

Resistance, Gender, and Postcolonial Identities in *Somebody's Daughter* and *Meaning of Consuelo*

Characters are involved in complex processes of identity and gender development in adolescent novels. A typical coming-of-age narrative will contain an “underlying premise of an essential self that will emerge to be discovered” (Mallan, 2009, p. 7). Our analysis of two novels about adolescent girls whose search for identities lead them in and out of mainland United States includes a consideration of post-colonial theories through which US patriarchy and colonialism are exposed through the characters’ identity development. By the end of *Somebody's Daughter* (Lee, 2005) and *Meaning of Consuelo* (Cofer, 2005), the US becomes a symbol for patriarchal religion and culture. Reading these novels through a post-colonial lens may help readers to appreciate the adolescent girls’ rejection of the patriarchy in their countries of birth and perhaps appreciate the complexities of adolescent immigrant identity.

These two young adult novels were selected for their underlying critique of patriarchy in Korea, Puerto Rico, and the US, and for the strong female characters who were born in places other than the US mainland. *Somebody's Daughter* is a novel about Sarah, a Korean American who was adopted by a US family as an infant. As a young adult, Sarah leaves the US for Korea in search of information about her birth mother. The novel is also about Kyong-Sook, Sarah’s Korean birth mother, who narrates her own life and the circumstances surrounding Sarah’s birth.

Meaning of Consuelo is a coming-of-age novel

about Consuelo, a Puerto Rican girl who must learn to cope with her schizophrenic sister and dysfunctional family. Consuelo leaves Puerto Rico for New York near the end of the novel to escape the negative influences of her family. Both novels are worthy of examination for their portrayal of adolescent girls’ telling struggle to define their identities among cultural and gender boundaries imposed on them by colonized versions of patriarchy. We suggest that an examination of how post-colonialism constructs gender, culture, and religion may provide students and teachers with a more worldly and holistic approach to understanding gender and identity in adolescent novels.

Before turning to a discussion of the novels, we describe the implications for analyzing gender and religion in *Somebody's Daughter* and *Meaning of Consuelo* through a post-colonial lens. Using the language of the colonists, the authors of these novels create narratives that engage in what Terdiman (1985) describes as “counter-discourse.” Counter-discourse, language that “writes back” to the colonists, becomes evident in the ways the characters narrate their identities (Tiffin, 1995, p. 96). Resistance through language and, as we argue here, symbolic gender rebellion must exist to move the characters forward in developing adult identities.

Post-colonial theories are frequently used to critique Western historicism and culture, specifically as an imposition on those cultures that demonstrate rebellion against Westernization (Ashcroft, 2000;

Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1998). Feminist and post-colonial theories are connected by oppositional discourses “which attempt to redress an imbalance in society and culture” (Childs, Weber, & Williams, 2006, p. 126). Important especially for the two adolescent novels analyzed in this article are the intersections between colonist patriarchy and the main characters’ rejection of religious and gender boundaries.

In *Somebody’s Daughter* and *Meaning of Consuelo*, reflections of gender rebellion are negotiated within conditions of post-colonial discourse. In *Unsettling Narratives* (2007), Bradford writes, “The past enters the present in the form of relations of power, systems of government, modes of representation, and myths of national identity” (p. 4). The characters are positioned as offspring of these location conflicts. Cultural differences are always imbued with power and authority, and adolescent female characters must negotiate differences within their home and new cultures through a gendered lens. Characters in both novels experience identity conflict in their birth countries for different reasons. For example, Consuelo, in *Meaning of Consuelo*, must negotiate strict gender boundaries in 1950s Puerto Rican culture. Manufactured differences create tensions that intersect with race, class, gender, and sexuality as characters move in and out of colonized countries.

Gender and Postcolonial Identities

Somebody’s Daughter begins with the narrative of Sarah’s adoption as an infant, the story told to her by her adoptive family. Readers learn that Sarah spends her childhood and adolescence in Minnesota feeling out of place physically and psychologically. Sarah drops out of college in order to enroll in a language and cultural immersion program in Seoul, Korea. Learning a new language is difficult for Sarah; however, she uses the language skills she develops to search for information about her biological mother in her quest to (re) construct her Korean identity.

Sarah’s biological mother, Kyong Sook, narrates her own life story in alternating chapters, describing emotional conflicts and circumstances surrounding Sarah’s birth. Readers learn that Sarah’s biological father was an American working in the Peace Corp. When Kyong-Sook was a few weeks away from delivering the baby, Sarah’s father quickly left Korea (and a pregnant Kyong-Sook) because of violent protests

in early 1970s Korea. When the owner of the restaurant where Kyong-Sook worked was killed during the military takeover, Kyong-Sook was forced to return to her small hometown where her parents forced her to give up Sarah for adoption to avoid scarring the family name.

In Kyong-Sook’s narrative, the US becomes a contradiction in symbols as readers will recognize that the US’s peaceful “intrusion” of Peace Corps volunteers and armed forces violates Kyong-Sook’s small-town innocence. Kyong-Sook, who represents those Korean women left behind by US soldiers, relies on a counter-discourse, which Terdiman refers to as a “corrosive irony concerning the here-and-now” (p. 76). The US military occupations are implicated in the patriarchal order of both Korea and the US in the ways that they abuse and disrespect native Koreans.

In Korea, colonization takes on subtle forms through the occupation of the US military and Peace Corps. A hint of atrocities committed by the US military emerges in the stories told by Kyong-Sook and Sarah’s Korean American friend, Doug. The 1960s and 70s US military “camptowns,” serviced by Korean women, play out as a counter-narrative through Sarah’s new understanding of Korean-US relations (Moon, 1996, 1999). Cho (2006) explains the contradiction of Korean American experiences in this way: “On one side is the geopolitical narrative that the U.S. military has always been a benevolent protector in Korea. On the flip side is the story of how Korean Americans (most of whom arrived through a trajectory of U.S. military intervention) are well assimilated into the United States” (p. 311).

The political and sexual conditions surrounding Sarah’s and Doug’s biological parents inform Sarah’s identity and her rebellion against US constructions of Korea and Korea’s constructions of Korean Americans. Kyong-Sook and Doug’s mother are oppressed by different forms of power; however, they remind read-

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ers of the hidden history of Korean American gender relations. Dominant discourses never completely hide the past, and Kyong-Sook's personal experiences and Sarah's knowledge of the sexual abuse of women in US military camptowns counter US discourse of military benevolence.

In *Meaning of Consuelo*, Consuelo develops a close friendship with her homosexual cousin, Patricio,

who eventually leaves for New York to escape his homophobic family and neighborhood. The abuse of male homosexuals is juxtaposed with Consuelo's acceptance of Patricio's sexuality. Consuelo's gender identity is (re)constructed against the changing landscape of 1950s Puerto Rico, in which the US disrupts an agrarian Puerto Rico through the introduction of industrialization and modernization.

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Although this US industrialization allows Consuelo's father to maintain steady employment, women's roles become unstable and shifting, violating boundaries of the patriarchal family and reinforcing a feminist counter-discourse that Consuelo creates throughout her narrative of adolescence.

Within the 1950s Puerto Rican framework, "women occupy a clear subordinate position to men, are limited to their roles as mothers, wives, and daughters, and are valued or judged by their moral behavior according to standards imposed on them by men" (Acosta-Belen, 1986, p. 127). Rules for moral behavior are strict, and women are not allowed to associate with those who would bring negative influences on home and family. Good Puerto Rican wives, for example, are not allowed to associate with homosexual men in public. Consuelo describes her first childhood memories of the neighborhood homosexual man as "outsider," or *El Fulano*, setting the scene for a plot in which Consuelo eventually constructs her own identity outside the norm of 1950s Puerto Rico. By Consuelo's definition, outsiders are those who refuse to accept Puerto Rican's strict gender guidelines that force women into submissive roles for the sake of

la familia.

Although she dismisses the US capitalistic intrusions into Puerto Rican culture in which Puerto Rican men are implicated, Consuelo eventually decides to move to New York City in order to remove herself from her family and community. Consuelo believes she must reject her family's acceptance of Puerto Rican patriarchy and the US colonists' form of capitalism in order to construct an identity that is uniquely hers. The irony of this move is that Consuelo cannot escape the capitalism and patriarchy of the US (Terdiman, 1985).

Both Sarah and Consuelo negotiate within and beyond national boundaries. They learn to "develop a tolerance for contradictions" (Cofer, 2005, p. 101) as they navigate the terrains of their birth countries. Sarah's connection to Korea is physical rather than cultural; she represents the unwelcome "colonizer" to other Koreans, who seem to view her Asian appearance as deceptive because she does not speak Korean nor is she familiar with Korean culture when she first arrives. Sarah's boyfriend, Doug, looks Caucasian but speaks fluent Korean; Doug had lived in Korea with his mother in a US military camptown until the third grade. Sarah and Doug are themselves contradictions, symbolic reminders of the ways the US has intruded into other cultures. The counter-discourses of femininity at work throughout this novel construct Sarah's character as feminine—attractive and deceptive at the same time, similar to the US military, which provided money and protection in exchange for sexual and economic power over Korean men and women. Sarah and Doug, although distanced by time and location, represent the counter-discourse of those who suffered from the injustices of US and Korean patriarchy.

Consuelo, on the other hand, is confronted by patriarchal discourse as it exists in her present. Although Consuelo is determined to cross gender boundaries, she first learns the language of dominance—a language that is not questioned (Terdiman, 1985). Consuelo narrates early experiences of female adolescence as a process of memorizing cultural restrictions for women. For example, Consuelo explains that after she begins menstruating, she inherited new duties as a "seniorita": "Then I was warned against the many things I could and should not do—an endless list of warnings" (Cofer, 2005, p. 50).

Women in *The Meaning of Consuelo* come to sym-

bolize the land and native Puerto Rico for Consuelo. The coqui frogs, for example, indigenous to Puerto Rico, could only be heard in the countryside where Consuelo's grandmother lived, because their song was drowned out in the cities by noises from manufacturing plants and factories. Like the voices of the frogs, the women and men who refuse to embrace Western capitalism are "lost in the noise of Western theorists as they talk *about* the colonized . . ." (Bradford, 2007, p. 8). Consuelo's father embraces the ideologies of those who arrive from the US mainland with their new technologies and goals of expansion. According to Choi (1998), "In the sacred mission of anti-colonial nationalism, the object of which is often to restore national masculinity, women of the colonized nation are often doubly oppressed" (p. 14). Consuelo associates men with US progress, but this progress destroyed the freedom and the beauty of land, nature, and home. In this association, Puerto Rican men are implicated in both the destruction of the land and in restrictions placed on women.

Unlike Consuelo in her native Puerto Rico, Sarah is the symbolic colonizer disguised as Korean native. Sarah's choices in *Somebody's Daughter* are restricted in Korea more by language and culture than by gender. For example, a Korean language classmate refers to her as a "Twinkie: Yellow on the outside, white on the inside" (Lee, 2005, p. 15). Sarah refers to herself as a "misfit, even in her native country" (p. 20). Sarah's identity is constructed physically by her Korean appearance in an Anglo world; in Korea, she renegotiates her gender and racial identity through her relationship with Doug. The silence surrounding the US camptowns in Korea is passed down as a "symbolic" trauma to children of the abused (Cho, 2006). The responsibility of US colonizers is highlighted when Doug and Sarah are almost arrested as outsiders during their visit to a US camptown. This public exposure of camptown life counters the historical silence that covers over the sexual and cultural colonialism.

Sarah eventually learns that her time in Korea is not so much a desire to find her birth mother, but a process she must experience in order to construct an identity beyond "adopted child." After visiting the US camptown, Sarah is able to comprehend the reality of Doug's childhood and the possibilities surrounding her birth. She admits that the "Korean princess" narratives she told herself were lies: ". . . what was underneath

was probably much much worse" (Lee, 2005, p. 112). Together, the narratives of Kyong-Sook, Sarah, and Doug contribute to post-colonial counter-discourse throughout the novel as a critique of contemporary Korea and the US military as they interfered in the lives of Korean women.

In *Meaning of Consuelo*, Consuelo's sexual identity is problematized by gender restrictions in her present and changing Puerto Rican landscape. Judith Butler (2003) suggests that "punishments for contesting the gender script" occur when gender performances become "out of turn" or established gender rules are violated (p. 426). Consuelo's revenge against her high school boyfriend temporarily "contests the script" of the female subordinate. Consuelo stands up to her European boyfriend, Wilhelm, who refuses to acknowledge her in public after she plans and initiates sex with him. She reconstructs her identity and sexual power when she "stalks" her ex-boyfriend to the point of embarrassment. Consuelo agrees to stop "stalking" her ex-boyfriend if he tells everyone that he was the sexual aggressor. As the fallen "Eve" who regains control, Consuelo eventually becomes the heroine at her school, receiving letters from other girls praising her for standing up to Wilhelm. Her "stalking" blatantly critiques rules of patriarchy; however, Consuelo maintains her power by pretending to follow the dominant discourse of Puerto Rican patriarchy as *La Sufrida*, the suffering woman.

Indigenous people developed strategies of resistance whose subversiveness often went unrecognized by the colonizers (Pratt, 1992). In this novel, Consuelo not only stands up to Puerto Rican society's double standard, but also subverts the authority of Wilhelm, a symbol for Western European patriarchy. Of course, the underlying message that Consuelo should be forced to defend her sexual behaviors is overshadowed by the simple explanation that patriarchy can be overcome by standing up to the male or simply leaving Puerto Rico for the US mainland.

Counter-discourses that portray women as both

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victims and resisters compete for attention in the conflicts that occur throughout *Somebody's Daughter* and *Meaning of Consuelo*. Sarah's self-hatred of her Asian appearance reflects both American and Korean society's gaze on Korean Americans. Moon (1998) explains, "The power disparities between nations, or governments, have been transferred onto women's bodies, namely that the women of the weaker state

represent, through their prostituted bodies, the dominated and controlled position of the weaker state" (p. 141). Sarah's adoption by Caucasian parents saves her from constructions of the Korean American female as prostitute, at least in the US. However, the history and subjection of Korean Amer-

icans is complicated, especially when Sarah suddenly decides that her body and race are sexually attractive. This occurs when she initiates a sexual encounter with her Korean friend, Jun-Ho. Sarah explains, "There was something about being with someone of my own race—a mirror image of me . . . and it was rapidly being translated into sexual desire" (Lee, 2005, p. 145). This relationship is temporary, and it is only through this male gaze that Sarah begins to connect to the sexual attractiveness of her body. Her physical self-acceptance marks a change in identity development.

Narratives of imperialism also include religious domination in forms that extend beyond the first visits of missionaries. Pui-lan (2005) writes about the Western Christian colonialism that occurred through missionary work and theological scholarship, subordinating peoples to the idea of a "white Christian Europe" (p. 4). Some post-colonial theorists also include discussions of how the Christian West has constructed negative images of non-Christian "others" (Said, 1990). Although Sarah and Consuelo's family members find peace within the structure of organized religion, Sarah and Consuelo must eventually reject all means of Christianity in order to move beyond the boundaries of patriarchy. Colonized versions of Christianity mold the identities of Kyong-Sook, Sarah, and Consuelo in a variety of ways. Interpreting the

effects of colonial Christianity on the gender identity of female characters may move readers of these two novels toward a deeper understanding of these texts.

Postcolonial Religion and Adolescent Identity

Contributing to the characters' identity development are counter-discourses that demonstrate the complexity of gender and religion in post-colonial experiences. According to Roberta Trites (2000), "Adolescent novels that deal with religion as an institution demonstrate how discursive institutions are and how inseparable religion is from adolescents' affiliation with their parents' identity politics" (p. 18). Contradictions emerge in the unresolved identity crises of the female characters as they struggle to discover themselves in relation to who they are and what their religion may indicate as taught to them by societal mores, parents, and traditions; identity constructions are further juxtaposed with a profound sense of alienation or self-imposed diaspora compared to the characters' own realized voices.

In Kyong Sook's narrative of 1950s Korea, women convert to Christianity in order to receive a formal education; however, after the conversion process, Korean women were not fully accepted into the Western Christian community and were ostracized by non-Christian Koreans. This is demonstrated throughout the narratives of Kyong-Sook as she describes her aunt's life as a Christian, single woman, living in poverty.

Violence against women in the name of religion took place in many forms in colonialist history. For example, in Africa the indigenous people were reduced to "less than human," and women were often treated as mere sexual objects. As Boaduo and Gumbi (2010) write, "[T]he colonialist coloured people are the direct off springs of *the colonialists and the poor African women subjects they raped and impregnated during their trampling expedition* with no respect to culture, traditions, and customs of the people they met" (p. 45; our emphasis). When persons are dehumanized, objectified, or reified, authorities determine who belongs. The choices available to colonized peoples, if any, are limited by the authority of the patriarchy and the church. Kyong-Sook's story includes her present life in Korea along with narratives of gender discrimi-

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nation and abuse she experienced from Koreans and Americans. Sarah and Consuelo experience a trans-generational form of imperialist religion, and their eventual rejection of Western Christianity implicates organized systems of religion as responsible for gender and racial discrimination in the colonial project.

Although organized religion plays a part in the family rituals of Consuelo and Sarah, the religious experiences of Kyong-Sook are contrasted with Sarah and Consuelo's eventual disregard for organized religion. In fact, underlying experiences of Korean and US Christianity bind the narratives of Kyong-Sook and Sarah as they experience Christianity in different ways. Feminist theologian Rita Gross (1996) explains that Asian Christians practice a Christian culture that contains a "heritage of colonial domination" (p. 54). Such domination is reflected in *Somebody's Daughter* as the Christian missionaries use abusive persuasive tactics to convert Kyong-Sook's aunt.

However, conversion to Christianity was also an opportunity for women to escape an oppressive Korean family life. For example, in *Somebody's Daughter*, Kyong-Sook's mother rebels against the missionaries, only to enter into a marriage with a violent husband; on the other hand, Kyong-Sook's aunt, who embraces Christianity, eventually lives in peaceful (but financially poor) independence. Although Christianity saves Kyong-Sook's aunt from servitude as a Korean wife and mother, she must trade one form of servitude for another in her "marriage" to Christ. As Adams (2010) writes, "Objectification permits an oppressor to view another being as an object. The oppressor then violates this being as an object . . . by object-like treatment" (p. 73).

Kyong-Sook, Kyong-Sook's aunt, and Sarah are contextually divorced from defining their identities without the significant male (brother, husband, father, father-god); however, Sarah and Consuelo define their own identities by eventually rejecting both cultural and religious constraints. The main characters' religious and spiritual development also becomes problematic because the imposed Christian religious and cultural values are not inherently theirs; the values are imposed upon them oppressively from traditions that are not indigenous to their culturally religious identities. These cultural identities include Confucianism and Buddhism—almost dismissed—in Sarah's Ameri-

can/Korean dynamic and the Tainos in Consuelo's Puerto Rico.

Although Kyong-Sook and Sarah never find each other, the narrative suggests that they find peace within themselves, accepting their lives and places in the end. Perhaps the reader is asked to subscribe to the idea that Sarah is protected by her adopted family as they ignore her Korean heritage, which stands as the Other, the alienated. In *Meaning of Consuelo*, Consuelo is not merely the daughter of her father even as her mother demonstrates the appropriate place for women. "Mami, at times, spoke like the Pope himself" (Cofer, 2005, p. 10), while she herself suffered through the anguish of the infidelity of Papi. Sarah and Consuelo are marginalized by those that are supposed to protect and nurture them, yet the colonial mindset functions both as protection and a "mechanism of social ordering" (Wood, 1999, p. 1). This "protection" is exacerbated by the religious traditions to which the parents succumb.

The oldest etymological root of *religion*—with some expression given to possible variations, *religio*, *religiare* from the Latin—simply means to bind together. That which binds the community together is often the notion of the most sacred and religious systems developed around that concept. Sarah and Consuelo are nearly consumed by the colonial patriarchy that lives and breathes within their family dynamic—Sarah, because her Korean identity is lost both within her Minnesota Lutheran family and her exclusion in Korea; Consuelo, because she is trapped in her female role within the context of the 1950 marketization of Puerto Rico. Christianity in *Somebody's Daughter* is narrated as a discourse of patriarchal control, as when Sarah's adopted parents explain God's role in Sarah's adoption. A male minister from the family church tells eight-year-old Sarah that her birth parents are dead, and their death was "preordained." "God called your Korean parents home so that you could become the daughter of your mother and father," the minister tells

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Sarah; Sarah concludes that “God is a murderer” (Lee, 2005, p. 1), and severs all connections with religion.

Religions fail to be credible in the cases of Sarah and Consuelo. Peter Berger (1990) writes,

The individual’s innermost being is considered to be the fact of his belonging to the collectivity—the clan, the tribe, the nation or what not. The identification of the individual with all others with whom he significantly interacts makes for a merging of individual being with others, both in happiness and in misfortune. It is carried in his blood unless he denies his own being. (p. 60)

During the journey for both Sarah and Consuelo, as they face processes of identity development, this banner of organized religion utterly fails, unless, of course, they acquiesce to those who hold the most powerful remnants of the colonialist patriarchy.

Kyong-Sook eventually embraces Christianity when, in mid-life, she falls in love and marries a

Christian minister. The discourse of Christianity as patriarchal and inspirational are at odds with each other, especially as Kyong-Sook narrates her mid-life conversion to Christianity. Kyong-Sook, happily married to a Christian minister, describes her physical feelings for her husband in this way: “Their bodies fit together as nicely as the yin-yang symbol on their country’s flag. She was disappointed on the nights

he didn’t touch her” (Lee, 2005, p. 207). Kyong-Sook finds solace in her religion and her marriage, but places her husband’s feelings and concerns above her own desires when she ends her search for Sarah.

Religion as a source of inspiration remains in the background for Sarah as she searches for the truth about her birth mother in Korea. Sarah must reject the patriarchal Christianity of the US in order to embrace the idea that her birth mother is alive. When the system does not answer the needs of some or, as in patriarchal and postcolonial traditions, is forced upon a people, those traditions continue and further marginalize or alienate women; they are not bound to the community of those who share in the notion of the

most sacred by their own dignified choice. In this context, we see Consuelo separate herself from her family and Catholicism in order to construct an identity that is her own. Although Consuelo prays to God to send a guardian angel to watch over her schizophrenic sister, she must reject the gender boundaries taught to her by her mother and other family members. Consuelo narrates, “I belong to myself. I was not like my mother. . . . She was ruled by ghosts and their dead words: *la decencia, el sacrificio, el deber de la mujer Buena, para la familia* It was time to learn a new language” (Cofer, 2005, pp. 131–132). Consuelo’s “new language” is a counter-discourse that readers must imagine when the novel ends with her departure to New York.

Sarah and Consuelo are treated in ways that fragment them as young women into pieces for consumption, labels, or categories by patriarchal, imperialistic, and colonial mindsets. In the context of the two novels, Kyong-Sook, Sarah, and Consuelo are objectified in their place. First, Kyong-Sook is the unmarried mother; later, she is known in her community as the childless wife of a minister. Sarah is stereotyped as the Korean girl who is “white” in both Korea and the United States. Consuelo is seen only as the female daughter, sister, and reified girlfriend. In order to develop their self-worth as individuals, the female characters must participate in adolescent sexual and religious rebellion, as is often the pattern in adolescent identity novels. This adolescent rebellion also counters the discourse of the patriarchal family.

Adolescent Identity and the Post-Colonial Family

In Pui-lan’s (2005) analysis of diasporic and borderland discourses, she recommends that feminists “interrogate how narratives of communal identities have been constructed leaving out women and others whose identities have been policed and or negated” (p. 47). As Consuelo leaves Puerto Rico, she acknowledges respect for the religions and rituals of the island, yet seems to relegate religion to her Puerto Rican identity. If religious tradition depends on “home” and “roots,” Consuelo must redefine her own sense of religion and spirituality in New York; however, the novel ends with Consuelo’s departure, leaving her new family identity to readers’ imaginations.

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Even in an age of individualism, family and community are important; accordingly, these female-authored texts demonstrate post-colonial contradictions by resisting and, at times, aligning with dominant ideologies (Bradford, 2006). By the end of both novels, the patriarchal, heteronormative family loses some of its power in the counter-discourses of these identity narratives. In *Somebody's Daughter*, Sarah chooses to return home to her adopted family in Minnesota, ending the search for her birth mother, more comfortable with a reconstructed "Korean-American" identity. In *Meaning of Consuelo*, Consuelo's escape from her Puerto Rican nuclear family includes plans to live with her cousin's homophobic father and extended family in New York. Although the underlying colonialist discourse of Consuelo's decision to leave is slightly overshadowed by the narrative of sexual freedom and power that Consuelo had finally experienced in Puerto Rico, Consuelo's move to the land of the colonists suggests that patriarchy and heterosexism continue to be central to the adolescent female identity even as she may—we do not know—still be searching for her own identity. In leaving behind her family, Consuelo rejects the Catholic religion that seemed to provide both solace and limitation for her mother.

By the end of *Somebody's Daughter*, any feminist critique of family is subverted when Sarah returns to the US to integrate her new sense of self with her adopted family. Kyong-Sook also gives over to the patriarchal family model when she decides not to search for Sarah any longer. "She wasn't meant to find the answer," Kyong-Sook thought. "God had given her the answer" (Lee, 2005, p. 242). The underlying narrative is patriarchal in two ways—Kyong-Sook allows God to make this decision about giving up the search, and she gives in to her husband's feelings of betrayal when Kyong-Sook tells him about a daughter from a previous relationship. As the "good Korean wife," Kyong-Sook places her husband above her own desire to know her daughter. When Sarah returns to the US at the end of the novel, she watches as a new Korean baby is handed over to an adoptive mother. Sarah wonders if she should warn the baby what her life would be like, then hurries to embrace her Minnesotan family, "closing the distance between them" (Lee, 2005, p. 262). The subtext of the novel reinforces the underlying ideologies associated with the traditional

American family; at the same time, discourses of imperialism are swept away, relegated to Korean history. After all, adopting children from third world countries into their families is acceptable in the eyes of Christian America.

Ruether (2000) asserts that the contemporary family must be re-imagined as part of a "redemptive community" (p. 230).

The counter-discourse of Sarah's and Consuelo's identity development suggest that the contemporary definition of "family values" must somehow be deconstructed to avoid a future of men who colonize, control, or distort the meaning of "family." Neither of these novels provides images of possibilities for a reconstructed, spiritually nurturing family and community, perhaps because this is the future that must be imagined by contemporary adolescent readers.

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