura Tropical* show how immigrants experience tension and miscommunication through their condition of living-in between cultures.

The three chapters have shown how the writings provided a space to explore the Korean Brazilian identity. In Chapter One, we saw that first generation immigrants had become aware of their negotiation between nostalgia for the homeland and their adaptation to Brazil. Due to their recent migration to Brazil, immigrants had a greater affinity to Korea but as they lived in Brazil, they recognized that they were in a state of marginal inclusion with both cultures. As seen in the story “Rua Sem Saída”, the protagonist Yunki began to feel marginalized from both Korean and Brazilian cultures. Each time Yunki experienced rejection and a disconnection with Brazilian and Korean peers, he coincidentally stumbled upon a street without an exit whenever he headed home. The more disoriented and trapped Yunki felt, the stronger the image of his encounter with the sign, *rua sem saída*.

Immigrants have internalized the points of intersection that they encountered daily in Brazil in order to organize multiplicity in their lives. As these writings have shown, Korean Brazilian identity began to be constructed when immigrants consciously recognized differences between Korean and Brazilian cultural values. From this viewpoint, they became more aware of their state of marginalization from both cultures and found that they desired for a new form of cultural identity. For Korean immigrants who came from a very homogeneous society, the decision to accept Brazilian culture as part of their identity showed that they had adopted Brazil and its culture as part of their lives.

In Chapter Two, I showed the variety of expressions and perspectives of how different members of the immigrant community defining the Korean Brazilian identity as a common goal of needing and wanting to have a dual-cultural identity to represent themselves. Immigrants actively transitioned from Korean to Korean Brazilian identity as they constructed literary content that included both Korean and Portuguese languages.

In this chapter, I argued that poems by Park Jong Ha's, "남미로 오는 기상에서" (Reaching South America in the Rising Hour) were in dialogue with Guilherme de Almeida's "prelúdio no. 2". Park's poems referred to the immigrant's nostalgia of the homeland and the loyalty of the poetic voice to Korea and to the memory of the homeland. Park's poem is immediately followed by Almeida's poem as a call for new foreigners to see the new and beautiful land that they were now part of.

The very addition of poems in Portuguese written by Korean Brazilians such as "Opus I" by Kim Tae Rang showed that Korean Brazilians used both Korean and Portuguese as their language of expression. The inclusion of both Korean and Portuguese language writings in *Cultura Tropical*, along with essays that addressed the notion of mutual cultural exchange and knowledge between Korean immigrants and Brazilians, represented the mission of the journal—to explore and attempt to understand both Korean and Brazilian cultures as part of who they were.

In the last chapter of this dissertation, I offered examples of how Korean Brazilians reflected on their immigrant history of thirty years as they lived a dual-cultural identity. Although fragmented and at times opposing in views, immigrants have shown that they possessed a cosmopolitan perspective about identity and culture. Organizers and writers of *Cultura Tropical* had initiated to expand the journal's content and network with other diasporas. The essays, "Warm Culture and Cold Culture" by Lee Sang Kwan (Korean Austrian Professor of Law) and "The Brazil I Saw" by Lee Jung Kun (Korean Pastor in Los Angeles), were discussed as examples of how Korean Brazilians did not limit themselves to affiliate to only Koreans or Brazilians, but also with other cultures and migrant communities. Immigrants felt empowered as they were able to associate themselves with both Brazil, Korea and other migrant communities.

As a consequence, Korean Brazilians felt that they could determine which culture they belonged to or not. Korean Brazilians have expressed that their identity was a form of subjectivity but also in a continuous renewal of cultural affiliations. On the whole, when I had asked my whether they considered themselves Korean or Brazilian, most found it difficult to give a single answer. When I suggested the term "Korean Brazilian" they seemed more at ease because both cultures contributed to their present identity. Reading and analyzing these examples from *Cultura Tropical* demonstrated that there is no such thing as a "purely" Korean or Brazilian identity for immigrants.

The writings examined in this dissertation illustrate how these narratives are firmly grounded in both cultures. They demonstrate not only how Korean immigrants adapt to Brazil, but also how immigrant cultures and experiences can contribute to the culture of the host country. Korean Brazilian literature captures both the struggle and the beauty that Koreans encounter as immigrants. Each generation of the Korean Brazilian community has adapted to the new culture and language as they find Portuguese words to more accurately depict their new experiences. With the first generation of immigrants, Portuguese words were phonetically transliterated within the main Korean body. The 1.5 and second generations communicated in Portuguese, which often placed them in the position of cultural and linguistic translators for their families. Their understanding of both Korean and Brazilian cultures allowed them to bridge the ethnic disparities and linguistic differences that often resulted in miscommunication. Immigrants establish a freedom for their own voices as they tell their own stories and reflections about culture, history and identity. Through their own comparison of cultures, Korean Brazilians create an independent rhetoric and, most importantly, address their issues of dual-identity.

Much work remains to be done in order to better understand this community and their vital contributions to Brazil. Additional research projects are necessary to record oral histories from the community, specifically focusing on the first wave of immigrants who wish to share their personal stories but lack resources and support for publication. The impact of the Korean language within Brazil is also a possible topic for further investigation since schools such as Colégio Polilogos, a Korean-Portuguese language school, has become part of the Bom Retiro community. Polilogos encourages Korean Brazilians and Brazilian students to learn both languages and cultures simultaneously as part of their formative education.

Moreover, with globalization and rapid technological innovation, Korean communities throughout Latin America and the United States have become better connected. Within this network, Korean Brazilians emerge as a critical component. E-mail and video conferencing software allow for increased communication and improved understanding between these distant members of the Korean diaspora. Many Korean Brazilians participate annually in the Global Network of Koreans Overseas, a conference and cultural course offered for Korean immigrants in other nations by the Korean government. At events like this one, immigrants become aware of the work and influence of each immigrant community in their different homes. Korean Brazilians find the opportunity to promote the values of their identity and ethnic growth in Brazil. Lawyers, educators, entrepreneurs, and other young leaders go to Korea to improve the connection between Korea and Brazil. Studying these interactions will facilitate a deeper understanding of socioeconomic relations and cultural exchange.

Most importantly, additional oral stories from the Korean community must be collected for preservation. The tales of the few remaining first wave immigrants need to be documented. They have rich and inspiring stories of life journeys that led them to Brazil. These stories can provide a foundation for future generations of Korean Brazilians to understand their identity. On the other hand, the absence of Koreans in much of Brazilian culture is a reality that must be addressed. Are Korean Brazilians treated as an invisible immigrant group or are they becoming part of the cultural diversity of Brazil? How will Korean immigrants become part of the discussion of modern Brazilian identity?

This dissertation has discussed a small ethnic group that has made Brazil their home and part of their identity. All they need is a hand to hold in return as they help build a modern Brazil. Poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade said in “Mãos Dadas”:

Não serei o poeta de um mundo caduco.
Também não cantarei o mundo futuro [...]
O presente é tão grande, não nos afastemos.
Não nos afastemos muito, vamos de mãos dadas [...]
O tempo é a minha matéria, o tempo presente, os homens presentes,
a vida presente.

As the poem suggests, it is important to consider the time of the present. The Brazil of today is a place where Korean immigrants have made their home and adapted to construct their unique cultural identity.

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