

BRITE DIVINITY SCHOOL

A RELATIONAL MODEL OF UNDERSTANDING ADULT KOREAN
ADOPTEES' ETHNIC IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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While adult Korean adoptees suffer from injustice that occurs out of sexism and racism, and that impacts ethnic identity formation destructively, this dissertation argues that expressing human agency through the action of responses to relationship is essential in constructing a healthy ethnic identity. Integrating the thought of Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki and John Shotter, this project maintains that an expression of human agency involves resistance against injustice and participation in new possibilities that take place in each moment in relationship. To live as persons who express human responsibility requires making choices and reconstructing ethnic identities.

Introduction

Why can't my ethnic identity just be me? Why do people always have to label people into who the race is or what they are? Or I mean, isn't it ok to be you? Maybe, I look Asian, but I don't feel I am Asian, sometimes I feel like I am extremely Asian. I want people to just accept that. After I tell someone this is who I am, you know, I am a Korean adoptee, then it's like, why do I have to justify who I am, my identity to other people? (She Ra, a Korean adoptee)¹

Emerging Voices of Adult Korean Adoptees

From September 9-12, 1999, an important conference called "The Gathering of the First Generation of Korean Adult Adoptees" took place.² Nearly 400 adult Korean adoptees who had been adopted and raised by American citizens between the years 1955 and 1985, gathered in Washington, D.C. Three accomplishments occurred at this conference. First, this conference gave adult Korean adoptees an opportunity to hear voices from the adoptee community. The first gathering was not a typical conference in that Korean adoptees were participants and presenters and in that it was a time to gain understanding about themselves as Korean adoptees by sharing their experiences with each other.

¹ This is a pseudonym of a Korean adoptee and I have disguised identity of the interviewees in this research project.

² Madelyn Freundlich and Joy Kim Lieberthal, "The Gathering of the First Generation of Adult Korean Adoptees: Adoptees' Perceptions of International Adoption." [on-line article]. New York: The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, June 2000. Available from <http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/proed/korfindings.html>. Accessed 15 January, 2006. Internet.

Second, Korean adoptees at the conference identified ethnic identity as the key area for discussion and stated that adult Korean adoptees become active agents of change in constructing a healthy ethnic identity. While there is no widely agreed upon definition, ethnic identity may be defined to be “a personal meaning system [regarding ethnicity] that is created over the course of the individual’s experience with the world and is organized primarily in narrative form.”³ Since ethnic identity is organized in a narrative form that is an expression of a high order of meaning-making, it is continuously constructed and reconstructed, as the individual moves through the sea of ever-changing relationships in the particular group or the larger sociocultural context.

While relationship is crucial in constructing the meaning of healthy ethnic identity, Korean adoptees must deal with negative influences such as racism and sexism that occur in society. In their article “The Gathering of the First Generation of Adult Korean Adoptees: Adoptees' Perceptions of International Adoption,” Freundlich and Lieberthal note that “discrimination was the key focus of the conversation in all groups and pervaded all aspects of the conversation - from family life, to dating, to community, to school experiences and, ultimately, to the way

³ Carolyn Saari, “Relationship Factors in the Creation of Identity: A Psychodynamic Perspective,” in *Constructing Realities: Meaning-Making Perspectives for Psychotherapists*, edited by Hugh Rose and Kevin T. Keuhlwein (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 144.

participants chose to identify themselves.”⁴ This situation requires Korean adoptees’ active participation in order to construct a healthy ethnic identity.

The necessity of human agency to handle negative influence on their ethnic identity that occurs in relationships is important for Korean adoptees who need to build healthy connections with others. Many adoptees suffer from the issue of attachment⁵ and have trouble building connections with others. Ronald Nydam notes

⁴ Freundlich and Liberthal, 30.

⁵ There is a debate regarding the relationship between the loss of the primary care-giver and the issue of attachment. Some psychologists argue that children’s relationship with their deceased primary care-giver should completely be detached in order to complete the process of mourning. For example, Sigmund Freud notes that, while the process of decathexis is a slow one, normal grief ends with complete decathexis or detachment from the primary care-giver. See Freud Sigmund, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV (New York: Basic Books, 1917/1959), 152-172. John Bowlby is another psychologist. During World War II, he observed many children who were taken from the city of London to Hampstead Nurseries outside of the city because they lost their parents. The result of his observation was that those children went through a sequence of protest, despair and detachment. See John Bowlby, *Attachment* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); *Loss, Sadness, and Depression* (New York: Basic Books, 1980). But I do not agree with Freud and Bowlby. There are two reasons. First, although Freud knew from his personal experiences that normal grief cannot end with complete detachment from a love object, he did not revise his understanding about the process of mourning. See Ester R. Shapiro, *Grief As a Family Process: A Development Approach to Clinical Practice* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1994), 30-31. Second, Bowlby also recognized that the continuing bonds with the primary care-giver have been ignored through the work of Colin Murray Parkes, but he did not utilize that work to amend his theory. See Phyllis R. Silverman and Dennis Klass, “Introduction: What’s the Problem?” in *Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief* edited by Dennis Klass, Phyllis R. Silverman and Steven L. Nickman (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 12. Although there is a limitation in the work of Bowlby in explaining the relationship between the loss of the primary care-giver and the grieving, Bowlby provides a useful theory to understand the issue of attachment that adoptees suffer. He maintains that relinquishment of the primary care provider may result to “either an anxious attachment that is characterized by chronic worry about further loss, or

that “If the pain of relinquishment remains as the guiding principle by which one determines one’s life, then love and life never quite work.”⁶ Since adoptees often experienced painful relinquishment of their birth parents, no matter whether it took place in the early or later ages, it is a lifetime issue⁷ to establish healthy relationships with their adoptive parents, friends, and people in the communities.⁸ Thus, when Korean adoptees become active agents of change in constructing their ethnic identity, they can take important steps to build a healthy relationship with others.

Third, when Korean adoptees argue that research on Korean adoptees has not fully addressed the experiences of adult Korean adoptees, they address the issue of human agency in constructing a healthy ethnic identity. Hollee McGinnis, a Korean adoptee, insists that research on Korean adoptees used to rely on the adoptive parents to answer questions regarding the racial awareness and identity formation of their

varying degrees of detachment from superficial sociability to extreme withdrawal, depending on the depth of the pain.” See Ronald J. Nydam, *Adoptees Come of Age: Living within Two Families* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 75.

⁶ Nydam, 89.

⁷ Helms considered racial identity development to be a lifetime process. See, J. E. Helms, *Black and White Racial Identity: Theory, Research, and Practice* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990). Also, Elizabeth KimJin Traver, a Korean adoptee, argues in her unpublished dissertation that Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity is shaped in a “lifelong dance.” See *Dethroning Invisibility: Talk Stories of Adult Korean adoptees*, Dissertation. University of Denver, 2000, 95.

⁸ The communities may be referred to as the groups in which persons bring resources for one another. In the case of Korean adoptees, the communities include the adoptive family, the school, the faith community, the small community where they grew up, and Korean American community in the U.S.

transracially adopted children.⁹ Her argument may be not fully justified, because research on Korean adoptees' identity can be divided into two groups, depending on whether the primary participants were parents or children. The former group of studies¹⁰ focused on the parents' approaches to their children's identities, and the second group¹¹ studied how the children perceive their identities and how they feel about them. In addition, some scholars explored how adult Korean adoptees develop ethnic identity formation, which we will examine in the following section. So it may not be appropriate to say that all research on Korean adoptees' ethnic identity has reflected just the parents' perspectives, although much has this focus. However, when Korean adoptees argue that adult Korean adoptees' experiences have been underrepresented in the previous studies, they insist that their own human agency has not been vocalized in constructing a healthy ethnic identity. In *Seeds from a Silent*

⁹ Hollee A. McGinnis, "Adult Korean Intercountry Adoptees: A Resource for Adoption Practice," *Columbia University Journal of Student Social Work*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2003), 12.

¹⁰ Francis M. Koh, *Oriental children in American homes* (Minneapolis: East-West Press, 1981); B. C. Trolley, J. Wallin, & J. Hansen, "International adoption: Issues of acknowledgement of adoption and birth culture," *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 12 (1995), 465-479.

¹¹ D. S. Kim, "How they fared in American homes: A follow-up study of adopted Korean children in the United States," *Children Today* 6 (1977), 2-6 and 36; W. Feigelman and A. Silverman, *Chosen children: New patterns of adoptive relationships* (New York: Praeger, 1983); N.S. Huh and W. J. Reid, "Intercountry, transracial adoption and ethnic identity: A Korean example," *International Social Work* 43 (2000), 75-87.

Tree, adult Korean adoptees speak in their own voices through poetry, fiction, and personal narratives, addressing that human freedom is their primary concern:

We seek to break a certain silence—silence from our land of origin, silence from the lands we now inhabit—tongues tied by racism, some external, some painfully internal; tongues tied by social mores, codes, and contradictions; tongues tied by colonialist myths of rescue missions and smooth assimilations. We hope to shatter these illusions, sowing new seeds for future generations not to be silent—to seek out themselves and each other, to define, re-define, explore, and question. We hope to inspire others, as they have inspired us—to speak honestly, truthfully—and to learn to listen in the same vein.¹²

Adult Korean adoptees did not choose adoption. They did not choose relinquishment. However, they attempt to seek out how they become active agents of change in constructing a healthy ethnic identity.

Re-envisioning Ethnic Identity and Human Agency

While adult Korean adoptees attempted to address their experiences themselves in recent research, there is no research that focuses on Korean adoptees' human agency. There are three scholars who have looked specifically at adult Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation. The first one is Elizabeth Kimjin Traver, a Korean adoptee and social worker. She conducted qualitative research to collect stories of adult Korean adoptees whom she identifies as involuntary minorities. She suggests a matrix of forces cradling the adoptees' identity continuum to show how the relationships with adoptive parents, communities, and Korean culture function as

¹² Tonya Bishoff and Jo Rankin, eds. *Seeds from a Silent Tree: An Anthology by Korean Adoptees* (Glendale, CA: Pandal Press, 1997), 2.

internal and external forces through which ethnic identity originates and develops. Interactions with those relationships cause their ethnic identity to be reconstructed across life spans. So, identity reconstruction can be described as an “on going process of re-evaluation of one’s self,” which is tied to “an identity process of recreating connection with one’s self, with others, and with cultures.”¹³

The second scholar is Kira Lieberman, a Korean adoptee and psychologist.¹⁴ She conducted nine in-depth interviews with adult Korean adoptees ranging in age from twenty-one to forty-seven years. She argues that while many participants identified themselves as Korean racially, there are some factors, such as personality, individual development, independence from one's adoptive family, age at time of adoption, and contact with Asian-Americans, that have influenced their ethnic identity development. Lieberman also argues that their ethnic identity is not static, but fluid, and that reconstruction of ethnic identity will continue to take place as the adoptees encounter new experiences.

The third scholar is Etsuko Fujimoto.¹⁵ Although she was not a Korean adoptee, she conducted in-depth interviews with twenty adult Korean adoptees who

¹³ Traver, 113.

¹⁴ Kira Lieberman, *The Process of Racial and Ethnic Identity Development and Search for Self in Adult Korean Transracial Adoptees*, Dissertation, Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, 2001.

¹⁵ Etsuko Fujimoto, *Korean Adoptees Growing Up in the United States: Negotiating Racial and Ethnic Identities in White America*, Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2001.

shared their views of and experiences with ethnic identities across their life spans, focusing on the relationships with the adoptive family, any racial and social groups, biological parents, and Korean culture. She observed two findings in these Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation. First, Korean adoptees' ethnic identity must be understood to be in process. Their ethnic identity undergoes constant transformation when Korean adoptees negotiate, construct, and transform their ethnic identity in relationship with families and their community in life spans. Second, each adoptee has a unique identity process and the participants' expressions of their ethnic identities were very diverse, resisting simplistic representations of Korean adoptees.

The research conducted by Traver, Lieberman, and Fujimoto provides pastoral theologians with valuable examples of the concrete lives of Korean adoptees who are obviously influenced by all kinds of relational and cultural dynamics that help or hinder movement toward ethnic identity formation. However, no author seems to pay attention to the issue of how adult Korean adoptees can become active agents of change in constructing and reconstructing a healthy ethnic identity. Typical is Traver's assertion that "[transracial] adoptees are faced with the developmental task of becoming human."¹⁶ Unfortunately, she does not explore how adult Korean adoptees' active agency can be developed in constructing a healthy ethnic identity. This issue is described well by Richard Lee who notes that many studies regarding transracial adoption only inquire about "adoptees' racial/ethnic self-designations,

¹⁶ Traver, 101.

subjective comfort with their races and ethnicities, or perceptions of discrimination and racism.”¹⁷ This implies that transracial adoptees are passive recipients of their given situation. As a pastoral theologian who takes into account that Korean adoptees also have been under negative, as well as positive, relational influences, and who understands that to become human requires an active participation in freedom, I believe it is important to examine how Korean adoptees begin to view themselves as active agents of change in their lives. My ambition in this research is not just to describe how the relationship with families and their communities impact ethnic identity, but also to look at how Korean adoptees become active agents of change in constructing a healthy ethnic identity.

Adult Korean Adoptees as *Homo Dialogicus Marginalis*

When a primary concern of this research project is to understand how adult Korean adoptees become active agents of change in constructing ethnic identity, Korean adoptees can be considered as *homo dialogicus marginalis*, which means “marginalized dialogical humanity.”¹⁸ From the perspective of this metaphor, Korean

¹⁷ Richard M. Lee, “The transracial adoption paradox: history, research, and counseling implications of cultural socialization,” *The Counseling Psychologist* vol. 31, no. 6, (2003), 715.

¹⁸ Darryl M. Trimiew, *Voices of the Silenced: The Responsible Self in a Marginalized Community* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1993), xvii. Trimiew developed the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*, critiquing H. Richard Niebuhr’s *homo dialogicus* from the perspective of the marginalized. For Niebuhr, *Homo dialogicus* means that human beings should express their human responsibility through the responsive action. However, Trimiew argues that the responsive action

adoptees' human freedom can be conditioned by the context, but their freedom is not reduced by the cause of the context. Rather, Korean adoptees should be engaged in response to action upon themselves as an expression of human freedom. Their action of response is to resist injustice and to participate in possibilities that occur in each moment in relationship.

Question of Human Agency and Sixteen Adult Korean Adoptees

This dissertation explores the issue of human agency with sixteen Korean adoptees in the United States. Utilizing human agency in constructing a healthy ethnic identity, the adoptees can challenge sinful states such as racism and stereotypes embedded in the dominant discourses, negotiate their ethnic identity, and make choices. The participants of this study are sixteen adult Korean adoptees who challenge the issues that hinder their movement toward healthy ethnic identity formation. They engage in ways to utilize human agency in the interactions with their adoptive parents, peers, and people in the society.

The primary task of the dissertation is to observe how adult Korean adoptees utilize human agency in constructing and reconstructing a healthy ethnic identity. The

should be expressed to overcome injustice, suggesting the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*. This metaphor brings an important implication to adult Korean adoptees' experiences because Korean adoptees should resist injustice through responsive action. However, Trimiew does not address another dimension of relationship, that relationship can be a source of enrichment and new possibilities. Thus, the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* in this project emphasizes Korean adoptees' responsive action to relationship that is a source of new possibilities and newness so that they can overcome injustice.

secondary task is to establish a foundation for a constructive theory through a dialogue between adult Korean adoptees' experiences and the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* that is supported and revised by an interdisciplinary dialogue between John Shotter as a psychological voice and Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki as a theological voice. In accomplishing these tasks, two primary research questions will be addressed.

- How have Korean adoptees worked actively to construct/reconstruct their ethnic identity (or not) throughout their lives in relationship with others including adoptive parents and their communities?
- How might the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* that is supported and revised by a theological anthropology change or inform the way pastoral theologians and caregivers better understand and empower the process of ethnic identity formation in adult Korean adoptees?

The first of these primary research questions— How have Korean adoptees actively constructed and reconstructed their ethnic identity (or not) throughout their lives in relationship with others including adoptive parents and their communities?—involves three secondary research questions.

- How did they become aware of their own ethnicity and how did it change over time?
- How have they been able to cope with stereotypes and misrepresentation that hinder movement toward healthy ethnic identity formation?

- How do they actively construct the way they want to be viewed by themselves or others?

Attempting to establish a foundation for a constructive theory risks making a universalizing claim that silences other voices and reinforces inherent biases issuing from a particular location. While there is no universal and normative narrative in the postmodern era and all meta-narratives become marginalized, Jung Young Lee suggests the power of each narrative from the perspective of marginality. He insists that “when the margin meets another, there is the margin of marginality, the creative core, which is Jesus-Christ’s presence.”¹⁹ When Jesus took the initiative in his incarnation, his intention was not to dominate, but to serve people. This theological understanding opens a door to my endeavor and discussion. Thus, I offer this work as part of an ongoing conversation and suggest a foundation for a constructive theory about theological anthropology that helps pastoral theologians and caregivers better understand and support the process of ethnic identity formation in adult Korean adoptees.

Organization of the Dissertation

This work incorporates some structures of most dissertations in the field of pastoral theology and includes a review of the literature, a discussion of methodology, and a suggestion of constructive theological proposals. It also integrates elements that

¹⁹ Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Nashville: Fortress Press, 1995), 151.

would be appropriate for the subject such as a discussion of psychological and theological voices and the integration of those voices and Korean adoptees' experiences in order to develop a paradigm of relational agency. This dissertation is structured as follows.

Introduction

Chapter One: A Metaphor of Web-Weaving as Methodology

Chapter Two: Adult Korean Adoptees and Human Agency

Chapter Three: John Shotter's Rhetoric-Responsive Version of Social

Construction

Chapter Four: Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki and Feminist Process Theology

Chapter Five: *Homo Dialogicus Marginalis*: Responsible Responding as an

Expression of Human Freedom

Chapter Six: Practices for Empowering Adult Korean Adoptees

Bibliography

Appendices

A brief overview of the chapters follows.

Chapter one will describe the discussion of the metaphor of web-weaving as methodology. Since several threads are involved in a project of web-weaving, it is necessary to understand how those threads are interconnected. The first thread is human experiences. To understand the first thread, feminist theology and Asian women's theology will be explored. The first thread will be clarified via an understanding of the second thread, which is qualitative research methodology. In this

section, the basic qualitative method, the participants, the process of collecting data, and managing the data and analysis will be explored. The third one is mutually critical correlation as a hermeneutical perspective out of which the dialogue between psychology and theology and human experiences occurs. Since mutually critical correlation as a methodology is a product of David Tracy, his methodology will be explored. The fourth one is practice. For a discussion of practice, Don S. Browning's practical theology will be examined.

Chapter two will describe the experiences of the sixteen Korean adoptees selected for this study and detail how they view or explore their human agency in relationships with families, peers, and the society. In the first section, I will explore negative influences that Korean adoptees experienced and how those negative influences impacted their ethnic identity formation focusing on four important themes. Those themes include (1) gender discrimination, (2) racial discrimination from the communities, (3) racial discrimination from the adoptive family, and (4) cultural discrimination. In the second section, I will examine how they suffer from negative influences. The types of suffering include feelings of loneliness, disconnection from relationships, violence, and suicide. In the third section, I will discuss how Korean adoptees develop their human agency in constructing ethnic identity, dealing with two themes such as (1) multiple ethnic identification and (2) reconstruction of ethnic identities.

Chapter three is a review of John Shotter's rhetorical-responsive version of social construction in the literature of social psychology. This chapter will begin with

his discussion about how he understands the human predicament focusing on four concerns. Those four concerns include (1) relationality, (2) responsibility as responsibility, (3) temporality, and (4) language as metaphor. In the next section, I will consider four concepts in Shotter's psychological theory. Those four concepts include (1) knowledge of the third kind, (2) duality of structure, (3) chiasmic structure, and (4) polyphony. Then in the third section, I will describe pastoral implications from Shotter's psychological voice, focusing two themes: (1) injustice and human agency, and (2) Shotter's social construction and human agency.

Chapter four will engage Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki's feminist process theology. The beginning of this chapter describes her understanding of the nature of injustice that she believes emerges out of evil and sin. The following section explores subjective immortality, which refers to the possibility of continuing to experience some form of life after death as a subjective center of consciousness. Since Suchocki believes subjective immortality can establish a basis for the fulfillment of justice, yet is not a sufficient answer to injustice, the next section will consider everlasting and temporal redemption. In the last section, I will discuss two important themes to find pastoral implications from Suchocki's feminist process theology. Those two themes include individual freedom and identity, which will be integrated with a fictional story regarding Catherine's experience

Chapter five will discuss the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*. This chapter will be composed of three sections. The first one will discuss a theological anthropology that occurs out of a dialogue between Suchocki and Shotter. The second

section will explore the nature of the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* focusing on how a theological anthropology corrects a limitation in Darryl M. Trimiew's idea. The last section examines the two primary questions for this research project in light of the revised metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*.

Chapter six will discuss the practices that can help empower Korean adoptees. This chapter will be composed of three sections. The first two sections include (1) making choices, and (2) reconstructing ethnic identities. The last section will deal with some suggestions for future research.

Limitation

My social location limits my view of the truth. A pastoral theologian "claims only a portion of the truth from her narrow, specific social location."²⁰ Therefore, where I stand may limit my perception of reality; the danger is that I may become blind to the value of and subtleties inherent in others' experiences. My social location—the fact that I am myself a Korean adoptee, highly educated, and raised in a racially homogeneous family—no doubt will influence how I analyze the collected data and develop my ideas in presentation of this project. That I am a Korean adoptee also means that I am aware of how society may present obstacles, through biases and prejudices, to adoptees' healthy identity formation. Having been raised in a racially

²⁰ Katherine Godby, *Becoming a Christian Authentic Self in a Postmodern World*. Dissertation, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, 2005, 16.

homogenous family in Korea means that I may find it more difficult to be aware of the many nuances of Korean adoptees' stories regarding ethnic identity in the United States. My goal is to respect Korean adoptees' experiences without making universalizing claims about them that might silence their unique voices.

Chapter One

The Metaphor of Web-Weaving as a Methodology

A pastoral theologian is like a designer who weaves a web. For this research project, various threads will be utilized such as theology and social sciences. The ultimate goal of the pastoral theologian as a designer is not to discuss the nature or existence of God, but to discern the nature of human existence and provide an appropriate and transformative response.¹ Because pastoral theology involves the activity of discerning the nature of human existence, one goes through a hermeneutical process. Nancy J. Ramsay defines this hermeneutical process as diagnosis, which “suggests knowledge that is not simply one’s opinion but understanding carefully discerned as true.”² In a sense, the pastoral theologian is a seeker of truth. Weaving the web is an attempt to pursue truth. A goal for pursuing truth lies in justice and diversity. Christie Cozad Neuger indicates:

All of the methods—gaining awareness of injustice, reclaiming a diversity of perspectives, deconstructing dominant culture norms and practices, reconstructing new theory, theology, and care, and maintaining persistent accountability for all who have access to privilege and power—will be necessary as we continue to respond to God’s call for mutuality, love and justice for all of creation.³

¹ T. W. Jennings, “Pastoral Theological Methodology,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, edited by Nancy J. Ramsay, H. Newton Malony, Liston O. Mills, and John Patton (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 862.

² Nancy J. Ramsay, *Pastoral Diagnosis: A Resource for Ministries for Care and Counseling* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 9.

³ Christie Cozad Neuger, “Power and Difference in Pastoral Theology,” in *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining Paradigms*, edited by Nancy J. Ramsay (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 85.

When we attempt to understand human agency in constructing adult Korean adoptees' ethnic identity, an important question lies in what is true focusing on injustice and diversity. The metaphor of web weaving helps us take a journey to pursue truth.

The metaphor of web-weaving emerges out of feminist theology. There are two reasons why feminist theologians prefer the metaphor of web-weaving. First, this metaphor that retains a feminine essence is considered as a useful tool for methodology. While not all feminists agree that this metaphor retains a feminine essence,⁴ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki is an example of feminist theologians who utilize the metaphor of web-weaving:

We women are weavers—makers of things from the stuff at hand. The image is an old one, calling up visions of women with spindles and looms, taking raw cotton or flax or wool and turning it into a refining thing for cultural use. Beauty, too, was woven into the final product, witnessing not only to the pragmatism of the work, but to the sense in which the soul of the weaver found its way into the finished object. We women are weavers. Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that we turn to ideas in a weaving way, seeing them, too, as raw material for cultural use. To work with ideas, weaving them together, impressing them with

⁴ There is a debate about whether the metaphor of weaving is an appropriate one for feminine essence. In her article "Roundtable Discussion: What's in a Name? Exploring the Dimensions of What Feminist Studies in Religion Means," Miriam Peskowitz explores the negative image of weaving in Roman stories about Penelope and argues that the image of weaving has been a useful tool for assigning gender, setting ideal standards of femininity, and confining the possibilities for women's lives. In other words, the metaphor of weaving is enmeshed in masculinist traditions. See *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* vol. 11, no. 1 (1995): 111-136. On the other hand, Carol P. Christ argues that the meaning of the image of weaving should be found in feminist work in religion rather than Roman stories such as goddess feminists' writing. She believes that the metaphor of weaving provides connections with generations of other women. "Weaving the Fabric of Our Lives," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* vol. 13, no. 1 (2005): 131-136. However, Suchocki does not get involved in this discussion, but it seems that she stands in the latter position.

beauty from the knowledge of living—Such an impulse drives the thinking of those whose very being remembers the weavers.⁵

Suggesting the metaphor of web weaving, Suchocki attempts to weave the two modes of thought – feminist theology and process philosophy. She argues that feminist theology provides a space where the ethical implications of process theology can be actualized. In other words, the complementary point lies in the arena of social action. Suchocki believes that the metaphor of weaving provides a strong metaphor to connect the two modes of thought.

Another reason for using the metaphor of web-weaving, in some feminist theologians' view, is that it expands a methodological approach. In her article, "Weaving the Web: Pastoral Care in an Individual Society," Pamela Couture attends to a limitation of individual approaches in pastoral care.⁶ Since suffering of individuals occurs because of the structure and systems of society, social concerns should be embraced as part of the web. Couture notes that "If we were to create a social ecological foundation for pastoral care and counseling, we would correlate theology not only with the implicit theology and practice in psychology, family systems theory, and general culture but also with the theology implicit in social institutions, including the congregation and government, and the ecclesial and public policies and practices they produce."⁷ The metaphor of web-weaving is important in my methodology for this project.

⁵ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Weaving the World," *Process Studies* vol. 14, no. 2 (Summer, 1985): 76.

⁶ Pamela Couture, "Weaving the Web: Pastoral Care in an Individual Society," in *Through the Eyes of Women* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 94-106.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

Since several threads are involved in a project of web-weaving, it is necessary to understand how those threads are interconnected. The first thread is human experiences. To understand the first thread, feminist theology and Asian women's theology will be explored. The feminist perspective that human experiences should be considered as a norm will be explored by focusing on the work of Elaine L. Graham. Then, Hyun Kyung Chung's Asian women's theology will be discussed. The first thread will be clarified via an understanding of the second thread, which is qualitative research methodology. In this section, the basic qualitative method, the participants, the process of collecting data, and managing the data and analysis will be explored. The third thread is mutually critical correlation as a hermeneutical perspective out of which the dialogue between psychology and theology and human experiences occurs. Since mutually critical correlation as a methodology is a product of David Tracy, his methodology will be explored. The fourth thread concerns practice. For a discussion of practice, Don S. Browning's practical theology will be examined.

Each Human Experience as a Norm

The first thread used to weave the web is human experiences. Human experiences are the basic raw materials for this project, which we can find everywhere human beings live. But it is not a simple issue to emphasize human experiences as we wish. While some human experiences are vocalized and considered as a norm, other human experiences are not heard and are placed in the shadow. Caregivers cannot recognize the needs of those people whose experiences are not heard or provide appropriate care to them. If this is so, then it is important to understand how to hear each individual human experience.

The importance of each individual human experience is addressed in feminist theology and Asian women's theology as well as in other places. In *Transforming Practice*, Elaine L. Graham suggests a methodology from a feminist perspective and argues that each human experience should be considered as norm. Graham's primary question concerns how to "reconstruct values by which Christian practice may be guided in a pluralist and fragmented society, and to identify a model of pastoral theology for a postmodern age."⁸ Since one of the features of the postmodern period is the collapse of the grand narrative, the authority and status of the sources and norms of Christian pastoral care and social action are questioned and are no longer taken for granted. We need a new definition of the sources and norms of Christian pastoral care. Graham insists that women's experiences provide a base to redefine the existing sources and norms, which leads us to a model of pastoral theology for a period of uncertainty. Its aim is to "rethink patterns of care to conform more accurately to women's needs and natures, as identified in psychology and anthropology."⁹ For example, the Christian community provides care on the basis of gender equality, but if that community does not reformulate the androcentric tradition, the practice of community is not the case, yet those women's experiences are considered as norm.

However, when Graham argues that women's experiences should be considered as a norm and source, this does not mean that she approaches women's experiences from an essentialist perspective. Her ultimate concern is to correct universalizing androcentric experience. She notes that "the naming of women's

⁸ Elaine L. Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1996), 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

needs and experiences serves as a disclosive practice in that it reveals the distortions and universalized prescriptions of androcentric pastoral practices, and serves to reorder the fundamental values of such practices toward the celebration of the complexity of human experiences.”¹⁰ Thus, the first task is to name women’s needs and experiences, which allows a critical engagement with tradition and transforms tradition so that it can be usable.

Asian women’s theology goes along with Graham’s argument. In *Struggle to be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women’s Theology*, Hyun Kyung Chung argues that it is important to hear the experiences of Asian women, who have suffered from an androcentric society through storytelling and to revise the androcentric tradition. The starting point for women’s theology is *hyun jang*, which is “translated as the place where historical events are happening...[which] Korean women confront in their everyday lives.”¹¹ The image of *hyun jang* is Jesus’ incarnation. Theologians for Korean women should dwell in *hyun jang* where women gather and listen to one another’s stories of victimization and liberation. A way to share women’s experiences in many Asian countries like Korea has been storytelling because the written, literary world has belonged to privileged males. Thus, the method of active listening to women’s storytelling is a crucial point for the methodology of Asian women’s theology.

While Chung, like Graham, maintains that it is a starting point to hear women’s experiences through storytelling, her methodological approach to correct an androcentric tradition is more concrete than Graham’s. There are three steps. The first

¹⁰ Ibid., 193.

¹¹ Hyun Kyung Chung, *Struggle to be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women’s Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 107.

step is critical social analysis, which includes political, economic, and religio-cultural analysis. Through this analysis, theologians see “the whole picture of complex interconnections in the evil structure.”¹² The second step is theological reflection. Theologians do not start from the Bible to understand the social context. Rather, they start from their own historical situation and ask “what relevant teachings does the Bible have to the questions they have.”¹³ Then, the last step is dialogical imagination in which theologians attempt to find “an alternative way of interpreting the biblical truth from Asian women’s perspective.”¹⁴ This dialogical imagination serves to challenge the established order of things, especially androcentric structures.

Chung’s primary concern in her theological methodology is *han* in women’s experiences. She defines *han* as a sense of unresolved resentment against injustice and a feeling of total helplessness and abandonment.¹⁵ These feelings are generated from “unjust psychosomatic repression, as well as by social, political, economic, and cultural oppression.”¹⁶ Andrew Sung Park attempts to expand the concept of *han*, arguing that the feeling of *han* cannot be found just in women’s experiences, but also in the structure where suffering takes place. But Chung notes that “both Korean women theologians and Korean male *minjung* theologians agree that oppressed Korean women’s core experiences in recent Korean history have been *han*.”¹⁷ Thus, she argues that in order to

¹² Ibid., 106.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 107.

¹⁵ Ibid., 42.

¹⁶ Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 10.

understand the meaning of *han*, it is important to hear women's experiences through storytelling.

As feminist theology and Asian women's theology emphasize women's experiences, their perspective indicates that each human experience should be considered as the starting point of methodology. This perspective is important in the discussion about Korean adoptees' ethnic identity. Ronald J. Nydam, a pastoral theologian, argues that it is necessary to hear the adoptees' voices and their experiences. His major concern is not Korean adoptees' ethnic identity *per se*, but the adoption system. But he suggests an important insight for this research project regarding Korean adoptees' ethnic identity. In his book, *Adoptees Come of Age: Living within Two Families*, Nydam confesses his ignorance about adoptees' experiences, noting that "I didn't know that I didn't know [about adoptees' experiences.]"¹⁸ He indicates that ignorance about adoptees' experiences brought two problems. The first one is related to his ministry. Although he was trained as a pastoral counselor for more than fifteen years, he missed opportunities for effective ministry as a pastoral counselor. The second problem is that he could not understand the social context. Since the closed adoption system has been practiced in the United States and adoption records were unavailable, adoptees were shut off from parts of themselves, such as ancestry, roots, and medical stories, from which to construct their identity. Nydam argues that these problems are related to "the unasked-about and untold stories of the adoptees' struggles with sadness,

¹⁷ Chung, 42.

¹⁸ Nydam, *Adoptees Come of Age*, 1.

with self-definition, and with ongoing closeness.”¹⁹ The ignorance of human experiences brings many problems in the clinical setting and social context.

However, the ignorance of adoptees’ human experiences does not emerge out of adoptees themselves but from the social structure. Nydam explores how adoptees suffered from societal disadvantage in society.²⁰ In the early decades of the 20th century, a woman who was pregnant outside of marriage was considered to be sinful and disgraced in society. So most single, pregnant Anglo-American women chose to relinquish their children to avoid social disadvantage. Relinquishment was given as a benevolent alternative and all things were covered up as if nothing happened. This social structure made it difficult for adoptees to vocalize their experiences or to put them in the context.

Mentioned earlier, adult Korean adoptees’ experiences are still not fully reflected in research. A reason may be related to the social disadvantage that occurs out of the culture of disgrace. When we hear Korean adoptees’ experiences through storytelling and consider each one’s experiences seriously, we can have an opportunity to understand the injustice and suffering that prevails in society

Qualitative Research and Human Experiences

While the first part of the metaphor of web weaving is human experiences, the second part of that metaphor is qualitative research through which we can draw human experiences. When we believe that pastoral theology is “contextual theology that is funded by critical engagement in acts of care or response to needs posed for such

¹⁹ Ibid., 5.

²⁰ Ibid., 10-29.

care,”²¹ an understanding of human experiences and the social context is necessary in pursuing pastoral theology. When the literature on adult Korean adoptees does not address the issue of human agency in constructing Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity, it does not appropriately reflect their needs. This reality indicates that in order to understand Korean adoptees’ experiences, we should conduct qualitative research and investigate the formation of their ethnic identity.

There are two reasons why a qualitative study is appropriate for examining Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity. First, as mentioned above, in social science there has been a lack of research on adult Korean adoptees. John W. Creswell says that qualitative research would be appropriate for the research problem to be explored when “little information exists on the topic.”²² Second, qualitative studies fundamentally concern human stories. Ethnic identity formation is linked to human narratives because “it is through the imposition of meaning on our individual life histories that we constitute and shape our own multiple identities.”²³ In addition, when we assert that part of a qualitative researcher’s work is “learning to listen well to others’ stories and to interpret and retell the accounts,”²⁴ Qualitative study will be especially well suited for this research project on Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity. This qualitative study will advance

²¹ Nancy J. Ramsay, “A Time of Ferment and Redefinition,” in *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*, edited by Ramsay (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 5.

²² John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 10.

²³ Tina Besley, *Counseling Youth: Foucault, Power, and the Ethics of Subjectivity* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), xx.

²⁴ Corrine Glesne, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* (New York: Longman, 1999), 1.

Korean adoptees' experiences and our pastoral theological understanding of the dynamic of human agency and relationality.

Naturalistic Inquiry as Qualitative Method

Since the starting point of the methodology is to attend to Korean adoptees' experiences, naturalistic inquiry is an appropriate qualitative method for this project. In *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba emphasize three characteristics of naturalistic inquiry. First, naturalistic inquiry demands a natural setting because the meaning is constructed from the context. Lincoln and Guba note that "phenomena of study, whatever they may be—physical, chemical, biological, social, psychological—take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves."²⁵ Since the meaning is dependent on contexts, the inquiry must be carried out in a natural setting. Second, naturalistic inquiry utilizes the human as the primary data-gathering instrument. Although this is not a new concept, the human as the instrument is important in naturalistic inquiry because "only the human instrument has the characteristics necessary to cope with an indeterminate situation."²⁶ Since naturalistic inquiry chooses to use the human as the primary instrument, this naturalistic paradigm emphasizes qualitative methods over quantitative. This emphasis is not because this paradigm is anti-quantitative, but because qualitative methods help researchers more easily utilize the human as instrument. Third, naturalistic inquiry utilizes tacit knowledge, which means intuitive or felt knowledge. This does not mean that naturalistic inquiry denies the importance of knowledge that can be expressible in

²⁵ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (London: Sage Publications, 1985), 189.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 193.

language form. But Lincoln and Guba maintain that “often the nuances of the multiple realities can be appreciated only in this way.”²⁷ Naturalistic fundamental inquiry insists that the data are constructions of the interactions between the investigators and the data sources. If so, data analysis leads to a reconstruction of those constructions.

Steps for naturalistic inquiry can be established as follows, which can help the research process move appropriately. The steps to be used for this research include:

1) conducting a pilot study with two adult Korean adoptees; 2) conducting one face-to-face or telephone interview and, (if necessary), one follow-up interview with between 15-20 participants; 3) collecting data from interview transcripts and memos;²⁸ 4) building analytic files organized by categories such as interview questions and people; 5) sorting the data into analytic files and developing a rudimentary coding scheme depending on thematic categories; and 6) getting feedback from some participants to validate the accuracy of these themes.

Participants

The participants were selected through purposeful sampling, which emphasizes that participants must possess characteristics necessary to provide the information. First, participants must be individuals who were adopted from Korea by Caucasian parents; at least one parent should be Caucasian. Second, the adoptees must be 18 years old or older.

²⁷ Ibid., 40.

²⁸ The researcher records the ideas that would pop up in the interviews and analysis, no matter how preliminary or in what form. By doing that, researcher may be open to new perspectives and new thoughts, because the researcher never knows what would happen.

There are two reasons why adult Korean adoptees raised by Caucasian families became the main participants in this research project. The first one is that it would be comparatively easy to locate participants who possess those characteristics. Statistically, there is no official information about the percentage of Caucasian parents in the U.S. who adopted Korean children. But it is generally known that most Korean adoptees grew up in white, upper or middle class homes in suburban settings.²⁹ Thus, it might be comparatively easy to find adult Korean adoptees raised by white parents in the U.S.

The second reason is that, while I wanted to compare adult Korean adoptees adopted and raised by Caucasian families in the U.S. to those raised by Korean families in the U.S., it was strange that adoptees raised by Korean families did not respond to my participation request in this research project. At one point, I contacted the Korean Adoptee Adoptive Family Network to discuss the recruitment of participants. Realizing that I am an adoptee raised by Korean parents, its staff encouraged me to compare adult Korean adoptees raised by Caucasian families in the U.S. to those who were raised by Korean families in the U.S. My effort to accomplish this goal brought both good news and bad news. The good news was that I could locate about eight adult Korean adoptees raised by Korean parents. The bad news was that, although I attempted to contact them by email, none of them responded to my email. There is no information about why they did not respond to my request. Since the population of Korean adoptees who are adopted by Korean families grows so fast, the task of comparing the similarities and differences between those two groups will be important for future research.

²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_adoptees

While it was generally thought that it might be comparatively easy to locate adult Korean adoptees adopted and raised by Caucasian parents, the task of locating participants was not an easy one to accomplish. The first action that I took was an attempt to find participants by contacting Hollee McGinnis, who founded Also-Known-As, Inc.³⁰ But since she left that association to take a position at the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, I tried to contact Lee-Ann Hanham, the current president of Also-Known-As, Inc. A short time later, Mee Hyun Gerstein, one of the vice presidents, emailed me saying that she would invest some attention to my project and would pass the information about my project to some Korean adoptees. But when I contacted her again to get some assistance, there was no response from her.

Another avenue for finding participants arose. My wife spoke to a woman who had adopted a Korean child who is now grown-up and married. My wife obtained her adopted adult child's phone number. The adopted daughter's name is Melanie Chung-Sherman, and she works as staff at Dillon International, Inc., which is one of the international adoption agencies based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. When I was talking to Chung-Sherman over the phone, she told me that there are between 300 and 400 adult Korean adoptees in Texas, Oklahoma, and Alabama, and she would help me find some participants through Dillon International, Inc. After obtaining the official permission of Dillon International, Inc. and with the assistance of Chung-Sherman, I sent out forty copies of request mail to adult Korean adoptees living in the Dallas-Ft Worth area, in

³⁰ www.alsoknownas.com. Also-Known-As, Inc. began in early 1996 and gave voice to the thousands of transracial adoptees, especially Korean adoptees, by creating a community that recognizes and celebrates people whose lives bridge nations, cultures and races through adoption.

which I inserted a copy of the request letter, two copies of the informed consent form, a copy of the interview guide, a copy of the demographic information, and a copy of the contact information along with the return envelopes (see Appendix I, II, and III, IV, V). Unfortunately, there were just two who returned the mailing.

Realizing that it would be impossible to find additional participants living in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, I decided to send out the participation request for my research project to some organizations related to Korean adoptees in the U.S. The first one was the Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network. I had an opportunity to post my participation request on the e-newsletter published twice a month. The second one was Korean adoptees associations such as Korean Adoptees Association in San Francisco, Korean Adoptees Association in South California, Asian Adult Adoptees of Washington, and Korean Adoptees Association in Boston. I posted my participation request on the discussion board of their websites.

The number of volunteers for my research project was twenty-three. They responded to my request via email. In the returning email, I introduced myself and described my study again, asking for their contact information so that I could send materials for interviews such as a request letter, two copies of an informed consent form, an interview guide, demographic information, and contact information (see Appendix). Twenty participants signed up and returned their informed consent form. Once I received it, I emailed to make an appointment for an interview. But three participants dropped out of the list of participants, failing to respond to my email without indicating any specific reasons. Although I interviewed seventeen participants, I failed to record an interview with one participant. Thus, the final number of participants was sixteen.

The demographic information regarding sixteen participants can be characterized as follows. First, the range of age is from nineteen to forty nine. Second, three of the participants were male and thirteen were female. Third, six of the participants were married and ten were single. Fourth, while both sides of fourteen participants' adoptive parents are Caucasian, two participants have Caucasian fathers and Korean mothers. Fifth, the range of the age at adoption is from 3 months to 6 years old. Sixth, while twelve adoptive parents have their own birth children (from one to seven), four do not have their own biological children.

Process of Collecting Data

The data for this research project were qualitative. While there may be several ways to collect qualitative data, such as collecting archives, observing participants, or interviewing, this research focuses on interviews as a source of data. In order to develop the interview guide, I asked the first two volunteers to serve as participants for the pilot study. Setting up the recording devices and keeping interview questions in my head, I conducted the pilot study with these two volunteers. This pilot study brought two issues to my attention. The first one was that I failed to successfully tape one of the interviews due to technical problem on my computer. Since all interviews would be conducted through telephone, I realized that I needed to add an alternative device in case I failed in recording an interview. It was a result of the pilot study that I purchased a conference phone and a voice-recorder device. The second issue was that, although I utilized the same interview guide, the process by which the subjects told their stories varied in that their life experiences in constructing ethnic identity were different. This pilot study made me start the interviews by asking a general question about the participants'

adoption stories, such as where they were born, when they were adopted, and what the adoption process was like.

After the initial questions, I entered a process of responding to the participants' comments, considering the questions in the interview guide. To utilize these two sources for the potential questions, there were two points to which I paid attention. The first one was a purposeful listening to the participants' answers and following up with probing questions. That purposeful listening was related to the second point. I kept the interview guide on my left-hand side and a memo note on my right-hand side. Because the interviews were conducted through telephone, it was easy to take notes.

The interviews focused on the participants' personal experiences regarding ethnic identity as Korean adoptees who were adopted and raised by Caucasian parents in the U.S. The length of the interviews varied from about 45 minutes to about 3 hours. All interviews were audio-taped on the computer as well as the audio-recorder device. I personally transcribed taped interviews using the computer word processor and the audio-recorder device.

Data Management and Analysis

The process of the data management was important because this process was connected to the data analysis. I have attempted to manage interview materials in the form of data cards (see Appendix F) so that I could easily group and classify them. By doing this, we consider each small unit seriously within the context of the full transcripts. I am indebted to M. Francyne Huckaby for this technique of the data

management.³¹ Huckaby adopted the method of data management from Lincoln and Guba and developed it in a detailed form. This arrangement of data makes it easy to analyze the interview data. The technique of analysis involves unitizing, categorizing, and constant comparison.³²

Mutually Critical Correlation as a Hermeneutical Perspective

The third part of the metaphor of web weaving is David Tracy's mutually critical correlation. While there are several threads used to weave the web, Tracy's perspective provides a dimension for this web-weaving. Tracy's main interest is to understand how to pursue truth in a postmodern era. Tracy believes that his interest can be accomplished through the mutually critical correlation between the interpretation of the contemporary situation and the interpretation of the Christian traditions. This idea is not a new idea, but a revision of Paul Tillich's correlation as a theological method.³³ Tracy argues that Tillich brought a contribution to the discussion about theological methodology by suggesting a way to correlate common human experience with Christian texts, in other words, correlation of situation and message. But Tracy argues that the correlation between the two sources in Tillich's methodology is not shaped in the form of mutual dialogue. In other words, Tracy insists that Tillich just utilizes the questions expressed in the situation to apply answers provided by the Christian

³¹ See M. Francyne Huckaby, *Challenging Hegemony in Education: Specific Parrhesiatic Scholars, Care of the Self, and Relations of Power*, Dissertation, Texas A & M. University, 2005, 161-163.

³² Lincoln and Guba, 331-351.

³³ For a detailed discussion about Paul Tillich's correlation as a theological method, see John P. Clayton, *The Concept of Correlation: Paul Tillich and the Possibility of a Mediating Theology* (New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1980).

message.³⁴ Tracy maintains that this formation cannot be accepted; rather, both contemporary situation and Christian traditions should be taken and investigated seriously in a mutual way, through which process we should determine what is true.

Three types of Theology: Fundamental, Systematic, and Practical

Tracy attempts to show how his mutually critical correlation can appear in three sources of theology—fundamental theology, systematic theology, and practical theology. The first two theologies are described in *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* and *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* respectively. But while Jennifer L. Rike assumes that a book on practical theology is projected, it has not shown up yet.³⁵

Fundamental Theology

Tracy insists that a fundamental theology can be best described through mutually critical correlation between “the meanings in common human experience and language and... the meanings present in the Christian fact.”³⁶ He explicates this theology on the basis of the interrelationships of five theses. First, Christian texts and common human experiences and language are the two principal sources. Second, the theological task involves a critical correlation of the results of the investigations of two sources of theology. Third, phenomenology is used to investigate common human experience and language. Fourth, historical and hermeneutical investigations

³⁴ David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (Minneapolis: Seabury Press, 1975), 46.

³⁵ Jennifer L. Rike, “Introduction: Radical Pluralism and Truth in the thought of David Tracy,” in *Radical Pluralism and Truth: David Tracy and the Hermeneutics of Religion*, edited by Werner G. Jeanrond and Jennifer L. Rike, (New York: Crossroad, 1991), xv.

³⁶ Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, 43.

are utilized as a method to examine Christian tradition. Fifth, a transcendental or metaphysical mode of reflection is employed to determine the truth-status of the results of one's investigations into the meaning of both common human experience and Christian texts. In other words, such transcendental or metaphysical reflection attempts the explicit validation of basic religions presuppositions (or beliefs) that are the conditions of the possibility of our existing or understanding at all.

There are two main sources for fundamental theology, and Tracy suggests the criteria for philosophical reflection on each source. The criterion for philosophical reflection on common human experiences and language is 'adequacy' arising from a basic phenomenological approach. We need additional description about the meaning of common experiences. There are three dimensions in common human experiences: (1) the immediate lived experience; (2) linguistic (e.g., metaphors or concepts) or non linguistic (e.g., images) to those immediate experiences; and (3) cognitive claims. Phenomenological reflection requires disclosing these common human experiences. Tracy describes three types of adequacy that disclose common human experiences. The first one is disclosing the authenticity of the self. The second one is that cognitive claims are consistent to internal coherence. The third one is whether "a particular concept (e.g., time space, self, or God) functions as a fundamental 'belief' or 'condition of possibility' of all our experience."³⁷ The criterion of adequacy is based on meaningfulness and truth in common human experiences.

On the other hand, the criterion for the philosophical reflection on Christian texts is 'appropriateness.' Tracy maintains that the appropriateness can be explored

³⁷ Ibid., 71.

through an adequate method of interpretation for texts. He finds an adequate method in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer:

[The] final moment of interpretation is properly defined by what Hans-Georg Gadamer labels the fusion of horizons: The reader overcomes the strangeness of another horizon not by empathizing with the psychic state or cultural situation of the author but rather by understanding the basic vision of the author implied by the text and the mode-of-being-in-the-world referred to by the text.³⁸

This understanding of the task of interpretation does not allow theologians to get involved in the difficulties of psychologizing those meanings, but it does encourage them to employ a method capable of explaining the principal existential meanings of Christian texts.

The correlation between the meanings discovered as adequate to common human experiences and meanings disclosed as appropriate to the Christian texts is a final stage in the method of the mutually critical correlation. Through this correlation, we can find how similar, different, or identical the meanings of the former are in relationship to the latter and vice versa.

Systematic Theology

While fundamental theology concerns the correlation between the cognitive truth-claims of a religious tradition and common human experiences, systematic theology focuses on the correlation between confessional truth-claims from within a particular religious tradition and the contemporary situation. Tracy notes that “the major aim of all systematic theology is to formulate a theological understanding of the

³⁸ Ibid., 78.

originating religious event into a theological focal meaning,³⁹ He continues to maintain that the major task of the systematic theologian is to reinterpret the Christian tradition for the present situation. The systematic theologian is required to risk a trust in a particular religious tradition. Therefore, the nature of the systematic theology lies in hermeneutics.

However, the reinterpretation of the Christian tradition does not disclose truth by itself, but that reinterpretation should be placed in dialogue with the situation. The public status should be honored and discussed to disclose truth in the reinterpretation of the Christian tradition. Tracy indicates that “whenever any systematic theologian produces a classic interpretation of a particular classic religious tradition... then that new expression should be accorded a public status in the culture.”⁴⁰ Truth is disclosed in the conversation between the Christian tradition and the situation.

While it is important to understand how Christian responses are expressed in the contemporary situation, Tracy finds an important message in political and liberation theologies. The central issue for these theologies concerns liberation from the structure of suffering. The theologians in these two groups “initiate their journey from some sense of the power of manifestation or proclamation, or both, but then move on into the realms of action and history, of performative personal, social and political praxis.”⁴¹ They involve action in and for history to unmask the conflicts and contradictions in oppressed and marginalized groups throughout the world. Furthermore, they uncover

³⁹ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Continuum, 1981), 421.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 390.

the illusions and ideologies embedded in the situations and structures of both society and church. Liberation and political theologians show how directly theology is related to the situation of suffering and oppression. The work of liberation and political theologians moves into correlation between the two directions. First, they focus on “the new form of critical reflection upon concrete, actual situations of liberation praxis.”⁴² Second, they reinterpret overlooked symbols of the Christian tradition.

While one more book on practical theology is projected, Tracy’s methodology informs some implications for the methodology of this research project regarding adult Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity formation. First, it is necessary to correlate the interpretation of the Christian tradition and the interpretation of the situation in a mutually critical way. By following this method, the pastoral theologian can disclose truth in accordance with the public status. Second, while Tracy explores the common human experiences in fundamental theology and the situation in systematic theology, he does not explain how they are connected. But as Larry Graham indicates, “psyches create systems and systems create psyches,”⁴³ also human experiences and the situation are connected to one another.

Two Steps of Correlation

Following the basic ideas of Tracy’s methodology, there will be two steps I will take. The first one is to correlate John Shotter’s rhetorical-responsive version of social construction to Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki’s feminist process theology. Both perspectives are critically reinterpreted to find similarities and dissimilarities. The

⁴² Ibid., 394.

⁴³ Larry Kent Graham, “From Psyche to System,” *Theology Today* vol. 49, no. 3 (October 1992), 329.

second step is to correlate the results of dialogue between Shotter's psychological voice and Suchocki's theological voice to Korean adoptees' lived experiences that were collected through a qualitative research method.

While there are many other relationally-oriented theologies, there are two reasons why I selected the work of Suchocki as a theological voice. The first one is that a primary goal in the theological work of Suchocki is to address the issue of how to overcome injustice, which is essential in the experiences of adult Korean adoptees. The second reason is that Suchocki discusses the dynamic between human agency and relationship to overcome injustice.

While there is diversity in social constructionist's theories, I believe that Shotter's rhetoric version of social construction can provide a useful tool to explain how Korean adoptees become active agents of change in constructing and reconstructing their ethnic identity. While Shotter shares many assumptions with other social constructionists, a main focus in his work has been on how people can develop human agency through responses to others.

Mutually critical correlation aims at constructing a more adequate language for pastoral theology. While historically many pastoral theologians have sought to understand the tension between social science and theology, I am influenced by James Lapsley who laments the lack of a more adequate language for pastoral theology.

Perhaps the greatest problem faced by the modern pastoral care movement from its inception to the present time has been the tendency of its members to gravitate toward other disciplines—fields of psychology and psychiatry in particular. The reasons for this have been complex, but one factor has certainly been the lack of an adequate vocabulary in pastoral theology itself that has both a clear rootage in the tradition and dynamic specificity. Before we can translate for others we need a language to translate. While such a

language must be rooted in some traditional and I think biblical constructs, it should not be narrowly confessional or overly prescriptive, I think, although the diagnostic and prescriptive modes are obviously also needed.⁴⁴

This discussion is important in understanding Korean adoptees' ethnic identity, as Eleazar S. Fernandez says, "[the question of color] is the locus of one's search for identity, and it is the locus for understanding God."⁴⁵ Thus, mutually critical correlation is so crucial for discussing how adult Korean adoptees can utilize human agency in constructing a healthy ethnic identity.

From Practice to Theory and back to Practice

An essential element in pastoral theology is practice because pastoral theologians are concerned with the critical and imaginative practices of pastoral care. But since practices are theory-laden, we should examine underlying assumptions in practices. Tracy's mutually critical correlation would be a useful method to examine those assumptions. Theory itself is not a place for pastoral theologians to dwell. They should go back to practices again. Don S. Browning argues that "[the view that I propose] goes from present theory-laden practice to a retrieval or normative theory-

⁴⁴ James Lapsley, "On Defining Pastoral Theology," A paper given in Denver, June 1986, at the annual meeting of The Society for Pastoral Theology, 1986, 9-10.

⁴⁵ Eleazar S. Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response of Systemic Evil* (St. Louis, Missouri: Charlice Press, 2004), 148

laden practice to the creation of more critically held theory-laden practices.”⁴⁶

Browning’s model can be described as from practice to theory and back to practice.

When Korean adoptees’ experiences should be considered as norm, that is not an attempt to universalize their experiences, but to disclose the reality that Korean adoptees’ experiences have been ignored. Korean adoptees’ experiences will be critically investigated in correlation with the hermeneutical perspective that emerges out of dialogue between Shotter and Suchocki. The discussion of the hermeneutical perspective will go back to practices.

A Concluding Remark on the Metaphor of Web Weaving

In this chapter, I have explored three threads to be woven together—human experiences as norm, qualitative research method as a process of collecting data and analysis, and mutually critical correlation—through which we can weave the web as a methodology for this research project. Since there is no universal and normative narrative in the postmodern era and all meta-narratives become marginalized, it may be dangerous to suggest a metaphor of web weaving as a methodology. But different voices help open a discussion of adult Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity formation. The web designed in this chapter does not last forever, but will be “torn down, deconstructed, remodeled into something more fitting, or moved on down the road.”⁴⁷ This web is like a house where pastoral theologians can live for a while when we discuss how adult Korean adoptees can develop their human agency in constructing ethnic identity.

⁴⁶ Don W. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 7.

⁴⁷ Nancy J. Gorsuch, *Introducing Feminist Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2001), xii.

Chapter Two

Adult Korean Adoptees and Human Agency

Since this research project focuses on the question of how adult Korean adoptees utilize human agency in constructing ethnic identity, I will explore two common themes that were significant for the majority of the participants. The themes include (1) multiple ethnic identification, and (2) ongoing reconstruction of ethnic identity. These two common themes came out of three main research questions, which follow.

- How did they become aware of their own ethnicity and how did it change over time?
- How have they been able to cope with stereotypes and misrepresentations that hinder movement toward healthy ethnic identity formation?
- How do they actively construct the way they want to be viewed by themselves or others?

These questions mainly target how Korean adoptees become active agents of change in the process of ethnic identity formation.

Before I discuss these three main common themes, it is important to explore negative influences that Korean adoptees experienced and how those negative influences impacted their ethnic identity formation. Thus, this chapter is composed of three sections. Those three sections include (1) what are negative influences that Korean adoptees experienced; 2) how these negative influences impact ethnic identity

formation; and (3) how Korean adoptees utilize their active human agency in constructing ethnic identity.

Korean Adoptees' Voices from the Desert

Dealing with the question regarding what are negative influences that Korean adoptees experienced, this section examines four themes that include (1) gender discrimination, (2) racial discrimination from the communities, (3) racial discrimination from the adoptive family, and (4) cultural discrimination. Before I discuss these four themes, I would like to comment on a few points. First, when I describe the experiences of 16 participants, there is a risk of generalization. Findings that come out of 16 adult Korean adoptees' experiences should not be utilized to limit other Korean adoptees' experiences. Second, while each of these four areas is a big topic, my primary concern is not to analyze the relationship between ethnic identity and those areas, but to describe Korean adoptees' experiences themselves. Third, in my analysis of gender discrimination, I will focus on female participants' experiences because most female participants shared the importance of gender in constructing ethnic identity. Fourth, the communities I refer to are school, the community in which they grew up, their faith community, Korean American community in the U.S., and Korean community in Korea. Fifth, although the adoptive family is part of each of these communities, I attempt to describe the racial discrimination of the adoptive family in a separate section because the participation of the adoptive family in racial discrimination impacts Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation more dramatically than discrimination by any other groups.

Gender Discrimination

When we describe gender discrimination in female Korean adoptees' experiences, there is one thing that we should be aware of. Not all female Korean adoptees think that gender discrimination is connected to ethnic identity formation. An example is Aviva:

I never thought about [if my gender has affected my ethnic identity], but because no matter what ethnicity is there, everyone has sex one way or the other. I don't think [gender] plays too much role. I guess some people say like gender may play a role in adoption because I think people feel like girls tended to be adopted and put adoption more than boys do. In that way, I think yes. I think that was true. But it's not overwhelming. So I personally don't think that it plays too much role.

Aviva's experience informs us that there may be a risk of generalization.

However, there are three common phenomena that many female participants in this research project experienced. The first one is an ambivalent attitude toward female Korean adoptees. By ambivalent attitude, I mean that while some men in the U.S. want to date or marry female Korean adoptees, they also attempt to disconnect from physical relationships with Korean adoptees because of racial background. Many female participants said that some men in the U.S., whether Caucasian or African Americans, attempted to date or marry female Korean adoptees based on these stereotypes. Jasmine stated:

Last year I was conducting in the session with old adult Korean adoptees. A lot of women expressed that especially in the dating scene, some Caucasian men [often] wanted to date them primarily because they were Asian. It is not because they were adoptees... but because they were Asian.

A reason why some Caucasian or African Americans wanted to date or marry female Korean adoptees lies in gender stereotypes. There are two groups of gender stereotypes.

The first concerns the notion that Korean adoptees are erotic and attractive. The second group of stereotypes portrays Asian women as quiet, shy, and obedient.

However, some Caucasian or African American men attempt to disconnect from relationships with female Korean adoptees because of racial background. Soonja Yoo shared her sad experience, saying:

Since I lived in all white community, a lot of guys were attracted to me because they all heard Asian women are exotic and they are easy. Basically that's all guys wanted from me at that age. That's all they wanted to use me. I remember I was dating with this guy, and I don't remember what his name was, but he was a jerk. I went out on a date with him and he was fine and I overheard him and his friend talking and his friend saying like, "Why are you with a yellow person?" He was like, "the only reason I went out on a date with her is that she is easy. And I am going to hit the base with her." And I overheard of it. And I ended up punching on him right on the mouth. I said like, "You arrogant, son of bitch, this date is over. I am walking home."

YoungAe also talked about a similar story.

When I was a seventh grader, we had boyfriends going out. I had one. His friend didn't like me because I was Asian. So he'd break up with me. To me at that time that was devastating. I was too young to remember all, but he asked me to go out. We were with boy friends and girl friends. But they'd make fun of me. I just remember thinking of that was so terrible in the world.

YoungAe continues to say that "It was really hurtful realizing that somebody would feel that way who didn't know me, just based on how I looked and there was nothing I could do to change it. So I just felt helpless that it happened." Many female Korean adoptees suffer from disconnection of relationship because their racial background is Korean.

The second destructive phenomenon is abuse, sexually and physically. She Ra is an example of this abuse. When she was in college, She Ra had a guy who stalked her. Part of the reason was, she assumed, that this guy felt that She Ra is an Asian and would not go to the police. But she did go to the police.

Sexual and physical abuse also includes more aggressive behaviors. Soonja was raped when she was in high school. She did not provide any detailed explanation about that tragedy in the interview but simply indicated that incident took place:

After I was raped, I went to a psychologist and that psychologist told me that I have a split personality that my parents shouldn't believe what I told them because they said my rape never happened. My parents never took me to the psychologist again because they believed it really happened. So we never went to him. My parents, my mom never treated me in a different way.

The problem is that this tragedy caused SoonJa to have difficulties establishing relationships with the male partners in her life. SoonJa indicated that “after I was raped, I guess the only way to have boyfriends is to give my body or myself to them.” This pattern continued until she met her fiancée who is a Korean adoptee. She confessed that her fiancée was the first person who respected and loved who she is. The genuine relationship with her fiancée helped her realize that she did not need to utilize her body and have sex with men any longer.

She Ra also has gone through a similar problem. As she indicates,

When I started college, I've met all other Korean adoptees and other Asians. Then I really started to understand that this is something I really needed to do because I was having troubles in relationship like dating. It was difficult to understand man. So especially since I had three adoptive brothers, I had adoptive father who was physically abusive, I had a boyfriend after boyfriend after boyfriend that I couldn't connect, that they couldn't understand me about who I am, so I just felt I really felt threatened by men.

In the case of She Ra, sexual abuse is not the only reason why she had trouble establishing relationships with men in the U.S. Physical abuse from her family is another reason. She Ra said that because of the racial background, “[my adoptive parents] chose not to help me get involved with other people and help me understand that it's ok [that] I have black hair and I am not blonde and my eyes are smaller that

they never see it growing up.” Her adoptive father and four brothers inflicted racial discrimination on her, including physical abuse. The sexual abuse and the physical abuse led to serious problems for She Ra in establishing relationships with men.

The third phenomenon is that female Korean adoptees were sometimes considered not a daughter but a mistress. While the former two phenomena—ambivalent attitude and sexual and physical abuse—can take place fundamentally because of the mixture of gender and race, this phenomenon occurs out of the complication of gender, race, and adoption. Ivy described an experience that made her feel weird at her birthday party with her father:

I think there was another really disturbing moment growing up.... My parents got divorced. I'd spend time with my dad and go out for dinner. I remember one time when I was eating out for my birthday, all dressed up and we went out to a special restaurant. When I was seventeen years old and he must have been, oh, probably, fifty, I don't know forty to fifty; anyway, it's just so weird that everybody kept looking at. It was just weird. And I couldn't figure out why it was so weird. And I finally figured out that people thought that I was his mistress. And you know, for me as an Asian woman again coming back to stereotypes that we were just hypersexual. Here I was kind of celebrating my birthday with my dad. And people were making all completely wrong assumptions that were so uncomfortable. That was another important moment. That was when I realized that people have no idea about my relationship with my family and my dad.

At that time her parents were divorced, and her mother and sister could not join her party. But the problem is that although Ivy was an adoptive daughter, that an assumption that emerged out of a sexual stereotype of Asian women made Ivy question if she was part of her family.

Kelly Young had a similar experience. As she says,

Oh, another time I was at the airport with my dad. He had an arm in arm with me. We were a loving family, hugging and holding hands something like that growing up. It didn't bother me at all. And I never really think about it. My mom was behind us. We were in front. She was

with my sister. I was in front with my dad. And my mom said, “Hey, George. You need to get off your hands from your daughter.” We turned around like “What?” She was like you really take your arms off your daughter because it’s getting dirty old men’s looks from these people who walk down from the hallway. And he laughed. I laughed. He hugged me closer and kissed me on the top of my head. “I don’t care.” And I said, “Who cares?” So my mom noticed things more I think than the rest of us family does. She was more sensitive to that than I was.

Kelly Young did not clearly describe this incident in terms of stereotypes *per se*. But since she thought that this experience was related to race, she realized that there is a close relationship between race and gender.

While most female Korean adoptees described that there is a close relationship between gender discrimination and ethnic identity, they seem to believe that gender is more important than ethnic identity in their lives. Kelly Young found the similarities between gender identity formation and ethnic identity formation, saying that “both forced me to defend myself and I developed a strong sense of who I am both as Asian and a woman second.” But she continued to say that “I see myself as a woman first and an Asian.” In other words, although one constructs an ethnic identity through a dynamic interaction with gender, gender identity is more important to her.

Hana’s experience provides a clearer example for Kelly’s description. When she was in graduate school, she began to explore sexism first and then ethnic identity. She says,

A lot of my classmates of color were very much in the process. But curiously I was not much interested in the word. I did not feel personally invested. Instead, I felt very personally invested in issues of sexism because that’s how I felt oppressed when I was growing up between the way mother treated me and the way she treated my brother. So one way it’s like I interpreted it earlier. Because I was adopted she didn’t love me the way she loves her own child. But then later it was like because I am a girl, I am being treated like a second class citizen because I am a girl child not a boy. And then I really saw how growing up in that sexist mindset I felt completely worthless and devalued as a human being

because I was a girl. How much that influenced and affected my lack of self-esteem and my lack of confidence in my abilities and how I related to them all of these things. It was huge awakening for me. Fortunately it was a female dominant school. I was very angry with men not because of men in my life who mistreated me, but the whole system of sexism. I went into that whole process and then as well looking at the whole ethnic identity issues and looking at a racial identity model. That was pretty much what I studied in my master's program.

There is a difference between Kelly and Hana in terms of their experience of gender and race. While Kelly's experience of sexism came out of the interaction with the society, Hana's experience occurred within the family system. But both of them realized that their suffering was fundamentally related to the whole system of sexism and racism.

Female Korean adoptees' experiences offer two important lessons. First, while most research regarding transracial adoption focuses on only ethnic identity, female Korean adoptees' experiences show the necessity of research as to how people construct gender and ethnic identities together within the experience of adoption. Second, gender plays an important role in ethnic identity formation and reveals the connection between social systems and the formation of gender and ethnic identities.

Racial Discrimination from Key Communities

There are four characteristics in racial discrimination from the communities. The first one is that most Korean adoptees faced their first experience of racial discrimination at school, which led them to be aware of their racial difference. The age range of Korean adoptees transferred to the U.S. from Korea for adoption is from six months to six and half years old. Although raised in culturally and racially heterogeneous families, Korean adoptees did not exactly understand what adoption and racial differences meant until they faced racial discrimination at school. Those experiences brought them an unexpected psychological shock.

Racial discrimination is not the only reason why Korean adoptees began to be aware of racial differences and to explore the meaning of these differences. Some activities such as going to Korean culture school made Korean adoptees realize the significance of difference. Esther shared a memory. At a young age, she went to a Korean culture camp in which she was drawing a picture on a T-Shirt. There was *Kimchi* log with two Korean faces of a boy and a girl. Esther colored her person's hair blonde because her mother had blonde hair that she loved. When Esther went up to present it, all her teachers and her adoptive sister were surprised. She just wanted to color what she wanted to look like, but she realized that people colored the iron on patch to look like themselves.

However, many experiences of racial discrimination are different from Esther's because Korean adoptees had negative influences on their ethnic identity. There are two types of discrimination. The first one is verbal abuse, which is related to physical appearance. Consider, for example, An Nee's experience of verbal abuse.

I was in school, and a boy called me a Jap. I was so mad because I knew people called names all the time, but at that time this made me so mad that I hit him over his head with my lunch bag. And I ran home and my mother said, "What's the matter?" And I said, "Why aren't you an American? If you were an American, I would be white." That was my first time that I noticed that I am different.

This kind of racial slur was common in adoptees' experiences. Although Korean adoptees began to experience verbal abuse at a very young age, they continued to hear racial slurs even as adults.

The second type of racial discrimination that Korean adoptees experienced at school was physical abuse. SoonJa is an example who experienced physical abuse at a very young age:

When I was like six years old, I went to my mom and dad and begged them to take me back to Korea because I was picked on so much. I was beat on so much and I had rocks thrown or stones at me and was spit at. This is a story that I never told my mom and daddy because my mom and daddy always told me like, “Oh, kids can act like that. You should be not so sensitive to everything.” They just don’t understand.

The physical abuse was less common than the verbal abuse. A problem of this racial discrimination is that Korean adoptees were hurt and helpless. The only thing that they could do was to look for assistance from adoptive parents. Unfortunately many adoptive parents did not understand their adoptive children’s painful experiences. I will come back to the discussion of Korean adoptees’ relationship with their adoptive parents in the next section.

The second characteristic in racial discrimination from the communities is that while most Korean adoptees grew up in a small town, the issue is not the size of the town itself, but the attitude of the community toward Korean adoptees. Obviously many adoptees confessed that they had difficulty feeling accepted by the small town in which they grew up. For example, She Ra grew up in a very small town where about 1250 people lived:

We were in extremely small town and extremely homogeneous. And I mean, you know who Koreans are. When they see somebody different, they just don’t know what to do or how to deal with it. So I think they had difficulties to understand differences

She Ra said that there were a couple of Korean adoptees younger than her, and all of the residents in that town were Caucasians. She Ra had trouble feeling accepted because she believed that the town was extremely small and homogeneous. Chang Joo is another participant who described a similar opinion. Describing that he grew up in a small town where most of people were Swedish German people and that he was the only Asian in the whole county, Chang Joo also had difficulty feeling accepted.

However, there are different experiences that, while they felt accepted in a small town, some Korean adoptees moved to a metropolitan city and began to struggle with racism. For example, YoungAe grew up in a small town near Boston and then one of the metropolitan cities in Texas.

As we were becoming older, we moved to Texas. I kind of got out of the comfort zone I had. Maybe that's when I became more aware that I just look different. It was more of an issue for other people. I think because I grew up in Boston where we were so accepted. Everyone knew who we were. And we just never discussed about that, when we moved here that no people knew us, I had to explain to a lot of people why I don't look like my mom and my brother. That's when I started to realize differences. People treated me differently because of how you look different.

This difference shows that the size of the community where Korean adoptees grew up may not be an essential element for us to understand the negative influences toward Korean adoptees. The issue concerns the attitude toward differences, whether Korean adoptees live in a small or large town. Kelly Young said that "looking different would be a source of unpleasantness from some people, and [unpleasantness] was what I really disliked about looking different." It is important for the community to have a positive attitude toward being different so that Korean adoptees can feel accepted.

However, Korean adoptees are aware that anyone in any town can express racial abhorrence. Jasmine said that while she never had any negative experiences growing up in the small town, she came across a weird happening about five years ago.

Somebody had covered our front porch and our door with the white supremacy propaganda. I don't know who that person was. It happened for a week. But I am not sure what he was. No one ever expressed, you know, a problem or anything toward me.

Since that time, Jasmine was scared of people in the neighborhood because she did not know who that person was and what people were really thinking about. On the other hand, although she never thought that she is an Asian until she looks at a mirror, that

occurrence made her aware that in her neighborhood she was an Asian and she was different from everybody.

The third characteristic is that Korean adoptees felt rejected by the Korean community in the U.S. Aviva emphasized that it is important for Korean adoptees to get to know the Korean heritage because Korean culture is one of the essential elements for Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation.

Unfortunately, the Korean American community in the U.S. did not help these Korean adoptees feel accepted and connected. Alex described that many members of Asian and Korean communities had a hard time accepting Korean adoptees. He continued to say that Korean speaking Koreans were just trying to find their own way of life. The trouble, he believed, occurred because of a language barrier and cultural differences. His assumption is that if he could have spoken Korean much better and he could have had a much more similar Korean culture, the relationship with Koreans in the U.S. would have been much better and they would have welcomed him with open arms.

However, Alex's expectation may not have come true. Hewha is an example to show that although there were no language barriers, she could not feel accepted. She has tried to establish a close relationship with English-Speaking Korean American students who were culturally Americanized because she did not want to feel bad about herself. Although there were no language barriers between Hewha and that group, Korean American students did not accept Hewha as part of their group. Hewha said that "They decided not to be open and they decided to be exclusive." She experienced abandonment by Korean American students. As she says,

All these kids basically picked on me like “Your hair is too short,” or “Your clothes would be too...” I don’t know... my appearance was that of white person. They would say... they would call me white washed.

Hewha mentioned that the fundamental problem is not a language barrier or culture difference, but an attitude of the second generation Korean Americans. Her experience shows that Alex’s expectation may not come true. Although Alex could have spoken Korean much better and had a similar culture, he might still have experienced rejection by the Korean community.

A question emerges that, if language barriers and cultural differences may not be a primary reason why the Korean American community rejects Korean adoptees, what would be a reason that Korean adoptees feel rejected? An experience of Chang Joo may provide a clue with which we can discuss causes. He believed that the Korean community considers Korean adoptees a problem. As he says,

It was very interesting talking to them about adoption. They were not sure how to deal with the issue of adoption because they knew that many Koreans are adopted. Minnesota actually had a lot of Korean adoptees population. So it was kind of interesting. One thing is [that] when they got to know you, it was like they were talking to you, blablabla, and then found that you are a Korean adoptee. Their response was like, “Wow, wait a minute.” It was like there was that little tension... From the first generation point of view, if a person is adopted, that means that either parent had a problem of honor. You know what that means? Like an honor issue, when they think about Korean adoptees, like, “Oh, then you must have come from a poor family or your parents must have been out of wedlock like that.

The problem is connected to shame embedded in Korean culture. From the statement of Chang Joo, we can draw a conclusion. The Korean speaking or first generation Korean Americans tended to reject Korean adoptees because of the issue of shame, and the second generation Korean Americans adopted their parent’s attitude. This tendency does not mean that all members of second generation Korean Americans reject Korean

adoptees. For example, when Aviva went to Korean school at a young age, she established a close relationship with second generation Korean Americans. Some second generation Korean Americans did not seem to inherit the demonic culture of shame about Korean adoptees. But in some cases, the shame embedded in Korean culture has transferred from generation to generation.

Because of this culture of shame, SoonJa became separated from her former fiancée. She was about to go to Korea in order to marry him and come back to the U.S. together. Everything was fine until his fiancée visited his parents in Korea. Then her fiancée notified her that it was useless to visit Korea because the relationship between them was over. Although she did not get any appropriate explanation from her fiancée, she knew deep down in her heart that because SoonJa was a Korean adoptee, her fiancée's family influenced him and the relationship between them was over.

However, the Korean American community in the U.S. accepts Korean adoptees who have accomplished achievements in the professional work. As Hewha says,

And so it's funny because the Korean [American] community... accepts me. I think it is because I am on television. I think if I were just normal, if I just said I am adopted, I don't think they [would have] treated me in the same way, because I know once you are in the orphanage, you are always an orphan. It's a bad mentality. But because of my job, I think people are nice to me.

Hewha wanted to take an advantage of this experience and to help connect the Korean American community to the Korean adoption society.

The fourth characteristic in racial discrimination from the communities is that most Korean adoptees did not describe any discrimination in the relationship with a religious community except just Chang Joo who felt disconnected from his church. Chang Joo started to attend his parent's church at a young age, but he felt lonely

because church members were all White and he was the only Asian in that church community. Later Chang Joo moved to a mega-church because his parents wanted to. That mega-church was not a place for him to feel right because, although there were many people around, he did not interact with them. His journey did not stop there.

After college, after college, I left that church. I wanted to look for my own because I wanted to find a church that I feel comfortable. I felt like forced to go to something that challenged me, and also find who I am as a person... So I started looking around and looked down online and checked out other different churches for multi-cultural churches... So I checked out different churches and found a Korean Presbyterian church in Minnesota. I checked that out with English ministry. It was very interesting and I joined that out. And then later on, English ministry members broke a part and found their own church called Church of Nations. The Church of Nations' pretty much made of the second generation Korean Americans and some first generation Korean Americans and then Korean adoptees and other minorities. We had Somalians, Kenyans, and Latinos. It was really cool.

While Chang Joo felt disconnected from churches whose majority is White, he felt acceptable in Church of Nations which is characterized as diverse, culturally and racially.

However, many Korean adoptees did not think that religion played an important function in their ethnic identity formation. An example is Ivy:

I was brought up in a very religious household, which I mean Methodist Protestant. My grandfather was a minister in Minnesota. We went to church every Sunday and we were very conscious with that. I mean that's part of who I am and part of culture I grew up in a very religious family. But in terms of my ethnic identity, I don't think that affected me that much.

She Ra also did not believe that church communities were an important fact that impacted her ethnic identity, arguing that "for me, there is no relationship between [church communities] and ethnic identity." But whenever she was struggling with who

she was, She Ra turned to God who helped her be strong. In other words, a relationship with God is crucial in her life.

Racial Discrimination from Adoptive Families

The description of racial discrimination from adoptive families may not discourage adoptive families who make all efforts to support their adoptive children. We should recognize the love and commitment that many adoptive parents have shown to their adoptive children. But there are two reasons that I want to develop this section. First, many Korean adoptees expressed the racial discrimination from their adoptive families. This reality reminds us of Suchocki's argument that the structure of relationships mediates vulnerability to dangers and destructions as well as openness to strength and richness.¹ Second, since Korean adoptees had experiences of abandonment at a very young age, the inappropriate support from adoptive parents might make their suffering worse. The racial discrimination from adoptive families can put Korean adoptees at a risk.

Adoptive families practice two types of racial discrimination: active and passive. Active discrimination involves physical and emotional abuse. Passive discrimination involves ignoring their adoptive children's painful experiences and failing to provide understanding and support. The latter is more common than the former.

The experiences of She Ra provide an example for the first type of racial discrimination of adoptive families. She suffered from verbal and physical abuse from her adoptive family. She remembered that "even when I was a little kid, I tried to get

¹ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The End of Evil* (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), 81.

my nose bigger, because my brothers made fun of me in front of my father. My nose was too small.” That was not the only thing that she suffered.

I felt that they were both emotionally abusive. I remember like the times that they have hit me growing up. It was really common, yes, people do hit their children at times, but they weren't compassionate. I don't think they were very good people. So we fought all the time. I never felt that I was part of their family. I felt like they always they were supposed to be my parents, but they never made me feel that I was their family.

Facing emotional and physical abuse, she made a decision to leave this abusive family because when she was in junior high, “it got to the point where I knew that for my mental health and for my physical health I had to leave.” Obviously that decision put her at risk because She Ra was too young to survive in society. But her harmful relationship with the adoptive family was so destructive that she made a decision to put herself at risk.

She Ra clearly described racism as a main reason for her suffering. Her adoptive parents wanted to adopt a white child. Unfortunately they did not get a chance because it was too expensive and they had to wait about two years. After learning that, they made a decision to adopt a Korean kid because people in that area tended to adopt Korean kids. But the problem was that they had difficulty understanding racial differences. Because of that issue, her adoptive family imposed emotional and physical abuse on her.

The second type of racial discrimination by adoptive families is the ignorance of their adoptive children's suffering from discrimination, and failure to provide understanding and emotional support. Many adoptive parents often do not tend to respond to their adoptive children's request for help seriously, when their adoptive children suffered from racial discrimination within their communities. As mentioned

earlier, when SoonJa shared her suffering with her adoptive parents, her mother took that incident seriously, thinking that was a happening between children. But a boy from her school did not stop discriminating against and harassing SoonJa. As she says,

And I was just sick of it. I kept telling him, "Stop it and leave me alone." You know, he was calling me a Chink. He said like, "You got slanted eyes. You eat a dog." And I said, "Stop it. Stop picking on me. Leave me alone. Go home." And at that time I said like three or four times and he didn't leave me alone. I finally got sick of it. I still don't know how I did it. But I grabbed this boy and slapped him over his back. I slapped him over side walk. He laughed and still picked on me. So I got sick of it. And I kept telling him, "Shut up." And I kicked him telling him to shut up and to leave me alone. And I kicked him so badly and he got a bloody nose and he got like black and blue eyes. He was pretty badly beaten up. I beat up this boy. And I went home crying.

Hearing about that incident, SoonJa's adoptive mother got angry at her and commanded her to apologize to this boy for her bad behaviors. Reactions like SoonJa's adoptive mother's were common. Sasha shared a similar experience. She talked about her experiences of discrimination with her parents, but her parents just considered it as one of the usual happenings among kids.

Although many adoptive parents said that they loved their adoptive children, they often hated other people of color. An example is Ivy's father. When Ivy was eleven years old, she was walking down the street. Suddenly a stranger came up to her and started to scream about Pearl Harbor and racial slurs. Embarrassed by this incident, Ivy brought up that topic in front of her parents. Her father very openly admitted to racism. But when she was growing up, it was hard to understand her father's attitude.

I think he loved me in his own way. He probably was ok to love me, but hated everybody else of color. I think that he justified and rationalized this attitude.

Her adoptive mother's attitude was different from that of her adoptive father. She was more open to talking about racial discrimination within the communities. But her

adoptive father's ambivalent attitude toward racism made it difficult for her to understand what it exactly means. Chang Joo said that in terms of ethnic identity it is important to be around people who understand how Korean adoptees feel and support who they are. If the relationship is so crucial for Korean adoptees, the adoptive parents' support and understanding is necessary for their adoptive children. Unfortunately, many adoptive parents often failed to provide appropriate support to their adoptive Korean children.

Cultural Discrimination

The issue of ethnic identity and culture is not a new topic because many immigrants in the U.S., no matter whether they are first, second, or third generation, go through the struggle to understand the relationship between ethnic identity and culture in their life. But for Korean adoptees, this issue is quite different for two reasons. First, adoption implies the loss of culture of one's birth country. When Korean adoptees in the U.S. were separated from their birth parents and adopted by Caucasian parents, this separation implied not only the loss of relationships with people to whom children are biologically connected, but also the loss of their cultural heritage. Second, it is not easy for Korean adoptees to contact the Korean culture because most Korean adoptees were adopted and raised in culturally and racially heterogeneous families. This reality gives Korean adoptees different experiences involving the issue of culture and race than non-adopted immigrants.

When Korean adoptees grew up in heterogeneous families, the culture of their birth country played an important role in Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation. Their physical appearance kept challenging them to reflect upon what it means to be different between inside and outside. They feel American inside and Korean or Asian

outside. Although they were culturally Americanized in the dynamics with their adoptive parents and the communities in the U.S., their Korean characteristics in physical appearance bring some tension in understanding who they are. For example, an image that YoungAe got from her friends was that of the banana. As she says,

[My friends] would actually call me banana [be]cause they don't need outside, but they need inside. There have been times when some one made comments about my being Asian. My friends joked asking me if I am an Asian. Like when I first got hired by an agency, now a foster care agency, my supervisor interviewed me and told my co-workers he was going to hire me. They asked him what color I was. He said I was an Asian. They got all excited and said we are going to bring some culture into our group. But my boss said, 'No, she is a white girl.' He said that I am a white girl after we had met one hour.

By the image of banana, it means that YoungAe is white inside and yellow outside. She Ra also explained the experience of the similar tension between inside and outside:

I was alone. And I don't think people understand that. I think it is easier for people to just turn and blame eyes and not understanding those differences. Even if they are Asian or nonAsian, people don't understand that, especially when you are biracial people. They just don't understand, Yes, I am Asian. I look Asian. I go by my Korean name. But actually I am white inside. You know, I am not a typical Asian. Yeah. I do have part of me that is Asian. I love Kimchi. But I am not completely Asian.

In order to understand who they are in the midst of this tension, Korean adoptees must understand what it means to be Korean outside. Korean culture can provide a source through which Korean adoptees can understand themselves.

If we believe that Korean culture is still important for Korean adoptees' development, the crucial role of adoptive parents is to provide resources of Korean culture through Korean language school, Korean culture camp, and so forth. When adoptive parents made significant efforts to provide their adoptive children with as many resources as possible, their children experienced many positive consequences. For an example, Aviva reconstructed her ethnic identity through Korean culture:

My ethnicity was changed because I learned *Poongmoolnori*² when I was a 6th grader. And I really liked that. So I guess in some way I was really interested in them. In that way, yes, but I wasn't conscious of changing my identity and like figure out my ethnic identity or anything like that.

Aviva's reconstruction of her ethnic identity was a result of her adoptive parents' efforts.

From the time Aviva was young, her adoptive parents arranged for her to go to Korean school and Korean culture camp so that she could learn Korean culture.

Aviva was not the only person who experienced the reconstruction of their ethnic identity through Korean culture. Esther described how her adoptive parent's effort impacted ethnic identity formation. As she says,

They celebrated our Korean heritage and my mother would make Korean foods every once in a while. A friend of ours traveled to Korea to visit her son in the armed forces. My mother asked her to purchase Korean Hanbok [Korean traditional cloth] for us. So we celebrated the date we arrived in the United States and called it our arrival date. It was almost another birthday. And we celebrated that. So I think that made a very large impact on the fact that I am Korean.

The exposure to Korean culture does not guarantee that Korean adoptees can always experience positive results from their contact with Korean culture. YoungAe's adoptive parents helped her go to Korean culture school that had been offered by an adoption agency. But she just stopped going there. Yumi also had negative experiences with Korean culture camp. Although she had fun learning Korean history, culture, dancing, Yumi stopped going to Korean culture camp because she did not like the generalizations about Korean adoptees:

² *Poongmoolnori* is part of the Korean traditional music, which is composed of six musical instruments: (1) *Kwaeing-gwari* (small type of percussion as *Jing*); (2) *Jing* (brass gong with a diameter of about 35centimeters); (3) *Jang-gu* (large type of drum); (4) *Taepyeongso* (instrument for melody); (5) *Buk* (a drum painted dragon on it); and (6) *Sogo* (small type of drum).

I've met some people at the Korean culture camp, but I was bad about keeping in touch with them. So I don't really keep in touch with anyone. We were much different. Although there was a whole huge group of kids who were adopted, there wasn't much similar. But I think everyone in one's own little way thinks of me as a token Asian.

The variety of Korean adoptees' experiences shows that contacting Korean culture is not like a vending machine through which we can expect positive experiences. But something seems better than nothing.

Ivy had no contact to Korean culture when she was growing up. She knew that she was a Korean from a very young age. But since there was no contact with Korean culture, she denied the Korean part of herself until she was twenty five.

I'd strongly associated with German Protestant white upper middle class. When I felt that way, I just kind of suppressed the Korean part of me. Around that time, when I was twenty five, I went through a lot of personal and emotional stress in my job, a lot of personal stress and a lot of change and at that point I decided that I needed to not ignore that and figured out what it meant to me. So I started to take Taekwondo and be with other Koreans. I also started to learn to speak Korean, trying Korean foods.

When Korean adoptees are not encouraged to contact the Korean culture, they might suffer from a denial of the Korean part of who they are.

One interesting observation from Korean adoptees' experiences is that, in some cases, Korean adoptees' denial about their identity as Korean is not connected to the adoptive parents' attitudes toward Korean culture itself, but to those parents' psychological problems. Many adoptive parents assumed that when their adoptive children were exposed to Korean culture, they might locate birth parents and then attempt to disconnect from the relationship with their adoptive parents. It is true that most adoptees attempt to locate their birth parents one time in their lives. But they just want to share some stories with their birth parents that they are living well and their

parents made a good decision for birth children. Soonja shared a psychological struggle with her adoptive parents:

If God gives me an opportunity that I can find my birth mom, I don't want to have relationship with her. All I want to do is just to thank her that she made a best decision in her life of giving me up. That's all I want to do. She doesn't know me and then how can we have a relationship? She doesn't know me. She doesn't know my favorite color. She doesn't know what makes me happy, what makes me so sad. She doesn't know what my favorite foods are. Nothing. We don't have anything in common. The only bond that we have is that she gave birth to me. But she is not my parents. She'd never be my parents. My real parents are my adoptive parents. They'd always be my parents. I learned that when you gave birth to a child, it does not mean that you become a parent automatically. I learned that I love my adoptive parents dearly.

But SoonJa said that "I had to constantly reassure my parents that I had no desire to look for my birth mom and I don't ever want to look for my [birth] mom." There is a difference in perception between SoonJa and her adoptive parents.

SoonJa is not the only participant who experienced their adoptive parents' issue of fear. YoungAe described her adoptive mother, who struggled with the feeling of fear as a person who adopted a Korean child:

I am really close to my mom...to my adoptive mom. I know that she would feel threatened by birth families no matter whatever reason. Even though it was thirty years ago that I was born, my mom would still get nervous about it. Part of the reason why she adopted from Korea was... internationally, was because she fears birth families' finding, you know whatever child they adopted. You know that's why they did that. She still feels sense of threat about it... uh... [be]cause it was two weeks ago. when we were out, I told her I had to tell you something. She said something about did your birth mom would try to find you. I mean she just brought it up out of nowhere.

Ivy is also another person who shared a similar experience:

I think part of the reason why I could not explore who I am as Korean was that I never wanted my adoptive parents to be hurt. And I never wanted them to feel like what they gave me was denied. So when I got older, I wasn't living with them and wasn't dependent, you know, it

became easier to explore who am I and what would I want in other life. It seemed like I left pain for them.

Ivy mentioned that she did not want to hurt her adoptive parents and that she could not be a Korean. It may not be easy to come to the conclusion that the adoptive parents' personal issue is the only reason for Korean adoptees' denial. There might be a complication of dynamics between adoptive parents and adoptive children. Chang Joo said that a lot of Korean adoptees feel insecure and that some of them became "people pleasers." In other words, part of the reason some Korean adoptees suffer from a denial of the Korean part of who they are may be related to the adoptees' feelings of insecurity.

However, what I want to discuss here is that the adoptive parents' personal issues often cause serious problems for Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation. The reality that many adoptees struggled with a crisis of ethnic identity when they went to college or when they were away from their adoptive parents informs an important implication. The exposure to the multicultural community might be one of the reasons why many adoptees struggle at that time. But since many Korean adoptees share a concern about their adoptive parent's personal issues, the change of dynamics in relationship between the adoptive parents and the adoptive children may be another reason why many Korean adoptees have gone through a significant stage in their ethnic identity formation in college.

Korean Adoptees' Sufferings

The second question that I would like to explore concerns how negative influences impacted Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation in terms of suffering.

Those sufferings include feelings of loneliness, disconnection from relationships, violence, and suicide.

Feelings of Loneliness

These feelings are related to the question about which group Korean adoptees fit in to. Some do not feel that they belong with any group, but feel stuck in the middle.

Soonja described herself as one who was torn:

I felt stuck in the middle. I didn't belong with my white friends. I didn't belong with my Korean friends. Where did I fit? You know, I was torn. You know, my culture is American inside of me, but I am a Korean outside of me. And I really struggled about that.

YoungAe shared a similar experience. As she says,

When I was [in college], I realized that I was not so much accepted by white students. But I also realized that I was not so much accepted by Korean or Asian students either. I never felt in the group.

Caucasian Americans and Korean Americans are not the only groups that Korean adoptees did not fit into. Korean adoptees also felt that they did not fit into other Asian groups. An example is Chang Joo. When Chang Joo was going to college, he started to hang out with many Asian friends because there was a pretty big Hmong community.

[However] there was a little tension between the Hmong and me. It's like we understood each other, but not really. These kids were born in the U.S., but they still had their certain culture because of their parents. It's interesting to see differences between them and me. But I noticed Asians are a lot more racially stereotypical and they are not capable of accepting other minorities.

Since Korean adoptees did not fit in any group, they suffered from the feeling of loneliness. She Ra's experience is one of the examples. She Ra's adoptive parents had three biological boys. The older brothers got married, but they did not invite She Ra to their wedding. They did not consider She Ra as a person because they assumed that She Ra was not qualified to participate in the celebration.

As mentioned earlier, since many Korean adoptees said that they had an issue of attachment, Korean adoptees' suffering from the feeling of loneliness might not just emerge out of the external influences. She Ra mentioned on her issue that "I felt that I wasn't secure myself...I had a lot of attachment issues." Chang Joo added a similar statement:

What's interesting is I think a lot of adoptees and myself have insecurity issues. For me I grew up in an orphanage for five and half years and I still have psychological things and can't trust in many people. I can trust only few close people. I still have psychological issues having trouble connecting with people, learning how to like them and love them, having emotional bonds with them.

These psychological issues, common in many adoptees, might play a partial role in Korean adoptees' feelings of loneliness. But the negative influences in the relationship with the community including adoptive parents made the feelings of loneliness get worse.

Disconnection from Relationship

The Korean adoptees in this research project suffer from two types of relationship disconnection. The first one is physical and emotional separation from adoptive parents. Facing verbal and physical abuse from her adoptive family, She Ra attempted to physically separate herself from her adoptive family.

I never felt that I am part of their family. I felt like they always were supposed to be my parents, but they never made me feel that I am their family. When they introduced me growing up, they always introduced their three boys and then this is an adopted child. And they'd always do that to me and we were not like a comprehensive family. So the fight kind of was escalated. And I was just tired of it and I had run away a couple of times. When I was in junior high, which is a difficult time for anyone, it got to the point where I knew that for my mental health and for my physical health I had to leave. I was tired of it. I was tired of fighting all the time and then I was arguing with my adoptive father. When I was a senior in my high school, I argued and I said like, "I do not need to do it any more." He said like, "Fine, get out of my house." So I

said, “Fine” and then I packed my bag and left. Because he said, “If you leave the door, you can’t come back,” I said, “fine.”

She Ra is an example of physical separation from her adoptive parents that emerged from her attempt to protect herself from physical and psychological harm.

There is also the psychological separation from the adoptive parents. Chang Joo described the relationship with his adoptive parents and said that there is no psychological connection with them.

For me, it’s like interesting I don’t tell my parents who adopted me how I really feel about their issues and the personal issues that I have. I don’t talk to them. I talk to people like my friends’ parents. It’s kind of funny. I trust people more than my parents who adopted me. It’s really sad, but I think, this is just my opinion, I think a lot of Korean adoptees have the similar issue like they want to trust their parents, but they can’t.

Chang Joo’s opinion may retain a danger of generalization. But Chang Joo showed an example for the psychological separation from the adoptive parents.

Alex said that he does not have any respect for his adoptive parents. Although his parents adopted him because they heard that they could not have babies any more, they had a biological child. And then the dynamics between Alex and his adoptive parents were changed and Alex believed that his adoptive parents did not provide appropriate care to him. Alex said that he still loves his adoptive parents, but that he does not have any respect for them.

The second type of relationship disconnection is divorce. Seven out of sixteen participants are/were married, and all seven are female participants. Out of seven participants, three have gone through divorce and remarriage and one was divorced and remains single. We may not argue that the divorce rate in the adoption society is high because the number of the participants is small. The importance of the divorce in these participants’ lives is that they suffered from divorce at the time of crisis in their lives.

Ivy went through her ethnic identity crisis when she was twenty five. The crisis made her disengage from the relationship with her Caucasian husband.

I have been in a long-term relationship with a Caucasian man. We have been together for eight years and we have been married for five years. I had felt very strongly I didn't want to have children. I had a lot of stress in the professional life, you know, high responsibility job. And I was breaking up with my husband and then I was realizing that I needed to figure out who I am.

After she began to absorb Korean culture, Ivy met her current Caucasian husband. Since her husband worked as a Taekwondo instructor, he was very immersed in Korean culture and language. Ivy said that her current husband changed her relationship with herself and others.

Hana also experienced the dissolution of a relationship at a time of crisis. She had a boyfriend in college. He was an American Indian. After Hana came back from the Peace Corps, her relationship with her boyfriend became serious. Then they moved to the metropolitan area so that her boyfriend could pursue a doctoral program. But Hana broke up with him. As she says,

I was very unhappy there. And suddenly I realized what I was doing here. I felt like I was tagging along. I wasn't feeling like I was living my own life. And so I was very unhappy.

Her crisis was related to her identity. Then she began to pursue the essential questions regarding her identity at a graduate school.

I described Korean adoptees' disconnection from a relationship in two types: (1) the psychological and physical disconnection of relationship with adoptive parents; and (2) the process of divorce. It is obvious that the process of disconnection of relationship is painful, but it is a way for adoptees to protect themselves from harmful situations. In

a sense, the disconnection of relationship made Korean adoptees take a journey to reconceptualize their identity.

Violence

The negative influences that emerged out of the system often made Korean adoptees express their anger in the form of violence. As mentioned earlier, SoonJa was suffering from racial discrimination by a boy from her school, but she could not find any help from her adoptive parents. Sick and tired of the continuous racial discrimination from this boy, SoonJa exploded into violence. Her violent behavior emerged from the continuous physical and verbal abuse that the boy had imposed. It looks like the violent behavior took place just one time because she did not mention about any other happenings.

However, violent behaviors could be repeated. For example, She Ra was exposed to physical and verbal abuse from her adoptive parents from the time she was young. When she was in high school, she left her adoptive family because of her mental and physical health. This separation emerged out of racial discrimination from She Ra's adoptive family. The disconnection of the relationship could not stop She Ra's suffering. First, since that time on she had to live on her own and suffered from serious financial problems. Second, she had trouble establishing relationships with men. Third, violent behaviors became a pattern in her life. As she says,

And once I had somebody and was dating him for a while, it was really difficult for me. I think my parents were physically abusive. When we would get into fight, my parents would hit me. So when I'd fight with ... people that I was dating, I'd hit them. For a while, that was really difficult from me. When I was dating guys and when I was fighting with them, I'd slap them and I'd hit them. So it was really difficult for me to break that pattern. Plus, I didn't feel that I was emotionally ready to be with someone because of all difficulties that I had with my parents growing up. So it was a struggle. I am actually married now. It was really

hard. This is the struggle I had through the college with dating because I didn't really date in high school [be]cause I didn't think people wanted to date with me and I didn't think that I was pretty enough. So I didn't really understand how to build relationships with people in general because my mom and dad were always together, and they always fought and we did it too.

In her perception, the pattern of the violent behavior was a product of the abusive relationship with her adoptive parents. The problem is that this pattern impacts relationships with others.

Korean adoptees often developed violent behavior in very dangerous ways. In Alex's case, he was exposed to racism many times from the time he was very young. Alex was angry at that situation and his hatred was cumulative. He said that "I was on a downward spiral for some ten years." He expressed his anger in the form of fighting many times. He ended up joining a gang and becoming a criminal. A reason why he joined in the gang was that he could feel connection in that group.

Knowing that simple thing when you call somebody to be there for you, when you see somebody else on the street or whatever, there is a sense of belonging whatever. When you run out of club or wherever you go to people's houses or parties something like that, they'd recognize who you are. Pretty much like that.

Alex could not feel any sense of connection with the communities—school, his adoptive family, and the Korean community in the U.S. In order to find a sense of belongingness, he risked his life. The matter of the racial discrimination is not just connected to the feeling of connection, but also to life.

Suicide

SoonJa was struggling with her ethnic identity when she was going to college. She started to hang out with Korean students. But they told her that "Oh, SoonJa. You are not a true Korean. Stop trying to act like a Korean because you are not a Korean."

SoonJa argued that “Yes, my culture is American. But my blood is Korean. Therefore, I am a Korean.” This incident made her realize that she does not fit with Korean friends. She could not feel connected to any group.

SoonJa’s tragedy became worsened by the disconnection of her relationship with her former fiancée. SoonJa was engaged to a Korean boyfriend. The relationship between them was fine until he came back to Korea. SoonJa was planning on going to Korea to marry him and come back to the U.S. When she bought an air ticket and everything, her fiancée said that “Don’t come. Things are off between us.” Her fiancée did not give any reason, but SoonJa knew deep down in her heart that this tragedy took place because she is a Korean adoptee. Failing to fit into any group, she went into a deep depression and tried to kill herself.

SoonJa was not the only person who attempted to commit suicide. An Nee described her sad experience in this way:

I remember saying to my mother one time when we were in the kitchen. I had a butcher knife and I have been to drug store to buy something to fade out my freckle. I said to my mother, “I need to kill myself because I am too ugly and nobody likes the freckles and it was partly because Korean people didn’t accept me and American people didn’t accept me, no matter what I did I wasn’t accepted.

An Nee’s desire to commit suicide was not a one time event. She said that she had a suicidal tendency from the time she was a kid. This tendency was related to her ethnic identity. An Nee used to pray that “God, why did you make me like this? How unkind of you to make me this way. You could have made me right, and then I wouldn’t hurt people.” An Nee’s attempt to commit suicide was connected to the question about her ethnic identity.

Alex also thought about committing suicide, but his idea about committing suicide could have led to a serious tragedy. Facing the racial discrimination from the communities and having difficulty finding any sense of belongingness with any group, Alex became hateful toward everybody and his feeling of anger was accumulated.

I have thoughts about committing suicide. I mean I have thought about it just as much as just hurting somebody else as well as my parents. I mean all around we were just hateful. We hated everybody for any reason. That was pretty much it.

Alex had his biological brother and they grew up in the care of the same adoptive parents. But the racial discrimination and their difficulties building relationships with their adoptive parents made them think about hurting themselves as well as others.

Korean Adoptees' Human Agency

Now, I turn to the question of how Korean adoptees utilized their human agency to construct healthy ethnic identity. This question focuses on how Korean adoptees become active of agents of change in constructing and reconstructing ethnic identity. Becoming active agents of change was expressed in two common themes. Those common themes include (1) multiple ethnic identification, and (2) on-going reconstruction of ethnic identity.

Multiple Ethnic Identification

I would like to start this section with Traver's understanding of Korean adoptees' ethnic identity because she was the first Korean adoptee who attempted to illustrate an ethnic identity continuum of adult Korean adoptees. The figure of that continuum is illustrated as below.³

³ Traver, 95.

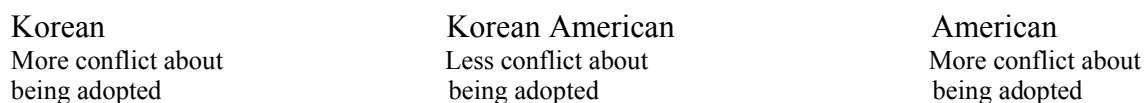


Figure 1: Traver's Ethnic identity Continuum

There are two characteristics in this continuum. First, Traver believes that adult Korean adoptees' ethnic identity falls somewhere on a continuum that is composed of Korean, Korean American, and American. But Traver insists that Korean adoptees' ethnic identity is a lifelong process and that identity continues to move on this continuum depending on various influences. Those influences include adoptees' relationships with adoptive parents, with kids at public school, with people at college, with visiting Koreans, and with co-workers. In other words, Korean adoptees' ethnic identity is not fixed but in process. Third, Traver maintains that there is a close connection between ethnic identification and adoption experiences. In Traver's view, while Korean adoptees who are less conflicted with being adopted tend to consider Korean American, others who are more conflicted with being adopted tend to identify them as Koreans or Americans.

Some Korean adoptees' experiences appear to reflect Traver's argument. For example, Hana provided a detailed explanation why she should consider herself as Korean American adoptee.

Clearly I am an American. First I grew up here, so culturally, you know, my perspective and my worldview... I don't have common things with Koreans on the cultural level the surface level. But at the same time there is a big part of me that is a Korean. When I came back to the U.S., I think I was definitely a lot more grounded. Being cleared, I know my heritages, you know, I know where I come from in the world. Growing up, I never identified with American history or European history. It never connected to that, but Korean history I felt really connected to it too. So it is interesting. I can't say that I am bicultural perfectly. I don't know

that I can say really that way. And actually what that means is that each one is very different, isn't it? But I felt like much more grounded about who I am and, you know, about being a Korean American and about being an adoptee.

Adopted and raised by a Korean mother and a Caucasian father, Hana considered herself to be American because she was culturally Americanized. But a visit to Korea was not the only incident to impact her identity; a spiritual experience and meeting with Korean American women helped her reconstruct her ethnic identity. In other words, her identity was constructed and reconstructed in interaction with various influences in her life.

While many Korean adoptees like Hana considered themselves to be a Korean American adoptee, some others corrected the general tendency and argued that they are not Korean American adoptees but American Korean adoptees. For example, Ree Soo Sang considered himself to be an American Korean adoptee. In other words, Ree Soo Sang believed that the American part of who he is comes first, and then the Korean part:

I've always thought about myself as being a child of God. And true adoption is becoming a child of God. And then I can closely relate that to my adoptive parents who adopted me to their family, and providing care and love just like Jesus has. As I accepted him into my heart, I believe that's most central in my identity. And secondly comes to my adoptive parents adopting me and attached to that. Then, my identity is American Korean, understanding that the majority of my life has been in America and my understanding that I was born... from a Korean parent and my understanding that God has created me as Korean. Therefore, I act and think completely differently...than other people in America... Viewing it that way causes me to be able to overcome a lot of those differences.

In Ree Soo Sang's case, the relationship with God provides a basis for his ethnic identity. His ethnic identification is integrated into the relationship with God. Ree Soo Sang found the meaning of racial difference in God's creation. But he considered that

American part of who he is comes first because he has been in American culture for the majority of his life.

Kelly Young also stood in a similar line with Ree Soo Sang, considering herself to be American Korean or American Asian. She argues that many Asian Americans consider themselves Asian first and then American. But in her case, the American part of who she is comes first and then the Korean part comes next.

I see the similarities between my gender and my ethnic identity. Both force me to defend myself and I developed a strong sense of who I am both as Asian and a woman. Similar to my view of myself as American first and Asian second, I see myself as a person first and a woman second. That is how I'd like to be viewed.

While she considered herself to be an American Korean, she said that her identity is still in process because she is exploring her Korean identity in the relationship with other Korean adoptees and Korean culture. These examples seem to support Traver's argument that their identity moves on the continuum that is composed of Korean, Korean American, and American.

However, there are two problems in Traver's argument. First, Traver argues that while Korean adoptees who consider themselves Korean American are less conflicted with being adopted, the other who consider themselves Korean or American are more conflicted with being adopted. This argument is not persuasive. There are two examples. The first one is She Ra who claimed that she considers herself to be a Korean American adoptee. But she suffered from racial discrimination from her adoptive family and then was separated from them because of physical and psychological health. The second example is Ivy who said that she considers herself to be American. Ivy faced a moment of crisis when she was twenty five. From that time on, she began to explore who she was as Korean. It does not mean that she was conflicted with being adopted. The

relationship with her adoptive family went well. She now considers herself as American.

These examples reject Traver's assumption about the relationship between ethnic identity and adoption.

Second, there is a danger of generalization in Traver's argument because Korean adoptees' ethnic identities are more multiple and diverse. There are several examples.

The first one is Ivy's ethnic identity. Ivy considered herself as just American:

My response is always, "I am an American," because that's my region where I grew up and my culture I fit in and I live. [People] can't accept that. They will say that I look a Korean, but my answer is, "I am an American."

But YoungAe did not claim herself to be American, but just White:

I still [consider myself] as White. Honestly I am not trying to pretend I am not. It's funny, because of all my friends, I am still best friends for them. It's on going joke for them because they don't see me as an Asian. I have one friend. She went to college. They asked her in one of the classes. Professors asked all students to raise their hands if they had any friends who were in a different race. She did not raise her hand. She is white. She didn't raise her hand... [My friends] always joke me around telling me that I am whiter than them.

While Ivy and YoungAe consider themselves as just American or White, Alex's perception is much different. He considered himself as just Asian.

When I was a kid and teenager, I wanted to be like a white guy. All the people I grew up with were white guys. As I got older, I identified with a lot more Asians. Most of my friends are Asians. It does not mean that I did not go along with White guys, but I felt more comfortable with the people who more look like me. I do not discriminate between any of them, but I appreciate the fact that I was being accepted by Asians.

Like many Korean adoptees, Alex struggled with ethnic identity at a young age. But he never claimed that part of himself is White or American or Korean, but he is just an Asian. A reason for this identification emerged out of his comfortable relationship with Asians.

Aviva's perception is a little different from that of other participants as she considered herself to be a Jewish Korean American adoptee. Because Aviva was adopted by a Jewish family, she went to Hebrew school as well as Korean school once a week. She believes that she became Jewish culturally.

These examples show that Korean adoptees' ethnic identities are more multiple and diverse than Traver's analysis. In other words, Traver's continuum may not provide an appropriate explanation for the phenomenon of the multiplicity of Korean adoptees' ethnic identity.

Here, I would like to explore Amanda Baden and Robbie Steward's cultural-racial identity model,⁴ because they attempt to explain the phenomenon of multiplicity that occurs in transracial adoptees' ethnic identity. Realizing the issue of multiplicity in transracial adoptees' ethnic identity formation, Amanda Baden, who is a Chinese American adoptee, attempts to provide a cultural-racial identity model along with Robbie Steward. The first step is to separate racial identity from cultural identity. The second step is to make a racial identity axis (figure 2) and a cultural identity axis (figure 3). The third step is to combine these two axes into a single model (figure 4). By following these steps, Baden and Steward argue that they can suggest sixteen identities of transracial adoptees, which "are made of the degree to which they have knowledge of, awareness of, competence within, and comfort with their own racial group's culture, their parents' racial group's culture, and multiple cultures as well as the degree to which

⁴ Amanda L. Baden and Robbie J. Steward, "A Framework for Use with Racially and Culturally Integrated Families: The Cultural-Racial Identity Model as Applied to Transracial Adoption," *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2000), 309-337.

they are comfortable with their racial group membership and with those belonging to their own racial group, their parents' racial group, and multiple racial groups.”⁵

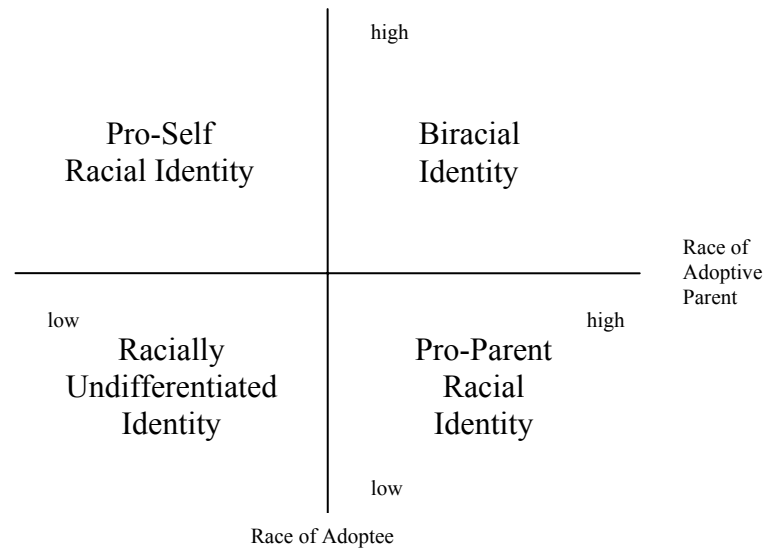


Figure 2: The Racial Identity Axis

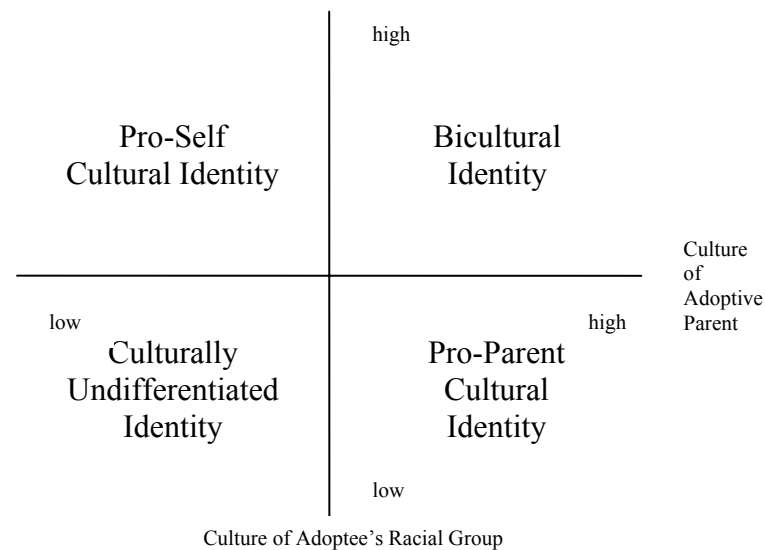


Figure 3: The cultural Identity Axis

⁵ Baden and Steward, 309.

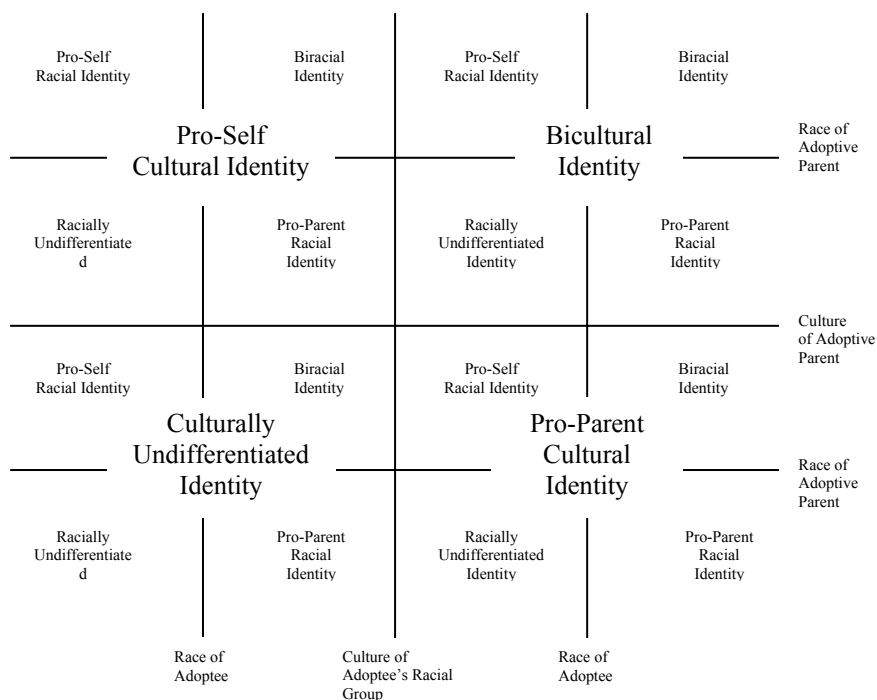


Figure 4: The cultural-Racial Identity Model

This model makes an important contribution to our understanding transracial adoptees, including Korean adoptees. While Traver believes that there are three types of Korean adoptees' ethnic identity—Korean, Korean American, and American, Baden and Steward suggest that there are sixteen types of identities. Baden and Steward's model helps us understand how diverse transracial adoptees' ethnic identity can be and overcomes the limitation of Traver's continuum.

However, Baden and Steward's model seems to ignore the variety of axes. Baden and Steward believe that there are two axes to understand transracial adoptees' ethnic identity, which are a cultural and a racial axis. But there are also many important elements that impact transracial adoptees' ethnic identity formation. For example, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, gender is also another important element that impacts transracial adoptees' ethnic identify formation. If we add only one more gender axis to

this model, the number of identity types would be sixty four. So it is dangerous to attempt to create certain categories for Korean adoptees' ethnic identity. Jasmine described a unique experience that she had as a transracial adoptee this way.

I stopped trying to put myself in one category or the other. So I am not Korean, I am not 100 %, I am not Caucasian, but American. I think it's just kind of being unique, like being [transracial] adoptees has its own category. So I am comfortable that I stop trying to put myself in one or the other.

Although Jasmine often considers herself to be just American, she rejects any attempt to put her in only one category. Thus, the phenomenon of the multiple ethnic identification informs that we should not attempt to put Korean adoptees in any certain category for Korean adoptees' ethnic identity, but to accept their own identity claim no matter how they claim who they are.

Here, it is important to ask why the phenomenon of the multiple ethnic identification occurs. Lack of exposure to Korean or American culture may not be a reason why some Korean adoptees considered themselves to be American, White, Asian, and so forth. For example, Ivy faced a crisis when she was twenty five. Until that time she suppressed the Korean part of herself because Ivy did not want to hurt her adoptive parents. But when she was twenty five, she made a decision not to deny Korean part of herself. She tried to make a connection to the Korean part of herself, attempting some activities that reflected the Korean culture such as Taekwando. When she was growing up, she always felt that she was an outsider. Now, she feels more comfortable with the Korean part of herself. But she still wants to consider herself to be American.

Alex is another example to show that a lack of exposure to Korean or American culture may not be a reason for multiplicity of ethnic identification. Alex was adopted and raised by a Caucasian family. He also grew up in a community where Caucasians

are the majority. But since he suffered from racial discrimination from his adoptive parents and community, Alex has not been able to make any connection with them. The only group that he felt accepted by was the gang of which the majority was Asian. Although he has been exposed to American culture, he never claimed that he is White or American.

The phenomenon of the multiple ethnic identification is related to Korean adoptees' resistance against stereotyped ethnic identity. The first clue is Hewha's statement. Hewha considered herself as physically Korean, and culturally American. She described her pattern of identifying herself as Korean or American.

I don't think you can point out [my ethnic identity]. I mean sometimes like even though I don't necessarily feel Korean, people treat me like I am Korean. So I come to the conclusion that I am adopted and I am Korean and I can be both. Definitely I am American. American comes first. But I mean American is so broad. You can be anything, but still can be American. So I think that I am culturally American, but I am physically Korean and I can be... because of a way other people see me... other people who don't know me, strangers see me Korean. So that's when I feel Korean a lot of times.

She said that no matter how other people see her, "I don't have any specific ethnic identification or formation." The way other people see her is just a stereotyped ethnic identity. When she said that she does not have any specific identification, she means that she rejects any stereotyped identity.

The second clue for resistance to stereotypes through multiplicity is She Ra's statement. She Ra also stood in a similar line with Hewha. She Ra said that although she does not classify her identity as being Korean or being American, many people just stereotyped her identity by placing her in a category.

If I am traveling somewhere, people stereotype me, seeing me as American. But because of my identity, my Korean identity, I think that Korean identity can be stereotyped a lot as well. I think people especially,

you know, I had a problem with birth parents and adoption agencies. They stereotype you as being quote and quote, happy adoptees, or they stereotype you as being angry adoptees. It's not always black and white like they want to see that. They like to classify you into some sort of categories. And so I used to be classified as an angry adoptee.

She Ra does not believe that people can put Korean adoptees' ethnic identity in one category or the other. The participants' stories show some examples for She Ra's argument. In other words, She Ra resists any attempt by people to classify those adoptees' ethnic identity in a stereotyped category.

She Ra clearly explains why she resists against stereotyped ethnic identity.

There should be more descriptions. There are so many different generation of Korean adoptees. Even though we do have our identity so similar, [we are different in many ways]. Some Korean adoptees, they got to be thirty years or forty years old, typically babies from the war. They are biracial. They are half-white and half-Korean. And their identity is completely different from mine. They had different life experiences because they had various skin and they would be easier to assimilate into the [American] society.

Yumi also described that she resists stereotyped ethnic identity.

I guess someone can stereotype me, but I just kind of look at that. You can choose to think that. Obviously if they'd choose to get to know me better, then I wouldn't let them stereotype me and affect me. I'm just being who I am. They can change their mind if they want. Like I said, you choose me to want to be around, I'd choose. But if you want to keep stereotyping me, I won't... I just won't be around them and surrounded with that. It's like there are ones that you need to choose whether or not they want to change their mind about me. I am not going to change my mind.

While many Korean adoptees like She Ra and Yumi resist being classified in any ethnic identity because they want people, Korean adoptees want people to see them as being a unique individual and person. Hewha is one of the participants who expressed this statement:

I would like to be viewed by others as just one of them, people I live with. I just want to be considered one of them. I mean it might not be

that I am Asian. It might be that I am a journalist or I want to see me as a good person. And I think that people would say, “Michelle, we just view you as Michelle.” But that’s not all true. You know, because for my birthday there were some people who see me as me, but they gave me things that I am Asian for my birthday. They may see me... uh... I just don’t know how they see me. But they see my Asian face. That’s what they deal with first of all.

Kelly Young is also another person who wants people to see her as she is:

I think races are very complicated because on the one hand I want to fit in with everybody else, I feel like I do. But I am aware but not painfully, I am aware that I am different from my neighbors. I know that I am probably the only one Korean or Asian in the entire neighborhood. Do I need to be mindful of this? Yes, I do. It’s unfortunate that people when they need me or not to give myself to the huge role on my neighborhood, but I want them to see me as person first and mom and as a good person and potential friend even if I don’t know them. I don’t know if I necessarily want them to see me as Asian first. I am not saying that I am not proud of being Asian. But I certainly don’t want... I need to be person who is from... like...(I added a statement that you want to be accepted as person not as a person who belongs to a specific ethnic group) Right, because I think that there is a danger that people tend to think that because you are a Korean you are going to represent all Koreans. I think that is a danger on that. I don’t want that. I want to be an individual first. At the same time, I want to be... umm... I don’t want to represent them all., but I want to provide by being a good person or by representing myself in a good life I want to have people see, “oh, she is from Korea.”

The resistance against any stereotyped ethnic identity leads Korean adoptees to be open to the phenomenon of the multiple ethnic identification. When Korean adoptees claim themselves in a certain way, that activity results from their interpretation of the relationship and its meaning. Thus, the resistance against the stereotyped identity is a way to express who they are as human beings and to become active agents of change.

Reconstruction of Ethnic Identities

Reconstruction is another way for Korean adoptees to become an active agent of change in constructing and reconstructing their ethnic identity. In this section, I will

focus on how Korean adoptees experienced the transforming moment and how they reconstructed their ethnic identity in those experiences. When I will describe transforming moments that are common to many Korean adoptees, those transforming moments include visiting Korea, experiences of parenting birth children, contacting with other multiracial women, developing relationships with God, and meeting with other Korean adoptees.

The first transforming moment is to visit Korea. Many Korean adoptees expressed that it was a life-changing moment to visit Korea. Ree Sang Soo said that “[Visiting Korea] was powerful and life-changing to me.” In my observations, meeting birth parents was not a reason why many Korean adoptees felt that way. There are two reasons to explain that meeting birth parents does not provide a transforming moment. First, although many Korean adoptees wanted to locate their birth parents on their trip to Korea, only a few of them could succeed in finding their birth parents. Second, there was nobody, except Esther, who found their birth parents, and said that they experienced a transforming moment in the reunion with birth parents.

Why is it that Korean adoptees felt that it was a life-changing moment to visit Korea? Many Korean adoptees described that visiting Korea itself was a healing process. Sasha visited Korea in 2001. She described her impression on the visit to Korea.

It was an emotional trip to me, I think. It was kind of unconsciously grieving. I was thirty at that time. I was older than other Korean adoptees who participated in that trip. People made sure going out and having so much fun. I cried a lot during the trip. And we went to a couple of orphanages. That was also an emotional experience going to Korea for the first time.

Sasha said that there was an unconscious grieving process during the trip to Korea. Ree Soo Sang also shared a similar story, saying that “[Visiting Korea] was a very good trip

and I grew spiritually and I greatly received healing during the trip also.” He continued to describe the nature of the healing, saying:

[Visiting Korea] helped me to perceive more clearly what’s going on in my heart. I had a personality of not wanting to be hurt by others around me. So I consciously built a barrier to protect my heart and not to become hurt by others. I also felt that whenever it’s come up, and I would be perceived as Korean, as a different person, and I don’t want to be hurt, there’s an emotional barrier. I would become very unemotional on my heart. Sometimes I would externally express my emotions but not heart-felt.

Ree Soo Sang mentioned two things that have been on his heart. The first one is vulnerability to feelings of hurt, which may relate to experiences of relinquishment. The second one is an ethnic identity as Korean. Ree Soo Sang believed that there is a close relationship between feeling hurt and being Korean. In other words, he experienced a feeling of pain because of the Korean part of himself. So he built a barrier to protect his heart and his being Korean. But during the visit to Korea, he received healing about this hurt feeling and being Korean. When many Korean adoptees including Sasha and Ree Soo Sang experienced the healing process during the tour to Korea, they reconstructed their ethnic identity by accepting the Korean part of themselves.

Esther explained her experiences in a similar line with Ree Sang Soo. She believed that because of two things that happened during the tour to Korea, her ethnic identity has been reconstructed. The first happening was the healing of pains that occurred at the time of relinquishment. As Ree Sang Soo says,

There was one significant thing that happened on that trip. There was a man who was praying for me and I pictured, I saw Jesus was holding a little baby. And he was, in the hospital, in the new born babies section of the hospital and he was cradling a baby and telling another woman in that room and he had a special plan for the baby he was holding and then the baby was crying and I told the man and pastor Park that baby cried and why is it the baby is crying? And I wasn’t sure exactly, but somewhere within me I knew and I thought the baby feels alone. And I

just burst into tears, sobbed and cried, and I didn't realize that was in me and there was pain on my mind. I was able to release that [pain] and give that to Jesus.

Healing of her pains that happened at the time of relinquishment led her to another experience.

Everyone we met there they loved us as their own family. And many people hugged us and said, "I am your Korean mother. I am your Korean family. You can visit at any time." To experience love that way was life-changing, and I embraced my Korean identity in a way I didn't realize I hadn't before because I didn't know I had been lacking until I went to Korea. I was able to feel and acknowledge that I am a Korean, and I was very good about that because they showed just what it means to be Korean and in terms of loving others in a very selfless way, I took pride in that.

Although the terminology is different between Ree Soo Sang and Esther, we can find that there is a close relationship between an experience of healing and ethnic identity. When Korean adoptees experienced the healing process regarding the pains of relinquishment, they could also reconstruct being Korean and accept the dignity of being Korean.

Visiting Korea does not just provide an opportunity to accept the dignity of being Korean but to find the variety of being Korean. For example, SoonJa has believed that she is a half-Korean and half-Caucasian because she had a lot of hair and light skin. But she went to Korea for a visit and met other Koreans who had more hair than she did and had light skin. SoonJa realized that physical appearance does not reflect her ethnic identity in an appropriate way. For Korean adoptees, visiting Korea is not a simple tour; rather, it provides a transforming moment to experience the healing of pains and to reconstruct their ethnic identity.

The second transforming moment is to parent biological children. Three out of sixteen participants had their own biological children. All three described the birth as a

transforming moment in their ethnic identity. Sasha mentioned that having biological children was a unique experience in her life. Sasha had a girl in the relationship with an African American husband. Unfortunately, since there is no further explanation about what her experience looked like, I do not know how parenting impacted the relationship with herself and others. The only thing that she described is that, after Sasha had a girl, she felt more comfortable with herself.

Ivy shared a similar story and provided a more detailed explanation. She said that it was very challenging to live with her biological children every day:

It was just an amazing experience. It was incredible. When you are not around people that you are related to, you never know where you come from.... Like when I sneeze probably five times, I never sneeze just one. I always sneeze bunch of times. My son does that as well. He sneezes probably four or five times. That's not something that I ever thought that's hereditary something that was passed on. After I realized that he did that too, I wonder, "Do my parents do that?" I mean birth parents. It's not like a big deal or anything. But it's just little things that are passed on. When you see your finger and hair and the way you talk and gesture when you talk or just little things you do, that's from your parents.

Ivy finds a connection with the Korean part of herself in the relationship with her biological children. Ivy said that "it's been wonderful to have them around and to see them grow to realize that even if what I am passing on to them isn't Korean tradition, the family tradition that I grew up with that's what they have."

Kelly Young also described that having biological children was a transforming moment in her life:

I don't know if this is common among people who are adopted. When I had the first child, it was the first time that I have ever been technically related to anybody. It brought a lot of happiness and joy and still does. And I think that I don't really think that my [adoptive] parents understand that. They might really talk about it. So when I talk to my daughter how I am from Korea that's where I was born and that I was raised here, I am trying to incorporate with that language early.

Since there were no male participants who were married and had biological children, it may be too early to say that all adoptees have gone through a transforming moment in the event of having their biological children. But three female participants who had their biological children indicated that they found a connection with their children who retain a Korean part like themselves.

The third transforming moment is to meet multicultural women. She Ra had difficulty accepting the Korean part of herself. There were two reasons. First, She Ra suffered from the racial discrimination by her adoptive family. Second, growing up in a very homogeneous white community, She Ra was never exposed to cultural diversity. There were many resources for Korean culture in the area where she grew up. But her adoptive parents never chose to use those resources. A transforming moment took place when She Ra went to college. She Ra began to accept herself and the fact that she is Korean. The strength emerged out of an Asian American women's group where She Ra could establish relationships with people who had an understanding about differences. She realized that she did not have to hide herself any longer.

Hana also had a transforming moment in the relationship with multicultural women. A difference between She Ra and Hana is that while the former had a significant relationship with an Asian American women's group, the latter had an interaction with Korean American women. When she was in a graduate school, Hana attempted to focus on Korean American women's experiences. A reason for this interest came out of her desire to understand her adoptive mother and have a healing relationship with her. Hana interviewed some Korean American women who did not speak much Korean and did not know what is going on in Korea. In the process of

learning their stories, Hana realized that the sufferings that many Korean American women experienced were passed down from generation to generation.

I realized so much from my wounds and my patterns. My emotional and psychological patterns were passed down from [my adoptive mother]. She got that from her mother and so on and so forth. And I really wanted to understand where the patterns came from. I realized that before it was such a personal issue, I really took it personally, but it was not me. It was not how she treated me. But I realized... this was much like cultural things... My thinking was really shifted at that point from being about my struggle theme held as a personal story to all of a sudden realizing I belong to a large collective story. When my thinking was shifted, it's like "wow." There was also freedom for me because then it was no longer personal and it's no longer about me. It was about what it means to be a Korean and Korean American and the whole legacy of suffering and of being Korean because of everything that happened in the 20th Century with colonization and war that kind of thing. And I am connected to that heritage. You know I was very aware of *han*. But I didn't know there was war and there was *han*. But I intuitively emotionally knew this concept. And in graduate school I was desperately searching for this understanding, but I could not find the Western literature.

What is interesting in Hana's experiences is that she established a connection with the Korean part of herself not just in terms of individual stories, but collective ones. In other words, she realized that her stories were not her own product, but a result of the interaction with many generations. The reconstruction of her ethnic identity brought a reconciliation between Hana and her adoptive mother.

A fourth transforming moment is to develop relationships with God. Some Korean adoptees experienced a transforming moment in relation with God, which brought an essential strength to build relationships and made them reconstruct their ethnic identity. In Chang Joo's case, a multicultural church helped him reconstruct his ethnic identity. Chang Joo felt rejected by his adoptive family, the Korean community, and the Korean church. But the Church of Nations that was separated from a Presbyterian church was more open to other cultures.

I have been a lot more comfortable with my cultural identity because if I'd fall down and if I'd have a problem, they would know what I feel like, because they have experienced that before. And if I ever want to know Koreans or Korean culture, I was very at the front of people whom I can talk to because I could just go to their houses having Korean foods and meals getting to know their parents and Korean culture.

Chang Joo felt accepted by the members of the Church of Nations and found hospitality within the cultural and racial differences.

Esther was another Korean adoptee who felt accepted by the church members and reconstructed her ethnic identity. Esther said that a trip to Korea was significant because she experienced God's love in a greater way through Korean people. Through the unselfish love that Korean people showed, Esther accepted and acknowledged that she is Korean. In other words, this spiritual experience helped her embrace Korean identity.

While Chang Joo and Esther experienced a transforming moment in their relationship with multicultural church members, some other Korean adoptees had spiritual experiences in relation to God. Through those spiritual experiences, they regained their self-esteem and began a journey to reconstruct their ethnic identity.

SoonJa was one participant who had a spiritual experience. This happening took place when she thought she was at the lowest point in her life, struggling with the issue of her ethnic identity. When she heard from her former Korean fiancée that the relationship was off, SoonJa went into the deep depression and attempted to kill herself and ended up being admitted to the hospital.

It wasn't until I went to bed. I was sleeping. I know people think, nurses think that I am crazy and hallucinating. But I know that God sent an angel to me that night. I saw an angel and that angel told me that everything is going to be alright. If I decide to believe in God again, the angel told me if I believe in God again and if I come to God, then everything will be ok. At that time, it was like, "is this real? You know,

that I really see this?" At that time a nurse came by to check on me. I asked that nurse, "Did you just come in my room to check on me?" She said like, "You are hallucinating." And then she gave me some medicine. And she said, "You are crazy." And then next morning, I went to my favorite verse, which was Psalm 23. Shortly after that, I got out of the hospital.

This experience made SoonJa go to Korea for a visit. During the trip to Korea, SoonJa had an opportunity to reconstruct her story. When she was very young, she begged her adoptive family to take her back to Korea. But SoonJa realized that she is one of the luckiest persons in the world because she could never have survived in Korea. That was the moment that she accepted her adoptive family.

Hana was another participant who shared a spiritual experience. Hana's spiritual experience was not explained in terms of Christian terminology. Hana defines God as something she does not know, greater than herself. By spirituality, she means there is a spirit just connecting or a feeling of connection to that being. Hana's spiritual experience occurred at the time she was selected as one of six explorers on a six-month-long expedition retracing the Great Marco Polo driving from Italy to Hong Kong. During the trip, Hana realized that her mother repressed her emotions; so, Hana had never experienced her emotions fully and has been accustomed to holding back her emotions. During the trip, she even felt broken down, but could not express her emotions. One of the team members told her that "It's like you have fear. We love you." That was a statement that Hana never heard in her life:

When he said, "we love you," I started crying so hard and tears came out like there was the deep well inside of my mind. Tears just came from the depth. I had never experienced that in my whole life. I don't know how long time I cried. Everybody was so affected by my pain. But I had been holding back so much pain. That pain came from such a deep place in my life. I knew that was coming from all deep places. And also I realized that my body posture was pointing out to me. When I was talking, my voice became very young. So I had somehow regressed to the very

young age. And then what happened bonded me and relieved me that there was nothing that I was hiding. It's like whole fear was pounded out. I was exposed and out. I had nothing that was left to hide. I could finally be authentic. And I've never experienced authenticity until that moment. And the next day when I woke up, I literally felt like I was another person. I was a new person or I was living in a different world. The world completely has been changed. It's like it's been shattered and replaced with a new world. And new possibilities existed. That was really amazing.

Hana named this experience as spiritual because she thought she experienced this awakening not as who she thought was her ego, but as a spiritual being. It looks like her spiritual awakening helped her build a connection with the transcendent being and provided strength to take a journey for reexamining her wounds that took place in the relationship with her adoptive mother.

A fifth transforming moment was to meet other Korean adoptees. Many Korean adoptees also experienced a transforming moment in relation to other Korean adoptees. While She Ra had a significant moment in relation to an Asian American women's group, the relationship with Korean adoptees brought another moment to reconstruct her ethnic identity. She Ra's first reaction that happened in relation with Korean adoptees was that she is not crazy, but normal because she was not the only person who had an issue of abandonment and commitment. Also, the relationship with other Korean adoptees helped her understand her identity. In other words, that relationship helped her accept who she is.

Aviva is another participant who reconstructed her ethnic identity in relation to other adoptees. Since she was raised by Jewish parents, Aviva identified herself as a Jewish Korean American adoptee. When Aviva introduced herself this way, many times people felt weird asking if she was kidding. This interaction made her reflect on who

she was. She also questioned “what really makes me Korean and what makes me American?”

However, meeting other adoptees made her feel comfortable. When she was in college, Aviva joined a Jewish Students Club of which her friend and she became vice-presidents. Her friend came from Peru and was adopted. There was another student who came from Ethiopia as an adoptee. They were not actually Korean adoptees, but Jewish adoptees. This environment made her feel comfortable with who she was as Jewish Korean American adoptee.

SoonJa was also one of the participants who experienced a transforming moment in relation with her fiancée who is a Korean adoptee. After she was raped, she used her body to build relationships with men. This pattern did not stop until SoonJa has met her fiancée. He was the first person who accepted who SoonJa is. Also, the relationship with her fiancée provided an opportunity to bring good things to herself.

In this section, I have described five transforming moments that emerged out of sixteen participants’ experiences. Those transforming moments include visiting Korea, parenting, meeting with other multiracial women, developing a relationship with God, and meeting with other Korean adoptees. These moments helped Korean adoptees reconstruct their ethnic identities and build a connection with themselves and others.

A Concluding Remark on Adult Korean Adoptees’ Experiences

The chapter has described 16 Korean adoptees’ experiences, focusing on three main sections. Those sections include (1) what are negative influences that Korean adoptees experienced; 2) how negative influences impacted Korean adoptees’ ethnic

identity formation in terms of sufferings; and (3) how Korean adoptees utilized their human agency to construct and reconstruct healthy ethnic identity.

Korean adoptees have been trapped by the structure where race, culture, and gender dynamically move to bring negative influences on ethnic identity formation. In other words, racism and sexism embedded in the destructive and sinful system are involved in Korean adoptees' construction of ethnic identity. Negative influences do not remain just as influences in themselves, but bring sufferings to Korean adoptees. Those sufferings include feelings of loneliness, disrupted relationships, violence, and suicide.

While Korean adoptees have been trapped by the structure that brings negative influences and sufferings, they do not remain as passive recipients of those influences; rather, they become active agents of change. The openness to the multiplicity of ethnic identification is one of the ways that Korean adoptees express their freedom. They resist any attempt to put Korean adoptees in one category or the other.

Korean adoptees' active agency is more clearly shown in their construction and reconstruction of healthy ethnic identity, which occurs in the transforming moments that include visiting Korea, parenting, contacting other multiracial women, forming relationships with God, and meeting with other Korean adoptees. Korean adoptees' experiences are reflected well in Suchocki's comment that relationality is a structure whereby both enrichment and evil occur. In the relationships with Korea, other women, other adoptees, and others, Korean adoptees reconstruct their healthy ethnic identity and build constructive connection with themselves and others.

Chapter Three

John Shotter and Rhetoric-Responsive Version of Social Construction

In this paper, John Shotter's rhetoric-responsive version of social construction as a psychological voice will be explored to discuss how adult Korean adoptees utilize human agency in ethnic identity formation.¹ While some pastoral or practical theologians attempt to connect social constructionism to practical or pastoral theology, they do not see difference in social constructionist theories and, thus, run a risk of generalization. The first example is Duane Bidwell. In his dissertation *Embedded Psychologies and Theologies: a Foundation for Critical Theory in Spiritual Direction*, Bidwell attempts to combine social constructionism with pastoral theology, addressing how social construction can contribute to spiritual direction.² He argues that the works of both Kenneth Gergen and John Shotter are resources for a psychological voice in developing his research project. But when he does not mention similarities and differences between Gergen and Shotter, he runs a risk of generalization.

Another example is social constructionism and practical theology. Chris A. M. Hermans attempts to integrate practical theology with social constructionism of social psychology. He argues that that practical theology aims at "a hermeneutical-empirical

¹ I have obtained many resources from John Shotter's website, which is <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/>.

² Duane Bidwell, *Embedded Psychologies and Theologies: a Foundation for Critical Theory in Spiritual Direction*, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Unpublished Dissertation, 2003.

approach to human actions.”³ In other words, practical theology starts theological reflection from practice. This practice-orientation makes the connection between practical theology and social sciences. Since social constructionism is a growing theory within social sciences, Hermans notes that it is important to dialogue between social constructionism and practical theology. While he brings an important contribution to an understanding of humanity, Hermans runs a risk of generalization by inviting just Gergen as a voice of social construction in his discussion. He is aware that social constructionism emerges out of a number of publications. But there is no explanation why he chose Gergen as a voice of social constructionism.

Social constructionism in social psychology is not just a product of Gergen, but also of many scholars who share assumptions of postmodern worldview. Jill Freedman and Gene Combs describe four basic assumptions that many social constructionists share.⁴ Those four basic assumptions include (1) realities are socially constructed; (2) realities are constituted through language; (3) realities are organized and maintained through narrative; and (4) there are no essential truths. Although social constructionists have some assumptions to share, their approach to these four assumptions in social constructionism is not exactly the same. The discussion about differences among social constructionists goes beyond the limitation of this research project. But I will come back to this issue, when I discuss how Gergen and Shotter have different perspectives on human agency.

³ Also see C.A.M. Hermans, G. Immink, A. de Jong and van der Lans, eds, *Social Constructionism and Theology* (Boston, Brill, 2002), vii.

⁴ Jill Freedman and Gene Combs, *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 22.

While there is diversity in social constructionist theories, I will focus on Shotter's rhetoric-responsive version of social construction because Shotter's theory provides a useful tool to explain how Korean adoptees become active agents of change in constructing and reconstructing their ethnic identity. While Shotter shares many assumptions with other social constructionists, his main focus in his work has been on how people can develop human agency through responses to others. Shotter's theory is complicated because he attempts to explain his theory by adopting many ideas from psychological and philosophical areas. But his interest in human agency is well reflected through four major concepts. Those concepts include (1) knowledge of a third kind; (2) duality of structure; (3) chiasmic structure; and (4) polyphony.

This chapter is composed of three sections. In the first section, I would like to explain how Shotter understands the human predicament because his interest in human agency occurred out of his understanding of the human predicament. The following section describes a summary of four concepts in Shotter's rhetoric-responsive version of social construction focusing on how human agency can be utilized. In the third section, I raise two themes to address contributions and limitations in Shotter's theory. Those two themes include (1) injustice and human agency, and (2) social construction and human agency.

Human Predicament

Shotter focuses on four concerns in understanding the nature of the human predicament. Those four concerns include (1) relationality, (2) responsibility as responsivity, (3) temporality, and (4) language as metaphor.

Relationality

Shotter maintains that while people are relational, the importance of relationality has been ignored in Western society. He finds a reason for this in the Cartesian legacy because he is convinced that the Cartesian legacy “state[s] in a clear, simple, and frank manner the interests and intentions implicit in our current ‘scientific’ ways of knowing and valuing: mastery and possession.”⁵ In other words, the Cartesian legacy has provided a paradigm to understand our activities and relationships in the world, promising a deep and effective knowledge of the natural world by which human beings may become masters and possessors. He argues, however, that the Cartesian worldview left as one of its main philosophical legacies a myth which continues to distort the nature of mental activities and undermines human relationality. His argument is clearly shown in his autobiographical essay, “Moving on by Backing Away,” where he describes the two major themes that can be marked in his life.⁶ The first one is to critique the Cartesian mechanistic paradigm in the human and behavioral sciences. The criticism stems not just because of its technical inadequacy, but also because of the theory’s pernicious moral effects. In other words, Shotter believes that the Cartesian perspective undermines our intrinsic human relatedness. The second theme is to develop the concept of “joint action,” which comes out of the assumption that human beings

⁵ John Shotter, *Social Accountability and Selfhood* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 32.

⁶ John Shotter, “Moving on by Backing Away” in *Narrated Identities: Psychologists Engaged in Self Construction* [on-line essay]. (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2005, 2005), 1. Available <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/BioAndResprog.htm>. Accessed 2 February, 2006. Internet. This online essay was slightly updated the first draft of an essay to appear in *Narrative Identities*.

cannot help but be “spontaneously responsive to both others and otherness in our surroundings.”⁷ Thus, he insists that the recovery of relationality is part of human nature.

Human Responsibility as Responsivity

The second concern in Shotter’s understanding of the human predicament is that of human responsibility, which is closely connected to human relationality. Shotter has always been concerned with the larger social conditions of our lives together and with our unresponsiveness to the obvious misery and injustices occurring all around us.⁸ The interest in human responsibility comes out of his personal experiences at a young age. In 1953, Shotter left grammar school to work as an engineering apprentice in an aircraft factory. He experienced degradation in his relationship with the factory staff, which is described in the preface to his book, *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life: Social Constructionism, Rhetoric and Knowing of the Third Kind*.⁹

[A] memory is to do with the fact that we thousand or so workers trooped in at 7:30am through a single, little door at the back of factory, jostling and pushing each other to make sure we clocked in on time, as every minute late cost us 13 minutes pay. While the ‘staff’ management, drawing office, administrative, and other such personnel and the Royal Air Force Officer customers, came in (‘strolled in’ we thought) though big double doors at the front, up imposing steps at 9:00am. But more than that, ‘they’ had their lunch on a mezzanine floor raising five feet above ‘us’ in the lunch room; ‘they’ had waitress service and white tablecloths, ‘we’ buttered sliced bread straight from the paper packet on the Formica top of the table; and so on, and so on: ‘They’ didn’t just look down on ‘us’, ‘they treated us like about-to-be-naughty children. Such incidents as these were paradigmatic of the thousand other small daily “hidden injuries of class”... or “degradation ceremonies” that then – in the 1950’s (and for the next decade) – were an integral part of the British industrial scene, marked, as it was, by a large number of strikes,

⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁹ John Shotter, *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life: Social Constructionism, Rhetoric and Knowing of the Third Kind* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), xi-xii.

and a general level of anger, resentment and widespread bloody-mindedness expressed by all.

As Shotter came to realize that this happening was a part of phenomenon of power imbalance, he also became aware of two other things. First, there was no appropriate language through which people could express their hurt feelings and describe why this experience of degradation mattered so much. Second, he was also bothered by the fact that the workers considered themselves trivial and that they thought that their endeavor to address that kind of situation would be useless. It seems that his personal experiences made him doubt that obtaining a sense of belonging would be enough for those people who are marginalized. Rather, he insists that human responsibility is necessarily required, saying that:

I thought that [in order] to be a person and to qualify for certain rights as a free, autonomous individual, one must ... be able to show in one's actions certain social competencies, that is, to fulfill certain duties and to be *accountable* to others in the sense of being able to justify one's actions to them, when challenged, in relation to the 'social reality' of the society of which one is a member.¹⁰

His major concern has been how human beings can enhance their ability to be autonomous and responsible agents in the society in which the power imbalance and degradation occurs.

As Shotter understands that being human means being relational as well as responsible, he suggests a rhetorical-responsive version of social construction as a psychological paradigm. He is convinced that social construction in social psychology can be a vehicle to address his understanding of the human predicament in an appropriate way. In his psychological understanding, human agency cannot be

¹⁰ Ibid., 16.

accounted as wholly an individual activity, but as a product of joint action because it is constructed in social interaction. But he is aware that due to the issues of the power imbalance and struggle, the shifting of the burden of responsibility from the individual to the relationship simultaneously “constrains” and “liberates” rather than only being liberating in a number of ways that are critical to relationship function and to the expression of voice. Shotter argues that liberating can be accomplished through human responsibility. He notes that:

Why I have called [my psychological understanding a rhetorical-responsive version of social construction] is because I want to claim that our ability as individuals to speak representationally—that is, to depict or describe a unique state of affairs (whether real or not), as we please, independently of the influences of our surroundings—arises out of us first and primarily speaking in a way that is responsive to the others around us.¹¹

While Shotter believes that the sense of belonging is crucial to understand the formation of identity, he is also aware that simply establishing connections with people in the society is not enough. Rather, he maintains that while human agency is a product of joint action, it should also be expressed in responsibility.

Temporality

The third concern in Shotter’s understanding of the human predicament is temporality. Shotter’s concern regarding temporality is also related to the problem of the Cartesian legacy. Shotter maintains that the Cartesian legacy has given little thought “to the idea of form-producing processes, to the idea of a growing world, or growing systems, or of irreversible changes and the occurrence of genuine novelty.”¹² When the

¹¹ John Shotter, *Conversational Realities: Constructing Life through Language* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1993), 6.

¹² Sotter, *Social Accountability and Selfhood*, 44.

Cartesian world view ignores the reality of irreversible processes and the emergence of novelty in temporality, human beings cannot experience genuine novelty. The problem of the Cartesian legacy results from a deterministic scheme of things. The present state of affairs necessitates only one future state. In this understanding, the future is pre-existent and it is also hidden from human knowledge. But Shotter notes that “the reality of time implies the reality of irreversible processes and the emergence of novelty, which is incompatible with the pre-existence of the future.”¹³ In contrast with modern thought or a Cartesian perspective, in Shotter’s view the future can be characterized as ambiguous and indeterminable. In other words, in the postmodern perspective, the future does not retain just one, but many possibilities.

Shotter maintains that indeterminacy and ambiguity as the nature of temporality in the postmodern perspective lay down a basis for human action. He notes that “possessing many possible modes of being, I can project myself in living from one to another.”¹⁴ Time is essentially incomplete until people make it complete through the act of selection or choice. When they choose one and exclude the other, they realize the uncertain future in the present time.

Language as Metaphor

Shotter suggests a rhetorical-responsive version of social construction to address human responsibility as responsivity, in which he utilizes language as metaphor. He suggests two reasons why he wants to call his theory rhetorical. The first reason is that the way of conversation is not merely to claim to describe a state of affairs, but to move people to action or change their perceptions. The second one is that rhetoric provides a

¹³ Ibid., 45.

¹⁴ Ibid.

vessel to understand human relationality. So he utilizes language as metaphor because “rhetoric makes use of metaphors which can function to help an audience ‘make connections’ between a speaker’s otherwise seemingly unconnected utterances, that is, to give intelligible linguistic form to otherwise merely sensed feelings or tendencies shared between speakers and their audiences.”¹⁵ If so, the live utterance can be a metaphor to help us understand how we can make connections and respond to situations. In the live utterance, the responsive expressions between speakers and listeners are intermingled, out of which the inescapable creation of something new takes place and they can act in accord with the providential opportunities for action.

Four Concepts in John Shotter’s Social Construction

While it may not be easy to describe how Shotter understands a rhetorical-responsive version of social construction in this chapter, I will explore four concepts: (1) knowledge of a third kind; (2) duality of structure; (3) chiasmic structure; and (4) polyphony. Before moving forward to discuss those four concepts, I would like to make two comments. First, these four concepts are not separated but interconnected and complimentary to one another. So when I describe each concept, I will add, if necessary, some more explanation about how that concept is related to the other ones. Second, since my interest lies in how Shotter understands human agency and how his perspectives can engage with the discussion of Korean adoptees’ ethnic identity formation, I will not just describe Shotter’s perspectives, but attempt to reveal how human agency can emerge in terms of relationality, multiplicity, and temporality.

¹⁵ Shotter, *Conversational Realities*, 6.

Knowledge of a Third Kind

The first concept we should explore is the internalization of knowledge of a third kind. Shotter insists that “while internalization of knowledge [of a third kind] cannot just be to do with effective action, it must also be concerned with the development of one’s being as a proper member of one’s society: for it is both constraining and enabling in one properly dealing with and sensing the nature of one’s ‘situation’ in socially intelligible terms.”¹⁶ In other words, the internalization of knowledge of a third kind provides a base by which one understands human agency in the form of responsibility as responsivity.

How does internalization of knowledge of a third kind take place? In order to understand the process of internalization of this knowledge, Shotter utilizes the psychological theory of Lev Vygotsky. For Vygotsky, an essential element is the use of sign systems (language, writing, number systems) as psychological instruments or tools, because “the internalization of culturally produced sign systems brings about behavioral transformations and forms the bridge between early and later forms of individual development.”¹⁷ While there is a logical connection between the use of signs and of tools under the indirect and mediated activity, they are essentially different. The basic divergence of the two is the “different ways that [signs and tools] orient human behavior.”¹⁸ The tool is externally oriented and plays a function to aim to change human

¹⁶ John Shotter, “Vygotsky: The Social Negotiation of Semiotic Mediation,” 1 [on-line article]. Available <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/BioAndResprog.htm>. Accessed 2 February, 2006. Internet. This article also appears in *New Ideas in Psychology*, 11 (1993), 61-75.

¹⁷ L. S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

external activities. On the other hand, the sign is internally oriented and a means to master internal activities. Here, the third point pertains to the real tie between the sign and the tool. Vygotsky insists that “the mastering of nature and the mastering of behavior are mutually linked, just as [her] alteration of nature alters [her] own nature.”¹⁹ Thus, the connection between sign and tool posits that artificial signs are an essential part in the process of internalization.

The process of internalization can be characterized as a series of three transformations.²⁰ The first one is that an operation that initially represents an external activity is reconstructed and begins to occur internally. In this first transformation, there are three stages in the development. At the first stage (preschool age) children do not have the ability to master their behavior by organizing special stimuli. The second stage of development is predominated by the external sign. And then, in the third stage (among adults), the external sign that children require in the early age is transformed into an internal sign, which is called internalization. While Vygotsky argues that this transformation takes place in the third developmental stage, he does not object that children of a young age have human agency. An example that Vygotsky utilizes is egocentric speech that happens in the first transformation of internalization.²¹ When children are not able to find a solution for a problem by themselves, they turn to an adult and verbally describe solving methods that they cannot carry out by themselves. However, the greatest change in children’s ability takes place later in their development, when children do not turn to an adult, but they appeal to themselves. This example

¹⁹ Ibid., 55.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 27.

shows how children can be free and independent from the structure of the situation. But Vygotsky argues that the higher mental form emerges later in adulthood through transformation.

The first transformation leads us to the second transformation by which an interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one. Every function in children's cultural development appears twice, first between people, and then inside the children.

The third transformation, which is the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one, is the result of a long series of developmental events. The process of transformation continues to exist and change with the sign systems until it turns inward. The system of signs restructures the whole psychological process and enables children to master their movement. On the other hand, inner activities play function in giving children further external structure. The interaction between these two directions continues to exist throughout their life.

We may draw three important elements from Vygotsky's psychology. First, our sign systems, especially language, are not a matter of individual creation, but a joint product. Shotton describes Vygotsky's psychology as follows:²²

[Vygotsky's psychology is a] two-way flow psychology to do both with (i) a prosthetic outflow of activity, out from people toward their already partially structured surroundings, in which they can 'give' or 'lend' them further structure, thus to investigate them further; and (ii) an inflow of activity in the other direction, back from an already partially structured environment into the people within it, a flow of activity which they must interpret hermeneutically to grasp the nature of the situation within which their current activity is 'grounded'; and (iii) the relations between these two processes.

²² Shotton, "Vygotsky's Psychology," 4.

In other words, Shotter finds that transformation, according to Vygotsky's psychology, is evolving in the circular movement between the external sign and the internal sign. Second, the source of sign systems have been in and come out of other people. Third and more important, children come to direct their actions by using their own internal sign systems within themselves. The emergence of human agency is related to internalization of the external sign.

An important thing that we should point out is that, as he attempts to develop the concept of knowledge of a third kind by utilizing Vygotsky's psychology, he adds ethical considerations to Vygotsky's psychology. There are two reasons.²³ First, Shotter believes that Vygotsky, talking about the process of internalization, does not explicitly make the distinction in ethical terms. Second, ethical consideration is connected to Shotter's concern about how to be a proper member of our society. The concept of knowledge of a third kind is related to the question of "how it is that we come to experience ourselves, our world, and our language, in the particular ways that at the moment we do, and how we might come to talk about ourselves differently."²⁴

Shotter explains how knowledge of a third kind retains a moral and ethnic consideration by comparing three different types of knowledge. Shotter maintains that there are two traditional types of knowledge. Knowledge of a first kind is about something given by others and by society. Before the Enlightenment, ways of talking and forms of relationships were described in religious terms, emphasizing God's will and human spirit. On the other hand, knowledge of a second kind emerged in an attempt

²³ Shotter, "Vygotsky and Bakhtin: On Internalization as a Boundary Phenomenon," 3 [on-line article]. Available <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/BakhtinVygotskyNIP3.htm>. Accessed 2 February, 2006. Internet.

²⁴ Shotter, *Conversational Realities*, 19.

to overcome the limitations of knowledge of a first kind, which is that human consciousness as a human condition had been ignored. During the Enlightenment, a significant movement took place in understanding ways of talking and forms of social relationship. People began to focus on reason and became concerned with the natural sciences that involved individuals' discovering the nature of an already existing state of affairs. While knowledge of a first kind emphasized the public sphere, that of a second kind relied on the inner and private sphere.

Aware of limitations in knowledge of a first and second kind, Shotter suggests knowledge of a third kind, saying that “[knowledge of this kind] is not to do with our discovering actualities individually, but with our realizing the possibilities we make available to ourselves, between ourselves socially – where either others, or we ourselves, have made the relevant provisions or resources required for their realization already available in their, or our previous social activities together.”²⁵ In this view, this knowledge of a third kind neither can be completely private nor inner. It is joint knowledge, knowledge-held-in-common with others. When we believe that knowledge of a third kind is a joint product of the dynamic interactions between the private and public spheres, this means that we must be morally sensitive to the social being of other people. Shotter notes that “in assessing [people’s] continually changing ‘semiotic positions’ within the process, [we] must be aware of what, morally, their positions allow or permit.”²⁶ In this sense, knowledge of a third kind is not theoretical knowledge, but practical and moral knowledge.

²⁵ Shotter, *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life*, 3.

²⁶ Shotter, “Vygotsky: The Social Negotiation of Semiotic Mediation,” 3.

Duality of Structure

While Shotter addresses the emergence of human agency through the concept of knowledge of a third kind, he utilizes the concept of duality of structure to describe how human beings enhance their abilities to be autonomous and responsible agents in their societies. In other words, this duality of structure explains how human beings can create a structured context or condition for its own continuation.

Due to its ability to produce in its wake, so to speak, a structured context for its own continuation, an action can be informed, not so much by factors present in the source from which it issues, as by the context *into* which it is directed.²⁷

In other words, when human beings can create a structured context for its own continuation, they do not need be guided by an inner representation of the outer circumstances, but a structured context. But Shotter maintains that the concept of duality of structure cannot provide enough of an explanation for the process of creation of a structured context; rather, the concept of duality of structure should be linked to the concept of intentionality. Thus, in this section, the connection of these two concepts will be explored.

Shotter defines the concept of duality of structure, saying that this concept refers to the fact that “all human action is doubly structured, for it is structured both as a product and as a process, or better, it is both structured and structuring.”²⁸ He insists that this structure can be found in temporal process. How is the structure of duality expressed in temporal process? First of all, we should explore how Shotter understands the temporal process. Shotter believes that there are two characteristics in temporal

²⁷ Shotter, *Social Accountability and Selfhood*, 196.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 195.

process—unity and differentiation. The temporal process can be characterized as differentiation because each phase is differentiated from the phases of before and after. But this does not mean that each phase is separated into “a patchwork of disjointed parts,” but it is connected to one another as aspects of the same dynamic unity.²⁹ In other words, there is a unity in temporal process. Shotter notes that “it is a unity which is perceived as unity, not in spite of its novelty in every moment, but because of it; for while clearly changing one sense, like a swirl or eddy in a stream, it remains recognizable in another sense as continually the same.”³⁰ This unity is not that of homogeneity, but that of heterogeneity. Shotter utilizes the image of the swirl or the eddy to explain the unity of heterogeneity. When a swirl or an eddy takes place in the flowing stream, it can be seen as occurring within a flow because its regions are at every moment different from what they were at a previous moment. If we follow Shotter’s argument, we may ask in what sense there is a difference among phases. Shotter insists that “there must be an irreducible, qualitative difference between its successive phases for [a swirl or an eddy] to be recognizable as a stability within a flow; each phase of it must be novel in some respect by contrast with the phase preceding it.”³¹ This does not mean that phases are separated from one another by their novelty. Novelty is considered continual and plays a role to connect phases to one another.

How is temporal process as a unity of heterogeneity connected to duality of structure? In Shotter’s perspective, each moment tends to move to the two directions—looking back retrospectively and looking forward prospectively. When people see the

²⁹ Ibid., 197.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

former direction, they see the product that has been specified or determined to date. On the other hand, when looking forward, they see the productive or formative process. Shotter maintains that each moment possesses this duality of structure that is composed of a product and a process.

Since temporal process retains duality of structure, it is important to understand how the dynamic movement of the product and the process takes place. Shotter notes that “all the parts of continuously functioning feedback loops, whether forming co-ordinations or not, are (1) in operation simultaneously, yet the feedback function depends upon (2) the co-ordination of a temporal succession among them.”³² In other words, the dynamic movement of the product and the process reveals both a simultaneous and a sequential property.³³ How does this simultaneous and sequential property occur? Following John Dewey, Shotter attempts to explain this property by using the relationship between an animal’s responses and stimuli.

An animal’s responses select and constitute the very stimuli to which they are, within a forming co-ordination, the responses. But the selectivity is not just one-way. For, just as the animal’s activity works (by making differences) to specify which of all the conditions in the environment at large (if any) constitute a response’s proper stimulus, so the conditions selected will work back upon the animal to specify the response’s value... thus to provide in a response’s execution a basis for its own further appropriate stimulus as into it.³⁴

Shotter believes that, in the dynamic movement between stimuli and responses, an animal maintains itself through its capacities to make differences in its surrounding. A primary interest that Shotter has is not in the world of animal *per se*, but in the

³² Ibid., 202.

³³ Ibid., 203.

³⁴ Ibid.

understanding of temporal process and duality of structure. Temporal process that possesses duality of structure helps human beings create a structured context for its own continuation. Because of this structured context, human beings do not need to be guided by an inner representation of the outer circumstances, but by a structured context.

While Shotter explains the concept of duality of structure focusing on temporal process, he does not enter into the discussion of human action yet. The notion of intentionality is central in explaining human action. That notion does not explain human action directly, but mental activity because human action should be mediated by the mental activity. In other words, when we understand how the notion of intentionality works in mental activity, we can grasp how we express our human action appropriately so that we can enhance our abilities to be autonomous and responsible agents in the societies.

Shotter maintains that there are two directions in the intentional nature of mental activity. First, people often tend to fit themselves into their environment. This kind of mental activity “exhibits an intrinsic connectedness to, an interpenetration of, an appropriate fittedness... of itself to its surroundings or context.”³⁵ Second, people also tend to fit their environment to themselves. Shotter explains the characteristic of this second direction.

such action ‘points to’ or ‘specifies’ a realm of other possible next actions, a ‘world of meaning or reference’ that seems to make its appearance even as the action occurs, and can thus function as the contact from within which the sense of action is understood and a reply to it formulated – where the reply makes a difference by specifying the already specified context further.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., 205.

³⁶ Shotter, *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life*, 5.

Out of two types of the intentional nature of mental activity, Shotter draws the notion of duality of structure. The notion of duality of structure serves to link these two directions of the intentional nature of mental activity. When this activity is viewed retrospectively, this will play a role as a product that has been specified and differentiated. Shotter insists that “in any one moment, the activity will have functioned to specify or differentiate a state of affairs into a set of distinct regions—the product of the process when viewed retrospectively.”³⁷ On the other hand, when viewed prospectively, the intentional nature of mental activity will be “further specifiable in an already specified manner.”³⁸ The latter direction informs how to control human action by what has been specified in the action as a structured context where they can act further. This is not a passive context because “what is specified at any moment acts back upon the actor to make a difference in the value of the act, and its value unfolds as the action unfolds.”³⁹ This does not mean that all mental activities follow the process of duality of structure. Shotter notes that “the essence of human action is such... that individuals may project themselves forward without the support of the environment, towards a future state of affairs which need not yet exist.”⁴⁰ But Shotter continues to argue that there is more than that kind of mental activity, maintaining that “due to its duality of structure, [the action] posits in effect a whole realm of other possibilities, [in other words,] next actions as appropriate continuations.”⁴¹ The concept of duality of structure provides a

³⁷ Shotter, *Social Accountability and Selfhood*, 206.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 211.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 210.

⁴¹ Ibid.

clue to understand the relationship between the notion of intentionality and the mental activity. Furthermore, the mental activity that will be further specifiable in an already specified manner helps human beings link their present action to their own past experiences and future possibilities.

When Shotter explains the concept of duality of structure, he proposes an important idea to understand human agency, which is that human action can be both unintentionally and intentionally expressed. Shotter utilizes an example of making sentences to explain this phenomenon. When we reproduce sentences, those sentences look like our own free products. But because we reproduce sentences on the basis of an already established social reality, making sentences should be considered as unintended consequence. This does not mean that we are not involved in this activity of reproduction as a free being. Since we are free to project ourselves forward prospectively, that reproduction is an intended consequence. Shotter believes that we have freedom of action, but our freedom is limited.

While Shotter believes that human beings are free and can express their intentions in interaction with society, he realizes that there is a tension in expressing their intention. Shotter clearly argues that because we are free to project ourselves forward prospectively, we are required to detect “transgressions and departures from the established social orders” and repair and prevent them.⁴² On the other hand, when people express their intention to fit themselves into their environment, they may participate in a harmful situation. Shotter unfortunately does not develop this idea about

⁴² Ibid., 215.

the latter dimension more fully. But he seems to understand the tension that we face in expressing our freedom.

Chiasmic Structure

The next concept that we should explore is chiasmic structure. Shotter utilizes various terms to explain the nature of relationality, such as joint action, chiasmic structure, and relational-dialogical structure. There has been a change in Shotter's selection of terminology. Shotter utilized the concept of joint action in earlier works like *Social Accountability and Selfhood* published in 1983. But in *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life: Social Construction, Rhetoric, and Knowing of the Third Kind* published in 1993, he utilized both relational-dialogical structure and chiasmic structure. By 2000, he mainly focused on chiasmic structure because "the resulting relations [with others and the otherness] have not just dialogically structured character, as I once thought, but a *chiasmic* (or dynamically intertwined) structure."⁴³ Thus, the concept of chiasmic structure may be appropriate to explain the nature of the dynamics of relations.

In explaining chiasmic structure, Shotter begins with his critique against the Cartesian worldview that insists there is nothing so distant that human beings do not reach it or so hidden that they cannot discover it; rather, a long chain of reasoning leads them to the discovery of God's established laws and to making them masters and possessors of nature. In this worldview, people are considered not as connected to others and the otherness around them, but as self-conscious, self-contained, and self-controlled. The Cartesian worldview results in making people deaf to other's responses

⁴³ John Shotter, *'Getting It': 'Witness'-Thinking and the Dialogical...in Practice*, Unpublished book, 66. Available <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/bookpage.htm>. Accessed on 2 February, 2006. Internet.

and in eliminating the two-way, dialogically-structured, spontaneously responsive activities, which are essential in making communicative relations possible. On the basis of this critique, Shotter develops a new way of understanding in order to recover a participatory attitude that allows us to enter into meetings with others and otherness around us.

Shotter insists that we can find an answer in the living expressions, which have chiasmically organized structure. The nature of living expressions can be more clearly seen in the immediate spontaneous, bodily responses. An aspect of living utterances is that they occur in the synchrony with movement of the body. When one speaks with someone else, one can see the other speaker's body moving in synchrony with utterances, i.e. hand movement in synchrony with intoning of words, and eye movements with pauses. The events of bodily expressions do not occur as a set of separate elements but as living unities in the meeting between speakers. Physiognomic expressions make us spontaneously express something of unique relation to those surroundings even in the situation where something is said in the repetition of a word-form used. In other words, a very different form of understanding becomes available to us due to the expressive responsiveness of all involved in the meetings. This phenomenon only takes place as long as all those participating in it sustain their spontaneously responsive, dialogically structured relations to each other.

The new way of understanding that emerges out of the living, spontaneous responsiveness to the expressions of others and the otherness around us provides us with

two things.⁴⁴ The first one is an orientational understanding. When human beings attempt to respond to the expressive, physiognomic aspects of their surroundings, it is not a matter of something to do with learning some factual information or skill, but it is a matter of gaining “a sense of where and how we are placed in relation to the others around us within the landscape of possibilities within which we are all acting.”⁴⁵

Through orientational understanding, we can go on with our activities in an intelligible way and justify our understanding to others around us.

The second thing that we obtain from the living, spontaneous responsiveness to others and otherness around us is novelty. Shotter lists three things that happen in the living utterances.

(1) Responding to each other: Feeling attracted or repulsed; agreeing or disagreeing; imaging examples or scenes; being totally confused and anxious; frightened; wanting to voice one’s reply; to elaborate; to test, and so on; obeying; being ‘instructed.’ (2) relating to each other: In doing all these things, we are coordinating our activities with each other. Or at least, proposing the possibility of it... but in fact, we are doing very much more. (3) Creating dialogical realities: We are creating “dialogical realities” with all their strange characteristics.⁴⁶

Since dialogical realities are created through responsivity, how does novelty emerge out of the living, spontaneous responsiveness to the others and otherness around us? An answer can be found in the metaphor of musicality. Shotter adopts the musical metaphor from the philosopher Milic Capek to explain the interactions between speakers in living

⁴⁴ John Shotter, “Participative Thinking: ‘Seeing the Face’ and ‘Hearing the Voice’ of Nature,” 5-7 [on-line article.] Available <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/Pori-Chapter.htm>. Accessed on 2 February, 2006. Internet.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁶ John Shotter, “The Musicality of Language: Knowing How to ‘Go on’,” 64 [on-line article]. Available <http://ubpages.unh.edu/~jds/Musicality.pdf>. Accessed on 2 February, 2006. Internet.

expressions. Capek believes that there is a musical element in living utterances. If this is true, we need to explore how Capek understands the musical phrase. According to Capek, one of the characteristics in a piece of music is its succession by adding a new tone to the previous ones. When a new tone is added, “the quality of a new tone... is tinged by the whole antecedent musical context which, in turn, is retroactively changed by the emergence of a new musical quality.”⁴⁷ The moment when novelty merges is when a new tone is added to the previous ones. As the musical phrase continuously goes on in succession, this novelty that emerges out of adding the new tone to the previous ones make the musical phrase remain incomplete and unfolding. When it is said that a new tone is added to the previous ones, it is not meant that a new tone as an individual unit is reducible. Capek clearly notes that “the individual tones are not externally related units of which the melody is additively built; neither is their individuality absorbed or dissolved in the undifferentiated unity of the musical whole.”⁴⁸ Rather, the musical phrase is “a successive differentiated whole”⁴⁹ Although its movement continuously goes on, it remains a whole. On the other hand, although the musical phrase is composed of a whole, it remains differentiated. The metaphor of musicality provides a helpful idea to understand how novelty emerges out of relationality, that is, the dynamics of a new tone and previous tones.

Shotter then attempts to connect the metaphor of musicality to the language game theory of Ludwig Wittgenstein to explain human agency. Wittgenstein clearly

⁴⁷ Milic Capek, *The Philosophical Impact of Contemporary Physics* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1961), 371.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

argues that “there is a strongly musical element in verbal language.”⁵⁰ Examples include the intonation and gestures in language. A reason why Wittgenstein focuses on the gestural function of language is that “Presumably that this sort of behavior is pre-linguistic: that a language-game is based on it, that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought.”⁵¹ Wittgenstein believes that a way to understand and use language emerges out of our natural inclination to be influenced by gestures. This gestural function of language cannot be separated from a reaction. Wittgenstein clearly notes that “The origin and primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop.”⁵² He does not describe how a musical element is revealed in verbal language in a detailed way, but he seems to argue that human beings understand the meaning of language in terms of the dynamics of a language-game that is composed of interactions between speakers. More importantly he emphasizes human responses to the gestural function of language from which the beginnings of possible new ways of acting and thinking emerge.

When Shotter follows Capek and Wittgenstein showing that there is a musical element in language, he insists that we should express human agency through responses to the relationships from which novelty takes place. The new way of understanding that brings both the orientational understanding and novelty emerges out of the chiasmic structure that is based on the living, spontaneous responsiveness to the physiognomic expressions of others and the otherness.

⁵⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 29e.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 95e.

⁵² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980), 31e.

One important thing that Shotter wants to emphasize through the concept of chiasmic structure is that human agency should be expressed in the form of responsivity. The new way of understanding is not obtained through the monological relationship, but through a dialogical one between the speakers. This understanding emerges out of the borderline at which speakers take part in conversation as active respondents to expressions to others and otherness. This understanding is developed, negotiated, or socially constructed between participants in the course of an ongoing conversation. In other words, this understanding can be obtained when participants can develop their human agency as responsivity to relationality.

Polyphony

The last concept we should explore is the concept of polyphony. In the article titled “Organizing Multi-Voiced Organizations: Action Guiding Anticipations and the Continuous Creation of Novelty,” Shotter discusses chiasmic structure and the creation of novelty as its result, and then insists that we should move from an orchestration to a polyphony metaphor.⁵³ This does not mean that Shotter intends to throw away the orchestration metaphor. Rather, he believes that the orchestration metaphor is a powerful one to help us describe the sequential unfolding of complexly organized activity. The orchestration metaphor is “very relevant to our task of understanding how to organize the complex interweaving of many strands of differently sequenced activities.”⁵⁴ A number of activities occur together in relation to a felt sense both of where the activity has been and where the next is headed. Thus, the orchestration

⁵³ John Shotter, “Organizing Multi-Voiced Organizations: Action Guiding Anticipations and the Continuous Creation of Novelty,” [on-line article]. Available <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/Essex.htm>. Accessed on 2 February, 2006. Internet.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

metaphor is one of the main concepts in Shotter's rhetorical-responsive version of social construction. However, although the orchestration metaphor would be a powerful concept to explain the relationality of chiasmic structure, Shotter notices a weakness in the orchestration metaphor, arguing that the orchestration metaphor does not "highlight sufficiently the dialogical relations between the two or more distinct points of view of two or more distinct agents that can be combined but not merged in the unity of a human event."⁵⁵ In other words, Shotter is concerned about a possibility that the orchestration metaphor may make each voice just fit "harmoniously or systematically into the whole so far constructed."⁵⁶ Shotter's question is about how our inner voices can be connected to "a sense of something that is required or demanded of us in our action."⁵⁷ Shotter believes that we can find an answer for this problem in the discussion of the polyphony metaphor.

In explaining the polyphony metaphor, Shotter was influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin's psychology. In his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin develops the thesis that Dostoevsky created a new form of artistic thought, that is, the polyphonic novel. What is unfolded in Dostoevsky's novel is:

a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices... not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combined but not merged in the unity of the event."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 6.

There are some important elements in the polyphonic novel. First, the hero of the polyphonic novel becomes a subject and therefore relatively independent from the author. Bakhtin indicates that “a character’s word about [herself] and [her] world is just as fully weighted as the author’s world usually is; it is not subordinated to the character’s objectified image as merely as one of [her] characteristics, nor does it serve as a mouthpiece for the author’s voice.”⁵⁹ The distance between the author and the hero is essential. Second, the polyphonic novel is composed of the dialectic interaction not between the author and the hero, but between the consciousnesses of the hero. Bakhtin notes that “The important thing in Dostoevsky’s polyphony is precisely what happens between various consciousnesses, that is, their interaction and interdependence.”⁶⁰ In other words, the polyphonic novel is dialogic through inner voices. For example, in Dostoevsky’s novel *The Double*, the second hero (the double) is introduced as a personification of the interior thought of the first hero (Golyadkin). Once externalization of the first hero takes place and the two characters are spatially separated, a dialogue between two independent parties develops. Without dialogue, consciousness and voices are never self-sufficient. Bakhtin argues that consciousness and voices “always find themselves in an intense relationship with [other consciousnesses and voices].”⁶¹ They can be combined in this relationship, but not merged in the unity of a human event; rather, they take on “a stranded, intertwined, polyphonic organization within

⁵⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁶¹ Ibid., 26.

themselves.”⁶² If we put the inner voices dialogically, “we can in our own inner speech also think dialogically – in terms, not only of many different voices with different logical points of view, but also with our inner expressions being related to each other with many different affective or emotional-volitional tones.”⁶³ In this way, the polyphony metaphor can provide a basis that each voice does not have to fit harmoniously or systematically into the whole so far constructed.

There are two important contributions that Shotter brought from Bakhtin’s psychology. First, when Shotter follows Bakhtin and argues for the polyphony metaphor, the dialogical self combines temporal and spatial characteristics.⁶⁴ While a narrative approach has focused on the temporal dimension of narratives, time and space are equally important in the polyphony metaphor. The spatial characteristic of the self is expressed in “the terms of ‘position’ and ‘positioning.’”⁶⁵

Second, human agency is not demolished in the service of relationship. The self can be defined “in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous *I* positions... in this conception, the *I* has the ability to move, as in a space, from one position to the other in accordance with changes in situation and time.”⁶⁶ Thus, the parties involved in the dialogical relation cannot be considered as passive recipients, but active participants.

⁶² Shotter, “Organizing multi-voiced organizations,” 9.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Hubert J. M. Hermans, “The Polyphony of the Mind: A Multi-voiced and Dialogical Self,” in *The Plural Self: Multiplicity in Everyday Life*, edited by J. Rowan and M. Cooper (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999), 110.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Pastoral Implications from Shotter's Rhetoric-Responsive Version of Social Construction

In this section, I would explore two themes to discuss pastoral implications for Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation. Those two themes include (1) injustice and human agency, and (2) Shotter's social construction and human agency.

Injustice and Human Agency

What would be an appropriate criterion to evaluate psychological theories?

Robert Kegan provides a helpful criterion for this question:

Any time a theory is normative, and suggests that something is more grown, more mature, more developed than something else, we had all better check to see if the distinction rests on arbitrary grounds that consciously or unconsciously unfairly advantage some people (such as those who create the theory and people like them) whose own preferences are being depicted as superior. We had all better check whether what may even appear to be an 'objective' theory is not in reality a tool or captive of a 'ruling' group (such as white people men, Westerners) who use the theory to preserve their advantaged position.⁶⁷

What Kegan argues for through this statement is that we should evaluate psychological theories in light of the experiences of the marginalized in society. In other words, since the marginalized suffer from destructive systems, it is essential to see whether psychological theories reflect the issue of injustice. When we attempt to connect Shotter's rhetoric-responsive version of social construction to Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation, this question is important because many Korean adoptees suffer from negative influences that occur out of racism and sexism, which impact Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation destructively. Unfortunately, Shotter does not raise this kind of question in developing his theory. Of course, Shotter's primary concern has

⁶⁷ Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 229.

been an issue of injustice. But Shotter does not mention about how injustice brings psychological impact on the formation of human agency. This phenomenon is clearly shown in the concept of knowledge of a third kind. The emergence of knowledge of a third kind occurs when the external signs become internalized, first between people and then within themselves. Ultimately human agency takes place, when people come to direct their actions by using their own internal signs systems that are transformed out of external signs. Mastering their actions, people can experience themselves, their world, and their language differently. Here, what we should ask is whether the marginalized such as Korean adoptees would follow the similar process of internalization with the people who have taken a dominated position in society. Since Shotter did not explore that type of question, this question may remain unanswered from Shotter's perspective.

However, Kegan provides a useful theory to understand how human agency of the marginalized such as Korean adoptees can be restricted in the process of development. My interest is not in what differences and similarities between Kegan's development of self and Shotter's rhetoric-responsive version of social construction would be, but in how human agency can be restricted by negative influences in society. Building a theory on the classic Piagetian paradigm of cognitive development, Kegan suggests six stages: (1) the incorporate self; (2) the impulsive self; (3) the imperial self; (4) the interpersonal self; (5) the institutional self; and (6) inter-individual.⁶⁸

While the last three stages are those that interest me, I would like to describe the first three stages briefly to understand Kegan's theory. In the stage of the incorporate self, there is no difference between the infant and the primary caregiver. The human self

⁶⁸ Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

emerges out of dependence upon and merger with the primary caregiver. The infant meets all needs from her primary caregiver and, thus, experiences a state of oneness with her primary caregiver. The following stage is the impulsive form of self where a major object becomes not just mothering figure, but family members. Although an infant realizes that there is an object separate from herself, she cannot “distinguish between her own perspective and reality.”⁶⁹ The third stage is the impulsive form of self that emerges out of embeddedness in self-sufficiency. The child begins to realize that she has her own needs, interests, and wishes, for which she must work to be met. Also, the child demands mutuality by accepting or cutting deals with others.

The last three stages occur beyond childhood. The fourth stage is the interpersonal form of self that emerges out of embeddedness in the mutually reciprocal one-to-one relationships. This stage starts in late adolescence and continues to develop through adulthood. Kegan maintains that in this stage “interpersonal partners permit relationship to be relativized or placed in a bigger context of ideology and psychological self-definition.”⁷⁰ The next stage is the institutional form of self that occurs out of embeddedness in independent self-definition. Self in this stage is characterized as independent and autonomous. The last stage is the inter-individual form of self. This self can establish genuinely adult relationship, acknowledges “capacity for interdependence, for self-surrender and intimacy, for interdependent self-definition.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Carol Lakey Hess, *Caretakers of Our Common House* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 59.

⁷⁰ Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, 119.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

In understanding these six stages of the human development of self, it is important to understand “holding environment”⁷² because that concept is the most important factor to determine the development of self. Environment can be defined as “the maternal environment that positively mirrors the infant’s self... and responds to the infant’s needs.”⁷³ Ideally, this environment plays three types of functions in the dynamic interaction with the person: (1) holding on and supporting the person where they are; (2) letting the person go beyond where they are; and (3) remaining in relationship when they change. When environments play those roles appropriately, people can develop a healthy self. But in reality, the environments fail to support the person where they are or to allow the person to grow into a different self. Kegan finds a reason for this phenomenon in a structure where the tacit ideology dominates powerfully.

American culture quite naturally provides these ideological supports to those it favors and elects as fellow participants in the social and psychological institutions which regulate its established arrangements. Essentially, these favored persons have been middle-class white men. A middle-class white man’s evolution out of embeddedness in the interpersonal is not a moving spectacle in our culture precisely because there is no spectacle—you cannot watch it (unless you look closely at a given individual over time). It will stand out in the private relations of the person’s immediate network but it does not stand out as figure on the cultural ground precisely because it is embedded in the tacit ideology of the culture. This is one reason the tacit ideology is so powerful and insidious for those it excludes: it cannot be seen; it is not held up for examination.⁷⁴

This phenomenon can take place in the interpersonal form of self that is characterized as having deep connections with others. In these connections, the tacit ideology tends to

⁷² Ibid., 121-128.

⁷³ Hess, 60.

⁷⁴ Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, 212-213.

force the marginalized to follow expectations of the dominant group. When the marginalized become interpersonally oriented, they have difficulty developing autonomy and independence in the institutional form of self. Carol Lakey Hess, a feminist practical theologian, maintains that, when women enter male-dominated spheres of life, environments “hold on too tightly to conventional understanding of womanhood and refuse to [remain in relationship] when women grow into differentiated selves.”⁷⁵ Women tend to be pressed to meet social expectations for femininity such as submissiveness, passivity, and dependence. Thus, when women are oriented to the interpersonal form of self, they have difficulty developing autonomy and independence because environments fail to let women go beyond where they are and to remain in relationship when they change.

Kegan’s perspective rightly points out a limitation in Shotter’s argument. When Shotter argues that human agency emerges out of mastering actions by utilizing internal signs systems that have been in and come out of others, human agency is a neither private nor public product, but a joint one. The dominant group such as middle-class white men may not have difficulty mastering their movement in the process of internalization of external signs. But in reality, the marginalized in society can go through a different path. Their agency can be limited in mastering their movement. Korean adoptees’ experiences are one of the examples. Facing many negative influences that occur from racism and sexism, these Korean adoptees were limited in mastering their movement, and thus have constructed their ethnic identity in a destructive way. Many Korean adoptees could not find any group to which they fit in. Some of them

⁷⁵ Hess, 60.

were disconnected from their relationships with others such as adoptive families, communities, and so forth. Furthermore, a few expressed their suffering in the form of violence and suicide. When Shotter did not reflect his theory in light of injustice, he could not reflect the experiences of the marginalized such as Korean adoptees in an appropriate way.

Shotter's Social Constructionism and Human Agency

Although Shotter has a limitation in explaining the emergence of human agency through knowledge of a third kind, Shotter still provides a valuable understanding about how Korean adoptees can utilize human agency to construct a healthy ethnic identity. First of all, we should explore the question regarding whether social constructionism brings about a destruction of human agency and moral responsibility because there has been a critique on social constructionism. For example, Harwood Fisher, in the article titled "Postmodern Agency," criticizes social construction, focusing on Kenneth Gergen, arguing that "Common to social constructionists and cognitive linguists is a retreat from the ontological issues of subjective experience to a combination of pragmatism and nominalism."⁷⁶ Its result is that human beings "escape from conundrums of subjective experiences" and lose "psychological realities and self-determination."⁷⁷ Fisher argues that a postmodern worldview brings the destruction of human agency and moral responsibility.

As a matter of fact, social constructionists do not intend to abandon or destroy the concept of human agency itself. They object to any idea that a foundational ontology

⁷⁶ Harwood Fisher, "Postmodern Agency: You and I can show it; not own it," *Theory and Psychology*, 9 (1999): 103.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

regarding human agency can be established and attempt to understand human agency as conversational. In other words, the point is “not to rule between what exists and what does not, but to ask how it is that we can go on if we enter a discursive practice in which we treat the real as constructed.”⁷⁸ Human agency lies within the shared attempt to sustain the conditions in which we “consider the gains and losses of our taken-for-granted claims for cultural life, and ponder the possibilities of alternatives.”⁷⁹ Constructed and performative agency is pursued only as “a way to diffuse or deconstruct the idea of agency in the service of reducing conflict and keeping the conversation going.”⁸⁰ Therefore, it may not be reasonable to insist that Gergen attempts to abandon or destroy the concept of human agency.

However, Gergen has a limitation in understanding human agency. This limitation is apparent in Gergen’s argument regarding an implication of relational responsibility. In an article titled, “An Invitation to Relational Responsibility,” which is a work done in collaboration with Sheila McNamee, he clearly describes the meaning of relational responsibility.

We hold relationally responsible actions to be those that sustain and enhance forms of interchange out of which meaningful action itself is made possible. If human meaning is generated through relationship, then to be responsible to relational processes is to favor the possibility of

⁷⁸ Kenneth J. Gergen, “Agency: Social Construction and Relational Action,” *Theory and Psychology*, 9 (1999), 114.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ John W. Lannamann, “On Being Relational In an Accountable Way: The Question of Agency and Power,” in *Relational Responsibility*, edited by Sheila McNamee and Kenneth J. Gergen (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999), 86.

intelligibility itself—of possessing selves, values, and the sense of worth. Isolation represents the negation of humanity.⁸¹

Gergen's perspective denies any sense of individual and subjective agency as "capacity for internal deliberation and control of one's actions."⁸² There exists only relational responsibility, which should be expressed in the activities that sustain and enhance forms of interchange. His position assumes that this type of relationship occur on a level playing field where all parties start out equally involved and responsible.

There are two problems in Gergen's perspective. First, I do not believe that those constructions are always equally possible for all parties involved. For example, while the meaning of ethnic identity is socially constructed, Korean adoptees' voices have been silenced and they have been exposed to negative influences in their societies. Their human agency has been limited by the social environments. In fact, Stanley Deetz and William White agree, when they state that "we feel the world McNamee and Gergen inhabit is too benign, their sensibilities too middle-classed, and their hopes too academic."⁸³ Gergen's position seems to ignore the social exigencies facing people in everyday life.

Second, I believe that human agency should be understood in terms of human responsibility as responsivity, which implies accountability. Michael Mazanec and Steve Duck criticize Gergen, arguing that he does not treat the notion of responsibility

⁸¹ Sheila McNamee and Kenneth J. Gergen, "An Invitation to Relational Responsibility," in *Relational Responsibility*, edited by Sheila McNamee and Kenneth J. Gergen (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999), 18-19.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸³ Stanley Deetz and William J. White, "Relational Responsibility or Dialogic Ethics? A Questioning of McNamee and Gergen," in *Relational Responsibility*, edited by Sheila McNamee and Kenneth J. Gergen (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999), 116.

as an inherently relational concept.⁸⁴ They note that “even those views of (individual) responsibility to which McNamee & Gergen react negatively are inherently and irreducibly relational concepts with implications beyond the relational walls... of the immediate dyad to social discourse of position, power, and marginality.”⁸⁵ Also, since the word “*responsibility*” comes from the Latin, “I answer” (*respondeo*), the root of this word “proclaim the primacy of the originary, and unitary ego.”⁸⁶ Thus, human agency cannot be understood appropriately without the concept of responses to the others and accountability.

Shotter does not stand in Gergen’s position in understanding human agency and responsibility. Unlike Gergen who emphasizes only the dimension of becoming that occurs through relationship, Shotter maintains that the existence of human beings is composed of both the dimensions of becoming and being. This phenomenon, according to Shotter, is called duality of structure, which is clearly shown in temporal process and human actions. While temporal process is considered a unity of heterogeneity, temporality retains both the product that has been specified or determined to date and the productive process. The important question is how we can utilize human agency in this duality of structure. An answer lies in human intentionality, which retains a characteristic of duality of structure. In other words, people should express their responsivity to the dimensions of both becoming and being, through which we can

⁸⁴ Michael Mazanec and Steve Duck, “Responding and Relating: Responsibility to Individuals, Relating, and Differences,” in *Relational Responsibility*, edited by Sheila McNamee and Kenneth J. Gergen (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999), 124.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁸⁶ Deetz and White, 113.

make differences in its surroundings. While it is important to respond to both dimensions, Shotter emphasizes an expression of human agency through responsivity to the dimension of becoming, which is shown in chiasmic structure and polyphony. Thus, Shotter insists that individual and subjective agency is not reduced in relationship; rather, that human agency is retained in responsivity.

When Shotter understands human agency as human responsibility and responsivity, he places his position in the post-Vygotskian perspective. In understanding human agency, there are two different theoretical approaches employing the grounding assumptions of social construction: discourse-based and a post-Vygotskian perspective.⁸⁷ The former perspective views all known psychological phenomena such as social attitudes, emotions, self, and so forth, as created in social discourse and as having their being only in social discourse. So Gergen insists that “we are now moving to the point of our understanding of knowledge where the individual is being replaced by social process.”⁸⁸ The contribution of this perspective is to make discourse central as a way to examine the genuine reality. But a problem is that the agentic self becomes “dissolved either in the linguistic reality or in the reality of social interactions.”⁸⁹ The consequence is that while this perspective may help overcome the problems in the traditional understanding that just emphasizes the individualistic perspective on responsibility, there is not much space left for an agentic self. On the other hand, a post-

⁸⁷ Anna Stetsenko and Igor Arievitch, “Constructing and Deconstructing the Self: Comparing Post-Vygotskian and Discourse-Based Versions of Social Constructionism,” *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 4 (1997), 159-172.

⁸⁸ Kenneth Gergen, “Toward Self as Relationship,” in *Self and Identity: Psychosocial Perspectives*, edited by K. Yardley and T. Honess (Chichester, England: Wiley, 1987), 63.

⁸⁹ Stetsenko and Arievitch, 164.

Vygotskian perspective turns to the methods of ‘active’ co-construction. This perspective considers a psychological inquiry as “a sort of an active enterprise, a human practice, a social process in which co-acting participants strive to achieve common goals.”⁹⁰ In other words, social constructionists who support the latter perspective take an active stance in the process of co-construction and change. So when Shotter situates his argument in the post-Vygotskian perspective, he embraces human nature as both relational and responsible.

When Shotter insists that human agency should be expressed in the form of responsivity to relationships, he provides the possibility that Korean adoptees utilize human agency to construct healthy ethnic identity. Traver insists that Korean adoptees’ status can be considered to be *involuntary minorities*.⁹¹ The term, involuntary minorities, is used to call the people who find “themselves in the United States through either slavery, conquest, or colonization.”⁹² Traver argues that Korean adoptees’ experiences resemble those of involuntary minorities in the United States in terms of passivity of their lives. A clear example is an issue of ethnic identity. Korean adoptees suffered from negative influences that occur out of racism and sexism, which impacted ethnic identity formation in a destructive way.

However, from Shotter’s view, Korean adoptees cannot remain in the passive position; rather, they are required to express human agency through responsivity in constructing healthy ethnic identity. A crucial point is responsivity to relationships that open up new possibilities and novelty in each moment. In what ways can Korean

⁹⁰ Ibid., 165.

⁹¹ Traver, 103.

⁹² Ibid.

adoptees express their human freedom through responsivity? We will come back to this question in the chapter five.

Chapter Four

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki and

The Weaving of Feminist Theology and Process Theology

In this chapter, I will explore Suchocki's feminist process theology to discuss how Korean adoptees can overcome injustice in constructing a healthy ethnic identity. There are two reasons. First, Suchocki's feminist process theology focuses on the issue of how to overcome injustice. Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki views herself as a process theologian and feminist theologian.¹ In an article titled "Weaving the World," she utilizes the metaphor of "weaving" to explain how to combine process theology and feminist theology.² A reason for weaving these two resources is not to integrate process and feminist modes of thought, but to discuss the issue of injustice. In other words, Suchocki finds herself working with a feminist mode of thought, not in a way that competes with process theology, but in a blended harmony. The complementary point lies in the arena of social action. The feminist mode of thought provides a space where the ethical implications of process theology can be actualized. Suchocki insists that "the

¹ See Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "The Idea of God in Feminist Philosophy," *Hypatia* vol. 9, no. 4 (Fall, 1994), 57-69; Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Weaving the World," *Process Studies* vol. 14, no. 2 (Summer, 1985), 76-86; Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Openness and Mutuality in Feminist Thought and Action," in *Feminism and Process Thought*, edited by Sheila Greeve Davaney (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1981), 62-82; Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Anxiety and Trust in Feminist Experience," *The Journal of Religion* vol. 60, no. 4 (1980), 459-471.

² Another reason for weaving the two resources is that Suchocki finds process and feminist modes of thought to complement each other in her own personal experiences. For her personal experiences, see Suchocki, "Weaving the World," 76; Suchocki, "Openness and Mutuality," 62-62.

philosophy espouses ideals of openness and mutuality; feminists commit their lives to the enactment of these values in society.”³ In this way, a process mode of thought enriches a feminist mode of thought and *vice versa*, through which Suchocki attempts to discuss how to overcome injustice.

Second, while destructive external influences impact identity formation, Suchocki argues that individual responses as an expression of human agency are necessary in constructing healthy identity. In *God, Christ, Church*, Suchocki explains identity formation in light of feminist process theology. External influences such as family, profession, locale, and so forth are involved in the process of identity formation. Suchocki insists that “every element in [one’s] description involves a primary reference to that which is not [oneself].”⁴ External reference becomes internal through relation and helps one understand who one is. Although external influences play a primary function in establishing identity, one’s creative responses are not reduced by external influences. Suchocki writes that “identity is more than the external influences affecting one; identity is also one’s influence on that which is beyond oneself.”⁵ Because of one’s creative responses, identity is not reducible to any one of those influences. External influences and human responses are two essential elements to contribute to identity formation. As external influences shape the individual, the individual shapes them. Although Suchocki does not explore ethnic identity formation *per se*, she discusses the relationship between identity formation and injustice, which can be a clue to discuss

³ Suchocki, “Openness and Mutuality,” 64.

⁴ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church: A Practical Guide to Process Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

how Korean adoptees can overcome injustice in constructing healthy ethnic identity.

Thus, I attempt to integrate the issue of Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation with Suchocki's feminist process theology.

The body of this chapter is composed of four sections. The first section describes Suchocki's understanding of sin and evil. The following section explores subjective immortality, which refers to the possibility of continuing to experience some form of life after death as a subjective center of consciousness. Since Suchocki believes subjective immortality can establish a basis for the fulfillment of justice, yet is not a sufficient answer to injustice, the third section will consider everlasting and temporal redemption. In the fourth section, I will discuss two important themes to find pastoral implications from Suchocki's feminist process theology. Those two themes include individual freedom and identity, which will be integrated with a fictional story regarding Catherine's experience.

Before I enter into the body of this chapter, I should indicate a limitation of this chapter. As mentioned earlier, a goal of the pastoral theologian is not to discuss the nature or existence of God, but to discern the nature of human existence and provide an appropriate and transformative response. Since I want to discuss how adult Korean adoptees utilize human agency in constructing a healthy ethnic identity, I do not use Suchocki's well-developed Christological proposals but instead focus on her theological anthropology.

Understanding of Evil and Sin

The first question that emerges out of the issue of identity formation is how Suchocki understands the nature of injustice. In other words, what is the nature of

injustice that impedes healthy identity formation? Suchocki explains the nature of injustice in two ways, evil and sin. Suchocki develops evil as the first concept of injustice in *The End of Evil*⁶ which was born out of her dissertation, *The Correlation Between God and Evil*.⁷ On the other hand, sin as the second concept of injustice becomes Suchocki's major issue in her later academic life, which is reflected well in *The Fall to Violence*.⁸ Suchocki's emphasis seemed to move from evil to sin. Why did this phenomenon take place in Suchocki's argument? I will come back to this question later.

While both evil and sin are included in the nature of injustice, what would be the difference between two concepts? Suchocki describes the difference between evil and sin:

The critical importance of retaining the terminology of sin is that sin, unlike evil, entails human responsibility and human hope. Simply to call a situation evil can lead to passivity or paralysis with regard to that evil. Evil overwhelms us, often as an impersonal force of fate. But sin is a human category, created in, through, and by us—and therefore sin is potentially a reality that, no matter how intricate, can yield to transformation.⁹

The difference between evil and sin lies in whether human freedom as the ability to choose one's potential gets involved in the process. When Suchocki defines sin as "the

⁶ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The End of Evil* (New York: State University of New York, 1988).

⁷ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The Correlation Between God and Evil*, dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1974.

⁸ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1994).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 129-130.

violation of creation, and therefore a rebellion against creation's well-being,"¹⁰ she argues that kind of violation is created through and by human beings. This criterion does not mean that there is no human role in the emergence of evil. Suchocki argues that evil is caused by two fundamental modes, finitude and human will. But what Suchocki argues is that sin belongs to the human category much more than evil. Thus, since sin can be named as something that ought not to be the case in a human category, people can offer better alternatives and offer "the catalytic hope of transformation."¹¹

The Nature of Evil

Suchocki's understanding of the nature of evil is connected to two fundamental modes of understanding the root cause of evil. The first mode is called the subjective pole of evil that concerns human will.¹² The second mode is called the objective pole of evil that concerns finitude. Theologians in the Christian tradition tend to belong to one or the other. While Augustine, Kant, and Hegel insist that human will is the source of evil, Schleiermacher, and Nietzsche argue that finitude is the root cause of evil.¹³ Suchocki's primary intent is to unify the two modes of understanding the root cause of evil, adopting the philosophical categories of Whitehead. Suchocki maintains that "Whitehead's concept of reality, as rhythmically both subjective and objective, allows a balanced tension between freedom and finitude whereby each conditions the other and

¹⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹¹ Ibid., 130.

¹² Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 6.

¹³ Ibid., 5-60. Suchocki explores six well-known theologians to see how they understand the root cause of evil and which mode of understanding evil they depend on.

both together provide the dynamic root of evil.”¹⁴ In Suchocki’s perspective, the tension between two modes of understanding the root cause of evil can be resolved when both poles are unified in a single theory.

Suchocki writes that the basis of her definition of evil lies in Whitehead’s understanding of evil. Evil, in Whitehead’s view, arises out of the interconnected operation of three metaphysical principles:

(1) that all actualization is finitude; (2) that finitude involves the exclusion of alternative possibility; (3) that mental functioning introduces into realization subjective forms conformal to relevant alternatives excluded from the completeness of physical realization.¹⁵

Another way to state these three metaphysical principles is that 1) evil is perpetual perishing; 2) evil involves the exclusion of alternative possibility; and 3) evil results from “ideals born out of season.”¹⁶ It is necessary to explore each one of these metaphysical principles individually to gain a deeper understanding. But one thing that we should attend to is that the three principles are interconnected and “involve dynamics which are operative in every actuality.”¹⁷ Attending to the connectivity of these three principles, Suchocki explores each principle to gain what Whitehead means.

The primary principle of evil is called perpetual perishing. Evil as perpetual perishing is linked with the creative process of the actual occasion.¹⁸ This creative

¹⁴ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 3.

¹⁵ Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 333.

¹⁶ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 66.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁸ It is necessary to define the actual occasion. Suchocki attempts to discern the finite reality from God. In Suchocki’s view, all creation is composed of actual entities, from God to inanimate particles. All creation is affected by the same creative

process of the actual occasion can be expressed as concrescence, which is “the unification of many feelings into the single actual occasion.”¹⁹ In concrescence, the finite occasion contrasts and evaluates the past data, and then chooses which data to be eliminated so that it can integrate them into satisfaction. Satisfaction is the goal of concrescence and completes the finite occasion. The actual occasion becomes this and not that, because “to choose to become this eliminates the possibility of becoming that: existence is a matter of choices, and choice is by definition exclusive.”²⁰ When the actual occasion chooses this possibility, the other possibility perishes. Once perpetual perishing occurs, the occasion cannot be changed and becomes objectified. On the other hand, Suchocki maintains that “[the actual occasion] becomes objectively immortal, a stubborn fact for the future.”²¹ Perpetual perishing is understood as evil because it entails the destruction of possibility through the necessity of choice. This evil that is an inherent part of finitude occurs in the process of the concrescence.

However, the condition of finitude allows evil as well as good into existence. Although the experience of the destruction of possibility is used as a base of definition of evil, experience is “an essential component of every element of existence, and... is open to the effect of alternative not its own.”²² That is to say, the actual occasion is

process. But there is one difference between God and the actual occasion. While God is understood to be nontemporal, occasion “implies a locus in the spatio-temporal extensiveness of the universe” (Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 175). Suchocki utilizes ‘actual entity’ referred to as God and ‘the actual occasion’ referred to as the finite reality.

¹⁹ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 175.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

²¹ *Ibid.* 63.

²² *Ibid.*, 67.

open to alternative possibilities and the novel comes into existence. Thus, there is fundamental ambiguity because the same structure that provides evil is also the structure that provides for good.

The second principle of evil involves the exclusion of an alternative possibility. Suchocki argues that this evil occurs in one of two ways: through extensive positive or extensive negative valuing.²³

The first one is extensive positive valuing. This evil occurs when the actual occasion attempts to bring all of the past into the present. But it is not possible for the actual occasion to incorporate with all that it feels from the past because discord may arise from conflicting values. When the actual entities try to do so, they deny their limitations in finitude.

The second way to exclude alternative possibility is extensive negative valuing. The process of concrescence involves the actual occasion's act of contrasting or evaluating feelings to discern which data it will carry forward into the future. At this point, it may be necessary for the actual occasion to be open to positive feeling of many data from the past, because Suchocki argues that "Manyness provides the basis for contrast and intensity, moving to high grades of existence."²⁴ But when negative prehension is too drastic, "the richness of contrast is lost, resulting in a trivialization of experience."²⁵ The actual occasion attempts to eliminate as much of the past as possible. This trivialization of experience results in maintaining the status irrelevant to the well-being of both itself and other actual occasion and closing from further experiences.

²³ Ibid., 64-65.

²⁴ Ibid., 65.

²⁵ Ibid.

The last and third principle of evil is that the actual occasion perceives that it fails to actualize relevant alternatives. This evil is different from the second principle, since the second one results from the actual occasion's voluntary choice, whereas the third one emerges out of in a situation in which relevant alternatives are excluded by 'external forces.' This alternative is suggested as ideals in a particular situation, but is problematic in other situations. Suchocki writes that "these ideals are born out of season in a time not yet ripe for their fullest realization."²⁶ This third principle of evil results in two consequences, which are loss and gain. The first one is the loss that the actual occasion cannot actualize relevant alternatives, suffering from "anguish and impatience with actuality."²⁷ This suffering that could have been avoided takes place from this loss. The second consequence is gain. Suchocki maintains that "such a situation becomes the motivating power toward achievement of a different actuality."²⁸ The ideals that have been problematic in a situation will turn to an actuality in a different situation. Since there is both loss and gain, there is ambiguity in this form of evil, which is a mixture of good and evil.

Following Whitehead's process philosophy, Suchocki attempts to describe how the understanding of the nature of evil is connected to the two fundamental modes which are the subjective and objective poles of evil and to tie them into one theory. In her endeavor, there are two important points that Suchocki wants to emphasize. Evil emerges out of the dynamic movement between finitude and human will. Suchocki notes that "the freedom is relative to the condition of finitude, but it is freedom

²⁶ Ibid., 66.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

nonetheless, so that the final reason for what a thing becomes is to be found both within that thing and within the conditions from which it arose.”²⁹ The dynamic movement between finitude and human will implies that human freedom is conditioned by finitude, but freedom is not reduced by finitude.

The second point is freedom in community. The actual occasion is free to choose from many alternative possibilities. But since there is intermingling of evil and good in the three principles of evil, the process of choosing possibilities involves comparison and evaluation of value. The value of its freedom derives from community because community “has defined its realm of alternatives.”³⁰ Community provides its boundaries which make possibilities relevant. So Suchocki maintains that “relationships are integral to an entity’s being, so that these relationships form a natural and legitimate qualification, be it up or down, of the initial valuation of the entity.”³¹ Therefore, human freedom and community are operating in rhythmic togetherness.

The Nature of Sin

Attempting to revise the traditional understanding of sin, Suchocki offers a working definition based on feminist process theology. She writes that sin can be defined as “participation through intent or act in unnecessary violence that contributes to the ill-being of any aspect of earth or its inhabitants.”³² That is to say, sin is the unnecessary violence of rebellion against creation’s well-being. As she argues that sin should not be considered as rebellion against God but against creation’s well-being,

²⁹ Ibid., 68.

³⁰ Ibid., 69.

³¹ Ibid., 70.

³² Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 12.

Suchocki stands away from the traditional understanding of sin as rebellion against God.³³ This does not mean that there is no connection between rebellion against creation's well-being and against God. Since "it is not possible for God not to be affected by that which happens in the world," rebellion against creation's well-being entails sin against God as well.³⁴ But she challenges the traditional understanding of sin and defines sin as rebellion against the creation's well-being.

Although she believes that there are dual dimensions in the understanding of sin, the one personal and the other impersonal, Suchocki focuses on impersonal sin. She maintains that the traditional understanding of sin has tended to emphasize sin as personal, noting that "sin as personal indicates a violation of relationships, resulting in a state of alienation from God, nature, one another, and the self."³⁵ Rather, she emphasizes sin as rebellion against well-being of existence, which is connected to impersonal sin. This does not mean that both dimensions of sin are mutually exclusive; rather, they are interconnected to each other. Thus, sin as impersonal will be explored first, and then sin as personal will be described.

Rejecting the traditional understanding of sin that focuses only on the personal dimension, Suchocki argues that sin as impersonal can be described as original sin and

³³ Ibid, 17-18. Suchocki discusses some difficulties with interpreting sin as a rebellion against God. First, staying within boundaries that are defined by God, which often turns out to be mores of a particular society, is not the fundamental problem of the human condition. Second, since a rebellion against God tends to be interpreted as rebellion against any form of political, social or personal power, this theology provides a formula to keep marginalized or oppressed people in the powerless place. Third, this concept of sin makes the victims invisible, and increase violence that victims suffer. Fourth, to interpret all sins in the light of rebellion against God effectively levels the distinction between sins.

³⁴ Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 13.

³⁵ Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church*, 22.

the demonic which “precedes the individual and is greater than the individual.”³⁶ For her, original sin emerges out of the human condition where all human beings live out their lives. Suchocki defines original sin as “inherited structures of consciousness, acting as socially sanctioned norms, that assume the ill-being of earth or any of its inhabitants.”³⁷ That is to say, original sin refers to a destructive structure which is already in place before one’s birth. Thus, these conditions are impersonal in that they do not result from individual influences and responsibility.

While original sin refers to the destructive condition, the demonic is described as power that is produced out of the destructive structure. Original sin as destructive condition is “the foundation for the further power of the demonic.”³⁸ This power makes the individual feel helpless and leads one to assume that there is no alternative except joining that destructive power because demonic power is “granted the power to overwhelm the alternatives.”³⁹ This power also maintains distortion which “requires a continuous denial of the fullness of reality, and the energy required to maintain ‘The Lie’ drains us of our vitality.”⁴⁰ Original sin is, therefore, demonic because it is “a confluence of many powers”⁴¹ that brings destruction to the well-being of existence.

³⁶ Ibid., 24.

³⁷ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, “Original Sin Revisited,” *Process Studies* vol. 20, no. 4 (1991), 233-243.

³⁸ Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church*, 26.

³⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁴¹ Ibid., 24.

As Suchocki emphasizes impersonal sin as original sin and the demonic, she suggests two elements that contribute to the situation of “being disposed toward sin prior to one’s consent.”⁴² The first one is the interconnected structure of existence. Process theology is based on a relational model, which “sets up a structure whereby the interactive influence between individual and society is highlighted at the personal as well as microscopic level.”⁴³ As we inherit from all of the past, this inheritance is woven into ourselves through our own creative response to relationships. This structure of personal existence connects us to the destructive structure as original sin.

The second element is “the normative gaze,” which refers to “the tendency to value one’s own kind as over against the other.”⁴⁴ Suchocki argues that the normative gaze is mediated through the intersubjectivity of institutions and society. Institutions and social organizations are operated through “intersubjectivity created by concentric rings of participants, governed by the dynamic force of a rather fluid mission, or purpose for its being.”⁴⁵ In the process of accomplishing goals such as mission and purpose, the institutions create their own power of psychic impact on society and shape the “norms and expectations of each individual consciousness.”⁴⁶ A problem is that some individuals or specialized group takes advantage through the manipulation of intersubjectivity in institutions, which results in shaping the power of the normative gaze. This power of institutions makes it difficult to transcend the norms. Suchocki says

⁴² Suchocki, “Original Sin Revisited,” 242.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 242.

that “by definition, the inherited norms cannot be questioned prior to their enactment: one is caught in sin without virtue of consent.”⁴⁷ The two elements—interrelationality and intersubjectivity— show that original sin makes sin inevitable.

Although she focuses on impersonal sin as original sin and the demonic to revise the traditional understanding of sin, Suchocki does not ignore the importance of personal sin. She rejects the traditional perspective that focuses only on personal sin. Personal sin, in Suchocki’s view, involves responsibility. If a person has not had an opportunity to express freedom, she cannot be held responsible for her actions. Since impersonal sin refers to a destructive structure which is already in place before one’s birth, this sin is free from individual influences and responsibility. But impersonal and personal sins are not mutually exclusive; they are interconnected to each other.

Personal sin emerges out of the dynamics of original sin and human freedom. While original sin refers to the destructive condition, the demonic is described as power that is produced out of the destructive structure. Original sin is demonic because it is a confluence of many powers and brings destruction to the well-being of existence. The power is truly greater than the individual. But Suchocki argues that as one assents to the demonic, personal sin that presupposes one’s responsibility is perpetuated in this dynamic. Personal sin takes place when one continues to be imprisoned in the power of the demonic, denying “the multiplicity of influences and the novelty in the immediate future.”⁴⁸ Personal sin is toward the self and toward others. In assenting, the power of the demonic is made subjective, and is “strengthened to the level of habit, becoming

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church*, 25.

more difficult to resist.”⁴⁹ To assent to the power of the demonic is to bring internal and external influence toward the others.

As the oppressive power of evil in the immediate environment is increased, resistance to that power is made much more difficult for others as well as for the self. In addition to this inward effect of one’s choice for evil on others, there is also the external effect which accrues when one’s destructive actions bring about physical or psychic harm to others.⁵⁰

As one is involved in assent to the demonic, she makes choices to be imprisoned in the power of demonic in which personal sin occurs. In addition, personal sin may strengthen the power of the demonic through taking part in destructive influences toward others.

Here, we should come back to the question: how does Suchocki understand the nature of injustice? Suchocki maintains that injustice emerges from two directions, evil and sin. Evil as the first concept of injustice occurs from an interaction between finitude and human freedom, and sin as the second concept of injustice takes place from impersonal sin that belongs to human category. What we observe in Suchocki’s understanding of the nature of injustice is that her emphasis has moved from the first concept of injustice to the second one. Why did this phenomenon occur? There is one clue in the preface of *The Fall to Violence*. An opportunity that Suchocki participated in a trial as a juror made her confront a day-to-day basis reality:

The sorry world of the crack house with its vials and white powders and guns had seemed so distant from my world as the academic dean of a theological seminary. But in truth, that ‘other’ world was only a few miles from my home. Where did that world start, and where did it stop? ‘My’ world was geographically close, but had I ever intentionally done anything at all to touch the lives in that ‘other world? Was I only

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 25.

involved to judge its inhabitants? Or was there not a sense in which I was a participant in that world as well as mine, even if that participation were as an absentee neighbor?⁵¹

A contact with the harshness of violence in reality seemed to make Suchocki realize that evil as a concept of injustice that occurs from the interaction of finitude and human freedom does not address the reality in an appropriate way. Thus, although Suchocki believes that injustice emerges out of two directions, evil and sin, her primary focus lies on sin that occurs from impersonal sin, which is demonic power and structure.

Korean adoptees' experiences are connected to sin that emerges out of impersonal sin. Korean adoptees have suffered from various types of discrimination: (1) gender discrimination; (2) racial discrimination; and (3) cultural discrimination, which impeded healthy ethnic identity formation. These discriminations occurred out of racism and sexism that have been embedded in society. In other words, these discriminations are not the outcomes of an interaction between finitude and human freedom, but of impersonal sin. Thus, the nature of injustice in light of Korean adoptees' experiences concerns impersonal sin that can also be described as original sin and demonic power.

Subjective Immortality

While Korean adoptees suffer from negative influences such as sexism and racism, which impact ethnic identity formation destructively, how can Korean adoptees utilize human freedom in overcoming injustice? Suchocki suggests subjective immortality as part of her answer. Subjective immortality is, in Suchocki's view, defined as the continuation of the individual participation in the activity of overcoming sin through self-creation. Suchocki insists that subjective immortality can provide a

⁵¹ Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 12.

ground for people who suffer from injustice. She writes that “for those who have been broken by [injustice], only subjective immortality can provide a sufficient redemption.”⁵² But the major issue that drives her is not subjective immortality per se, but justice:

With regard to justice, I can only agree that the vision of subjective immortality is absurd or selfish if in fact all persons are as privileged as most philosophers and theologians. The point is not that we die, nor that some of us die young, nor that others of us die painfully. Death, like life, comes in many ways; why not? Death is not the problem—the problem is injustice.⁵³

Thus, it is important to explore how Suchocki understands the concept of subjective immortality and how that concept is connected to justice.

Suchocki attempts to develop the concept of subjective immortality by criticizing Charles Hartshorne and modifying Whitehead’s process philosophy. So it is important to explore Suchocki’s perspective on Charles Hartshorne because Suchocki describes that “reading through the literature of Charles Hartshorne on the issue of immortality is a richly rewarding experience.”⁵⁴ Suchocki finds two interesting points in Hartshorne’s theory. The first point is that Hartshorne lays the groundwork for subjective immortality by using the terminology of objective immortality. Here, it is important to understand the definition of objective and subjective immortality. Objective immortality occurs among actual occasions which are referred to as finite realities. Every actual occasion affects every successor. An effect is the transmission of the actual occasion’s value to another and its value continues on and on. A reason why

⁵² Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 165, note 2.

⁵³ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, “Charles Hartshorne and Subjective Immortality,” *Process Studies* vol. 21, no. 2 (1992), 119.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.

this immortality is objective is that “no finite occasion can prehend another in its entirety... [and] the other is felt as object.”⁵⁵ So this process is defined as objective immortality. On the other hand, subjective immortality occurs between God and the actual occasion. This immortality is referred to as “God’s prehension of the entirety of the finite occasion, including its own sense of itself.”⁵⁶ God feels everything that belongs to the actual occasion. When the finite occasion as subject is taken and retained into God, this process constitutes subjective rather than objective immortality. What Suchocki argues is that Hartshorne denies the possibility of subjective immortality in favor of objective immortality.

The second point is related to the first one. The second problem in Hartshorne’s theory is, in Suchocki’s view, that his preference for objective immortality prevents him from developing a basis for the further possibility of justice through the concept of subjective immortality. Suchocki argues that the entity’s participation in God is necessary in overcoming injustice, underlining that “in order to answer [injustice], we must be able to establish that the occasion which is subjectively immortal in God participates in the divine concrescence, so that God’s transformation of the occasion in accordance with God’s own aim is a transformation for the occasion as well as for God.”⁵⁷ Unfortunately Hartshorne, in Suchocki’s view, never explores the possibility of how the entity can take part in God and how God’s concrescence affects the occasion. We will come back to the discussion of this issue in the section on redemption.

⁵⁵ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 177.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 97.

Criticizing Hartshorne, Suchocki depends on Whitehead's process philosophy to develop her theory regarding subjective immortality. Although the concept of subjective immortality does not emerge out of Whitehead, Suchocki suggests that Whitehead proposes a possibility for that concept. There are two reasons. The first one is that Whitehead "struggled with the insufficiency of objective immortality alone in relation to the reality of perishing."⁵⁸ The second reason is that although Whitehead does not discuss subjective immortality, Suchocki believes that "Whitehead gives grounds for considering [the possibility of subjective immortality] in his enigmatic statements with reference to retention of immediacy for occasions in God."⁵⁹ But as mentioned earlier, while developing the concept of subjective immortality on the basis of Whitehead, Suchocki's major issue is not subjective immortality per se, but justice and overcoming sin.

In modifying Whitehead, Suchocki focuses on the two ways to discuss subjective immortality. The first one is the occasion's own self-creation as enjoyment and the second way is God's total prehension of this self-creation.

The first way is the occasion's self-creation, which is called enjoyment. Suchocki's concern about enjoyment comes out of her question regarding whether continuance of subjective immediacy in satisfaction would be possible in the process of concrescence. Responding to her own question about the continuance of subjective immediacy in satisfaction, Suchocki's answer is in the affirmative. Her argument proceeds from the understanding of creativity. The process of concrescence depends on the creative participation of the actual occasion as a subject. It does not mean that the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 91.

actual occasion's freedom is unlimited. Its freedom works within the structures of finitude. Also, the process of concrescence cannot carry out this process in isolation from other actual occasions. But Suchocki describes that "to be something for oneself necessarily entails being something for others."⁶⁰ She finds an answer in the concept of 'superject,' which "refers to the sense in which an occasion has an effect beyond itself."⁶¹ This means that the actual occasion is a subject as well as superject. Since the occasion is referred to as a subject-superject, it embraces creativity. This means that creativity is not separable from the occasions of the process. Suchocki writes that, because of this ability of creativity, the occasion "creates itself in concrescence and forces the emergence of a future beyond itself in transition."⁶²

However, there is a possibility that creativity can leave the occasion at the time of satisfaction. How is it possible to explain this tension? Suchocki argues that creativity leaves the occasion because "the occasion's active functioning has been brought to a conclusion."⁶³ That is to say, creativity leaves the occasion in the process of becoming. This process is called concrescent creativity. On the other hand, creativity does not leave the occasion because it still functions for a future. The occasion still influences the other's becoming. This process is called transitional creativity. Suchocki explains the relationship between these two creativities in this manner:

After all, that which is concrescent creativity from the perspective of one entity is transitional creativity from the perspective of another: prehension is transitional creativity, subjectively appropriated. One could

⁶⁰ Ibid., 177.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 86.

⁶³ Ibid., 87.

argue, on this view, that there is *only* concrescent creativity, or *only* transitional creativity, depending upon whether one spoke from the perspective of the present or the past. If the satisfaction is active, not passive, and therefore, embodies its own form of creativity as the experience of decision rather than the making of decision, this becomes the generation of the givingness which evokes the future.⁶⁴

Here, Suchocki finds the intermediate creativity between the concrescent and transitional phrases. This mode of creativity is called enjoyment. The intermediate creativity is not a process for selection, but for enjoyment, because there is the dynamics of holding the many in unity. Suchocki notes that “The occasion’s concern has been the unification of the manifold past into the oneness of itself; but this very concern for unification forces the occasion beyond itself to the concerns a new unification made possible and made necessary by its own creative activity.”⁶⁵ The enjoyment of the occasion has a double dimension. The enjoyment serves to “enjoy itself as a new value in the world and as a fresh requirement for another’s unification.”⁶⁶ Since the enjoyment of the occasion requires the future beyond itself, this enjoyment entails the generation of the transitional creativity. Enjoyment as creativity provides a bridge between concrescent and transitional creativities. If this is true, there are three phases of creativity: concrescence, enjoyment, and transition. In Whitehead’s view, there are just two phases: concrescence and transition. But Suchocki cites Whitehead’s statement finding a ground for enjoyment as creativity in Whitehead’s statement.

The notion of ‘satisfaction’ is the notion of the entity as concrete, abstracted from the process of concrescence; it is the outcome separated

⁶⁴ Ibid., 88-89.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 90.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 98.

from the process, thereby losing the actuality of the atomic entity, which is both process and outcome.⁶⁷

Satisfaction is an outcome that emerges out of concrescent creativity, which is a consequence that creativity leaves the occasion. But Whitehead seems to be aware that there is something different from satisfaction. Suchocki develops Whitehead's idea and modifies the two phases into three. She argues that there is enjoyment as creativity that constitutes the subjective immediacy of the occasion. Since three phases of creativity – concrescence, enjoyment, and transition – move in a dynamic way, concrescent creativity is “the first mode of creativity, grounding which covers concrescence with the second mode, enjoyment of itself, which generates the third mode, the superjective offering of itself to its future.”⁶⁸ The subjective immediacy is reborn in enjoyment as creativity.

While the occasion's own self-creation as enjoyment is essential for objective immortality, God's prehension of the occasion's self-creation is necessary for subjective immortality. Following Whitehead's theory, Suchocki argues that the occasion's self-creation would continue to exist when God prehends the occasion's self-creation. That is to say, the relationship between the occasion and God is essential to understand the continuance of individual participation.

The occasion moves toward the achievement of intensity of experience. The intensity of experience is referred to as “the manner in which an occasion holds many possibilities, also called eternal objects.”⁶⁹ So the goal of this movement is to maximize

⁶⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 84.

⁶⁸ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 89.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 92.

possibilities from the occasion's perspective. The intensity of experience is twofold. This can be achieved within each occasion, and it can also be accomplished within the nature of God. Within each occasion, the maximum degree possible is essential for its intensity of experience. Suchocki insists that "the greater the number of possibilities which the occasion can contrast and enjoy, the greater the intensity of its experience." The occasion goes through process of selection, through which the occasion moves toward unification of many possibilities into one. But God's intensity does not lie in the maximum degree possible, but in God's primordial nature itself. God's intensity is not identified by the degree of possibilities because it is "simply the vision and valuation of all possibilities whatsoever."⁷⁰ In other words, God's primordial nature is all-inclusive. All possibilities of the occasion are known and valued by God. Since there is "absolutely no negative prehension and hence... no perspectival elimination, there is no violation of the subjective unity of the occasion."⁷¹ The occasion is just the unification and just the value in the primordial nature of God. If so, the occasion becomes subjectively immortal in the primordial nature of God. The occasion's self-creation continues to exist in God.

Since the occasion's self-creation is known and valued by God, we have some questions because some people may think that individual freedom is demolished in the relationship with God. Is it possible for an occasion to express self-creation in the primordial nature of God? If it would be possible, what would the nature of the occasion's self-creation mean? How does the dynamic between God and the occasion move? As God prehends all possibilities of the occasion through the primordial nature,

⁷⁰ Ibid., 92.

⁷¹ Ibid., 96.

it is obvious that the occasion becomes apotheosized in the primordial nature of God. But that does not mean that the occasion is demolished into God. Rather, the occasion provides the actuality that is accomplished through the process of concrescence to the potentiality of God's primordial vision, which contributes to God's own intensification of experience. The occasion and God are composed of the complementary dynamics:

Through the most extreme form of its actuality, the vividness of its satisfaction, the world is the instrument of novelty for God, even as through God's own form of potentiality God is the instrument of novelty for the world. God and the world, as contrasting opposites, each contribute to the intensity of immediacy of the other: God through potentiality, the world through actuality; God through inclusiveness of the primordial vision, the world through the exclusiveness of the decisive satisfaction.⁷²

When the intensity is understood as the manner where the occasion accomplishes the maximum degree possible, the subjective experience of the occasion is crucial. Since Whitehead focuses on objective immortality where the occasion becomes immortal, it is not possible to suggest an appropriate explanation about how intensity as the maximum degree possible can be accomplished. But Suchocki attempts to modify Whitehead at this point because she believes that Whitehead still provides a ground for her explanation.⁷³ The ground would be God's retention of the subjective immediacy in God's own nature. God's continuous aim in the dynamic movement with the occasion

⁷² Ibid., 93-94.

⁷³ See Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 92. Suchocki explores three passages in Whitehead's writings and modifies Whitehead's idea. The first one is "In the temporal world, it is the empirical fact that process entails loss: the past is present under an abstraction. But there is no reason of any ultimate metaphysical generality why this should be the whole story." (Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 340.) The second one is "in [God's consequent nature] there is no loss, no obstruction. The world is felt in a unison of immediacy. The property of combining creative advance with the retention of mutual immediacy is what... is meant by the term everlasting." (Whitehead, *The Process and Reality*, 346) The third one is "In everlastingness, immediacy is reconciled with objective immortality." (Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 351)

would be the retention of subjective immediacy in God, which makes it possible for the occasion to experience the intensity. Suchocki insists that “The subjectivity of the occasion itself is of prime importance; the retention of this subjective immediacy in the everlasting presence of God would then be the maximum fulfillment of God’s purpose.”⁷⁴ This process in the dynamics between God and the occasion can be considered a rebirth of subjective immediacy of the occasion through God’s prehension.

There is another question regarding whether enjoyment in satisfaction goes against Whitehead’s process philosophy. This critique emerges from David Ray Griffin’s review of Suchocki’s *The End of Evil*.⁷⁵ Griffin’s critique does not aim at the concept of subjective immortality per se, but at the way that she modifies Whitehead’s process philosophy and formulates subjective immortality. Like Suchocki, Griffin believes that it is important to develop the concept of subjective immortality to overcome evil. But Griffin maintains that, since satisfaction admits no addition in Whitehead’s philosophy, Suchocki brings three problems by discussing enjoyment as satisfaction.

First, the notion that subjective immediacy persists in the creativity of enjoyment in the satisfaction does not imply that it would persist in the transitional creativity. Second, her argument seems to turn a difference of degree into a difference of kind: she goes from saying that an occasion’s immediacy cannot be fully retained when it is prehended by a finite actual entity to the absolute distinction between objective and subjective immortality. Third, it is not clear that the immediacy that is reconciled with objective immortality in Whitehead’s statement is subjective immediacy; the issue, taken in context, seems to be that in

⁷⁴ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 94.

⁷⁵ David Ray Griffin, “Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The End of Evil: Process Eschatology in Historical Context*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988” *Process Studies* vol. 18, no. 1 (spring, 1989), 57-63.

God's experience, unlike ours, the distant past is not felt with less immediacy than the immediate past.⁷⁶

Griffin believes that although the concept of subjective immortality is necessary to overcome evil, Suchocki's endeavor to develop that concept is not enough to be persuasive because she does not reflect Whitehead correctly.

Responding to Griffin's critique, Suchocki does not discuss whether her concept of enjoyment violates Whitehead's nature that satisfaction admits no addition. Rather, she argues that without enjoyment there is no way to connect concrescent and transitional creativity. Griffin, in Suchocki's view, fails to "see the import of positing a third form of creativity, intermediate between concrescent and transitional creativity, which then becomes the ground for a prehension that retains the immediacy of the occasion."⁷⁷ Transitional creativity is just prehension and the initial factor in concrescence. If so, there is no way to differentiate concrescent and transitional creativity. Depending on whether one sees from the perspective of the present or the past, creativity can be considered only concrescent or only transitional. Suchocki insists that enjoyment provides an answer for this difficulty. Since enjoyment is referred to as the dynamics of holding the many in unity, it serves to connect concrescent and transitional creativity. But more important, Suchocki argues that if the satisfaction entails creativity, there is still the immediacy of the occasion. The immediacy of the occasion that is experienced in the concrescence is perished in satisfaction. The subjective immediacy neither prehends nor concresces. If so, although the occasion is objectively immortalized, the immediacy does not remain in a passive way. Suchocki

⁷⁶ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁷ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Evil, Eschatology, and God: Response to David Griffin," *Process Studies* vol. 18, no. 1 (spring, 1989), 66.

maintains that “if the immediacy is present in the satisfaction, then an entity that prehends the fullness of the satisfaction also prehends the full immediacy of the occasion.”⁷⁸ The concept of enjoyment entails the continual existence of dynamic activity of the subjective immediacy.

However, the question about the addition of enjoyment in satisfaction still remains unanswered. Joseph A. Bracken, a Jesuit process theologian, suggests an answer to support Suchocki’s position.⁷⁹ Becoming aware of the debate regarding whether enjoyment violates Whitehead’s category, Bracken says that “my response would be... that the self-constituting decisions of the occasions are not thereby altered; only the degree of self-acceptance is altered as the occasions progressively learn to make God’s feelings in their regard the basis for their own feelings about themselves.”⁸⁰ He attempts to interpret enjoyment as a degree of self-acceptance and argues that Suchocki’s concept of enjoyment does not violate Whitehead’s category. But Suchocki’s argument is more complex than Bracken’s because the theory that Suchocki suggests involves the acceptance of oneself and others as the occasions are taken up into divine life. The discussion about enjoyment among process theologians shows that Suchocki needs to develop her idea about subjective immortality in a more thorough way. Nevertheless, since her major goal is to construct a theology to overcome evil, the concept of subjective immortality provides a basis for that goal.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Joseph A. Bracken, *Society and Spirit: A Trinitarian Cosmology* (London: Associated University Press, 1991).

⁸⁰ Ibid., 147.

While Suchocki insists that the concept of subjective immortality is necessary to discuss how to overcome evil, how can Suchocki's understanding be applied to Korean adoptees' experiences? It is obvious that Korean adoptees have suffered from negative influences that occur out of racism and sexism and that negative influences impede healthy ethnic identity formation. But Korean adoptees' human agency is reduced by those negative influences. Self-creation, that is to say, freedom to choose, is maintained in the occasion. Although, as we shall see in the case study, Catherine suffered from a destructive structure, freedom to choose is not demolished in that structure. Thus, subjective immortality provides a ground for people who suffer from injustice.

Redemption

Although the discussion about subjective immortality suggests the possibility of individual participation by modifying Whitehead, Suchocki still argues that subjective immortality itself is not enough to overcome sin. This means that her major concern has not been answered yet because her concern is not subjective immortality per se, but overcoming injustice. Suchocki attempts to find an answer, exploring two areas: everlasting and temporal redemption.

Everlasting redemption

Suchocki suggests the possibility of subjective immortality even after objective immortality takes place. Its answer lies in God's prehension. The prehension of the finite occasion can be characterized in terms of partiality. There is no way in which the finite occasion can fully retain the value of the other. The finite occasion can only reenact the portion of the other's value. This occasion goes through a process of selection, through which the finite occasion moves toward the unification of many

possibilities into one. God's prehension is not exclusive, but all-inclusive. All possibilities of the finite occasion are known and valued by God. Since God retains all possibilities of the finite occasion in the primordial nature of God, the finite occasion's immediacy continues to exist even after objective immortality occurs.

However, a question that Suchocki raises is that "even though God prehends the subjective occasion into everlasting concrescence, the retention of the occasion's immediacy in this concrescence does not necessarily imply any change to that immediacy."⁸¹ It is obvious that the retention of the occasion's immediacy in the primordial nature of God provides a ground for overcoming of evil, but it is not enough to claim the fulfillment of justice. For there is a danger that "whatever has been experienced in finitude as unmitigated evil will continue to be experienced in such a fashion through all eternity."⁸² The eschatological 'heaven' can be described as 'hell,' since finitude as unmitigated evil is frozen forever. Because of this danger, many feminists go against the concept of afterlife or immortality. Valerie C. Saiving, for example, argues that "the most basic assumption we have inherited from patriarchal culture, and the one which feminists may find most difficult to overcome, is that the enduring self is the true locus of value, and that the death of the self is our greatest adversary."⁸³ Like Saiving, many feminists consider the concept of immortality as anti-feminist. Since Suchocki, as a feminist, wants to find a possibility to overcome evil

⁸¹ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 101.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Valerie C. Saiving, "Androgynous Life: A Feminist Appropriation of Process Thought," in *Feminism and Process Thought: The Harvard Divinity School/Claremont Center For Process Studies Symposium Papers*, ed. Sheila Greeve Davaney (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 28.

through the concept of subjective immortality, it is necessary to provide an answer for this difficulty.

Suchocki attempts to find an answer for this question by exploring the distinction between “genetic time of concrescence” and “serial time marked by transition.”⁸⁴ The basic difference between these two types of time lies in whether the person is prehended by God and thus resurrected in the life of God. In Suchocki’s view, the person is not referred as the substantial one, but as the one who is “composed of a whole society of actual occasions continuously coming into being and perishing.”⁸⁵ Since various elements such as life, body, and soul are integrated in the person, the person entails the sense of continuity. The consciousness of personhood, for example, achieves unity because this consciousness prehends the consciousness of the past and creates a consciousness for its immediate future. But Suchocki maintains that in the metaphysical reality, “the person is composed of discrete occasions and each occasion is prehended by God upon its completion.”⁸⁶ She continues to note that “there can be no holding off of this divine prehension until the person herself or himself perishes.”⁸⁷ If so, the person in finite existence is a movement from one occasion to the next in the serial pattern.

On the other hand, genetic time should be understood in the dynamics of the occasion’s immediacy and God. Genetic time is different from serial time. This type of time is based on the person reborn moment by moment in God that is composed of

⁸⁴ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 102.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

togetherness of all occasions. Suchocki does not emphasize the rebirth of the person, but of the occasion, because the occasions are resurrected directly and persons indirectly. That is to say, the occasions that are resurrected in God create the persons. If so, in God all events or times of the person are present. They are not simply the concluding moment. Suchocki insists that, because of the nature of genetic time, “in God, finite personal identity is ‘thick,’ much deeper than the ‘thinness’ of seriality.”⁸⁸ Serial time is transformed into genetic time in God. The consequence of genetic time would be three types of transcendence of personality in God.

First, a transcendence of seriality into the fullness of the self; second, a transcendence of selfhood through the mutuality of feeling with all other selves and occasions; and, third and most deeply, a transcendence of selves into the Selfhood of God.⁸⁹

Suchocki provides neither any definition of the self nor any explanation regarding why she changes the terminology. But she seems to utilize the word self as being person. The transcendence of the person is related to genetic time that occurs through the occasion’s participation in resurrection. This person remains itself in God, but is yet transformed. When God prehends the occasion, it is reborn in the primordial nature of God, and its union with God is accomplished. But the person goes beyond the union through the experience of the resurrection. Suchocki maintains that “the essence of an occasion’s union with God is its final bursting of the bonds of selfhood even while affirming that selfhood.”⁹⁰ In other words, the transformation of the person emerges out of genetic

⁸⁸ Ibid., 108.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 110.

time where the occasions are resurrected. Resurrection is the source of the everlasting redemption.

The occasion experiences transformation through resurrection because it becomes aware of three types of judgment. The first one is that the occasion becomes aware of what it could have become in the process of divine concrescence. God's experience through the prehension of the occasion's satisfaction is evaluative because God compares what the occasion became with what it could have become. Since the occasion is included in God's own nature, it experiences the judgment from God's perspective. In other words, the occasion experiences God's responsiveness to its being.

The second type of judgment is that the occasion becomes aware of its role in relation to the society. God's response is not limited to an individual occasion, but the community itself, because God prehends each occasion in relation to others. If so, the occasion feels the experiences of all others relative to itself.

The third type of judgment is that the occasion becomes aware of its role in relation to the entire world. For example, God feels the world's pain, and then the occasion feels that pain as well. The occasion incorporates God's response to the world through judgment.

The self-awareness of the occasion emerges initially out of the judgment of God upon the occasion, but in the end becomes its own self-awareness. But, since it is incorporated into the consequent nature of God, the occasion finds a sense of peace. Suchocki insists that "the judgment that flows from the occasion's relation to the whole

is finally... a knowledge of one's participation and belonging within the completed whole."⁹¹ Thus, judgment is transformation, redemption, and peace.

Temporal Redemption

While everlasting redemption provides a ground to overcome evil, how is this redemption connected to the on-going world? The nature of the question concerns how the experience of release from sin can be accomplished in the world. Suchocki believes that an answer for this question lies in a doctrine of God, focusing on the unity of the primordial and consequent natures in God. Developing her argument for the unity of the two natures, Suchocki criticizes Whitehead's perspective. While he mentions the primordial and consequent natures in God, Whitehead does not explicitly pay attention to the role of the consequent nature. It is, Suchocki assumes, because "while Whitehead speaks easily in terms of a primordial nature and a consequent nature, he no more intends an actual division in the reality of God than he does in any other entity—God is not an exception to metaphysical principles."⁹² But Suchocki argues that it is important to explore how the two natures are integrated in the unity of God. Thus, the importance of the consequent nature is recovered in Suchocki's argument.

The primordial nature of God is referred to as God's grasp of all possibilities. This grasp involves "an ordering evaluation of possibilities into a harmony which is called the primordial vision."⁹³ The harmony vision in this nature is not simply a complex holding of diversity in unity, but makes the possibilities so ordered that five

⁹¹ Ibid., 109.

⁹² Ibid., 117.

⁹³ Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church*. 226.

valuations such as adventure, zest, truth, beauty, and peace are manifested.⁹⁴ But a difficulty emerges out of the primordial nature of God that is composed of all possibilities. Introducing Whitehead's major principle, Suchocki describes that "where there is power, there is actuality."⁹⁵ Power rests on actuality. Since the possibilities of God are not actual, the only way that they can have power is through "the agency of the actuality which is their origin."⁹⁶ If so, the vision of harmony entails "an appetition toward actuality for its fulfillment."⁹⁷ The actuality lies in the finite world. The consequent nature is one that feels the actuality of the finite world. Without the consequent nature, the fulfillment of the primordial nature cannot be accomplished. This is why Suchocki argues that the unity of the two natures is essential.

When the consequent nature of God is continuously incorporated with the actuality of the finite world, it does not mean that God remains passive. The actualization of the vision occurs first in God because God's subjective aim governs the process of concrescence to actualize the primordial vision. But this actualization cannot be accomplished without the prehended world. Suchocki maintains that "It is precisely this world which the transforming concrescent power of God must render into a manifestation of the primordial vision."⁹⁸ She continues to say that "the abstract harmony of all possibilities becomes a concrete harmony of just these living actualities

⁹⁴ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 118.

⁹⁵ Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church*, 36.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹⁷ Suchocki, *The End of Evil*, 118.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

within God.”⁹⁹ The vision of harmony that is manifested in zest, adventure, truth, beauty, and peace is reorganized in accordance with the way in which the world may be transformed. This is an apotheosis of the world and the occasion’s expression of the everlasting redemption in God.

How does this experience of apotheosis and redemption affect the continuing creation of the world? This experience provides the possibilities for redemption in the world. Suchocki insists that it is the initial mode of the redemption in God which “accounts for the movement of primordial possibilities into real rather than merely potential relevance for the world.”¹⁰⁰ The process that the primordial possibilities are moved into real relevance for the world depends on the reversal of the dynamics of existence. The subjective aim of the finite world moves first for itself and then for other. But in God’s reality, the dynamic of existence is reversed because the subjective aim of God moves first for others, and second for God’ self. If so, the initial aim of God that is generated from God’s satisfaction moves toward the world. This initial aim becomes “an optimum way for how a new finite unification can be accomplished from as many standpoints as are afforded in finitude.”¹⁰¹ In other words, the initial aim provides a directive power that the occasion needed and makes available to the world as real possibilities for the occasion’s actuality. It is God’s providence for the world that provides the creative power for the world in terms of possibilities.

While God provides possibilities to the finite world through the initial aim, the finite occasion’s freedom of response is necessary because whether or not these

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 121.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

possibilities for harmony are achieved depends upon the decisions of the world.

Suchocki argues that “whether or not we act creatively in history on the basis of these possibilities rests with our individual and corporate freedom to assent to the initial aims of God.”¹⁰² As each occasion is touched by the initial aim of God, its freedom of response is required to actualize the possibilities in God. Without freedom of response toward God’s initial aim, temporal redemption in the world cannot be achieved.

Since Suchocki emphasizes the importance of the community, arguing that God’s initial aims for the world are ones leading to a richness of community, it is necessary to talk about the dynamics between the community and the individual. But Suchocki does not separate the richness of community from the richness of the individual. Her assertion comes out of her theological understanding of ‘God’s image.’ Suchocki does not invest much space to discuss this theological concept, but we can find some clues in her writing. Suchocki describes that “the all-inclusive well-being of the many in the community is the reflection of God’s image in the world.”¹⁰³ Suchocki seems to understand the image of God in terms of community. But her understanding about God’s image is more dynamic than the expression in this statement. Suchocki maintains that “God is a complex subjectivity, containing many subjectivities within the depths of the one divine immediacy.”¹⁰⁴ God’s image, in her view, lies in the dynamics of the oneness and the many. So Suchocki argues that the richness of community is not antithetical to the good of community because in the process world existence is interrelated.

¹⁰² Ibid., 124.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 123.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 129.

On the basis of her understanding of the community as the many toward the one toward the many again, Suchocki argues that freedom of the community is required for temporal redemption of the world and for overcoming evil. The temporal structure of redemption lies in participants in the societies of the world. But community can be destructive structure because freedom in community provides a finite context where destruction and evil can take place. Yet it provides a finite context where healing and redemption are also brought to bear. As the community acts responsibly responding toward God's initial aim and standing against evil, its actuality can become a gift to God.

Pastoral Implications of Suchocki's Feminist Process Theology

In discussing pastoral implications, I will describe two themes, critiquing Suchocki's feminist process theology. Those two themes include individual freedom and identity. The discussion of those two themes will be integrated with Catherine's experiences which is an imaginary story.

A fictional Story: Catherine's experience

I would like to introduce a fictional person by the name, Catherine. This narrative is based on an imaginary situation. Catherine lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, and teaches social work at the university. She has been married to a Korean adoptee for five years. She is an active member of a Presbyterian church. She enjoys hiking and often plays the piano and gets involved in political activities.

Catherine has a student in her class who is a Korean adoptee like her. She recently had a short conversation with her, which led her to recall part of her own story. Catherine was born in Taegu, South Korea. When she was one and half years old, she

came to the U.S. to be adopted by a Caucasian family who lived in a small town in Minnesota. Since her adoptive parents had two boys, they wanted to add a daughter in their family. It was not until she was in a third grade that she realized that she was different from her family. One day, a boy, who was one of her classmates, approached her, calling her chink and flat face without any reason. She came back home feeling angry and frustrated. She asked her mother why she was different from other family members, but her mother just advised her to ignore it. There was a more shocking experience when she was in high school. She went to a gas station along with her adoptive father. She realized that all the people in that area looked at her and her father and that they were curious about their relationship. But her father never told them that she was his adoptive daughter. She explored this with anger when she came back home. That was the moment she began to ask why.

When she went to college, her anguish deepened. She developed relationships with many friends who had diverse ethnic backgrounds. But she never felt that she was a part of their culture. Her physical appearance easily identifies her as Asian, but she believes there must be something more than that kind of labeling when it comes to questions of her ethnic identity.

Personal Freedom

Injustice impacts ethnic identity formation in a destructive way. When Catherine confronted negative influences that happened at elementary school and in society, she could not construct healthy ethnic identity. Those negative influences occurred out of racism and sexism embedded in society. Those influences can be called sin because sin is the unnecessary violence of rebellion against creation's well-being. Thus, Catherine's suffering is a product of impersonal sin and original sin.

Although Catherine's human freedom can be conditioned by impersonal sin and original sin, her freedom is not reduced by the cause of impersonal sin. A foundation for Catherine's human freedom, from Suchocki's perspective, is subjective immortality. When God prehends the entirety of the finite world and retains everything that belongs to the actual occasion, self-creation and an ability to choose continues on and on. Suchocki understands human freedom as one that is shared with God, but human freedom should be expressed as response-ability.

However, there is an important question: can individual freedom be retained in Suchocki's argument? Griffin argues that there are two problems in Suchocki's theology. The first one is the issue of individual freedom. In other words, Griffin questions whether Suchocki's view of individuality is one that allows it to retain moral agency. He suggests two evidences for his argument. The first one is the reciprocity of the mutual prehensions. He finds a problem in Suchocki's argument that every occasion is internally connected to all other occasions. If so, the occasions' prehensions are mutual and infinitely reciprocal. For example, "A feels B, and B feels A; A therefore feels B feeling it, and B feels A feeling it; A therefore feels B feeling A feeling B—and so on to infinity."¹⁰⁵ The mutual prehension does not simply end with the relationship between A and B. It goes beyond that relationship. Anne Marie Martin expands Griffin's example, describing that "A not only feels B, but also C, D, E, F etc. which all in turn also feel A."¹⁰⁶ The reciprocity of mutual prehensions can be infinite. If this is true, the question we need to ask is "is individuality retained so that "the fulfillment of

¹⁰⁵ Griffin, "Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki," 61.

¹⁰⁶ Anne Marie Martin, *Visions of Justice, the Question of Immortality: A Study of the Nature of Oppression and Liberation in the Work of Rosemary Radford Ruether and Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki*, Dissertation, McMaster University, 1997, 234.

justice which depends on individual experience can occur?”¹⁰⁷ In other words, Griffin seems to ask if individuality can be maintained in the relationship that is characterized as the reciprocity of mutual prehensions.

The second evidence concerns *prima facie* evil. Griffin discerns *prima facie* evil from genuine evil. While *prima facie* evil is “necessitated by the conditions of finitude,”¹⁰⁸ genuine evil is generated by the free decisions of actualities. But Griffin argues that there would be no such thing as genuine evil in Suchocki’s argument. For since “occasions with conscious satisfactions are everlasting conscious in God... they have no freedom to exercise this consciousness in a destructive, even a self-destructive, fashion.”¹⁰⁹ Of course, Suchocki does not believe that this is the case in understanding freedom, but that they have freedom in the interconnection of the temporal redemption and everlasting redemption. But in Griffin’s view, Suchocki is limited in reflecting genuine evil, describing that “an occasion of experience that was responsible for extreme agony in other occasions will be aware that it contributed to making the divine satisfaction less harmonious than it could have been.”¹¹⁰ Griffin argues that Suchocki suggests the notion of conscious experience is devoid of freedom.

Responding to Griffin’s critique, Suchocki develops her argument from the concept of God’s absolute power. In Suchocki’s view, God has absolute power because what occurs in God’s concrescence relies on God. But Suchocki’s understanding about God’s absolute power is different from the classical position. Suchocki describes that

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Griffin, “Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki,” 57.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 61.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

“what God must deal with in the divine concrescence depends upon the world; how God deals with it depends upon God.”¹¹¹ Following Suchocki’s argument, we can assume that God does not have freedom to choose the actualities of the finite occasion. But once the actualities of the finite occasion are taken into God’s life, they become transformed and apotheosized through God’s process of concrescence. Here we can find a possibility for individual freedom. As individual freedom is taken into God’s life, God’s freedom overrides individual freedom. But following Suchocki, Martin maintains that “losing personal freedom means gaining a new form of freedom.”¹¹² This is clearly described in Suchocki’s statement.

If a now subjectively immortal occasion in God has yearned for the well-being of all, and so formed itself that it was in conformity with God’s own desire for the well-being of the world, then that occasion will experience God’s freedom as its own most deliriously joyful freedom; it will be freer than it had ever hoped to be.¹¹³

Thus, Suchocki believes neither that freedom in God belongs wholly to God, nor that freedom in the finite occasion belongs wholly to itself. Rather, its freedom is shared in relationship.

However, while Suchocki emphasizes human freedom that is shared in relationship, she does not provide any appropriate answer for the question regarding individuality of human freedom. In other words, Suchocki does not address the dimension of being, but just dimension of becoming in human freedom. As a matter of fact, in *The Fall to Violence*, Suchocki attempts to explain the dimension of being later. When Suchocki moved from evil as the first concept of injustice to sin as the second

¹¹¹ Suchocki, “Evil, Eschatology, and God,” 67.

¹¹² Martin, 237.

¹¹³ Suchocki, “Evil, Eschatology, and God,” 67.

concept of injustice, she clearly argues that “it is essential... for the theology of sin to be based on an ontology of freedom.”¹¹⁴ Human freedom is a given possibility within one’s nature. Whether or not human freedom as a given possibility occurs depends upon the ontological freedom to choose among options. While Suchocki suggests the possibility of the dimension of being in human freedom later, she does not provide an explanation about the connection between the dimension of becoming and that of being in human freedom.

While Suchocki has trouble in describing the dimension of being in human freedom, Bracken offers an appropriate explanation regarding individual freedom in feminist process theology. He supports Suchocki’s modifying Whitehead’s process philosophy to develop the concept of subjective immortality. But he continues to argue that Suchocki’s feminist process theology can make more sense if it is explained in light of “the Trinitarian and field-oriented approach to the God-world relationship.”¹¹⁵ An essential point in this approach is that God should not be conceived as an individual entity, but as a community of three divine persons. If God is considered as an individual entity and the world as a compound individual, its consequence of corporation is that the world will be subordinate to the divine. But in Bracken’s approach, God is envisioned as a community of three divine persons. If so, the dynamics are different because both of them are composed of community. The three divine persons do not in themselves constitute Ultimate reality. The participation of the world or all creatures is necessary. Their participation can be accomplished through the prehension of the three divine persons. At the moment, all of them occupy a common ground. This does not

¹¹⁴ Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 130.

¹¹⁵ Bracken, 147.

mean that the world is subordinate to the three divine persons, but they possess an ontological independence from one another. Bracken provides a possibility that individuality can be maintained in the dynamics of three divine persons and the world.

In light of Suchocki's theological understanding of human freedom, Catherine's human freedom should be expressed as response-ability to new possibilities that God provides. In other words, human freedom is shared in relationship. But this does not mean that individuality in human freedom is reduced, rather Catherine possesses an ontological independence from others. Thus, Catherine's human freedom is shared in relationship, but her ontology of human freedom as a given ability to choose is not reduced by relationship. When Catherine expresses a response-ability as human freedom in constructing healthy ethnic identity, her freedom is an expression of participation into new possibilities that open up in each moment in relationship.

Identity

The issue of identity is related to the first issue of human freedom. Griffin argues that Suchocki "speaks of the immortality not primarily of enduring persons but of momentary experiences."¹¹⁶ He attempts to quantify occasions of momentary experiences. If we assume that Griffin is 70 years old and that he had five occasions per second, he had over 11 billion occasions of experiences in his lifetime. Meanwhile, Griffin questions where he can find a clue for the notion of an enduring person. Suchocki does not ignore the enduring person, arguing that momentary experiences are united into a single person in God. But Griffin maintains that the problem has not been resolved. Although there is a parallel between David Griffin who is writing this critique

¹¹⁶ Griffin, "Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki," 62.

and David Griffin who is experiencing himself in God, Griffin insists that he does not identify with this other person who is experiencing him in God. He continues to say that

If I cannot now identify with those already extant immortal experiences, I cannot be excited by the thought that, after I die, experiences of the same kind knowing themselves to have been David Griffin will be immortal. For I cannot anticipate that that will be my immortality and salvation any more than the present extant David Griffin(s) in God continue(s) a continuation of me.

Griffin seems to insist that the earthly identity is not the same as the heavenly identity.

A fundamental problem emerges out of this difference. As Suchocki says, the heavenly identity does not enter the earthly identity that is its present consciousness.¹¹⁷ Then the essential issue would be consciousness and personal identity.

Suchocki confesses that she has been aware of this problem.¹¹⁸ While she agrees with the problem of the eight billion David Griffins that Griffin points out, she maintains that the problem actually provides some possibilities for understanding identity. Since normative personality “goes beyond the old understanding of corporate personality, in which individuality was lost to the greater whole; it requires instead a fuller mutuality, a togetherness of deep reciprocity,”¹¹⁹ this can be characterized as communal. But the issue of the eight billion David Griffin is that of the “the continuity of temporal and everlasting identity.”¹²⁰ Suchocki argues that when the occasions are taken up into God, they become a unified person in God because they have “a

¹¹⁷ Suchocki, “Evil, Eschatology, and God,” 68.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

counterpart in God.”¹²¹ But since the counterpart in God does not enter in current consciousness, a counterpart in God is not evident in the occasions.

While there is still a problem in the relationship between consciousness and personal identity, Suchocki attempts to resolve that problem by considering the nature of finite consciousness as a subjective form. She indicates that the nature of finite consciousness is related to satisfaction, that is, the actual experience of unification. In the process of concrescence, consciousness does not require the prehension of the present, but of the immediate past.¹²² But because the process moves in a fast way, consciousness obtains the illusion of continuity. But Suchocki seems to fail to provide an appropriate answer for the relationship between consciousness and personal identity. She admits a limitation in her argument, noting that “it seems to me that this musing is a mixing of metaphysics and intuitive imagination; the rigor of logically extending the metaphysics fails, and I have not adequately answered the objection.”¹²³ In other words, she does not seem to provide enough explanation about how a counterpart in God enters in the current consciousness.

Bracken is also aware of the problem of eight billion David Griffins in Suchocki’s feminist process theology. Bracken finds an answer for this question in his approach mentioned earlier. He clearly thinks that “the field-oriented approach to the God-world relationship... helps to explain how finite occasions within the divine consequent nature can grasp their predecessor occasions not serially, as in the space-

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 68.

¹²³ Ibid.

time continuum, but simultaneously.”¹²⁴ That is to say, the notion of a society as a preexisting field for the emergence of new occasions provides an answer for this question. How does that phenomenon take place? This approach is well summarized in this statement that “in terms of the God-world relationship... the three divine persons and all their creatures possess an ontological independence of one another and yet co-constitute a common ground.”¹²⁵ Bracken does not think that the one should be subordinate to the other. Rather, three divine persons and all their creatures should constitute the society where they all contribute to “on-going existence and structure of this cosmic society.”¹²⁶ If so, when the world or all creaturesprehend precedent occasions, the common ground cannot be found; rather, their prehension would be just “a source of confusion and ambiguity.”¹²⁷ But within the divine consequent nature, a different phenomenon occurs.

if [the occasions] be understood as an all embracing field of activity..., then the finite occasion (like the three divine persons) can prehend the field as a structured whole, in effect, read the past history of the society to which it belongs in the structure of the field, and thereby to which it belongs in the structure of the field, and thereby identify with all the previous subjectivities therein represented.¹²⁸

Responding to Griffin’s critique against Suchocki, Bracken provides a useful explanation about how a counterpart in God enters in the present consciousness and how an enduring identity can be achieved. His Trinitarian and field-oriented approach to

¹²⁴ Bracken, 150.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

the God-world relationship brings a possibility about how the enduring identity and the momentary identity can be integrated in process theology. Bracken helps Suchocki overcome a limitation in explaining the connection between the enduring identity and momentary identity.

Catherine constructed and reconstructed her ethnic identity throughout her life. When she was young, she had considered herself to be a Caucasian. Having gone to college and exposed to the multicultural environment, Catherine began to accept the Korean part of identity. Now, she wants to identify herself as a Korean American adoptee. But what is important is that she feels comfortable identifying herself in a diverse way. Sometimes she considers herself to be an American. In other times, she considers herself to be a Korean or a Korean American. Catherine accepts the phenomenon of multiple ethnic identification because she feels that those identities are part of her ethnic identity. Rather, she rejects any attempt that people assume any ethnic stereotypes and put her in one category or the other. Through this process, Catherine expresses an expression of resistance against injustice and constructs healthy ethnic identity.

Chapter Five

Homo Dialogicus Marginalis: Responsible Responding as the Practice of Human Freedom

A main concern in this chapter is to explore how a theological anthropology that emerges out of a dialogue between Suchocki and Shotter can correct a limitation in Trimiew's *homo dialogicus marginalis*. As a primary question in this research project is how adult Korean adoptees can utilize human agency in constructing a healthy ethnic identity, the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*, which means marginalized dialogical humanity, from the work of Trimiew is a powerful tool for Korean adoptees. This is because Trimiew emphasizes an expression of human responses against oppression and injustice. Since Korean adoptees suffer from injustice that occurs out of sexism and racism embedded in society and which impacts ethnic identity formation destructively, Korean adoptees should express human freedom through responses. In other words, the expression of responses is essential in resisting injustice. However, while relationship can be a source of evil and enrichment, Trimiew focuses on the dimension of evil. Therefore, the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* in this research is not just a description of Trimiew's idea, but it is also a further development used to discuss Korean adoptees' human agency in constructing a healthy ethnic identity.

This chapter will be composed of three sections. The first one is to explore a theological anthropology that is woven out of two threads, that is, a mutually critical dialogue between Suchocki's feminist process theology and Shotter's rhetoric-responsive version of social construction. A primary goal of the mutually critical dialogue is to discern the nature of human existence and to understand how people can express human agency through responses. The second section is to come back to the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* in the work of Trimiew and to develop that metaphor in light of a theological anthropology that is generated out of the dialogue between Suchocki and Shotter. The third section is to examine how a revised understanding of *homo dialogicus marginalis* helps answer a primary question regarding human agency and ethnic identity in the experiences of the sixteen Korean adoptees I have interviewed.

A Theological Anthropology as a Result of Web-Weaving

This section is composed of three themes that emerged out of the work of web-weaving of two threads, that is, the integration of Suchocki's feminist process theology and Shotter's rhetoric-responsive version of social construction. Those three themes include (1) sin and human agency; (2) relationship and human agency; and (3) individuality and human agency.

Sin and Human Agency

Before we discuss sin and human agency, we need to know how to deal with the terms, *sin* and *evil*. Some authors use the terms synonymously. For example, W. J.

Lowe insists that both evil and sin result from a human choice, but that moral evil can be expressed as sin in religious terms.¹ However, other authors make a distinction between sin and evil. Peter C. Hodgson finds it helpful to make the distinctions between sin and evil. He notes that “evil is a consequence that also precedes individual acts of sin; it becomes sedimented in the historical destiny that tempts to sin, thus adding a tragic dimension to moral responsibility.”² Suchocki also makes a distinction. While evil emerges out of the interaction of finitude and human freedom, sin belongs to a human category. From Suchocki’s perspective, sin is a violation of creation that occurs out of human ability to choose one’s potential. Since various resources that do not make a fine distinction between sin and evil are utilized in this research project, the two terms may often be used interchangeably. However, I will underscore the term *sin* that belongs to a human category in this research project.

When we believe that sin belongs to a human category and emerges out of the human ability to choose one’s potential, a postmodern thought regarding sin can be challenged. In *Evil and the Justice of God*, N. T. Wright criticizes postmodernism, arguing that

Postmodernism, in recognizing that we are all deeply flawed, avoids any return to a classic doctrine of original sin by claiming that humans have no fixed “identity” and hence no fixed responsibility. You can’t

¹ W. J. Lowe, “Evil,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, edited by Nancy J. Ramsay, H. Newton Malony, Liston O. Mills, and John Patton (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 379.

² Peter C. Hodgson, *Winds of the Spirit: A Constructive Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 222.

escape [sin] within postmodernity, but you can't find anybody to take the blame either.³

Wright argues that a postmodern perspective tends to dispose of the meaning of sin. He argues that this phenomenon takes place because of an assumption that human meaning is not fixed, but always constructed through relationship. People are responsible only for relational processes. When a postmodern perspective insists that the meaning of sin is always constructed through relationship, the meaning of sin does not posit individual agency and responsibility.

Shotter does not discuss whether the meaning of sin posits individual responsibility *per se*. He focuses on how original sin affects human agency. Shotter maintains that, traditionally, original sin has been utilized to explain the existence of evil in the world and to justify people's suffering. Because of this original sin, people needed external force established by God, such as society and religion, because "there could be no cure for man's naturally occurring evil nature in this life."⁴ Shotter does not stand in the traditional position, maintaining that original sin made people naturally sinful; rather, people have natural ability to change the world. In other words, he argues that individual agency as ability to choose is not reduced by original sin. In his discussion regarding original sin, Shotter does not consider whether

³ N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* (Intervarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL, 2006), 31-32.

⁴ Shotter, *Culturally Politics of Everyday Life*, 11.

original sin retains a sense of human agency and moral responsibility, but he concerns himself with the influences of original sin over human agency.

Although Shotter does not develop the idea of sin in his theory, he corrects a limitation in the postmodern perspective regarding human agency and moral responsibility. His understanding of the human predicament lies in the issue of injustice that occurs out of degradation. Confronting the reality of degradation, Shotter argues that human agency should be expressed in the form of human responses against injustice. Unlike other social constructionists, Shotter argues that individual agency and responsibility are not reduced in relationship.

While Shotter is known as one of the originators of the movement in social psychology called social constructionism, his position in understanding human agency is different from that of other social constructionists. A reason is that his goal is not to develop social constructionism itself, but to address how social constructionism can be utilized to overcome injustice. In his autobiographical essay, "Moving on by Backing Away," Shotter clearly describes his main concern:

I have to say that for me, social constructionism has been a way-station on the way to somewhere else. I have always been concerned with the larger social conditions of our lives together, and with our unresponsiveness to the obvious misery and injustices occurring all around us. And once I had overcome my entrancement with the sheer mystery and amazingness of things and turned toward more everyday practicalities, my first forays into the social and behavioral sciences were with the aim in mind of being more responsive to such troubles and injustices.⁵

⁵ Shotter, "Moving on by Backing Away," 1.

Shotter utilizes social constructionism as a method by which people can respond to the issue of injustice. Thus, his approach to human agency is different from that of other social constructionists.

However, since he does not develop a discussion about how his understanding of human agency is connected to sin, Shotter cannot provide an appropriate answer to the critique regarding the disposition of individual sin yet. Suchocki's theological discussion regarding personal and impersonal sin helps Shotter overcome a limitation. Suchocki criticizes a traditional tendency to emphasize personal sin, arguing that impersonal sin is created by human beings and becomes a destructive structure that is inherited from generation to generation. When people suffer from injustice that occurs from impersonal sin, they are not responsible for this sin. However, Suchocki's emphasis on impersonal sin does not mean that she denies personal sin. When one assents to impersonal sin and continues to be imprisoned in the power of impersonal sin, personal sin is perpetuated in one's life.

Suchocki's discussion of impersonal and personal sin brings three contributions. First, Suchocki corrects a Western worldview that underscores independence, uniqueness, and individual-centeredness.⁶ In other words, she opposes any idea that an individual is responsible totally for what had happened and how to deal with it. Second, Suchocki does not believe that individual agency is reduced in

⁶ For a detailed discussion about the Western worldview of responsibility, see Derald Wing Sue, "Eliminating Cultural Oppression in Counseling: Toward a General Theory," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, vol. 25, no. 5 (1978), 419-28.

relationship. When people make decisions to be imprisoned in the power of impersonal sin, they are subject to personal sin. Third, Suchocki's concept of impersonal sin explains why people suffer from injustice. When Shotter attempts to overcome injustice that occurs from degradation in society, injustice is connected to impersonal sin.

The discussion of sin and human agency leads us to a conclusion. Human beings are not responsible for impersonal sin. This sin is a destructive structure embedded in society that limits human freedom, and thus brings injustice. But when we make a decision to be imprisoned in the power of impersonal sin and cannot see other possibilities, personal sin is perpetuated in human life.

Relationship and Human Agency

Relationship can be a source of enrichment and sin. When impersonal sin is embedded in the form of destructive structure in society, human beings can be subject to suffering from injustice that occurs from destructive relationship. However, relationship can also be a source of enrichment. A reason is that new possibilities and novelty emerge out of relationship. Both Suchocki and Shotter share a common ground in emphasizing new possibilities and novelty that occur in relationship.

However, there are two differences between Suchocki and Shotter. First, While Suchocki develops her theory on the basis of a theological understanding of God, Shotter rejects any divine influences. Shotter utilizes the words, *vagueness* and *mystery*, to explain uncertainty and conflict in society, noting that "if vagueness and mystery are really there in the actual structure of our social lives together, then if we

are to construct a realistic account of our actual social being, they cannot be ignored... [and should be taken] to be a central feature of the world—the moral and the political world of our social, cultural, and historical being.”⁷ For Shotter, vagueness and mystery do not preclude the possibility of orderliness in social life; rather, there is an opening for unique creativity if human beings are to continually adapt their lives to their changing surroundings. But Shotter does not believe that divine influence will bring any possibility for the unique creativity:

[My mentioning vagueness and mystery apparent in society] should in no way be interpreted that I am appealing to any outside, godly influences in the ordering our lives—for my own part, I am a complete atheist, and have no belief or yearnings for a heavenly father or guide; my concern is with the promotion of the more human forms of life that can be discerned in some aspects of our current ways of living. But if, in such an uncertain world, there is to be any order and reliability in it, then it is crucial that people can (and do) know who to take responsibility for at least some crucial aspects of their actions.⁸

While Shotter excludes any possibility for a theological discussion in his work, he finds an answer in human relationship that goes in moment-by-moment creation.

Second, while Shotter maintains that new possibilities occur in relationship itself, Suchocki notes that new possibilities belong to God. Suchocki deals with the relationship between God and the finite world in the process of fulfillment of justice. God provides possibilities to the finite world through the initial aim, but whether possibilities can be actualized depends on decisions of the finite world. On the other

⁷ Shotter, *Getting It*, 17.

⁸ *Ibid.*

hand, God fulfills satisfaction through feeling a finite world's actualities. Suchocki insists that the finite world can overcome injustice in this dynamic with God who is a source of possibilities.

Although there are some differences between Shotter and Suchocki, there is one element that connects both authors, which is responsivity to relationship. Suchocki considers human freedom as a given possibility within one's nature, noting that "the sociological understanding of freedom depends upon an ability to develop one's potential within a context where this development may be hindered or facilitated by self or others."⁹ Freedom is the ability to choose and to develop according to one's highest potential.

However, Suchocki does not believe that human freedom automatically guarantees overcoming injustice or any change. Suchocki maintains that the ontology of human freedom should be established within the ontology of relationships. Suchocki understands the ontology of relationships as a given ability to connect and be connected with others, insisting that "the very possibility of relationships depends upon the ability to respond to relationship, and that this 'response-ability' is at the core of every moment of our lives."¹⁰ When people express their ability to respond to relationships, they will experience the multiplicity of the parameters that follow from

⁹ Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 130-131.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

the multiplicity of the relationships.¹¹ Because of this multiplicity of the parameters, they can question the givenness of themselves and their world. This freedom is self-transcendence exercised through response-ability.

Responsivity to relationship is also an essential element in Shotter's psychological theory. People are intermingled in the living utterances out of which the inescapable creation of something new takes place. However, the living utterance itself does not automatically guarantee the emergence of novelty and new possibilities. Responsivity to relationship is essential to make novelty occur in relationship. When one speaks with others, a very different form of understanding becomes available to us because of the expressive responsiveness of all involved in the living utterances. In other words, novelty and new possibilities occur as long as all those participating in the utterances remain spontaneously responsive to each other.

Responsivity to relationship brings two implications in understanding a theological anthropology. First, people are free, but human freedom is shared in relationship. Free agency cannot be separated from responsivity to relationship. The second one is related to the first one, which is that responsivity to relationship is essential in overcoming injustice. Although relationship is a source of new possibilities and novelty, overcoming injustice is not guaranteed automatically. Overcoming injustice requires an expression of human freedom in the form of responsivity to relationship. Because of this dynamic of relationship and human

¹¹ Ibid., 133.

agency, we can argue that human beings are free, but human freedom is shared in relationship.

Individuality and Human Agency

While human freedom is shared in relationship, does this freedom retain individuality? This question should be asked to both Suchocki and Shotter because both authors argue that human agency cannot be separated from relationship. In other words, human agency should be expressed through responsiveness to relationship.

Both Suchocki and Shotter argue that human agency retains individuality, but there is a difference in the way to develop the connection between human agency and individuality. Suchocki finds an answer in the ontology of human freedom. In *The End of Evil*, Suchocki struggles with the question regarding whether individuality can be retained in identity, and she cannot provide any appropriate answers. Suchocki argues that when the finite occasion is taken up into God, it can have an enduring identity that retains individuality. Her argument regarding an enduring identity has a limitation because she does not explain how the earthly identity that is its present consciousness can be the same as the heavenly identity. However, in her later work, *The Fall to Violence*, Suchocki maintains that people have a given ability to choose among options within their nature. The ontology of human freedom provides an idea about how human agency can retain individuality. Unfortunately, Suchocki does not provide a further explanation about how the ontology of human freedom is connected to an experience of apotheosis in God.

While Suchocki considers human freedom as a given ability to choose, Shotter rejects any idea that human beings already possess a well-developed individuality. Rather, he insists that human agency that retains individuality emerges out of interactions with society. This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of internalization of knowledge of a third kind. When people internalize and master external signs, they construct a structured context that provides a basis to give further structures.

However, human agency that retains individuality itself does not guarantee changes. Human freedom should participate in the duality of structure. Shotter argues that human beings are doubly structured. Each moment tends to move to both looking back and looking forward. Looking back, people see the product that has been specified or determined to date. On the other hand, looking forward, they see the productive process. In the dynamic between the product and process, people can express their ability to make differences in their surroundings. When people participate in this duality of structure, they can link their present action to their own past experiences and future possibilities.

Nature of Homo Dialogicus Marginalis

In this section, a primary concern is how a theological anthropology that occurs from a dialogue between Suchocki and Shotter brings a contribution to the development of the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*. Trimiew suggests the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*, critiquing H. Richard Niebuhr's idea of

responsibility. However, the discussion will not remain as a simple presentation of Trimiew's perspective, but will be developed into a constructive metaphor to explore how Korean adoptees can utilize human agency in constructing a healthy ethnic identity. Thus, this section will be composed of three parts: (1) Niebuhr's *homo dialogicus*; (2) Trimiew's *homo dialogicus marginalis*; and (3) a further development of *homo dialogicus marginalis*.

Niebuhr's Homo Dialogicus

Since Trimiew developed the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* from Niebuhr, it is necessary to know how Niebuhr understands human responsibility. There can be a risk of over-simplification in explaining Niebuhr's theory in the limited space of this chapter; it is possible only to call attention to how Trimiew utilizes Niebuhr's theory and develops the idea of *homo dialogicus marginalis*. In *The Responsible Self*, Niebuhr develops the metaphor of *homo dialogicus* to explain human responsibility.¹² Niebuhr first explains two metaphors that people have utilized to understand responsibility. The first metaphor is *homo faber*, which is humanity-as-maker. This metaphor considers personal life as art or craftsmanship. Human beings are ones who make themselves for the sake of a desired end. The metaphor of humanity-as-maker describes two things about human beings: "we act

¹² H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999). Since this book was published after he died in 1962, it is important to read the introduction of that book by James M. Gustafson, who was Niebuhr's student and colleague, in order to understand the direction of Niebuhr's thought.

toward an end or are purposive; and we act upon ourselves, we fashion ourselves, we give ourselves a form.”¹³ In other words, this metaphor focuses on personal freedom and rights. But a problem with the metaphor of *homo faber* is that we cannot consider human beings’ personal lives just as just craftsmanship. The metaphor of *Homo faber* rejects material that does not fit one’s purpose or end. But if we deal with human beings, we have to take them for better or for worse. If this is true, human beings’ lives are more like politics than like craftsmanship. The second metaphor, *homo politicus*, which can be defined as humanity-as-citizen, emerges out of the understanding of human beings as political. This metaphor involves the interpretation of all experiences to take account of morality. In other words, this metaphor fundamentally concerns the good of society. But Niebuhr argues that we need an alternative metaphor because both metaphors tend to go to the extreme. From his consideration of the limitations of the two metaphors, Niebuhr suggests the metaphor of *Homo dialogicus*, which means humanity-as-answerer. He notes that “what is implicit in the idea of responsibility is the [metaphor] of [humanity]-as-answerers, [humanity] engaged in dialogue, [humanity] acting in response to action upon [them].”¹⁴ The metaphor of *homo dialogicus* plays a role in overcoming the limitations in the former two images.

¹³ Ibid., 49.

¹⁴ Ibid., 56.

Niebuhr describes four characteristics in the metaphor of *homo dialogicus*, in other words, “the form of personal existence we call responsible.”¹⁵ The first one is that personal action is responsive action. Niebuhr considers all actions as responses to action upon human beings. But there is one condition in Niebuhr’s argument: actions should be accompanied with interpretation because some reactions related to the body do not fall into the category of self-actions. So he defines all actions as responses to interpreted action upon human beings. The response to interpreted action is considered as the second characteristic of responsible action. Niebuhr notes that responsibility is “not only responsive action but responsive in accordance with interpretation of the question to which answer is being given.”¹⁶ The third characteristic is accountability. Niebuhr defines accountability as the anticipation of reaction to our reaction. So he maintains that “responsibility lies in the agent who stays with [her] action, who accepts the consequences in the form of reactions and looks forward in a present deed to the continued interactions.”¹⁷ The fourth characteristic in Niebuhr’s understanding of responsibility is social solidarity. In other words, accountability implies community in which responsive action takes place because Niebuhr understand the self as “dependent upon the faithful response of others in community in order to form a reliable sense of identity, to shape [the self’s]

¹⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, “On the Meaning of Responsibility,” unpublished manuscript of address given at Cambridge University, May 25, 1960, 10.

¹⁶ Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self*, 63.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

dominant interpretive images of the real, and to develop conscience and conceptions of moral value.”¹⁸ The self exists in the dynamic movement with response, interpretation, and anticipation in accountability. These all are located in “a continuing community of agents.”¹⁹

Yet, to more fully understand the metaphor of *homo dialogicus* in Niebuhr’s theory, it is important that we examine Niebuhr’s theology. Niebuhr developed his theory of responsibility on the basis of the relationship between God and humanity, noting that human action of response can be described as response to God’s action. In other words, Niebuhr sets his understanding of human freedom within the context of divine action. A reason why Niebuhr attempts to connect human freedom to divine action emerges out of his understanding that there is the multiplicity of events and of one’s interpretations. A human being is the one in many-ness in oneself. Then, where is the unity? Niebuhr maintains that an answer can be found in human response to God’s actions. The ethics of responsibility is that “God is acting in all actions upon you. So respond to all actions upon you as to respond to [God’s] action.”²⁰

Human response to God’s action is clearly shown in Jesus Christ, whom Niebuhr considers a paradigm of responsibility:

¹⁸ James W. Fowler, *To See the Kingdom* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 154.

¹⁹ Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self*, 65.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

[Jesus] is the responsible man who in all his responses to alteractions did what fitted into the divine action. He interpreted every alteraction that he encountered as a sign of the action of God, of the universal omnificent One, whom he called Father. He responded to all action upon him as one who anticipated the divine answer to his answers. Will of God meant for him not only primarily divine imperative but the divine action, carried out through many agencies besides those of men obedient to commandment.²¹

The will of God to which Jesus responded is referred to as the divine action, in other words, what God does in all that Jesus does. What makes Jesus respond to the will of God is radical faith about God's sovereignty, which is "a present, though oftentimes hidden, reality will in the end become fully manifest."²² Jesus' response to God's will is an expression of radical faith.

However, Niebuhr insists that Jesus' response to God's will that is present in every event is neither fatalistic nor mechanistic.²³ Jesus' way of thinking is far away from the idea that all acts of finite agents had been predestined. Jesus' interpretation is a clue concerning Niebuhr's argument. For example, when Jesus interprets the natural phenomenon of the weather, he finds the signs of cosmic generosity because there is no discrimination; rains come down in equal proportions on the fields of

²¹ Ibid., 164.

²² E. Clinton Gardner, "Responsibility and Moral Direction in the Ethics of H, Richard Niebuhr," *Encounter* 40, no. 2 (spring, 1979), 147.

²³ Gardner, 148. Gardner argues that Niebuhr's emphasis on the primacy of the divine action comes out of not only a critique of Barth's transcendent Christocentric theology but also a protest against the anthropocentrism of Liberal Protestant theology as exemplified by Ritschl, Harnack, and the Social Gospel. Niebuhr critiques the humanism and moralism of secularized versions of the Gospel.

everyone, no matter who they are. Niebuhr maintains that this interpretation leads Jesus to respond to criminals and outcasts whom God has not cast out. As shown in this example, Jesus' responses to natural events are "expressive of an omnificent intention that is wholly affirmative of what it brings into being."²⁴ Niebuhr describes the responsibility exemplified in Jesus as a response that "fits into the divine actions and that looks forward to the infinite response to his response."²⁵

Niebuhr brought an important contribution to the discussion of human responsibility. Trimiew mentions that Niebuhr's metaphor is inspiring because that metaphor "summons the believer to respond to God in faith under any and all circumstances."²⁶ He does not add any detailed explanation about the ways in which the response to the divine action would be meaningful. But Libertus A. Hoedemaker provides a useful description of Niebuhr's contribution. He maintains that Niebuhr's major contribution is an emphasis on "the missionary structure of the Christian faith."²⁷ However, for Hoedemaker, *missionary* does not suggest a traditional meaning related to the effort to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth but an indication that "the Christian faith with all its forms, symbols, the structures, is directed toward incarnation in total life, toward the world as human world-before-

²⁴ Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self*, 166.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

²⁶ Trimiew, xi.

²⁷ Libertus A. Hoedemaker, *The Theology of H. Richard Niebuhr* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1970), 151.

God.”²⁸ When Niebuhr argues that we should express human responsibility in the form of response toward the divine action, he brings a contribution that places the Christian faith and church in the context of human problems.

Trimiew's Homo Dialogicus Marginalis

Although Niebuhr emphasizes the importance of human response to God's will, Trimiew finds a serious limitation in Niebuhr's *homo dialogicus*. Trimiew argues that Niebuhr's *homo dialogicus* does not provide an appropriate metaphor by which we can address the issue of injustice that occurs out of oppression. James W. Fowler also argues that “we have to recognize the omission in Niebuhr's ethics of any adequately developed theory of right or justice.”²⁹ Trimiew believes that a fundamental problem in Niebuhr's *homo dialogicus* lies in an inappropriate understanding of God's action and God's will. In other words, Niebuhr's understanding of God's will is too opaque to answer the issue of oppression. Trimiew argues that the Niebuhrian perspective does not take the existence of evil seriously. He notes that “the evil of oppressors may be interpreted by modern Niebuhrian scholars to be a working out of God's infinite design rather than an act of idolatry that should be resisted.”³⁰ Because Niebuhr does not take the existence of evil seriously, Niebuhr insists that “God moves in ways that dictate the chastising of people by

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Fowler, 264.

³⁰ Trimiew, 8.

oppression in conformance with the will of God.”³¹ For Niebuhr, God’s will is generous and ineluctable.

Trimiew maintains that God’s will, from the perspective of the marginalized, is “committed to a justice that is partisan for the powerless.”³² God opposes any form of evil such as structural oppression. When we believe that human action is action in response to God’s will, we should express human responses to oppose and resist any oppression. The perspective of the marginalized who suffer from injustice and oppression brings “a reinterpretation of God, human response, accountability, and social solidarity in ways that permit a critical reinterpretation of the past that does not doom people to the moral redundancy of simply repeating past acts of oppression in new and even more perverse forms.”³³ Thus, in light of a paradigm of justice, Trimiew develops the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* through reinterpretation of Niebuhr’s *homo dialogicus*.

Trimiew’s emphasis on human expression through responses against oppression is important in understanding what becoming human means. As a matter of fact, God’s will is clearly shown in 1 Timothy 2:4: “all [people] to be saved and to come a knowledge of truth.”³⁴ When we believe that God’s will focuses on salvation,

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 13.

³³ Ibid., 12.

³⁴ This passage is cited from New International Version.

how would we understand salvation? Letty M. Russell defines salvation as “freedom to hope in God, freedom to be human.”³⁵ A basis for salvation is Christ who sets us free. Christian freedom is the result of Christ’s action because Jesus liberates those who believe in him. This freedom is not just a gift but also a task which needs to be lived out in Christian lives:

Our story of new life in Christ is a story about freedom. The one who represents that freedom in Jesus Christ. He represents God’s humanity and freedom in choosing to be with us. At the same time as Jesus represents our humanity and need for God’s liberating help, he also represents true humanity. This true humanity shows us God’s intention in creating us as helpers and partners who freely live in obedience to God’s gracious will.³⁶

When we believe that God’s will is expressed in freedom to be human, human responses against oppression are an expression of becoming human because human freedom is given as a task to people. People are set free to live out God’s will and purpose.

When we attempt to interpret Trimiew’s perspective in light of a theological anthropology that occurs out of a dialogue between Shotter and Suchocki, an expression of responses against oppression and injustice is that of rejection of participating in personal sin. It is obvious that people are not responsible for impersonal sin because that type of sin has existed before their birth. However, if they assent to impersonal sin and make decisions to be imprisoned in the power of the

³⁵ Letty M. Russell, *Becoming Human* (Philadelphia: the Westminster Press, 1982), 85.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

demonic, personal sin is perpetuated in their lives because they deny that there are other possibilities in their lives. God's will is that people should not be imprisoned in the power of the destructive structure but that they should resist oppression and injustice through responsibility.

However, Trimiew does not believe that people are completely free. Human freedom is conditioned by the context. The marginalized suffer from injustice because they are "pushed from the center of the decision-making process that a society employs to distribute its benefits and burdens, goods and services, merits and demerits"³⁷ When we believe that the system creates the psyche, the marginalized can be limited in their ability to act responsibly. However, human freedom is conditioned by the context, but freedom is not reduced by its cause. Rather, human beings should be engaged in response to action upon themselves as an expression of human freedom.

Further Development of Homo Dialogicus Marginalis

While Trimiew attempts to criticize Niebuhr's *homo dialogicus* in light of injustice, Trimiew's argument also has a limitation. It is obvious that the marginalized suffer from negative influences that occur in relationships. For the marginalized, human responsibility should be expressed in the form of resistance against injustice. But since relationship can be a source of both evil and enrichment, human action of response to enrichment can be another way to overcome injustice. In other words, the

³⁷ Trimiew, xiii.

marginalized should express the action of response through participation in new possibilities that occur in relationship. When Trimiew just pays attention to a dimension of evil, he has a limitation in discussing how human beings can act responsibly.

However, a theological anthropology clearly informs how relationship can be a source of enrichment, that is, new possibilities and novelty. There is also a consistent theme in fine art that reflects this notion of enrichment via relationship. An example is *Babette's Feast*, which is a film directed by Gabriel Axel in 1987. Its story concerns a middle-aged Frenchwoman named Babette. Carrying a letter of introduction, she has fled from France and arrived in Jutland on the west coast of Norway. Although the two elderly sisters, Phillipa and Martina, are shocked by Babette's appearance on a stormy day, they graciously allow Babette to stay with them to work as a cook. Although Babette was a well-known cook in Paris, she humbly prepares foods as the two sisters requested. A peaceful scene is broken down when Babette wins ten thousand francs in the lottery. This happening takes place when the sisters have been planning a small anniversary celebration in honor of the birthday of their father. Babette conceives a plan and asks the sisters for permission to prepare and pay for a real French meal for the anniversary dinner. Realizing Babette's real intention, the sisters cannot refuse. But the responses that the villagers give are different from that of the sisters. They confess their guilt and sorrow over the event that Babette prepares, which is worsened along with past relationship difficulties and grievances among them. They eventually make a decision that they will partake of the

meal but will not make a single comment regarding the foods. But the general, a guest, is able to realize how magnificent the feast would be:

Mercy and truth have met together. Righteousness and bliss shall kiss one another.... We in our weakness believe we must make choices in life. We tremble at the risk; we know fear. But, No! Our choice is of no importance. There comes a time when our eyes are opened, and we come to realize that mercy is infinite. We need only await it with confidence and receive it in gratitude.³⁸

The general's statement makes clear how relationship can create the newness and novelty. The arguments and bitterness among villagers and the sisters disappeared. The guests and the sisters were healed.

Russell describes how people can anticipate new creation in relationship. This anticipation is not based on futurology, but on eschatology. A difference between both perspectives is that

futuresology asks when things will happen *if* they happen, and works to direct the evolution of these events. Eschatology, on the other hand, asks how to live now *as if* the vision of God's purpose or goal for our lives were already present. It presses us to make our lives count for something because God counts on us.³⁹

This eschatological perspective occurs in relationship with Jesus because Jesus became the first fruit of the fulfillment of God's promise that has already, but not yet arrived. Because of this eschatology, people can continue to hope in the face of inhumanity and brokenness in society.

³⁸ *Babette's Feast*, a film written and directed by Gabriel Axel, based on a story by Isak Dinesen (Orion Home Video, 1988).

³⁹ Russell, *Becoming Human*, 41.

Here, we need to recall the importance of responsivity in the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*. While relationship would be a source of new possibilities, changes are not guaranteed by the occurrence of new possibilities themselves. An expression of human freedom through responses is necessary to actualize possibilities and bring changes. Human beings should be engaged in response to action upon themselves as an expression of human freedom. Relationships can be a source of evil, but they also can be a source of enrichment. Therefore, we should express an action of response both to resist injustice and to participate in possibilities that occur in relationships.

Examination of Two Primary Questions for Research Project

Two primary questions have been explored in this research project. The first question was “How have Korean adoptees worked actively to construct/reconstruct their ethnic identity throughout their lives in relationship with others, including adoptive parents and their communities?” The second was “How might the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* that is supported and revised by a theological anthropology change or inform the way pastoral theologians and caregivers better understand and empower the process of ethnic identity formation in adult Korean adoptees?” Answering these two questions, this section will be composed of three parts: (1) methods to construct ethnic identity; (2) three assumptions in the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*; and (3) integration of methods and the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*.

Methods to construct ethnic identity

There are two major methods by which Korean adoptees constructed and reconstructed their ethnic identity. The first one is multiple ethnic identification. In identifying ethnic identities, adult Korean adoptees reject any attempt by people to classify ethnic identities in one stereotyped category or the other. Their ethnic identities are expressed in the form of multiplicity and variety. This phenomenon occurs as Korean adoptees attempt to resist injustice that occurs out of racism and sexism. When Korean adoptees claim themselves in a certain way, that activity results from their interpretation of relationship and its meaning. Thus, multiple ethnic identification is a way to express who they are as human beings and to become active agents of change.

The second one is reconstruction of ethnic identities. This phenomenon takes place in various moments: (1) visiting Korea, (2) experiences of parenting birth children, (3) contacting other multiracial women, (4) developing relationships with God, and (5) meeting with other Korean adoptees. These moments helped Korean adoptees construct and reconstruct their ethnic identities and build a healthy connection with others.

Three Assumptions in the Metaphor of Homo Dialogicus Marginalis

There are three assumptions in the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* that occur out of a dialogue between Trimiew's idea and a theological anthropology. The first one is that human freedom should be expressed through responses. A theological anthropology that emerges out of the integration of Shotter and Suchocki

suggests that responsivity as human freedom is essential to overcome injustice. Human freedom is conditioned by the context. But freedom is not reduced by the negative influences of the context; rather, response-ability is necessary because a possibility of relationships depends on an ability to respond.

The second assumption is that human responses should aim at resistance against injustice. God's will is that everyone be saved, which means freedom to be human. However, impersonal sin impedes human beings from participating in the well-being of existence. This type of sin makes the marginalized suffer from injustice that occurs in relationship. God invites people to respond to impersonal sin. In participating in this resistance through responses, they reject participating in personal sin.

The third assumption is that while relationship can be a source of both evil and enrichment, people should express their human agency through responses toward new possibilities and novelty that occur in each moment. New possibilities emerge out of relationship. But the occurrence of new possibilities does not guarantee changes. People should express their responses to relationship so that they can actualize possibilities.

Integration of Methods and the Metaphor of Homo Dialogicus Marginalis

There are three elements that we can find through the integration of methods and the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*. The first one is that Korean adoptees' responsivity as an expression of human agency appears in resistance against injustice and oppression. They suffer from injustice that occurs out of

impersonal sin, which impacted Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation destructively. When Korean adoptees refuse any attempt to classify their ethnic identities into certain stereotyped categories, they resist impersonal sin and do not participate in personal sin.

The second element is that Korean adoptees respond to new possibilities that occur in each moment in relationship. A characteristic that we can find in Korean adoptees' ethnic identity is multiplicity. When Korean adoptees identify their ethnic identities in the form of multiplicity, they respond to new possibilities. The characteristic of multiplicity also appears in reconstruction of ethnic identities. Through reconstruction of their ethnic identities, Korean adoptees utilize their human agency through responses toward new possibilities.

The third element is that Korean adoptees' expression of human freedom can be defined as that of responsivity. This phenomenon clearly appears in both multiple ethnic identification and reconstruction of ethnic identities. When Korean adoptees utilize their human agency through responses in constructing ethnic identities, they participate in becoming human because freedom to choose is a task which needs to be lived in Korean adoptees' lives.

A Concluding Remark on the Metaphor of *Homo Dialogicus Marginalis*

Adult Korean adoptees sometimes do not have many opportunities to utilize their human agency for their lives. They did not choose to be relinquished. They did not make a decision to come to the United States to be adopted and raised by

American citizens. However, when adult Korean adoptees vocalized that their primary concern is ethnic identity, a significant moment occurred and Korean adoptees' invisibility was broken down. Furthermore, Korean adoptees' human agency becomes manifest as they construct and reconstruct their ethnic identity through responses against injustice and participation in new possibilities. Therefore, Korean adoptees' expression of human freedom to construct healthy ethnic identities is an expression of freedom to become human.

Chapter Six

Practices for Empowering Adult Korean Adoptees

The metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* that emerged out of a discussion of a theological anthropology and Trimiew's idea becomes embodied through practices. Through critical and imaginative practices, we can empower adult Korean adoptees and help them construct healthy ethnic identities. Because it is important for Korean adoptees to express their human agency through responses to negative influences which impact ethnic identity formation destructively, two methods of practice as an expression of responsivity will be explored: (1) making choices; and (2) reconstructing ethnic identities. Before a concluding remark for this chapter is presented, some suggestions for future research will be made.

Making Choices

The theme of making choices in this section will be composed of three subsections: (1) understanding the concept of guilty feeling in the work of Suchocki; (2) exploring the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*; and (3) discussing a feminist therapy model.

Understanding the Concept of Guilty Feeling in the Work of Suchocki

Suchocki maintains that the concept of guilt has a close connection to responsivity in overcoming injustice. From Suchocki's perspective, the emotive

response is connected to human freedom. How does that phenomenon take place? Suchocki develops her argument through the separation of the ontology of guilt and the phenomenon of feeling guilt.

The ontology of guilt can be defined as emotive response to control and the freedom presented by alternative choices. When infants are born into a ready-made situation where demonic power dominates, they participate in impersonal sin because impersonal sin provides a structure in which they take part, no matter whether they agree or not. But they are not yet guilty because guilt “involves the possibility of control over that participation.”¹ Since infants participate in impersonal sin innocently, they are not guilty. However, when infants grow into greater freedom at a later stage in human development, they can have enough ability to question themselves and their actions. If they fail to transcend the boundaries established by original sin and continue to deny the existence of alternatives, an emotive response called the ontology of guilt occurs.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of guilty feelings occurs out of the transgression of boundaries. Suchocki maintains that “feeling guilty often follows from the sense of having transgressed previously held boundaries, regardless of whether or not those boundaries were or were not appropriate, and regardless of whether or not one crossed those boundaries willingly.”² For example, the

¹ Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence*, 135.

² *Ibid.*, 138.

phenomenon of feeling guilty takes place when victims of incest or other forms of abuse assume responsibility for the crime. This phenomenon of feeling guilt does not end with the actual act, but continues to exist in the lives of the victims in a destructive way. That feeling invades the boundaries of the self that define one's sense of acceptable being and behavior. Thus, the victims shape a system of negative self-esteem that emerges out of transgression of boundaries through the phenomenon of feeling guilty.

After Suchocki separates the phenomenon of guilty feeling from the ontology of guilt, she discusses two steps, recognition and evaluation, which are interwoven with an emotive response of guilt. Suchocki insists that infants are born in society and that as they begin to take shape, a value system emerges out of ready-made structure. But when people come to the development stage where they have enough capacity for freedom, there are some steps to follow. The first step is to recognize that the influential structures exist. The second step is to evaluate influential structures that are inherited. Suchocki argues that when people take the steps of recognition and evaluation, they can gain some degree of control over the effects of influential structures upon them and move into a stage of self-transcendence. If people have enough ability to transcend destructive structures, and they do not transcend those structures, the emotive response of guilt is involved.

There are two contributions. First, when Suchocki separates the phenomenon of feeling guilty from the ontology of sin, she does not risk a generalization and argues that human experiences related to false guilt feelings do not retain personal

responsibility. The experiences of Korean adoptees can be one of the examples of false guilt feelings. Many Korean adoptees attempted to change their external appearance to become similar to their adoptive parents or friends. A reason for this phenomenon is that the key communities such as adoptive parents, schools, towns where Korean adoptees grew up, and Korean American communities, impose values and norms of structural systems through racial, gender, and cultural discriminations. Once Korean adoptees internalize values and norms of structural systems, they encounter the experiences of self-disapproval. Suchocki maintains that the experience of self-disapproval translates into guilty feelings.³ In other words, feelings of guilt accompany transgression of boundaries that define Korean adoptees' sense of acceptable appearance. Korean adoptees experience feelings of guilt in the dynamic movement with key communities and do not retain personal responsibility.

The second contribution is that the steps of recognition and evaluation help care-givers understand the importance of the stories of the marginalized. In other words, it is essential for care-givers to attend to the experiences of the marginalized as fully as possible before they help people move to the stage of making choices and finding solutions. There are two reasons.⁴ First, if destructive influences that emerge out of impersonal sin are not fully named and well described, it will be difficult for Korean adoptees to find appropriate choices and solutions. Second, there is a

³ Ibid., 139.

⁴ Christie Cozad Neuger, *Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 188-189.

possibility to limit human agency of the marginalized. Since Korean adoptees' experiences have not been heard fully, it is important for them to vocalize their experiences and to feel that their stories are heard. In that sense, Suchocki's suggestion regarding recognition and evaluation is meaningful to Korean adoptees.

However, while it is important for Korean adoptees to name their problems carefully, tell their experiences fully, and have their stories heard, an essential element in human freedom is to express human freedom through responsivity and to make choices. Unfortunately, in explaining the concept of an emotive response to guilt, Suchocki does not detail how to make choices and express human freedom. If we remain in the step of recognition and evaluation, we cannot find any notion of making choices. The steps of recognition and evaluation do not guarantee any change through making choices. Thus, while Suchocki suggests the importance of understanding the ontology of guilt in overcoming injustice, her suggestion is not an appropriate answer to the discussion of human freedom through responsivity because recognition and evaluation are not enough to resist injustice that emerges out of original sin and the destructive structure.

The Metaphor of Homo Dialogicus Marginalis

The importance of making choices clearly appears in the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*. From the perspective of this metaphor, relationship can be a source of evil and enrichment. An ultimate element in this metaphor is to express human freedom through responses to relationship. When Korean adoptees respond to relationship, their freedom can be expressed in the form of resistance against injustice

and oppression and of participation in new possibilities. A base for making choices lies in human responsivity to new possibilities through which people can make choices to actualize those possibilities. Although it is necessary for Korean adoptees to go through the steps of recognition and evaluation regarding negative influences that emerge out of original sin, Korean adoptees should not remain at that stage. Rather, they should move to another step to discuss making choices and respond to novelty and multiple possibilities.

Feminist Therapy

A feminist therapy model goes along well with the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis*. Mary Ballou and Nancy W. Galalac develop a feminist therapy that provides a powerful resource to explain the significance of making choices as an expression of human freedom. Feminist therapy focuses on women's experiences. But since feminist therapy deals with the "attitudes and practices destructive to women in the environment,"⁵ it can provide a useful resource for discussing how Korean adoptees who suffer from injustice that comes out of racism and sexism can express human freedom through responsivity.

Ballou and Galalac suggest a model that is composed of five steps. The first one is that of separation. A goal in this step is to examine the power systems' values and norms that brought destructive harm to women's growth and development and to help women gain some distance from them. Since Suchocki argues that an evaluation

⁵ Mary Ballou and Nancy W. Galalac, *A Feminist Position on Mental Health* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1985), 98.

process is essential to experience the self-transcendence from external influences, there is a similarity between Suchocki's approach and a feminist therapy model. The step of separation helps us correct a limitation in Shotter's knowledge of a third kind. While Shotter argues that knowledge of a third kind is a product of internalization of the external signs, it is important to examine the nature of external signs because the power systems' values and norms limit the growth and development of the marginalized, such as Korean adoptees.

The second step is that of validation. When a woman internalizes the dominance of power systems that are rooted in patriarchy, she encounters the experiences of self-disapproval. In other words, she learns to discount herself and to accept the values and norms of power systems. This process of validation helps a woman confront the invalidation of that woman as a person. The therapist's role is "[to model] self acceptance for the client as well as [demonstrate] how one woman provides non-judgmental validation of another woman's experience as real and true for her."⁶ A responsibility for a woman is to respond to the support of the therapist and other women. Through self-acceptance, she can validate her own experiences and data.

The third step is that of association. The process of association helps a woman establish the therapeutic alliance with other women. This process is necessary to break down the barriers, the isolation, and the fear of differences and mistrust that

⁶ Ibid., 106.

were built up in the power systems. Furthermore, the process of association helps a woman affirm herself and accept her value as a person.

The fourth step is that of authorization. This process of authorization is important to help a woman become responsible for her life choices. A primary task of this process is that “each woman examines her resources and assesses her skills and strengths accurately to determine if they are sufficient to reach the goals she has set for herself.”⁷ In other words, each woman should get prepared to reconstruct the power systems in her environment during the last step of negotiation.

The fifth step is that of negotiation. The process of negotiation helps a woman move from being the passive recipient of support to being an active and responsive agent of her environment. According to Ballou and Gabalac, there are some ways to express human agency:

The client must be able to state her requirements clearly, be certain of her goals, of what she wants to gain and how much she can afford to lose. She must be able to make decisions and plan effective strategy to meet her needs, and to evaluate her progress and analyze the cost to herself. As she practices negotiation behaviors, she needs to learn to assess the timing required to be effective, when to push an advantage, mobilize support, compromise, or retreat. She needs to be able to manage her emotions during the process and to deal with the feelings of those persons on the other side of negotiations effectively. She must also be prepared to lose and survive.⁸

⁷ Ibid., 114.

⁸ Ibid., 118.

An essential point in this feminist therapy model is how a woman can become an active agent of her environment. In other words, a woman should respond to the destructive environment and making healthy choices.

Hana's experiences clearly show how feminist therapy can be applied to Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation. When Hana was a graduate student, she explored what it means to be a Korean-American woman in her thesis focusing on gender, culture, and race. A reason is that, during that time, she felt like revisiting all of her wounds that occurred in relationship with her adoptive mother. In the process of interviewing some Korean-American women, Hana realized that there is a large collective story from which her adoptive mother obtained a legacy of suffering. Since Hana's emotional psychological patterns came down from her adoptive mother, her personal story is part of the large collective story. Acknowledging how norms and values of a destructive system that appear in a large collective story disvalued Hana and her mother, she could accept her Korean part of ethnic identity and experience a healing moment. When she came to accept the Korean part of ethnic identity, she made a different choice and identified herself as a Korean American adoptee.

While Hana's experiences show how feminist therapy can be applied to Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation, an important thing is how to express human freedom through making choices. Korean adoptees' human agency is shown in the phenomenon of multiple ethnic identification. Not all participants of this research project identify themselves to be a Korean American adoptee like Hana; rather, Korean adoptees' experiences do not show any consistent pattern in

identifying ethnic identities. Korean adoptees refuse to be classified in some stereotyped ethnic identities because the norms and values of the structural systems are embedded in those identities. When Korean adoptees want people to see them as being unique individuals and persons, they resist injustice that impacts ethnic identity formation destructively and express their human agency through making choices.

However, making choices as an expression of human freedom itself does not guarantee an expression of healthy choices. In other words, we need some criteria by which to discern if making choices is done appropriately, because Neuger notes that “choices... can take endless shapes and go in endless directions.”⁹ She continues to suggest seven evaluative questions as useful criteria for assessing helpfulness of choices:

First, does this choice address the real issues involved as revealed in the coming to voice and gaining clarity dimensions of the counseling?... Second, does this choice empower the counselee in a non-destructive way?... Third, does this choice reverse or reframe damaging patriarchal values in such a way that the reversing or reframing will continue to provide a means toward ongoing clarity for the counselee?... Fourth, does this choice enhance the possibility of healthy relationships and support the healthy relationships that are already in the counselee’s life?... Fifth, does this choice fit with the counselee’s (and counselor’s) understanding of God’s ongoing calls for love and justice?... Sixth, is there adequate support for the ongoing implications of this choice or these choices?... Finally, the seventh question asks if there is a method and a plan for on-going evaluation of the consequences of this choice or these choices?¹⁰

⁹ Christie Cozad Neuger, *Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 191.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 192-194.

Making choices is a way to express responsibility to the environment in which negative influences occur, but the marginalized can make unhealthy choices. Thus, it is important to judge the helpfulness of choices through these criteria.

An example useful in discussing the importance of making healthy choices can be found in Alex. Since Alex was exposed to suffering that occurred from racism in his family and school for a long time, he could not feel a connection with any communities. However, Alex ended up joining a gang and becoming a criminal because that was the first time that he felt acceptance in relationship with other Asian members of the gang. He made a choice to identify himself as an Asian and ran a risk of his life. Alex's choice may neither empower himself nor enhance healthy relationships with others. Thus, empowering Korean adoptees should be based on how to construct a healthy ethnic identity.

Reconstructing a Healthy Ethnic Identity

While we explored the issue of making choices in the previous section, reconstruction of ethnic identities is another issue that we will deal with in this section. Both issues are connected to novelty and new possibilities that occur in relationships. But the issue of reconstruction is based on language as metaphor. Exploring the issue of reconstruction, two main themes will be examined. Those themes include (1) ethnic identity and narrative and (2) new possibilities and reconstruction in narrative psychology.

Ethnic Identity and Narrative

While the metaphor of *homo dialogicus marginalis* emphasizes an expression of human agency through responsiveness to new possibilities, Shotter's discussion of language can provide a base on which we can develop a therapeutic method for pastoral practice. Shotter utilizes language as a metaphor for his rhetoric-responsive version of social construction because language helps people not merely claim to describe a state of affairs, but also to move people to action or to change their perceptions. From Shotter's perspective, language can be a source to bring changes. How do changes occur? Language is composed of relationships in which new possibilities take place. However, Shotter does not believe that relationship itself brings a change; rather, responsiveness to relationship is essential to actualize new possibilities. Thus, Shotter's main interest is not language itself but how human agency can be enhanced through language.

The discussion of language and narrative is important in considering how Korean adoptees construct a healthy ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is intertwined with narrative because ethnic identity can be defined as a personal meaning regarding ethnicity, which occurs in the dynamic of relationship. There is no difference between language and narrative. Narrative is an expression of a higher order of meaning-making, but storing experiences is dependent upon language.¹¹ Therefore, it is

¹¹ Carolyn Saari, "Relationship Factors in the Creation of Identity: a Psychodynamic Perspective," in Hugh Rose and Kevin T. Kuehlwein, eds. *Constructing Realities: Meaning-Making Perspectives for Psychotherapists*, edited by

important to explore how Korean adoptees participate in the process of constructing ethnic identities through narrative and language.

However, although Shotter provides a base on which we can discuss how Korean adoptees can utilize human agency in constructing a healthy ethnic identity, he does not develop a therapeutic method for practice. Pastoral theologians insist that theory cannot be separated from practice because practice is theory-laden. So it is important that theory should go back to practice. This formula does not mean that theory is a starting point. Pastoral theologians begin with understanding of practice. However, theory that is embedded in practice should be examined and then should go back to practice. In that sense, Shotter does not provide any appropriate base to discuss human agency.

New Possibilities and Reconstruction in Narrative psychology

This section concerns Michael White's narrative therapeutic approach. When we explore White's narrative therapy, we run a risk of generalization because narrative therapy is not a product of one scholar, but of many, who develop new ways of facilitating desired changes based on a postmodern view of reality. As was mentioned in chapter 3, there is diversity in social constructionism and narrative therapy. Thus, it is important to note that White's narrative therapy does not reflect all dimensions of narrative psychology.

However, there are two reasons why we should explore White's narrative therapy despite a danger of generalization. First, White's narrative therapy suggests some useful therapeutic methods by which to discuss how Korean adoptees construct their ethnic identity through narrative. Second, White addresses the issue of power and narrative by utilizing the work of Michel Foucault, a philosopher. Since Korean adoptees suffer from injustice that occurs out of the destructive structure that retains the issue of power, White's therapeutic approach can be helpful in discussing the issue of injustice.

In spite of a risk of simplification, it is important to explore some essential elements of Foucault's philosophical understanding of power and knowledge. Since a focus in this section concerns how White utilizes Foucault's ideas, a main source for Foucault's theory will be White's description and some authors' comments on Foucault will be added. First, Foucault does not understand power as something owned by or bestowed by a certain person; rather, from Foucault's view, "power is in social relations among individuals, groups, institutions, systems, and any combination of these entities."¹² Because power is in social relations, Foucault's main focus lies in finding rules resulting from interactions of power relationship.

Second, Foucault does not consider power as regressive, but as predominantly constitutive. Since power is in social relations, it functions "[to] normalize truths that

¹² M. Francyne Huckaby, *Challenging Hegemony in Education: Specific Parrhesiastic Scholars, Care of the Self, and Relations of Power*, dissertation, Texas A & M University, 2005, 111.

shape our lives and relationships.”¹³ When people normalize truths, they move into activities that support “the proliferation of global and unitary knowledges, as well as the techniques of power.”¹⁴ Foucault does not ignore the importance of regression of power; rather, he emphasizes social relations of power through the notion of constitution.

Third, since people experience power as constitutive predominantly, power and knowledge cannot be separated. In other words, the function of power is intertwined with knowledge construction. Power leads people to normalize truths. But when this predominant knowledge becomes totalizing and is considered as broadly accepted universals, this knowledge becomes taken-for-granted as truth in discourse and practice. Totalizing a Truth makes other knowledges subjugated, hidden, and buried. This phenomenon is a regressive dimension of power.

Lastly, Foucault insists that the recovery of subjugated knowledges makes us able to criticize the dominant knowledges. There are two classes of subjugated knowledge. The first one is “constituted by those previously established or erudite knowledges that have been written out of the record by the revision of history achieved through the ascendance of a moral global and unitary knowledge.”¹⁵ The second class of the subjugated knowledge is local popular or indigenous knowledges

¹³ Michael White and David Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), 19.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

that have survived in the marginal societies. An important task is to escape encapsulation in dominant knowledges. An answer lies in “the insurrection of the subjugated knowledges against the institutions and against the effects of the knowledge and power that invests scientific discourse.”¹⁶ Thus, in Foucault’s view, the recovery of subjugated knowledge is necessary in order to discuss experiences of people who have been marginalized in society.

Referring to Foucault’s view on power and knowledge, White argues that the therapeutic endeavor focuses on resurrecting the subjugated knowledges. He notes this to be “the generation of alternative stories that incorporate vital and previously neglected aspects of lived experience.”¹⁷ Because his main goal is to resurrect the subjugated knowledges, White engages in language because meaning is derived from the stores of human experiences. In an attempt to integrate language with Foucault’s philosophy, White suggests that the therapeutic process has four steps: (1) externalization of the problem; (2) relative influence questioning; (3) unique outcomes; and (4) re-authoring stories. Here is an important caution. White does not suggest any step-by-step process through his theory; rather, these steps are sets of conversational questions to help structure the re-authoring process.

¹⁶ Ibid., 27.

¹⁷ Ibid., 31.

The first step is externalization of the problem. White and Epston maintain that people tend to detail a “problem-saturated description” in the session.¹⁸ However, an important premise is that “neither the person nor the relationship between persons is the problem... rather, the problem becomes the problem, and then the person’s relationship with the problem becomes the problem.”¹⁹ When people separate themselves from the problem, they can describe themselves and others from a new perspective and facilitate construction of alternatives.

The second step is relative influence questioning. This step is composed of two sets of questions. The first one is to help people map the influences of the problem in their lives and relationships. A purpose of this question is not to investigate the nature the problem, but to identify the effect of the problems over people. The second set is to assist people to map their own influence in the life of the problem. These two sets of questions provide a possibility to find unique outcomes later.

The third step is unique outcomes. This step helps people find occasions in which they have been subjugated by unitary knowledges but refused to follow these knowledges. There are several ways to identify unique outcomes. People can recall “facts or events that contradict the problems’ effect in their lives and in their

¹⁸ Ibid., 39.

¹⁹ Ibid., 40.

relationship.”²⁰ Sometimes people can find unique outcomes during the counseling session. Or they can imagine future unique outcomes. These outcomes can facilitate the construction of new meanings.

The fourth step is re-authoring stories. When people identify unique outcomes, it is necessary to thicken those outcomes. Through this process, people can determine preferred ways of living and interacting with themselves and others and participate in new possibilities.

When White attempts to resurrect the subjugated narratives through these four steps, he suggests two ways regarding how to express human freedom through responsivity. First, people can respond to influences of the problems and others by identifying and separating from unitary narratives that are subjugating them. Second, people can express their responsivity through participation in the process of re-authoring their stories. White insists that the narrative mode is “a world of interpretative acts, a world in which every retelling a story is a new telling, a world in which persons participate with others in the re-authoring, and thus in the shaping, of their lives and relationships.”²¹ When people participate in the process of re-authoring their stories, an activity of responsivity to open up new possibility is involved in that process.

²⁰ Ibid., 56.

²¹ Ibid., 82.

She Ra's experiences illustrate how narrative therapy can work in the formation of ethnic identity in Korean adoptees. Having suffered from racial and gender discrimination of her adoptive family, She Ra fought with her adoptive family for a long time. She Ra was considered as a trouble-maker in her family. Her family always blamed She Ra, saying that they were a perfect family; but once they adopted She Ra, they began to experience troubled family relationships. Because of the changed attitudes of her adoptive family toward her, She Ra felt as if she was a burden to the family. However, college was a place in which She Ra reconstructed her narrative. There were two significant moments: one, meeting other Korean adoptees of her age and second, meeting with other Asian women who had multi-cultural background. Although there was a difference in terms of experiences with adoptive families, She Ra found a common ground with other Korean adoptees because they have gone through similar emotional difficulties. The relationship with other adoptees made her feel that she is not alone. She Ra realized that the problem lay not on her, but on racism embedded in the very homogeneous white community. She Ra also shared a similar understanding with women of multi-cultural backgrounds because they suffered from racism and sexism like her. The meeting with other Korean adoptees of her age and women of multi-cultural origins helped She Ra accept the fact that she is Asian. That was a significant moment in her life. It helped her open her eyes to the different worlds and to reconstruct her narrative of ethnic identity differently. She began to utilize human agency through responses to new possibilities and to re-author her narrative.

For Korean adoptees, the reconstruction of ethnic identity through re-authoring their narrative is an important expression of human freedom. Re-authoring narratives is clearly shown in transforming moments that Korean adoptees went through in their lives. Transforming moments included visiting Korea, experiences of parenting, meeting with other multiracial women, developing a relationship with God, and meeting with other Korean adoptees. Korean adoptees found alternative stories in those experiences and have gone through the process of meaning making regarding ethnic identity. The issue of ethnic identity is not limited to Korean adoptees in the United States. But there are two unique elements that we can find in Korean adoptees' transforming experiences. First, the healing process is connected to re-authoring narratives. Many Korean adoptees experienced transforming moments during a tour to Korea. The relationship with birth parents is not a main issue that impacted them; rather, visiting Korea was a symbolic activity that brought a healing process to Korean adoptees who had gone through a painful feeling of relinquishment. Second, re-authoring narratives in Korean adoptees' experiences is often concerned with the Korean part of being. Since these adoptees grew up in the United States, the issue has been how to deal with the Korean part of being and connect it to the American part of being. In other words, the issue has been a connection with themselves and others. When they reconstructed their ethnic identity in a different way, they could build a new connection with themselves and others.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this research project point to a number of suggestions for future research regarding Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation. First, this research suggests that we need a further exploration regarding the relationship between ethnic identity and gender identity. A major focus in this research was how gender discrimination brings a destructive impact on ethnic identity formation. In interviews, most female participants agreed that while there is a close relationship between gender identity and ethnic identity, gender identity is more important than ethnic identity in their lives. The argument of some female participants in this research contradicts an opinion of James E. Cote. In an article, "Identity: A Multidimensional analysis," Cote notes that ethnic identity is more important than gender identity:

It is possible that race is more important for certain dimensions of identity formation than gender, such that depending on their class and age, women of a given race may subjectively experience more in common with men of their own race than with women of another race as they form their sense of identity; moreover, in terms of actual social identity... they may objectively have more in common with their brothers."²²

The experiences of some female Korean adoptees challenge an assumption in Cote's statement. Thus, we need to explore the relationship between gender identity and ethnic identity and how they interact in Korean adoptees' experiences.

²² James E. Cote, "Identity: A Multidimensional Analysis," in Gerald R. Adams, Raymond Montemayor, and Thomas P. Gullotta, eds. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 151

Second, while this research just focuses on adult Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation in the United States, it may be necessary to compare experiences of adult Korean adoptees who were adopted and raised by Caucasian parents to those of Korean adoptees who were raised by Korean parents. The experiences of Hana and An Nee, who were raised by a Korean mother and a white father, were different from other participants. The interaction with their adoptive Korean mother especially brought a serious impact on their ethnic identity formation. When Hana was revisiting all of her wounds that occurred out of her experiences of abandonment and lack of her adoptive mother's care, she felt as if she was reexperiencing her adoptive mother's wounds. In this connection, Hana explored her experiences as part of collective story and began to examine the meaning of *Han*.²³

I was part of collective story. So at that point my thinking was really shifted from thinking about my own personal struggle to realizing that I belong to a collective story. When my thinking was shifted, it's like "wow." There was also freedom for me because it was no longer personal and it's no longer about me. It was about what it means a Korean and Korean American and whole legacy of suffering and of being Korean because of everything that happened in the 20th Century with colonization and war that kind of thing. I am connected to that heritage. I was very aware of *Han* (恨). But I didn't know there was war and there was *Han*. But I intuitively and emotionally knew this concept. And in graduate school I was desperately searching for this understanding, but I could not find the Western literature.

²³ For more understanding of the meaning of *Han*, see Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993); Jae Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of the Inner Wounds-Han* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

While Hana experienced a unique experience with the interaction with her adoptive Korean mother, my question was whether Korean adoptees who were raised by Caucasian American parents can experience suffering of *Han* in a similar way. There are two Korean adoptees, Jae Ran Kim and Beth Kyong Lo, who addressed suffering of *Han* in their academic articles.²⁴ However, their major concern lies in the adoption system in Korea, a topic which goes beyond the limits of this research.

Fundamentally, this question concerns similarities and differences between adult Korean adoptees who were raised by Caucasian American parents and those who were adopted and raised by Korean parents in the United States. Since the comparison of these two groups was one of my interests, I have tried to locate six adult Korean adoptees who were adopted and raised by Korean parents (both sides Korean) in the U.S. However, all of them, unfortunately, declined my request for participation. I could have a long phone conversation with a male Korean adoptee who was raised by Korean parents. But he did not want to participate in my research. I believe that research comparing these two groups may bring an important contribution to understanding Korean adoptees' ethnic identity formation.

²⁴ Jae Ran Kim, "Scattered Seeds: The Christian Influence on Korean Adoption," in *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption*, edited by Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006), 151-164; and Beth Kyong Lo, "Korean Psych 101: Concepts of Hwa-Byung in Relation to Korean adoption," in *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption*, edited by Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006), 167-176.

Third, since some Korean adoptees shared painful experiences that happened in relationship with their adoptive parents, it may be necessary to do research in which adult Korean adoptees and their adoptive parents can participate together in order to discuss a theological meaning of reconciliation and forgiveness. There are two reasons. First, the recovery of relationship between them through reconciliation and forgiveness can help Korean adoptees construct a healthy ethnic identity. Second, there is no research in which adult Korean adoptees participated along with their adoptive parents.

Fourth, while many participants in this research experienced a healing process as a result of a tour to Korea, we need an additional study to examine how the country of Korea plays a role in Korean adoptees' lives and how the healing process takes place. As mentioned earlier, the continuing bonds with the primary care-giver are important in the process of grieving. But interestingly enough, many Korean adoptees went through a healing process not in the relationship with their birth parents, but with Korea itself. Not all Korean adoptees experienced a healing process during a tour to Korea. Some had negative experiences when they were in Korea. But it is true that many participants described a tour to Korea as one of transforming moments in their lives. This phenomenon challenges us to examine whether the country of Korea can play a function as a representative of the primary care-giver.

Finally, while this study only examined Korean adoptees, we need to be aware that there is diversity of transracial adoptees in the United States. According to the statistics of the U.S. government, approximately 20,000 infants and children are

adopted from foreign countries each year by citizens of the United States.²⁵ Until 1994, Korea was the country that sent out the most infants and children to the United States. Since that time until the present, China (mainland), Russia and Guatemala have taken over that position and transferred many adoptees to the United States. This change implies that there is diversity of background in the society of adoptees. Since a theological anthropology in this research emerged out of an attempt to examine only sixteen Korean adoptees, a theological anthropology for Korean adoptees may or may not be applied to adoptees who have different ethnic backgrounds. Thus, care-givers should be aware of this limitation and conduct on-going research in order to provide a better understanding regarding transracial adoption.

A Concluding Remark

Scripture describes a beautiful story regarding Moses. Moses grew up as an adoptee and was considered to be an Egyptian prince. But Egypt was not a place for him to live because Moses did not identify himself as an Egyptian, but as an Israelite. His identification with other Israelites made him observe sufferings that the Israelites had to go through. Confronting injustice, Moses did not take a passive stance; rather, he made a decision to compete with an Egyptian king, a source of evil. That was a moment for him and his people to take a long journey to obtain the promised land. It

²⁵ For a detailed information, see http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/stats/stats_451.html.

took a long time to accomplish their goal, but Moses and his people could not stop their journey because the promised land had been given them already.

For Korean adoptees, the promised land is not a physical land, that is, neither the United States nor Korea, but a place where Korean adoptees can claim themselves to be human. Sunny Jo, a Korean adoptee who was adopted and raised by a Norwegian family, notes that Korean adoptees should make their own nation.²⁶ Her argument is not that Korean adoptees should be separated from other people, but that they should be united to respond to negative influences that occur out of racism and sexism embedded in society. Constructing a healthy ethnic identity is not accomplished automatically, but Korean adoptees should express human agency through responsiveness and participate in new possibilities that are created in each moment. The land which adult Korean adoptees have been promised is given already, but Korean adoptees have yet to arrive there.

²⁶ Sunny Jo, "The Making of KAD Nation" in *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption*, edited by Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006), 285-290.

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APPENDIX A
REQUEST LETTER

Pastoral Care Center
TCU Box 298130
Fort Worth, TX 76129
June 1, 2006

Dear

I am writing to ask you to participate in a research project I am conducting. The project is a qualitative study of adult Korean adoptees entitled *A Relational Model of Understanding Adult Korean Adoptees' Ethnic Identity Formation in the United States*. In brief, the purpose of this study is to investigate ethnic identity formation of adult Korean adoptees in the United States. The question is "how has the ethnic identity of adult Korean adoptees been constructed and reconstructed in relationship with families and the community throughout life?" While there is some research on this topic, I intend to focus on Korean adoptees' active agency of change in constructing ethnic identity.

My interest in this research is related to my social location, which is that I am myself a Korean adoptee raised in a racially homogenous family. That I am a Korean adoptee means that I am aware of how society may present obstacles, through biases and prejudices, to adoptee's identity formation. Having been raised in a racially homogenous family in Korea means that I may find it more difficult to be aware of the many nuances of Korean adoptee's stories regarding ethnic identity in the United States. My goal is to respect Korean adoptee's experiences without making universalizing claims about them that might silence their unique voices.

This study involves a qualitative research design and will be conducted by me, Kang-II Kim, M.Div, (817-257-7574), a doctoral student enrolled in the Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling (PTPC) at Brite Divinity School located on the campus of Texas Christian University. The specific research strategy is one telephone or face-to-

face interview with each participant and, if necessary, one follow-up interview over the duration of the research project beginning June 1, 2006 and ending December 31, 2006. These interviews will be used to gather a deeper understanding about your experiences and what they have meant to you. Upon your formal consent to participate, you and I will choose the dates and times of the interview. The interviews will each take approximately two hours to complete. As the primary investigator, I will conduct all interviews. My primary dissertation advisor is Professor Christie Neuger (817-257-7575). This study is being conducted as dissertation research solely for educational purposes for completing requirements of the Ph.D. program in PTPC at Brite Divinity School.

I have enclosed two copies of the INFORMED CONSENT form. Please review this carefully. If you are willing to participate, please sign them both and return one of them along with the demographic information and contact information forms. We will go over the consent form again when we meet and you may choose not to participate at any time. Once I receive your consent form and the other two documents, I will contact you within a week to set up a day, time, and place for our interview. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 817-257-7574. Thank you for considering this invitation to participate in the research project."

Respectfully,

Kang-Il Kim, M.Div.

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

This research project is entitled *A Relational Model of Understanding Adult Korean Adoptees' Ethnic Identity Formation in the United States*. The purpose of this study is to investigate ethnic identity formation of adult Korean adoptees in the United States. The question is about "how has adult Korean adoptees' ethnic identity been constructed and reconstructed (or not) in relationship with families and the community throughout life?" While there is some research on this topic, the primary researcher intends to focus on Korean adoptee's active agency of change in constructing their ethnic identity.

This study involves a qualitative research design and will be conducted by a doctoral student enrolled in Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling (PTPC) at Brite Divinity School. The specific research strategy is interpretive interactionism, which assumes that meanings arise through social interactions.

The participant's interview will occur at a time and date decided upon together with the primary researcher prior to the interviews. The interviews will each take approximately two hours to complete. One face-to-face or telephone interview and, if necessary, one follow-up interview will be asked of the participant over the duration of the research project beginning June 1, 2006, and ending December 31, 2006.

The doctoral student, Kang-II Kim, M.Div. (817-257-7574), is the primary researcher who will conduct all interviews. Mr. Kim's primary advisor is Professor Christie Neuger (817-257-7575). This study is being conducted as dissertation research solely for educational purposes for completing requirements of the Ph.D. program in Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling at Brite Divinity School.

Some of the benefits of participating in this study include the opportunity to contribute the participant's knowledge and experiences to pastoral theology and counseling, adoption theory, and transracial adoption practice. Pastoral caregivers in many areas will also benefit from this knowledge in the ability to improve assessment and care for all transracial adoptees.

The risk of participation includes the possibility of feeling some discomfort in describing his or her life history and experiences. The participant may also have some concern about the use of the information that the participant provides. The primary researcher (Kang-II Kim, M.Div.), the primary dissertation advisor (Professor Christie Neuger), Academic Dean (Professor Nancy Ramsay, 817-257-7577), or Ph.D. Committee Chair (Professor Nancy Gorsuch, 817-257-7590) can be contacted at any time to discuss concerns or complaints that the participant has.

The participant is free to disclose only information which is comfortable to disclose. The participant may refuse to answer any questions asked during the interviews, and may choose not to participate at any time without any explanation and without penalty.

To protect against the foreseeable risk to the participant, the primary researcher will be supervised on a regular basis by his primary dissertation advisor. In the event that the participant decides the feeling of discomfort has become problematic, or in the event the primary researcher assesses the interview is too upsetting, the participant's participation in the study may be discontinued by either party.

The participant's personal information such as real name, home address, phone number, and email address will not be used, but other information will be presented in the dissertation. Names and other specific details may be altered to preserve confidentiality. The overall report of this study will be shared with participants, the primary dissertation advisor, and the academic community without the use of the participant's personal information. Information the participant provides during the interviews will be written down by the primary researcher in the form of transcripts and recorded on audio-tape when possible. Only the primary researcher will have access to the names of the participants, and these will not be disclosed. Any transcripts collected, audio tapes created during the interviews, and any other documentation will be kept in a secure location in a locked filing cabinet in the Pastoral Care Center of Brite Divinity School, for a period of five years before being destroyed. Only the primary researcher and the Director of Pastoral Care Center will have access to the key to this storage facility. The researcher will provide careful and supervised access of such data ONLY to his primary dissertation advisor and only when necessary for

completing the dissertation process. The participants may receive copies of any of my respective transcripts and/or audio tapes if requested of the primary researcher.

There are two exceptions to the promises of confidentiality and anonymity. If information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse or neglect, the law requires that this be reported to the proper authorities. In addition, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, Brite Divinity School might not be able to avoid compliance with the court order or subpoena.

The participation in this study is voluntary, and consent is to be given freely and without coercion. If the participant decides not to continue, he/she will not be subject to any penalty.

The investigator will provide explanation of any language in this document that the participant did not fully understand. By signing this document, the participant agrees to involvement in this study, gives his/her permission for the interviews to proceed.

Participant's Name	Signature	Date
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Researcher's Name	Signature	Date
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_____ The participant agrees to be audio taped

_____ The participant does not agree to be audio taped.

Participant's Name	Signature	Date
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APPENDIX C

Interview guide

1. How did you become aware of your own ethnicity? When did you notice that ethnic difference mattered? In what ways did it matter? How did this change over time? How do you currently make sense out of your ethnic identity?
2. How have people understood your ethnic identity and how have you been able to influence that understanding? Have there been times when your ethnic identity was mis-represented or stereotyped? If so, in what ways was it mis-represented? How did that affect your relationship with self and others?
3. What is most central in your ethnic identity? Why? Do you think that other people would agree with the way you see yourself?
4. Do you think that people's descriptions about your ethnic identity are the final description, or do you think there is more to you outside this description? Of the many different ways your ethnic identity has been described, are there any that you find yourself questioning? Why?
5. While many people seem to have many opinions about your ethnic identity, how would you like to be viewed by others? How do you view yourself? How would you like to view yourself?

APPENDIX D

Request for Demographic Information

1. What is your present age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What current religious affiliation, if any, do you hold?
4. What is your current occupation?
5. What is your present marital status?
6. How many children do you have? Are those children adopted and/or biological?
7. At what age did you leave Korea to arrive to the United States?
8. In what area(s) of the U.S. were you raised in your adoptive family(families)?
9. Did you have any siblings? Are those siblings adopted and/or biological?
10. Anything else you would like me to know?

APPENDIX E

Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address: _____

Best time of day to call the participant:

Weekdays: _____

Weekends: _____

In referencing the participant's experiences in the transcripts and dissertation, names and specific details may be altered to preserve confidentiality. The researcher invites the participant to choose a name that the researcher may use to reference the participant--otherwise, the researcher will select a pseudonym. The researcher will be the only person who has access to this information.

The pseudonym the participant chooses for reference in the dissertation is:

APPENDIX F

A METHOD OF MAKING DATA CARDS

I formatted pages for transcription. The headers were formatted and included the type of transcript, the date that the data were collected, the pseudonym of the participant, page numbers in the format, and the number of the total pages. Margins of one inch for the top, bottom, and left margins, and 2.75 inches for the right margin were formatted. Line numbers and spacing were added. In this formatted setting, I transcribed all interviews by myself. The following work was to correct and edit the transcripts of interviews. Two copies of all transcripts then were printed out so that I sent one copy of that to my primary advisor and I kept the other in my file for the record.

The next work was to reformat and divide all transcripts into the data units for analysis. I took the files I finished formatting and printing and saved as a new title to indicate that these were data unit cards. For example, in the case of the interview with An Nee, I saved that file as An Nee interview cards. The page size and the margins were reformatted so that each textual unit could be printed on 8.5 by 11 paper. The page size was reformatted into 5.75 inches for width and 4 inches for height. The additional reformatting was 0.25 inches for the top margin, 0.5 inches for the bottom margin, 0.75 inches for the left margin, and 0.5 inches for the right margin. Below is an example of the reformatting of data unit cards:

	<u>Interview with Hana</u>	<u>10-24-05</u>	<u>page 9 of 109</u>
86	guess my adoptive mother instead of giving me to the nun or taking me inside the orphanage, she hailed a taxi and we were home at night.		
87			
88	KANG: Sounds like it was an unusual process.		
89	HANA: Oh, very unusual. I guess it's the way you call in Korean. I don't know		
90	how to pronounce correctly. <i>Inyeon</i> (인연 因緣) (laughing)		

91 KANG: Yes, it means destiny.
92
93 HANA: Right. Right. So because of that, I was never sent to the orphanage. And
94 recently you know not that long ago I asked my adoptive mother. I said, "Why did
95 you take me home? You know when you did not have interests in adopting." And
she told me, "I was

These data unit cards then were printed out on the color-coded paper and were cut into half. This arrangement of data makes it easy to analyze the interview data.

VITA

Kang-Il Kim was born in Pohang, Republic of Korea, on March 15, 1963. Then, he was adopted and raised on December, 21, 1974, son of JongDae Kim and Bongnam Wu. In March 1982, after graduating from Haksung High School, in Ulsan, he entered Pusan National University in Pusan. In March 1988, he received a Bachelor of Arts from Pusan National University with a major of English Language and Literature. In March 1989, he began theological studies at Korea Theological Seminary in Pusan, where he received Master of Divinity in February, 1992. In September 1996, he entered Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he earned Master of Theology in Biblical Studies in May 1999. In September 1999, he entered Divinity Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, George, where he earned Master of Theology in Pastoral Counseling in August 2000. In August 2001, Kang-Il entered the Doctor of Philosophy program in Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas.

Kang-Il is ordained at the Presbyterian Church (Korean) and served four congregations in various capacities. In 2000, he was a chaplain intern at Northside Hospital, Atlanta, George. In 2001, he was a chaplain resident at Emory Health system. In an academic year of 2002-2003, he was again a chaplain resident at Harris Methodist Hospital, Fort Worth, Texas. Kang-Il currently works as an associate pastor of Binnerri Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) in Garland, Texas. Kang-Il and his wife, Shin-Kun, were married in 1994 and have two boys, Hyung-Jin and Wu-Jin.

Permanent Address: 2951 Sandage Ave. # 606
Fort Worth, Texas 76109

This dissertation was typed by the author.