

The Familial Stranger: The U.S. Adoptive Kinship and The Question of Race

Soh Yeun Kim

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2020

Reading Committee:

Chandan Reddy, Chair

Gillian Harkins

Eva Cherniavsky

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

English

© Copyright 2020

Soh Yeun Kim

University of Washington

Abstract

The Familial Stranger: The U.S. Adoptive Kinship and The Question of Race

Soh Yeun Kim

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Chandan Reddy

Department of English

“The Familial Stranger: The U.S. Adoptive Kinship and The Question of Race” explores how race informs the U.S. adoptive kinship formation. By placing race at the center of its inquiry, the dissertation traces what role race has played in the cultural and legal inscription of children as the orphan/adoptee in the U.S. adoption history. In particular, it questions how race conditions the cultural imaginary and the legal institutionalization of the U.S. adoptive kinship in which race intersects with (non-) biological ties, ethnicity, gender, class, and national belonging. Combining the literary, historical, and cultural studies approach, this dissertation expands the temporal frame to think the genealogy of racialization of the U.S. adoptive kinship. The narrative of U.S. adoption that creates and defines the adoptability of children in need racializes the adoptee by framing their deficiency and difference as concurrently the possibility of modification and fulfillment and the irremovable mark of otherness. Interrogating the way that the racial otherness

of the adoptee has been historically constructed from the late nineteenth century to the present, this work contends that despite its philosophy to create the “as-if-begotten” family, U.S. adoption has been producing adoptees as the “familial strangers” with the promising potentials to be like ‘us’ but also with the indelible flaws coming from their biological and social origin, while also demonstrating how the adoptee’s transgressive presence and border-crossing disrupt and redefine the boundary of kinship, race, and culture.

To my grandfather,
who gave me life and love

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	i
Introduction	1
Children at Risk: U.S. Adoption and the (Re)making the American Family	
Chapter 1	22
Civilizing the Savage: The Production of Orphans and the Placement of Adoptees in the Late Nineteenth-century U.S.	
Chapter 2	83
Saving 'Our' Children: Mixed-race Alien Children and U.S. Transnational Kinship	
Chapter 3	144
The Dream of A 'Rainbow' Family: U.S. Transnational Transracial Adoption and Multiculturalism	
Coda	211
Only for the Best Kind: Children on the Border and the U.S. Immigration Control	
Works Cited	220

Acknowledgments

I owe so many people for assisting me at every step of writing this dissertation. This work would not have been possible without their intellectual, emotional, and material encouragement and support over the last few years. First, I sincerely thank my committee members, Chandan Reddy, Gillian Harkins, and Eva Cherniavsky. It has been a great privilege for me to work with them, whom I deeply respect not only for their work of research but also for their dedication as teachers and activists. It is from them I have learned how to contribute validly both within and outside an educational institution. I am very grateful to Gillian for her insightful and incisive questions that have significantly pushed me to think through my entangled inquiries. Eva's critical reminder of the purpose and the direction of my work has been immensely helpful. I additionally thank Eva for her support as the Director of Graduate Studies when I needed extended help. Most significantly, I can make no adequate acknowledgment of my indebtedness to Chandan. He has been nothing but a supportive, understanding, and inspiring mentor. Throughout my rugged progress, he has guided me with thoughtful advice and great patience. Particularly, the last several months of my dissertation writing met unusual challenges amid the global pandemic and the resultant economic and political turmoil. Without Chandan's bottomless intellectual and moral support, I would not have gotten through the last stage of writing.

I count myself lucky to have many people's institutional and personal support that carries me on over the long years of my stay at the University of Washington. I am deeply grateful to Kathy Mork, who has taken care of me throughout my graduate studies with the institutional knowledge and tireless encouragement. My special thanks go to James Gregory. Besides the generous financial aid, his kind mentoring has helped me during the most demanding period of writing. I am grateful to Julia Carlson, whose relentless support has secured my progress in the

graduate school. Susan Glenn, Enrique Bonus, Anita Verna Crofts, and John Christopher Hamm granted me mentorship more than I deserved. I am thankful to Brian Reed, who as the Director of Graduate Studies allowed me a flexible timeline to define my research fields more precisely. I also want to thank Jennifer Siembor, Diana Borrow, Lori Anthony, and Yuko Mera, whose administrative help I appreciate.

A word of thanks to wonderful friends whose presence has enriched my intellectual and personal growth over my graduate years. Sunao Fukunaga, Caleb Knapp, Samantha Simon, Curtis Hisayasu, Elizabeth Brown, and Gianna Craig are like my family found at UW English. Without intellectual and communal engagement with them, my time in Seattle would have been very different. The warm friendship of Balbir Singh and Susanne Liaw helped me survive the early lone years in the graduate program. I fondly cherish many days we spent together studying for seminars, preparing for teaching, and sharing life over tea. I thank Yifan “Adele” Zhang who is my first friend at UW. When there was a limited resource available for international students, her advice and experience were invaluable to me. I appreciate Ziyang Bai, Milan Vidakovic, Seungeun Park, Chak Lam “Colum” Yip, Sani Chartudomdej, and A.Y. Yomi-Odedeyi who are not just brilliant minds that I have been lucky to interact with but also share the rigor of a transplanted life in a foreign country. I want to express my special gratitude to Heyang Julie Kae. The Asian American Studies Research Collective she created was influential in the development of my research topic.

UW has given me exceptional chances to work with wonderful leaders and mentors. I have been especially lucky to have many fabulous female mentors: Rene Singleton is who gives me the most honest advice about living as a woman of color; Ana Mari Cauce’s fierce spirit has shown me how to serve as a lighthouse when there is little light around; Hellen Garret has

surprised me with her gracious mentorship; I am grateful to Ellen Taylor for her heartfelt support and inspiring conversations; I admire Kelly Edwards' effort to create the inclusive and ethical community; I thank Dorothy Bullitt for her caring wisdom. I appreciate Lincoln Johnson, whose generous affection and incredible mentorship have been my life savior. Jerry Baldasty has taught me how to work over differences and see a bigger picture without missing details. Denzil Suite has shown me a role model of reliable and responsible leadership. Rickey Hall's remarkable dedication to minority students has humbled me. Justin Camputaro has never hesitated to remind me of what matters and what to prioritize. Joel Benoliel has been a kind advocate for me. Each of them has guided me to ways that I can translate my research interest and values that I uphold into action and service.

Thank you to my friends who have pushed me to be resilient and not to settle easily: Mitchell Chen, Alan-Michael Weatherford, Katie Vail, Adaurennaya Chidinma Onyewuenyi, Navid Azodi, Arwa Dubad, Farah Nadeem, Sophie Nob, Roxana Chiappa Baros, Meixi Ng, Ted Chen, Marcus Johnson, Christian Love, Louie Van Vital, Julien Ishibashi, Maria Abando, Amanda Robb, and Sasha Yanakova. I also thank those who spent long, tireless hours with me: Austin Wright-Pettibone, Alex Bolton, Giuliana Conti, James Moschella, Peder Digre, Vanessa Kritzer, Yasmeen Hussain, Eddie Schwieterman, Erin Firth, Osman Salahuddin, Elizabeth Oestreich, and Brad Copenhaver. I would like to say a special thanks to Daniele Meñez who is a dear friend and sister whom I love and respect. Your friendship has been indispensable ever since we met. I have been lucky to have many friends who welcome me whenever I visit Korea. Their unchanging friendship has been invaluable for me to feel connected to home while undergoing a life as an "alien." I thank Chanmi Ko, Hyemi Song, Soyeon Yoo, Yoonji Kim, Minju Kim, Hyekyong Park, Minji Kang, Eugene Kim, Eun Jeong Kim, Jeena Kim, Sohyun

Kim, Yeonju Kim, Hwa Young Kim, Youngsuk Ko, Suk Young Moon, Yong Ju Kim, and Yoon Jeong Chae. I am blessed to have them in my life. My deep gratitude goes to Sook Suh. Her guidance has been essential in my academic and personal life since I entered Ewha Womans University.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my parents, Tae Euk Kim and Sung Hee Roh. Their loving support has been a great encouragement for me to get where I am today. I thank Hyedong Min, my only living grandparent, for staying healthy until I could share the news about her granddaughter's small achievement. I also thank my parents-in-law, particularly Dong Young Yang, who has been supportive of my work. And last, my life partner and best friend, Kyu Hwa Lee, has believed in me in any circumstances. He has given me a priceless opportunity to explore my life in the way I want, even when it means thousands of miles apart from each other for years. I owe this work and who I am today to him.

Introduction – Children at Risk:

U.S. Adoption and the (Re)making the American Family

During the campaign for President George H. W. Bush in 1992, Representative Newt Gingrich told the Republican audience, “Woody Allen having non-incest with a non-daughter to whom he is a non-father because they were a non-family fits the Democratic platform perfectly.”¹ Gingrich’s statement was to criticize the amorality of the Democratic party that was supported by Woody Allen whose relationship with Soon-Yi Previn had been much talked about in the media throughout the year. When Previn and Allen's relationship was known to the public in early 1992, the news quickly went viral. The couple’s story incited people’s interest not simply because Woody Allen in his mid-fifties was seeing a much younger woman in her early twenties, but because Soon-Yi Previn was the adopted daughter of Allen’s long-term partner, Mia Farrow. The media was riveted with the question of the moral and legal boundary of their kinship. Legally, Previn and Allen were strangers. Previn, previously Oh Soon Hee, was adopted by Farrow and her husband André Previn when she was seven years old from Korea in 1977. Farrow and Allen never formed a legal union. But, can we say that they were not a family since Allen and Farrow did not marry but held a long-term partnership only? Or, although they were not a family by law, could Allen be regarded as a stand-in father to Farrow’s children, including Soon-Yi Previn, considering their direct and indirect interactions over the years? Then, was Allen’s relationship with Previn, Farrow’s daughter, incestuous? Previn, however, was an adopted daughter, not a biological daughter of Farrow. This raised the question of whether their legally and biologically unrelated relationship could be thought in terms of incest. Regarding the morality of his relationship with Previn, Allen argued their relationship might be uncommon but

¹ See George E. Will, “No One Is Safe from GOP Attack Dogs,” *Miami Herald*, September 1, 1992, 39A.

not amoral since they had never formed a parent-child relationship while Previn grew up. Previn also made a similar account about their relationship, saying it had been far from being familial. Was their assertion that he had not performed a fatherly role towards Previn critical to judge the nature of their intimate relationship? What does the question of whether they were (un)related as a family offer us to think about the cultural and legal definition of kinship?

These questions about Allen, Farrow, and Previn's kinship got further complicated as Allen and Farrow had one biological child, Ronan Farrow, in 1987. Furthermore, Allen became a co-adopter of two of Farrow's adopted children, Moses and Dylan Farrow, in 1991. Thus, Previn was a partner of Allen who was an adoptive father of her adoptive siblings. But, if Allen and Previn's relationship might be regarded as anomalous but not amoral, how could Allen and Farrow's relationship be defined when they had a biological child while being unmarried and Allen became a legal guardian of some of Farrow's adopted children? When Allen filed a child-custody lawsuit against Farrow in 1992, Moses wrote a letter to him in an accusatory tone: "I don't consider you my father anymore. It was a great feeling having a father, but you smashed that feeling and dream with a single act. I HOPE YOU ARE PROUD TO CRUSH YOUR SON'S DREAM."² How can we demarcate Moses' feeling of having a father from having a legal father who had adopted him after his adoptive mother, and from disowning his adoptive father based on Allen's failure of performing a good father figure? Allen's affair with Soon-Yi Previn and the alleged molestation of Dylan Farrow by Allen further proved, Farrow contended, that he was a misfit as a parent,³ which she used to accuse Allen of having the amoral relationship with Previn. As Previn and Allen got married in 1997, Previn and Farrow's relationship became harder to define. Was Previn an ungrateful and daring daughter who betrayed her adoptive

² Mia Farrow, *What Falls Away: A Memoir* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1997), 335.

³ See *Allen v. Farrow*, 197 A.D.2d 327 (1994) and 626 N.Y.S.2d 125 (N.Y. App. Div. 1995).

mother by marrying her mother's old partner? Was Farrow an unforgiving mother who could not wish the happiness of her adopted daughter? The general opinion was much more favorable for Farrow, who was heartbroken by her old partner and adopted daughter and was seeking to recover her maternal right to two adopted children from Allen. But, Farrow was not an impeccable parent either, when closely examined.

Before Farrow adopted Soon-Yi Previn from Korea, she had formed a very 'normal' and heteronormative family with André Previn with whom she had three children, though it was not the first marriage for both of them. Farrow and André Previn adopted two children from Vietnam in 1973 and 1976 and Soon-Yi Previn in 1978. To adopt Previn, they challenged the federal law that limited the number of transnational adoptees to two per family with the help of her friends who had a connection to Massachusetts Congressman Michael Harrington. As Congressman Harrington sponsored the bill that allowed Farrow to exceed the limit of transnational adoptees, she succeeded in adopting Previn. Farrow could adopt two more children in 1980 and 1985 as a single mother after getting divorced for the second time. Though a child was usually placed at the stable, well-equipped, heterosexually married couple's home, having been a known white female celebrity who already 'successfully' had adopted multiple children, she managed to adopt more children without much difficulty. Then, she conceived her fourth biological child with Allen in 1987. But her expansion of the family did not end there. She adopted five more children between 1992 and 2000. With ten adopted children and four biological children, Farrow was the late twentieth century Pearl S. Buck and Helen Doss. Farrow's family closely resembled "one international family" that Doss was proud of having built with children who came from different countries, had different skin colors, and had different physical capabilities in the mid-twentieth century. In the interview with *The Telegraph*, Farrow said, "I don't know if you know anything

about my family, but they are drawn from a large number of countries, and different cities ... Most of us are not related by blood, but by love, and the deepest commitment ... So when we hear of children, wherever they are – when there is suffering, they are members of our family.”⁴

While her adoptions were generally regarded as the deeds of her magnanimous motherly love for children in need, for which children’s race, gender, health condition, or a country of origin did not matter, her adoptions also demonstrate the racial, gender, and economic privilege that she had as a white, rich, female, celebrity parent. Although it is not a dominant perspective, there has been a good amount of criticism about her incessant “collection” or unquenchable “spree” of children. For instance, Justin Levine writes that Farrow used adoption as an emotional salve, calling her adoption history as an addiction.⁵ The countries that Farrow’s transnationally adopted children came from shows the trajectory of U.S. transnational adoption to a degree as well. Beginning with Daisy and Lark from Vietnam from where the U.S. airlifted thousands of children during the war, Farrow’s finding of the next two children, Soon-Yi and Moses, in Korea was not incidental. During the late 1970s and the early 1980s when these two were adopted, Korea was sending the biggest number of children than any other country to the U.S. since it had started its sending after the Korean War. Farrow’s choice returned to Vietnam, getting Tom and Frankie in 1992 and 1995. Thaddeus adopted from India in 1994 was the only child whose birth country was not intervened by the U.S. military force.

⁴ Harriet Alexander, “Mia Farrow Interview: My Children are All Related – By Love and Commitment,” *Telegraph*, November 16, 2013, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/centralafricanrepublic/10454023/Mia-Farrow-interview-My-children-are-all-related-by-love-and-commitment.html>.

⁵ Justin Levine, “The Woody Allen Controversy Reader: A Closer Look At Mia Farrow’s Adoption Addiction (Or, The Perils of Using Adoption as an Emotional Salve),” *Medium*, May 21, 2018, <https://medium.com/@levine2001/the-woody-allen-controversy-reader-a-closer-look-at-mia-farrows-adoption-addiction-or-the-426fbd614895>.

As much as Allen and Previn's relationship was not readily legible to the normative understanding of kinship and romantic relationship, the family that Farrow built through biological reproductions and adoptions was not ordinary in many aspects. Her familial ties tangled with multiple marriages, biological children with two different partners, transnationally, domestically, and transracially adopted children, and a non-marital partnership do not offer a simple definition of kinship. Where could the boundary of Previn's, Allen's, and Farrow's family be drawn, respectively? Are they *non-families* as Gingrich said? Or can we see them as families of a different kind that cannot be contained and understood within the heteronormative conceptualization of kinship?⁶ How does legal adoption constitute and terminate kinship among Allen, Farrow, and their children? How do we legally, morally, and culturally define kinship in their convoluted relationships?

The Allen, Previn, and Farrow trio and their non-normative familial relationship make us question how the U.S. culturally and legally understands kinship, and how adoption that constitutes non-traditional kinship outside blood ties and across race, culture, and nationality simultaneously transforms and consolidates normative kinship. Though Soon-Yi Previn has become a rather infamous adoptee, adoptees are highly celebrated figures in contemporary America. In the 1990s and the 2000s, numerous celebrity adoptive parents made adoption as something culturally familiar to American people. But until the early 1980s, adoption used to be kept hidden to make adoptive kinship as invisible as possible. The social stigma attached to illegitimate children and unwed mothers added the pressure to make adoption less visible. The

⁶ Kimberlee McKee has made a brilliant argument about the media's failure of recognizing their non-normative kinship as a valid kinship along with sexualization and infantilization of Soon-Yi Previn as an Asian adoptee by the media, Farrow's disapproval of Previn's articulation of her choice in contrast to her supportive engagement with another daughter's allegation of Allen's molestation. See Kimberly McKee, "'Let's Not Get Hysterical': Was He Ever Her Father?" *Feminist Formations* 30, no. 2 (2018): 147-74.

perception that adoptees were abandoned children also generated shame and silence about adoption. Thus, race matching had been practiced as the most critical policy, based upon the belief that adoptive kinship should resemble biological kinship as much as possible until the 1960s when the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War ideal of racially harmonious America, and the influx of Asian children shifted the culture of U.S. adoption. Less vigorous than race, but religion was another key consideration for social service professionals when they placed a child until the early twentieth century. Though adoption has been a fabric of American society even long before its legal inception in 1851, it is still regarded as less normal, though not abnormal, compared to a 'natural' family. But, at the same time, it has been saluted as a progressive and humanitarian act since the 1950s.

Observing the conflicting perspectives on adoption, my research had the following questions as a starting point: What transforms adoptees from unruly troublemakers, juvenile delinquents, and untamed outcasts who should be punished, discriminated, and marginalized to desirable, malleable, and adjustable subjects to love and nurture within a family? What social, legal, and cultural changes have risen in rendering adoptees as the desirable beings who deserve a blessing of a good home? What kind of children become the object of adoption when they are not 'natural' orphans? How is children's orphan status constructed when society decides who to help and manage? Who can become the adoptive parents of those children? What happens to children as well as their biological and adoptive families after children are adopted? When it is transnational, transracial adoption, how are differences within the adoptive family negotiated? Is contemporary adoptive kinship still a replica of a natural family? Or has adoption brought a noticeable shift in the U.S. conceptualization of kinship, race, class, and culture?

Among the varied elements constitutive of U.S. adoptive kinship, “The Familial Stranger” explores particularly how race informs the U.S. adoptive kinship formation. This dissertation challenges the popular historicization of U.S. adoption that presents race as a subordinate element, despite the constant interventions that race has made in shaping the U.S. adoptive kinship. By placing race at the center of its inquiry, this research questions how race conditions the cultural imagination and the legal and social institutionalization of adoption that collectively produce a certain kind of children as adoptable and a certain kind of parents as (in)eligible for parenthood. It thus problematizes the foundation of U.S. adoption that is modeled as the “as-if” kinship to move toward a more complex understanding of the way that race intersects with (non-)biological ties, ethnicity, class, and national belonging in the U.S. adoptive kinship formation. It particularly examines how the rhetoric of U.S. adoption has evolved from the rescue of the needy children to the celebration of a family with diversity over the last one and half centuries and how such evolution reflects and shapes the shift and consolidation of the U.S. understanding of race in its adoptive kinship formation.

From Strangers to Familial Strangers

Interrogating the connection between the construction of the orphan/adoptee as children to be saved, provided, and educated and the delegitimization and criminalization of those who are deemed undisciplined and undesirable as disqualifying parents, I contend that despite its philosophy to create the “as-if-begotten” family, U.S. adoption has been producing adoptees as the “familial strangers” with the promising potentials to be like ‘us’ but also with the indelible flaws coming from their biological and social origin.

Legal scholar Mark Strasser claims, “Adoption is a creature of statute. There is neither a fundamental right to adopt nor to be adopted and states have much discretion with respect to the contents of their adoption laws.”⁷ Yet, “[b]ecause adoption is the most institutionalized means of forming non-traditional families (other than divorce), and clearly is the one about which most people have the most positive attitudes,” as Adam Pertman notes, it has “instigate[d] structural and attitudinal changes that [affect] the whole range of complex families.”⁸ Indeed, the coterminous desire and social pressure for a ‘complete’ family that consists of a married couple and children have made adoption a staple part of American culture and experience. Therefore, kinship often has been insisted as if it is a universal right that everybody is entitled to. Though the percentage of the household with adopted children is small compared to other types of households,⁹ adoptive kinship thus has become a critical site where the U.S. has struggled to define what the American family is and who can be part of the American family, when a family member who is not related by blood can be created by law.

As a legal method of creating legitimate kinship, however, adoption always has been straddled between two contradictory ideas. One is championing the blood, which has made adoptive kinship only the second-best kind of kinship. Historian and women’s studies scholar Julie Berebitsky points out that the U.S. has striven “to create adoptive families that not only mirrored biological ones but also reflected an idealized version of them.”¹⁰ The idealized version of the family that adoption emulates is modeled after the heterosexual, middle-class, white,

⁷ Mark Strasser, "Conscience Clauses and the Placement of Children," *Utah Law Review* (2013): 985.

⁸ Adam Pertman, *Adoption Nation: How the Adoption Revolution Is Transforming America* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 14.

⁹ According to the Census 2010, among 64.8 million children, 2 percent are adopted children, 4 percent are stepchildren, and the rest 93 percent are biological children. See Rose M. Kreider, and Daphne A. Lofquist, “Adopted Children and Stepchildren: 2010,” *Census 2010 Special Reports* (CENSR-6RV), U.S. Census Bureau, April 2014, 4.

¹⁰ Julie Berebitsky, *Like Our Very Own: Adoption and the Changing Culture of Motherhood, 1851-1950* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 129.

nuclear family. In that sense, adoption, rather than radicalizing the U.S. kinship, has striven to be a proximal reproduction of the heteronormative kinship, and consequently has normalized such kinship as ‘natural.’ On the other hand, there is a cultural narrative that familial love of adoptive kinship can overcome any barriers, whether it is an absence of a biological tie or racial and cultural differences. Thus, an adoptive family is not just as good as a ‘natural’ family, but better since adoptive kinship brings a progressive change to society alleviating racial and class conflicts and creates a familial community that anybody can belong to, based on love. Not only does it supplement an ‘incomplete’ kinship by matching parents who want a child with a child who needs a permanent home, and removing the burden of parenting from people who cannot afford the responsibility, but adoptive kinship presents the more progressive, inclusive, and richer kinship. The history of U.S. adoption has been a constant conversation between these two perspectives.

Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon write that “cultural understandings of kinship are shaped by – and in turn, contribute to the shaping of – the political dynamics of national and transnational identities, the economic movements of labour and capital, the cosmologies of religion, the cultural hierarchies of race, gender, and species taxonomies, and the epistemologies of science, medicine and technology.”¹¹ In short, “[a]doption has been changing America as much as America has been continuously changing its adoption.”¹² As the cultural and social institution, the way adoption is shaped and practiced demonstrates how the U.S. society understands its kinship. In that sense, U.S. adoption has been developed as an exclusive, rather than inclusive, institution that allows kinship only among certain kinds of people.

¹¹ Sarah Franklin, and Susan McKinnon, eds. *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 9.

¹² Pertman, 4.

“Orphans” are not uncommon figures in the American cultural representation that “abounds with orphaned, homeless, destitute, or neglected children.”¹³ Their peculiarity comes from the fact that they lack what everyone else has by default in their life – the family. Whether their parents perished, abandoned them out of poverty or illness, or disappeared, children left without parents to love and care for them are viewed as lacking something critical in their life. But, not all adoptees are orphans as much as not all orphans are adoptees. This means that some children are deemed desirable and thus adoptable while other children are not. The question of who the adoptable children are is a question about how they become suitable for adoption. James Marten puts, “as Americans tried to determine what it means to be an American, they also wondered what it meant to be an American *child*.”¹⁴ In the same vein, Rachel Rain Winslow pinpoints that “orphans” are rarely, if not never, “free” subjects but subjects that are constructed by their various biological, social, and cultural affiliations. She argues, thus, “the term orphan has also changed to reflect different standards in racialized citizenship, social policy, and attitudes toward poor parents over the course of the twentieth century.”¹⁵ Sharing the view, Laura Briggs describes that adoption is the system that transforms children of poor people into productive members of the society by putting them into (white) middle-class homes.¹⁶ In a positive light, adoption is the social service that provides love and home for children in need. On the other hand, it is the system that penalizes and disciplines poor people for being less

¹³ Carol J. Singley, *Adopting America: Childhood, Kinship, and National Identity in Literature* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

¹⁴ James Marten, “Introduction,” in *Children and Youth in a New Nation*, edited by James Marten (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 5.

¹⁵ Rachel Rains Winslow, *The Best Possible Immigrants: International Adoption and the American Family*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 13.

¹⁶ Laura Briggs, “Orphaning the Children of Welfare: “Crack Babies,” Race, and Adoption Reform,” 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), 76.

productive members of society and less successful parents. Here, “poor” means more than economic poverty. I argue that “poor” people’s poverty, which is deemed as a token of their failure as community members, is criminalized and ultimately racialized, as it did with children of the urban poor in the late nineteenth century, waifs of war-stricken countries in the mid-twentieth century onward, and the children of black people throughout the last century.

Under such conceptualization, children in need are readily transformable to orphans, a pre-step to become adopted by another set of parents who are better than birth parents. Though who to be helped for which reason has been changing over time, a basic narrative has stayed similar. In that narrative, adoptees are imagined and perceived as strangers who come with differences from ‘us’ and insufficiency to be filled with the newly constituted kinship. Those differences and deficiency give children an entry qualification to be part of a new adoptive family, but I problematize that those differences and deficiency are sustained through racialization, making adoptees as familiar strangers within, as far as adoptive kinship is constituted to become like the model biological kinship that is white and heteronormative. Throughout its various attempt to normalize the differences, I argue that U.S. adoption has racialized adoptees by producing them as familial strangers whose differences that alienate and racialize them within a family become the essential elements in constituting their entry to the adoptive kinship.

Race and the Envisioning of the American Family

Although the multi-racial, multi-cultural adoptive family has become a celebratory icon of contemporary America’s diversity and inclusion that collapse many previous barriers in kinship, the fact that such a family gets a spotlight bespeaks of its newness and rarity in the

cultural and racial geography of U.S. kinship. With an increase of transracial adoption and transnational adoption that is more likely to be transracial than not, it is easy to forget how abnormal race-crossing or race-mixing of adoptive kinship is regardless of the long period that kinship in the U.S. has been transracial, from Native Americans' adoption of a white colonial settler to mixed-race children born between a slave owner white father and an enslaved African American mother. In its attempt to duplicate a biologically tied family as much as possible, race-matching was essential in constituting an adoptive family. When adoption was synonymous with white people's adoption of white children until the early 1960s, however, race-matching was another way of securing the exclusion of non-white people, as adoptees, adoptive parents, and biological parents, in the U.S. adoption practice. But either race-matching before the 1960s under the motto of creating a harmonious family, or the shift to the ideal of colorblindness after that, race always has been one of the most defining factors in the formation of U.S. adoptive kinship. Pointing out that the world of adoption is "largely peopled by prospective white parents in search of white children," Elizabeth Bartholet has argued that U.S. adoption is a "race-conscious quest."¹⁷ I add to that that it is a still race-conscious quest either when white adopters seek non-white children, or non-white adopters are not expected to desire and own a white child.

In thinking race as the central element in understanding the U.S. adoptive kinship, I put a distance from biological essentialism that associates race with certain physical, cultural, or intellectual characteristics as innate, fixed, and natural. If race-matching in the past was insisted out of the injunction to keep the racial order, it has been preferred after the 1960s, if not insisted any longer, for the creation of a visibly, that is, racially homogenous family. But it is

¹⁷ Elizabeth Bartholet, *Family Bonds: Adoption and the Politics of Parenting* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 113. See also Bartholet, "Where Do Black Children Belong? The Politics of Race Matching in Adoption," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 139 (1991): 1249.

underscored by biological essentialism that believes that a mono-racial family is more natural and more manageable with its members sharing the same phenotype. I suggest that U.S. adoption's insistence on race matching was conditioned by the fear of mixing race even when a child is not a biological offspring of transracial intimacy. As Cynthia Callahan states, "Transracial adoption is, after all, a kind of miscegenation, undertaken without sexual intercourse but accomplishing a mixing of races," the ideal of race-matching in forming an adoptive family reveals a fear of miscegenation of a different kind.¹⁸

I also caution against cultural essentialism. When transracial and transnational adoption emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, adoptees were absorbed into the new family through assimilation and acculturation. However, when there were obvious racial and cultural differences between adoptees of color or adoptees from another country who also were more likely to be non-white and their white American adoptive parents, assimilation and acculturation meant that adoptees had to become white American without being white. Americanization could be idealized and normalized in the U.S. adoptive family, because becoming "American" was believed to be a cultural act, which effectively obliterated the racial, economic, political, and cultural power hierarchies between the two parties. By adopting and sharing American values, beliefs, and practices, adoptive family members could belong to one group that was culturally defined, even when there were other salient differences such as race.

Colorblindness that has driven transracial adoption, both domestic and transnational, employs the cultural essentialist approach. However, colorblindness is not free from racial thinking while it appears to erase race deliberately. Race fundamentally conditions people's life in the U.S. whether adoption participants try not to see race or not. Race of adoptees of color

¹⁸ Cynthia Callahan, *Kin of Another Kind: Transracial Adoption in America Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 135.

could be unseen only when white people are willing to not see it, which testifies that adoptees of color are still racialized. The intentional not-seeing of race is also inseparable from white privileges that allow whites not to acquire racial literacy or to minimize the effect of the racially structured society. Arguing that “contemporary racial inequality is reproduced through “new racism” practices that are subtle, institutional, and apparently non-racial,” Eduardo Bonilla-Silva labels such racial ideology as colorblind racism.¹⁹

Building upon Bonilla-Silva’s notion, I also critique multiculturalism. It may ‘see’ the cultural, racial, and many other differences that transnational, transracial adoptees carry, but it fails at properly acknowledging the socio-political significance of those differences. I argue that multiculturalism racializes adoptees’ cultural heritage in the name of culture keeping, especially when they are transnational adoptees of color, as if their racial body is naturally and inseparably affiliated with their birth ethnicity. The celebration of multiculturalism in conjunction with transnational, transracial adoption is another white act, as (non-white) ethnicity is naturally expected from people of color. Thus, the transnational transracial adoptive kinship becomes the cultural, familial “white habitus” that Bonilla-Silva speaks. It is a white habitus where “a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that *conditions* and *creates* white’ racial tastes, perceptions, feelings and emotions and their views on racial matter” happens.²⁰ In the era of today’s multiculturalism, race is articulated through culture without being explicitly mentioned, while culture is interpreted and understood on racial terms. Transnational transracial adoption is the productive site to interrogate how multiculturalism that buttresses the contemporary transnational transracial adoption has been failing at reckoning and resolving the “race problem”

¹⁹ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 2-3.

²⁰ Bonilla-Silva, 104.

within transnational, transracial adoptive families. If the issue of colorblindness is not seeing the racial body of adoptees, thus ignoring the lived experience of adoptees as people of color, the issue of multiculturalism is seeing adoptees' racial body with an expectation that they would have an (additional) ethnic identity that matches with their racial body. Regarding that both are white-centered perspectives that racialize adoptees of color, it sustains the racialization of adoptees in the way that appears non-racial.

Race is a social construct. But it also has materiality. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant remind us, "race as an unstable and "decentered" complex of social meanings constantly [is] transformed by political struggle."²¹ But it also has a "changing same" quality at its core as Bonilla-Silva points out. His theorization of race is not to deny the changing nature of race as a socially constructed category, but to highlight the way that race functions as a "social real category" that racializes people such as "black" and "white."²² I find his notion of race useful to understand the transgressive presence of adoptees who are defined by the black and white racial dichotomy but also disrupt the binary racial thinking. Particularly the presence of transnational adoptees of color within a white household demands the reconfiguration of kinship, race, and culture. As seen the historical shift of the way that Asian adoptees are imagined from detestable, unnaturalizable savage foreigners to malleable, tolerable, and interesting future model minority, "current adoption practices do not merely fit into what is historically given, but in themselves produces race," as "constructions of race and culture are contingent processes that are historically open-ended."²³ This new race (or new racism) does not completely substitute the

²¹ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 54.

²² Bonilla-Silva, 8-9.

²³ Ann Anagnost, "Scenes of Misrecognition: Maternal Citizenship in the Age of Transnational Adoption," *Positions* 8, no. 2 (2000): 391.

previous version. Yet, it keeps provoking “new ways of imagining race, kinship, and culture” of adoptive kinship and beyond.²⁴ As Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin brilliantly put, adoptees’ lives as outsiders within are the acts of transgression.²⁵

With these considerations, my work is in the conversation with critical adoption scholars whose research examines how transnational adoptees of color, particularly Asian adoptees, are situated within the racial thinking of the U.S. in understanding their transracial adoption with the white adoptive family but at the same time how their transgressive presence and border-crossing disrupt and redefine the boundary of kinship, race, and culture. Over the last decade, many younger adoption studies scholars have approached the topic of adoption differently from the scholars of the previous generation. Their purview is much more transnational, transracial, and adoptee-centered. Adult adoptee scholars’ contribution has been particularly decisive in shifting the discourse of the field. My approach is aligned with those junior scholars, while I hold the position of an outsider in the adoption community. The prominent presence of Korean adoptees in the U.S. adoptee population and the historical development of U.S. transnational adoption that was literally contoured by the U.S.-Korea adoption make me centralize Korean adoptees in my discussion to a degree. Yet, my research also attempts to study the orphans/adoptee whose racial otherness is not necessarily constituted by the non-white skin color. My work that looks into the late nineteenth century, arguing the way that orphans were constructed as the racialized other, thus expands the temporal frame to think the production of adoptees as the racial other and the role of race in the U.S. adoptive kinship formation.

²⁴ Toby Alice Volkman, “Embodying Chinese Culture,” in *Cultures of Transnational Adoption*, edited by Toby Alice Volkman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 81.

²⁵ Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin, “Introduction,” 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), 5.

Summary of Chapters

“The Familial Stranger” makes an interdisciplinary approach that combines literary, historical, and cultural studies. The literary texts selected for this dissertation are not necessarily orphan- or adoptee-centric. Rather, the chapters of this work read the less obvious cultural representation of children who are perceived as orphaned children by the social and legal norms to study how their legibility as the orphan/adoptee is inscribed and what role race plays in the inscription of children as the orphan/adoptee. For that end, this project pays attention to various factors surrounding the cultural representation of the orphan/adoptee, such as legislation regarding adoption, statistical data, legal cases, adoption agencies’ policy and customary practice, and adoption participants’ demands and influence on adoption procedures and structures, which conditions the way that the orphan/adoptee is constructed as the racial other in the respective period that the chapters studies.

Chapter 1, “Civilizing the Savage: The Production of Orphans and the Placement of Adoptees in the Late Nineteenth-century U.S.,” examines how the orphan/adoptee was constructed as the racial other in the reconceptualization of children and childhood and the formation of the modern adoption in the late nineteenth century. Situating Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in the historical context of the development of the mass placement of needy and unruly children as a way of social work and social reform, this chapter investigates the competing legal, social, and cultural understanding and practice in which the orphan/adoptee was perceived simultaneously as the priceless, dependent subjects for familial love and as the racialized subjects requiring the civilizing education and home.

Chapter 2, “Saving ‘Our’ Children: Mixed-race Alien Children and the Making of the U.S. Transnational Kinship” turns to U.S. transnational adoption in the 1950s and the 1960s to explore the role that mixed-race children fathered by the U.S military personnel and mothered by Korean women played in the birth of the U.S.-Korea transnational adoption. Focusing on how transnational adoption was developed as a solution to the “GI baby problem,” this chapter interrogates the way that mixed-raced children simultaneously unsettled and consolidated the boundary of kinship and the color line of the mid-twentieth century U.S., where the reality of racial segregation and anti-miscegenation laws were competing with the Cold War ideal of a racially harmonious America. With that interest, “Saving “Our” Children” traces the hypervisible but ghostly presence of mixed-raced children in Heinz Insu Fenkl’s *Memories of My Ghost Brother* and Chang-rae Lee’s *A Gesture Life*.

Chapter 3, “The Dream of A ‘Rainbow’ Family: U.S. Transnational Transracial Adoption and Multiculturalism,” studies U.S. transnational transracial adoption in the post-1970s period. Through the comparative study of domestic and transnational transracial adoption and of transnational monoracial and transracial adoption, this chapter investigates the varied ways that racial and cultural differences are negotiated within different transnational, transracial adoptive families. Focusing on how Asianness and Asian Americanness play out in the transnational transracial adoptive family relationship both as racial and cultural differences, this chapter examines the politics of multiculturalism in the U.S. transnational transracial adoption kinship with Jane Jin Kaisen’s art project *Loving Belinda*.

A Note on Terminology

To stress upon the historical construction of children to *orphans* as a pre-step to transform them into children available for adoption, *orphans* in this dissertation mean more than parentless or abandoned children, and *the orphan/adoptee* is used both together and separately to accentuate the connectedness of their making as well as to distinguish the legal process of such making. *Children* are used when there is a need to indicate minor children neutrally, instead of orphans or adoptees. However, this word choice has been made with the awareness that adoptees are often infantilized in the adoption discourse without due recognition that they do not stay as children forever. Thus, where appropriate, another term, *adult adoptees*, is used referring to adoptees who are not minor children.

There is more than a single principal term in English that calls a legal transfer of a child who is born in one country to another set of parents who are citizens of another country. *International*, *intercountry*, and *transnational* adoption are used interchangeably. Similarly, *interracial* adoption and *transracial* adoption are being used interchangeably to refer to adoption of a child of a certain race by parents whose race is (believed to be) different. *International*, along with *interracial*, is the most common term in the popular adoption discourse, while *intercountry* was dominantly used until the 1980s. *Intercountry* is still actively used particularly in the legal field. Many governmental organizations such as the U.S. Department of State and the United Nations use *intercountry* adoption as their vocabulary.

While the three terms are being used interchangeably without conflict with each other, this dissertation has chosen to use *transnational* and *transracial* for two reasons. First, while it acknowledges that U.S. adoption has developed into a highly institutionalized practice ever since its legal inception and the federal government holds a cardinal authority regarding immigration and naturalization of foreign children, transnational adoption, like any other adoption, does not

occur between definite two parties who claim possession over a child. Like the examples of mixed-race children born between U.S. servicemen and local foreign women and adult adoptees without citizenship illustrate, the familial, racial, cultural, and national belonging of certain children and adoptees are sometimes unsettling and variable. To highlight the move of children is not simply ‘between’ two countries or ‘from’ one country ‘to’ another but also ‘across’ and ‘beyond’ a pre-given, fixed nationality and national borders, this dissertation prefers using transnational.²⁶ But this use is not necessarily to critique the history and significance of other terms. The second reason is much simpler: *transnational* is being used increasingly in the most recent scholarship by critical adoption studies scholars, while it is not a dominant term and the other two terms are actively used. *Transracial* has been adopted to connote the indeterminate and disputable nature of race as well as to phrase transnational adoption that is transracial as *transnational transracial* adoption.

Unless it is noted differently, *Korea* is used to indicate the Republic of Korea, a.k.a. South Korea. It is not to obliterate the existence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a.k.a. North Korea, in the adoption discourse, but North Korea has never participated in transnational adoption since its foundation in 1948, while its huge youth population who suffer from malnutrition or grow without having sufficient parental care is not a secret to the international society. Especially when the severe famine that is known as “the March of Suffering” devastated North Korea in the mid-1990s, the unprecedented number of young children roamed on the street for begging, died of starvation, and escaped to nearby Chinese border towns. To address the issue of orphaned and stateless North Korean children, the Obama

²⁶ Arissa Oh, on the other hand, uses *international* since she believes that the other two terms less sufficiently capture the cross-border and interracial nature of adoption between countries whose power relations are unequal and inseparable from imperialist histories. In that regard, my perspective is not different from hers while our preference of the term differs. See Oh, 15-16.

administration passed the North Korean Child Welfare Act in 2012. Though it declares that it is to “facilitat[e] immediate protection for those living outside North Korea through family reunification or, if appropriate and eligible in individual cases, domestic or international adoption,” this Act was the first step to make the Congress build a committee who could develop a strategy and a regular report to help North Korean children in need than to enact an instant action.²⁷ Official action to transnationally adopt stateless North Korean youth living outside North Korea has not been taken yet. With the change of the Presidency and the altered relation between the U.S. and North Korea, the U.S. Congress is not working on this issue currently. With this understanding, North Korea’s adoption practice and policy are not the subjects of this dissertation’s discussion when it comes to transnational adoption. Having said so, in this dissertation *Korea* refers to South Korea, except where noted differently.

²⁷ See Sec. 2 (2) in U.S. Congress, Public Law 112-264, “H.R. 1464 - North Korean Child Welfare Act of 2012,” January 14, 2013, <https://www.congress.gov/112/plaws/publ264/PLAW-112publ264.pdf>.

Chapter 1 – Civilizing the Savage:

The Production of Orphans and the Placement of Adoptees in the Late Nineteenth-century U.S.

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* of 1884 has been not only acclaimed across generations as one of the American literature classics but also has been studied extensively. Frequently researched topics of this novel include the problem of race and slavery, the question of morality and conscience, and Huckleberry Finn as a character of an American hero, an anti-heroic social outcast, and Twain's alter-ego. However, among the numerous and diverse studies of this popular text, there has been little interest in delving into Huck's position as an adoptee.

Huckleberry Finn, as a protagonist and a narrator, opens the book by informing the reader about his whereabouts after the famous 'adventures' happened in the previous book, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. As a result of the adventures led by his pal Tom Sawyer, Huck becomes a ward of multiple guardians over time. There are Widow Douglas and Judge Thatcher at the beginning of *Huckleberry Finn* and the Phelps at the end of the story as those who assume more or less conventional guardianship over Huck. He also stays with many other adults who try to lend an air of authority and care to him such as Colonel Grangerford, the Wilks as well as the duke and the king, over his journey, even if their respective qualifications and roles are debatable. By and large, the novel begins with the update on Huck's new life under the custodianship of Widow Douglas as her "son" and ends with the prospect that the Phelps couple intends to adopt him.²⁸ On the run or not, therefore, Huck constantly becomes a subject of the

²⁸ "The widow Douglas, she took me for her son..." See Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism*, edited by Thomas Cooley. 3rd ed. (Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton, 1999) 13.

(possibility of) new kinship through custody and adoption in this book's narrative. This makes us question who becomes the subject to the familial care like adoption and what makes a child eligible for a new home and a good family.

Huck is not a literal orphan, however, when he is 'adopted.' Huck's father, Pap Finn, is not only alive, but the whole town knows his existence even though he is usually not around. Considered as a *virtual* orphan regardless of the existence of his birth parent, Huck is 'adopted' by a reputedly benevolent guardian, Widow Douglas. Her 'adoption' of Huck is customary than formal, and it is not legally finalized in the story. But, adopting a child without completing it by law was commonplace in the 1830s or 1840s St. Petersburg, a Mississippi river town in Missouri where Huck's adventure begins, as well as in the 1870s and 1880s Hannibal, Missouri that inspired Mark Twain to picture St. Petersburg of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. Considering that the very first modern adoption statute in the U.S. was legislated in 1851 in Massachusetts²⁹ and legal adoption was optional than mandated until much after the post-WWI period, whether Huck's adoption is legally contrived or not, thus, is not a focal point of this chapter's interest.

Rather, by examining the literary figuration of Huck as an orphan/adoptee character who is subject to a series of custody and adoption in the context of the U.S. adoption history, this chapter investigates the way that Huck is transformed from a 'savage' juvenile delinquent to an orphan child, which confirms his 'adoptability' based upon his constructed orphan status, and the way that he is perceived and produced as a racialized child, differentiated from the white boy child Tom Sawyer, for being a different kind of orphan/adoptee. If we read "race" as a metaphor

²⁹ There were some legislations regarding adoption prior to 1851; however, Massachusetts' Act to Provide for the Adoption of the Children of 1851 is considered as the very first U.S. 'modern' adoption law that legislated adoption as a social and legal act for a child's welfare than for a benefactor's interest.

of difference in the way that Henry Louis Gates Jr. defines race as the ultimate trope of difference that is interpreted arbitrarily and loosely but irreducibly, we can think Huck's sticky difference persisted through the narrative as the racially inscribed difference.³⁰ The racial connotations surrounding his orphan status and later adoptee status in the texts, continuously place a distance not only between Huck and his community but also between Huck and his adoptive family. His racialized status as a white boy *of a different hue* works as a basis to rationalize why he must be "civilized" through adoption to become one of 'them.' And yet, the same reason with which he could obtain his adoptability makes his full membership, either familial or communal, impossible, since it accentuates his other-within being, which I name as "familial strangers."

This chapter first examines the transforming understandings of children and childhood in the nineteenth century to investigate the legal and cultural context from which the orphan/adoptee emerged as dependent subjects to be protected and guided, instead of instrumental subjects used for their economic potential. This chapter places the mass placement of children of the orphan trains ran by the Children Aid's Society (CAS) at the center of the U.S. modern adoption's inception and formation. The U.S. modern adoption that was popularized in the form of the mass placement by the CAS' orphan trains consolidated the belief that orphans had better be "saved" even at the expense of separation from their biological kin, if the society could bestow them with a "better" alternative: adoptive kinship. The mass relocation and adoption of "orphans" beginning in the mid-nineteenth century show the way that the U.S. public invested in and handled destitute children through the privatization of them through adoptive kinship. This social experiment was the complicated outcome straddled over the humanitarian

³⁰ See Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Editor's Introduction: Writing "Race" and the Difference It Makes," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 1-20.

philanthropy towards the unfortunate children, the colonial notion of “civilizing” the barbaric urban urchins, the urgency of the new social welfare program to manage the swelling population of the poor, and the emerging notion about the impact of environment and heredity attributed to lower-class people and immigrants as well as people of color. The legislation of adoption laws beginning in the mid-nineteenth century both reflected and coalesced the changing notion of childhood, parental rights, orphans, and kinship.

By reading an orphan like Huck as a precursor of the modern adoptee, this chapter theorizes the orphan/adoptee as a modern child figure that entered public discourse as a social problem but disappeared by being absorbed into a private sphere. The orphan/adoptee emerged into the public realm as a new object of both sentiment and fear, which made them placed into a private home to be managed through adoptive kinship. This chapter sees that this process was interlocked with the racializing rhetoric that structured the orphan/adoptee as racial others within a family as well as in the U.S. society. While the juridical discourse “formulates the child as raceless (i.e. white) and middle class” as Annette Ruth Appell writes,³¹ the conflicting expectation and the lived experience of placed out children at a new home alluded to their biological and environmental origin different from the middle-class children, which I interpret has the effect of racializing children. The orphan/adoptee could be located at home securely and successfully through de-racialization that could produce them as potential ‘us,’ but concurrently they became (re-)racialized as those who could not be wholly one of ‘us’ once they were brought inside. This chapter argues that modern adoptees could become legally and culturally

³¹ Annette Ruth Appelle, “The Prepolitical Child of Child-Centered Jurisprudence,” in *The Children’s Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities*, edited by Anna Mae Duane (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 30.

conceivable figures in the U.S. public discourse, specifically due to their biologically, that is racially, construed difference from their adoptive family based upon the “as-if” kinship.

In her study of the legal foundation and cultural interpretations of U.S. adoption, anthropologist Judith Modell points out the legal axiom of “substitutability,” the foundational philosophy that U.S. adoption is built upon, as its epistemological and structural limit. As far as the U.S. adoption system strives to reproduce a ‘natural’ family through a “contractual arrangement” in its adoptive family formation, its adoptive kinship cannot but be at best an imitation of biological kinship.³² In its ideal to be “just like” a biological family by a complete legal replacement of one relationship by another, the U.S. adoptive kinship posits “the child as-if-begotten[,] the parents as-if-genealogical” and the birth parents “as-if-childless.”³³ “The paradoxes” of adoptive kinship, however, “entailed in thoroughly resting a contracted upon a blood bond, a legal upon a biological relationship, and “culture” upon “nature.”³⁴ This mechanism is premised upon “a powerful faith in environmental influences; an adopted child can learn to resemble his or her [adoptive] parents, to grow up in their image” and therefore possibly would become “indistinguishable from anyone else in the family.”³⁵ Suitable education and care that would not have been possible under biological parents could “minimiz[e] the threat of “bad blood”” in establishing the as-if permanency and continuity of one’s genealogy through adoption.³⁶ Yet, such ideation also implies that the “[e]mphasis in adoption law on terms of consent, on grounds for termination, and on the permanence of contract reveals a suspicion that the legal transfer does not erode the claims of nature.”³⁷

³² Judith S. Modell, *Kinship with Strangers: Adoption and Interpretations of Kinship in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 2.

³³ Modell, 225.

³⁴ Modell, 4-5.

³⁵ Modell, 24.

³⁶ Modell, 24.

³⁷ Modell, 28.

This chapter looks into the issue of “the threat of “bad blood”” in the U.S. adoptive kinship production of “familial strangers.” To put it specifically, it seeks to inquire how the tenacious resonance of “bad blood” as both a metaphor of socio-cultural difference and a biological element that stands for race underpins U.S. adoption and its conceptualization of kinship. Exploring the question of “the threat of bad blood” as a race problem, this chapter is in conversation with American literature scholar Mark Jerng who “theoriz[es] race as something inherent to the formulation of adoption itself.”³⁸ Jerng criticizes that a typical historicization of U.S. adoption “facilitate[s] a grand narrative of racial integration and the telos of racial equality,” which makes race exterior to the question of adoption, while race has played an essential role in the conceptualization and institutionalization of U.S. adoption.³⁹ Pointing out the problem that “notions of adoption based on substitution tended to detach racial identity from familial identity,” Jerng asserts the importance of thinking how the subjects like transracial adoptees emerge at the juncture of race, kinship, and nation.⁴⁰

Drawing from this understanding, this chapter explores how U.S. adoption, despite its legislation that shapes adoptees as “as-if” kin, always already configured adoptees as others whose otherness was postulated upon their racial otherness. The not-yet-definable and thus non-representational element in the figure of the modern adoptee reflects the ghostly anxiety about adoption kinship as a lesser and insecure kind compared to normative ‘natural’ kinship. Adoption may “reform, rehabilitate, and educate” the needy children, and yet the anxiety of their ‘bad’ heredity persists in the form of concerns about the indelible effect of their social and biological

³⁸ Modell, xl.

³⁹ Mark C. Jerng, *Claiming Others: Transracial Adoption and National Belonging* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xxxiii.

⁴⁰ Jerng, xx.

origin and the “inferior nature of adoption”⁴¹ On that note, this chapter studies how the emergence of a figure of the orphan/adoptee in the late nineteenth-century literary work like *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* was predicated on the construction of adoptees with implicit racial insinuations, which produced them as racialized figures for being orphans/adoptees, long before transracial adoption became not just a conceivable idea after the 1920s but a less exceptional practice for the American public after the late 1960s. While the question of a child’s race in adoption became a controversial point of reference in the twentieth century, this chapter interrogates the latent racial anxiety that was silently accompanying adoption in the late nineteenth century. Though adoption had been a longstanding custom since the colonial time in the U.S., the adoption became a new cultural and social act with its gradual institutionalization and the development of placing out that involved the massive transplantation of children across the nation in the late nineteenth century. This chapter examines how adoption that transfigures a person outside one’s biological relationship into kin is construing the orphan/adoptee as the potential and virtual racial other whose dependency and otherness become their condition for a new kinship.

The New Conceptualization of Children and Childhood

Adoption as the communal care of children in need had been practiced since the colonial time in the U.S. When a child’s biological parents died, the community first and foremost had to decide who would take in an orphaned child.⁴² Relatives were the first choice, but newly

⁴¹ E. Wayne Carp, *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 4, 9.

⁴² The life expectancy in the 17th century colonial America ranged between mid-twenty to mid-thirty. Even in New England where people had a higher life expectancy than other colonial states, nearly 40 percent of people died before reaching their adulthood. This indicates that a high percentage of parents did not see their children grow into adolescence and as many as one out of two children spent part of one’s childhood in the household of a stepfather or other guardians. See Michael Haines’ “Fertility and Mortality in the United States.” *EH.Net*

migrated settlers did not have a network of kin to rely upon. The historian Lois Green Carr explains that the arrangement of child-rearing responsibility in the colonial period was more out of concern to protect orphaned children's inheritance with a designated guardian than to take care of their sensibility.⁴³ While religious and charitable organizations led the effort to take care of children in need, the legal need to define orphaned children's belonging as an heir developed the orphans' court that "ha[d] jurisdiction of the estates and persons of orphans."⁴⁴ Nancy Zey, in her study of the government's handling of orphaned minors in the Southwest borderlands in the 18th century, explains that placing out needy children arranged by the county courts in the Mississippi Territory did not require takers of children to assume the parental roles. The court as the "overseers of the poor" and "the administration center for orphans and indigent minors" located children where they were needed as apprentices or extra hands for farming or housekeeping.⁴⁵ These examples show that the nation had assumed limited but influential roles in the matter of orphans even before the legislation of adoption laws beginning in 1851. To use the words of historian Marily Irvin Holt, the indenture of minors became public as well as private relief.⁴⁶ But its fundamental interest always did not lie in the well-being of children.

Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples, March 19, 2008. <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/fertility-and-mortality-in-the-united-states/> for detailed statistics.

⁴³ Lois Green Carr, "Orphans' Court," in *Childhood in America*, edited by Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 352-356. In the legal perspective centering the right to inheritance, children were often considered as orphans when their fathers died, even when their mothers were still living. In that regard, a designated guardian tended to be male for the reason that it was highly likely that a widow would get married again.

⁴⁴ John Bouvier, "Orphans' Court," *A Law Dictionary Adapted to the Constitution and Laws of the United States of America and of the Several States of the American Union*, rev. 6th ed. (The Constitution Society, 1856; HTML reprint), https://www.constitution.org/bouv/bouvier_o.htm.

⁴⁵ Nancy Zey, "Children of the Public: Poor and Orphaned Minors in the Southwest Borderlands," in *Children and Youth in a New Nation*, edited by Marten, James (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 173-189.

⁴⁶ Marilyn Irvin Holt, *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 25.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, however, the new kind of social welfare programs for orphaned children started to appear with the emergence of a new kind of orphans. Cities that were experiencing the uncontrollable density and the poor living condition with the increasing number of newly migrated people were the centers of such concerns. Between 1860 and 1890 about 10 million people immigrated to the U.S., and between 1890 and 1920 an additional 15 million came. With the mass migration in the unprecedented scale, the U.S. population jumped from 2,244,602 in 1850 to 4,138,697 in 1860 to 9,249,547 in 1890 to 13,515,886 in 1910. With such an exploding influx, the percentage of foreign-born people in the U.S. total population rose from 9.7 percent in 1850 to 13.2 percent in 1860 to 14.8 percent in 1890 and 14.7 percent in 1910.⁴⁷ The number of immigrants per one hundred U.S. residents also rose from 7.1 people in the 1860s to 10.5 in the 1880s to 11.6 in the 1900s.⁴⁸ As much as 40 to 50 percent of them settled in the northeast region, while 19.8 percent of the U.S. population lived in urban areas in 1860, the number grew to 35.1 percent in 1890 and 45.6 percent in 1910.⁴⁹ Amidst the rapid industrialization and urbanization, and the swelling population and changing demographics, the number of under-cared children also grew. For instance, writer Andrea Warren describes how crowded New York city was with “the parentless, abandoned, abused” children “due to poverty, illness, death of a spouse,” and “children on street, outcast, newsboys,

⁴⁷ See Table 2, Campbell J. Gibson, and Emily Lennon, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-born Population of the United States: 1850-1990," U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, February 1999, last modified May 21, 2012, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/twps0029.html>.

⁴⁸ See Table 14, “Foreign-Born Population by Historical Section and Subsection of the United States: 1850 to 1990” of Gibson and Lennon.

⁴⁹ According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, places were regarded as ‘urban’ when its population was over 8,000 in 1880, 4000 in 1890, and 2,500 in 1900. The definition of ‘urban’ changed over time reflecting the changes of the society. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, “Urban and Rural Areas,” last modified December 17, 2019, https://www.census.gov/history/www/programs/geography/urban_and_rural_areas.html and Table 1 “Urban and Rural Population: 1900 to 1990,” Oct. 1995, <https://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/urpop0090.txt>.

bootblacks, young peddlers, pickpockets, petty thieves, child beggars, flower seller.”⁵⁰ “Soon the word orphan became expanded in its significations to include half-orphans, and later, to embrace destitute children having both parents living, many of whom were in a condition yet more unfortunate than orphanage.”⁵¹ The proliferation of such minors began to be recognized as a public problem.

While those children’s ways of living in cities were new, however, they were not the first group of unfortunate children whom the U.S. had seen. Besides the forced labor and violence that enslaved children had to experience, until the mid-nineteenth century, children were not treated much differently from adults. It was in 1836 when the first law regarding child labor was passed in Massachusetts, which required children laborers under the age of fifteen to attend school at least three months a year.⁵² The *Fletcher v. People* in 1869 was the very first court case that dealt with child abuse in the U.S.⁵³ This history tells that the children’s welfare was gradually becoming the social issue with the new conception of children as a distinct group different from adults over the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century’s dominant understanding, childhood, legally and culturally, was not recognized as a specific period of age nor as a distinct period of biological development yet. It denoted a set of social conditions that were loosely interpreted. As the historian Philippe Ariès has stated in his seminal work, childhood as a separate social category was an invented idea that had not existed before. The very notion that children are special beings different from adults is a socially constructed modern

⁵⁰ Andrea Warren, *Orphan Train Rider: One Boy’s True Story* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996), 26.

⁵¹ Holt, 24.

⁵² Though there had been multiple efforts to ban the minor’s labor since the 1840s, it was only 1938 that the federal government regulated the minimum age of employment and the maximum hours of work of children with passaging the Fair Labor Standards Act.

⁵³ Samuel Fletcher, Jr.’s parents who locked him for days were fined for their cruelty. See *Fletcher v. People*, 52 Ill. 395 (Ill. 1869).

idea born out of the competing notions of children and childhood.⁵⁴ Whereas the Calvinist conception of the innately sinful children who require correction, which continued from the previous century, was still around, the Lockean conception of childhood as a blank slate and the romantic vision of children as innocent and vulnerable beings who need protection apart and together transformed the way that children and childhood were perceived over the nineteenth century.⁵⁵

The romantic notion of children postulated children as innately pure, innocent, and vulnerable beings. Under such a view, toward the end of the nineteenth century, children were increasingly “valued in emotional rather than economic terms.”⁵⁶ Being valued for love, not for their labor potential, children were increasingly portrayed as someone to be protected and adored. The proliferation of the literature on the upbringing of children in the early nineteenth century demonstrates one instance of the gradual shifts in understanding of children. The child-rearing advice books and magazines offered parents with the ‘adequate’ ways to understand children’s needs, based upon the changing notion of children and childhood. Instead of the father’s rigid discipline, the mother’s sensitive and affectionate approach was normalized as ideal parenting. The popularization of highly sentimentalized orphans in the literary works also reflected the changing perception. Vulnerable kids who were suffering from or dying away due to poverty, illness, or lack of parental care in literature sensationalized children to the minds of the American public. The sentimental literature on children in despair and the child-rearing advice literature that highlighted children’s specialness helped to develop the perception that

⁵⁴ See Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962).

⁵⁵ Karen Sánchez-Eppler, “Introduction,” in *Dependent States: The Child’s Part in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), xvii-xviii.

⁵⁶ Sánchez-Eppler, xvii.

childhood was a distinct period in which a child should be able to learn, play exempted from any economical mandate or physical castigation, and be happy.

This perspective was combined with the Lockean understanding of children as a *tabula rasa* impressionable with education and guidance. If the previous centuries' discipline concentrated on the punitive correction and the repression of the wicked nature of children from the Puritan perspective, John Locke's idea that the internalization of good moral and social behavior could condition ignorant children to become respectable citizens through gentle persuasions and role models gradually prevailed. This philosophical account of children emphasizes nurture over nature. In her study of transformations of the psychological and social meanings of childhood experience in the nineteenth century U.S., Barbara Finkelstein argues that the new effort to save and educate the orphan, the abandoned child, and the youngsters living in dire poverty is tied tightly to the society's growing attempt to separate sound children from criminal adults and harmful environments. Finkelstein demonstrates that the simultaneous emergence of houses of refuge, houses of reformation for minors, and asylums for orphans, separate orphanages for children of different sex, notes the "commitment to purity" founded upon a burgeoning conceptualization of children as those who have to be protected and nurtured in good influence.⁵⁷ Thus, the tutorial environments were regarded as a key player in the production of healthy future citizens. The expansion of public schools with the reform movement in the early nineteenth century and the vocational education in public schools substituting the traditional apprenticeship, and the establishment of kindergarten beginning in 1856 were the

⁵⁷ Barbara Finkelstein, "Casting Networks of Good Influence: The Reconstruction of Childhood in the United States, 1790-1870," in *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, edited by Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 117-118.

outcome of this understanding.⁵⁸ Also, the rural West, in contrast to the urban jungle in the Northeast, were idealized and the home was perceived as an indispensable factor in children's safe and ethical life.

By the late nineteenth century, when the cultural perception of children extended, the belief that the society was responsible *in loco parentis* when parents themselves could not provide adequate care grew further. If houses of refuge, the primary institutions to house poor and delinquent minors, represent the way unfortunate children were cared in the first half of the nineteenth century, placing out, represented by the orphan trains led by the Children's Aid Society, demonstrates the way that those children were taken care of in the later years of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. While both methods aim the educational and moral uplift of children in need, the latter emphasizes the importance of the home and the presence of the family for children to grow soundly beyond separating them from the harmful environment and providing them with education, even if they had to remove children from their birth parents. The expansion of the meaning of the 'orphan' also helped the growth of non-orphan placement. This shift signals how destitute, poor, homeless, and orphaned children further and further became the public matter. Charles Loring Brace's establishment of the CAS offered a good solution to the issue.

Rescuing "Street Arabs": The Orphan Trains and The Relocation of Poor Children

⁵⁸ The first kindergarten in the U.S. was founded in 1856 in Watertown, Wisconsin by Margaritha Meyet-Schurz following the Friedrich Fröbel's pedagogy that acknowledged children's unique needs and emphasized the importance of mothering in children's development. Meyet-Schurz's kindergarten was run in German language. The first English-language kindergarten was founded by Elizabeth Peabody in 1860 in Boston, Massachusetts.

Adoption from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was practiced in various forms such as custodianship, placement, apprenticeship, and legal adoption. However, with the introduction of the orphan trains in 1854 by the Children's Aid Society, the innovative social experiment that transferred thousands of children from east to west, from cities to the countryside, and from biological parents or institutions to adoptive parents shaped and shifted the geography of U.S. adoption.

In 1853, when the CAS was founded by Charles Loring Brace, its purpose was to address the children's welfare which was an emergent social issue with the growing number of impoverished and orphaned children in city areas. After serving as a minister in Blackwell's Island for a few years, Brace decided to dedicate himself to helping children in need. Several hundred thousand children did not have social services to tend them except orphan asylums and almshouses. Besides working as newspaper boys and match girls, thieving, robbery, and prostitution were not too extraordinary ways of living for many children to survive a harsh life on the street. Appalled by the horrendous life of those children, he felt the necessity of different supporting systems for the increasing number of destitute children. To borrow Jacob Riis's words, he saw those children as the other half to help. Starting with a headquarter located in New York City, the CAS grew quickly as a national nonprofit organization. Its programs had a wide variety from newsboys' lodging houses, runaway shelters to industrial schools, a fresh air program, and a lending library system. Yet, the most noted legacy of the CAS is its lead of the mass placement of orphans, later known as the orphan trains. Brace, the social engineer of the orphan trains, believed that children could be "saved" if they had been "raised in the proper setting," "if reached before bad habits became chronic."⁵⁹ The placement with a new good family

⁵⁹ Marilyn Irvin Holt, *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 25.

would provide them with an opportunity to improve themselves in a respectable environment than when they lived in the squalor of a city or the overcrowded and poorly managed orphanages. The mortality rate of New York orphanages in the late nineteenth century was as high as 60 to 80 percent. So deadly and deficient, historian Julie Miller describes this crisis as “the murder of the innocents.”⁶⁰ Driven by such belief and concern, the orphan trains that had begun in 1854 continued until 1929, delivering 200,000 to 250,000 children to forty-seven states. As Mary Jalongo points out, Brace was not the person who created placement for the first time in the world. The U.K. began to transport poor children to the American Colonies circa 1617. “[A]lthough Brace was not the first person to consider a relocation program, he was the first to ramp it up to the scale of a major sociological experiment.”⁶¹ As a result, the mass placement via the orphan trains quickly popularized and standardized the way that children who were not biologically related were taken into a family in the U.S.

The orphan train movement, which established and expanded not only the modern adoption system of the U.S. but also “stranger” adoption, however, was the result of the various factors besides the desire to ‘help’ children in need. First, this new social welfare program was specifically for poor and destitute children. Therefore, I argue that the orphan trains must be understood as the program specifically designed for the poor white children of a lower class than just for children. It is worth noting that the CAS’s placement was not the program that exempted orphans from labor. The apprenticeship of working-class children was an accepted custom that could provide basic education and skills for their survival in addition to a home to stay. Through healthy and safe labor under caring guardians, children could grow independent and industrious

⁶⁰ See Julie Miller, *Abandoned Foundlings in Nineteenth-Century New York City* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

⁶¹ Mary Jalongo, "From Urban Homelessness to Rural Work: International Origins of the Orphan Trains," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 38, no. 3 (2010): 166.

members of the family and society. The treatment that children could receive under apprenticeship was viewed gentler than when a child worked as an indentured servant or a factory worker. Historian E. Wayne Carp explains that placing children out as apprentices was a nascent form of foster care that would be systemized later years.⁶² Furthermore, children's labor was still essential in the west as well as in the cities for working-class people; boy children were useful for farm and factory work while girl children were instrumental for housekeeping, domestic help, and home-based workshops like sewing and garment making. "[A]s late as 1880, working-class children contributed between 28 and 46 percent of household income in two-parent families."⁶³ Without the "free" labor of children, labor-intensive farming was nearly impossible.⁶⁴ As an integral part of the household labor, children's contribution to the family economy was critical as "one farmer remarked, "Every boy born into a farm family was worth a thousand dollars."'" Demonstrating the great shortage of working hands in the west, Brace wrote in 1880 that the rural west was suffering from a great lack of labor and therefore there was "the endless demand for children's labor in the Western country."⁶⁵ In these circumstances, Marilyn Irvin Holt points out that the "social pronouncement for the child and the child as laborer did not clash."⁶⁶ Orphaned children whom the orphan trains delivered, therefore, met the double goal in that sense, as unfortunate children could be a beneficiary of the home and the family while

⁶² Carp, *Adoption in America*, 3.

⁶³ Stephen O'Connor, *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 36.

⁶⁴ Chaim M. Rosenberg, *Child Labor in America: A History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company Inc., 2013), 4.

⁶⁵ Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years' Work Among Them*, 1872 (Montclair, N.J.: P. Smith, 1967), 242. There are many discussions that regard the placement of children with farm households as the exploitation for their economic value than emotional, critiquing the mass transfer of children done in the name of the best interest of children rendered another form of children indentureship or in the worst case, slavery. The view of adoption as the industry with the pecuniary interest that the social welfare system has continued until today, as shown in the criticism of the black-market babies and child-trafficking of Haiti in 2011. This topic requires another extensive discussion, though this chapter does not focus on the topic.

⁶⁶ Holt, 31.

adoptive parents could get an additional family member who was the inexpensive source of supporting labor and familial intimacy.

Regarding this interesting juxtaposition of ideas of the vulnerable children to be protected and of the laboring children who are useful, American Studies and literary scholar Karen Sánchez-Eppler explains the need to understand the nineteenth-century American childhood itself as “a sign of class status.” She notes that “at the beginning of the nineteenth century almost all children participated in some version of family-supporting labor, while by the beginning of the twentieth century, [the] state had begun to pass child-labor laws and to view children working not as normative but as abusive.”⁶⁷ Yet, the value of children as a labor resource lingered much longer with working-class families, and a vast number of young children participated in various economic activities by necessity until the early twentieth century. In this regard, the “middle-class families’ exemption of their children from labor as one of the strongest markers of their difference from the lower class.” The rising valuation and idealization of play, according to Sánchez-Eppler, manifest that “to the extent that childhood means leisure, having a childhood is in itself one of the most decisive features of class formation.”⁶⁸ Sociologist Viviana A. Zelizer also delineates the transforming conception of children from a productive laborer to a sentimental object for affection as “sacralization.”

But it was not a linear, smooth development. While working-class people were dependent upon children’s labor, middle-class families began to see young children at work as exploitation.⁶⁹ The emphasis upon children as vulnerable and dependent beings signals the victory of the latter over the former at its conceptualization, and slowly but gradually it led to

⁶⁷ Sánchez-Eppler, xvii-xviii.

⁶⁸ Sánchez-Eppler, 152-154.

⁶⁹ Viviana A. Rotman Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

changes in the laws, policies, and institutional services about children's education, labor as well as adoption. However, children who were placed via the orphan trains were separated from this middle-class ideal of children and childhood in practice, while "the successfully adopted child, rescued and rehabilitated through the committed nurture of its adoptive parents," who proliferated in the nineteenth-century domestic fiction, "reinforced middle-class ideals of functioning, expanding families in alignment with the growing nation."⁷⁰ This shows that there were competing interests around children in the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, and though the middle-class centered notion gradually set in as a norm the practice was always not identical to the idea. If children were demonetized as Zelizer argues, it happened to only a certain kind of children.

Orphans were separated by another degree from the middle-class centered notion of children and childhood for the possibility that they were innately "different" from children who grew in a good environment getting the effective care from the birth. While progressivism in the late nineteenth century as much as the reform movement in the first half of the nineteenth century highlighted the significance of nurture and environment, toward the end of the nineteenth century the nurture vs. nature controversy grew stronger with the growth of medical science. George Mendel's study that founded modern genetics was published in 1865, and George Galton introduced the word eugenics into the world in 1883. On the other hand, the U.S. was dealing with the Reconstruction, the Jim Crow segregation, and the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic movement. In this cultural and political climate, working-class children, particularly poor children of new immigrants, were viewed as "savages" who were exposed and therefore corrupted by the urban streets as well as "a symbol of beauty within the ugly, corrupting and

⁷⁰ Carol Singley, "Childhood Studies and Literary Adoption," in *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and The Humanities*, edited by Anna Mae Duanne (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 188.

decaying city landscapes.”⁷¹ Elaine Hadley states that “languages such as ‘savages’, ‘guttersnipes’ or ‘street arabs’” “in contrast to the ‘innocent,’ ‘obedient,’ and ‘silent’ representation of children in the middle-class household” expressed the anxiety of the society regarding the possible “difference” of the impoverished, abandoned, and orphaned children.⁷²

When we frame the mass placement of children in the late nineteenth-century cultural and political climate that segregated African Americans, prohibited Chinese immigration, discriminated against immigrant workers from Eastern and Southern Europe whose membership to whiteness was repudiated, usurped the Native Americans’ land and sent Native children to boarding schools outside reservation for assimilation, it is plausible to see that adoption as “saving” children from the malicious environment meant rescuing them from not only the social but also the biological pollution that those children were born into. I thus read the language used to describe those children such as ‘savages,’ ‘tribes,’ and ‘street arabs’ insinuates the *racial* reference into their characterization. Regarding the rise of philanthropist approaches to children on the street in the mid-nineteenth century, Margaret May points that it was not entirely out of humane benevolence, but also out of fear that “children, deprived of proper moral instruction, would become trained as criminals, drunks and debauchers.”⁷³ From this point of view, ragged

⁷¹ Tom Cockburn, “From ‘Street Arabs’ to ‘Angels’: Working-Class Children, Competence and Citizenship, 1850-1914,” in *Welfare, Exclusion, and Political Agency*, edited by Janet Batsleer and Beth Humphries (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 24.

⁷² Hadley here discusses the mid-19th century English children on the street, but a similar language was also used in the U.S. as shown in Jacob Riis’ photograph “Street Arabs in ‘Sleeping Quarters’” and “Street Arabs in Night Quarters - Mulberry Street.” See Elaine Hadley, “Natives in a Strange Land: The Philanthropic Discourse of Juvenile Emigration in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England,” *Victorian Studies* 33, no. 3 (1990): 411-439 and Jacob A. Riis, *Street Arabs in Night-quarters - Mulberry Street*, 1890, Photograph, Museum of the City of New York, New York, U.S.A., https://library-artstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/asset/AMCNYIG_10313347471, and *Street Arabs in Sleeping Quarters*, 1890, Photograph, Museum of the City of New York, New York, U.S.A., https://library-artstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/asset/AMCNYIG_10313346403.

⁷³ Margaret May, “Innocence and Experience: The Evolution of the Concept of Juvenile Delinquency in the Mid-nineteenth Century,” *Victorian Studies* 17 (1973): 7-29, quoted in Tom Cockburn, “From ‘Street Arabs’ to ‘Angels’: Working-Class Children, Competence and Citizenship, 1850-1914,” in *Welfare, Exclusion, and Political Agency*, edited by Janet Batsleer and Beth Humphries (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 25. *Welfare, Exclusion and Political Agency*, edited by Janet Batsleer, and Beth Humphries, Routledge, 1999.

children became a new social urgency for the whole society. The attitude of Brace and the followers of the orphan train movement was to render “the preventive possibilities of social action” combined with a humanitarian impulse.⁷⁴ It was at stake how far what is given by nature can be mediated, fixed, and transformed by nurture. The words of Richard Henry Pratt, the founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, “Kill the Indian, Save the man,” resonates with the mass placement of destitute children to a notable degree. It was the program to “civilize” materially and emotionally impoverished children by placing them at home to make them “better” people.

To achieve the goal, the mass relocation of children initiated by the orphan trains not only place out parentless orphans but also separated tens of thousands of children from their biological parents, which was a significant change that marks the U.S. modern adoption. When parents could not provide good parenting but were (deemed) neglectful, abusive, and poor, their natural right to children could be deprived of by removing children from a malfunctioning home to another better home. The implementation of the best interest of children, the principle for the U.S. modern adoption, rationalized the need for the “better” kinship and home for children, and accordingly the cultural and legal definition of “orphan” grew to expand toward the end of the nineteenth century. This attitude notes that the critical change in the valuation of biological parenthood. When it was not meritorious for children, as parents failed at their role, the society was willing to step in *in loco parentis*. With the rise of mass placement of children led by the social welfare organization like CAS driven by the religious sense of mission, the philanthropic drive for social reform, and the changing accounts of children and childhood, the U.S. society

⁷⁴ Ronald D. Cohen, “Child-Saving and Progressivism, 1885-1915,” in *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, edited by Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 275.

was willing to “domesticate” children in other means, if not possible with their biological family. Orphans were becoming “the child of the society” through the replaced privatization of them. For the poor working-class people, the right to their children was becoming something to ‘earn’: otherwise, their parental rights could be denied and revoked. Based on this shifted understanding, the non-orphan placement grew more and more common. According to the 1893 report, about 47 percent of the total placements were non-orphan placements. Placing out spearheaded by the orphan trains not only distributed parentless orphans who needed parents but also ‘produced’ the children who had better be relocated from their biological parents to an adoptive home.

This is the cultural and historical context in which this chapter locates Huckleberry Finn of Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The making of Huck from a “savage” child to an adoptee to be “civilized” and Huck’s escape from the dependent state at the exchange of the “respectable” home and family deal with the question of not only how children should be taken care of but also how destitute, under-educated, and delinquent children like orphans should be handled.

From a Pariah to an Adoptable Child

The issue of placing Huck at home in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* occurs as the post-adventure narrative of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. While the town’s interest in Huck’s placement with a guardian is not too foreign considering the long history of adoption in various forms in the U.S., the ground for the Huck’s necessity to be placed in someone’s home shows the change in the cultural understanding of child-rearing and childhood over the nineteenth century. Huck’s problem is that he is not ‘well-parented’ and hence practically parentless. Though he is not a ‘real’ orphan with a living father, Huck in *Huckleberry Finn* is regarded as an orphan who

needs a reliable new home. Huck's father Pap Finn comes back from time to time, but his social behavior and living style remove him outside a respectable community membership. Pap's issues are multi-layered. He is an uneducated, unemployed, alcoholic widower and a neglectful father. He does not own a decent home but a shack, and more importantly, he is a vagrant who does not stay at home, leaving Huck at the child's own best discretion. Pap who was jobless, poor, illiterate, intemperate, and vagrant was undoubtedly a fallen prodigal and a despicable outcast.

Being a son of such a failing man, Huck's reputation is also tarnished. When Huck first appears in *Tom Sawyer*, he is described as "the juvenile pariah of the village, Huckleberry Finn, son of the town drunkard."⁷⁵ Not only that, he is also the subject of hatred and fear for mothers since he is a boy with no discipline.

"Huckleberry came and went, at his own free will. He slept on doorsteps in fine weather and in empty hogsheads in wet; he did not have to go to school or to church, or call any being master or obey anybody; he could go fishing or swimming when and where he chose, and stay as long as it suited him; nobody forbade him to fight; he could sit up as late as he pleased; he was always the first boy that went barefoot in the spring and the last to resume leather in the fall; he never had to wash, nor put on clean clothes; he could swear wonderfully."⁷⁶

Attending neither school nor church, Huck's days are totally at his own disposal. Huck comes and goes at his discretion; he is another vagrant who roams around without a 'real' home. Much like his father, he is "idle, lawless, and vulgar." For Huck's mother is dead, he is even deprived of a gentle mother's nurture. Having only but an 'improper' parent who is mostly absent, it is highly likely that Huck would become another Pap when he grows up. Bad boy Huck, therefore, invokes dread and abhorrence for other parents who are afraid of the menacing influence Huck

⁷⁵ Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 1876 (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1994), 45.

⁷⁶ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 46.

can have upon their children; “Huckleberry was cordially hated and dreaded by all the mothers of the town.”⁷⁷

Parents are not the only ones who loathe Huck. One day Tom is questioned about his tardiness and his confession of the encounter with Huck shocks the schoolmaster.

“I STOPPED TO TALK WITH HUCKLEBERRY FINN!”

The master’s pulse stood still, and he stared helplessly. The buzz of study ceased. The pupils wondered if this foolhardy boy had lost his mind. The master said:

“You—you did what?”

“Stopped to talk with Huckleberry Finn.”

There was no mistaking the words.

“Thomas Sawyer, this is the most astounding confession I have ever listened to. No mere ferule will answer for this offence. Take off your jacket.”⁷⁸

Said in capital letters, Tom knew how his response would be received. It was something outrageous to count as “offence” and Tom needs to repent his wrongdoing. This is another instance that clearly shows how much Huck has been marginalized and differentiated from other “respectable boys.” He is a social taboo to the eyes of adults who believe they know what is right or not. In brief, he is considered not only an orphan but a despicable *pariah*.

Until Tom Sawyer brings Huck into his ‘gang’ in *Tom Sawyer*, thus, Huck in St. Petersburg has been nothing but a notorious villain. To prevent other boys from being lured by reckless Huck, he had better be physically removed to a distance outside the town’s boundary. Another option is to ‘correct’ him under the care of someone who can provide him with a proper home and good education – adoption. At the beginning of *Huckleberry Finn*, the readers see that the town leans toward the latter. But, what makes Huck from a detestable outcast to avoid in *Tom*

⁷⁷ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 45.

⁷⁸ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 51.

Sawyer to a child who deserves home and protection in *Huckleberry Finn*? To understand Huck's transformation from a pariah to a respectable boy, we need to look into the way that Huck becomes a subject for adoption – more specifically, the condition in which he is considered as *adoptable* in the story.

Both Tom and Huck appear as a troublesome ward who does not know how to behave genteelly for Aunt Polly and Widow Douglas. They cause lots of troubles and a headache for their caregivers. Huck's life in the opening part of *Huckleberry Finn* has many resemblances to Tom's in *Tom Sawyer*. Huck who feels suffocated with wearing uncomfortable clothes and staying inside home looks for any chance to be out of them like Tom whose clothes do not stay clean. Huck finds school boring and often go somewhere else like Tom who frequently 'plays hookey.' Butter melts down over Huck's head when his stealing gets caught by Aunt Sally while the sticky jam is all over Tom, who hides in the closet to enjoy it sneakily. Aunt Polly's bafflement with Tom demonstrated in "'TOM!'... 'What's gone with that boy, I wonder? You TOM!'"⁷⁹ is similarly echoed with Aunt Sally's puzzlement with Huck and Tom at the end of *Huckleberry Finn*.

However, though Huck has been notorious as a pariah before Tom meets him, a true troublemaker throughout both novels is, mostly Tom, not Huck. Full of playful ideas about heroic deeds that he has learned from 'books,' he leads Huck and other boys not only to silly fusses but often to serious commotions. In *Tom Sawyer*, the whole town believes that Tom, Jo Harper, and Huck drowned to death. Later, an extensive search is made when Tom becomes missing again, lost in the cave in the Jackson's Island with Becky. In the final episode of *Huckleberry Finn*, a whole town is alerted with a bogus threat of stealing slave Jim from the

⁷⁹ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 7.

Phelpses plotted by Tom. Despite the monstrous calamity created by Tom's endless 'games,' Tom is barely punished besides a brief scolding or a 'work' to paint the fence during a holiday.

This bottomless forgiveness toward Tom reflects the shifted notion of childhood as a time for leisure and play as well as the reformers' idea that emphasizes the protection and guidance of children. Historian Carl Degler explains that whereas the earlier centuries' rigid evangelical discipline was to "break the child's will," viewing a child as an imperfect person with natural stubbornness to be corrected and self-assertiveness to be regulated, beginning from the early nineteenth century affectionate persuasion, instead of physical coercion, was viewed as a more suitable and acceptable method for middle-class parents.⁸⁰ According to this understanding, boys like Tom are supposed to explore, play, and have fun. Though he may create a problem from time to time, it is not a lethal dent in his development into a fine person.

In this perspective, Pap who takes his hand on his child saying that he needs to discipline him but exerts violence depending on his moods not just shows the man of the past but also appears as an abusive father. Aunt Polly, on the other hand, shows a motherly and gentler approach to Tom relying upon patient and affectionate persuasion and taking physical punishment as the last resort. The first chapter of *Tom Sawyer* introduces Aunt Polly, who does a long monologue while looking for Tom:

"Hang the boy, can't I never learn anything? Ain't he played me tricks enough like that for me to be looking out for him by this time? But old fools is the biggest fools there is. Can't learn an old dog new tricks, as the saying is. But my goodness, he never plays them alike, two days, and how is a body to know what's coming? ... it's all down again and I can't hit him a lick. I ain't doing my duty by that boy, and that's the Lord's truth, goodness knows. Spare the rod and spile the child, as the Good Book says. I'm a laying up sin and suffering for us both, I know. He's full of the Old Scratch, but laws-a-me! he's my own

⁸⁰ Carl N. Degler, "Introducing Children into the Social Order," in *Childhood in America*, edited by Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 211-213.

dead sister's boy, poor thing, and I ain't got the heart to lash him, somehow. Every time I let him off, my conscience does hurt me so, and every time I hit him my old heart most breaks ..."⁸¹

She is exasperated by Tom's endless tricks and troubles and mentions her solemn duties to discipline the child, but she cannot "lash" him but "spare the rod." Instead of accusing him of the relentless behavior, her lamentation goes more toward her incapability to know him better. Though her language is religious, her words display her understanding of playfulness of the boyhood as well as the emphasis upon gentle guidance than physical punishment. Moreover, no matter how troublesome Tom could be, she will forgive him again and again. Her cry, "I could forgive the boy, now, if he'd committed a million sins!"⁸² is not valid once but continuously through the sequel book. Echoing Aunt Polly in *Tom Sawyer*, Aunt Sally also shows the magnanimous understanding of her nephew despite the dire result of his plotting at the end of *Huckleberry Finn*. Their incredibly generous and repetitive forgiving for Tom is not separable from the fact that Tom is biological kin of theirs as said by Aunt Polly, "he's my own dead sister's boy, poor thing, and I ain't got the heart to lash him, somehow." Tom has a privilege of blood ties.

If Tom suffers from consequences of a great number of unrests he causes, he starves, feels homesick, is lost for a couple of days in the cave, and gets hurt in the leg. Yet, all these rather help him get more cherished and build fame and pride as a boy hero, far from harming him lethally or disciplining him. For example, when he is once punished by Mr. Dobbins on behalf of Becky Thatcher who accidentally tore a page from her teacher's anatomy book, Tom's act is complimented as chivalrous, only enhancing his desirability as a future spouse of Becky to her family. The troubles Tom creates and experiences, rather than making him a helpless

⁸¹ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 8.

⁸² Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 130.

troublemaker destined to fail, help him become a more full-blown person exactly because of his experience of *adventures*.

Leslie A. Fiedler argues, a character like Tom makes a Good Bad Boy who breaks his mother's heart but only to be forgiven by her, while a Good Good Boy like Sid Sawyer just obeys and confirms what is desired for a mild-mannered boy. Fiedler draws the connection between a boy's delinquency and the growing pains, delineating it as a healthier and vital quality for a boy child to have. In the context that a boy's "delinquency is a declaration of maleness," "Tom Sawyer exists as the projection of all that Sid, pious Good Good Boy, presumably yearns for and denies."⁸³ When he has to suffer, Tom certainly gets rewarded for his pain; when not, he remains unscathed and pardoned. Thus, despite differences in their boyhood in which Tom makes troubles and Sid does not, in the end, Tom's settlement will not differ greatly from Sid's. More correctly, Tom is expected to become a more mature man because of his adventure experiences than a nearly characterless and indistinctive boy Sid. When a better passage of rite to manhood is available for a Good Bad Boy, following the road of adventures is a not just exciting but ideal way. His ploy may bring a little trouble to him, but he becomes more complete because of the small pain he experiences. As his prospect for the world is ordained by his future father-in-law Judge Thatcher, Tom is assuredly believed to grow up into a promising man: "Judge Thatcher hope to see Tom a great lawyer or a great solider some day. He said he meant to look to it that Tom should be admitted to the National Military Academy and afterward trained in the best law school in the country, in order that he might be ready for either career or both."⁸⁴

⁸³ Leslie A. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 1960 (Victoria, TX: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998), 269-271.

⁸⁴ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 217.

Such a right to the promising future and the childhood with ‘adventures,’ however, is not given to all boys. Huck may be part of Tom’s adventures, but the future for Huck is not set similarly to Tom. When he sets his own adventures, they are not harmless and silly adventures like Tom’s. Tom can indulge in the story of rubbing the lamp and getting anything wished such as “fetch[ing] an emperor’s daughter from China for you to marry,” “the A-rabs and the elephants” are not for Huck though he rubs the lamp until he “sweat[s] like Injun.”⁸⁵ Sánchez-Eppler writes, “[b]y the end of the century, play, and the worlds of the imagination, would become cultural markers for what was marvelous about childhood, and this culturally valuable play would be recognized as an attribute of middle-class affluence and leisure.”⁸⁶ Whereas the wild imagination and imperfect socialization like ridiculous games are “a mark of freedom and a source of power” for children like Tom, they yield differently for boys like Huck.⁸⁷

Not just in *Tom Sawyer* where Huck appears as a child living on the margin but also in *Huckleberry Finn* where Huck outshines Tom as a protagonist, a boy who can look forward to rewarding adventures and a promised future indicates exclusively Tom, never Huck. When Huck is forgiven for having taken part in such a dangerous plot of ‘stealing’ Jim for the second time at the end of *Huckleberry Finn*, he is assuredly pardoned. But it is important to stress that he is forgiven mainly because he has been believed to be Tom, not Huck himself. Posing as Tom-Huck and Sid-Tom, both of whom are legitimate white boys as well as biological relatives, their taking a fugitive slave away does not constitute a criminal offense but a frivolous prank of boys. The fact that the late Miss Watson left the will to free Jim and therefore Jim has been already freed offers another safeguard against the boys’ dangerous scheme. Even when Huck is taken as

⁸⁵ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 25-26.

⁸⁶ Sánchez-Eppler, 153-4.

⁸⁷ Sánchez-Eppler, 16.

someone that is reformable and civilizable and thus is adopted, there is still a difference maintained between Tom and Huck. Agreeing with other critics who view Tom and Huck respectively as Twain's nostalgic portrayal of his boyhood and the wishful imagination of the childhood the author wanted to have himself but could not, Fiedler reads Huck as a boy who "stands for what Tom is not quite a rebel enough to represent"⁸⁸ and who Twain "was not and only wished he dared aspire to be."⁸⁹ Huck is Tom's dark double. I thus argue that Huck serves as a Bad Bad Boy standing next to Good Bad Boy Tom, even when he is adopted by Widow Douglas and considered for adoption by the Phelpses. Tom as a Good Bad Boy is possible with Huck being Bad Bad boy as much as Sid being Good Good Boy.

Though Huck is subject to a series of custody and adoption, thus, except for brief moments at the end of *Tom Sawyer* and the beginning and the end of *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck remains mostly just a forlorn pariah who roams outside and does not belong to any home stably. For instance, there is the first chance that Huck can become an object of the town's attention when he comes back safely from the Jackson's Island with Tom and Jo Harper while everybody has believed them drowned to death. Seeing them alive, people get excited and relieved. But no one expresses any gladness with that Huck is also safely back.

Aunt Polly, Mary, and the Harpers threw themselves upon their restored ones, smothered them with kisses and poured out thanksgivings, while poor Huck stood abashed and uncomfortable, not knowing exactly what to do or where to hide from so many unwelcoming eyes.⁹⁰

Shunned from the tear-shedding families who are happy to recover their lost children, he stands aloof. For being *nobody's child* (at best, Pap's if it counts), he is unclaimed and invisiblized. Again, it is Tom who stops Huck when he is about to leave and demands people that Huck has to

⁸⁸ Fiedler, 271.

⁸⁹ Fiedler, 277.

⁹⁰ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 119.

be welcomed insisting, "Aunt Polly, it ain't fair. Somebody's got to be glad to see Huck" Only then, Aunt Polly reacts to Huck's return from the death saying, "And so they shall. I'm glad to see him, poor motherless thing!"⁹¹ Her pity for Huck in this scene is initiated only on Tom's request. Furthermore, her attention goes onto the fact that there is no parent to take in Huck, than she is sincerely relieved to have him safely back. Care and love for him should have been his parents' business, but they are absent since his mother already passed away and his father is a 'bad' parent who stays away. Huck might be a poor thing for being a virtual orphan, but the pity does not go far. No one considers him as someone who deserves further beyond the momentary pity: the attention toward Huck is very much short-lived. Huck is not taken any differently after the event, either; he is still a child pariah outside people's concern despite his dramatic return from death. If Huck is acknowledged any differently from time to time, it is only because Tom continuously counts him in as one of his playmates. Tom's inclusion of Huck functions as a conduit that requires other people to grant a degree of acknowledgment of Huck as his friend. Otherwise, Huck is excluded from any caring attention, let alone the acclamation as a hero like Tom. He is the other who is set apart from the community in every aspect. Huck is kept at a distance as he has been, for he is not regarded adaptable either to any home or to the community.

Another example that explicitly illustrates Huck's marginalization is the case of Muff Potter who is put in prison for murdering Dr. Robinson in *Tom Sawyer*. As having witnessed the murder done by Injun Joe, both Tom and Huck feel sorry for wrongly accused Potter and try to help him by doing a little grace while he is in jail. But they dread to reveal the truth for Injun Joe's retaliation while feeling agonized for Potter. Yet, it is Tom who later gets a chance to tell the truth in public and save the poor man from a death sentence. Huck, on the other hand, is not

⁹¹ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 119.

invited as a witness for being a pariah boy; unlike Tom, he is not allowed to enter the official record of the town lacking credibility. Tom, through this event, cements his Good Bad Boy status that is more glorious than an unremarkable Good Good Boy. With such acknowledgment, he earns a solid path to grow into a Good Man. On the other hand, Huck's goodness is kept in the dark, keeping him to remain solely as a Bad Bad Boy. Consequently, all the glory goes to Tom while Huck disappears completely from the story for six chapters after the comeback from the Jackson's Island, except for once when Tom finds him to talk about Potter's case. Huck's sympathy is not less acute than Tom's, and yet Huck's good conscience is not known to the public. Instead, his troubled mind is shared only to Tom in "a lonely place" where Tom comes to "to unseal his tongue" and "divide his burden of distress with another sufferer" while "assur[ing] himself that Huck [has] remained discreet."⁹² Since Huck's perspective is disclosed only in the "lonely place" to his friend, it does not earn any further validity.

When Huck saves Widow Douglas from Injun Joe's plotted attack by revealing Injun Joe's disguise as a Spaniard to the Welshman, Huck gets another chance to gain public acknowledgment and be awarded a Good (Bad) Boy status like Tom. However, Huck's bravery is again denied and delayed as Mr. Jones leaves the savior's identity in secret. Though the Welshman keeps it secret for fun, Widow Douglas' indebtedness to Huck is not properly and timely acknowledged. Rather, Huck's deed is forgotten without further compliment. Instead, his good deed is immediately overthrown by Tom who is stuck in the cave with Becky. At the same time, Huck becomes immobilized by falling sick. While he is in bed, his voice is hushed by Widow Douglas who says, "Hush, hush, child, hush! I've told you before, you must *not* talk. You are very, very sick!"⁹³ His ability to talk for himself is hindered by all means; in consequence,

⁹² Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 145.

⁹³ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 190.

his presence is almost effaced. Even when his saving of Widow Douglas is known to people, the excitement is decisively dampened as Sid Sawyer has already disclosed it to others out of malice against *Tom* - Huck is too insignificant for Sid to consider. In the end, Huck's heroic act never gains wide acknowledgment like Tom's. Never awarded with a valid prize that Tom never misses getting, Huck is constantly positioned as someone in the margin who can never make a full claim to a membership of the community.

Huck's marginality and otherness do not change much after Huck is adopted by Widow Douglas. While Huck does not find her ways very agreeable, there are a few moments in the book that he acknowledges her kind heart for him. For instance, after his initial attempt to leave Widow Douglas' place, he says, "[t]he widow she cried over me, and called me a poor lost lamb, and she called me a lot of other names, too, but she never meant no harm by it."⁹⁴ Joining the household of such Widow Douglas and obtaining the wealth as the result of the adventure with Tom, Huck gets a different position in the town from before. Becoming Widow Douglas' child for Huck signifies not only the change of the 'home' but also the change of the status from the uneducated, poor, working-class to the educated, financially comfortable, leisurely middle-class person in the coming days. He becomes a *pricier* child than before. Accordingly, when Huck briefly disappears from Widow Douglas' place, "[t]he public were profoundly concerned" and search for him for forty-eight hours.⁹⁵ It is contrasting from the reaction that he has received when he came back alive from the Island. What has changed from before is not Huck, but "Huck Finn's wealth and the fact that he was now under the Widow Douglas' protection."⁹⁶ It is

⁹⁴ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 14.

⁹⁵ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 218.

⁹⁶ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 217.

questionable whether people's concern is about Huck's safety or more about the safety of Widow Douglas' boy.

As Widow Douglas who is "the first aristocracy in [the] town" takes him as her ward, he is rewarded more than what he has asked for. By getting a chance to be under the roof of Widow Douglas, his chance to grow into a man of civilization different from Pap seems larger. He has now the possibility of becoming a child with the future. Nonetheless, I'd like to stress the fact that Huck's saving of Widow Douglas' life does not lead to a reward that truly benefits Huck. Widow Douglas' adoption of Huck has been made for indebtedness, as he has saved her life. In that regard, Huck has "earned" his opportunity to a "better" home, though it is not what he has wanted. If we see their adoptive relationship as something originally built on the trade of mutual benefits, their relationship lacks naturalness and permanency that Tom has with his aunts – their relationship is not unconditional. Though Huck is the one who repeatedly walks out of the parent-child relationships in the story, his relationships' changeability and breakability speak of the same chance on the side of custodians if things go wrong or when they change their minds. He can be somebody's child, but at the same time, he can be nobody's child. He needs to keep proving his worthiness to keep his place at "home" *if* he wants to stay.

In the context of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century when adoption of unfortunate and wayward children was sentimentalized and romanticized as benevolent gifting children with what they deserve, Huck's otherness can be read as the condition to construct his status as an "orphan," that is, a child in need who lacks a loving family and a safe home. As much as Huck is not a literal orphan but considered parentless, many children who were placed out in the time of Twain's orphan boys were not literal orphans. Rather, they were socially and legally perceived and constructed as orphans who should be taken

care of. But the acquisition of the orphan status is accompanied by another condition that those orphans need to discard their old selves tainted by their humble birth and previous vicious life and get educated to conform to the middle-class normativity and ideal of children and family. The invitation to the better home for most orphans placed out in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century was not unconditional. Their transfer from one home to another and from one family to another was made with a specific purpose of “civilizing” them under a specific understanding of the problem of proliferating children on the street. With the help of adoptive kinship, they needed to be productive members of the family and the society at large. The society would not lock them up in prisons, almshouses, and asylums like before but encourage them to get skilled and educated and place them at home. But the outcome of these changes is also up to them, as Horatio Alger *Ragged Dick* depicts “rags to respectability.” Depending on how they behave, they could become either Nat Blake or Dan in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Men* and *Jo’s Boys*.⁹⁷

Therefore, while both Tom and Huck appear as a troublesome ward who does not know how to behave genteelly for Aunt Polly and Widow Douglas, Huck’s trouble is not simply considered as the mischievousness or silliness of a boy, which is the ‘natural’ part of a boy’s development. For Huck, a life under the guidance of Widow Douglas and her sister Miss Watson, and Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas Phelps later, is the matter of conversion to a ‘civilized’ person from “the juvenile pariah of the village.” Huck needs to transform himself into someone

⁹⁷ Alcott’s 1871 book *Little Men* introduces two orphan boys taken out of Boston street to Plumfield, an idyllic boarding school for ran by Jo(sephine) March Bhaer and her husband Professor Friedrich (Fritz) Bhaer. These two charity students get good education for their best end, but their life path diverges greatly in *Jo’s Boys* (1868). Musician Nat, despite some stumbles with money and freedom and relationships, ultimately lives a respectable life. On the other hand, Dan, who is “a Firebrand,” “a wild boy,” “a lawless lad,” and “the only boy [the Bhaers] ever failed with,” experiences an accidental murder, imprisonment, hard labor, and dies young though his death happens while he tries to protect someone else. Though *Little Men* assures that both boys are “tamed” and “saved,” with education and love, *Jo’s Boys* shows a different life path of the two depending on their individual choices and morality while it does not necessarily frame Dan as a fallen person.

impressionable, educatable, and therefore redeemable, shedding off his lowly self of the past. Symbolically, the first thing he has to shed off to become a new boy that Widow Douglas tries to make with him is his rags. The new clothes that he dons on literally covers his body and makes his sun-worn body efface under the starched clothes that symbolize the order of the house and civilization. The very first comment that Pap makes seeing Huck, after coming back from a year-long disappearance, is about Huck's new clothes: "Starchy clothes—very. You think you're a good deal of a big-bug, don't you?" He mocks his son who is well-covered with tailored clothing as if civilized-looking Huck fakes real Huck. Pap's rough look that is "just rags, that was all" makes a visible contrast to Huck who is getting 'sivilized.'⁹⁸ Though "his sufferings were almost more than he could bear," Huck "bravely bore his miseries three weeks" wearing clean clothes, sleeping on the stainless sheets, eating with a knife and a fork, learning books, and attending church.⁹⁹ Yet, will Huck be able to become another Tom if he is domesticated and assimilated into the white Christian middle-class norms enough?

The conversation between Tom and Huck in the woods after Huck runs away from Widow Douglas for the first time demonstrates that Huck may not stand on the same level with Tom even after becoming Widow Douglas' boy. Trying to persuade Huck to come back to 'home,' Tom says, "Huck, I wouldn't want to [shut you out], and I *don't* want to—but what would people say? Why, they'd say, 'Mph! Tom Sawyer's Gang! pretty low characters in it!' They'd mean you, Huck. You wouldn't like that, and I wouldn't."¹⁰⁰ Tom's words are threatening as they highlight that Huck's 'sivilization' by Widow Douglas'

⁹⁸ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 31.

⁹⁹ Three weeks is the same length of time Tom felt like "an entire age" when he is down with measles in *Tom Sawyer*. Having been "a prisoner, dead to the world and its happenings," Tom "was hardly grateful that he had been spared, remembering how lonely was his estate, how companionless and forlorn he was" (Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 144-145).

¹⁰⁰ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 220.

guidance has become the *required* condition to be part of Tom's gang. In this remark, Tom is very assured that no one else but Huck in his group would be subject to the charge of "low characters." If "low characters" are ever assumed, it cannot but be about Huck. Tom's rhetoric also implies that even when Tom wants Huck as his gang member, if Huck is viewed as low characters by other people, he may have to exclude Huck from the group, for it is not appropriate. To avoid such presumption, Huck has to come back 'home' and ultimately to a civic community, and prove that he does not carry any of those low characters. The probability of Huck's low character is deeply intertwined with Huck's association with Pap and the assumption of "the threat of the bad blood." I read that Huck's precarious position underscores the contingent racialization that he is subject to. The accusation of "low characters" questions where to draw the borderline of racial demarcation. He is a white boy of a different color.

Pap's midnight rant displays the anxiety that he would not be differentiated from African Americans:

"There was a free nigger there from Ohio—a mulatter, most as white as a white man. He had the whitest shirt on you ever see, too, and the shiniest hat; and there ain't a man in that town that's got as fine clothes as what he had; and he had a gold watch and chain, and a silver-headed cane—the awfulest old gray-headed nabob in the State. And what do you think? They said he was a p'fessor in a college, and could talk all kinds of languages, and knowed everything. And that ain't the wust. They said he could *vote* when he was at home. Well, that let me out."¹⁰¹

His anger about the highly educated, enfranchised, and well-dressed Ohio black man exhibits not only the frustration that comes from a comparative evaluation of himself, and therefore a recognition about his precarious position as a white man. In comparison to a

¹⁰¹ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 39.

successful black man who is “most as white as a white man,” Pap’s status as a white person appears nominal. His failure of living up to the social norms as a productive, diligent, law-abiding, and family-centered person has set him apart from the normative membership of the respectable white. The increasingly porous racial boundary before and after the Civil War emerged from the new mobility and enfranchisement of freed blacks as well as unemployment and displacement of the poor white. Being white like Pap did not secure his status as a white person any longer.

Similar to Pap’s tirade, biracial Injun Joe is another person who expresses anger for being treated “like” a black person. His rage for being whipped in public has to do with the necessity and anxiety to distinguish himself from the black: “He had me horsewhipped! —horsewhipped in front of the jail, like a n***! —with all the town looking on! Horsewhipped! —do you understand?”¹⁰² His humility with being punished like an African American is powerful enough to make him plan to kill and mutilate Widow Douglas, the deceased judge’s wife, for revenge. “[J]ugged [him] for a vagrant” by comparison “ain't a millionth part of it,” he says. Though vagrancy is another racially criminalized act, he thinks that it is not as racially demoting as flogging.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 180.

¹⁰³ Reading the racially coded Vagrancy Acts in the South in the following decades of the Civil War, Hsuan L. Hsu reads that prevalent racial anxiety of the time shown in characters who live on the borderline such as Pap and Injun Joe testifies the vulnerability to racialization of the poor and their anxiety about it. the eyes of townspeople. Mark Jerng also explains the charged significance of vagrancy in the mid to late 19th century, highlighting the relation between “the gap between agency and the conditions that construct one’s status” as a recognized member of the nation whose political, social, racial order was being reconstructed in the postbellum society. The newly gained mobility was the sign of emancipation for people like previously enslaved African Americans, but it was perceived as a danger and a threat to the order of the “white” society and was criminalized as vagrancy. Hsu similarly stresses that the racially coded Vagrancy Acts allowed the white much more mobility, as shown in the contrasting mobility of Huck and of Jim. The black were put back to another form of bondage by diverse laws that prevented them from acquiring landed property and by the indenture system that limited their mobility. See Hsuan L. Hsu, “Vagrancy and Comparative Racialization in *Huckleberry Finn* and “Three Vagabonds of Trinidad,” in *Sitting in Darkness: Mark Twain's Asia and Comparative Racialization* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 53-81.

As for Huck, his contingent racialization can be examined in his sympathy towards Muff Potter as much as his relationship with Jim. While Tom feels sorry for Potter for a simple reason like “he's mended kites for me, Huck, and knitted hooks on to my line,” Huck attests a more complicated understanding of Potter’s social position that has made him already guilty for his behavior long before being charged for the murder that he did not commit.¹⁰⁴ Huck’s empathy underscores that Potter has been already guilty due to his inconsistent employment, drinking habits, vagrancy, which is mirroring why Pap has been ostracized from the community of St. Petersburg.

"He ain't no account; but then he hain't ever done anything to hurt anybody. Just fishes a little, to get money to get drunk on—and loaf around considerable; but lord, we all do that—leastways most of us—preachers and such like. But he's kind of good—he give me half a fish, once, when there warn't enough for two; and lots of times he's kind of stood by me when I was out of luck."¹⁰⁵

In this conversation, Huck is identifying himself with Potter, insisting that “we all” do what Potter does to a degree. In the same way that Potter helped Huck when he “was out of luck,” Huck wants to support and defend Potter, not simply for his innocence but also for the reckless “moral” judgments that others make about him. Huck sees himself in Potter as much as in Pap for not successfully conforming into the social norm of a Good Man, even when Potter’s alleged immorality is dangerous enough to lynch him if he dares to run away.

Though Huck does not express explicit concern about his immediate safety, I read that Huck’s distress is smeared by racial anxiety. Huck’s constant preoccupation with a deathly feeling both inside and outside ‘home’ is pertinent to him being a pariah child who is social distress to the community. Lynching and many mob violence that Huck witnesses over his

¹⁰⁴ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 146.

¹⁰⁵ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 146.

journey and the imminent danger coming from traveling with runaway slave Jim underline that Huck's preoccupation with deathly feeling and his proximity to incessant danger make him acknowledge that they are not unfortunate incidents happening only to others. Unlike Tom, who never needs to worry about such trouble even when he causes a serious agitation, Huck, being a boy of Potter's and Pap's kind, is susceptible that he cannot be excused without taking a consequence. They are altogether racialized for their differences. If Huck feels stifled and deathly lonely inside the home under the pressure of domestication and civilization to make him whiter, when he leaves home he has to face the deaths of others and has to be on constant alert for the safety of himself and Jim who are not white enough. Or, like Pap and Jim who are suspected as a murderer of Huck, which Mrs. Judith Loftus mentions when Huck stops by her place pretending to be someone else, he can be accused of what he has not done. Huck is not immune to Richard Henry Pratt's words, "Kill the Indian, Save the man."

Huck's comprehension of such affiliation is partly expressed over his moral dilemma regarding his silence about fugitive Jim. When he is questioned about fugitive slaves by two men, Huck feels "stuck," battling between the guilty feeling of 'stealing' Jim who someone's property and the humanitarian sympathy for Jim's aspiration for freedom and the reunion with his family. While ruminating what to do, he articulates his indecisiveness as something beyond his control, saying:

They went off and I got aboard the raft, feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it warn't no use for me to try to learn to do right; a body that don't get *started* right when he's little ain't got no show—when the pinch comes there ain't nothing to back him up and keep him to his work, and so he gets beat.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 113.

Though he does acknowledge that his hiding Jim would be regarded wrong by the society's moral and legal standard, he rationalizes his "immorality" has been conditioned by his upbringing. Unlike other people who are educated what is right and wrong since they are little, Huck has not had a chance of learning it until recently. He has had no guiding influence such as parental figures who can take him back onto the right path and keep him there. He is "a body that don't get *started* right when he's little ain't got no show" and thus he is nearly doomed to go wrong. As American literature scholar Cynthia Callahan states, "a narrative of presumptive guilt exposit the racial rules."¹⁰⁷ Huck's comprehension of himself, in this regard, makes a parallel to Tom's accusation of Huck's possible "low characters." A similar thought has been exhibited earlier when he wonders about Miss Watson's teaching on God's way. He cannot comprehend why a mighty being like God would ever care about someone like him when he is "so ignorant, and so kind of low-down and ornery."¹⁰⁸ This thought is confirmed once again when Huck who is impersonating Tom asks Tom to help him to rescue Jim from the Phelps' place. When Tom agrees, Huck is surprised thinking,

"I know what you'll say. You'll say it's dirty, low-down business; but what if it is? I'm low down; and I'm a-going to steal him, and I want you keep mum and not let on. Will you?"

His eye lit up, and he says: "I'll help you steal him!"

Well, I let go all holts then, like I was shot. It was the most astonishing speech I ever heard—and I'm bound to say Tom Sawyer fell considerable in my estimation. Only I couldn't believe it. Tom Sawyer a n***-stealer!¹⁰⁹

While there is no harm for someone like himself who is "low-down" to do stealing, Tom is different from him. Thus, when Tom is willing to join the plan, Huck sees that Tom is recklessly

¹⁰⁷ Cynthia Callahan, *Kin of Another Kind: Transracial Adoption in America Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 76-77.

¹⁰⁸ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 24.

¹⁰⁹ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 235.

“lowering” himself. I connect Huck’s self-degradation compared to Tom to the understanding of the heredity and the environment rising in the late nineteenth century. As far as Huck is Huck, he cannot be like Tom, ever. Thus, while Huck’s persistent desire to be a part of Tom’s band can be read as his secret longing for a certain kind of membership, Huck repeatedly reveals his belief that his place is different from Tom and other respectable boys due to his birth and upbringing. His willingness to succumb to Tom’s lead even when Tom is stubborn, ridiculous, and tyrannical is rooted in Huck’s belief in Tom’s superiority.

The expression on the effect of heredity and environment appears also in Huck’s comments on the king and the duke. When Jim asks Huck, “Don’t it s’prise you de way dem kings carries on, Huck?” Huck answers, “Well, it don’t, because it’s in the breed. I reckon they’re all alike.”¹¹⁰ They are unlawful and vicious because there is the “bad blood” in their “breed” and “it is the way they’re raised.”¹¹¹ As much as Pap, Muff Potter, and Injun Joe, the king and the duke are “ain’t no account.” Due to their behavioral and inherent “native” characteristics, they are present vagrants and future exiles. So is Huck.

Huck’s alliance with them than with boys like Tom position Huck not just as a child pariah but also as someone whose total adaptability to ‘home’ through adoption is discredited. Becoming a ward of an honorable member of the town like Widow Douglas does not exempt Huck from threatening racialization that has originated from both his birth and upbringing. Despite the noticeable escalation of his footing as a ward of the widow and his expanded chances for the future with help of the new wealth, Huck still does not stand on the same level with Tom due to his differential origin and lack of good influence by far. As such, he is always already marked racially so that with a little misstep or misbehavior he will be labeled of “lower characters,”

¹¹⁰ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 168.

¹¹¹ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 169.

which never happens to Tom. I argue the ambivalent racial status of Huck is one of the things from which Huck is running away from since the demand of ‘sivilization’ itself is what marks Huck as the potential racial other and that is the very reason that he is put to remain as a Bad Bad Boy without being able to be a Good Boy. Huck’s Bad Bad Boy status is rooted in the constant necessity to remind him of his origin and background as a pariah child begotten by a fallen man. Huck must keep proving that he is not of the low kind such as Pap, Potter, or Injun Joe. He may be taken into care and protection of a family & a home, but he remains as the other whose potential difference likely keeps him apart. He is re-located to a home to get redeemed but still is marked as a “stranger” placed within.

The timing of the expression of Widow Douglas’ interest in Huck, therefore, is critical since it happens when Huck has become more than as a child in need. Her decision is accidentally made and publicly claimed along with Huck’s acquisition of property with the treasure Huck and Tom have found. Their ownership of the treasure becomes possible with the death of Injun Joe, and Huck and Tom’s knowledge of its existence and location conveniently allows them to claim it as theirs. Put differently, only after Huck becomes a man of property, which differentiates him from destitute and dissipated Pap’s kind of people on the verge of racial demotion, Huck finally earns his eligibility as a child to be nurtured at home.

The widow said she meant to give Huck a home under her roof and have him educated; and that when she could spare the money she would start him in business in a modest way. Tom's chance was come. He said:

"Huck don't need it. Huck's rich."¹¹²

Here, Huck’s transformation to an “adoptable” child is constituted more by the monetary fortune he now possesses, and less by the fact that he is a child who deserves to be a beneficiary of a

¹¹² Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 215.

“home.” Widow Douglas’ claim that she will take him and educate him hopefully to become a man in business is thus efficiently negated by Tom, who says that Huck does *not need* such help since he already has become rich. If Widow Douglas intends to provide Huck with financial means for a decent civilized life, Huck conveniently achieves it by himself. The novel’s narration also confirms what makes Huck (eligible to) be part of the community: “Huck Finn’s wealth and the fact that he was now under Widow Douglas’ protection introduced him into society.”¹¹³ Thus, the kinship bestowed to Huck, which is the right to protection and dependency, is ironically obtained as Huck achieves independence with the obtainment of property.

While adoption and the acquisition of the property happen almost at the same time for Huck, we can break down the rationalization of Huck’s adoption as the following: once Huck obtains the wealth, though it is not immediately known to people, he enters the public realm as a person of property; as he is likely to have some future due to the newly found wealth, his welfare and belonging are now a public matter; he is perceived as who needs protection, education, and care by a respectable family, not a troublesome rascal to be removed; he is a child deprived of a proper home and respectable parents; thus, Huck is perceived as an “orphan” regardless of Pap or put differently because his parent is Pap; for the best interest of him, Huck is claimed as a son of a renowned member of the town and he will be safely relocated at home and will be duly civilized. The privatization of Huck by the well-established household through adoption, while his past and birth still mark him, achieve double goals. The villainous child is removed and relocated to someone’s home, while a good home will (re)produce another respectable member of the society. Huck’s civilization and kinship, thus, are no longer just a private matter. As

¹¹³ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 217.

Sánchez-Eppler writes, “how the rearing of children proves a primary site of interaction between public standards and private life.”¹¹⁴

The most prominent event that shows the changing notion of a child as a public issue is that Widow Douglas and Judge Thatcher’s attempt to win their custody right over Huck’s biological father Pap through a court ruling.

The judge and the widow went to law to get the court to take me away from him and let one of them be my guardian; but it was a new judge that had just come, and he didn't know the old man; so he said courts mustn't interfere and separate families if they could help it; said he'd druther not take a child away from its father. So Judge Thatcher and the widow had to quit on the business.¹¹⁵

Though this legal battle is so briefly described, it demonstrates that the modern adoption of a forlorn boy like Huck takes up not just the rebirth of a child also but the removal of biological parents’ natural right if they do not live up to the society’s expectation of “good” parents. In this case, the widow’s parenthood insists on not just adopting a child who needs care and help but also the legal severance of a relationship between the biological father and the child in the name of “the best interest of a child.”

The law’s new authority to designate someone who is not related by birth as a more qualified caregiver over a biological parent enabled a significant intervention into a private sphere of kinship. For instance, the first U.S. modern adoption law, Massachusetts’ An Act to Provide for the Adoption of Children of 1851, confirms that once a child is legally adopted, the child will become a legal child of adoptive parents, holding all the rights given to a biological child. Furthermore, Section 7 decrees that the relationship with a natural parent shall be discontinued wholly.

¹¹⁴ Sánchez-Eppler, xx-xxi.

¹¹⁵ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 33.

Sect. 7. The natural parent or parents of such child shall be deprived, by such decree of adoption, of all legal rights whatsoever as respects such child; and such child shall be freed from all legal obligations of maintenance and obedience, as respects such natural parent or parents.¹¹⁶

While the statute emphasizes the necessity of written consent of biological parents or relatives, if they are alive, to constitute adoption, it declares that the authority to end a birth relationship between parents and a child and to transfer parental rights to another party when the court sees right belongs to a judge, therefore, a state.

The 1838 *Ex Parte Crouse* of Pennsylvania Supreme Court made a monumental decision that established *parens patriae* of refuges and reformatories before the 1851 Act. Mary Ann Crouse, a fourteen-year-old girl, was sent to the Philadelphia House of Refuge since “by reason of vicious conduct” she became beyond her mother’s control and therefore “from regard to the moral and future welfare of the said infant she should be placed under the guardianship of managers of the House of Refuge.” Yet, disagreeing with it, the girl’s father made a petition for *habeas corpus* and insisted her confinement was unconstitutional.¹¹⁷ Though this case did not deny the father’s parental right to the child, the court ruled that Mary Ann’s staying at the Refuge did not violate the child’s constitutional right, since the Refuge is not a prison for punishment but a school for a reformation of her incorrigibility. When a biological parent failed to control her, the responsibility could go to the state’s institution.

Gradually over the nineteenth century, the court emerged as a state apparatus in which the sustainability of biological parents’ natural rights could be questioned for the public wellness that is emblemized and realized through the wellbeing of a child. As Nancy Zey puts, the court

¹¹⁶ See 1851 Chap. 0324. An Act to Provide For The Adoption Of Children. Massachusetts.
<https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/95599>

¹¹⁷ See *Ex parte Crouse*, 4 Wharton 9 (Pa. 1839).

was becoming “the administration center for orphans.”¹¹⁸ If there is a way to prevent Huck from becoming another Pap, Potter, or Injun Joe who is woe and a potential threat to society, though Huck may never be able to become another Tom, a bigger risk at least can be curbed by placing him at a better home with a better parent. Hence, Widow Douglas and Judge Thatcher’s attempt to intervene at not just Pap’s way of parenting but his parental rights themselves through the appeal in the court notes the changing perception about the children’s welfare and the rise of the regulatory power of the state over kinship in the late nineteenth century.

In *Huckleberry Finn*, Pap’s right as a biological father is not stripped because the new judge has decided that “courts mustn't interfere and separate families.” This decision reflects the caution against a hasty termination of a biological family relationship by the force of the law. Yet, the judge’s ruling of keeping Pap’s fatherly right, according to Huck, is out of his misunderstanding of Pap’s (dis)qualification: “he didn't know the old man.” This remark indicates that the ruling could have been different if Pap’s personality and history of misconduct had been accurately known to the judge. Pap’s ineligibility is a fact, whereas the court does not say so this time. This demonstrates the critical shift in the understanding of parental rights to their child, from what is naturally given and therefore inalienable to something that can be denied and legally constituted if necessary in the eyes of the law.

It is worth noting that the new judge’s offer of a chance of reformation for Pap is made after the Huck’s custody right has been decided in favor of Pap. By securing his parental rights to Huck, Pap also secures his extended access to the wealth of his son; therefore, he is not a man without property like before. For one night, Pap looks back at his disorderly life with regret, and the new judge and his wife cry, hearing his words of repentance. But the pledge is too soon

¹¹⁸ Zey, 179.

broken, “mak[ing] a man of” the drunkard fails, and he is given upon.¹¹⁹ Soon after this, Pap dies and disappears from the story for good. Though Pap’s death is accidental, it is a necessary death since there is no more hope for his changes. The new judge expresses his pessimistic view of Pay saying, “he reckoned a body could reform the old man with a shotgun, maybe, but he didn’t know no other way.”¹²⁰ For younger Huck who still has a chance to be better and has wealth, a father like Pap had better be gone.

Historian Daniel T. Rodgers discusses the “tale of lost and recovered fortune” as one of the popular formulae of the nineteenth century’s boy’s literature, presenting Horatio Alger’s works as examples. He explains that “fortune was not built through work and self-denial, nor was it the reward of bravery and goodness; it was a stolen legacy and the hero’s mission is not to earn it but find it.”¹²¹ In this regard, Huck’s story may seem to resemble Alger’s stories of upward mobility, in which the protagonist boy earns a rightful place and justice is set right. But Huck’s obtainment of an adoptable boy status is marked by another troublesome fact that the fortune previously belonged to Injun Joe who was ousted for being a biracial villain, or more correctly who was treated as a villain for being biracial. Also, Huck’s acquisition of the treasure comes at the cost of Injun’s life. Therefore, when Widow Douglas’ adoption of Huck aims to provide him with a chance for becoming a ‘man,’ Huck permanently owns his earning of adoptability to Injun Joe’s death. In other words, disposable Injun Joe’s life has become the price for Huck’s ‘sivilization.’ So far as Huck’s new status relies on such bloody wealth, he is not free from the fact that his propertied whiteness is paid by the life of the man of color who was pushed

¹¹⁹ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 33.

¹²⁰ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 35.

¹²¹ Daniel T. Rodgers, “Nineteenth-Century Boy’s Literature,” in *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by Caroline Field Levander and Carol J. Singley (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 93-94.

outside the social boundary for not being white enough. Here, Huck's racial charge is double-folded: he first seems to attain the adoptability by obtaining the wealth which can promote him out of the racially contingent pariah status, but the wealth is inherited from another pariah man, Injun Joe, whose racial identity, as well as lifestyle, denounces him from standing equal to other white men. By becoming a man of property, Huck is expected to adjust himself substantially from savagery to civilization. On the other hand, the need for such change does not occur to Tom who claims, "being rich ain't going to keep me back from turning robber."¹²²

A Fugitive Child and Absent Parents: Resisting the Fiction of Kinship

Huck's run in *Huckleberry Finn* is a long and extended one, but it is not his first run from Widow Douglas' place. Briefly, Huck runs away not long after his stay at her home at the end of *Tom Sawyer*, which is shown again at the beginning of *Huckleberry Finn*. Townspeople search him futilely for two days and worry if he died. That townspeople cannot know where Huck is, even when they make a collective effort to find Huck, shows how Huck's later long disappearance could be possible. Huck's world exists outside the society which normative people reside in; it is in a "forbidden society."¹²³ He can become out of their reach when he decides to go beyond the 'sivilization' boundary, whether it is geographical or cultural. Whenever Huck stays at 'home,' it is a decision made more by Huck himself, less by others.

As a good example, when Huck determines to stop Injun Joe from hurting Widow Douglas, it is not because he seeks to get rewarded for his act like being adopted. If he has wanted any prize, it is keeping having fun with Tom doing the treasure hunting and other silly games. As far as he is invited to Tom's life-threatening but exciting plays, he does not feel any

¹²² Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 219.

¹²³ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 46.

other need. Loving parents and a luxurious home are not part of his consideration. Huck's such preference is early exhibited in the family reunion when he and other boys return from the Island. He feels uneasy while other boys are showered with kisses and tears, but Huck's discomfort is not because he also wants to get the attention, as said, "And the loving attentions Aunt Polly lavished upon him were the one thing capable of making him more uncomfortable than he was before."¹²⁴ He feels uncomfortable, not because Aunt Polly does not show an immediate affection for Huck until urged by Tom, but more because he does not have a desire for it.

As much as he is not touched by Aunt Polly's transient courtesy, Huck is not sincerely welcoming the custody under the roof of Widow Douglas, either. Widow Douglas, besides Jim, shows the most genuine kindness to Huck in the whole story. She is already treating him warmly when Huck gets sick, while she still does not know that it is Huck who has saved her life. Also, she is the almost only person who believes that Huck needs good care like any other child. In general, she is described as a very nice person: "the widow Douglass, fair, smart, and forty, a generous, good-hearted soul and well-to-do, her hill mansion the only palace in the town, and the most hospitable and much the most lavish in the matter of festivities that St. Petersburg could boast."¹²⁵ But their relationship is formal than familial and affectionate. She barely appears in person in *Huckleberry Finn* except at the beginning part of the book. She does not develop a substantial familial relationship with Huck, nor gets involved in any following major events of Huck. Widow Douglas' role in *Huckleberry Finn* appears very limited to paying the debt and kindness to Huck by providing him with the 'home' where he can be civilized and nurtured.

¹²⁴ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 119.

¹²⁵ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 37.

When Huck runs away, the thought of Widow Douglas does not make him stop. While the widow shows more patience and generosity than any other people, familial affection does not spring from their relationship; for both parties, a familial bond is not what ties them together. Huck has never asked for it, and accordingly, Huck does not feel any obligation to be grateful to her for his adoption. Instead, when he is ‘housed’ he takes it as a bitter price that he has to pay to keep hanging out with Tom as shown at the end of *Tom Sawyer* as well as at the beginning of *Huckleberry Finn*. Huck suffers under the burden of ‘sivilization’ - “a kind of apprentice manhood, in which the “savage boy” was trained up into an assertive man.”¹²⁶ After a short period of trial, Huck disappears into the woods since he feels like a dead when “the bars and shackles of civilization [that] shut him in and bound him hand and foot.”¹²⁷

After Huck’s first attempt to hide away, Tom tries to persuade Huck to come back. Tom argues that “Well, everybody does that way, Huck.”¹²⁸ Besides his internal thoughts on Tom’s fanciful ways, Huck makes the longest protest against Tom in the history of their relationship. Him not being the “everybody” is the critical point that Huck raises.

"Don't talk about it, Tom. I've tried it, and it don't work; it don't work, Tom. It ain't for me; I ain't used to it. The widder's good to me, and friendly; but I can't stand them ways . . . —everything's so awful reg'lar a body can't stand it. . . Tom, it don't make no difference. I ain't everybody, and I can't *stand* it. . . . It's just worry and worry, and sweat and sweat, and a-wishing you was dead all the time. Now these clothes suits me, and this bar'l suits me, and I ain't ever going to shake 'em any more. Tom, I wouldn't ever got into all this trouble if it hadn't 'a' ben for that money; now you just take my sheer of it along with your'n, and gimme a ten-center sometimes—not many times, becuz I don't give a dern for a thing 'thout it's tollable hard to git.”¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Sarah E. Chinn, *Inventing Modern Adolescence: The Children of Immigrants in Turn-of-the-Century America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 8.

¹²⁷ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 217.

¹²⁸ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 218.

¹²⁹ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 218.

Huck insists that he does not want to be a “reg'lar” boy. He has tried but learned that he feels only awful, as if he has been “dead all the time” or wishes he was dead.¹³⁰ While Tom believes in following other people’s path after having occasional adventures, Huck perceives that it is not a life he will and can fit into. Even when he desires to “fit in,” he does not have full access to a life of “respectable boys” like other; the wealth has positioned him a little higher, but not on the same level with Tom as he is marked differently for being a “savage” child of a pariah man. In brief, not only will he never be able to be another “regular” Tom, Huck actively refuses to be regularized, domesticated, and civilized. His refusal to conform to the normative expectation is concretized as his running away: from civilization, home, and parents.

One thing to note is that Huck never considers himself as an orphan who needs to be guided and cared for regardless of his biological father’s prolonged absence and the lack of maternal care. He is put under the watch of multiple adults in the book, but he never fully accepts any of them as his parental figure. Huck’s understanding of himself not as an orphan, however, does not mean that Huck has a strong filial attachment to Pap. Rather, Pap used to be a fearful person for younger Huck, as described with his immediate anxiety when Pap is expected to come back soon at the beginning of *Huckleberry Finn*. His agony mostly arises from the physical abuse that Pap used to do upon him, as said, “[h]e used to always whale me when he was sober and could get his hands on me.”¹³¹ His fear is expressed once again during their co-stay, as Huck grumbles, “by and by pap got too handy with his hick'ry, and I couldn't stand it. I was all over welts.”¹³²

¹³⁰ “I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead.” See Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 16.

¹³¹ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 24.

¹³² Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 37.

But Huck's "uncomfortable feeling" about Pap's habitual violence should not be mistaken as his wishing for Pap's death. When he says, "Pap he hadn't been seen for more than a year, and that was comfortable for me; I didn't want to see him no more," it is about his distaste of the physical abuse he has to experience with Pap than the wish for Pap's death. While Huck minds Pap's violence, what he wants is a safe distance from Pap's violence and his bad temper than his actual death. A life with Pap rather allows him a relaxing and liberating life as far as Pap does not lose his temper. Staying in the woods after leaving Widow Douglas' place, he feels blissful: "[the life at woods] was kind of lazy and jolly, laying off comfortable all day, smoking and fishing, and no books nor study."¹³³ He soon goes back to the "idle, lawless, and vulgar" Huck in rags who appears in the beginning part of *Tom Sawyer*. Furthermore, Huck's stress about Pap's violence is much eased when Pap shows up to Widow Douglas' house. Seeing him, Huck realizes that Pap is not as powerful as before; instead, he looks aged and debilitated. "I used to be scared of him all the time, he tanned me so much. I reckoned I was scared now, too; but in a minute I see I was mistaken . . . but right away after I see I warn't scared of him worth bothring about. He was most fifty, and he looked it."¹³⁴ Seeing that his father appears older and weaker, Huck realizes that he does not need to feel scared of him like before. Thus, if he can avoid Pap's recurring violence, he has no strong reason to mind living with Pap. For that reason, Huck's indifferent response to the news of the discovery of a drowned body in the river, which is believed to be Pap by most people, does not testify Huck's welcoming of Pap's death, either. His detachment comes from his distrust that the found body is his father's, after learning the way the corpse was floating.

¹³³ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 36.

¹³⁴ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 31.

What Huck seeks for by running away is a *parentless* life: a life away from any kind of parenting. Pap is regarded as an immoral and unsuitable father, but when he is around, Huck is more liberated from society's pressures of guidance and nurture. The price of non-conformity is a label as a delinquent, but he can enjoy freedom and independence. The new cultural and legal understanding of children as innocent, immature, and vulnerable who need parents, guardians, or custodians to protect them postulates that children do not have agency – they are “dependent” beings. In her study of children's role in the making of social meaning in the nineteenth century, Sánchez-Eppler points out that “[c]hildhood is not only culturally, but also legally and biologically understood as a period of dependency. . . . The very belief in children's “specialness” – how vulnerable, innocent, ignorant beings they require adult protection and training – thus marks childhood as culturally irrelevant.”¹³⁵ As people in the making, they are “partial” and therefore incomplete. For not being fully human yet, “the figure of the child demarcated the boundaries of personhood, a limiting case for agency, voice, or enfranchisement.” But the children's “right to care, protection, and guidance,” that is the right to dependency, is what endorses the necessity of parents, the family, and home.¹³⁶ Highlighting the intersection of adoption studies and American culture and literature, Carol Singley writes, “[t]he success of the fictive adoptive placement parallels the optimism associated with a growing middle class and serves as a reminder that there is a “place” for everyone in an expanding nation.”¹³⁷

Yet, the promise of reward through kinship and home is not realized for Huck either with Pap or with Widow Douglas. Huck feels “dreadful lonesome” when he is locked up in the

¹³⁵ Sánchez-Eppler, xvi.

¹³⁶ Sánchez-Eppler, xxvi.

¹³⁷ Singley, “Childhood Studies and Literary Adoption,” 193.

shanty for three days while Pap makes a trip to town.¹³⁸ But he feels similarly when he is alone at night in his room at Widow Douglas' place, which makes him wish, "I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead."¹³⁹ Neither his biological father nor the good-willed adoptive parent does not make him less lonely.¹⁴⁰ The historically constructed idea that a good family completes one's life and without it a person's life lacks something crucial is undercut by the helpless loneliness that seizes Huck. As much as a biological parent's presence promises "natural" love and care, adoptive kinship, even when it is with a good intention, does not guarantee emotional, as well as physical, comfort for a child. While the outside world does not mean liberation, the home does not signify the shelter from all the problems and worries for children as the reformers and adoption supporters believed. Pointing out that "the rescue agencies were always bothered by" unruly children like "runaways," Tom Cockburn suggests of seeing children's recalcitrant behavior like running away, truancy, and absenteeism as "a form of resistance to the imposition of middle-class standards of education on working-class children."¹⁴¹ Then, Huck's running away can be interpreted as "a resistance to felicitous endings found in popular nineteenth century adoption tales" and domestic fictions, and a denial to be normalized, domesticated, and civilized.¹⁴² He is a child character set in "the competing ideological conceptions of childhood – as both a dependent state in need of discipline and an independent 'articulation of freedom in a world of constraints.'¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 37.

¹³⁹ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 16.

¹⁴⁰ The lonesome feeling that he exhibits in these cases are of a different kind from the lonesomeness he observes in nature while he is during the journey. For example, the quietly running river is also described as lonesome: "And afterwards we would watch the lonesomeness of the river, and kind of lazy along, and by and by lazy off to sleep." See Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 136.

¹⁴¹ Cockburn, 39-40.

¹⁴² Singley, "Childhood Studies and Literary Adoption," 188.

¹⁴³ Sánchez-Eppler, 42.

In this light, Huck is a “fugitive child” from the structured and forced dependency of kinship care. He sets him free from the grasp of both his biological father and the adoptive parent, by framing his disguised death. Ironically, the invention of his death is what allows him to live as he wishes. While many scholarships on the nineteenth-century American literature discuss a decline of paternal order and a rise of maternal sensibility as a proper guiding ideal, Huck’s refusal to be nestled at home either with a biological father or an adoptive mother is a denial of both authorities and a challenge to the myth of the family as a heavenly refuge from the harsh and dangerous world. Furthermore, Huck’s choice not to be bound by a “home” signifies the contest of the modern adoption that was built on the child-centered notion of kinship by insisting the child’s choice over a parental figure’s choice and authority. As Modell states critiquing the cultural belief in the naturalness of kinship, “[c]hoice” that adoptive kinship testifies “violates the cultural assumption that a parent-child relationship is a necessary relationship.”¹⁴⁴

As the testimonies of orphan train riders show, the adopted children’s life with a new family was not paradisaic unlike what the social reformers and the public imagined. As depicted by Andrea Warren’s book on Lee Nailling’s experience and Christina Baker Klein’s recent fictional account of the orphan trains, a trip from east to west without knowing where their journey would end for children was scary and confusing than hopeful. In a general selection process, which was conducted until the early 1890s, children were displayed for onlookers like items for sale. Warren cites the 1889 editorial that compares the “exhibition” and the “selection” of children by interested prospective adoptive parents to the cattle market: “the crowd standing around . . . were discussing [the children’s] merits

¹⁴⁴ Modell, 233.

and demerits, like they would so many cattle they intended to purchase.”¹⁴⁵ A matching was discursive and disorganized, being far from the romanticized idea of the predestined connection between adoptive parents and a child. The post-adoption service was none at first, and when it was implemented as the placing out program grew, it was not effective. Since the CAS held onto the idea of a clean cut from the past, it offered adoptive parents very limited information about children’s backgrounds. Its collection of information, when available, was insufficient and haphazard. Because of these issues, reaching the 1870s, the CAS was accused of “knowingly sending delinquents and undesirable west” or “dumping the “Eastern refuse.”¹⁴⁶ The dissatisfaction, along with the doubt about the quality of the children, did not occur only on the adoptive parents’ side. Many adoptees were exploited, denied their right to education, and exposed to violence. In the case of female adoptees, they did not have a reliable safeguard in case that an adoptive father or a male sibling made a sexual approach. Since most placements in the orphan trains era were not legal adoption but a distribution of children where they were wanted, even when rape or a sexual relation happened, it was not legally regarded as incest. Like the protagonist of Kate Chopin’s *Summer*, an adopted daughter ended up marrying her adoptive father as a substitute wife after the adoptive mother passed away was not very rare, though it was not a highly palatable option for female adoptees.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ quoted in Warren, 47.

¹⁴⁶ Holt, 122.

¹⁴⁷ The legal interpretation of an adopted child’s position within kinship was very murky until the mid-20th century. Regarding whether a sexual relationship with an adopted daughter was incestuous, the Mississippi state court decided that an adopted child was not a daughter within the incest statutes, understanding a daughter only as a biologically begotten child (“an immediate female descendant”), not an adopted daughter, a stepdaughter, or a daughter-in-law, based upon the definition made by *People vs. Kaiser*, 119 Cal. 456. See *State v. Lee*, 196 Miss. 311, 17 So. 2d 277 (Miss. 1944).

Mrs. Judith Loftus's kindhearted reception of Huck who has disguised a girl named Sarah Mary Williams can be thought in relation to the mass placement of orphans, child labor, and adoptive kinship whose terms were not greatly beneficial for children in the late nineteenth century. Mrs. Loftus, instantly noticing Huck's impersonation, says:

"... Set down and stay where you are. I ain't going to hurt you, and I ain't going to tell on you, nuther. You just tell me your secret, and trust me. I'll keep it; and, what's more, I'll help you... You see, you're a runaway 'prentice, that's all. It ain't anything. There ain't no harm in it. You've been treated bad, and you made up your mind to cut. Bless you, child, I wouldn't tell on you. Tell me all about it now, that's a good boy."¹⁴⁸

She shows an understanding of the hardship of a young child who works as an apprentice, which was a common arrangement of the adoption placement in the late nineteenth century. Most boys were taken in as a labor force and their indenture-like working conditions were not gentle. Showing the deep sympathy about the bad treatment Huck would have experienced, she invites Huck not to be afraid. Instead of chastising him for running away or reporting him out, she coaches him how to act like a girl not to be caught later. Mrs. Loftus's perception, as much as Huck's frustration with the life at Widow Douglas' house, reveals the disjuncture between the conceptualization of children as vulnerable and cherished subjects and the lived experience of children whose life was challenging even with the "gift" of kinship and home. This attests to a "fiction of kinship," not in the sense that adoptive kinship is not real or dysfunctional, but in the sense that adoptive kinship is another system of bordering and the family is a mechanism of normalizing.

Becoming one of the respectable children, thus, does not come for free. When Huck is "the juvenile pariah of the village," "Huckleberry [is] always dressed in the cast-off

¹⁴⁸ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 70.

clothes of full-grown men, and they [are] in perennial bloom and fluttering with rags.”¹⁴⁹ Huck used to dress up as a man and act like a man. Put differently, he carries himself as a “man-child” who is responsible for no one but himself. He is rarely dependent on anyone, and he is content. When he becomes a child of the public with the newly gained wealth, the perception that he (also) needs a good home and a nurturing parent furnishes him with an adoptive kinship that is supposedly better than what he used to have. However, to have the benefits, Huck must let go of his independence and has to become an idealized dependent child, which is admitting that his previous being has been faulty, untamed, and problematic.

From this perspective, Pap is highly instrumental for Huck being an “absent father.” He is not only absent in most pages of both books, but Pap dies soon after Huck’s journey begins. But Huck does not learn Pap’s death until the last page of the story when Jim finally confesses that he witnessed Pap’s dead body in the abandoned floating house during the flood right after they left the Jackson’s Island but did not tell Huck. Thus, Huck’s escape from Pap does not signify Huck’s intention to cut the relationship with his biological father nor wish for Pap’s death. He does not feel affectionate toward his biological father as much as he does not yearn parental love from him; yet, this does not amount to the wish for Pap’s death. Furthermore, Huck never feels wicked enough to wish for someone’s death including phony villains such as the duke and the king. Even when he knows that they are shameless tricksters, he feels sorry seeing them surrounded by the angry mob who have discerned their fraudulence and try to punish them. From this perspective, Huck’s journey can be read as his escape from Pap who capriciously confines him as well as Widow Douglas who tries to teach him the order of civilization. It is his attempt to gain his agency and independence back.

¹⁴⁹ Twain, *Tom Sawyer*, 46

However, Huck is well aware of the limit of his leverage as a child outside the home. Therefore, while Huck runs away from parental authority, Huck brilliantly utilizes the “absent parents” to fend his independent agency. Over the journey, he often presents himself as a child whose parents are sick, poor, and are incapable of adequate care and thus who seeks help from others. Such narratives not only make people feel pity for him but also serve as a smart excuse about a young boy’s suspicious mobility at the moments. By emphasizing having invisible, invalid, incapable, or ineffective parents and avoiding being seen as an orphan or a vagrant juvenile delinquent, Huck finds a way to circumvent unwanted intervention by other adults. For instance, when he introduces himself to Mrs. Judith Loftus in the disguise of a girl, his story is: “My mother’s down sick, and out of money and everything, and I come to tell my uncle Abner Moore.”¹⁵⁰ In another occasion, when he is questioned with whom he is by two runaway slaves hunters, he pretends as if his parents are with himself but they are sick, saying, “it’s pap that’s there, and maybe you’d help me tow the raft ashore where the light is. He’s sick—and so is mam and Mary Ann.”¹⁵¹ The men’s misunderstanding that his fabricated parents are sick with smallpox, which Huck does not correct, is lucky, but by creating the presence of an incapable and invalid parent he successfully prevents the men’s uninvited meddling.¹⁵²

If Jim has not been sneakily sold by the king and the duke, Huck’s journey may continue longer without the need to go to Phelps’ place to rescue Jim. If Tom’s fanciful plan of escaping Jim from the Phelps has succeeded, it could have been “for [them] to run him down the river

¹⁵⁰ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 67.

¹⁵¹ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 111.

¹⁵² Jim is a character who provides both physical and emotional assistance for Huck during their trip. Jim’s royal affection for Huck and his goodness help Huck’s inner growth. On that note, Jim may seem to serve a pseudo-father figure’s role to Huck. However, his role as a paternal figure is severely limited for him being a slave; his status as an enslaved person hinders him from claiming a full authority as a person and an adult. Rather, the infantilization of enslaved African Americans makes Jim as a man-child who cannot assume a parental authority to Huck. Rather, similarly to Huck, Jim runs away from the enforced dependency as an owned property and the infantilized status as a “child” of a master.

on the raft, and have adventures plumb to the mouth of the river, and then tell him about his being free, and take him back up home on a steamboat, in style, and pay him for his lost time, and write word ahead and get out all the n*** around, and have them waltz him into town with a torchlight procession and a brass-band, and then he would be a hero.”¹⁵³ The latter plan is very unlikely, but Huck’s destination is not at home. Thus, when he learns that “Aunt Sally she’s going to adopt me and sivilize me,” he decides to leave for the Territory. He says that he “I been there before” and he “can’t stand it.”¹⁵⁴ He reckons Silas Phelps and Aunt Sally as good and kind people, but he refuses to be put back into the order of home and civilization. Adoptive kinship is not a gift nor a reward that he has been seeking. His plan could have been different if he was Tom. When he is welcomed, fed, and nurtured after being mistaken as Tom by the Phelpses, he thinks, “Being Tom Sawyer was easy and comfortable.”¹⁵⁵ But Huck does know that he is not Tom and cannot be another Tom. Therefore, concluding his adventurous journey that makes up *Huckleberry Finn*, he declares that he will be on the road again. Instead of becoming a stranger-within under the familial order that he does not want to comply with or he cannot be a perfect part of, he tries an uncontained, unruly, unorganized life on the road. His impending departure from kinship and home also can be read as Huck’s resistance to becoming a “man” as the society expects him to be. Becoming a good man includes establishing a family through heterosexual marriage and reproduction. Unlike Tom, whose future includes Becky Thatcher or another girl like Becky, Huck has no prospective companion. Rather than seeing it as Huck’s exclusion from the ‘normal’ kinship sustained by biological reproduction through marriage, I suggest that Huck shows a child figure who refuses to become a father that builds a home and a family in the way

¹⁵³ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 294.

¹⁵⁴ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 296.

¹⁵⁵ Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 233.

the U.S. society expects its members to do for their legitimacy. Whether his upcoming adventure will be safe, joyful, or imperious is open-ended, as his previous adventure has shown, but at least he does not plan to feel 'dead' again by confirming to the familial and societal order, which reserves the cultural assumption that the home and family are indispensable and completes a 'normal,' respectable American.

Conclusion

In the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, thousands of children per year were taken to a new home for their best interests as well as society's need to control unruly children without proper parenting in the rapidly developing urban area. But, like Sara Williams whom Huck once impersonates, many children who were perceived as orphans who would need the help of adoptive kinship did not find an ideal home where they were placed. The process of constructing Huck as an orphan/adoptee and his (plan to) flight from forced dependency and unsolicited kinship show the tension arising from the changing cultural and legal attitudes toward children and childhood as well as kinship in the late nineteenth century, which intersected with the idea of children as vulnerable, dependent beings and the question of an individual origin and environment. By tracing the reconceptualization of children and childhood in the late nineteenth century and the emergence of the U.S. modern adoption in the form of the mass placement of children as a way to resolve the social problem with them, this chapter argues that unruly, destitute children who were simultaneously viewed as the subject of pity and fear, were produced as the potential and virtual racial other whose dependency and otherness became the condition for their new adoptive kinship.

Chapter 2 – Saving ‘Our’ Children:

Mixed-race Alien Children and U.S. Transnational Kinship

From the 1950s through the early 1960s, the dominant image of the Republic of Korea (hereafter, Korea) to the U.S. public was the war-torn, impoverished country saved from the seizure of communism by the U.S. military intervention and the international humanitarian aid. Though the U.S. and Allied Forces ‘successfully’ defended off the invasion of North Korea that was supported by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, the nationwide destruction of its infrastructure and millions of deaths by the total war left Korea little to begin its reconstruction, while the half of the Korean peninsula went into the hands of ‘communists,’ severing the nation into two. As the U.S. engaged with another ideology-driven battle in Vietnam circa 1954, the memory of the Korean War quickly fell out of the U.S. public’s attention, which made the Korean War known as “the Forgotten War” or “the Unknown War.”

However, Korea’s dismal conditions of living during and after the Korean War made a specific kind of impression upon the mind of the U.S. public: countless Korean waifs in need of help. The U.S. media coverage of Korea in the 1950s was teeming with begging, dingy-looking, and malnourished children. Magazines, newspapers, radio programs, and TV news frequently showed pathetic Korean children who vividly emblemized the country devastated by the war. “Crying babies sat next to the bodies of their dead mothers. Gangs of children roamed the street, foraging for food and sleeping in the rubble. Little girls with their baby brothers or sisters tied to their backs walked from Seoul to Pusan and back again” are common images of Korean children that decorated the news.¹⁵⁶ Laura Briggs critiques the U.S. media’s affective investment in the

¹⁵⁶ Arissa H. Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 22.

“disease, poverty, and war” happening to foreign people in a foreign place, saying that “[f]rom the 1930s to the 1970s, U.S. Americans learned a way to feel about foreign children.”¹⁵⁷ She argues that not only popular magazines such as *Life*, *Readers’ Digest*, *Ladies’ Home*, and *Saturday Review* but also international organizations like the UNICEF normalized the images and narrative of waifs in a strange land using “the grammar of “hunger” or “need” in contemporary U.S. culture.”¹⁵⁸

Due to the chaotic circumstances of the war, there is no accurate record of how many children were “orphaned,” but 100,000 are the common estimate of the number of children who were lost, left, and abandoned by parents’ death or poverty in the war’s wake. Although the sheer number of parentless or homeless children in Korea was big, with the sentimental photojournalism and narratives that produced Korean children as a bleak spectacle of the plight, Korea was known as “the land of orphans” to the world. SooJin Pate points out the portrayal of impoverished Korea and its children as the objects of humanitarian aid educated Americans about how to “gaze” those neocolonial subjects while erasing “the militarized, gendered, racialized, sexualized, and imperialist dimensions of Korean adoption” and the U.S.-Korea relationship.¹⁵⁹ As if living up to its nickname, Korea, starting from 1953, officially began to send its abundant resources—children—to other nations for adoption and reigned as the most sending country for the next four decades. The biggest recipient of these children was the U.S., and it has been so until the present day.

¹⁵⁷ Laura Briggs, *Somebody’s Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 158.

¹⁵⁸ Briggs, *Somebody’s Children*, 144-145.

¹⁵⁹ SooJin Pate, *From Orphan to Adoptee: U.S. Empire and Genealogies of Korean Adoption* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 1, 41-71.

Whereas most Korean children who have been sent to the U.S. and the rest of the world for the last seven decades are full Korean, at the beginning of its transnational adoption mixed-race children were a majority and they were the compelling reason for the initiation of Korea's transnational adoption.¹⁶⁰ Hurh Won Moo's study in 1972 estimates that a total of 12,280 mixed-race children were born between 1950 and 1965.¹⁶¹ Facing the living outcome of the intimacy, either coerced or voluntary, between U.S. servicemen and Korean women, both Korea and the U.S. were troubled with the uncanny presence of mixed-race children whose familial, racial, and national belonging was in question. Historian Arissa Oh, investigating why mixed-race GI babies arose as an agitating problem in postwar Korea, argues that the "GI baby problems" became a state project, which resulted in the systematic development of transnational adoption of the U.S. driven by the Cold War politics, American Christianity, the romantic narratives of humanitarian rescue, and consumerism.¹⁶²

Yet, the years that mixed-race children were a majority in the U.S.-Korea transnational adoption in their number and significance was very short in its history of nearly seven decades, though the production of Korean mixed-race children fathered by U.S. military servicemen has continued.¹⁶³ Though the first 'official' U.S.-Korea transnational adoption was sparked with the

¹⁶⁰ There are various terms used to call mixed-race children such as GI baby, UN baby, *honhyŏla* (mixed-blood child), and more derogatory terms like *japjonga* (crossbreed) and *twigi*. While the absolute majority of mixed-race children born by the end of 1960s were children fathered by U.S. military personnel, they were not all children of GI's. From the 1970s, as the Korean government use the military camptown sex industry also to attract foreign tourists and the number of civilian foreigners who visited Korea for business and so on, there were some mixed-race children who were non-GI babies. Thus, while GI baby was one of the common terms used to note mixed-race children fathered by U.S. soldiers since the World War II, and while this chapter studies the transnational transracial kinship sprung in camptowns adjacent to U.S. Army bases, this chapter uses mixed-race children as a main vocabulary to indicate children fathered by U.S. serviceman, while it can be used interchangeable with GI babies.

¹⁶¹ Won Moo Hurh, "Marginal Children of War: An Exploratory Study of American-Korean Children." *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 2, no. 1 (1972): 13.

¹⁶² Oh defines Christian Americanism as the Christian religiosity intertwined with American nationalism and exceptionalism stressing on "an expansive sense of responsibility and a strong belief in the importance of family." See Oh, 79-80, 86-87.

¹⁶³ Korean adoption is commonly used to refer to adoption from South Korea in the U.S. But this chapter calls the adoption between the U.S. and Korea as "the U.S.-Korea adoption" or "the U.S.-Korea transnational

issue of mixed-race children, Korea's 'export' item changed to full Korean children from mixed-race children in the early 1960s. From the 1970s through the mid-1980s, there was a tremendous increase in the number of Korean children sent for overseas adoption, climbing to 8,837 in its peak year of 1985, which amounted to one percent of Korea's total newborn babies of the year. Why and how full Korean children who were racially and culturally foreign were excitedly received by U.S. families in the 1960s onwards is essential to understand the way that transnational and transracial adoption pioneered by Korea's large-scale sending affected U.S. adoptive kinship. When the writer Pearl S. Buck, who was already a mother of two adopted children by then, including a girl born between a Japanese mother and an African American father, founded the Welcome House in 1949, it was because of her frustration with the U.S. adoption agencies that categorized Asian-raced children as well as mixed-raced children as "unadoptable" non-whites. But within less than a decade, several hundreds of Korean children, both full and mixed-race, were adopted by Americans annually.

While acknowledging the pivotal role that full Korean children have played in the re-configuration of Asianness and transnational transracial kinship in the U.S. cultural and political understanding, this chapter turns its attention to the hyper-visible, over-represented, but silenced, marginalized figures of Korean mixed-race children whose familial, racial, cultural, and national belonging was questioned and tested. As Oh states, the problem of mixed-race children created the "institutional and imaginative preconditions for the establishment of" not only Korean transnational adoption but American transnational transracial adoption.¹⁶⁴ The U.S.-Korea transnational adoption that began with the mixed-race children's issue established the standard of

adoption" to emphasize that it is a dual state project, thinking that the term Korean adoption is more from the U.S. perspective that specifies a sending country only.

¹⁶⁴ Oh, 20.

transnational adoption for the rest of the world in the twentieth century, but it could be sustained and expanded because it soon prioritized another kind of children. The political, moral, and emotional appeal regarding Korean mixed-race children's hardships tied to their racial anomaly in their mother's country successfully substantiated the urgency for the unprecedented transfer of children across the national, cultural, and racial borders to their father's country, but once the system settled in, they faded out, overshadowed by a more coveted symbol of the new era, full Korean children. Neither fully Korean nor American ethnically and nationality-wise, and not White for being half Korean or being half black in the case of Korean black children but also not simply black for being partially Asian, the indeterminate in-betweenness of the mixed-race children fathered by U.S. servicemen and mothered by Korean mothers was vexing.

I find Leslie Bow's study of Asian Americans' racial interstitiality in the Jim Crow South useful to think of mixed-race children's place in the discourse of the U.S.-Korea adoption. Bow questions the inadmissible place of other "colored people" such as Asians, Native Americans, or mestizos in the South where the color line was set in the dichotomy of black and white with few provisions for gradations of color. Building on Homi Bhabha's notion of "the interstitial passage between fixed identification [that] opens up the possibility of cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy,"¹⁶⁵ Bow argues that Asian American "subjects [who] are made within the space between abjection and normative invisibility" makes us to "envision alternative connections and affiliations that complicate black and white."¹⁶⁶ Their "anomaly is a productive site for understanding the investments that underlie a given system of relations; what is unaccommodated becomes a site of contested interpretation."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, [1995] 2004), 5.

¹⁶⁶ Leslie Bow, *Partly Colored: Asian Americans and Racial Anomaly in the Segregated South* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 5, 4.

¹⁶⁷ Bow, 4.

To put in Bow's language, mixed-race children are "the site of cultural reinscription, the place where difference is made to conform to social norms." Their deviant racial difference must be managed through their removal from Korea and an indecent mother and their absorption into a model American family with capable and loving parents. But, simultaneously their anomaly as the racial other in both countries is "the physical manifestation of the law's instability, its epistemological limit, the point of interpellation's excess" that repudiates transnational adoption of mixed-race children as a solution to the "GI baby problem."¹⁶⁸ I argue that as subjects "in a state of simultaneous acceptance and abjection"¹⁶⁹ in the "global family making"¹⁷⁰ of the U.S.-Korea transnational adoption, mixed-race children were structured as exceptions, but their exceptionality was never normalized unlike Asianness of full Korean children and other Asian children adopted into U.S. families in the later decades.

This chapter reads Heinz Insu Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* and Chang-rae Lee's *A Gesture Life* that offer stories of mixed-race children to rethink the narrative of 'redemptive' kinship crossing the national, cultural, and racial line in the Cold War period. Mixed-race children arose as the prime subjects in rationalizing the relocation of Korean children into an American home for the sake of their multifold abjectness, but their half-American body was not a key to happiness or the seamless integration into the American kinship, as much as their half-Korean body was not a doomed curse only. Their Koreanness was disavowed for their body that carried the visible racial difference coming from a foreign father, but their difference that opened the gate to the American family prevented them from a total blending-in due to their

¹⁶⁸ Bow, 4.

¹⁶⁹ Bow, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 9-10.

racial difference that was ambiguous, ambivalent, and anomalous for being neither white nor black, but also not purely Asian.

Focusing on Korean mixed-race children's interstitial racial, cultural, and national position, this chapter looks into transnational and transracial kinship, both adoptive and biological, begotten from the intimacy between U.S. servicemen and Korean women to explore how race informed U.S. kinship, Korean kinship, as well as U.S.-Korea transnational adoption in the 1950s and 1960s. This chapter also looks at mixed-race children who are both biological and adopted children in Fenkl's and Lee's work to critique the U.S. adoption discourse that conceptualized mixed-race adoptees, as well as full Korean children, as parentless, deserted, and unwanted orphans whose best luck was getting adopted. As the previous chapter has discussed, historically adoptees have not been necessarily parentless orphans. Rather, more often than not, they have been socially and legally *constructed* orphans to become suitable and available for adoption. Seeing the connection between U.S. domestic adoption in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that created the mass relocation of children by producing children of the urban poor, particularly immigrants, to social orphans for adoption in the name of the best interest of children and the development of U.S.-Korea transnational adoption in the mid-twentieth century by generating the rescue rhetoric about Asian 'misfit' children who must be saved by 'us,' this chapter particularly investigates the convoluted kinship that Korean mixed-race children fathered by U.S. servicemen and mothered by Korean women are thrown into and out of. By examining the varied transnational transracial familial relationships and the strategy to "manage" the race issue of the transnational transracial family with mixed-race children in the two literary texts, this chapter investigates the way that race built and disrupted kinship in the 1950s and 1960s when racial segregation and aspiration for racial integration disorderly cohabited.

Where Do They Belong?: The Question of Belonging of the War-Born Mixed-Race Children

Korea was neither the very first country that had to figure out what to do with its helpless children in the aftermath of war nor the first country that sent its children for overseas adoption. The violence and devastation of war make children vulnerable, and where war occurs, there are always children who are born of war as well as die of war. However, what arose as a concerning issue with the Korean War was the “post-conflict policies relating to ‘ownership’ of soldiers’ children” who looked different.¹⁷¹ The appearance of mixed-race children born between U.S. soldiers and local Korean women brought the attention of both Korea and the U.S. As Adam Pertman notes, “A small number of international adoptions took place after the two World Wars, when Americans took in orphaned children from Europe. But the practice did not become systematic, and didn’t start regularly crossing color lines, until Americans began adopting the mixed-race children whom G.I.’s had fathered during the Korean War.”¹⁷² Between 1953 and 1962, approximately 15,000 foreign-born children were transnationally adopted and 8,812 of them were from Asia, primarily Korea.¹⁷³ With the dominance of Korean children in transnational adoption, “[i]nternational adoption became almost synonymous with adoption from Korea.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Sabine Lee, *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 11.

¹⁷² Adam Pertman, *Adoption Nation: How the Adoption Revolution Is Transforming America* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 22.

¹⁷³ Howard Alstein and Rita J. Simon, “Introduction,” in *Intercountry Adoption: A Multinational Perspective*, edited by Howard Alstein and Rita J. Simon (New York: Praeger, 1991), 3; E. Wayne Carp, “Introduction: A Historical Overview of American Adoption.” *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 14; Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 175.

¹⁷⁴ Hübinette

As Pertman notes, children already had been crossing national borders before the ‘systematic’ transnational adoption started to emerge after the Korean War. With the growing number of people whose demand exceeded the available supply of healthy white babies, many American private agencies and individuals were looking for children to adopt not just outside the system, which generated gray and black market adoptions, but also outside the U.S. doing “an intentional baby hunt.”¹⁷⁵ The baby smuggling and trafficking across the Canada-U.S. border from the 1930s to the 1970s served the needs of many American homes who were looking for a white baby to adopt. Thousands of children from Roman Catholic Quebec, Canada, and Ireland were adopted into American Catholic homes from the 1940s to the 1970s. The history of these little-studied transnational adoption “market” was the mixed outcome of the changing sexual mores, the persisting stigma on single motherhood, the controversy around birth control, and the increasing demand for healthy white babies in the “baby scoop era.” Criticizing the social stigma on an illegitimate child and an unwed mother and the women’s right on their reproduction limited by the illegalization of abortion, Rickie Solinger has stated: “More than 80 percent of white unwed mothers in maternity homes came to this decision [of relinquishment of their bastard child] ... acting in effect as breeders for white, adoptive parents, for whom they supplied up to nearly 90 percent of all nonrelative infants by the mid-1960s.”¹⁷⁶

Amid these conflicting needs and supplies, there was a new wave of children that emerged outside the U.S. in the post-World War II period. European countries such as Poland,

¹⁷⁵ Rachel Rains Winslow, *The Best Possible Immigrants: International Adoption and the American Family* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 25-26, 35-36.

¹⁷⁶ Rickie Solinger, *Wake up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 95. Karen Balcom’s research also shows how that maternity homes in Canada where unwed mothers ‘hid’ to give birth to a child away from their home functioned to supply children to the gray and black adoption market for U.S. adoptive families. See Karen Andrea Balcom, *The Traffic in Babies: Cross-border Adoption and Baby-selling between the United States and Canada, 1930-1972* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

Czechoslovakia, and Hungary spearheaded a small number of transnational adoptions during the World War II, and it expanded to transnational adoption of “war orphans” to the U.S. from other countries such as West Germany, Greece, and Italy in the late 1940s and the early 1950s.¹⁷⁷ Many of the orphans whose estimated number is 400,000 were unclaimed children of U.S. servicemen.¹⁷⁸ Japan, where the U.S. troops occupied with the end of World War II, joined the sending country club in the mid-1950s, followed by Korea. According to demographer Richard Weil, among over 19,000 foreign-born children who were adopted to the U.S. between 1948 and 1962, 80 percent of them were from six countries – Austria, West Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, and Korea – all of whom (have) hosted the U.S. military bases.¹⁷⁹ Pointing out that West Germany and Japan ranked among the top five sending countries to the U.S. until 1974 and 1972 respectively, Oh connects the U.S. military presence and these countries’ transnational adoption. Unlike other sending European countries, whose children’s adoption was mostly interethnic and interracial, West Germany and Japan bore a different issue with their “brown babies” fathered by African American servicemen and half-white and half-black “occupation babies.”¹⁸⁰ Korea’s decades-long high ranking as a sending country of children to the U.S. was not solely due to the U.S. military presence on its national soil and the ensuing prolonged relationship between U.S. GI’s and Korean women, but the beginning of its transnational adoption was certainly pertinent to the new generation of mixed-race children whose appearance was distinct from the rest of its people, similarly to the issue of mixed-race children in West Germany and Japan.

¹⁷⁷ Winslow, 7-8.

¹⁷⁸ Ellen Herman, *Kinship by Design: A History of Adoption in the Modern United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 216. Herman also cites Norman M. Lobsenz who reported in 1956 that there were 85,000 orphaned children in Germany, 35,000 in England, and up to 300,000 in Asia but as of 1956, only 2,000 American servicemen acknowledged their paternal responsibility. See Herman, 351 and Norman M. Lobsenz, “The Sins of the Fathers,” Redbook (April 1956), 22.

¹⁷⁹ Weil, 179-182.

¹⁸⁰ Oh, 4-6.

In the discussion of the history of the U.S.-Korea adoption, many scholars have focused on the Korean War as the beginning point of the intimate encounter between the U.S. military and Korean civilians, but as the recent studies by Eleana Kim, SooJin Pate, Arissa Oh, Racheal Rains Winslow, and Kori Graves highlight, Koreans' interaction with the U.S. Army personnel started years before the Korean War. Right after Korea's independence from Japan on August 15, 1945, the U.S. Military Government in Korea was established in September 1945 and lasted until August 1948 when Korea established its government. During the Korean War, sixteen countries dispatched its troops as members of the United Nations Command and sixty-seven countries offered various aids for Korea, but the U.S. sent the biggest number of people. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the total 5,720,000 U.S. servicemen served during the Korean War, including 1,789,000 who served in theater.¹⁸¹ The predominant presence of the U.S. military personnel is reflected in the way that mixed-race children were called in Korea. Initially, they were also called "UN orphans" along with many other names, but soon "GI babies" became nomenclature for mixed-race children except for much more derogatory terms. The U.S. occupation of Korea did not discontinue after the war, as its military operation with numerous army bases across Korea has been active until the present day. The extended stay of the U.S. troops has contributed to the continued spawning of mixed-race children, symbolizing the asymmetrical and complicated geopolitical, economic, gender, and race issues of the U.S.-Korea relationship. As historian Sabine Lee notes, "Children whose mere existence frequently creates personal, familial, societal, cultural and political problems in which are often very unsettled postconflict communities and states."¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, "America's War," Fact Sheets, (November 2019), https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf.

¹⁸² Sabine Lee, 1.

Initially, mixed-race children were appealing candidates for transnational adoption for many reasons for both countries. Korea that was reconstructing itself after the war did not have many resources to invest in its social service for needy children. Thus, Korea heavily relied upon foreign aid for the creation and financing of social welfare institutions such as orphanages, hospitals, and schools. Foreign missionaries and soldiers were the major force of such relief effort. For instance, more than three hundred orphanages were erected between 1953 and 1954 with the help of U.S. service people, and “[o]ut of 273 child welfare facilities existing in 2002, 177 were established before 1960 and as many as 144 in the 1950s.”¹⁸³ U.S. missionaries and servicemen were acting as surrogate parents by feeding, clothing, and sheltering destitute children of Korea.¹⁸⁴ Besides of the shortage of national resources for needy children, mixed-race children were the oddity that did not fit into Korea’s ethno-nationalistic belief that they were a culturally and racially homogenous people, when the issue of “one people” was very critical in Korea’s national pride, especially due to its long fight for independence from the Japanese occupation. In the circumstance in which destitute minors outnumbered the nation’s institutional capacity, the belief that socially ostracized, racially discriminated, and financially needy mixed-race children could not have a normal life was shared widely. The establishment of Child Placement Service (CPS) with the support of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in 1954, a year after the war ended, specifically “for the purpose of providing international adoption of mixed children to the U.S. and other Western countries,” reflected such a view.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Pate, 14; Tobias Hübinette, “Korean Adoption History,” in *Guide to Korea for Overseas Adopted Koreans*, edited by Eleana Kim (Seoul, South Korea: The Overseas Koreans Foundation. 2004).

¹⁸⁴ Susie Woo, *Framed by War: Korean Children and Women at the Crossroads of US Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 14.

¹⁸⁵ Hübinette

Rhee Syngman, the first president of South Korea from 1948 to 1960, was a vigorous advocate of transnational adoption of mixed-race children, and actively communicated his view to the U.S. government officers and private agencies. In his letter to Im Byung Jik, the Korean ambassador to the United Nations, on April 8, 1954, Rhee wrote, “we are most anxious to send as many as our orphans to the States as possible. In particular we desire to have adopted those children of Western fathers and Korean mothers who can never hope to make a place for themselves in Korean society. Those children should appeal to Americans even more than Koreans.”¹⁸⁶ This remark stresses that due to their racially different body, mixed-race children were “imagined to have a place in American society under the protective care of” Americans, but not in Korea.¹⁸⁷ The Rhee’s perspective significantly shaped the Korean government’s transnational adoption policy, though it has been criticized for outsourcing Korea’s social welfare services to foreign countries and politically using children for the “diplomacy of intimacy” by numerous scholars and activists.¹⁸⁸ The thought about the ambivalent position of mixed-race children who were “devalued and dehumanized at home but revalued as objects of desire abroad” was also shared by many like-minded U.S. private agencies and individuals, which resulted in the aggressive placement strategy of mixed-race children led by Harry Holt’s Holt Adoption Program (HAP), who saw transnational adoption of mixed-race children as the best solution.¹⁸⁹ The HAP, strongly supported by the Rhee administration and working cooperatively with the CPS, placed about 250 children who were mostly mixed-race children in

¹⁸⁶ Syngman Rhee to Im Byung Jik, 8 April 1954, Syngman Rhee Related Correspondence 6 (1954), “Orphan Adoption Issue” (고아입양문제), National Institute of Korean History (국사편찬위원회), quoted in Eleana J. Kim, *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 61-62.

¹⁸⁷ Kim Park Nelson, *Invisible Asians: Korean American Adoptees, Asian American Experiences, and Racial Exceptionalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 42.

¹⁸⁸ There were some opposing voices within Korea stating that Korea should keep its human resources for the country’s rebuilding, they did not hold a dominant position in the discourse. See Woo, 149-150.

¹⁸⁹ Kim, 72.

1956, the first year of its operation, and it continued to be a leading agency in the following decades that defines the U.S.-Korea transnational adoption.¹⁹⁰

Created by the politically charged relationship between a military serviceman and a local woman, having a visible body that marks them as the other on both sides, Korean mixed-raced children were not just a racial minority but also the racial other. Reared by their Korean mother, most mixed-race children were culturally Korean. But according to Korea's patrilineal registration system, a child who was not a legitimate child of a Korean man could not be listed on the nation's birth registry, which prevented their access to public education and many other basic rights as citizens. Furthermore, due to their either too light or too dark skin color, hair color that was not black, hair texture that was not straight, different facial features from Koreans, their partially Korean body marked them visibly and racially.

The societal understanding that mixed-race children were the outcome of a disrespectful association between Korean women and U.S. GI's further encouraged a heinous stigma attached to these children. The sex industry of Korean women for U.S. servicemen was not simply the natural child of the natural encounter between military men stationed in a foreign country and local women. Sociologist Seungsook Moon illustrates that the genealogy of the U.S. military prostitution in South Korea was originated from the system created by the Japanese Empire and institutionalized with the U.S. Empire's military thrust into Korea. When the U.S. Army Military Government set in 1945, it instructed "all male military and civilian personnel assigned or attached to [U.S. Army Forces in Korea]" "to refrain from association with Korean women" "other than through the lowest form of prostitution."¹⁹¹ With the virtual permission for

¹⁹⁰ Woo, 151.

¹⁹¹ "Association with Korean Women," January 25, 1947, United States Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK) Adjutant General, General Correspondence (Decimal Files) 1945-1949, National Archives and Records Administration at College Park (NARA), Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme

prostitution, prostitution involving GI's sprawled quickly, but the rampant spread of venereal disease soon became concerning for both the U.S. military and the Korean leaders. As a way to regulate the issue, the Korean government converted the previous "comfort stations" built by the Japanese Empire to "UN comfort stations" to serve the needs of its allies' soldiers during the Korean War, and its use was extended after the war specifically for the U.S. military.¹⁹² By 1953 there were about 350,000 prostitutes in Korea, and sixty percent of them were prostitutes dealing with U.S. servicemen throughout the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁹³ Moon criticizes that such arrangement met both the U.S.' imperialist interest in keeping its soldiers entertained and the Korean government's interest in guarding respectful Korean women from the uncontrolled behavior of G.I.'s, which was done at the expense of lower-class women who were part of the industry but not always out of their choice.¹⁹⁴ Ji-Yeon Yuh traces that poverty, rather than loose sexual mores, was what drove a majority of women into military prostitution in the years of the U.S. occupation and the Korean War. Besides, young girls from the countryside, war widows, orphans, and former Japanese "comfort women," victims of sexual violence and girls who were kidnapped and sold to the market consisted of the service people.¹⁹⁵ They were nameless, poor, and helpless women.

Commander of the Allied Powers, and United Nations Command (RG 554), Box 50, quoted in Seungsook Moon, 44.

¹⁹² Regarding the adoption of this terminology for sex service for Allied Forces Seungsook Moon explains that the term referred to sex workers serving soldiers and such meaning survived into the 1960s. See Seungsook Moon, "Regulating Desire, Managing Empire," in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, edited by Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). But I contend that the uncritical and continuous use of the term demonstrates the deeply sexist view on the "fallen women" of the Korean society, regardless of what caused the plight of those women.

¹⁹³ Woo, 145.

¹⁹⁴ Seungsook Moon, 41, 51. See also Katharine H. S. Moon, *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

¹⁹⁵ Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 30-31

GI's sexual violence against Korean women from an abusive relationship to rape was prevailing, but there was no protection for the women but a blatant blaming that they invited such an assault with their unkempt behavior. It was only 1967 when the Korean American Friendship Society was established to manage the conflict about GI's violence against Koreans including sexual violence. Even with its standing, the tension was not mediated on an equal term for both parties due to the geopolitical and economic relationship between the U.S. and Korea. Thus, when a child was born either as a result of sexual violence or out of a romantic relationship but later deserted by a father, a mother and a child were left without a proper supporting system. Also, the Confucian values that emphasized women's chastity separated women associated with U.S. GI's from respectable womanhood, regardless of an actual job that those women had. As Lee writes, "the gendered discourse on sexuality, deviance, morality, race, ethnicity and criminology as a background to perceptions of the so-called 'sins of the mothers,' which are readily transferred onto the children, born out of wedlock as a result of wartime liaisons with foreign soldiers, and thus become expression of socially deviant behaviours."¹⁹⁶ Mixed-race children were perceived as sinful, being a child of sinful mothers. Their non-Korean body symbolized not just their racial difference, but their racial difference was the evidence of their illegitimacy and deviancy. With a racialized body stamped with shame and rejection, Korean mixed-race children were harshly ostracized from society.

The U.S. military, however, did not acknowledge those foreign children fathered by U.S. servicemen as Americans in the mid-1940s and the early 1950s. Most servicemen's rotation term was short, and a good majority of people who happened to have a child with a local woman abandoned them when their service in the country was due. Some of them never learned that they

¹⁹⁶ Sabine Lee, 11.

had a child when those mothers had a very limited means to contact them. Catherine Ceniza Choy explains that the “U.S. military actively discouraged marriages between American servicemen and Japanese and Korean women”¹⁹⁷ and often intentionally separated a couple through transfer. Furthermore, “U.S. military laws abrogated American servicemen’s responsibility toward their mixed-race children unless they admitted paternity and registered their children’s birth with the U.S. consulate.”¹⁹⁸ The U.S. military began to formally permit interracial marriage in 1951, and hundreds of marriage applications filed in throughout the 1950s show that an international, interracial couple who was interested in a legal marriage was not too rare. But, Moon points out that “[t]he military intended to guarantee that interracial marriage would not automatically lead to the Korean bride’s entry into the United States.”¹⁹⁹ Yuri Doolan argues that the U.S. military’s racist understanding that Asian women made better prostitutes than respectable wives made the U.S. military discourage and disapprove its servicemen’s legal association with Asian women, as shown in the differentiation between European and ‘Oriental’ spouses of its military personnel by the War Brides Act of 1947 that granted the entry only to European women.²⁰⁰ Under this circumstance, a child’s legitimacy and citizenship became precarious, left only to a father’s willingness to accept his paternal responsibility. Furthermore, when an international, interracial couple wanted to legally build a family, anti-miscegenation laws that prohibited multi-racial marriage in many states until the late 1950s was a big hurdle, in addition to the immigration laws that categorized Asians as inadmissible aliens.²⁰¹ Thus, rejected

¹⁹⁷ Choy, 22.

¹⁹⁸ See Note 33 in Choy, 185.

¹⁹⁹ Seungsook Moon, 65.

²⁰⁰ Yuri W. Doolan, "Transpacific Camptowns: Korean Women, US Army Bases, and Military Prostitution in America," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 38, no. 4 (2019): 38.

²⁰¹ Twenty-eight states barred interracial marriage by 1954. Fourteen states repealed anti-miscegenation laws who forbid marriage between a white person and an Asian between 1948 and 1967 including Arizona (1962), California (1948), Idaho (1959), Maryland (1967), Montana (1953), Nebraska (1963), Nevada (1959), Oregon

by a father and his country and unrecognized by a mother's country, a great majority of mixed-raced children became 'stateless' figures. Oh describes such unrecognized, unregistered mixed-race children as "stateless nonpersons who would never find legal or social acceptance."²⁰²

The rise of the rhetoric of moral responsibility of the U.S. as a country of the children's father, however, presented unclaimed mixed-race children of GI's to the American public in a different light, when kinship across a national as well as a racial border had been outside the terrain of most Americans' imagination. Liberalism that stressed universal humanity merged with the Evangelical Christianity and the anti-communist campaign boosted Americans' interest in saving the 'unwanted' children in a foreign land. Christina Klein illustrates that adoption of Asian children in the Cold War became the form of foreign aid and the way to participate in the U.S. foreign policy for Americans, generating the vision of the world family that stood for U.S. security and prosperity. The Cold War politics that needed to present more racial tolerance of the U.S. in a world theatre utilized adoption of Korean children as a sentimental and humanitarian trope for the U.S. commitment to international democracy and racial harmony. Instead of just "confrontation" or "containment," what Klein calls Cold War Orientalism also pursued "integration." Having a familial relationship with unfortunate children served effectively for that purpose on the multiple levels;²⁰³ "[t]he issues of Cold War geopolitics and American racism intersected with the burgeoning discourse of family formation."²⁰⁴ Furthermore, to the eyes of Americans for whom transracial adoptive kinship was a strange novelty, mixed-race children's biological origin from an American father and their partial whiteness or blackness made them

(1951), South Dakota (1957), Utah (1963), and Wyoming (1965). Another sixteen states' anti-miscegenation laws were overturned by *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967.

²⁰² Oh, 7, 51.

²⁰³ Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

²⁰⁴ Klein, 146.

look less foreign and thus relatable, which helped to build an emotional, political, and scientific imperative of why they were ‘our’ American children to the U.S. popular understanding.²⁰⁵ In short, for the U.S. that wished to present itself as “a global leader of international humanitarianism and racial liberalism” against the Iron Curtain,²⁰⁶ the issue of the left-out children fathered by U.S. GI’s needed to be resolved. For that matter, transnational adoption provided magnificent “private solutions ... to a public problem.”²⁰⁷

Based on the consensus between Korea and the U.S. that mixed-race children’s American body would ease their assimilation into the U.S. family, culture, and nation, enabling their ‘blending in,’ which would be impossible if they would remain in Korea, where they were seen as shameful aliens of different skin color, the U.S.-Korea transnational adoption got initiated with the combined effort of state and non-state actors of the two countries.²⁰⁸ Though there were precedents of adoption of European war orphans by U.S. citizens in the late 1940s and the early 1950s under special legislation, however, the *making* of these ‘foreign’ children to ‘our’ children by placing them with American families was not a simple process. Let alone racial segregation, antimiscegenation laws, and anti-Asian racism, it was the work that required the new legislation

²⁰⁵ See Oh, Choy, and Kori A. Graves, *A War Born Family: African American Adoption in the Wake of the Korean War* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).

²⁰⁶ Kelly Condit-Shrestha, "South Korea and Adoption's Ends: Reexamining the Numbers and Historicizing Market Economies," *Adoption & Culture* 6, no. 2 (2018): 368.

²⁰⁷ Oh, 73.

²⁰⁸ Choy who has studied the records of International Social Service-United States of America Branch, Inc. (ISS-USA) dating from 1929 to 1995, argues that the ISS social works, contrary to private adoption agencies and religious institutions, held a much more careful approach to transnational adoption of Korean children by Americans against the popular view of transnational adoption of Korean children. “ISS-USA workers questioned the impact of cultural and national difference on the internationally adopted child” (38). For that reason, ISS saw transnational adoption only as a short-term solution under the circumstances of Korea’s dire situation and the unavailability of ‘adequate’ alternatives for the plight of mixed-race children. See Choy, 15-45.

Oh also shows that while the Holt Adoption Program (HAP) who actively promoted mixed-race children’s transnational adoption became a dominant agency of the U.S.-Korea transnational adoption, “ISS was never a major conduit for Korean children. Between 1955 and 1963 that was its most active years, ISS-USA placed at most 13.7 percent of the Korean children who were adopted overseas” due to their more reserved approach to transnational adoption of non-white children. See Oh, 123-4.

of immigration laws, the modifications of the previous adoption practice that centered on interracial and interethnic ‘matching,’ the reestablishment of a definition of what an “American family” was like, and the multiple-level cooperation between the sending and receiving country’s government as well as their public and private institutions. Differently from what Richard Weil famously has stated, transnational adoption of foreign-born children like Korean war orphans and the following generation of social orphans was not the “quiet migration,” but the migration that needed the legal, political, and cultural work of all levels from the government to adoption participants.²⁰⁹

A series of special legislation that enabled unprotected foreign minors to come to the U.S. has generated the popular view to see transnational adoptees as “privileged” immigrants. Under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 (Public Law 80–774) that temporarily authorized the entry of up to 20,000 displaced persons for permanent residency,²¹⁰ 1,246 Greek children, 1,156 German children, and 567 Italian children were adopted to the U.S. household.²¹¹ This legislation that was renewed in 1950 for another two years expanded its number of entries to 41,500 to settle displaced people in European countries by the Second World War, though the total immigrants’ number from a specific country was not to exceed the set quota. Winslow highlights the significance of the Displaced Persons Act (DPA) that set the keystone of U.S. transnational adoption. The DPA was critical in its incorporation of orphan provisions into the refugee law by categorizing “eligible displaced orphans” with other eligible displaced persons.

²⁰⁹ Weil writes, “Among receiving countries, the United States is very liberal in accepting such adoptees, provided adequate standards of home life can be certified by an adoption agency” and its adoption of foreign-born children were orderly and quiet. See Weil, 288.

²¹⁰ U.S. Congress, Public Law 80–774, “S. 2242 - The Displaced Persons Act of 1948,” Library of Congress, June 25, 1948, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/80th-congress/session-2/c80s2ch647.pdf>.

²¹¹ See Table 1 in Richard H. Weil, “International Adoptions: The Quiet Migration,” *International Migration Review* 18, no. 2 (1984): 280-281.

Meanwhile, due to the Johnson-Reed Act that barred the entry of “aliens ineligible to citizenship” and then the McCarran–Walter Act of 1952 that abolished racial restriction but retained a quota system, children of Japan and Korea were not eligible to immigrate for adoption. But the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 (Public Law 83-203), initially called the Emergency Migration Act, allowed 21,400 non-quota visas for “the homeless, the persecuted and the less fortunate of other lands,” including 5,000 visas designated for the Far East countries. Though its number was much smaller compared to what was allotted to European countries, this act enabled the adoption and immigration of East Asian children until 1956 when it expired. Also, its critical impact lies in its definition of orphans:

Sec. 5 (b) When used in this Act the term "eligible orphan" shall mean an alien child (1) who is an orphan because of the death or disappearance of both parents, or because of abandonment or desertion by, or separation or loss from, both parents, or who has only one parent due to the death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertion by, or separation or loss from the other parent and the remaining parent is incapable of providing care for such orphan and has in writing irrevocably released him for emigration and adoption; (2) (a) who has been lawfully adopted abroad by a United States citizen and spouse, or (b) for whom assurances, satisfactory to the consular officer to whom a visa application on behalf of the orphan is made, have been given by a United States citizen and spouse that if the orphan is admitted into the United States they will adopt him in the United States and will care for him properly;²¹²

This legal provision “made the international definition of orphan compatible with the domestic one”²¹³ by including children whose parents were alive but not actively present by disappearance, abandonment, or separation. Since a foreign child could be made into an eligible

²¹² U.S. Congress, Public Law 83-203, “H.R.6481 - the Refugee Relief Act of 1953,” U.S. Government Publishing Office, August 7, 1953, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-67/pdf/STATUTE-67-Pg400.pdf>.

²¹³ Winslow, 73-74, 44-45.

orphan through administrative and legal arrangements to be adopted by Americans, it created the first possibility of mass transnational adoption of foreign children.

Another radical shift that the Refugee Relief Act of 1952 made was proxy adoption by stating: “Assistance rendered an alien in connection with his transportation to and resettlement in the United States shall not be regarded as a cause for excludability as an alien likely to become a public charge.”²¹⁴ The effort of passionate advocates like Harry Holt and his supporter Senator Richard Lewis Neuberger (OR-D) made transnational adoption “faster, cheaper, and more accessible” to Americans via proxy adoption and charter flights.²¹⁵ The “expedience and practicality” that the HAP pursued met with the serious criticism from U.S. social service agencies, “such as the [International Social Service-USA Branch, Inc. (ISS-USA)] and individual U.S. state welfare departments [who] insisted that the well-being of adoptive children necessitated minimum standards of investigation, placement, and supervision.”²¹⁶ But the fact that “the Holt’s tactics were extremely popular with adoptive parents, legislators, and the media” demonstrates the way that foreign orphans were made exceptional by not only creating new immigration laws to accept them into the U.S. but also “[u]sing the immigration system as a de facto international adoption program.”²¹⁷ Even when some practices of transnational adoption went against the conventional institutional system of the U.S. domestic social service, it often was deemed permissible as it was believed to be the best and most practical way to save endangered, destitute children in a country that could not do without America’s help. Such philosophy has continued as shown in ISS-USA’s Hong Kong Project that delivered hundreds of

²¹⁴ See Sec 7(c) of the Refugee Relief Act of 1953.

²¹⁵ Oh, 95.

²¹⁶ Oh 95; Choy 83. See also Winslow 95-103. The proxy adoption was stopped in 1961 when the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) was passed. The INA made transnational adoption a permanent part of the U.S. immigration law differently from previous acts and bills that were issued to handle orphans and children refugees as a temporary issue.

²¹⁷ Winslow, 91.

“known” children refugees who escaped communist China to Chinese Americans and white Americans between 1955 and 1962, the Operation Pedro Pan that brought more than 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban children between 1960 and 1962, and the Operation Baby Lyft that did a mass evacuation of South Vietnamese children in April 1973.²¹⁸

The status of mixed-race children as stateless nonpersons, however, unsettles the popular narrative of transnational adoptees as ‘privileged’ immigrants. This popular discourse resonates with the long-standing perspective that sees adoption as ‘saving’ or ‘rescue’ set in the late nineteenth century. While it is unfortunate that a child could not live with loving biological parents like others, they are lucky to be ‘chosen’ by adoptive parents who would provide a means for a comfortable life in addition to love. By getting adopted, children can leave poverty, misery, and deprivation behind and make a fresh start for a ‘better’ life with ‘better’ parents. This foundational belief also applied to early transnational adoption, feeding the U.S.’ ideal for world democracy and racial liberalism by helping children of color in Asian countries such as Korea, whose freedom was fought by the U.S. forces. The U.S. was saving not just a whole country with the armed force but also extended its paternal care to their helpless children through humanitarian aids in which adoption played an important role. The economic prosperity of the U.S. in comparison to Korea also shaped the understanding of the benefits of adoption to the U.S. for both Koreans and Americans. Hence, in the aspect that war-orphan, particularly from Asian countries, were not restricted by a national origins quota, and that they were invited to the wealthier, more progressive country leaving their war-trodden and backward mother country

²¹⁸ See chapter 2 “The Hong Kong Project” in Choy; chapter 3 “The National Baby: Creating Monumental children in Cuba, from Operation Peter Pan to Elian Gonzales,” in Karen Dubinsky, *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2010); and chapter 2 “After the Airlift” in Allison Varzally, *Children of Reunion: Vietnamese Adoptions and the Politics of Family Migrations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

behind, transnational adoptees' immigration was viewed as privileged, and its exceptionality has been normalized in the general perception of U.S. transnational adoption.

Such discourse, however, overlooks severe flaws and conflicts of the early configuration of transnational adoption. Above all, if we consider mixed-race children's patrimony, their adoption is not "emigration or immigration but repatriation: children being restored to their rightful places, to enjoy the privileges that came with their American paternity."²¹⁹ Whereas the moral responsibility was a part of the rhetoric that promoted the U.S.-Korea adoption, it was quickly immersed by a more dominant narrative of the egalitarian, humanitarian rescue of the helpless, which created the national amnesia of the U.S.' liability. When it comes to the methods of bringing those children over to the U.S. the strategies of Harry Holt's HAP, who became synonymous with the U.S.-Korea adoption, were problematic in various ways. First, it "encouraged the possibility of overseas adoption over local family preservation," which means it prioritized adoption over biological kinship.²²⁰ While the HAP believed that mixed-race children would have a better opportunity of life in the U.S. as Americans than as discriminated non-full Koreans in Korea, they were too ready to cut biological kinship between mixed-race children and their biological mother permanently. In their optimistic view of children's successful integration to a new family and a nation through assimilation and colorblindness, they also downplayed the prevailing racism against non-whites in the U.S. With the faith that its service did the religious, personal, and national good through placing a child and the desire to meet the overflowing request for children from interested individuals, the HAP was not simply efficient in placing mixed-race orphans but it actively searched any available mixed-race children by visiting, persuading, and soliciting mothers of mixed-race children. Besides of visiting orphanages to look

²¹⁹ Oh, 69; Woo, 150-151.

²²⁰ Condit-Shrestha, 368.

for any available mixed-race orphans, the HAP employees went to military camptowns (henceforward, camptowns), found mixed-race children, and visited their home to persuade their mother to relinquish their child for adoption, soliciting that a brighter future awaited the child in the U.S. But the HAP's aggressive recruitment of children often propelled the production of more "orphans." Pressured with an idea that a rosy life was promised for children with adoption, many poor mothers gave up their child for the child's best interest. Yet, the HAP did not involve in any post-adoption follow-up but processed a transfer of children only. Furthermore, as the ISS-USA caseworker Margaret Volk noted, it was often uncertain if those mothers knew the consequence of their relinquishment. Though they agreed to give away their child, many did not understand that their parental right would be permanently denied, and it was very likely that they would never see their child again.

Nevertheless, the HAP's "active, *systemized* obtaining of adoptable Korean children" was satisfying to the needs of white American adopters. The HAP's tactics, combined with Korean government's strong interest to send mixed-race children to abroad, "the Korean stigma against racially mixed children, the absence of support for Korean birth mother," "led to the mass removal of 2,348 mixed-race children in the 1950s, roughly 65 percent of the mixed-race children population in South Korea."²²¹ Its emphasis on the priority of adoptive kinship, mass relocation of children, production of "paper orphans" for the sake of adoption, conformity, and assimilation, the HAP's practice has a close resemblance to the Children Aid's Society's (CAS) mass placement of children via orphan trains in the late nineteenth century. Similar to the CAS's mass collection and shipment of children, the HAP "collected children, housed them in an orphanage [that it had established and owned], delivered them via mass flights, and processed

²²¹ Woo, 163.

them through proxy adoption.”²²² In that sense, what Charles Loring Brace was to the urban poor and delinquent children is what Harry Holt was to Korean mixed-race children. While crediting their contribution to expanding kinship beyond the biological, regional, class, and racial divide, their aggressive mass placement strategy often bore numerous consequences adversary to children whom they tried to help.

To account for Korean mixed-race children’s adoption simply as privileged immigration, the racial line affected white Korean children and black Korean children disparately. Oh analyzes how the racial otherness of Korean mixed-race children is arbitrarily constituted by the binary racial logic. She problematizes the way that Korean-white children’s white blood alleviated their “otherness” to white adopters as the acceptable non-whiteness, whereas Korean-black children’s non-whiteness was judged as the less desirable blackness.²²³ Not only U.S. adoption agencies who used to follow the ‘matching’ principle to create “aesthetically ideal families” as Brian Paul Gill writes,²²⁴ but also adoption agencies working in Korea such as the HAP and ISS-USA were very reluctant to place ‘black’ children in the white household in the first decade of the U.S.-Korea adoption. The agencies’ effort to place Korean-black children only with African American families demonstrates the continuing racial line set by the one-drop rule and its application to the ‘black blood’ of Korean mixed-race children. The racial matching method to produce ‘white’ adoptive families and ‘black’ adoptive families reveals the failed myth that transnational adoption was a step to racial integration.

Observing the racial hierarchy of Korean adoption agencies that put white Korean children at the top and black Korean children at the bottom, Pate relates black Korean children’s

²²² Oh, 165.

²²³ Oh, 127.

²²⁴ Brian Paul Gill, “Adoption Agencies and the Search for the Ideal Family, 1918-1965,” in *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 162.

categorization as “unadoptable” along with children with physical and mental disabilities and older children by HAP by the late 1960s to anti-black racism.²²⁵ Such labeling was corresponding with the U.S. domestic adoption agencies’ major principles to create adoptive families that resembled biological families as closely as possible and exclude disabled children from adoption.²²⁶ Yet, race sorting of Korean-white children and Korean-black children was highly arbitrary as much as the black and white racial line was arbitrarily constituted. Diverse descriptions regarding children’s physical characteristics were recorded to define their ‘correct’ racial traits. The ISS Korea’s record shows varied racial categories such as “Mongoloid-Negroid,” “Mongoloid Philippino,” “Korean & Philippino” to detect and label the racial trace observed in each child’s appearance.²²⁷ Skin color, hair texture, eye color, and nose shape were also recorded in detail.

Oh criticizes that the “pseudoscientific attempts to identify the racial origins of mixed-race children” mark the racial taxonomy that tried to set white and black Korean mixed children apart. Woo also argues not only that the Korean institutions’ race analysis was developed by the need of U.S. adoption agencies and adopters to prevent transracial adoption of a black child, but also such a rigorous race identification impacted Korea to pathologize black mixed-race children.²²⁸ Pate asserts that “the way in which mixed-race orphans were categorized reveals the extent to which Korean orphans were understood through an American racial ideology.”²²⁹ As these scholars note, race labeling of Korean mixed-race children relied upon the knowledge of race current in the U.S. domestic race relations. By applying the race knowledge to understand

²²⁵ Pate, 119-120.

²²⁶ Gill, 162.

²²⁷ Oh, 135. Oh also observes that a child’s complexion was a keen issue for black adopters in the attempt to make their adoptive family look as natural as possible. Thus, a child who looked too light or dark compared to a couple’s complexion became an issue.

²²⁸ Woo, 154-156.

²²⁹ Pate, 120.

and categorize Korean mixed-race children who were the offspring of the unusual and illegal intimacy among Oriental females and American males, adoption agencies were tried to chart these mixed-race children within the existing race map. By transforming the illegible racial identity of mixed-race children into a legible one within the existing race logic defined by the black and white dichotomy, transnational adoption of mixed-race children attributed to the reproduction, and thus naturalization and normalization of the stringent racial line.

To the contrary to the common belief that Americans' adoption of Korean children expanded racial liberalism, African American families were recruited specifically to place black Korean children, because so few white families wanted a 'black' child and adoption service institutions were hesitant with black and white cross-racial adoption. In these circumstances, African American families adopted many Korean black children between 1953 and 1964. With the rise of the civil rights movement and the family as the symbol of an American ideal of the Cold War era, the African American community who had been excluded from the participation of legal stranger adoption expressed an avid interest in transnational adoption of newly available foreign black children.²³⁰ Also, the awareness of racial inequality that Korean black children experienced in their birth country motivated many African American people, particularly military servicemen's families, involved in the U.S.-Korea adoption.²³¹

The institutional definition of an "ideal family" that modeled after a white middle-class nuclear family, however, excluded many African American families from adoptive parenthood. The unequal economic opportunities made it difficult for many African Americans to meet the financial stability eligible for adoption. The adoption process fee that was bigger than what most African American prospective adopters could afford discouraged many African American

²³⁰ See Graves, chapter 4, "The New Family Ideal for Korean Black Adoption," 149-187.

²³¹ Graves, 123.

couples who were interested in adoption.²³² Married African American women's economic activity was also viewed as unfit to ideal motherhood and femininity instead of a necessity for their household economy. Such judgment disqualified many African American applicants from adoption.²³³ To increase the pool of eligible African American parents, many public and private adoption agencies moderately adjusted their criteria of adoptive parents and revised their notion of an "ideal" family.²³⁴ In that aspect, African Americans' participation in the U.S.-Korea adoption re-contoured the U.S. adoptive kinship by challenging the previous norm for eligible parent candidates. Nevertheless, as Graves argues, "the adoption of Korean black children by racially marked families exposed the contradictions inherent in the rhetoric of democracy and the realities of US race relations," and "the ideals and rhetoric of Cold War civil rights that facilitated adoption of Korean black children increasingly benefited white adoptive families more than African American families."²³⁵ The record of Korean children who were adopted between 1955 and 1961 shows that mixed-race children adoption comprised of 88.1 percent of the total US-Korea adoptions in 1955 and black Korean children's adoption made up of 15.3 percent of the total number of adoption of the year. The black Korean children's adoption went up above twenty percent from 1956 to 1958, reaching the highest rate of 26.3 percent in 1957, but it started to drop as the adoption of full Korean children increased from 1958. In 1960, black Korean children's adoption consisted of only 9.6 percent of the total adoptions, whereas white Korean children's adoption did 28.8 percent and full Korean children's adoption 61.6 percent. Its

²³² The median income in 1955 of the black household was \$1,075 whereas that of the white household was \$2,506. The cost of the adoption of a Korean child was \$200-300. See U.S. Census Bureau, "Table P-4. Race and Hispanic Origin of People (Both Sexes Combined) by Median and Mean Income," Historical Income Tables: People, August 27, 2019, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>.

²³³ Graves, 154-159; Oh, 133-134.

²³⁴ Oh, 133.

²³⁵ Graves, 178, 5.

rate went further down to 5.4 percent in 1961.²³⁶ Ever since then, mixed-race children's adoption has been outnumbered by full Korean children's adoption, and black Korean children's adoption became less and less significant in the U.S.-Korea adoption data. Considering the data of Korea's Children's Survey Committee showing that the number of mixed-race children fathered by African Americans was 205 among 1,518 mixed-race children that they estimated by 1960,²³⁷ the percentage of black Korean children's adoption among the total U.S.-Korea adoption is smaller than its population.

“The neediest children are the Korean-Americans, especially those of Negro fathers,” said Susan Pettiss, the assistant director of ISS-USA, in 1958.²³⁸ But black mixed-children, even among mixed-race children in Korea, were least wanted by Koreans for their deviancy and by white Americans for their blackness, hardest to place because of anti-black racism and the shortage of black adoptive homes limited by the white-centered family norms and assessment, and least narrated in the U.S.-Korea adoption history. Mixed-race children, after several years from the beginning of the U.S.-Korea adoption, were swept aside by the emerging “yellow desire” of Americans for cute, smart, and malleable “Asian” children.²³⁹ On the other hand, once they were adopted, regardless of being deemed black, white, or “oriental” in the case of full Korean children, adopted children were expected to become “American” by assimilating themselves to American values and culture and being legally reborn as American citizens. Yet, their integration into Americanness would differ between incorporation, erasure, and exclusion,

²³⁶ See Table 3.1 “Number of mixed-race and full-Korean children placed abroad for adoption, by race and agency, 1955-1961” in Oh, 82.

²³⁷ Woo, 163.

²³⁸ Susan T. Pettiss, “Effect of Adoption of Foreign Children on U.S. Adoption Standards and Practices,” *Child Welfare* (July 1958), ISS-USA papers, Box 11, File on “Adoption Manual and Other Printed Material,” SWHA, quoted in Choy, 21.

²³⁹ Pate terms the discourse of “yellow desire” to critique Americans’ imagination of their exceptionality by inviting Korean into their homes in the era of Asian exclusion, which they believed contributed to the racially integrative society. See Pate, 17, 87-88.

depending on their degree of closeness to whiteness that decides their place as “anomalous subjects” if we come back to Bow’s language, which unveils a dissonance in the interpellation to racially liberal Americanness that U.S. transnational adoption aspired to achieve. As Oh insightfully notes, “Korean adoption’s simultaneous transgressing of the Asian-white divide on the one hand, and careful policing of the black-white color line on the other, shows the continuing power of the black-white divide.”²⁴⁰ Race was central in the constitution of U.S.-Korea transnational adoption: “racial diversity and tolerance in the United States, and racial purity in Korea.”²⁴¹ If we see transnational adoption of Korean waifs is the “racialized distribution of freedom and humanity” that Lisa Lowe theorizes, mixed-race children’s issue is what we can interrogate about “[m]odern hierarchies of race [that] appear to have emerged in the contradiction between liberal aspirations to universality and the needs of modern colonial regimes to manage work, reproduction, and the social organization of the colonized.”²⁴² Mixed-race children did not simply disappear by being brought within as abject subjects to be confirmed to normativity, but their beings persistently opened up the interstitial rupture that resisted the heteronormative kinship across race and national borders, disclosing its contradictions.

Nobody’s Children, Everybody’s Children: The Question of Belonging of Mixed-race Children

The protagonist of Heinz Insu Fenkl’s autobiographical novel *Memories of My Ghost Brother* is Insu or Heinz, a child born in 1960 between German American G.I. father Eldridge L.

²⁴⁰ Oh, 127-128.

²⁴¹ Oh, 67.

²⁴² Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 36.

Fenkl and Korean mother Mahmi.²⁴³ He lives in Pupyong,²⁴⁴ a camptown where the U.S. Army base Camp Market is located. Insu's world revolves around U.S. military bases on which his mother and relatives economically depend for a living and to which he is affiliated for being a child of an American soldier. He grows up knowing "all the waitress at the military clubs in ASCOM, the prostitutes and husband-seekers who lined up outside the gates for escorts, the unsponsored wives who rode the Army bus routes with [his mother and him]."²⁴⁵ The presence of the U.S. forces has transformed the little town as a neocolonial transnational space where people of a different nationality, color, and culture are territorially separated by the wall but live entangled with each other. Its entanglement is most vividly testified by the proliferation of mixed-race children like Insu.

The 1960s of Insu's boyhood was the time that camptowns were consolidated under Park Chung Hee, who seized power through a military coup in 1960. Though Park's military regime's view on prostitution catered for U.S. servicemen was not different from that of the previous administration of Rhee, it increased the control and surveillance on the sex industry, including the requirement of sex workers' registration, the installment of the monitoring system of sex workers' venereal disease contraction, and the facilitation of camptowns for the national economy to earn foreign currency, as Seungsook Moon explains. Moon points out that "it was

²⁴³ Mahmi is not her name but means 'mother.' Other people such as Emo, Hyongbu who are Insu's relatives and live with him are also called with a term indicative of his relationship to them than with their actual name following the Korea tradition. Emo means 'aunt.' On the other hand, Hyongbu means a brother-in-law who is a husband of an older sister, Emo. Yet, five-year old Insu just imitates his mother's way of calling him. While it is strange that Emobu (the uncle who is a husband of one's blood-related aunt) is available and not more difficult to call than Hyongbu, it may note Insu's young age that does not figure out complicated names for each relation.

But I argue that it also shows the Insu's family is already not normative as its women enter a relationship with the U.S. military personnel for a living and an entire family depends on their sex labor and extended means coming from it. Hyongbu who does not hesitate to degrade Korean women who go out with the U.S. GI as the shame of a family and the nation, but he lives off from his wife's earning coming from the U.S. military base without having a job. When he gets sick, her daughter's sexual labor is what pays off his medical bill.

²⁴⁴ The city's Romanized name is Bupyeong, but I follow Fenkl's romanization in this chapter.

²⁴⁵ Heinz Insu Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (New York, N.Y: Dutton, 1996), 121.

not until 1962 that camptown prostitution became organized and developed into a distinct form of its own.” Before then, many women worked on their own without pimps with more autonomy.²⁴⁶ The relative autonomy of Insu’s Mahmi is not irrelevant to the nature of the camptown before the control of both the space and women’s body would become more rigid and commercialized in Park’s regime, besides the fact that she is now a legally married wife of a U.S. soldier. However, the life of women like Mahmi is not blessed beyond their access to American cigarettes and a paltry amount of dollars that they earn, as shown in various struggles of other women around her, including Gannan and mothers of Insu’s GI baby friends.

One of the most frequent victims of the militarized intimate relationship is women. Gannan was led to the escort service for GI’s by her relative Mahmi after she came to Pupyong leaving her hometown. She has succeeded in finding a steady “yellow haired GI” who temporarily provided humble income for her physical service. However, when she finds herself to be pregnant but her partner does not make any gesture to marry her, Gannan commits suicide. Emo and Mahmi once have argued, saying “It’s no good being a *yang saekshi* [Yankee wife]²⁴⁷ ... It’s not as if those GIs will buy her a homestead,” or “If you hadn’t introduced her...” acknowledging that a woman’s life like Gannan is walking on thin ice that depends on the unreliable romantic relationship with a great risk of not just pregnancy but pregnancy of a mixed-race child out of wedlock. If she keeps a baby, she will have to live facing a further social death with her unclaimed mixed-race child.

²⁴⁶ Seungsook Moon, “Regulating Desire, Managing Empire,” in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, edited by Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 57.

²⁴⁷ Though *yang saekshi* literally means an American wife, it was a term interchangeable with *yanggongju* (Yankee princess) or *yanggalbo* (Yankee whore). These words were at first used to indicate sex workers for GIs, but later their use was expanded to name pejoratively any Korean woman who had an intimate relationship with an American.

The vital difference between Gannan who kills herself and Mahmi who has survived is whether their “cohabitating prostitution” has led to marriage or not. Cohabiting prostitution is a monogamous liaison with a specific partner for the long term, which could lead to the possibility of marriage.²⁴⁸ Gannan dies with an unborn child, but the secret of Mahmi’s first child demonstrates that Mahmi’s fate could have been similar to Gannan’s. The only information about Insu’s “ghost brother” is that the name of Kuristo’s father is unknown and he is a different person from Insu’s father. Insu’s cousin Haesuni says, “We don’t know. Nobody knows. Even Mahmi doesn’t remember his name.”²⁴⁹ Her history of having a child of the unidentifiable GI man while surviving the Korean War tells that she was a part of the camptown sex work before meeting Insu’s father. Katherine Moon writes, “The earliest prostitutes were camp followers of troops during the Korean War; they did laundry, cooked, and tended to the soldiers’ sexual demands. Some had been widowed by the war, others orphaned or lost during a family’s flight from bombs and grenades.”²⁵⁰ Mahmi has been ‘lucky’ to meet a man who agreed to marry her and accepts his son, compared to Gannan. Otherwise, Insu could have been unborn like the baby who Gannan conceived.

But their fate does not seem unique in the context of the U.S. military intervention in Asia. The way that GI’s call Insu “baby-san” and Mahmi as “mama-san,” for instance, reflects that the U.S. military personnel is shifted between the post-World War II Japan and post-Korean War Korea, which shows the U.S. expanding military occupation in the Asia-Pacific region for its the Cold War geopolitics. More importantly, though the terms end with the Japanese honorific suffix ‘san (さん),’ “baby-san” is the word that GI used to call Japanese military prostitutes. The

²⁴⁸ Seungsook Moon, 65-66.

²⁴⁹ Fenkl, 264.

²⁵⁰ Katharine H. S. Moon, *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 3.

way that “baby-san” and its variation are circulated as an ordinary vocabulary to call Korean women and their children by GI’s demonstrates the continuity of the neocolonial relationship with the U.S. between Japan and Korea as well as the military sexualization of Korean women.

While these women’s life appears to be on the verge of tragedy in the militarized, gendered, and racialized space of camptowns, it is worth noting that the lives of people in Pupyong are vexed with more than the complications of the US-Korea geopolitical relationship and militarism. The trace of the Japanese occupation that ended five years before the Korean War’s breakout is much around like the gloomy-looking ghost of the Japanese Colonel who haunted the house that Insu’s family used to live. His friend Yongshiggi has a grandfather who is blind “ever since the Japanese had gouged out his eyes.”²⁵¹ The name of Tatagumi, the part of the city where Insu’s family moves, also hints at the residue of the Japanese occupation. The Korean War ended more than a decade ago, but the deep wounds that the war left vividly stay in countless people’s bodies and lives. A group of jobless Korean veterans who come to beg for money and food to Insu’s house presents bodies that are missing a leg, an arm, or fingers.²⁵² A boy, Tong-su, blows himself to pieces while digging out a shell that has been carelessly left after the war.²⁵³

In addition to the residue of the violence from the past, a crowded, poor, and rapidly changing camptown is far from being safe in general. Insu describes the Korean camptown people’s life in the post-war period as something full of “potential tragedies”:

The war was fifteen years past with Korean in an uneasy peace, and yet Pupyong seemed to have some fatality nearly every day: the shoeshine boy who was run over by a train on he tried to put scrap metal off the tracks; the delivery boy crushed between two buses when he tried to take a shortcut through the

²⁵¹ Fenkl, 178.

²⁵² Fenkl, 81-83.

²⁵³ Fenkl, 248-249.

terminal; the bar girl killed by a truck as she tried to free her high heels to form a patch of fresh tar on the main road.²⁵⁴

So pervasive are silly fatal incidents, when Insu's family gets carbon monoxide poisoning overnight, Insu simply shrugs it off saying it was not as bad as the previous time.²⁵⁵ Cholera sweeps the neighborhoods taking away numerous people's life, but there is nothing much that people can do but carry on and forget the unfortunate deaths.²⁵⁶ Mahmi's words that "the most fun you can ever have in life...as long as you don't get killed"²⁵⁷ makes an acute comment on not just the camptown with incessant small and big incidents but also Korea where the broken and vulnerable bodies touched by the violence of colonization and war. The militarization and sexualization of Korea by the U.S. Army additionally deepen the struggles of its people. The haunting memories of the dead are omnipresent, therefore, while the effort for life is ongoing.

A new attribution brought to Korea by the U.S. Army forces is the transformation of camptowns to the space where anti-black and anti-Asian racism permeates. On the bus that runs between Tatagumi and Yongsan, the central U.S. Army base located in Seoul, Insu observes that the space of the bus is segregated along the color line. While the first half is occupied by white GI's, the back half of the bus is taken by Korean women and their children, KATUSAs,²⁵⁸ and Black GI's.²⁵⁹ Though President Truman integrated the U.S. military in 1948 to repudiate the international criticism of the country's racial segregation, the Jim Crow law was in full effect among the military personnel working in Korea. Racial segregation was not just limited to GI's

²⁵⁴ Fendl, 138.

²⁵⁵ Fendl, 139.

²⁵⁶ Fendl, 200.

²⁵⁷ Fendl, 138.

²⁵⁸ KATUSA that stands for Korean Augmentation to the United States Army indicates Korean soldiers whose service is augmented to the U.S. Army in Korea.

²⁵⁹ Fendl, 93.

operation but extended to their relationship with Korean women. Insu's neighbor, Changmi's mother says:

“Black men are much nicer to women. And you have to decide, before you start, whether you're going to date the Black or white GIs. They won't let you date both ... The white bastards won't touch you once they see you with a black man ... And the women who go with Black men won't associate with you if you go with a white man.”²⁶⁰

The black and white racial binary of the U.S. has been transplanted into Korean camptowns, and Korean women who associate with GIs have to adopt and comply with the racial rules of the U.S. The spatial order in the bus shows that the racial position assigned to Koreans and their mixed-race children is non-whiteness. However, depending on their association with either black or white GI's, the racial line is divided again among the non-white camptown people. Korean women have to make an arbitrary choice of which race they would go for, and as Changmi's mother tells, once they choose between either the white for their bigger number, bigger wealth, higher rank, or the black for their relative gentleness or whatever reasons, their lot is marked as white or black. The rule is so rigid that it also demarcates the relationship among Korean women along the color line despite that both groups of women live within the same community that is structured by the U.S. military relationship with Korea. Jeehyun Lim, pointing out that Koreanness becomes “an outcast sign exterior to the black-white binary,” calls the camptown women's racial association the “proxy racialization of Korean women as white or black.”²⁶¹

However, this color line is further complicated by the U.S. military intervention into Korea and then Vietnam where the U.S. has been fighting against “Oriental” enemies. Fighting against the North Korean armies, the U.S. servicemen often mistook allies with enemies,

²⁶⁰ Fenkl, 210.

²⁶¹ Jeehyun Lim, “Black and Korean: Racialized Development and the Korean American Subject in Korean/American Fiction,” *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 5, no. 1 (2013) [4].

civilians with soldiers during the Korean War. While merciless killing and brutal looting by North Korea became the main content of the anti-communism education and propaganda in the post-Korean War period through the early 1990s, the incidents like the No Gun Ri Massacre in which up to four hundred South Koreans fleeing from the attack of North Korea in July 1950 were murdered by mass shootings by the 7th Cavalry Regiment of the U.S. Army has been little known but explicitly buried.²⁶² But the pervasive anti-Asian racism that erupted against the Japanese during World War II and targeted the Chinese and Chinese Americans when Mao Zedong founded the communist People's Republic of China in 1949 did not exempt Koreans from racial hatred and violence during the Korean War. Anti-Asian racism got fueled further with the Vietnamese War, popularizing racial slurs like "gook." In Insu's camptown world, in the same way that "baby-san" slides into people's vocabulary to call Korean women and children, racial slurs like "gook" become part of the U.S. military personnel's daily language. Amidst the rise of anti-Asian racism, Koreanness that gets obscured being defined by a black and white color line, resurfaces as the insuppressible, indelible otherness that is neither black nor white, as Insu says, "I would forever be tainted by a Koreanness that would make the words "gook" or "dink" sound strange coming from my lips, like the word "n***" spoken by a Black GI to anyone but his brothers."²⁶³

As Insu's father has been involved in the Vietnam War, Insu's family becomes further inseparable from the U.S. portrayal of Asians as the cunning, belligerent, uncivilized savage to kill that the war encourages. Insu's father in his first dispatch helped Montagnard people to fight

²⁶² The Pentagon's investigation report of No Gun Ri was released in January 2001, but it concluded that the three-day long killing was "an unfortunate tragedy inherent to war, not a deliberate killing" by the U.S. forces. For more information about the No Gun Ri Massacre, see Charles J. Hanley, Sang-Hun Choe, and Martha Mendoza, *The Bridge at No Gun Ri: A Hidden Nightmare from the Korean War* (New York: Henry Holt, 2001).

²⁶³ Fenkl, 253.

the Vietcong between 1966 and 1967. While Insu's father is generally reticent and reserved, he describes the spraying of the defoliant over the jungle and Vietnamese people like a marvelous spectacle, saying "Agent Orange. It was beautiful. In a few days everything would be dead."²⁶⁴ In the following pages, Insu gets a bone-chilling realization that his father's military insignia symbolizes the blood-smeared power that "kills people whose skin is the color of [his]."²⁶⁵ The hatred against Asians among GIs becomes intense with the fear of North Korea's invasion and the ongoing bloody war in Vietnam where many of their friends are killed-in-action. Such racial adversary is not irrelevant to his father's action against other Asians who look like him. Eight-years old Insu observes the increase of violence in the camp, saying that "Houseboys and prostitutes were beaten more frequently; there were more fights in the clubs."²⁶⁶ Ironically, during the same period, tens of thousands of young Korean men were being sent to Vietnam upon its fraternal country's demand to help the Americans' war for democracy and freedom against other Orientals.²⁶⁷ However, the distinction between Asian-raced allies and Asian-raced enemies is nebulous and inscrutable, as it was in the World War II and the Korea War.

The geopolitical origin of the encounter of Insu's father and mother during the Cold War, their relationship in a highly neocolonial setting, Insu being a mixed-race child as an offspring of such encounter, the economic structure of the camptown that relies upon the U.S. Army base and its personnel, and the frequent vacancy of Insu's father to engage with the war with Asian

²⁶⁴ Finkl, 128-129.

²⁶⁵ Finkl, 133.

²⁶⁶ Finkl, 132.

²⁶⁷ Between 1964 and 1972, Korea sent 312,854 soldiers to Vietnam. Most of them were not professional but drafted soldiers who joined the army for the compulsory military service required for Korean male citizens. Mixed-race Koreans, even when they were registered citizens, had been excluded from the compulsory military service until 2004. Exclusion, instead of exception, is a correct expression to describe the exclusion of mixed-race Korean males from one of four most critical duties to the nation as Korean males, since they could not service even when they wanted. Since 2005, there has been a limited way for mixed-race Korean males to perform military service, but they should not look like a foreigner, which is a very ambivalent criterion.

enemies altogether make Insu realize the complex and problematic relations that condition his family. Insu tells himself, “I don’t think my father ever considered our house his home that year. We were just the family that kept him occupied when he wasn’t working.”²⁶⁸ The Korean home for Insu’s father, rather than being an anchor that makes him return, functions not much different from a place for “cohabitating prostitution” except that his kinship to Mahmi is legally bound and his kinship to Insu is biologically tied. The sign that Insu’s family relation is insecure is present in many anecdotes throughout the text. Emo hurriedly sends Insu to bring back Mahmi home when her husband shows up unexpectedly. Emo says, “On days he comes, she’s supposed to be home.” While he freely comes and goes, Mahmi does not own the same freedom. She is expected to be present and serve when he comes back, which shows the asymmetrical power dynamic between the two. Whether it is because of the money that Insu’s father provides for his family is unclear. Even if so, the support by Insu’s father must not be a generous giving, seeing that Insu and Mahmi first live in a ghost-haunting house due to their low budget and then move to a less flourishing neighborhood in the town. She keeps having to make money by selling stocks acquired from the U.S. base in a black market, but it seems not sufficient for an entire family, as shown in that Haesuni starts to work for GIs like Mahmi and Gannan when she becomes sixteen. Rather, his family functions more normally during the absence of Insu’s father, as far as their affiliation to the U.S. that gives them access to the American goods is not interrupted. Rather, Insu notices that Mahmi “seemed much happier without [his] father.”²⁶⁹

The fragmentary kinship that Insu’s family holds is also shown with that Insu’s father mostly stays in the base even when he does not need to. His intentional distance is not just physical but also emotional. He does not want to be seen with his wife in front of other U.S.

²⁶⁸ Fenkl, 132.

²⁶⁹ Fenkl, 121.

soldiers. “He told my other later that having his men see his Korean white undermined his authority. We never visited again.”²⁷⁰ His shame about his association with a Korean woman is connected to the militarized sex industry that the camptown epitomizes as well as racism against Asians. While he married the woman who he had a child with, he feels that it is not a respectable marriage to the eyes of his peers, though they must have a similar relationship, either married or not, with other local Korean women. It is little known what Mahmi used to do before meeting Insu’s father, but the distinction among a prostitute, a husband seeker, or an unsponsored wife who Insu sees at the gate of the base does not seem significant. They are part of the militarized sex industry for the U.S. army with a litter degree of difference. Insu’s father is highly conscious of how his Korean wife is viewed by other GI’s and he does not think her necessarily beyond it.

Insu’s father’s feeling of “shame” about his association with Mahmi extends to his feeling about his biological son. His initial reaction to having a mixed-blood child is vividly described: “When he saw me for the first time after my birth ... he had held me like a piece of wood, a rifle stock at present arms. He had held his son and turned bright red from the shame of having a mixed-race child.”²⁷¹ For Insu’s father, his kinship with his Korean family exhibits a dishonorable affiliation with inferior Asians, a previous sex worker and a current black-market smuggler, and a mixed-race child who is not white. He strives to hide them out of sight of other people as if such a gesture could obscure what they signify and he can keep a distance from them. Regarding his distancing, Haesuni suggests of his uncertainty of his biological kinship with Insu:

²⁷⁰ Fenkl, 132.

²⁷¹ Fenkl, 63.

It's all because of your father. He didn't want some other man's son in his family. Why do you think he treated you so oddly when you were little? He almost dropped you when my mother gave you to him that first time. Maybe he was afraid it was that other man's son.²⁷²

The unquenched doubt about if Insu is his son is based on Mahmi's history with other GI's and the presumptive doubt of her fidelity. The thought that Mahmi are suspicious racially as Asian and morally as a woman who had a relationship with other GI's led to the forced severance of Mahmi's biological kinship with her first son not to make Insu another mixed-race bastard, which created the monstrous tragedy of Insu's family that is not spoken,

Although Insu is excited when he gets a chance to spend time with his father, his father is a stranger that he neither fully understands nor feels close to. Even after he attends the American school located in the base and begins to learn his father's world, he feels that there is an unbridgeable distance between his world and his father's. Being punished for using his mother tongue instead of his father tongue at school, he is reminded of being an outsider among "full" Americans. His father's world is unfamiliar to him, similar to his father's room in the camp that Insu once visits. Except for one small family picture, Insu sees no sign that it could be his father's room. Instead, the room is filled with items like western writers' books that Insu cannot understand. Insu says, "I would never have believed this could be his life away from us." His father and he are tied by blood, but their world is separated by culture, race, and a nation that they belong to respectively. Like a book that Insu has never read until his father's death, though he values it being his father's gift given on his eleventh birthday and that Insu's father dies without learning that Insu has never read the book, there is emptiness between the father and the son with many things that should have been said but are not said.

²⁷² Fenkl, 264.

Yet, his father is not the only person who estranges the rest of his family. Insu's Korean family keeps many secrets from Insu's father. When Gannan dies, Mahmi does not deliver the news to him. When she is sick after losing unborn twins, which is uncertain by miscarriage or abortion, she also keeps it a secret to him. When she visits the camp to amass items to sell, she has to do it unseen by him. Insu's smuggling of the U.S. military items to sell outside camp using his "insider" status, should remain unknown to his father. His experience of being bullied for being half-American goes unmentioned to the father. Beyond his frequent absence, Insu's father is left out from the family's everyday incident, from small to significant. He is made to remain a stranger to his own family.

In many aspects, their kinship appears just for benefits: for Insu's father having a stable intimate partner and for Mahmi securing an American husband who gives her a status of a married woman and access to the U.S military bases. Yet, a child who springs out of that relationship complicates their relation, making it impossible to maintain their relationship like a business-like contract. I suggest that pervasive secrets in Insu's family and many other camptown families expose the raw reality of the illusionary myth of the transnational and transracial family that both Korea and the U.S. cultivated through transnational adoption. The family relationship like Insu's is never free from the neocolonial political, economic, gender, and race structure that contours their relationship, while this does not mean that a genuine relationship cannot be formed among a U.S. serviceman and a local Korean woman, and their children. Due to the skewed foundation that enabled their encounter in the first place, they cannot be "normal" while a relationship like theirs is normalized within the contained space like camptowns by the geopolitical needs of both states. The management of secrets by camptown Korean mothers is the conterminously coerced and adaptive tactic to sustain their transnational

and transracial kinship, when their mixed-race child and their history as a camptown woman, that is the direct outcome of the U.S. military occupation of Korea, do not allow them a life outside camptowns. Those secrets are woeful children of the entanglement of the U.S. racial order, the military sex industry, Korea's poverty, and the Koreans' belief in their racial homogeneity, however, drive them to make more secrets that cannot be told.

The most prominent secret in the text is Insu's ghost brother who was sent to the U.S. for adoption. The existence of Kuristo has been kept secret to Insu, let alone the fact that Kuristo was sent away for adoption as a condition to allow Mahmi to marry Insu's father. If the feeling of shame of the sexual intimacy and the kinship with inferior Asians made Insu's father refuse to take another man's child as his own, the available system for "unwanted" children could have made him think his insistence on the child's adoption less inhumane. The fast-growing U.S.-Korea adoption that was celebrated in both nations and Kuristo's being mixed-race might have made him think that the child would be adopted by another American couple. Yet, such rationalization is self-contradictory in the sense that he thought that other Americans would take a total stranger as their familiar member as if the child was born to them, while he did not want to keep his wife's child. On the other hand, it is not implausible to think that Mahmi ended up sending away Kuristo, primarily since it was not extraordinary for parents to place their children in a facility for temporary care when they could not take care of them. For instance, the number of children left at South Korean orphanages rose from 715 in 1951 to a peak of 11,319 in 1964.²⁷³ A great number of children in orphanages were not literal orphans and many parents came back to reclaim their children when they could afford it. As Mahmi's placement of Kuristo was not voluntary, she returned to the orphanage twice, but the orphanage threatened her not to

²⁷³ Weil, 282.

keep her child if she would come back again, rather than helping the mother who tried not to abandon her child. Without her knowledge or consent, the child was transferred to another facility and then placed for adoption. While this is a very tragic separation between a mother and a son, Mahmi's words that "That's where all the wonderful things come from, and that's where [Kuristo] is" also hints at the mythic dream that she has about America similarly that she thought that Insu's father was the most beautiful man she had ever seen.²⁷⁴ She has been upset and sad about the loss, but her sadness is relatively endurable since her son is in America with Americans. This shows how adoption to the U.S. was understood and imagined by many Koreans. As Weil notes, "the presence of efficient foreign adoption facilities encouraged the abandonment of children."²⁷⁵

But the "speechless tragedy, a river of silence"²⁷⁶ of Mahmi who forcibly gave up his first son not to make both him and another child fatherless mixed-race bastards, of Insu who never has met and known his half-brother, Kuristo, one of the thousands of mixed-race children who were sent away from his living mother for adoption, and of Insu's father whose kinship is tainted by racialized, militarized, and gendered relations, were not uncommon and not the worst kind. James' mother also succeeded in finding an American husband and went to America, but as her husband gets stationed in Korea, her family returned to Korea. But Insu learns that James died years ago. As Insu wonders about the cause of James' death, Hyongbu speaks of the brutal reality of people's life when war keeps killing people, GIs keeps buying women for pleasure, their intimacy generates mixed-race children, but people have to find a way to survive poverty and misery.

²⁷⁴ Fenkl, 267.

²⁷⁵ Weil, 282.

²⁷⁶ Fenkl, 246.

“You’re a dungwhore and you catch yourself a GI by getting pregnant with his brat, but then he goes off to Vietnam and gets himself killed. That leaves you with benefits from the great Emperor of America, but now you have a black brat to feed, and it’s not enough money. So you want another GI husband to start things over – maybe a white guy with a higher rank, *ungh?* – but who would marry a whore with a Black kid?”²⁷⁷

The implication that James was drowned by his own mother, who could not marry a white GI with her half-black child, reminds of Insu’s mother who was pushed to send her son for the orphanage to marry a new husband.

Both Insu’s mother and James’ mother suffer a lot from losing their son, one by adoption and another by death. While it is something to consider whether they are just victims, the difference of the action taken by these two mothers who had a fatherless mixed-race child but met a new GI who would marry them only if they get rid of their child demonstrates the critical way that race plays in these women’s gendered, sexualized, and racialized interracial and international relations with a U.S. soldier. Kuristo was not a highly desirable child for adoption. According to Haesuni’s recollection, Kuristo had a medical condition; “Kuristo was sick with something in the chest, and no one wanted him.”²⁷⁸ Since he was a mixed-race child with special needs, his desirability at the adoption market must have been very low in the late 1950s when he was put into an orphanage. However, he was at least not black. On the other hand, James was half-black, thus black, was older than five, and a boy who was less preferred by adoptive parents. His level of desirability is down on the list according to the 1960s’ U.S. Korea adoption assessment chart. James was the kind of child that few would want even if he had been put for adoption. Facing James’ tragic death, Insu thinks that James’ “difference went further than

²⁷⁷ Finkl, 229.

²⁷⁸ Finkl, 263.

simply begin of mixed blood” and “James’ tragedy was in the fact that his father was Black.”²⁷⁹
As Changmi’s mother tells Insu’s mother, “That man never would have married her if she had such a troublesome Black son, now would he? Isn’t the husband white?”²⁸⁰

The attempt to escape from poverty and misery of Korean camptown women through marriage with GI’s is, more often than not, fatal, dangerous, and pricy due to the “rules of blood” that decides camptown children’s fate through their anomalous birth, their kinship with a father whose skin color is not same with theirs, and their mother’s way to do their second marriage. The navigation of the labyrinth of race, romantic intimacy, and kinship requires head-swirling calculations about race besides luck, like Changmi’s mother’s case. Changmi’s mother found an American father to her Korean child. Her black sergeant husband was kind to her and even liked Changmi. But as she did not get pregnant with him over a year, she “feared now that he might be infertile, and she was terribly afraid he would divorce her if she didn’t produce a child, so she had scouted the Army clubs until she found a man who looked just like him.”²⁸¹ Even if she succeeds to conceive a child, whether the child lives well is uncertain. For instance, James’ sister, Suzie, for whom James’ mother killed James, became a prostitute for foreigners when her family came back to Korea. After her face was cut by her customer, she committed suicide. This shows that the transgenerational tragedy sprung from camptowns continued and what entailed them. Thus, thinking of many of his friends who left for the U.S. Insu wishes they have “avoided the misfortunes of other children” of camptowns like “Gannan’s baby, who died still in the womb; Paulie, who apprenticed himself to a pimp and disappeared; Suzie, who ate rat poison after she was disfigured by a Japanese banker.”²⁸² Changmi’s mother survived a difficult time

²⁷⁹ Finkl, 232.

²⁸⁰ Finkl, 211.

²⁸¹ Finkl, 209.

²⁸² Finkl, 172.

and did not die young like Gannan or Suzie. But how did she end up living in a camptown in the first place? Who is the father of Changmi? Did he die or desert Changmi and her mother? Why did Changmi's mother seek a GI father instead of a Korean man when she already had a full Korean child Changmi? Was marrying a black GI her choice or something else? Would she have tried to get a white GI first? If she succeeds in having a child and her marriage lasts as she wishes, will they go to America like the family of Jongsu whose mother married a white GI as her second husband? What will the family relationship like for Changmi in Korea when she gets a half-sibling who has a very different look from hers? What kind of life will she have when she goes to the U.S., and how will her Asian race and her sibling's half-Asian, half-black race affect them in the U.S.? As a military family, where would they live? How will their neighborhood treat this transnational, transracial family?

America does not seem to provide a rosy life, though "even seemingly devoted mothers" like Mahmi and many other GI brides "will traffic in children for the mythic promise of America."²⁸³ Jani, who looked most "like a Hello" among Insu's friends with "blond hair, blue eyes, and freckles," got a new GI stepfather who brought them to Minnesota. Though Insu "wishfully imagined" Jani "had escaped ... had survived into happiness,"²⁸⁴ Jani died of leukemia before reaching twenty-two. Insu, as an older narrator of the text, shares the skepticism about mythic America, confessing that "the dream country... had vanished for me the day I set foot in the Westward land" when his whole family migrated to the U.S. Having grown up in a camptown, he and other camptown boys already have seen what the U.S. could be like for people like them to a degree. The "mythic promise of America" generated hundreds of thousands of GI brides, their mixed-race children, and mixed-race children and full Korean children who were

²⁸³ Fenkl, 233.

²⁸⁴ Fenkl, 145, 172.

sent to the U.S. for adoption, But it was “another American lie” similar to what Insu thought of American textbooks. Their untold stories, however, keeps haunting both countries like resurfacing Kuristo’s apparition in Insu’s dream.

The Unfulfilled Romance of the Family

If Heinz Insu Fenkl’s text shows how mixed-race children born out the intimacy between U.S. servicemen and Korean women were conditioned by the militarized space and the racializing process of a camptown set by the U.S.-Korea geopolitics, Chang-Rae Lee’s *A Gesture Life* shows a glimpse of what happened after those children arrived in the U.S. *A Gesture Life* begins with protagonist Hata’s statement, “People know me here.”²⁸⁵ Bedley Run is a small suburb of New York. Having resided in the town over several decades as a gentle, patient, law-abiding, quiet, and successful small business owner, he is greeted cordially by his neighbors. Living in a nice and big house, which shows the fruit of his hard work, his post-retirement life in his seventies is prosaic and peaceful. He takes a walk through a town, tends his garden, and does swimming as a daily routine. Such a life runs monotonously till the house gets on fire by accident and his memory of the past unfurls.

Though everybody knows him as Franklin Hata, a Japanese American who migrated from Japan sometime after World War II, his identity has morphed into different names and different nationalities in his earlier life. He was an ethnic Korean who grew up in Japan while Japan was occupying Korea. In his early teens, with the help of his excellent academic performance, he was adopted to the local affluent Japanese couple, becoming Kurohata. In his twenties, he served on the Empire Army as a medical officer whose duty included the

²⁸⁵ Chang-rae Lee. *A Gesture Life* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999), 1.

maintenance of “comfort women’s” health. After the Pacific War ended, he immigrated to the U.S. and has lived as a Japanese American Franklin Hata who is commonly called Doc Hata. He has one daughter that he adopted but their relationship has been estranged for a long time.

As the title of the book indicates, Hata’s life is comprised of various *gestures*. Regarding Hata’s floating across multiple national borders as an allegory to U.S.’ intervention in the Pacific region, Lisa Lowe argues that “the novel situates the presence of the Asian American in the US as evidence of US geopolitical involvement in Asia, and points to the ways building the twentieth century as what Henry Luce called “the New American Century,” which involved the U.S. securing an empire in Asia.”²⁸⁶ Lowe reads that the Pacific War portrayed through Hata’s journey from Japan to Burma and other war sites and then to the U.S. not only illustrates the atrocity of Japan’s operation during the war against sex slaves and unnamed women but also makes “a reference to United States military empire.”²⁸⁷ This critique challenges an understanding of Hata simply as a colonizer for being a soldier or a benefit giver for being an American adoptive father to a girl from Asia. He was certainly a participant of the political and military complex of Japan’s empire-building, but not in a flat dimension. He was the colonized subject born into a Korean family who might have forcibly migrated to Japan and suffered from living at the bottom of the society with meager jobs such as hide tanning and rendering. His people are literally nameless and untitled colonial subjects. Starting with the undignified family, Hata moves from one moniker to another: Oh, Jiro Kurohata, Lieutenant Kurohata, Doc Hata, and Frank(lin). I read that each of these names demonstrates a different positioning that Hata takes in a different time and place as well as to different people than being a different person.

²⁸⁶ Lisa Lowe, "Reckoning Nation and Empire: Asian American Critique," in *A Concise Companion to American Studies*, edited by John Carlos Rowe (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 229-244. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 241.

²⁸⁷ Lowe, ““Reckoning Nation and Empire,” 239.

While many scholars have taken his gestures as his desire to negate his native ethnicity as a Korean but an attempt to empower himself by becoming someone else who belongs to a structure and a lineage, I argue that his Japanese ethnic background and nationality via his adoptive kinship with his Japanese family must be acknowledged as much as his hidden Koreanness. Mark Jerng acutely reads, saying “just when he thinks he can erase his own participation in the Japanese army's imperial efforts by adopting and forging a natural father-daughter relationship with a Korean girl, another history of war and occupation, the US role in the Korean War, emerges in the very place of that erasure.”²⁸⁸ I add to this view, arguing that an emphasis upon his ‘gesture’ to expunge his Koreanness reversely obliges him to get fixated to the ethnicity and the nationality of his origin only. While his gesture of being Japanese while eclipsing his Korean identity is highly problematic, especially considering that Korea was colonized by Japan, he recollects of the time when he lived with his biological family saying, “Most all of us were ethnic Koreans, though we spoke and lived as Japanese, if ones in twilight.”²⁸⁹ Long before he was reborn as Kurohata by getting adopted, he already had been pressured to live a life of gestures as an obedient colonial subject by substituting his Korean ethnicity with Japanese. Lim also states, “Viewing Hata [only] as a Korean American subject is impossible unless one either employs a rigidly biological notion of Korean American where descent overrides voluntary affiliation or accepts hybridization as intrinsic to the Korean American subject.”²⁹⁰ Thus, looking back at the time when he was adopted by the Japanese couple, Hata says, “This was when I first appreciated the comforts of real personhood, and its attendant secrets, among which is the harmonious relation between a self and his society.”

²⁸⁸ Jerng, 59.

²⁸⁹ Lee, 72.

²⁹⁰ Lim [, 11].

Reaching the harmony between the subject he was supposed to be and the societal title that he held as a son of the Japanese citizens, he felt it was “the true beginning of “[his] life.””²⁹¹ From this perspective, his floating across different names as well as different national borders could be read as not simply his intent to erase his past self for worldly ambition but his longing for personhood with which he could find “home.”

Therefore, arriving in Bedley Run he has been complacent to be a “Good Charlie,” the way that he knew to become American Kurohata. Though his daughter Sunny snaps at him by pointing out that he is just the “Good Charlie,” it is who Hata had wanted to become. In his early years in Bedley Run, some town boys targeted his store as a place and hurt the place, but he did nothing to them. He tolerated the unpleasant incident by deliberately not doing anything. Rather, he patiently waited to be allowed to be part of Bedley Run as a Good Charlie instead of an anonymous Asian immigrant who is hated and excluded. For Hata, Good Charlie is a liberating signifier to open a new opportunity to him in a new place among new people, rather than being a pejorative. As a way to overcome anti-Asian racism in the 1950s and the 1960s during which Hata might have migrated to the U.S., Hata chose to affirm himself to American values by becoming a hard-working, quiet, self-subsistent, and non-threatening model minority. His attitude was not different from when he did not confront hostile students at the Japanese school that he attended after he got adopted. When his Indian friend Lenny is irritated by racist odds he has experienced, Hata advises him not to blame others. “It’s true that at times I have felt somewhat uneasy in certain situations, though probably it was not anyone’s fault but my own . . . but I’ve always believed that the predominant burden is mine, if it is a question of feeling at home in a place. Why should it be another’s? How can it.”²⁹² Previously he was Kurohata,

²⁹¹ Lee, 72.

²⁹² Lee, 135.

honorary Japanese, but now is Hata, honorary White. Those names indicate the 'ideal' personhood that he could seize and perform in each moment of his life. He actively has acculturated and transformed himself into a different name by devalorizing his cultural, national, and racial difference. Yet, his "self-subalternization" gesture only approximates him to the ideal; his place is no other than "Good Charlie."

One of the moments that his such gesture is severely shaken is when he tried to form a family. After securing the economic stability as a small business owner and therefore a moderately successful immigrant living in a suburban town, he became interested in forming a family. Never having been married before and not being interested in getting married soon, he chose to adopt a child transnationally. Revealing that Sunny is not his biological daughter to Mary Burns, a neighbor whom he has been seeing, he says, "I was very lucky to get her, bring without a wife, and also because I'm somewhat older than is preferred. But I was able to convince the agency of my qualifications, and now I'm a happy father."²⁹³ His aspiration to become a father was not different from any normative imagination of a classy American family. As he expressed his ardent wish to get a daughter to the adoption agent, he was speaking of "a completeness, the unitary bond of a daughter and a father. Of harmony and balance."²⁹⁴ His dream of a perfect family, however, could not but get challenged, as his fantasies for a new family through adoption was about 'passing' as a natural family through race matching when he had been already 'passing' as Hata. It reveals another gesture for an "as-if" identity based on his wish to suppress his adoptive kinship as secretive as possible to make it 'real.'

His eligibility as an adoptive parent was, however, flawed in multiple aspects according to the social service standard of the 1950s and the 1960s. He was unmarried, and thus he did not

²⁹³ Lee, 50.

²⁹⁴ Lee, 74.

have a wife who could provide caring motherhood for a child, which was a quintessential element in measuring the eligibility of adopters. Furthermore, he was in his mid-forties or older, which was outside the ideal age range of adoptive parents. The social service professional who interviewed him warned him that “it was exceedingly rare for a single man to be granted an adoption, that in fact there was no precedent for it and so really no reason for a meeting.”²⁹⁵ He was a misfit as an adoptive parent. Though the text does not mention it, I suggest that his being Asian was a critical demerit to become an ideal candidate. The chance that Hata could have adopted a child domestically in the 1960s was close to none, unless he wanted a black child. Hata failed in winning the parental eligibility test because he did not fit into the heteronormative middle-class nuclear family model, and also because he was not white. Though he was well-established with a successful business, that was not enough. He was *not white enough*.

As the earlier section has discussed, since the 1940s “a strong demand by childless couples for adopted children, an increase in the number of children available for children” with the rise of illegitimacy rates and the emergence of transnational adoption, “an increase in the number of children available for adoption repudiation of the standard of the “unadoptable” child, and more liberal attitude on race”²⁹⁶ had been transforming the U.S. adoption practice. Furthermore, the 1950s and 1960s were the time when transnational adoption, particularly from Asian countries like Japan and Korea, was promoted, since the “rhetoric of adoption symbolically “solved” the problem of America's racially exclusive immigration laws. It freed the idea of family from its biological roots and dependence on physical proximity and made it a function of sentiment instead.”²⁹⁷ Transnational adoption worked to enable Americans to

²⁹⁵ Lee, 73.

²⁹⁶ Carp, *Family Matters*, 27.

²⁹⁷ Klein, 120.

imagine familial love that could overcome not only national borders but also cultural and racial dissimilarities. But, despite the aspiration of racial harmony, the color line was kept rather rigidly in placing a child, while full Asian children were acquiring the new racial position that was not white but tolerable for being not black. As David Eng states, transnational adoption functions against children who are the other by collectively expunging their particularities and obliterating the history of U.S. political and military advancement that produced those children's migration as such.²⁹⁸ But, the act of white, middle-class couples who invited a culturally, biologically, and racially stranger foreigner as their child, was viewed as the humanitarian kindness for the less fortunate, which represented America's exceptionality. Hata was not a fitting person for this grandiose scheme for the world, either. In short, in the late 1950s or the early 1960s when Sunny might have arrived, transnational adoption was affecting the geography of U.S. kinship, but the service was not for people like Hata.

His "orderly, welcoming suburban home in America, with a hopeful father of like-enough race and sufficient means" gets Sunny, an orphan from Pusan, Korea.²⁹⁹ Seeing that he was not very eligible, Hata "brought along a large donation to the agency, this beyond the regular expenses, as well as a like sum for the woman, which [he] explained as a most proper gift in [his] former homeland."³⁰⁰ He bribed the agent and the agencies, and thus purchased his chance for a child. Furthermore, he faked as if the money was a respectable custom of an Asian country that he came from. This self-orientalizing, however, presented his 'original' ethnicity and people as conniving and cunning to the eyes of a white agent. His fervid hope to build a perfect family was, thus, already tainted from the beginning as he acquired his parenthood with deception and

²⁹⁸ Eng, #.

²⁹⁹ Lee, 73.

³⁰⁰ Lee, 73.

bribe than the effort to become a suitable parent, while the white-centered societal order would have excluded him from an ideal parent model anyhow.

When Hata finally got a “suitable orphan,”³⁰¹ their “match” seemed perfect for both of them were Asian and Korean. As Hata’s previous life as a Korean was not known to other people, it was a fortunate coincidence. He narrates, “I had wished to make my own family, and if by necessity the single parent kind then at least one that would soon be well reputed and happily known, the Hatas of Bedley Run...I had assumed the child and I would have a ready, natural affinity, and that my colleagues and associates and neighbors, though knowing her to be adopted, would have little trouble quickly accepting our being of a single kind and blood.”³⁰² Hence, he dreamed of a consanguineous kinship that racially matching adoption could have allowed him another “natural” gesture that could go without being noticed, like his whole existence in Bedley Run and before.

However, his wish did get realized due to the “racial” difference of Sunny. Sunny was mixed-race, and as her “thick, wavy black hair and dark-hued skin” showed that she was probably partially black. The detectable racial difference made “a ready, natural affinity” “of harmony and balance” that he had dreamed of impossible, as Sunny’s body revealed that they were not of single blood. “Her hair, her skin, were there to see, self-evident, and it was obvious how some other color (or colors) ran deep within her.” A gesture for the natural kinship became impossible – “the blighted hope in my eyes.”³⁰³ But Hata further got frustrated with that her mixed-race, a testimony to the U.S. military occupation in Korea, that had been generating mixed-race children since mid-1940s when U.S. troops started to reside in the Korea peninsula

³⁰¹ Lee, 74.

³⁰² Lee, 204.

³⁰³ Lee, 204.

after Korea became independent from Japan with the closure of the Second World War. Hata expressed his disappointment for a happy and natural family building, saying that though “the agency had promised a child from a hardworking, if squarely humble, Korean family who had gone down on their luck” she “would be likely to be the product of a much less dignified circumstance, a night’s wanton encounter between a GI and a local bar girl.”³⁰⁴ While this speculation was unproven, it is undeniable that Sunny was a by-product of the U.S. military occupation of Korea as the U.S. was stretching to the Pacific Asian region to fight off communism as a world guardian of democracy. Sunny might have come from a hardworking but unlucky family who could not keep their child, but the existence of Sunny itself still imbued the tangled history of violence, war, and the emergence of the U.S. empire.

If we come back to the word “suitable,” the arrangement of Hata and Sunny’s kinship, I read, was the result of deliberate coordination. Being black Korean, Sunny was not a highly esteemed supply for Hata, but also not for any other white Americans. Yet, Hata was not white enough to claim a desirable child like other “normative” adoptive parents. His eligibility that was at the lower rung of adoptive parents would not suffice him any better chance than someone like Sunny, a black mixed-race Korean child. Whereas full Korean children were gradually becoming popular among interested white adopters, mixed-race children still outnumbered full Korean children in the late 1950s. Among mixed-race children who were urgent to be placed, a white Korean child could not be placed with Hata. According to a black and white binary, he was neither of them but had to be categorized as black when it came to his eligibility as an adoptive parent within the existing system of race. To answer the question “Is Yellow Black or White?”

³⁰⁴ Lee, 204.

Hata was black in the racial labeling of the U.S. adoption system.³⁰⁵ If a white Korean child had been put with him, it would transgress the color line that the U.S. social services tenaciously upheld. Thus, the most available stock for someone like Hata was a Korean black child. As a less wanted child and a non-white parent who was less qualified, they suited each other, according to the U.S. racial order that designated their place as such in constituting adoptive kinship.

Sunny's black body not just visibly revealed that their relationship was not biologically tied, which failed his dream for a ready, natural familial affinity, but it also foreclosed Hata's life-long effort to locate himself in a white suburb town Bedly Run as an accepted, known, and raceless American neighbor. Or as Lim puts, Sunny reminded of Hata that his American life as an exemplary model minority had been an illusion.³⁰⁶ His internalized white gaze, however, limited his realization that he could be a Good Charlie only as far as he did not present a threat to the existing social, political, and racial order. When he wished more than what was allowed for him, his honorary white status could be removed. When Sunny questions him, after they reunite, saying, "I cannot believe you're surprised [with getting a child like me]. Did you really believe they would give you a wanted child?" Hata answers, "They said I would be an ideal candidate, if it weren't for the fact I wasn't married."³⁰⁷ This naivete, even after many decades, shows that he never clearly sees that he is viewed as the non-white racial other by others. Disapproving eyes of Hata who cannot see himself in the racial hierarchy that racializes his 'Oriental' body not just non-white but approximates to black, thus never find a perfect daughter in Sunny who is partially black. He lacks an understanding that anti-Africanism is anti-Arianism in another guise and vice versa, since "insofar as Asians and Africans share a subordinate position to the master class,

³⁰⁵ "Is Yellow Black or White?" is the title of Chapter 2 in Gary Y. Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

³⁰⁶ Lim[, 16].

³⁰⁷ Lee, 335.

yellow is a shade of black and black, a shade of yellow.”³⁰⁸ Failing at acknowledging that they are a kindred people when it comes to the race issue as Okihiro notes, he believes that he is racially, and therefore in nearly all aspects, different from her. Also, he is forgetful that she is also Asian. The best understanding that he gets by meeting Sunny again, who could not and did not want to live as “white” in Bedley Run, is that two of them are “both orphans of a sort [who] come learn for ourselves.”³⁰⁹

His failure of bonding with young Sunny, the decades-long estrangement with her, the unsentimental reunion with her, instead, tell Hata’s failed family romance premised upon impossible dreams of a normative family, when his ‘gestured’ fatherhood through adoption and his ‘gestured’ selves with multiple names and ethnicities are enmeshed with historical, political complexity of the Japanese colonial history that made a colonial subject Oh become Kurotata who became a part of violence done unto his own people, the U.S. Cold War intervention that produced mixed-race children like Sunny, and the racial order of the U.S. society that marginalized Hata as an inassimilable foreigner who could not be a full American for whom only the perfect American family was realizable.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the political origin of the U.S.-Korea transnational adoption to study how race informed the newly emergent transnational, transracial kinship, both biological and adoptive. The stringent racial order that places children like Insu and Sunny as the abject and marginalized subject in transracial and transnational kinship discloses the false dream of the harmonious family that the Cold War U.S. dreamed of and promoted through transnational

³⁰⁸ Okihiro, 55, 34.

³⁰⁹ Lee, 336,

kinship. The “GI baby problem” in the mid-twentieth century was, however, not just the outcome of the U.S. military expansion to build the global empire, but the evidence of the uncontrollable sprung out of the new intimacy. While their less desirability illustrates the racial order that defines who deserves more to be ‘us’ in the U.S. kinship formation, the racial interstitiality of mixed-race children also challenges us to reconfigure the familial, racial, and national boundaries. Mixed-race children did not simply disappear by being brought within as abject subjects to be confirmed to normativity, but their beings persistently opened up the interstitial rupture that resisted the heteronormative kinship across race and national borders, disclosing its contradictions.

Chapter 3 – The Dream of A ‘Rainbow’ Family:

U.S. Transnational Transracial Adoption and Multiculturalism

Adoption as an act of including someone who is not biologically tied to a family has expanded the traditional notion of a family in various ways. The demographic history of the adoption population, however, illustrates what kind of adoptive kinship the U.S. has consistently sanctioned and sustained. The vast majority of adopters in the U.S. have been invariably white, middle-class, heterosexual, and married people. This specific group’s dominant presence in the U.S. adoption history testifies that the national laws and state policies on adoption and the cultural norms have supported the needs of white, middle-class, heterosexual, and married people than of any other adoption participants.³¹⁰ As a state-led kinship institution, U.S. adoption

³¹⁰ It is to be noted that there is no single official source that gives an over-arching data of the U.S. adoption, primarily since each state has regulated adoption differently from the beginning of its institutionalization. Even when a good portion of the state record has been kept, gathering the adoption data at the national level was another task. For instance, the U.S. federal government stopped requiring the states to report on the number of private domestic adoptions since 1975. As a result, there is no official collective adoption data of the nation at all from 1975 to the mid-1980s. The Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Center for Social Statistics resumed to collect data afterward, but they had to rely upon agencies’ voluntary submission and therefore the data was incomplete at large.

Recognizing the serious absence of the historical and current status of the nation’s adoption information, a series of legislations were implemented by Congress to create a more comprehensive data of adoption across the states. They include the Voluntary Cooperative Information System (VCIS) of 1983, the Child Abuse Amendments of 1984, the amendment to title IV-E of the Social Security Act (section 479) of 1986, and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) of 1993. But these legislations had limitations as they encouraged, while later required, the states to report only on their public adoption cases. Therefore, other types of adoption that took up 30% to 80% of the total adoption were not still part of the nationally collected data. Non-public adoptions that were categorized as “Other” include adoption facilitated by private agencies, independent adoption, and stepparent adoption. Ironically, the most accurate adoption record among all types of adoption practiced in the U.S. is transnational adoption, despite many loopholes in its documentation.

Furthermore, compared to the demographics of adoptees, the information regarding adoptive parents is further lacking and inconsistent. A marital status, religion, the presence of a biological child, and a household income level of adopters have been traditionally accounted for as important matching factors. Thus, these elements have been studied and documented in a pre-adoption home study and an eligibility assessment. On the other hand, there is no clear data that tells the racial and ethnic background of adopters. Above all, the historically homogeneous identity and background of adopters did not propel adoption agencies, the state governments, and the federal government to collect the data regarding adoptive parents. Also, the number of domestic transracial adoptions was tiny until the early 1970s, which means that even when a child might be non-white, adoptive parents were most likely to be white.

has steadfastly maintained a peculiar form of family that meets the racial, gender, and class normativity as an ideal in which the kinship trio of a man, a woman, and a child stands as the “facts of nature” and “facts of life.”³¹¹ Nevertheless, adoption has added different configurations of family relations in the U.S. kinship spectrum.

As the notion of family has partially shifted with the emergence and growth of less conventional family types including single-parent and same-sex households, the kinds of the family who (are deemed eligible to) participate in adoption also have become more diverse than in the past. Among various adoption practices, transnational transracial adoption creates complex intersections among (non-) biological ties, race, ethnicity, class, gender, and national borders, beyond a multiracial family formed through interracial relations with their jointly begotten children or stepchildren who are of a different race from their stepparent. If the appearance of multiracial and multicultural families built through adoption in the popular TV series such as

The very first national survey on adoptive parents, the National Survey of Adoptive Parents (NSAP), was conducted in 2007-2008 by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and the DHHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The NSAP studied 2,089 adoptions, which included domestic adoptions from the foster care system (763 children) and private sources (781 children) as well as transnational adoptions (545 children). Yet, this survey was conducted due to the concerns that adoptive parents did not have sufficient services to assure adoptees’ well-being after adoption, and less due to the need to understand adoptive parents’ demographics and how it affected their adopted child(ren). For a detailed analysis of NSAP, see Sharon Vandivere et al., “Adoption USA: A Chartbook Based on the 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. 2019. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/adoption-usa-chartbook-based-2007-national-survey-adoptive-parents> and Matthew D. Bramlett and Laura F. Radel, “The National Survey of Adoptive Parents: An Introduction to the Special Issue of Adoption Quarterly,” *Adoption Quarterly* 13 (2010): 147-156, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926755.2010.524870>.

For more information regarding the U.S. adoption data and its history after the 1970s, see the National Council for Adoption (NCFA) (1982, 1986, 1992, 1996, and 2002), the National Council for Adoption’s *Adoption Factbook* series (1985, 1989, 1999, 2007, and 2011), Penelope L. Maza (1984), Victor Eugene Flango and Carol R. Flango (1995), E. Wayne Carp (2002 and 2004), Matthew D. Bramlett & Laura F. Radel (2010), Matthew Shuman and Victor E. Flango (2013), and the series of reports published by the Children’s Bureau and by the Donald Adoption Institute.

³¹¹ See Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds, *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001). Scholars including Sarah Franklin and Stefan Helmreich draw upon David Schneider’s analysis of the relationship between kinship, gender, and reproduction in thinking of the “nature” of kinship.

Diff'rent Strokes (1978–1986), *Sex and the City* (the sixth season, 2003–2004), and *Modern Family* (2009–present) have made transnational transracial adoption as a familiar cultural material for the contemporary U.S. public, transnational transracial adoptions by celebrities like Angelina Jolie, who adopted a child from Cambodia in 2002, from Ethiopia in 2005, and from Vietnam in 2007, and Madonna, who adopted two children from Malawi in 2017, and the explosive media coverage on them have made transnational transracial adoption as something à la mode.

With the seeming frequency and prevalence, transnational transracial adoption has been repeatedly extolled as a proof of the nation's embracement of differences and a further departure from its racially divided past. In her study of the cultural, ideological, and legal changes of U.S. adoption in the twentieth century, historian Barbara Melosh has noted that "an acceptance that observers have attributed to the relative openness of American society, its fluid class and social structure, its racial and ethnic diversity. This embrace of adoption attests to the vibrant optimism of many Americans, to our belief in the malleability of human nature and the benevolence of social institutions."³¹² Yet, whether the increased familiarity with transnational transracial adoption has reshaped the U.S.' conceptualization of kinship and whether the emergence of different forms of adoptive kinship has transformed the notion of family as positively as Melosh has read, requires a much closer examination. As anthropologist Toby Alice Volkman writes, "Numbers and media attention do not in themselves suggest a profound transformation in, or the normalization of, adoption."³¹³

³¹² Barbara Melosh, *Strangers and Kin: The American Way of Adoption* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 2.

³¹³ Toby Alice Volkman, "Embodying Chinese Culture." *Cultures of Transnational Adoption*, edited by Toby Alice Volkman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 82.

“The Dream of A ‘Rainbow’ Family” studies U.S. contemporary transnational transracial adoption in the post-1970s period to investigate how racial difference operates in conjunction with the cultural and ethnic diversity imperative that is imposed and adopted disparately among transnational transracial adoptive family members and in different kinds of transnational adoptive families. While transracial adoption, either domestic or transnational, is closely intertwined with the national politics, social policies, and cultural understanding of race and kinship, this chapter contends that the different historical route of U.S. domestic transracial adoption and transnational transracial adoption reveals the differential racial politics and cultural imaginary regarding black and Asian children, and biological parents of color and white adoptive parents, who are the most representative groups in U.S. domestic and transnational transracial adoption.

Elaborating on the issues of multiracial and multicultural kinship established by transnational transracial adoption, this chapter reckons the caution raised by many scholars including Kristi Brian who illustrates the need to consider transnational transracial adoption and domestic transracial adoption together than separately. Brian writes that the “limitations of [the adoption] governing mechanisms necessitate a constellation of more critical approaches and contributions that address the fact that the already privileged and advantaged benefit most from these regulatory measures,” highlighting the importance of recognizing that the same mechanism runs transracial adoptions altogether.³¹⁴ Sharing these understandings but stepping further, I situate the role of Asians and Asianness playing in the contemporary form of the U.S. transnational transracial adoptive kinship at the center of my inquiry. In particular, I explore how different racial politics and cultural imaginary beget differential race and cultural relations of the

³¹⁴ Kristi Brian, *Reframing Transracial Adoption: Adopted Koreans, White Parents, and the Politics of Kinship* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2012), 147.

transnational transracial adoptive family in the contemporary multicultural American society. Speaking of “Asian,” I am keenly aware of the problem of ‘lumping’ Asian adoptees from various Asian countries that are not just culturally but also racially diverse into one monolithic group, Asian. East Asian adoptees and their adoptive family frequently over-represent the experience of U.S. transnational transracial adoption, and their hypervisibility in the U.S. adoption discourse and politics must be read with caution, considering that each country’s historical, political, and cultural context of sending children for adoption abroad is dissimilar. While being aware of this issue, my discussion of Asian American adoptees in this chapter strategically focuses on East Asian adoptees from the Republic of Korea (henceforth, Korea) and China to highlight the historic presence of the Korean adoptee population in the U.S. transnational adoption community and the sizable growth of the Chinese adoptee population since the 2000s.

The way that racial and cultural differences are negotiated within the transnational transracial adoptive kinship provides a critical site where the (re-)conceptualization of kinship can be explored beyond the black-white dichotomy, when we consider the substantial influence of transnational transracial adoption of Asian children in the U.S. adoption history. The transnational transracial adoptive family concurrently unsettles and strengthens the very principle that U.S. adoption has thrived upon: the notion of “as-if-begotten.” Judith Modell criticizes that the U.S. legislation of adoptive kinship has been sustained upon this notion rooted in the biologism, which insists on the singularity of one’s familial relationship.³¹⁵ Under this principle, when adoption occurs, one’s relationship with birth parents is annulled and replaced by an adoptive relationship. The linear and irrevocable process of relinquishment and replacement is

³¹⁵ See Judith S. Modell, *Kinship with Strangers: Adoption and Interpretations of Kinship in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

not an exception to the contemporary transnational transracial adoption, but with an arresting twist.

In the multicultural global society, racial and cultural differences are not (to be) a hurdle to forming a kinship any longer. The “as-if-begotten” ideal rather provides an additional justification for an extension of the opportunity for kinship beyond the conventional norms and custom, since transnational transracial adoption illustrates that the conspicuous racial and cultural differences not just can be surmounted but also ought to be nurtured. Deemed as a manifestation of the bond founded on the genuine affection despite the absence of a biological connection and the overt difference of race, culture, class, national origin, or more, a so-called ‘rainbow’ family with a transnationally adopted child of color has become a celebratory locus of harmonious differences in the multicultural society that the U.S. sees itself is accomplishing.

But, the fact that Asian children from abroad have been continuously preferred over black children from within as early as since the 1950s when Korean children began to be available for Americans, make us question the dreamy thought of racial and cultural harmony through transnational transracial adoption. Even if multicultural ideals have been changing various aspects of U.S. society, the growing number of black and brown children in institutional care, as well as the historical disfavor of adopting them, does not attest to the genuine shift. Put simply, not all children of color have been viewed in the same light regarding their need for a permanent home through adoption. Transracial adoption, either transnational or domestic, offers a lens through which racialization of kinship can be examined. Highlighting the way that race creates differential access to kinship and the differential racialization of differences within the transracial family, this chapter illustrates the distinct way that race plays for each transracial adoption’s cultural and political interest.

Mark Jerng astutely points out the continuous mechanism in which a newly acquired identity of transracial adoptees functions as a primary condition that permits them into knowable and relatable personhood.³¹⁶ Jerng marks that transnational, and transracial adoptions have been the “constructed and legitimized, and regulated” nation-state institution centered on “racialized norms of citizenship buttressed by the sanctification of white fathers and mothers as benefactors” at the expense of infantilized and illegible racial others throughout the U.S. history.³¹⁷ The transracial adoption’s tacit has morphed from the ““sameness of adoption”(children should look and “be” like their parents)” to the accommodation of differences.³¹⁸ Yet, the liberal assumptions that a private choice for a familial affiliation effectively placates and negotiates racial and cultural differences as well as non-biological ties within adoptive family relations, disclose a disjuncture between domestic and transnational transracial adoption in their codification of differences.³¹⁹ Jerng’s argument can be extended to that while the racial recognition pivoting around the black and white debate is what identifies U.S. domestic transracial adoption, the question with transnational adoption lies more with adoptees’ initial foreign origin where race partakes as a partial and elusive element while their body is still racially marked. Sociologist and education studies scholar Mia Tuan notes, though transnational transracial adoption often has outnumbered domestic transracial adoption in the U.S. adoption history, “[t]he term ‘transracial adoption’ is typically reserved for those adoptions involving the domestic placement of African-American children with white American parents, while ‘international adoption’ or ‘intercountry adoption’ refers to foreign-born Asian or Latin-American children adopted by white American

³¹⁶ Mark C. Jerng, *Claiming Others: Transracial Adoption and National Belonging* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xxvi.

³¹⁷ Jerng, xxii, xii-xiii.

³¹⁸ Jerng, xxxvi

³¹⁹ Jerng, 184-192.

parents.”³²⁰ The different implication that each term highlights shows the way that race is deemphasized in the cultural perception and discourse of U.S. transnational transracial adoption.

Stating that “race only ever appears as disappearing, a racial politics that acknowledges difference only to dismiss its importance,” David L. Eng offers a useful frame to examine the antithetical operation of concurrent race-seeing and not seeing in U.S. transnational transracial adoption under the banner of colorblindness and multiculturalism.³²¹ Eng emphasizes that forgetting of race itself becomes the conditions of possibilities for racialized subjects like transnational adoptees to acquire the right to intimacy and kinship. He turns to Hannah Arendt’s notion of citizenship to explain the way that the right to intimacy and kinship has become the new state-sanctioned right to have rights. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt addresses the new political situation in which one’s political belonging, as well as alienation, is decided by a nation-state who monopolizes the power to declare, saying:

We became aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and that means to live in a framework where one is judged by one’s own actions and opinions) and a right to belong to some kind of organized community, only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation.³²²

The prominence of “a right to have rights” “to belong to some kind of organized community” places people like contemporary transnational adoptees who used not to be able to acclaim these rights as the *added* “subjects of possibilities.” Hence, Eng sees transnational adoptees as well as

³²⁰ Mia Tuan, “Domestic and International Transracial Adoption: A Synopsis of the Literature.” *Sociology Compass* 2, no. 6 (2008): 1849.

³²¹ David L. Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Kinship* (Durham and London: Duke University Press), 117, xi, 4.

³²² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 7th ed. (New York, Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), 296-297.

queer citizens, whose right to intimacy and kinship has been expanded, as subjects who emerge out of the liberal notion of freedom and universal rights.

In this light, transnational transracial adoption seems to fulfill an awaited promise of liberal freedom for more, if not all, people by extending the right to kinship to subjects like foreign-born children (of color) whose lack could be eased by better qualified (white) adopters in a western country, as well as gay and lesbian citizens who used to be excluded from the legitimate kinship eligibility. But it is critical to note that such a right to have the right to kinship already preconditions them as racialized subjects. Illuminating the way that the affirmation of freedom and the forgetting of race go hand by hand in the neoliberal colorblind age of ours, Eng argues that the private structure of kinship has become a “privileged site for the management of ongoing problems of race, racism and property in U.S. society.”³²³ The liberal notion of the transnational transracial adoptive family, therefore, is contingent on the term that it must lose its exceptionality to fulfill its symbolic value.

Building on this understanding, this chapter argues the way in which Asianness, both as the racial and cultural difference within the transnational transracial adoptive family, simultaneously creates flexibility and reproduces race and cultural identification of adoptees of color from Asian countries in a very specific form of culture keeping, to use Heather Jacobson’s term, that works towards the dream of an ‘as-if-begotten’ family, not in spite of, but because of the differences within the family. Sociologist Heather Jacobson critiques the culture of “culture keeping” of the contemporary transnational adoption family and community where contradictory values and perspectives on culture meet and compete. Her question of which culture is actually kept in the family with a transnationally adopted child unveils that the desire to continue “the child’s ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background” contains the racialized idea of

³²³ Eng, 6.

culture, even when it marks a significant transition from the long residing tenet of assimilation of the previous era.³²⁴

The culture keeping practice of the transnational adoption community operates under the belief that one's "ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic background" is a part of a child's birthright. Jacobson points out that culture keeping, therefore, is assumed "[u]nder [the] perspective of culture as an inalienable right."³²⁵ This notion postulates that disregarding cultural differences of an adoptee from her adoptive family members amounts to an act of violation of the adoptee's inalienable right. However, Jacobson's comparative study of culture keeping of Russian-adoptive families and Korean-adoptive families shows the very disparate pressure and expectations set for adoptees of color and white adoptees, though both groups of adoptive parents have invited a child who came from a foreign country whose culture is distinct from that of the U.S. into their family. The expectation to cultivate the cultural heritage of a child adopted from a different country presents a differential ethical obligation to the adoptive family depending on the adoptee's racial closeness to the rest of their (most likely white) American adoptive family.³²⁶ The selectively driven culture keeping of different transnational transracial adoptive families, therefore, reveals that a transnational adoptee's culture is maintained only more when transnational adoptees are children of color. In this logic, the culture of adoptees of color from abroad is perceived as what is rooted in their biological characteristics, that is, race and skin color, than anything else.

³²⁴ United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner, Human Rights (OHCHR), "Convention on the Rights of the Child" (November 20, 1989), Part 1, Article 20.3.

³²⁵ Heather Jacobson, *Culture Keeping: White Mothers, International Adoption, and the Negotiation of Family Difference* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008), 5.

³²⁶ A Russian-adoptive family and a Korean-adoptive family in Jacobson's study indicate a family who have adopted a child from Russia and Korea respectively. The racial and ethnic background of adoptive parents of both groups is homogenous for a majority of them being a white, middle-class, heterosexual couple.

Extending this understanding, I argue that the discourse of multiculturalism that has encouraged U.S. transnational transracial adoption since the 1980s has created a peculiar form of racialization of foreign-born adoptees of color from Asia, by translating the racial difference of transnational transracial adoptees into the cultural diversity that is deemed a restorable and selectable ethnic choice. In this process, the concurrently innate and aestheticized cultural diversity is interpreted as something undoubtedly compatible with Americanness, that is ‘naturally’ and legally given to those adoptees through a newly constituted relation with their American family. Under this creed, the structural and institutional inequality set along the line of race, class, or national borders becomes malleable as they are absorbed and morphed through the language of culture and ethnicity. In this adjustment, culture functions less as a site of struggle, but more as a site of confluence and convergence.

The belief in a putatively amicable cohabitation of multiple cultures and races in the transnational transracial family is further contested when we ask if a whole transnational transracial family becomes ethnically or racially hyphenated after the origin of their adopted child in a similar way that the adoptee of color invariably carries an ethnic expectation anchored in their visibly discernable race—doubly discernable as a person of color and someone whose race is different from the rest of their family. I argue that the uneven cultural imperative and the ethnic and racial moniker paired with a perceptible racial identity of the transnational transracial adoptee reveal the way that racial and cultural differences of the transnational transracial adoptive family function differently depending on the racial closeness of the adoptees to their adoptive family. The multiracial and multicultural kinship formed with transnational transracial adoption is practiced through the peculiar racialization of the adoptee of color, which defers the race of the adoptee. It opens the possibility of inviting them into a new kinship premised upon

the notion of liberal and progressive Americanness; and yet, this possibility of becoming “us” concurrently persists the reproduction of adoptees’ otherness while simultaneously putting it under erasure. Thereupon, this chapter works on Eng’s questions of whether a transnational adoptive family is an immigrant family, whether a transnationally adopted child from Asia to the U.S. is Asian American, and whether family members of transnational transracial adoptees identify their own family as Asian American when they adopt a child from Asia.³²⁷ When the option and the obligation to claim an ethnic identity are mostly the transnational transracial adoptees’ business, we have to ask how the ideals of multiculturalism work and conflict with the adoptees’ racial identity and identification that are paired with their biologically defined cultural heritage.

For that end, this chapter examines the historical trajectory of transracial adoption in the late twentieth century, comparing U.S. domestic and transnational transracial adoption with a series of legislations, statistics, and organized actions regarding transracial adoption. Next, it investigates the impact of multiculturalism on the popularity of adoption of foreign Asian children over other kinds of children of color who are domestically available by looking at the various steps taken by the global society including the development of laws and attitudes of countries who send children to the U.S. and the U.S. adopters’ response to these measures. Lastly, this chapter will study adoptee visual artist Jane Jin Kaisen’s *Loving Belinda* project to discuss transnational transracial adoptees’ exploration and negotiation of their racial and cultural identity in the multicultural U.S. society as people whose body is Asian but whose cultural identity may not be simply Asian or Asian American.³²⁸

³²⁷ Eng, 94.

³²⁸ Jane Jin Kaisen, *Loving Belinda* (Århus, Denmark: Forlaget *[asterisk], 2015).

Kaisen explains that she created *Loving Belinda* to problematize the colonial history in which transnational adoption has occurred, particularly in the Scandinavian context as a reference to the growing xenophobia against immigrants of color and the Korean adoptees' relation to other immigrants.³²⁹ While the main characters appearing in the work are supposedly Americans and its narrative is set in the U.S., this chapter's choice of the work by a Danish Korean adoptee artist as a text to study U.S. transnational transracial adoption is not invalid. My object is neither to displace the Scandinavian context from the project nor to insist on the U.S. centric discourse regarding transnational transracial adoption. Rather, paying attention to the multiple reversals across racial and cultural identities and power positions, I read how Asianness is constructed, negotiated, and performed in *the Loving Belinda* project through an experimental example of a transnational transracial family of the U.S.

The Rise and the Decline of U.S. Domestic and Transnational Transracial Adoption

Though the effort for formal domestic transracial adoption emerged in the late 1940s, its number has never been comparable to that of transnational transracial adoption. U.S. domestic transracial adoption had its short heyday in the 1970s, partly due to the influence of the Civil Rights movement. Adoption was not an exception to the Civil Rights movement's advocacy of ending infamous racial segregation. In 1971, 2,574 cases of transracial adoption of black children by white adopters occurred, which was the biggest ever since the very first case of transracial adoption had been reported in Minnesota in 1948.³³⁰ Considering that the total number of

³²⁹ Tobias Hübinette and Jane Jin Kaisen, "Transnational Adoption in the Context of Colonial Repression," *Loving Belinda* (Århus, Denmark: Forlaget *[asterisk], 2015), 67-78.

³³⁰ It does not mean that African American children were not adopted at all before 1948. The public record exists as such because only in 1948 the U.S. Children's Bureau (USCB) finally started to add race in its adoption reporting system. The exact number of transracial adoptions before 1948, therefore, is unknown. Nonetheless, the adoption of black children not just by white adopters but also by people of color who were not African Americans was not salient until the late 1960s.

adoptions that happened in 1972 was about 153,000 including 3,100 transnational adoptions, 2,754 cases may seem small, making up only 1.4 % of the total adoption numbers of the year, but it was a huge leap from 394 cases in 1954.³³¹

Yet, soon after it, domestic transracial adoption decreased significantly throughout the mid-1970s and the 1980s. The striking decline of U.S. domestic transracial adoption was caused by two major actions: The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW)'s "The Position Statement on Trans-Racial Adoption" in September 1972 and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978. The NABSW's Position Statement and the ICWA were the first concerted effort against the unconditional pro-assimilation policies of the previous decades. Viewing that ethnicity is a way of life foundational for one's physical, psychological, and cultural socialization in the U.S., the NABSW vehemently opposed to the placement of a black child in a white home. They argued that transracial adoption of a black child by white people was a wrongful practice that met white adoptive parents' needs instead of the best interest of a black child. Furthermore, they saw that it seriously inhibited the appropriate social preparation of a child of color in the society where racial demarcation was still outstanding; they called the white people's adoption of black children as the "cultural genocide" that impeded the children's "survival in a racist society."³³² Besides, they stressed the presence of many black families who could take in children of their own kind, while the child welfare system and its professionals

³³¹ The statistics used in this chapter have been taken from various resources created by both public and private units as well as by several scholars. But, having said in Footnote 1, there is no official data that solidly presents the accurate number of the nation's total adoptions, and therefore numbers presented in this chapter are the best available estimates. Regarding the absence of the national collective data of adoption, Flango and Flango note, "the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has been collecting adoption information from each state and has become the authoritative source of national adoption statistics." See Victor Eugene Flango and Carol R. Flango, "How Many Children Were Adopted in 1992," *Child Welfare* 74, no. 5 (1995): 1018.

³³² National Association of Black Social Workers, "National Association of Black Social Workers Position Statement Against Trans-Racial Adoption" (New York: National Association of Black Social Workers, September 1972), 1-4.

structurally marginalized black families from adoption, viewing black parents as less qualifying to become adoptive parents.

In a similar vein, the ICWA of 1978 claimed that Native American children were the collective resources essential to their tribal survival, and therefore their children must be kept with their own family and tribe. Stating that “there is no resource that is more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children,” the ICWA asserted that the mass placement of Native American children into non-Native American white households was severely detrimental to the preservation of Native American tribes and people. In their view, it was a systematic genocide of Native Americans led by the U.S. federal government under the guise of ‘civilizing’ Native American children. For that reason, it was deemed as a literal continuation of the previous century’s enforcement that made Native American children attend U.S. boarding schools from 1878 to the 1930s, forcibly making them leave their family and home for the purpose of ‘civilization.’ The ICWA of 1978 was also a reaction to the crisis generated by the Indian Adoption Project that happened from 1958 to 1967. Funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Children’s Bureau (USCB) and administered by the Children’s Welfare League of America (CWLA), the Indian Adoption Project “deliberately placed 395 Native American children from reservations in sixteen western states with white families in Illinois, Indiana, New York, Massachusetts, Missouri, and other states in the East and Midwest.”³³³ Historian Ellen Herman argues that the Indian Adoption Project was “the first national effort to place an entire child population transracially and transculturally.”³³⁴

³³³ Ellen Herman, *Kinship by Design: A History of Adoption in the Modern United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 63.

³³⁴ Ellen Herman, “Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)” (Last modified February 24, 2012), <https://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/topics/ICWA.html>.

Under the influence of these actions that strongly opposed transracial adoption, U.S. domestic transracial adoption plummeted throughout the 1970s and 1980s. But, the 1970s was also the period that the total adoption number sweepingly grew, reaching 175,000 in 1970 that is the highest number in the U.S. adoption history. This tells the almost contrasting trend between domestic transracial adoption and the other types of adoption including transnational adoption. Many studies that insisted that transracially adopted children were more likely to exhibit negative social behavior as a result of lacking care and guidance for their social fitting from their white adoptive parents, also added a reason to reconsider the previous practice of domestic transracial adoption. As a result, domestic transracial placements snagged from the mid-1970s and have never burgeoned like transnational transracial adoption.

The impact of the near stop of domestic transracial adoption that occurred in the mid-1970s is resonating even after the implementation of legislation in the following decades such as the Howard M. Metzenbaum Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 (Public Law 103-82), the Interethnic Placement Act (IEPA) of 1996 (Public Law 104-188), and the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 (Public Law 105-89). The MEPA of 1994 was enacted out of concern for a growing number of children put into foster care and the increase of children aging in the foster care system without finding a permanent home. Thinking that the previous decades' practice of race matching between a child and their adopters was the main reason that hindered adoptions of more children and the recruitment of more potential adopters, the Congress passed the MEPA as the part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. The MEPA prohibits "delaying or denying the placement of a child solely on the basis of race, color, or national origin

(RCNO) of the adoptive or foster parent, or the child, involved.”³³⁵ The IEPA of 1996 further supplements the MEPA’s effort to eliminate any RCNO barriers to adoption.

The 1997 ASFA’s main objective is to continue the effort of family preservation but at the same time to reduce the time that a child stays in foster care for the child’s welfare. For that end, it requires a state who is in charge of a child to “file a petition to terminate the parental rights of the child’s parents..., concurrently, to identify, recruit, process, and approve a qualified family for an adoption,” when the child has been in foster care for fifteen of the most recent twenty-two months.³³⁶ It is the very first federal legislation that mandates the termination of birth parental rights for adoption, which has generated a huge shift in the U.S. adoption practice by giving priority, though conditional, to expeditious adoption over the maintenance of a birth relationship. It also actively advocates the termination of a birth relationship for the best interest of a child when biological parents or relatives are not capable of providing appropriate care.³³⁷

This series of efforts by the U.S. federal government to promote adoption regardless of RCNO, to take children out of foster care sooner, and to place them in a permanent home for the best interest of a child, however, did not result in a noticeable change of the number of domestic transracial adoptions in the following years. Due to the scarcity of the collective data of the national adoption number and the further absence of the information about adoption participants’

³³⁵ The MEPA is not applied to Native American children who are subject to the ICWA of 1978.

³³⁶ See the ASFA, Sec.103 a) (3) subparagraph (E).

³³⁷ Out of concern for an arbitrary removal of a child from her birth family, which was the biggest concern in legislating the ASFA, there is a provision entitled “Preservation of Reasonable Parenting” that aims to preserve and reunify a birth family as a primary goal for an overseeing state. Yet, the ASFA lists the definition of parental neglect and abuse much more specifically and broadly than before. It also designates the court to decide whether a child has been abandoned with a more critical assessment of “good” parental care than previous legislations. Depending on a court ruling of whether a parent has not followed the state law’s definition of good parenting, the court can terminate one’s parental rights. While the total substitute of a birth relation for a legally constituted relation is what defines U.S. adoption from the beginning of its formalization in the mid-19th century, the ASFA further reinforces the probable priority of adoptive kinship over biological when the welfare of a child with her biological parent(s) and relatives becomes questionable in the eyes of the law.

racial identity and cultural background, it is not possible to delineate the exact number of domestic transracial adoption from the mid-1970s.³³⁸ But, there are a few indicators with which the trend of domestic transracial adoption can be examined.

Karl Ensign's 1991 report on foster care for the Department of Health and Human Services writes that "the number of children in federally assisted Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)/title IV-E foster care" grew substantially from 1983 to 1988.³³⁹ Ensign notes that though the number grew between 1962 and 1977 as well, the growth in the 1980s is much more substantial. For instance, the number of children remaining in foster care at the end of 1986 was estimated at 273,500 but it grew to 360,000 in 1989. Also, the number of children in AFDC/title IV-E foster care jumped from 110,749 in FY 1986 at a federal cost of 637.2 million dollars to 132,109 in FY1988 costing 891.4 million dollars.³⁴⁰ This data shows that the federal government's policies to boost adoption regardless of RCNO were far from being successful.

The rising number of children staying in the foster care system has been a national concern, and yet it reveals a more problematic aspect when we examine who is more likely put into foster care and who is less likely to leave it. According to the CWLA's 2007 National Data Analysis System, as of 2004, one decade after the MEPA, African American children take up 34 percent of children in out-of-home care and stay longer in foster care than children of any race. Compared to white children whose average length of stay in foster care is two years, African

³³⁸ See Footnote 1 of this chapter.

³³⁹ The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation's 2005 brief explains about the impact of the federal funding allocation and its policy changes saying: "From 1961 until 1980, federal foster care funding was part of the federal welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Since 1980, however, foster care funds have been authorized separately, under title IV-E of the Social Security Act ... While the underlying AFDC program was abolished in 1996 in favor of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF), income eligibility criteria for title IV-E foster care continues to follow the old AFDC criteria as they existed just before welfare reform was enacted ... Title IV-E remained little changed from its inception in 1980 until the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act in 1997 (ASFA)."

³⁴⁰ Karl Ensign, "Foster Care Summary: 1991" (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, the Department of Health and Human Services, 1991), 1.

American children stay for 39.4 months. It also shows that “45% of African American children were adopted by one parent families of any race, while only 16% of white children were adopted by one parent families”(CWLA).³⁴¹ In other words, African American children tend to be less preferred compared to white children who are more likely adopted by much more traditional white, heterosexual, married, middle-class parents whose eligibility is assessed higher than any other parent candidates in the adoption society. The 2010 U.S. census also shows that multiracial African Americans make up 14 percent of the U.S. population, but black children make up 23 percent of all foster youth. These data demonstrate that African American children stay longest in foster care, and they have been continuously the least popular choice for adoption among all minors available for adoption. This unfortunate fact has not altered despite the various legislative changes by the federal government and the provision of a subsidy for adoption of a child of color by many states.³⁴² Rather, its short peak period in the early 1970s was very exceptional in the U.S. adoption history in all aspects and the incongruity between the legal accommodations and the actual events has been barely broken when it comes to domestic transracial adoption.

The same data also speaks to the fact that domestic transracial adoption of African American children have been less preferred by adopters *even when* they are interested in building a multi-racial family if they can explore other options. The other options have been provided by a wave of children from other countries, particularly from Asian countries like Korea and China. It is worth pointing out, therefore, transnational transracial adoption has become a very popular

³⁴¹ Child Welfare League of America, “Issue Brief: Transracial Adoption and the Multiethnic Placement Act” (*National Data Analysis System*, June 2007), https://thehill.com/sites/default/files/MEPA_Final_IB_0.pdf.

³⁴² Along with children with physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral issues, disease, or disability, older children (whose definition vastly varies depending on a state from one (IL) to twelve years old (KS)), and a member of a sibling group, a child whose is a member of a racial or ethnic minority in most states fit into a category of a special needs child or a ‘hard-to-place’ child. The states who do not consider a child’s racial or ethnic background for special needs adoption are Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Uta. Yet, many of these states have a high population of people of color and therefore have a greater number of children of color compared to other states.

alternative path not only during the era when white people's adoption of children of color was collectively opposed by the NASBW and the ICWA, but steadily even after the federal government legislated multiple laws to encourage people's interest in domestic adoption of children of color and to allow *again* "white families access to adoption of non-white children."³⁴³

First, the statistics demonstrate a stark contrast between the trend of domestic transracial adoption and transnational transracial adoption. During the period of the dramatic decline of domestic transracial adoption in the 1970s and the 1980s, transnational adoption constantly increased. According to the 1985 *Adoption Factbook* by the National Committee for Adoption, one of the most collective data about U.S. adoption, the number of children adopted from abroad had a steep growth from 2,409 in 1970 to 4,864 in 1979. The number of overseas adoptions doubled up to 8,327 by 1984 and it reached 10,096 in 1987.³⁴⁴ The number of foreign-born children's adoption grew sharply again with a new influx of Chinese children beginning in 1992. As a result, the number of overseas adoptees received by the U.S. reached its peak in 2004 with 22,989 cases. Meanwhile, the annual number of the total adoptions in the U.S. was relatively unflinching between 1987 and 2001, ranging between 118,000 and 127,000. As a result of this combination, transnational adoption accounted for only 5 percent of the total adoptions in 1992 but it jumped to 15 percent in 2001. The fact that the total adoption number remained constant while transnational adoption rapidly increased means that overall domestic adoption dropped during the period. Also, it is notable that the increase of U.S. transnational adoption has less to do with the number of available adoptees. In contrast to European countries whose transnational adoption numbers declined in the 1980s, the U.S. during the same period not only dominated the

³⁴³ Laura Briggs, *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 98.

³⁴⁴ See Table. 9 "Immigrant orphans admitted to the U.S. by country or region of birth, fiscal years 1979-1984," *Adoption Factbook* (Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Adoption, November 1985), 122-124.

global rank in its placements of foreign-born children but also expanded its demands for overseas adoption. Thus, the increase of the out-of-country placements in the post-1970s years can be read as the U.S. specific phenomenon instead of the global trend.

The stark increase of transnational adoption suggests another interesting trend in the U.S. adoption practice. U.S. transnational adoption historically has been much more transracial compared to its domestic adoption. For instance, among 22,989 children adopted from other countries to the U.S. in 2004, more than 50 percent of them were presumably transracial adoption. According to the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, 10,774 of 22,989 were from Asia. Among them, 7,038 were from China and 1,713 from Korea. In addition, 605 children were from Africa, and 448 from South America.³⁴⁵ Rose M. Kreider writes in her analysis of the 2000 U.S. census³⁴⁶ that “[n]early half (48 percent) of foreign-born adopted children” of all ages “were born in Asia, about one-third (33 percent) in Latin America, and one-sixth (16 percent) in Europe.”³⁴⁷ Also, Kreider reads the estimates of the 2000 U.S. census as that “[f]oreign-born adopted children are much less likely to be White or Black than adopted children overall or than biological children of the householder,” and “are more likely to be Asian or Hispanic” than adopted children overall.³⁴⁸ Legal scholar Solangel Maldonado also notes that as of 2006, “almost two-thirds of the children Americans adopted from other countries in recent years and 81% of all foreign-born adoptees in the United States, comes from Asia or

³⁴⁵ Half of the remaining total was from Russia. For more detailed statistics of transnational adoption of the U.S. since 1999, see the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the U.S. Department of State, “Adoption Statistics” (*Travel.State.Gov.*, 2018), https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/adopt_ref/adoption-statistics.html.

³⁴⁶ The 2000 Census included “adopted son/daughter” as a relationship category for the first time, in addition to the category of “natural born son/daughter” and “stepson/daughter.”

³⁴⁷ Rose M. Kreider, “Adopted Children and Stepchildren: Census 2000 Special Report,” *Adoption Factbook IV*, edited by Thomas Atwood et al. (VA: National Committee for Adoption, 2007), 121.

³⁴⁸ Kreider, 149, 153.

Latin America—countries with non-white populations.”³⁴⁹ The 2009 report of Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services based on its 2007 national survey of adoptive parents: race, ethnicity, and gender shows that “children adopted internationally are most likely to be in transracial placements (84 percent), compared with 28 percent of children adopted from foster care and 21 percent of those adopted privately from within the United States.”³⁵⁰

Such demographics of transnational adoptees are not radically different from those of the earlier post-WWII decades. Before China began to send its children for overseas adoption in 1992, Korea had been the most sending country outnumbering any other sending countries by a big margin for over four decades. Some studies estimate that Korean adoptees comprise nearly fifty percent of all U.S. transnational adoptees by the mid-2000s. European countries such as Austria, Greece, Germany, and Italy sent children to the U.S. after the World War, but its number was small and their sending was a temporary measure taken in the aftermath of the war. Richard M. Lee writes, “International adoptions also account for approximately 85% of all transracial adoptions based on estimates of past and present adoption figures of nonrelated racial/ethnic minority children.”³⁵¹ Despite the incompleteness of the existing data about transnational adoption, various data demonstrate that U.S. transnational adoption historically has been transracial in a high percentage from its onset. Therefore, though the ten times growth of transnational adoption by the U.S. households from 2,409 in 1970 to 22,989 in 2004 was more

³⁴⁹ Solangel Maldonado, "Discouraging Racial Preferences in Adoptions," *U.C. Davis Law Review* 39, no. 4 (2006): 1432.

³⁵⁰ See Figure 7, Sharon Vandivere, Karin Malm, Child Trends, and Laura Radel, “Adoption USA: A Chartbook based on the 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2019), <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/adoption-usa-chartbook-based-2007-national-survey-adoptive-parents..>

³⁵¹ Richard M. Lee, "The Transracial Adoption Paradox: History, Research, and Counseling Implications of Cultural Socialization," *The Counseling Psychologist* 31, no. 6 (2003): 714.

than due to the growing demand of the U.S. adoption community, the fact that U.S. domestic transracial adoption did not increase markedly in a similar pace of its transnational transracial adoption gives us a critical insight to the constellation of U.S. domestic transracial adoption.

Besides the previous decades' debate over the domestic transracial adoption policies and the abrupt halt made in the mid-1970s, the continuing unpopularity of black children despite their higher availability was heavily impacted by the 1980s' emergence of the 'crack baby' crisis narrative. The concern for children's physical and psychological health when they were born from and grew up under uneducated, poor, irresponsible, and drug-addicted parents spanned the media, and it quickly developed into a concern of the whole nation which already had been deep in the aftermath of *Roe v. Wade* of 1973. The *Roe v. Wade* ruling that placed the fetal right over a women's right to choose, however, shaped black and brown women's culpability based on a different reason: they got pregnant 'irresponsibly' and in consequence become shamelessly dependent on the nation's welfare system. The idea of the 'welfare queen' which emerged in the mid-1970s already created the politics of blame, "demonizing working-class black, Latino, and indigenous women and children as unworthy of help—plagued by personal irresponsibility, moral and intellectual inferiority, and other unattractive personal characteristics."³⁵² The 1980s' scandalous stories about unwed, immoral, and unfit crack mothers provided the U.S. public with another chance to capitalize on their fear, generating criticism against young mothers of color who demonstrated "bad parenting, moral failure, and a criminal recklessness about fetuses."³⁵³ This imagery was highly racialized one as it targeted particularly the African American community and, most of

³⁵² Briggs, *Somebody's Children*, 98.

³⁵³ Briggs, 104.

all, black single mothers who were viewed as the ill bed of all the problems.³⁵⁴ If white women were accused of being mercilessly insisting their right to abort, black women were culpable for abusing the right to reproduce by creating too many children that they could not properly provide for, and thereby harming the society.

The crack epidemic that created the image of unfit and criminal mothers of color and the racialized culture of blame, beyond feeding the myth, led the U.S. welfare system to prioritize adoption over family preservation under the name of the best interest of children. The black and brown homes were labeled as ‘bad’ homes that could not rear children morally and healthily. Thus, children from those bad homes were to become a public charge until they would find a better, proper home that could raise them well. Under this logic, foster care and adoption, instead of a biological relation, were portrayed as the ideal paths for those unfortunate children, which led to legislation like the 1997 ASFA. As American Ethnic Studies and Critical Adoption Studies scholar Kim Park Nelson points out, “since the 1980s, the American child welfare system has used child removal (state removal of children from the custody and guardianship of their parents) as a supposedly child-centered remedy for a host of ills including child neglect or abuse as well as legal problems of parents, including substance abuse and incarceration.”³⁵⁵ Black homes were failing homes even to keep their own babies, which, in turn, attributed to the consolidation of the ‘good’ home managed by the more successful, qualified, and responsible parent figures who were less likely to be black.

³⁵⁴ In this political climate, Jennifer Clarise Johnson became the very first woman to be convicted of drug delivery to her newborn infants via the umbilical cord during pregnancy in 1989. Her sentence was overturned by the Florida Supreme Court three years later in 1992.

³⁵⁵ Kim Park Nelson, *Invisible Asians: Korean American Adoptees, Asian American Experience, and Racial Exceptionalism* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers), 97.

But, the problem of ‘bad’ parents and ‘bad’ homes does not end with blaming the incompetent adults of color. The label “crack babies” already alluded that those children were bad seeds who could not be much helped even if they were rescued from the ill home. The controversial research by Dr. Ira J. Chasnoff in 1985 and other scientists throughout the 1990s continued to provide ‘scientific’ evidence about a possible link between pregnant women’s drug use and cocaine-exposed babies born with chronic issues.³⁵⁶ The prevalent perception of black babies as a damaged stock, which put more of them into foster care, hindered their adoption further. For they were viewed as already biologically and psychologically damaged, let alone their race entangled with the political and historical complexity, they were not highly desired in the adoption market. Black babies were deemed as the biologically disadvantaged class starting from their birth. On the same note, Laura Briggs writes that the “criminalization of poverty through the War on Drugs” “identify (implicitly Black) “crack babies” as a new bio-underclass, destined from birth to be uneducable and unemployable.”³⁵⁷

As a result, while the number of black children in foster care grew fast in the 1980s and the 1990s, their adoption rate did not rise along, despite the outcry of many people who wanted to adopt a white child but could not due to the “white baby famine.” On the other hand, for people who were interested in transracial adoption, a child of color who is not black, especially

³⁵⁶ Ira J. Chasnoff’s study published by *the New England Journal of Medicine* became a seminal work that established the notion of crack babies for the next decade or so, even though the credibility of her research finding was continuously questioned due to its inadequate sample size and limited research methods. Chasnoff herself, along with other twenty-nine medical doctors, scientists, and psychological researchers, issued the “Open Letter to the Media” which argued for the invalidity of her previous research and the prevalent belief in that notion, saying, “we are writing to request that the terms “crack baby” and “crack-addicted baby” be dropped from usage. These terms and similarly stigmatizing terms, such as “ice babies” and “meth babies,” lack scientific validity and should not be used” (Arendt et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the term and the myth of ‘crack baby’ did not immediately stop to feed the society’s racialized cultural imagination regarding black children and criminalization of black, particularly unwed and young, mothers.

³⁵⁷ Laura Briggs, “Orphaning the Children of Welfare: “Crack Babies,” Race, and Adoption Reform,” 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), 75.

an Asian child from abroad, was an excellent alternative to entertain. They were children of color but *of a different kind* who came from a different place. The early 1980s was also the time when a surge of the model minority myth took place, which reinforced the diverging racial perception of blacks and Asians. Mia Tuan, along with many other adoption scholars, elucidates that the model minority that generates a ‘positive’ cultural imaginary of Asians has led the expansion of transnational adoption of Asian children.³⁵⁸ To use Leslie Fiedler’s language that Chapter 1 has used, Asian children serve as Good Good children in comparison to black children who are Bad Bad children.³⁵⁹ Asian children (from overseas) are assumed to be non-threatening while having a great potential for intellectual achievement and easier blending in. They are potentially and comparatively good stocks to claim, since they are not white but at least they are not black.

Sharing this point of view, historian Arissa Oh argues that Asian children’s “not-blackness” appealed as “a digestible diversity” to Americans “in the midst of a new emphasis on multiculturalism and colorblindness,” leading to Americans’ preference for “a nonwhite foreign child over a nonwhite American child.”³⁶⁰ In her study of the origin of international adoption focusing on the U.S.-Korean adoption emerged after the Korean War, Oh states, “Unable to obtain a white child, and unwilling or unable to adopt a Black child, Americans turned to Korean

³⁵⁸ Mia Tuan and Jiannbin Lee Shiao, *Choosing Ethnicity, Negotiating Race: Korean Adoptees in America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011).

³⁵⁹ The adventurous and rebellious Good Bad Boy position is not easily permitted to the adoptees. Even if they are not supposed to be pressured to feel perennially grateful for being ‘saved’ like in the past, they do not own the same privilege to “deceive, break [parents’] heart a little, be forgiven” like biological children; that is not “what [adoptive parents] really want [them] to do.” See Leslie A. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (Victoria, TX: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998), 270. Walking away from the discourse of saved orphans, contemporary adoptees may attempt to be Good Bad children, but it is more likely that adoptive parents and community expect them to turn out to be Good Good. Yet, differently from Sid Sawyer, their Good Good child position is deeply racialized since contemporary transnational transracial adoptees in the U.S. are not free from the society’s view seeing them as the model minority at best, while their experience is not identical to that of non-adoptee Asian Americans in many aspects. Also, whereas they are often narrated as the more privileged immigrants, the very fact that many adult transnational adoptees without citizenship are vulnerable to deportation challenges the notion about adoptees’ privileges gained through becoming a part of a white American family.

³⁶⁰ Arissa H. Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption. Asian America* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 12-13.

children: a ‘racial middle ground’ that did not require white parents to cross the highly charged black-white divide.”³⁶¹ Similarly, Maldonado counts race as one of the critical reasons of American adopters’ preference for foreign-born children of color over African American children saying, “Although the majority of children available for international adoption are not White, they are not Black, either.”³⁶² Thus, while evading the risk of getting a ‘damaged’ or ‘problematic’ child through domestic transracial adoption and the burden of dealing with the complicated black-white racial relations, prospective adopters could go for a more global, radical, fashionable, and promising option: transnational transracial adoption. Simply put, the meager number of domestic transracial adoption and the proliferation of African American children staying in foster care during the period when the number of children of color adopted from abroad rapidly grew, illustrate a sharp contrast between the trajectory of domestic and transnational transracial adoption.

With these examinations, I contend that the U.S. has approached its domestic transnational adoption and transnational transracial adoption very differently, while both are transracial adoptions, which reveals the differential racial politics and cultural imaginary of kinship dealing with two kinds of transracial adoptions that involve different race groups. Transnational transracial adoption of children from Asian countries has allowed U.S. adopters to bypass the historically loaded race relations, particularly with African Americans, through the translation of Asian adoptees’ race into a cultural entity, which is presented as the ethics for integration and a way to accommodate their foreignness. The flexibility and possibility of ethnic choices assumed for and awarded to Asian adoptees in the axiom of multiculturalism are working along with the continuous cultural and political production of a black family as a

³⁶¹ Oh, 127.

³⁶² Maldonado, 1418.

‘failed’ family and black children as the ‘undesirable’ goods, particularly compared to Asian children from abroad—the dialectic configuration of the black exclusion/Asian inclusion if I reword Edlie Wong’s language.³⁶³ I argue, therefore, that the U.S. society’s aspiration for multicultural and multiracial kinship has been applied selectively by interpreting and naturalizing the racial and cultural differences of Asian children from abroad into a singularly naturalized compound, i.e. their “ethnic foreignness,” while demarcating black children from adoptive kinship opportunities based on their differently racialized body ensnared with the hereditary biological and social illness. Those racialized differences seemingly ironically but strategically provide Asian adoptees a sufficient condition to gain a possibility of adoptive kinship, but their differences are concurrently nullified and maintained within a newly formed family, which exposes the racial politics that drives transnational transracial adoption of the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century under the tenet of multiculturalism.

A “White” Act: Multiculturalism and the U.S. Transnational Adoption

The previous section delineates that U.S. transnational adoption that has been historically more transracial than interracial grew rapidly until the mid-2000s in comparison with domestic transracial adoption, because it supplied a different kind of children of color from those who were available within the domestic market.³⁶⁴ When it comes to domestic transracial adoption,

³⁶³ See Edlie L. Wong, *Racial Reconstruction: Black Inclusion, Chinese Exclusion, and the Fictions of Citizenship* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 1-4.

³⁶⁴ Since 2005, the number of the U.S. transnational adoption has continuously decreased by 72 percent. According to the Travel.State.Gov, Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, the number of transnational adoptions was 22,726 in 2005, but 4,058 in 2018. It is understood that changes in adoption laws of Korea and China, two major sending countries, have caused the international decrease of transnational adoption rather than cultural changes or policy shifts in the U.S. itself. Also, some major sending countries like Russia and Ethiopia have banned adoption by foreigners, including Americans. Other countries like Romania, Guatemala, or Kazakhstan have cut back or stopped their sending. The decrease of transnational adoption is the *global* phenomenon coming along with the shifting perception, practice, and laws regarding transnational adoption in many sending and receiving countries. And yet, the total number of adoptions in the U.S. also has similarly decreased since then. Therefore, it is also possible to consider it as something that is not a transnational adoption specific

the U.S. has managed its transracial adoption vacillating between two opposite policies: matching race or skin color between an adoptee and adoptive parents; and looking beyond race in matching a child and adopters. To put it simply, the U.S. domestic transracial policy has developed in the order of matching – non-matching – matching – non-matching over the last century. But it is worth noting that RCNO differences, which have been the central elements in both hindering and promoting U.S. domestic adoption, have been viewed as inevitable or at least much less forbidding when it comes to transnational adoption. This section examines the factors that made transnational transracial adoption much more favorable compared to domestic transracial adoption from the 1980s to the mid-2000s, centering on the implications of multiculturalism for the popularity of adoption of Asian children compared to other kinds of children of color from within the nation.

Many scholars initially read that the rise of multiculturalism in the U.S. not only reflected its changing perception of race but also compelled the expansion of its transnational adoption. Transnational adoption itself was not new to the U.S. society at all, for it had been practiced since the mid-1940s and more actively from the mid-1950s. Yet, the way that transnational adoption was understood and practiced assuredly changed in the late twentieth century. Contrary to the past practice in which differences were ‘embraced’ through non-optional assimilation and a clean cut from the past, under the premise of multiculturalism culture keeping and the

phenomenon. A further examination is needed to identify more accurate causes of the reduction of overall adoption in the U.S. since the mid-2000.

Peter Selman offers some insight into various causes of the decline of transnational adoption, though his discussion examines the *global* trend between 2001 and 2007 in “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st century” and between 2004 and 2010 in “The Global Decline of Intercountry Adoption.” See Peter Selman, “The Global Decline of Intercountry Adoption: What Lies Ahead?” *Social Policy and Society*. 11, no. 3 (2012): 381-97 and Peter Selman, Karen Smith Rotabi, and Judith L Gibbons, “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century,” *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 575-94.

awareness of racial and cultural difference among family members became the new ethics for a family who adopted a child (of color) transnationally.

Leading the early discussion of multiculturalism, Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann have defined that multiculturalism is the politics of difference that has come after and along with the politics of equal recognition. Following the historical shift of the political ideals, from honor whose importance is founded in that it is not given to everyone, to dignity that is an equal and universal right, Taylor and Gutmann have argued that people need a due recognition of society and significant others to establish their identity. They write that “[w]e need relationship to fulfill, not to determine, ourselves” in both the intimate sphere with significant others and in the public sphere.³⁶⁵ The links between recognition and identity and the dialogical aspect of human relationships underscore the question of identity and authenticity in the era of multiculturalism. This line of liberal multiculturalism demands the civic-minded public to picture a society in which individuals’ differences would not define discriminatorily who they are. Multiculturalism, instead, insists to acknowledge differences but to celebrate them. In this understanding, differences are not obstacles to overcome in forming kinship through adoption any longer; it rather has become something to observe and respect. The emergence of liberal multiculturalism has affected the U.S. adoption community significantly. Championing boundary-crossing across racial, ethnic lines as well as nationality and class, adoption of a child from abroad has become an honorable as well as a fashionable path for many U.S. prospective parents to become global citizens who are mindful of the disparity of the power and privileges compared with others who are located geopolitically different.

³⁶⁵ Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 33.

In her study of migration patterns of adoptees and the politics of adoption, historian Karen Dubinsky contends that why most babies move “from south to north, east to west, poor to rich, brown to white” is not simply because of economic and political conditions of participating countries.³⁶⁶ Rather, she argues that “[w]e couldn’t have modern transnational adoption if we didn’t have a single, global imagination for the ‘child.’”³⁶⁷ “The invention of a single standard childhood” creates a child “as representative icons of civilized Western subjectivity, in contrast to non-Western ‘others.’”³⁶⁸ In this context, the belief in every child’s universal right to family and care regardless of her place of origin, race, class, gender, etc. becomes a rationale to justify the nearly one-directional flow of adoptees across the globe. This rationale, however, is deeply problematic since it reproduces a racialized and colonial taxonomy of peoples and cultures. Under the imagination of differences for the sake of everyone’s universal right, leaving a child under the care of poorer, less civilized birth parents of color in a developing country with a weak social welfare system can appear less desirable than putting a child under the care of richer, more educated, white parents in a western country that has stronger social welfare security.³⁶⁹ Yet,

³⁶⁶ Karen Dubinsky, *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 20.

³⁶⁷ Dubinsky, 14.

³⁶⁸ Dubinsky, 16.

³⁶⁹ It is worth mentioning that sending countries have taken various measures to fight with the label of incompetence against them. For instance, the active foreign adoption of countries like Russia and Korea has been a subject of criticism more domestically than internationally. The growing public opinion that sending children for adoption abroad hurts their national pride has attributed to Russia’s Dima Yakovlev Law that prohibits Russian children’s adoption by U.S. citizens and Korea’s legislation that prioritizes domestic adoption over transnational. The stunning and rapid economic growth in the mid-1980s already removed Korea from making an excuse of being a poverty-stricken country that could not provide adequate social welfare for its own minors. Though the number of Korean children sent abroad dropped noticeably after the late 1980s, the steady flow of children bound to foreign households did not decrease until the mid-2000s during which Korea still sent over 2,000 children per year for overseas adoption.

Korea’s Special Act on Adoption (SAA), enacted in 2012, was a result of Korean overseas adoptees’ persistent activism for several years. Many Korean overseas adoptees were concerned that in the past a child often had been taken away without biological parents’ consent, and there was no way to retract their relinquishment once a child was transferred for adoption even when birth parents had not necessarily given their consent to the adoption. To fix those issues, the 2012 SAA required biological mothers to register a child in their family registry and stay at least seven days with their child before finalizing their relinquishment of the child. This legislation was 1) to secure basic documentation of a child’s birth record including an immediate relation; 2) to prevent a birth mother’s hasty

evading the old rhetoric that emphasizes the granting of help and saving, transnational adoption in the late twentieth century employs a win-win narrative in which transnational adoption creates a new kind of family built by global citizens who are less hindered by obsolete boundaries and values. In the changed narrative of adoption, global citizen-adopters position themselves not as givers but as beneficiaries, since adopters can become 'genuine' global citizens who accomplish multicultural, and more often than not, multiracial familial bonds through adoptees from a different culture and nation.

The global society's agreement on the children's universal right to care and protection is based on such a widely shared belief in the possibility of boundary-crossings, which has enabled the mass migration of children for adoption further. The United Nations' (UN) "Convention on the Rights of the Child" of 1989 confirms that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion,

decision; and therefore, 3) to increase a chance for a birth mother to keep her child with a longer deliberation period. Yet, the SAA devastated the situation further, as many unwed women who got anxious if their identity would not be kept hidden safely with the required child's registration under them ended up abandoning their baby in a more secretive and dangerous way. Soon after the law went in effect, the Korean media covered numerous cases of newborn babies found dead or nearly dead being left in an unsafe place or in a severe weather condition. Moreover, the SAA's higher qualifying conditions for adoptive parents dwindled a pool of prospective adopters, though the intention was to ensure adopters' financial capability to provide for a child. This is the time when the number of babies left in a "Baby Box" (or a Drop Box) rose strikingly in Korea, which has become a big social controversy, while domestic adoptions by Koreans did not increase much. In short, the SSA brutally failed in creating a safety net for both biological mothers and their babies; instead, it unexpectedly made more babies left unsafely and anonymously. To remedy the issues, the 2015 Family Registry Law limited access to some identifiable information related to adoption, divorce, etc. Also, while it is controversial, a new law that removes the responsibility of registration of a child under a biological mother has been recommended by many professionals and politicians.

Meanwhile, scholars like Kelly Condit-Shrestha caution against the popular criticism by the international society about Korea's failure to take care of their own children without sending them abroad, stating that such a discourse, more often than not, is rooted in the Western ideals and superiority. Condit-Shrestha writes that "a close analysis of Korea's adoption numbers reveals that the trends of Korean international adoption connected to domestic practice simply don't match up" (374), suggesting that while the international society's criticism played an impactful role in Korea's policy change and legislations regarding its transnational adoption as shown in the decline of Korean adoptees sent abroad in the late 1980s, its effect was temporary and did not fundamentally change Korea's legal and cultural attitudes about sending children abroad for adoption. She asserts the necessity of a more historically contextualized approach to the U.S.-Korea adoption history that is intertwined with the U.S. Cold War geopolitics, the Korean economic national building dependent on the U.S., and, most importantly, the capitalist base-structure of the U.S.-Korea adoption industry. See Kelly Condit-Shrestha, "South Korea and Adoption's Ends: Reexamining the Numbers and Historicizing Market Economies," *Adoption & Culture* 6, no. 2 (2018): 364-400.

political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”³⁷⁰ This belief was established in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” in 1948 and proclaimed again in the “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” in 1976.³⁷¹ The UN’s monumental “Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption” of 1993 (the Hague Convention, hereafter) has not only set a term for contemporary transnational adoptions but also created further momentum for participating countries to streamline and normalize the process of sending and receiving children across national borders and enhance the transparency and efficiency of transnational adoption. Children’s migration to another country is an arrangement that global society partakes in since they collectively believe that it is a way to fulfill the best interest of the children: children who cannot be sufficiently taken care of by their biological parents deserve a chance to prosper if they could be paired with more capable adoptive parents. Under this understanding, ‘completing’ a family with a child from less fortunate parents and countries nicely meets with the global society’s ideal. The international agreement on the universal right to a family as most fundamental for a child’s healthy upbringing thus has brought additional kicks to the interest of prospective adopters. The understanding of a child just as a child regardless of their RCNO and the insistence on the urgency of kinship for children in need make any RCNO differences marginal. National borders, as much as racial and cultural boundaries, must not be an obstacle to

³⁷⁰ United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner, Human Rights (OHCHR), Preamble, “Convention on the Rights of the Child” (November 20, 1989).

³⁷¹ The “International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights” sees the family as family the “natural and fundamental group unit of society” (Article 10.1) and “the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” as “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (Preamble). Based on this understanding, it states everyone’s right to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family (Article 11.1). To achieve this, “[t]he States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent” (Article 11.1). For a full text, see “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” (December 16, 1966. OHCHR), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>.

spreading familiar love that everyone has right to, which further justifies a search of adoptable children abroad than making prospective adopters' motivation suspicious.

Certainly, global society acknowledges that transnational adoption has its own challenges. Arbitrary payments often mandated in the name of service fees or a donation to adoption agencies has been an epicenter of criticism against the transnational adoption 'industry.' The proliferation of overseas adoption delays the installment of the necessary social welfare system of a sending country by outsourcing its children in need. The infamous history of child trafficking and kidnapping has been a constant woe regarding the transnational adoption 'black market.' A higher cost and a longer wait time for a baby from a certain country or of certain sex reveal that transnational adoption is often a highly racialized and gendered commercial practice. A change in related laws of a sending or receiving country creates an abrupt tweak as witnessed in the past with countries such as Guatemala (stopped adoption to the U.S. since 2008 jointly with the U.S.), Vietnam (blocked adoption to the U.S. from 2008 to 2014), Nepal (suspended adoption to the U.S. jointly since Aug. 6, 2010), Russia (banned adoption to the U.S. since 2013), and Ethiopia (suspended transnational adoption since April 7, 2017).³⁷² Furthermore, each country has different standards and laws about the transparency of the adoption process, and a global consensus like the Hague Convention does not govern

³⁷² Regarding the observed opening and closure of an adoption supply market for U.S. adopters, Condit-Shrestha notes that there is a known pattern of the U.S. transnational adoption since the 1970s: 1) a large number of overseas placements; 2) reports of systematic corruption and abuse; 3) the suspension, limit, or temporary close of an adoption site (by which she means a certain country); and 4) a movement of the U.S. transnational adoption to another new site(s). See Kelly Condit-Shrestha, "South Korea and Adoption's Ends: Reexamining the Numbers and Historicizing Market Economies," *Adoption & Culture* 6, no. 2 (2018): 379-380.

Similarly, Diana Marre and Laura Briggs also observe a similar pattern of transnational adoption in Latin American countries and Russia: "the "opening" of a country to adoption, followed by allegations of commercialization and abuse, sometimes with a period of sharp restriction on transnational adoptions." See Laura Briggs and Diana Marre, "Introduction: The Circulation of Children," in *International Adoption, International Adoption*, edited by Diana Marre and Laura Briggs (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 12-13.

everywhere. Thus, there is no effective retaliation to take when some countries do not ratify it or stop complying with it.

Nevertheless, the expanding transnational adoption enterprise has provided attractive alternatives for many U.S. prospective adopters who feel limited by options available in their domestic domain. Most of all, many sending countries have offered a much faster track compared to the U.S. domestic adoption process. For instance, the wait time for the U.S. domestic adoption of a healthy child used to be notoriously long taking up to several years, though the average wait time significantly has changed with the passage of the ASFA in 1997. One of the ways to adopt a child more quickly, before the ASFA as well as currently, is taking a child with special needs, the category that includes children of color above a certain age in most states.³⁷³ On the other hand, many newly emerging sending countries have offered an expedited process to send out their children to foreign households. Romanian children after the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu's government in 1989, Russian children after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and Haitian 'orphans' after the earthquake in 2010 are recent examples. Besides, the U.S. government actively has responded to various crises across the globe that have generated adoptable children by temporarily shortening its immigration process and lifting a visa

³⁷³ As of 2019, there are ten states - Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Utah – who do not include a child's racial and ethnic background or membership within conditions for special needs children. However, Alabama, Georgia, Kansas, and Mississippi are Southern states whose black population percentage is high, and Minnesota is the state with the highest concentration of Korean adoptees. So, the absence of race and ethnicity as a category for special needs children in these states needs to be understood in their historical and demographical context. Therefore, it is not an overstatement that except for a few states, most U.S. states legally reckon that the non-white race and ethnic background or its membership affects children's desirability in adoption. Based upon that understanding, the states provide more subsidies and benefits for people who adopt special needs children of color.

Utah, however, is a slightly different case. With the strong pro-adoption policies that even allow a birth mother to place her child for adoption within 24 hours after delivery and the presence of Latter Day Saints (LDS) Family Services, a Mormon Church-owned adoption agency, adoption processes in Utah are swifter, easier, and cheaper than many other states.

requirement for those children.³⁷⁴ For that reason, despite the higher cost of some countries and the unfamiliarity with the adoption laws of other countries, many prospective adoptive parents consider transnational adoption over domestic adoption.³⁷⁵

In addition, a wider door that some sending countries have for less conventional adopters including single parents, older parents, same-sex parents, people who do not meet the income requirement level of domestic adoption, has been a huge pull for an increased interest in transnational adoption. Parent eligibility to adopt a child is made of numerous elements, but the essential eligibility includes the candidates' age limit, their marital status, the length of their marriage, the allowed number of divorce experiences, the number of children in their family, the minimum annual income, the minimum net worth, and the education level. These qualifications often have been applied more loosely, however, when a country newly opens its gate for overseas adoption or cannot handle their children in need properly due to war, a political crisis, or a natural disaster.

Since 2007, for instance, people who are younger than 30 or older than a child by 50 years, are an LGBT couple, or are a single male parent cannot adopt a child from China. China limits adoption by people who exceed a designated body mass index (BMI) level and have a recent cancer history as well. People who take medication for anxiety or depression are also barred from an application. But, these specific criteria in financial capability, physical and psychological health was not part of a package in the initial years of China's transnational

³⁷⁴ The fast and swift migration of children was not the unfamiliar in the U.S. adoption history, however, since the U.S. has many precedents such as the Operation Peter Pan in 1960-1962 with Cuban minors and the Operation Babylift with Vietnamese children in 1975.

³⁷⁵ Maldonado debunks various myths regarding transnational adoptions, arguing that transnational adoption is not easier, cheaper, faster, safer, and more humanitarian unlike a common belief. While her arguments are mostly correct, in the history of transnational adoption, as Condit-Shrestha demonstrates, a sending country that just opens its gate for overseas adoption tends to have a simpler process, which leads to faster adoptions, before it builds a more full-blown process and make adjustments.

adoption. Instead, the Chinese government and agencies, as well as American agencies, advertised that thousands of healthy children were badly waiting to be adopted by well-meaning foreigners, and the adoption process of a Chinese child was relatively fast and simple with much less restrictive regulations. The 1991 adoption law limited applications for adoption of a healthy child only to foreigners who were older than 35 and childless, while parents who had a child either by birth or adoption were allowed to adopt only special needs children. But, seeing an exciting reaction of the international society and the pouring demands for Chinese children, the Chinese government soon lowered the bar by extending the eligibility to adopt a healthy child to people at the age of 30 or older either with or without another child in their household. These adjustments created a big boom of adoption of Chinese children from the mid-1990s through the mid-2000s, making China the most sending country in the world and a great resource for non-conventional candidates who had been previously set outside the eligibility realm of adoptive parenthood.³⁷⁶ Likewise, Korea is currently one of the most restrictive countries among those who historically have sent its children for transnational adoption. But, for several years after the Korean War, there was barely any restriction for adoptive parent eligibility besides their goodwill; being white Westerners sufficed enough to guarantee a better life of Korean adoptees. Korea has supplied over 120,000 children to the U.S. since 1953. In 1986, Korea sent 6,150 children, which is near one percent of its total birth number of the year, 642,000, and makes up 54 to 59 percent of all children adopted in the U.S. that year.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ It is worth noting that many restrictions introduced in 2007 were reactionary measures taken by the China Center of Adoption Affair (CCAA) to handle a spike in demand for children than for other reasons. Seeing the high demand that exceeds the supply of available children and the worldwide popularity of Chinese children for adoption, China has built narrower criteria to find more qualified parents for its badly wanted children. The total number of Chinese minors adopted to the U.S. dropped from 6,492 in 2006 to 3,912 in 2008, and then further down to 3,000 in 2009. In 2018, the number of Chinese transnational adoptees became as small as 1,475.

³⁷⁷ The number dropped to 1,862 in 2001, 0.034 percent of the total birth that year in Korea, but despite the aggressive legislations of the Korean government to discourage transnational adoption and boost up domestic adoption, but transnational adoption of Korea still exceeded its domestic adoption until 2008 and the U.S. was

But the shorter length of wait time and wider opportunities, while very important, do not fully explain the rapid growth of overall transnational adoption by Americans from the late 1980s to the mid-2000s. As this chapter has illustrated earlier, during the same period the domestic adoption number was relatively steady. Therefore, the trend of domestic adoption, when it is considered together with the steep growth of transnational adoption, does not evince the decrease of the overall interest in adoption in the U.S. Instead, it speaks of the very specific growth of U.S. transnational adoption. Considering that domestic transracial adoption's number decreased during the same period, the contrasting popularity of transnational adoption that was transracial adoption in a high percentage reveals a different perception regarding racial and cultural differences of children coming from different shores, while adoption deems to operate to fulfill the liberal promise of kinship and familial happiness based on the globally shared belief that kinship is a fundamental and universal right.

Another critical contributor pertinent to the high popularity of transnational transracial adoption compared to domestic transracial adoption further discloses how thin and self-contradictory the rhetoric of liberal multiculturalism is. The sheer physical distance and language difference, entailed in most transnational adoptions, on top of other general discrepancies between adoptive and biological parents, stand as reliable buffers for adoptive parents to secure their parental authority with little to no intervention coming from biological parents. It is not to underestimate meaningful changes that the U.S. adoption participants and community have made. Indeed, adoptees from abroad are no longer pressured to discard their cultural heritage and

constantly the destination of the majority of Korean adoptees sent abroad. The data on the birth rate of Korea is from Statistics Korea, "The Statistics of Birth and Death Rates in 2001 (2001 년 출생.사망통계 결과)," *Korean Statistical Information Service* (August 2002), <http://kosis.kr/index/index.do> and the number of Korean adoptees are based on the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the U.S. Department of State, "Adoption Statistics," Travel.State.Gov. (2018), https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/adopt_ref/adoption-statistics.html.

original identity to assimilate themselves into American culture and their new family like before. Many adoptive families engage with other adoptive families with a child from the same country for culture keeping as well as general support for each other. The increasing advocacy for open adoption, in which people in the adoption triad maintain a relationship while the adoptee grows up, has profoundly impacted the U.S. transnational adoption community as well. Since the 1990s stories of a reunion with an adoptee's birth family have been blessed than hushed down both inside and outside the adoption circle.³⁷⁸ As a result, a birth search has become a rite of passage for many contemporary young transnational adoptees.³⁷⁹ Furthermore, more and more U.S. adoptive parents visit their adoptee's birth country together with their adopted child to gain the first-hand cultural experience and a deeper understanding of a country from which their child came. In short, there is a widely shared consensus that adoption, either domestic or transnational, is not a closed transaction like before.

This shift that multiculturalism has generated in perception regarding the importance of acknowledging and supporting adoptees' cultural heritage and biological relations is well illustrated in the starkly different experience of Korean adoptees who were adopted before the 1980s and of the Chinese adoptees who came to the U.S. after the 1990s. For instance, Linda Goldstein Knowlton's documentary *Somewhere Between*³⁸⁰ follows four adopted teens from

³⁷⁸ The Children's Bureau of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines "openness" of adoption very loosely by leaving a type and a level of openness decided by adoptive and birth parents. Yet, open adoption includes the exchange of basic identifiable information and contact information of both parties so that future interactions would be possible when an agreement is made, and therefore a psychological and emotional loss of an adopted child could be minimized.

³⁷⁹ This does not mean that transnational adoptees' return trip or birth search is essential to and indispensable for their identity formation. Rather, such a notion wrongfully normalizes transnational adoptees' desire to get connected to their birth family, culture, and nation as a necessity, upholding the idea that adoptees are inescapably tied to a void that they eventually will have to try to fill. This dissertation is careful with the violence of such an understanding. This part simply attempts to depict the increasing practice of a return trip and a birth search among contemporary transnational adoptees.

³⁸⁰ Linda Goldstein Knowlton, dir. *Somewhere Between* (2011; New York, NY: Docurama Films, 2013), DVD.

China who belong to a totally different generation from Korean adoptees like Deann Borshay Liam or Jane Jeong Trenka.³⁸¹ Not only are these girls provided with generous and various opportunities to nurture their cultural heritage and grow up as Chinese American, but their yearning to search for their biological family takes a central place in the film's narrative, highlighting the understanding that it is essential for the adoptees' understanding of the self.

Despite these reforms and changes, most adoptive parents' involvement usually does not go much beyond giving an acknowledgment of the existence of adoptees' biological family and support for their birth search. Stepping away from a denial or an erasure of the past, many adoptive parents in the era of multiculturalism regard their adopted children's relationship with their biological kin as what they ought to support but still as what they had better not intervene. This stance could be viewed as a distance kept out of reverence for other parents and family, but the fact that there is little expectation for adoptive parents to participate continuously in a triad relationship attests to the uneven positionality that biological and adoptive parents can claim. Transnational adoption of a child from a(n unmarried) parent (of color) of an economically less developed and non-English speaking country, when combined with a physical distance, reduces a chance that the adoptee's biological family contact and communicate with (white) adoptive parents of a higher socioeconomic status in the Western countries like the U.S. located in the Northern hemisphere. In this circumstance under which most transnational adoptions occur, a reunion and an ongoing relationship afterward are more likely to be possible when the effort gets enacted by an adoptee and adoptive parents, rather than by biological parents who, more often than not, are guilt-laden, socially stigmatized, and have fewer means to pursue a search for their

³⁸¹ Borshay Liam came from Korea to the U.S. at the age of eight in 1966 and Jeong Trenka in 1978 at the age of six. Both Borshay Liam's autoethnographic film *First Person Plural* (2000) and Jeong Trenka's memoir *The Language of Blood* (2003) document the hardships they experienced with their adoptive family regarding their racial difference and past identity.

child. In consequence, the relationship that grows out of a reunion, if it is lucky to happen, is mostly between adoptees and their biological family, while the relationship between the biological and adoptive parents is generally minimal. Even when all participants support an adoptee's relationship with both sets of family, thus, transnational adoption is less likely to make adoptive parents hold accountable for a continued or full-blown relationship between an adoptee, their biological parents, and themselves. Here, adoptive parents' peripheral positioning with their adopted child's biological family is voluntary than enforced. On the other hand, many transnationally transracially adopted people's biological family are limited to a peripheral position of a vastly different kind.

In this light, cultural differences that are championed in the formation of a multicultural and multiracial family with transnational transracial adoption, in addition to a physical distance, frequently serve to condone adoptive parents' passive involvement in the triad relation as unfortunate but excusable. Transnationally adopted children are encouraged to be ethnically diverse and get supported to recover a link to their past and biological family, but the rest members of their adoptive family are nearly free from any of the expectations that carry an ethical weight in today's multicultural society. The adoptive family's heightened interest in cultural and racial diversity functions to make them aspire to claim global citizenship via the act of adopting a child from afar, and yet it does not oblige them with a hyphenated identity, either racially or culturally, unlike the adopted child of color. The culture of their adopted child could be an additional feature that complements them, which most adoptive parents welcome and are positive about, but the 'foreign' culture - in the literal sense as well as in the sense of being strange and unfamiliar - is fundamentally of the child and not theirs. Instead, an addition of a child of color to a family through transnational adoption allows adoptive family members more

options to explore: an option not to choose any other ethnicity than Americanness, that is analogous to whiteness, and an additional option to associate with the adoptee's ethnicity *if* they want to. The RNCO differences should not hinder children in need from getting familial care and love, they would not discourage prospective parents from adopting them, and yet they are what can be set aside rather than what adoptive parents and family must adopt as an integral part of their identity.

In that aspect, the answer to David Eng's question of if a transnational adoptive family is an immigrant family in their lived experience is more likely to be no, as much as the answer to the question of if a transnational transracial adoptive family redefines themselves racially and ethnically with a new member of their family is likely to be no. Using Park Nelson's words, I thus argue that contemporary transnational transracial adoption under the aegis of multiculturalism, despite some critical changes, is still saliently a "White act." A majority of contemporary transnational transracial adoptive families practice largely celebratory but weak multiculturalism that embraces differences of the adoptee, but without critiquing the structurally racist system and history that condition adoptees, adoptive parents, and biological parents differently.³⁸² In that sense, contemporary transnational transracial adoption, along with adoption in general, is rigidly classed, racialized, and gendered, not much unlike the past.

*"We Will Stay a Normal Family": Performing Race, Performing Kinship*³⁸³

³⁸² Kim Park Nelson, 97-101.

³⁸³ This section's wording comes from "Performing Race, Performing Family," one of sections in Kimberley Mckee's article "Real versus Fictive Kinship: Legitimizing the Adoptive Family," in *Critical Kinship Studies*, edited by Charlotte Kroløkke, Lene Myong, Stine Willum Adrian, and Tine Tjørnhøj-Thomsen (London; New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016), 228.

Differently from their white adoptive parents, transnational transracial adoptees occupy a cultural-biological entity that is simultaneously malleable and immutable. Especially, when transnational transracial adoptees own an Asian-raced body, they cannot opt out of the negotiation between whiteness and the cultural heritage of their country of origin, and the negotiation between being an American and a foreigner, the troublesome label that has been historically attached to Asian Americans. How Asian American adoptees balance out their racial-ethnic foreignness with their white cultural identity is central to understand transnational transracial adoptive kinship. With that inquiry, this section will read *Adopting Belinda*, the art project by Jane Jin Kaisen, that challenges us to reconceptualize what racial difference within a transnational transracial adoptive family means in the context of multiculturalism, focusing on the effect and perception of Asian-race bodies in adoption.

Interrogating the notion of cultural authenticity of a transnational adoptive family, anthropologist Andrea Louie explores the way that white American parents and Asian American parents who adopted a child from China conceptualize and practice Chineseness. The aspiration to foster the cultural heritage of their adopted child from China, however, discloses a severe gap between the two sets of race-based parents. Compared to white adoptive parents, Asian American adoptive parents tend to hold the “privilege of authenticity,” with the help of their racial-ethnic background that allows them more flexibility to “practice and create (or do not practice) Chinese or Chinese American culture.”³⁸⁴ How is the cultural privilege connected to the racial identity of adoptive parents who are not white in the transnational transracial adoptive relationship? How do transnational transracial adoptees define and negotiate their racial and ethnic identity under the culture keeping led by their adoptive parents who are mindful of the

³⁸⁴ Andrea Louie, *How Chinese Are You?: Adopted Chinese Youth and Their Families Negotiate Identity and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 89-90.

importance of acknowledging their adopted child's cultural and racial difference? How is the racial and ethnic identity of the adopted child of color from abroad explored when adoptive parents are deemed to hold the "privilege of authenticity"?

Louie's question of how cultural authentication in the adopted child-rearing is decided and measured along with adoptive parents' racial and cultural background is precisely the quest of Jane Jin Kaisen's *Loving Belinda* project, which interrogates the discourse and practice of race, culture, kinship, and transnational adoption in the twenty-first century. The mock-documentary project consists of three videos that follow adoptee Belinda and her adoptive parents the Andersons from 2006 to 2015.³⁸⁵ The first video "Adopting Belinda" begins with a Danish TV program host's interview with Mr. and Mrs. Anderson in Minneapolis, Minnesota, who recently adopted a baby girl from Denmark. The major questions asked to the Anderson couple are the following: why they chose to adopt and why a Danish child; what the process of their transnational adoption of a Danish child was like; whether they know anything about the history of the child and her biological parents; and if everything is alright with them and a child is happy. These questions are utterly basic, conventional, and familiar, and so are the Andersons' answers to the questions. The Andersons explain that they decided to adopt due to the infertility issue, the most common reason for adoption now as well as in the past. Though adopting a child from Denmark is strenuous since it is not a country that usually sends its children for overseas adoption, they say that the process was orderly and smooth and Belinda has had no problem in joining the new family of theirs. They think that it was worth their effort, more because they are

³⁸⁵ After being published individually, the trilogy was shown collectively in her solo exhibition held at Galleri Image in Aarhus, Denmark in 2015, along with the photograph and the seminar on the project. At the end of the exhibition, Kaisen published the book *Loving Belinda* that includes the excerpted dialogues and images of the video films and the multiple conversations and articles by herself and other scholars who address race, migration, and coloniality of transnational adoption.

proud of being able to help Belinda's mother who could not take care of Belinda due to her young age and health issue. Throughout the interview, both Mr. and Mrs. Anderson repeatedly but casually emphasize how everything of their adoptive family formation has been nothing but 'natural.'

The biggest reason for the Andersons' assurance for the successful and seamless birth of a new family, however, lies in their ethnic background according to the Andersons. Mr. Anderson speaks:

"Most people adopt from like countries in Asia or South America or Africa. But we really wanted to have a Danish child . . . because we have Danish roots ourselves . . . since we have roots in Scandinavia, it would seem more natural that we adopted from Scandinavia. And here in Minnesota we have a lot of people of Scandinavian descent. So, it just seemed like the right thing to do. It is kind of natural."³⁸⁶

In this answer, he rationalizes their Scandinavian cultural heritage as a tie that naturally connects themselves to Belinda. For being ethnically Danish, the most desirable and rational place for their transnational adoption was Scandinavian countries. With the help of the cultural commonality, they would not be foreign to each other, and for having the Danish parents Belinda would get a guaranteed chance for continuing her cultural heritage. Besides, they are living in a place that is largely inhabited by people of Scandinavian descent – Minnesota. In short, by being matched with the Danish parents who live in a Scandinavian community in the U.S., "[s]he will feel at home here." In this narrative of adoptive kinship formation, the Andersons demonstrate the "privilege of authenticity" that Andrea Louie has observed in the Asian American adoptive parents of a Chinese adoptee. However, the Andersons' such responses offer the platform from which Kaisen's work departs to critique the way that race, culture, kinship, and colonial politics

³⁸⁶ Jane Jin Kaisen, "Adopting Belinda," *Loving Belinda* (Århus: Denmark: Forlaget *[asterisk], 2015), 32.

of transnational adoption are entangled. The *Loving Belinda* project destabilizes the normalized image, practice, and discourse of transnational transracial adoption precisely by reproducing them but in a reverse direction of a commonly practiced version of transnational transracial adoption and also by making them performed by the ‘unconventional’ subjects.

First, throughout the interview, the Andersons appropriate the old but still frequently circulated rhetoric of adoption as a benevolent ‘rescue,’ that exhibits the colonial egalitarian perspective. Belinda’s biological mother is a less qualified parent compared to themselves. Furthermore, Belinda’s biological mother’s issue, if there is any, is not treated as her individual problem but generalized as the whole Danish people’s problem. Mr. Anderson says, “And there’s also this issue with... Well, in Denmark... you know that ... I mean, *they* drink a lot... especially young people... and... it’s a *country* where even women smoke a lot. So, they have... well, there are those parents who have problems (emphasis added).”³⁸⁷ Except that Belinda’s mother is quite young, the ambiguity of which is also to be questioned, other information about her is uncertain and vague. Smoking and drinking are mentioned disapprovingly, but it is unclear if Belinda’s biological mother did any of them excessively so that it was the cause that led her to relinquish her child. The Andersons are making a speculation of what she could be like based upon the generalization of her people, while the assumed characteristics of hers are in turn used to affirm their understanding of Danish people as a whole. When she is portrayed as an incapable and young substance user, the Andersons are certain of their cultural, ethical, financial, and emotional superiority under the “single, global imagination for the ‘child’” that Dubinsky has critiqued. They claim, thus, adopting Belinda is a generous act to help not just an unfortunate young woman and poor Belinda. Mr. Andersons says, “In a way we’re also helping the Danish

³⁸⁷ Kaisen, “Adopting Belinda,” 34.

people because she'll ... I mean, her chances of getting a good life ... You cannot compare with if she would have stayed in Denmark, it's impossible, with such a, I mean..."³⁸⁸

The Andersons' adoption narrative is teeming with generalizations, cultural stereotyping, and the fallacy of presumed superiority of themselves, and yet it is intriguing and troublesome for the viewers as they are also subtly invited to agree with the Andersons' view. Mr.

Anderson's "you know that..." might be dismissed as filler words, but they spill the sense that Mr. Anderson thinks such perceptions are widely shared. When we consider that this show's main audience within the video's narrative is Danish people who might be curious about a post-adoption life of a Danish girl adopted by an American family, the insensitivity and the ease of his remark are more alarming at multiple levels. However, the Andersons' positioning makes a double-layered critique of not only the very limited information about the birth parent, the circumstance of her relinquishment, and the culture of the child's birth country that they have, but also the problematic cultural imaginary upon which a majority of transnational adoptive parents operate, even when they mean 'well' and are reflective on the possible differences of their adopted child from themselves.

When someone considers transnational adoption, one of the primary steps for prospective adopters is deciding which county they would go for their adoption. Each adoption agency works with a few specific countries and it often defines the range of options that prospective adopters can choose from.³⁸⁹ Besides the rather constricted options adopters can entertain with adoption

³⁸⁸ Kaisen, "Adopting Belinda," 34.

³⁸⁹ For instance, among the agencies located in Minnesota, the Children's Home Society & Lutheran Social Service works with China, Columbia, Ecuador, Honduras, India, and Korea, while EVOLVE Adoption and Family Services has maintained relationships with Colombia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Bethany, which has its offices across the nation including MN, has a partnership with Albania, Columbia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, South Africa, Uganda. The countries that each agency has a connection with are very different, and depending on available agencies and other factors such as the adoption cost, the options that prospective adopters can have can be greatly different.

agencies in their residing state, the prospective parents' interest in a specific country, like the Andersons, also defines an agency that they would contact. Their decision to pick a specific country may be based on various reasons. To name a few, a shorter wait time, their eligibility fit for a certain country, a special occasion of a country such as a natural disaster or a political crisis that increases the number of children available for adoption, sensational media coverage of children in a specific country, or a successful example of other transnational adoptive families in the neighborhood can motivate people. In brief, people's choice of a specific country for their adoption and their finding of a child whom they can adopt from a specific country are heavily affected by external factors than a destined fate between adoptive parents and a child, the narrative that has persisted in the U.S. adoption. Thus, considering that a majority of transnational adoptive parents begin to learn about a foreign country and its culture as they process their adoption to welcome a child better, the Andersons' response reveals confidence and assurance that differentiate themselves from other transnational adoptive parents by emphasizing that they already own a shared cultural background with their adopted child—the “privilege of authenticity.”

The Andersons' assertion, however, is self-contradictory as it criticizes Danish people and Danish culture with which they identify themselves. Furthermore, where a line should be drawn between the Danishness that the Andersons see in the Danish people like Belinda's biological mother and the Danishness that is their cultural heritage and many other people's in Minnesota is not only obscure but very absurd. Considering that they did a transnational adoption according to the video's narrative, it is plausible to guess them to be Danish *Americans* in terms of their current nationality. Are they first-generation immigrants from Denmark? Or, are they a later generation of Danish descent? If they are children of an immigrant family of Danish

descent, what kind of Danishness is being discussed? These questions are not to insist on the essentialist view, supposing that there is real, singular, and authentic Danish culture. On the contrary, the questions oblige us to acknowledge that culture keeping is almost always a very arbitrary and elective act that is negotiated through multifold, competing factors that are conditioned by racial and cultural conceptions and imaginary when we talk about the cultural heritage of a transnational adoptee.

Putting herself as an example of the culture keeping conundrum, Andrea Louie shares an anecdote about her biological son's choice, rejection, and negotiation with various Chinese cultural exposure including the Chinese language education, and her struggle to plan and organize her son's learning and experience of Chinese culture as a Chinese American parent. In establishing the 'right' level and kind of Chineseness her family would pursue, she questions how Chinese she and her son should and could be as the descendants of Chinese Americans. This arbitrary border, however, becomes simultaneously more inflexible and flexible in the case of a transnational transracial adoptive family with white parents and a child of color. The white adoptive parents of a Chinese American adoptee that she studied practice everyday Chineseness in a few typical ways: they decorate their home with Chinese paraphernalia; they register the child for Chinese language lessons or a culture camp; they engage in cultural activities such as celebrating Chinese holidays; they travel to China for the cultural experience and a birth search.

What kind of Chineseness do these kinds of activities constitute? This question's purpose is not to devalue sincere and serious efforts made by many transnational transracial adoptive parents, but it is more aligned with the argument of anthropologist Ann Anagnost, who has cautioned that "the politics of inclusion can so easily be subverted... to the controlled insertion of culturally inflected signs devoid of history (such as Chinese New Year, the dragon, the

Chinese writing system, or ethnic cuisine).”³⁹⁰ Sociologist and urban education scholar Lori Delale-O’Connor also argues that cultural activities like culture camps are limited to the “safe and acceptable aspects of children’s birth cultures” such as “food, clothing, songs, dance, and games.”³⁹¹ Sociologist Sara Dorow further points out the problem of such elective cultural experiences, saying that the adoptive parents “construct their families as transnational, transcultural, and transracial, by transmitting to their children what they saw as a more authentic choice of moving among China, Chinese American, and white (or multicultural) America ... by embracing and normalizing a Chinese cultural identity.”³⁹² Then, a question to which we need to return is how an adopted child’s culture is explored and negotiated differently and more properly, if the adoptive parents assume that they have cultural competency with the privilege of authenticity.³⁹³

The Anderson family has a second interview with the same program *Kaffen er serveret* (Coffee is Served) in 2014 when Belinda becomes nine-years old.³⁹⁴ Hinting that the discussion

³⁹⁰ Ann Anagnost, "Scenes of Misrecognition: Maternal Citizenship in the Age of Transnational Adoption," *Positions* 8, no. 2 (2000): 412.

³⁹¹ Lori Deale-O’Connor, “Safely ‘Other’: The Role of Culture Camps in the Construction of Racial Identity for Adopted Children,” in *Race in Transnational and Transracial Adoption*, edited by Vilna Bashi Treitler, London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014, 161.

³⁹² Sara K. Dorow, *Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 228.

³⁹³ M. Elizabeth Vonk defines “cultural competency” for transracial adoptive parents as “an unique set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enables parents to meet their children’s needs related to racial and cultural socialization” (Vonk and Massatti, 2008, 204-205), focusing on three major components: racial awareness, survival skills, and multicultural planning (Vonk 2001). See M. Elizabeth Vonk, "Cultural Competence for Transracial Adoptive Parents," *Social Work* 46, no. 3 (2001): 246-55 and M. Elizabeth Vonk and Richard R. Massatti, "Factors Related to Transracial Adoptive Parents’ Levels of Cultural Competence," *Adoption Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (2008): 204-226.

³⁹⁴ It is worth mentioning the chance that this show’s title makes a reference to the Korean morning program called *AM Plaza*. The literal translation of the show’s name is *Morning Episode*. This daily program that has been running since 1981 is well-known to international Korean adoptees as it has introduced several adoptees who visited Korea to search for their biological family. It has served as a popular venue for returning adoptees to make an appearance because it is aired on one of the national channels that anybody can watch, and also because it is a popular show for the older generation, especially women in their 50s or older. This means that there is a higher chance that their birth mother or relatives may watch the show than other programs. Based on the program’s renown among international Korean adoptees and the implication that the Danish program could be another morning show

of what is the ‘right’ way of doing transnational adoption has grown tremendously over the years between the two interviews, the interviewer asks if the Andersons think whether it is important to preserve an adoptee’s history and birth culture and what they actively have done for Belinda’s cultural heritage. The Andersons’ response is earnest but becomes a similar vignette of the reality of many transnational transracial adoptive families who take myriad strategies to cultivate the birth culture of their adopted child.

MRS. ANDERSON: Yes, we do a lot of things actually, and we do think it’s very important. Some adoptive families are not very conscious of these aspects, but of course Belinda’s Danish heritage is part of her, so we encourage that. There are also a lot of things we appreciate about Danish culture, for instance Danish design and IKEA and...

MR. ANDERSON: Lego.

MRS. ANDERSON: Yes, Lego. And we even have a Norwegian minister in the church we attend, so we try to encourage all the positive aspects of Danish culture to Belinda.³⁹⁵

They are also giving Belinda horse riding lessons with a horse of a Danish *Frederiksborg* breed, which is shown in the last video “Loving Belinda.” The list that has Ikea, Lego, a Danish horse, and a Norwegian minister as examples of the experience of Danish culture is random and very relevant. Though examples are not necessarily ‘negatively’ stereotyping items, the Andersons’ rejoinder has even a comical effect, since Mr. and Mrs. Anderson who emphasize their Danish roots as a qualification to make them fit parents do nothing different from other transnational transracial parents. Rather, they duplicate the cultural stereotypes about the Scandinavian countries by naming the Swedish home furnishing company and the Danish toy production

as its name speaks, it is not implausible to draw a connection between *Kaffen er serveret* (Coffee is Served) and *AM Plaza*.

³⁹⁵ Kaisen, “Revisiting the Andersons,” *Loving Belinda* (Århus: Denmark: Forlaget *[asterisk], 2015), 45.

company among many possible examples when they are interviewing with the Danish TV program from Denmark.

To understand the performative element of this work, it is vital to note that acting in the *Loving Belinda* project, especially in the first two videos, was not scripted. The basic concept was created before the production, and yet the dialogues were improvised while filming, said Kaisen.³⁹⁶ Tobias Hübinette and Kaisen who acted Mr. and Mrs. Anderson character say in the post-production conversation that their acting as the adoptive parents, even though completely improvised, was very ‘natural’ for them “because this narrative logic is so pervasive, so it was so easy to imagine what our characters, the adoptive parents would respond” not just about parental roles but also about the way they would educate their transnationally adopted child about their birth culture.³⁹⁷ Hübinette and Kaisen’s performance of the Andersons’ culture keeping has an alienation effect, however, first due to the ways that they incorporate a conventional but flawed conceptualization of a foreign culture, which leads the audience to wonder about the effectiveness of culture keeping and the ways to do culture keeping in a transnational adoptive family. Also, it alienates the audience from the familiar narrative of transnational adoptive kinship because culture keeping in Kaisen’s work is done by people who believe they are culturally competent, unlike most white adoptive parents. Their belief that Belinda’s cultural diversity is guaranteed with numerous “as-if” conditions helped by elective cultural exposures and that all other issues occurring with their adoptive relationship could be mediated through successful and constant culture keeping, offers criticism of the common, optimistic imagination

³⁹⁶ Jane Jin Kaisen, “Artistic Research as a Means to Critically Translate the Perceptions of Transnational Adoption,” Lecture at Korean Women’s Institute (한국여성연구원), Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea, video, April 16, 2015, <https://youtu.be/ZqP7DkXPurw>, 38:47.

³⁹⁷ Tobias Hübinette and Jane Jin Kaisen, “Transnational Adoption in the Context of Colonial Repression,” *Loving Belinda* (Århus, Denmark: Forlaget *[asterisk], 2015), 72.

about a transnational family's afterlife accomplishing the smooth immersion and convergence of differences and diversity via culture.

But what strikes out most in their performance of the Andersons has to do with the Asian raced body that the Andersons own but do not perform at all. The emphasis on their Danish ethnicity appears ambivalent from the beginning since they exhibit a racially Asian body. Yet, the very moment that the viewers wonder about their 'real' identity is when the complicated intersection of race, culture, migration, and adoption erupts. While it is a fact that there are few Asian Danish, there are Asian Danish people, including Asian immigrants and transnational adoptees such as Korean Danish adoptees. Furthermore, Denmark is the country whose adoption ratio per capita is highest in Europe. If the audience views them as American, or more specifically Danish Americans who transnationally adopted a child, the reason to think the Andersons strange still does not seem to fade, either. The Andersons de-center race not only in the presentation of their identity but also in their relationship with their white child Belinda. Their Asian race and the racial difference between them and the child are what the audience sees immediately. But race goes unmentioned until the Danish TV host raises a question about the perception and reception of a transracial family like the Andersons in the U.S. in "Revisiting the Andersons." Both in the real time that the *Loving Belinda* project evolved and in the fictive time within the project, the viewers hear barely anything about their racial difference from the Andersons.

Obviously and intentionally, the actors in the videos perform whiteness of Danish/American characters. However, the state where they live has not only a big population of Scandinavian Americans but also the largest per capita number of Korean adoptees in the U.S. Park Nelson writes that the estimated population of Korean American adoptees in Minnesota,

ranging between ten thousand and fifteen thousand, makes the state that is known for its ten thousand lakes have “an adoptee for every lake.”³⁹⁸ Therefore, it is not baseless to guess that they could be Asian, possibly Korean, adoptees adopted by Danish or Danish American parents, though it is not clearly mentioned that they are also adoptees in the video. When we follow this line of thinking that they are Danish Americans who were transnationally transracially adopted from Korea, we should consider that they are *not* performing whiteness, for most Korean adoptees, even in Minnesota that has the biggest Korean adoptee population in the U.S., are culturally white since they grow up with a white family in a dominantly white environment. Rather than regarding the Andersons as ‘performing’ or mimicking whiteness, we can postulate that the Andersons show the outcome of the adoptees who are both culturally and racially harmonized and immersed into their white adoptive family and environment. They embody the “as-if” adoptive kinship that has been successfully executed, which allows them to be themselves without being bound by their Asian-raced body. Their raced body is part of them, but it is not the sole factor that defines who they are. Demonstrating the cultural and racial transgression of their birth origin and biological trait, they show the ideal present and future of a multicultural society in which people like transnational transracial adoptees are able to join a family with whom they are not biologically related in spite of differences and regardless of their origins. Attaining an impeccable political and cultural belonging of their adopted country and family, the Andersons in *Loving Belinda* are therefore the realization of a successful transnational transracial adoption that has been dreamed about. Racial difference is seen, but race becomes one of many differences that can be mediated through culture. Thereupon, if they are culturally Danish American, their claim for Danishness must not appear odd or contradictory in the globalized

³⁹⁸ Park Nelson, 101.

multicultural society, whether they have an Asian body or not. The real-life identity of Tobias Hübinette being a Swedish Korean adoptee and of Jane Jin Kaisen being a Danish Korean adoptee adds another layer onto their (performance of) whiteness within and outside the narrative.

In fact, as the study of numerous adoption scholars has demonstrated, adoptees of color who grow up in a white family in a dominantly white community tend to be culturally white, unless and until they consciously choose to explore a different ethnic identity. As the ethnographic studies of transnational transracial adoptees done by Tobias Hübinette, Tovy Alice Volkman, Sara Dorow, Eleana Kim, Heather Jacobson, Kim Park Nelson, and Andrea Louie show, many transnational transracial adoptees who are racially Asian struggle to ‘fit in’ in the dominantly white society as a racial minority who look different while they grow up, which speaks of the whiteness they emulate to achieve and is measured against. Moreover, even when they make an intentional choice of another culture of either their birth country (transnational adoptees), race (domestic transracial adoptees), or something else they want to claim, their white ethnicity immediately neither goes away nor is instantly replaced.

But it is critical to note that, let alone this “white mask, Asian face” issue, if put in Frantz Fanon’s language, they also battle with the racialized perception that sees them only as culturally and racially Asians due to their Asian raced body. Heather Jacobson’s study of culture keeping of China-adoptive families and Russia-adoptive families, despite its highly gendered perspective focusing only on the adoptive mother’s role in studying adoptive parental caring, illustrates the way that race of the adoptees plays in shaping the degree of culture keeping of transnational adoption in the multicultural U.S. The white skin color of Russian adoptees shields them from the inquisitive public eyes because they can blend in with their white American adoptive family;

since they look white, their adoption history can go invisible. Thus, they can ‘pass’ as a racially and culturally American and as a biologically begotten child except when they are willing to share their history. Hence, Russia-adoptive parents feel less pressured to preserve their adopted child’s cultural heritage. If the child is enthusiastic about their birth culture, learning the roots can be done whenever and whichever way the child and the adoptive family choose to do. On the other hand, the luxury of “ethnic shopping” is less available for Chinese adoptees, because of the visible racial difference between them and their adoptive family. They cannot pass, unlike Russian adoptees, regardless of how culturally American they are or want to be.³⁹⁹ The differential culture keeping imperative between the two race-based adoptee groups exposes the centrality that race plays in the transnational adoptees’ identity formation and options they could explore. It also testifies that under multiculturalism race may be seen but is frequently translated into the contextless, depoliticized culture without resolving the structural issues of race and race relations. Louie comments that her interviewee adoptive parents “address [her] questions about race by talking about culture – viewing cultural pride as a solution for the focus on the child’s difference, falling back on culture as a means of addressing the potential racism their children may face.”⁴⁰⁰ Reversely, in the case of the Andersons, their cultural competence does not offset racial difference that is silenced but keeps (re)appearing. Race stays around as a sticky marker that suspects the sanguinity of their kinship despite the presumably shared culture with their adopted child. That the Andersons’ adoption of Belinda is interethnic does not override the visible racial dissimilarity between the adoptive parents and the child. Their “privilege of authenticity” is questioned though they have a shared ethnic background with the child since their racial background does not ‘match’ with their self-identifying ethnicity.

³⁹⁹ Jacobson, *Culture Keeping*, 2008.

⁴⁰⁰ Louie, 180.

This dilemma of the in/visibility of race in the transracial adoptive kinship was shown a century ago in Sui Sin Far's short story "Pat and Pan." The story introduces a Chinese American family with a white adopted boy and a biological daughter. Pat grows up as a culturally Chinese American with his sister, a biological daughter of their parents, until the missionary person Anna Harrison learns about Pat's transracial adoptive familial relationship. While the Chinese American community has few issues to accept Pat as one of their people, Anna Harrison is horrified with the abnormal arrangement made across the racial boundary, saying "for a white boy to grow up as a Chinese was unthinkable."⁴⁰¹ With the persistent effort, Pat is brought back to the white society, despite that Pat's Chinese American adoptive parents, Lum Yook and her spouse, did nothing but a good deed by helping Pat's biological white mother, who is their friend who became too sick to take care of Pat. They send off Pat to the "Americans" in the end. Though Mrs. Lum Yook says, "The son of the white woman is the son of the white woman," "deep in their hearts [is] the sense of injustice and outraged love." It is stressed that they have been compelled to give up Pat because "there are many tongues wagging because [the white boy] lives under [their Chinese] roof."⁴⁰² In this story, it is the white American society that limits the transracial kinship than the Chinese community and Pat's Chinese American adoptive family, as the white American society cannot perceive Pat's adoptive Chinese American kinship as legible and legitimate.

Far's story is very bold in portraying the transracial adoptive family in which parents are Chinese American and an adoptive child is white, considering the historical climate in which it was written. The 1910s was the time of the anti-immigration agitation and xenophobia, and

⁴⁰¹ Sui Sin Far/ Edith Maude Eaton, "Pat and Pan" *Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Writings*, edited by Amy Ling and Annette White Parks. 1912 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 160.

⁴⁰² Sui Sin Far/ Edith Maude Eaton, 164.

Chinese Americans had been the target of racial discrimination for decades since the mid-nineteenth century, which was epitomized with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. However, the less violent but still lingering question about the Asian raced Andersons' competency and practice as good adoptive parents for a white child Belinda in the twenty-first century in Kaisen's work reveals the ongoing uneasiness about the Asian and the white raced body cohabiting in the family. Though Far's story was exceptional in its imagination of kinship at that time, Pat's transracial family showing that 'Chinese American' and 'white American' are not exclusive to each other seems to be realized in a family like the Andersons in the multicultural society of the twenty-first century. But, unfortunately, they are not free from the similar doubt that Pat's family experiences in the early twentieth century.⁴⁰³

The uneven cultural imperative paired with a perceptible racial identity of adoptees, or adoptive parents in the case of the Andersons, thus, attests to that transnational transracial adoptive family's culture keeping operates as another form of racializing. Park Nelson states, "Even for this highly acculturated group raised to think of themselves as more white than Asian or Korean, race remains a salient feature informing their lives... Their fate remains tied to a group they may not identify with but to which they are socially bound."⁴⁰⁴ Park Nelson writes that Korean American adoptees are therefore saddled between blackened racialization that patronizes them as pathetic orphans of color from another country whose violent experience of relinquishment and transfer could be healed by paternalistic love of white adoptive parents and whitened racialization that portrays them as model minorities who may out-white the white.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰³ Cynthia Callahan offers an analysis of the race problem in Far's "Pat and Pan" while reading the late 20th century fictions about the transracial family. See Callahan, "Chapter 6. Adopting Ambivalence in the Fiction of Sui Sin Far, Anne Tyler, and Gish Jen," *Kin of Another Kind: Transracial Adoption in America Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 131-137.

⁴⁰⁴ Park Nelson, 142.

⁴⁰⁵ Park Nelson, 128.

Likewise, Tuan in her earlier study has argued that the Asian Americans' experience is conditioned between the dichotomy of perennial foreigner or model minority.⁴⁰⁶ The descriptions of Korean American adult adoptees of themselves such as "not 'white' enough," "Caucasian with a difference," "a white person in an Asian body," "white middle class, but adopted from Korea," and "a person who did not fit in" illustrate the ambivalent and indecisive racial and cultural position they deal with.⁴⁰⁷ The ambiguity of the Korean American adoptees' racial and cultural position exhibits a paradox of antithetical racialization of Asian Americans who are 'close to white but not quite' – the inexplicable other whose position is not readily legible within a binary black-white color line.

Claire Jean Kim's theory of racial triangulation of Asian Americans is very instrumental to understand the peculiar racialization of transnational transracial adoptees who have an Asian-raced body. Walking away from both the approach that maps out different racialization trajectories of each distinct racial group and the approach that sees an in-between place of Asian Americans within a single and linear racial hierarchy, Kim has argued that "Asian Americans have been racially triangulated vis-à-vis Blacks and Whites or located in the field of racial positions with reference to these two other points."⁴⁰⁸ According to Kim, Asian Americans have been racially triangulated through two processes: first, the relative valorization that places Asian Americans superior to blacks but less than whites; second, the civic ostracism that constructs Asian Americans as immutably foreign and unassimilable with whites on the cultural and racial ground. Kim states that these mutually constitutive processes, which concurrently empowers

⁴⁰⁶ Mia Tuan, *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?: The Asian Ethnic Experience Today* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

⁴⁰⁷ Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, "Survey of Adult Korean Adoptees: Report on the Findings," (New York: Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 1999).

⁴⁰⁸ Claire Jean Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," *Politics & Society* 27, no. 1 (1999): 107.

whites and deflects blacks through the racial triangulation of Asian Americans, displace a discourse about racial conflicts and racial privileges by a discourse about cultural differences that effectively removes any racialized language. In other words, “[t]he field of racial positions has now been rearticulated in cultural terms.”⁴⁰⁹

Building upon this view, I take Park Nelson’s argument to see Korean American adoptees as white Koreans as a vital point to rethink about the way we critique Asian American adoptees’ racialization in the politics of multiculturalism. Park Nelson highlights the dilemma of Korean American adoptees set between the culture of “privileging of cultural sameness over racial difference in adoptive families” and “the enforcement of race-only identity in a racist and White-dominated social context.”⁴¹⁰ By looking at the split, Park Nelson discusses the social pressure that Korean American adoptees experience to (re-)identify as non-white, especially after they begin to live apart from their adoptive family, could be violent as well.⁴¹¹ The internalization of whiteness and a white gaze coming from their dominantly white upbringing and environment must be checked and challenged. But I agree with Park Nelson who argues that expecting Asian American adoptees to disavow their cultural white identity to claim their non-white identity as Asian American and Asian that are perennially affiliated to their country of origin is another enforcement of a race-only identity. That approach does not properly regard the complexity of the multicultural and multiracial relations that Asian-raced transnational transracial adoptees who grow up in a white household live through, as if there is a singular way to define their Asian-raced identity ‘correctly.’ As much as culture keeping that is offered to and expected from transnational transracial adoptees under the charter of multiculturalism operates upon the

⁴⁰⁹ Kim, 117.

⁴¹⁰ Kim, 132,121.

⁴¹¹ Kim, 133-140.

presumption that there is an inalienable culture that the adoptees must not be separated from and have a right to, the pressure for transnational transracial adoptees to gainsay their cultural whiteness and adopt the ethnicity that corresponds with their racial identity operates upon the similar idea that their birth ethnicity is acquirable and restorable only if they strive for it. Volkman states a contemporary understanding of an adoptee's right to an "identity" is conflicted with its underlying belief that people like transnational transracial adoptees have "a nationally or culturally rooted identity and they are expected to explore "multiple identities."⁴¹²

This reveals a similar racializing logic that Asian American adoptees' cultural heritage is naturally ingrained 'in their blood.' In this mechanism, the ideal of transnational transracial adoption that wishes to transcend racial and cultural differences within a transnational transracial adoptive family while acknowledging the differences instead of erasing them becomes another racialization that accentuates transnational transracial adoptees' racial difference and their naturalized perennial foreignness. This cultural essentialism racializes transnational transracial adoptees' culture as something rooted in their racial body that is intricately intertwined with their foreign origin.

This approach based upon the "in-born" cultural identity demands rethinking of Asianness and Asian Americanness, as well as (white) Americanness, that are substantiated, intervened, and regenerated by transnational transracial adoptees from Asian countries. Problematizing the referentiality of "Asian American" in the U.S. context in which liberal multiculturalism emerged as a dominant paradigm, Kandice Chuh argues for the necessity to think "[t]o whom and to what "Asian American" refers," since 'Asian American' is "a term *in*

⁴¹² Volkman, "Introduction," 5-6.

difference from itself.”⁴¹³ Chuh articulates the problem of multiculturalism that “manages at once to sediment Asian Americanness in a narrative of otherness that achieves cohesiveness through an emphasis on (previous) exclusion and powerlessness, and to erase the continuities of the materialities underwriting such positions by insisting on the irrelevance of the past.”⁴¹⁴

Otherness here, as “an already determined idea, a predetermined ideal, of minoritized cultures, of otherness, predicates acceptable versions of alterity” that is “devoid of the contradictions and complexities that inscribe and describe people’s lives.”⁴¹⁵

Both the idea that drives culture keeping of transnational adoptive families but more imperatively for Asian American adoptive families, and the idea that the culture of a birth country is innately connected to the transnational transracial adoptees’ identity are premised upon the racial and cultural imaginary that transnational transracial adoptees like Asian American adoptees are, to use Chuh’s language, “discretely bounded and discretely knowable” subjects “merely modified by a specific adjective (“Asian”).⁴¹⁶ While they are also ‘modified’ by other adjectives such as transnational, transracial, and adopted, the possibility of these traversing terms already becomes restrictive when transnational transracial adoptees are understood as being inherently bounded by a certain nation, race, and culture. Chuh thus undertakes a critical consideration of transnationalism that “may be used to reify specifically national boundaries through a reaffirmation of the identity of the “true” national subject,”⁴¹⁷ addressing “the limitations of territorial imagination that cannot account for the transnational dimensions of nationalized subjectivities.”⁴¹⁸

⁴¹³ Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise on Asian Americanist Critique* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 7, 8.

⁴¹⁴ Chuh, 6.

⁴¹⁵ Chuh, 18.

⁴¹⁶ Chuh, 3.

⁴¹⁷ Chuh, 14.

⁴¹⁸ Chuh, 15.

Although these contradictions that go against the multicultural ideal are not limited only to Asian American adoptees among transnational transracial adoptees, their peculiar positions in relation to domestic black children who have been historically less favored for adoption and the problematic referentiality of Asian American that is defined as differences in relation to the black and the white speak the way of Asianness and Asian Americanness of transnational transracial adoptees from Asian countries are being construed within the U.S. racial and cultural imaginary. At the same time, the impossibility to produce them as fully knowable subjects in such conceptualization without simultaneously othering them whose roots are set in another shore bespeaks the undecidability and instability of Asian Americanness.

Thus, I read that the experimental formulation of a transnational transracial family shown with the Andersons in Kaisen's *Loving Belinda* project challenge us to reconceptualize Asianness and Asian Americanness as well as the transnational transracial adoptive kinship of the U.S. and the global society. Not just by reversing the racial role by posing as racially Asian but culturally white people but also by taking the role of adoptive parents instead of adoptees, the Andersons disrupt and question the contemporary global notion of transnational transracial kinship at multiple levels. The uncommon juxtaposition of their positioning as Asian-raced adoptive parents of a white transnational adoptee and the decentralization of race from their adoptive kinship discourse while mediating it through equivocally conceptualized culture and ethnicity make their identity and performance not readily explicable and containable, which unsettles a presumption about the transformative kinship through transnational transracial adoption in the multicultural U.S. society and beyond.

The Andersons in the interview with a Danish adoption researcher who visits them in "Loving Belinda" emphasize over and over how 'normal' his family is. Though they are infertile

and their adopted child has been dealing with the attachment disorder that probably originated from the traumatic experiences back in Denmark, the Andersons negate that any of them is an essential issue. Instead, they insist that everything is normal. Mr. Anderson speaks, “Our hope is of course to just continue to be a normal family[,] which we believe that we are, in spite of some difficulties... So that’s really our hope for the future, and we also believe that that’s what’s going to happen. We will stay a normal family.”⁴¹⁹ Mr. Anderson’s repetitive emphasis on their family’s normalcy, however, so much as the interviewers’ concern about the Andersons’ culture keeping capability for Belinda and her psychological well-being, can be read as an affirmation of the deviancy they are labeled with despite their assurance and confidence for their ‘natural’ and wholesome adoptive kinship. The Andersons’ determination and hope to stay a normal family now and in the future, then, disclose the lingering doubt as to the Anderson family’s integrity and legibility compared to other ‘real’ ‘normal’ families, both adoptive and non-adoptive.

Yet, I contend that the transnational transracial adoptive family of the Andersons opens up a conceptual space in which Asianness, Asian Americanness, and whiteness, as well as adoptive kinship, can be reimagined, not by affirming to the normative kinship that is defined as a neutral family made of a heterosexual married couple and their biologically begotten children, but by breaking such normativity through their transnational transracial adoptive kinship that presents less ‘normal’ elements such as a non-biologically constituted parent-child relationship, the racial difference between parents and an adopted child, a non-white couple as adoptive parents, adult adoptees as adopters, a reverse direction of travel that a child makes for adoption, and Asian-raced Americans who do not succumb to either the biologically defined racialized identity or Asianness such as foreignness and docility. Then, Mr. Anderson’s saying, “It’s no

⁴¹⁹ Kaisen, “Loving Belinda,” *Loving Belinda* (Århus: Denmark: Forlaget *[asterisk], 2015), 59.

problem. We chose to adopt. And that's another way of having a child, right? We accepted that" can be read as a declaration of the possibility of other configurations of transnational transracial adoptive kinship and Asian Americans in the twenty-first century that disintegrates the normativity itself, without losing its critical stance presented through the satirical performance deploying conventional ideas of transnational transracial adoption and whiteness.⁴²⁰ Their wish for normative kinship thus creates a counter-hegemonic narrative about adoptive kinship and transnational transracial adoption, becoming a subversive act through conformity.

Conclusion

The comparative study of the historical trajectory of U.S. domestic and transnational transracial adoption demonstrates the disparate race politics and cultural imaginary in the two transracial adoptions in the late twentieth century. By focusing on the particular way that Asianness simultaneously creates flexibility and reproduces racial and cultural otherness of transnational transracial adoptees, this chapter problematizes the way that multiculturalism operates in configuring the transnational transracial adoption practice and ideal. It argues that culture keeping in the contemporary transnational transracial adoptive family translates the racial difference of transnational transracial adoptees into another cultural difference that is concurrently naturalized and structured. Multiculturalism sees the racial difference of an adoptee as if it is another attainable ethnic diversity by choice while maintaining it as a biologically defined entity naturally tied to the adoptee's raced body.

Yet, despite the involuntary racialization that Asian American adoptees are subject to and the salient problem of transnational, transracial adoption that has "invested in the production of

⁴²⁰ Kaisen, "Adopting Belinda," 58.

the “right” and white family,” Kimberly D. Mckee’s assertion of the importance of seeing the impact and changes that transnational, transracial families with Asian adoptees bring to the society at large beyond individual family units’ rendering of race and kinship raises a critical question.⁴²¹ She offers an argument that the Korean American adoptive family *is* Asian American, differing her view from Eng’s, while she builds her argument drawing from Eng and Alice Y. Hom’s notion of queer that is “a political practice based on transgressions of the normal and normativity.”⁴²² The Asian American transnational transracial adoptive family blurs and amplifies Asian Americanness as well as whiteness by creating a rupture in what is the ‘normal,’ which “require[s] a rethinking of what it means to be part of the diversity of Asian American experience” in the current moment of the U.S. society where “the Asian American identity is [being] reinvented”⁴²³ with the growing and changing presence of Asian American adoptees as well as changing demographics and migration patterns of Asian immigrants to the U.S.

Given this understanding, the Andersons and Belinda in Kaisen’s *Loving Belinda* constitute another kind of Asian American family that expands, as Mckee comments, the conceptualization of who Asian Americans are and what the Asian American adoptive family is like. In that regard, I argue that the convergence and crossing of familial, cultural, ethnic, racial, class, and national borders occurring in the transnational transracial adoptive family formation, therefore, along with their limitation and reproduction of the almost already failing “as-if” ideals for adoptive kinship, offers the possibility of a different configuration of the family, adoptive

⁴²¹ Kimberly D. McKee, *Disrupting Kinship*, 66, 75-76.

⁴²² David L. Eng and Alice Y. Hom, eds. *Q&A: Queer in Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 1, quoted in Kimberly D. McKee, *Disrupting Kinship: Transnational Politics of Korean Adoption in the United States* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 61.

⁴²³ McKee, *Disrupting Kinship*, 75.

kinship, and Asian Americanness, as well as Americanness instead of producing them within containable ideation of another 'them.' In that regard, the Anderson family is normal, and they should be able to stay as a normal family.

Coda – Only for the Best Kind:

Children on the Border and the U.S. Immigration Control

On June 20, 2018, President Donald Trump signed the Executive Order 13841 that ended the forcible separation of families at the U.S-Mexico border, announcing that it is “the policy of this Administration to maintain family unity, including by detaining families together where appropriate and consistent with law and available resources.”⁴²⁴ Previously, under the “zero tolerance” policy issued in April 2018, any aliens were criminally prosecuted when they were caught while crossing the border without a document proving their legal migration, and alien minors were separated from their parents and detained. The story of the forced separation of thousands of families generated a strong outcry against the policy, and President Trump published the executive order within a few months to alleviate the criticism. According to the government’s record, as many as 1,556 “alien children” were separated from their family between May to June 2018. But many human rights organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) argued that the number of separated children and babies was bigger than that, considering the federal government’s border control had tightened since 2017 after the inauguration of the Trump administration who was an avid advocate of the rigorous regulation of ‘illegal’ migration.

On June 26, 2018, ruling *Ms. L vs. Immigration And Customs Enforcement* (ICE), Dana M. Sabraw, United States District Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern

⁴²⁴ See Sec.1 in “Executive Order 13841 of June 20, 2018, Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation,” The Office of the Federal Register (OFR) of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/06/25/2018-13696/affording-congress-an-opportunity-to-address-family-separation>.

District of California, granted the preliminary injunction to stop detaining minor children separately from their parents and reunite families separated by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) custody or foster care, or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) custody, absenting the HHS' and DHS' determination that "the parent is unfit or presents a danger to the child."⁴²⁵ However, family separation by the federal government continued even after Judge Sabraw's ruling. According to the HHS' "Report to Congress on Separated Children" at the directive of at section 236 of H.R. 6470 that required a monthly report on the alien children who had been separated by the HHS, the number of separated unaccompanied children from April 2018 through July 2019 is 3,602. Though children separated by June 2018 when the executive order was issued is 2,609 among them, a thousand of additional children were separated from family. In June 2019, 174 children were separately detained, making the highest number since June 2018. Among the detained children in the reported period, 207 were under five when they were separated from their families.⁴²⁶ But, this number varies due to the inadequate tracking system of the government. The ACLU reported that as of October 2019 more than 5,400 children had been separated from their family since 2017.⁴²⁷

While the continued separation of families, the imprisonment of undocumented migrant adults, and the detainment of their minor children may seem contradictory to the Executive Order 13841, its Section 1 begins stating, "It is the policy of this Administration to rigorously

⁴²⁵ Mr. L came to the U.S. with his seven years old daughter S.S. seeking political asylum from the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, upon the arrival in November 2017, he had been detained separately from his daughter except for four days. He was in San Diego while S.S. was detained in Chicago. Mr. L's lawsuit against the ICE was filed on February 26, 2018. For further details of the case, see *Ms. L vs. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, 3:18-cv-00428 (S.D. Cal.) at <https://www.aclu.org/cases/ms-l-v-ice>.

⁴²⁶ See "Count and ages of Minor separated from April 2018 through July 2019" in Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Report to Congress on Separated Children." October 24, 2019. <https://www.hhs.gov/programs/social-services/unaccompanied-alien-children/report-to-congress-on-separated-children/index.html>.

⁴²⁷ PBS News Hour, "Tally of Children Split at Border Tops 5,400 in New Count," Oct 25, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/tally-of-children-split-at-border-tops-5400-in-new-count>.

enforce our immigration laws.” Under this direction, if aliens attempt an improper entry to the U.S., they are considered having committed a crime and will be subject to a fine or imprisonment.⁴²⁸ Thus, the federal government’s criminal persecution of “illegal” immigrants as its prior goal of the immigration regulation has continued. The biggest victims of such a policy have been children. From emotional and psychological suffering from the separation from their family to the inappropriate care including malnutrition, the unsanitary conditions of the facilities, and a lack of medical care, the issues regarding these “illegal” alien children have been countless. In the contemporary U.S. society where children are deemed nearly sacred, the degree of the mistreatment of those children might be hard to believe. However, the mistreatment and criminalization of undocumented immigrants and their children testify the very essence of the U.S. perspective on who deserves the right to family as well as many other rights that are primarily bestowed onto a certain kind of citizen.

If the reckless separation of families at the border made many people deeply concerned, another issue that arose in late 2018 was that separated migrant children might not be able to reunite with their family permanently once they were placed for adoption. Many of their parents were deported or detained indefinitely and thus did not have access to legal measures to stop the placement of their children for adoption. Nor was the parents’ consent collected or confirmed by a due process. Yet, according to the legal structure of U.S. adoption, once a child is legally transferred, it is hard to revoke unless adoptive parents willingly relinquish their rights to an adopted child. The haphazard placement of forcibly separated foreign migrant children in an American household, however, reflects the long-standing way that U.S. adoption has been practiced.

⁴²⁸⁴²⁸ “Executive Order 13841 of June 20, 2018.”

First, when children do not belong to ‘good’ parents who are law-abiding, disciplined, successful citizen parents, they are also criminalized as juvenile delinquents although they are not decision-makers of undocumented migration. For being children of ‘bad’ parents, they are already regarded as problematic. Second, since such parents are not living up to the ‘western’ standard of good parenthood, their rights to children could be questioned. Though they are biological parents of their children, their blood tie does not automatically qualify them with the rights to children. Rather, failing at the test of ‘good’ parents, birth parents can face the chance that their children are removed from them. Third, children are believed to have opportunities for a better life if they are put under the care of wealthier, more educated, and white parents of the U.S. than living with their ‘illegal’ migrant parents of color from a poor country. By getting adopted, they could leave poverty and can become an “American child.” Fourth, since adoption supposedly prioritizes the best interest of children, biological parents would have to give their consent to relinquish a child. If they do not, they are regarded as selfish parents who prevent the better life of their children. In the same logic, adoptive parents who are willing to take children who are not tied to them by blood are regarded as generous. If adoptive parents are childless, an adoptee would give them the satisfaction of owning a child whom they can call their own, which makes adoption a more mutually beneficial act. Fifth, the U.S. adoption laws acknowledge the only one set of parents as legal guardians of adopted children. Thus, once children are transferred to other parents, parents who hold legal authority over children are adoptive parents, which obliterates the existence of biological parents who are already marginalized by the U.S. laws that do not welcome unprofessional, low-income, menial workers to immigrate to the U.S.

While the forced severance of families, particularly the tragedy of young children, promptly troubled many people, there has been a less objection made against to adoption of these

children. Some people think that since those people wanted to come to the dreamland America, although the whole family did not make the dream come true, at least their child could enjoy the goodness of America if they are adopted by American citizens who can give the child the future that the child's biological parents might want to give her. Though it is unfortunate that a child cannot be with her family any longer, a child is lucky to be adopted by American parents. The perspective that sees adoption as a 'gift' to undocumented 'alien' children, if not a 'rescue,' is still prevailing when we look at the reactions to the family separation at the U.S.-Mexico border for the last three years. And yet, such a point of view reveals how adoption has been fundamentally understood and whose voice has been most reflected in the evolution of the U.S. adoption practice, while the Trump administration's aggressive treatment of 'illegal' migrant families shows that central and Latin American parents do not share the same parental rights with Americans, let alone other rights when they are considered as criminals.

Adoption often has not led adopted children to a happy life with a new loving family, as much as it is always not the best way to take care of "orphans." The arrest, detention, and deportation of Adam Crapser, the 41-year-old Korean adoptee, by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in 2016 not only stirred up the U.S. adoption community but attracted global attention to the decades-old loophole in the U.S. immigration system regarding foreign-born adoptees. When another Korean adoptee Phillip Clay's suicide after deportation to Korea was known to the world, *The New York Times* wrote that his deportation to 'home' was like a death sentence to him.⁴²⁹ Adam Crapser left Korea when he was three years old. Phillip Clay was adopted to America when he was eight. Even though they were brought from another country by

⁴²⁹ Sang-Hun Choe, "Deportation a 'Death Sentence' to Adoptees After a Lifetime in the U.S.," *New York Times*, July 2, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/02/world/asia/south-korea-adoptions-phillip-clay-adam-crapser.html>.

adoptive parents who wanted them to be their family members and they lived nearly all their lives in the U.S., they were not part of the country fully.

Though Crapser's and Clay's case may appear as a very terrible mistake done by indifferent or negligent adoptive parents and the bureaucratic paperwork that hinders family-making of well-intended people, as of 2018, the number of adoptees from abroad without citizenship in the U.S. is estimated to be 35,000 to 49,000, and about 18,000 to 26,000 of them are from Korea. Bastard Nation, the North American adoptee rights organization, analyzes the causes of this perplexing legal crack as follows:

Some say they were unaware of naturalization requirements and believed citizenship was automatic upon adoption finalization. Some claim to have been misled by their adoption agencies, courts, lawyers, or federal immigration authorities. Some believed that it was up to the adoptee, at the age of majority, to choose their citizenship status. In some cases, adoptive parents disrupted the adoption, and either "rehomed" the children they brought to the US or turned them over to the state foster care system where they lingered with no legal closure.⁴³⁰

Whichever has attributed to the legal limbo of thousands of non-citizen adoptees, their sheer number testifies that the U.S. immigration system regarding transnational adoption has a fatal blind spot. The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 offered some mending to the stringent regulation of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, and there is an ongoing effort to pass the Adoptee Citizenship Act since 2015. However, the undue hardship of non-citizen foreign-born adult adoptees has been unresolved as shown in Crapser's and Clay's case.

And yet, U.S. transnational adoption, from its onset, began as an *exceptional* form of immigration. As historian Ellen Herman writes, "Until passage of the Immigration and

⁴³⁰ Bastard Nation, "Bastard Nation Analysis and Endorsement of The Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2015," July 1, 2016, <http://bastards.org/bastard-nation-analysis-and-endorsement-of-the-adoptee-citizenship-act-of-2015/>.

Nationality Act of 1961, which incorporated international adoption, the migration of foreign-born children to the U.S. had no place in permanent law.”⁴³¹ Instead, provisional acts included foreign children’s migration tangentially and citizenship has not been automatically given to all adoptee immigrants. Rather, the U.S. law enforcement set on foreign-born adult adoptees without citizenship and the public discourse (re)initiated by Crapser’s and Clay’s case strongly challenge an old narrative that transnational adoption is the most privileged immigration and a philanthropic deed, if not the best, to fulfill the happiness of people involved in the adoption circle. Rather, they make us think of transnational transracial adoptees as liminally legal immigrants.

The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 does not prohibit people like Adam Crapser and Phillip Clay from acquiring U.S. citizenship in principle. They have to apply for naturalization and meet eligibility requirements for adult lawful permanent residence (LPR). But the IIRIRA of 1996 makes legal immigrants also eligible for deportation when convicted of minor misdemeanor offenses. The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 that excludes them for being over 18 years old at the time of its passage, non-citizen adult adoptees like Crapser and Clay have fallen deeper into the legal liminality. They are documented but incompletely. They are not illegal immigrants, but still aliens. That Crapser’s attempt to apply for a green card made him arrested, detained, and then deported reveals the problematic ambivalence of the illegal-legal dichotomy in the U.S. immigration regulation.

While there should be no more Crapser or Clay, we also need to examine the direction of the Adoptee Citizenship Act, the bill that has been proposed since 2015 to include adult adoptees

⁴³¹ Ellen Herman, “Proxy Adoptions,” *The Adoption History Project*, last modified February 24, 2012, <https://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/topics/proxy.htm>.

who have been excluded from the Child Citizenship Act of 2000.⁴³² Representative Adam Smith (D-Wash.) who introduced the bill in 2016 speaks: “Adoptees who are brought to this country should have the rights of any other American and be treated equally under the law as biologically born children... This is a part of an inherent promise the United States makes to the adoptive family, to the child, and to the sending country, when an intercountry adoption takes place.”⁴³³ And yet, I caution that the Adoptee Citizenship Act reiterates the “as-if” rhetoric and the good promise of adoption to a great degree. Though it may function as a strategic move to create a prompt legal safeguard for non-citizen adult adoptees against further retribution like what Crapser and Clay experienced, I suggest that the Act is too much premised upon the very logic that has produced adoptees as dependent ‘children’ and can continue to label any ‘astray’ transnational adoptees as liminally legal in varied ways. Again and again, foreign-born adoptees, and particularly adoptees of color, must keep proving that they are good ‘children’ who deserve America’s kindness even after they reach adulthood,. When foreign-born adoptees appear not to deserve what American stands for, they can be tossed back to their ‘home’ country that they have never known well as shown with Crapser and Clay. To bring the change, we need a different language and conceptualization of kinship and migration of adoptees whose legitimacy is not solely defined by the government recognition of their familial relationship and their confirmation to the heteronormative kinship and the ideal citizenship.

The legal gap regarding adult adoptees without citizenship and the family separation and the adoption placement of children of undocumented migrant families as a way to police their

⁴³² There are the Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2015 (S.2275), 2016 (H.R.5454), 2018 (H.R.5233; S.2522), and 2019 (H.R.2731; S. 1554).

⁴³³ Charles Lam, “Bill That Could Save Adoptees Without Citizenship Waits in Congress,” NBC News, October 28, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/bill-could-save-adoptees-without-citizenship-waits-congress-n674871>.

deviant immigration attest to that adoptive kinship with these familial strangers is highly conditional. U.S. adoption has functioned as if children in need are welcome to a new family who promises all the rights to happiness and kinship that a good, normal home can offer, the universal rights that any child deserves. Yet, as much as the placement of orphan train children in the late nineteenth-century was an act of contingent inclusion, which was premised upon their redeemability through civilization and education, foreign-born children whose family do not live up to the 'good' parent model are invited to the ideal American kinship surmounting various boundaries and yet their biological and social origin keeps producing them as the racialized other. Those adopted children can be forsaken, both literally and figuratively, when they do not fit into the ideal of the U.S. 'good children.' If they become familial strangers from strangers, they can be turned back to strangers when they misbehave. Thus, the explosive growth of transnational adoption since the mid-twentieth century must be checked with the differential evaluation and regulation of domestic children of color, who are deemed not desirable enough in comparison to foreign-born adoptees who are believed to be more manageable and malleable.

U.S. adoption, despite some meaningful changes and conscious efforts over the last century, still functions as the race-conscious quest that asks how white children are to be adopted and how white they could become. Yet, those familial strangers are not simply passive subjects in the adoptive kinship formation, and they have never been. Their migration across varied borders is not the one-time event that ends with their adoption. Their salient presence that speaks different stories of the family, immigration, and racial and cultural identity formation itself reveals the limitation and failure of the normalization that U.S. adoption imposes, creating acts of resistance and a change to the U.S. adoptive kinship and instigating new ways of imagining kinship, race, and culture.

Works Cited

- Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Report to Congress on Separated Children." October 24, 2019. <https://www.hhs.gov/programs/social-services/unaccompanied-alien-children/report-to-congress-on-separated-children/index.html>.
- Alberghene, Janice M. "The Children's Magazine: Calculated for the Use of Families and Schools." In *Children's Periodicals of the United States*, edited by R. Gordon Kelly, 105-8. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984.
- Alexander, Harriet. "Mia Farrow Interview: My Children are All Related – By Love and Commitment." *Telegraph*. November 16, 2013. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/centralafricanrepublic/10454023/Mia-Farrow-interview-My-children-are-all-related-by-love-and-commitment.html>.
- Alstein, Howard, and Simon, Rita J. "Introduction." In *Intercountry Adoption: A Multinational Perspective*, edited by Howard Alstein and Rita J. Simon, 1-22. New York: Praeger, 1991.
- Anagnost, Ann. "Scenes of Misrecognition: Maternal Citizenship in the Age of Transnational Adoption." *Positions* 8, no. 2 (2000): 389-421.
- Appelle, Annette Ruth. "The Prepolitical Child of Child-Centered Jurisprudence." In *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities*, edited by Anna Mae Duane, 19-37. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013.
- Ariès, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. New York: Vintage Books, 1962.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 7th ed. New York; Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962.
- Arendt, Robert E., et al. "Open Letter to the Media." February 24, 2004. <http://www.crack-babies.org/cb-openltr-feb04.pdf>.
- Balcom, Karen Andrea. *The Traffic in Babies: Cross-border Adoption and Baby-selling between the United States and Canada, 1930-1972*. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2015.
- Bartholet, Elizabeth. *Family Bonds: Adoption and the Politics of Parenting*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
- . "Where Do Black Children Belong? The Politics of Race Matching in Adoption." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 139 (1991): 1163-711.
- Bastard Nation. "Bastard Nation Analysis and Endorsement of The Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2015." July 1, 2016. <http://bastards.org/bastard-nation-analysis-and-endorsement-of-the-adoptee-citizenship-act-of-2015/>.
- Berebitsky, Julie. *Like Our Very Own: Adoption and the Changing Culture of Motherhood, 1851-1950*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000.

- Bernal, Raquel, et al. "Child Adoption in the United States: Historical Trends and the Determinants of Adoption Demand and Supply, 1951-2002." Department of Economics, Northwestern University, November 10, 2009.
<http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~cmo938/adoptAEA.pdf>
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. 1995. London; New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.
- Bouvier John. "Orphans' Court." In *A Law Dictionary Adapted to the Constitution and Laws of the United States of America and of the Several States of the American Union*. rev. 6th ed. The Constitution Society, 1856; HTML reprint.
http://www.constitution.org/bouv/bouvier_o.htm.
- Bow, Leslie. *Partly Colored: Asian Americans and Racial Anomaly in the Segregated South*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.
- Brace, Charles Loring. *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years' Work Among Them*. 1872. Montclair, NJ: P. Smith, 1967.
- Bramlett, Matthew D., and Laura F. Radel. "The National Survey of Adoptive Parents: An Introduction to the Special Issue of *Adoption Quarterly*." *Adoption Quarterly* 13 (2010): 147-156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926755.2010.524870>.
- Brian, Kristi. *Reframing Transracial Adoption: Adopted Koreans, White Parents, and the Politics of Kinship*. Asian American History and Culture. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2012.
- Briggs, Laura. "Making 'American' Families: Transracial Adoption and U.S. Latin America Policy." In *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, edited by Laura Ann Stoler, 606–645. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.
- . "Orphaning the Children of Welfare: "Crack Babies," Race, and Adoption Reform." In *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption*, edited by Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin, 75-88. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006.
- . *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Briggs, Laura, and Diana Marre. "Introduction: The Circulation of Children." In *International Adoption, International Adoption*, edited by Diana Marre and Laura Briggs, 1-28. New York: New York University Press, 2009.
- Bureau of Consular Affairs, the U.S. Department of State. "Adoption Statistics." Travel.State.Gov. 2018. https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/adopt_ref/adoption-statistics.html.
- Callahan, Cynthia. *Kin of Another Kind: Transracial Adoption in America Literature*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011.

- Carp, E. Wayne. *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- . *Family Matters: Secrecy and Disclosure in the History of Adoption*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Carr, Lois Green. "Orphans' Court." In *Childhood in America*, edited by Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason, 352-356. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. "Foster Care Statistics 2016." *Numbers and Trends*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, April 2018. 1-12.
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/foster.pdf>.
- . "Trends in U.S. adoptions: 2008–2012." *Numbers and Trends*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, January 2016. 1-36.
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/adopted0812/>.
- Child Welfare League of America. "Issue Brief: Transracial Adoption and the Multiethnic Placement Act." *National Data Analysis System*, June 2007.
https://thehill.com/sites/default/files/MEPA_Final_IB_0.pdf.
- Chinn, Sarah E. *Inventing Modern Adolescence: The Children of Immigrants in Turn-of-the-Century America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009.
- Choe, Sang-Hun. "Deportation a 'Death Sentence' to Adoptees After a Lifetime in the U.S." *New York Times*, July 2, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/02/world/asia/south-korea-adoptions-phillip-clay-adam-crapser.html>.
- Choy, Catherine Ceniza. *Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America*. New York: New York University Press, 2013.
- Chuh, Kandice. *Imagine Otherwise on Asian Americanist Critique*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Cockburn, Tom. "From 'Street Arabs' to 'Angels': Working-Class Children, Competence and Citizenship, 1850-1914." In *Welfare, Exclusion, and Political Agency*, edited by Janet Batsleer and Beth Humphries, 22-46. London; New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Cohen, Ronald D. "Child-Saving and Progressivism, 1885-1915." In *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, edited by Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, 273-309. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Condit-Shrestha, Kelly. "South Korea and Adoption's Ends: Reexamining the Numbers and Historicizing Market Economies." *Adoption & Culture* 6, no. 2 (2018): 364-400.
- Deale-O'Connor, Lori. "Safely 'Other': The Role of Culture Camps in the Construction of Racial Identity for Adopted Children." In *Race in Transnational and Transracial Adoption*, edited by Vilna Bashi Treitler, 155-168. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014.
- Degler, Carl N. "Introducing Children into the Social Order." In *Childhood in America*, edited by Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason, 211-213. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

- Doolan, Yuri W. "Transpacific Camptowns: Korean Women, US Army Bases, and Military Prostitution in America." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 38, no. 4 (2019): 33-54.
- Dorow, Sara K. *Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.
- Dubinsky, Karen. *Babies without Borders: Adoption and Migration across the Americas*. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2010.
- Ensign, Karl. "Foster Care Summary: 1991." Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, the Department of Health and Human Services, 1991. 1-14.
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/74571/fcsum91.pdf>.
- Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute. "Survey of Adult Korean Adoptees: Report on the Findings." New York: Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 1999.
- "Executive Order 13841 of June 20, 2018, Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation." The Office of the Federal Register (OFR) of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO).
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/06/25/2018-13696/affording-congress-an-opportunity-to-address-family-separation>.
- Far, Sui Sin/ Edith Maude Eaton. "Pat and Pan" *Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Writings*, edited by Amy Ling and Annette White Parks. 1912. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995. 160-168.
- Farrow, Mia. *What Falls Away: A Memoir*. New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1997.
- Fenkl, Heinz Insu. *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. New York: Dutton, 1996.
- Fiedler, Leslie A. *Love and Death in the American Novel*. 1960. Victoria, TX: Dalkey Archive Press, 1997.
- Finkelstein, Barbara. "Casting Networks of Good Influence: The Reconstruction of Childhood in the United States, 1790-1870." In *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook*, edited by Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, 111-152. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Flango, Victor Eugene, and Carol R. Flango. "How Many Children Were Adopted in 1992." *Child Welfare* 74, no. 5 (1995): 1018.
- Fogg-Davis, Hawley. *The Ethics of Transracial Adoption*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Franklin, Sarah, and McKinnon, Susan, eds. *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Gates, Jr., Henry Louis. "Editor's Introduction: Writing "Race" and the Difference It Makes." *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 1-20.
- Gibson, Campbell J., and Emily Lennon. "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-born Population of the United States: 1850-1990." U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population

- Division. February 1999. Last modified May 21, 2012.
<https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/twps0029.html>.
- Gill, Brian Paul. "Adoption Agencies and the Search for the Ideal Famil, 1918-1965." In *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives*, 160-180. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Hadley, Elaine. "Natives in a Strange Land: The Philanthropic Discourse of Juvenile Emigration in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England." *Victorian Studies* 33, no. 3 (1990): 411-439.
- Haines, Michael. "Fertility and Mortality in the United States." *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, edited by Robert Whaples. March 19, 2008. <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/fertility-and-mortality-in-the-united-states/>.
- Herman, Ellen. "Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)." *The Adoption History Project*. Last modified February 24, 2012. <https://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/topics/ICWA.html>.
- . "Proxy Adoptions." *The Adoption History Project*. Last modified February 24, 2012. <https://pages.uoregon.edu/adoption/topics/proxy.htm>.
- . *Kinship by Design: A History of Adoption in the Modern United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Hodgson, Lucia. "Childhood of Race: A Critical Race Theory Intervention into Childhood Studies." In *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities*, edited by Anna Mae Duane, 38-51. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013.
- Holt, Marilyn Irvin. *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.
- Hsu, Hsuan L. *Sitting in Darkness: Mark Twain's Asia and Comparative Racialization*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.
- Hübinette, Tobias. "Korean Adoption History." In *Guide to Korea for Overseas Adopted Koreans*, edited by Eleana Kim. Seoul, South Korea: The Overseas Koreans Foundation, 2004.
- Hübinette, Tobias, and Jane Jin Kaisen. "Transnational Adoption in the Context of Colonial Repression." *Loving Belinda*. 67-78. Århus, Denmark: Forlaget *[asterisk], 2015.
- Hurh, Won Moo. "Marginal Children of War: An Exploratory Study of American-Korean Children." *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 2, no. 1 (1972): 10-20.
- Jacobson, Heather. *Culture Keeping: White Mothers, International Adoption, and the Negotiation of Family Difference*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008.
- Jalongo, Mary. "From Urban Homelessness to Rural Work: International Origins of the Orphan Trains." In *Early Childhood Education Journal* 38, no. 3 (2010): 165-70.
- Jeehyun Lim. "Black and Korean: Racialized Development and the Korean American Subject in Korean/American Fiction." *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 5, no. 1 (2013). Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2vm8z5s2>.

- Jerng, Mark C. *Claiming Others: Transracial Adoption and National Belonging*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- Kaisen, Jane Jin. *Adopting Belinda*. Single video channel. <http://janejinkaisen.com/>, 2006.
- . “Artistic Research as a Means to Critically Translate the Perceptions of Transnational Adoption.” Lecture at Korean Women’s Institute (한국여성연구원), Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea, video, April 16, 2015. <https://youtu.be/ZqP7DkXPurw>.
- . *The Andersons*. Single video channel. <http://janejinkaisen.com/>, 2015.
- . *Revisiting the Andersons*. Single video channel. <http://janejinkaisen.com/>, 2015.
- . *Loving Belinda*. Århus, Denmark: Forlaget *[asterisk], 2015.
- Kim, Claire Jean. "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans." *Politics & Society* 27, no. 1 (1999): 105-38.
- Kim, Eleana J. *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Klein, Christina. *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Knowlton, Linda Goldstein, dir. *Somewhere Between*. 2011; New York: Docurama Films, 2013. DVD.
- Kreider, Rose M., and Daphne A. Lofquist. “Adopted Children and Stepchildren: 2010.” *Census 2010 Special Reports* (CENSR-6RV). U.S. Census Bureau, April 2014.
- Lam, Charles. “Bill That Could Save Adoptees Without Citizenship Waits in Congress.” NBC News. October 28, 2016. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asia-america/bill-could-save-adoptees-without-citizenship-waits-congress-n674871>.
- Lee, Chang-rae. *A Gesture Life*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1999.
- Lee, Richard M. "The Transracial Adoption Paradox: History, Research, and Counseling Implications of Cultural Socialization." *The Counseling Psychologist* 31, no. 6 (2003): 711-744.
- Lee, Sabine. *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.
- Levine, Justin. “The Woody Allen Controversy Reader: A Closer Look At Mia Farrow’s Adoption Addiction (Or, The Perils of Using Adoption as an Emotional Salve).” *Medium*, May 21, 2018. <https://medium.com/@levine2001/the-woody-allen-controversy-reader-a-closer-look-at-mia-farrows-adoption-addiction-or-the-426fbd614895>.
- Lim, Jeehyun. "Black and Korean: Racialized Development and the Korean American Subject in Korean/American Fiction." *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 5, no. 1 (2013) [1-27].

- Louie, Andrea. *How Chinese Are You?: Adopted Chinese Youth and Their Families Negotiate Identity and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.
- Lowe, Lisa. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.
- . "Reckoning Nation and Empire: Asian American Critique." In *A Concise Companion to American Studies*, edited by John Carlos Rowe, 229-44. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Maldonado, Solangel. "Discouraging Racial Preferences in Adoptions." *U.C. Davis Law Review* 39, no. 4 (2006): 1415-1480.
- Marten, James. "Introduction." In *Children and Youth in a New Nation*, edited by James Marten, 1-12. New York: New York University Press, 2009.
- McKee, Kimberly D. *Disrupting Kinship: Transnational Politics of Korean Adoption in the United States*. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2019.
- . "Real versus Fictive Kinship: Legitimizing the Adoptive Family." In *Critical Kinship Studies*, edited by Charlotte Kroløkke, Lene Myong, Stine Willum Adrian, and Tine Tjørnhøj-Thomsen, 221-235. London; New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016.
- Melosh, Barbara. *Strangers and Kin: The American Way of Adoption*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Migration Policy Institute. "Number of Immigrants and Immigrants as Percentage of the U.S. Population, 1850 to 2018." 2018. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-over-time>.
- Miller, Julie. *Abandoned Foundlings in Nineteenth-Century New York City*. New York: New York University Press, 2008.
- Modell, Judith S. *Kinship with Strangers: Adoption and Interpretations of Kinship in American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Moon, Katharine H. S. *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Moon, Seungsook. "Regulating Desire, Managing Empire." In *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, edited by Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon, 39-77. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- National Association of Black Social Workers. "National Association of Black Social Workers Position Statement Against Trans-Racial Adoption." PDF file. New York: National Association of Black Social Workers. September 1972. Available at [https://cdn.ymaws.com/nabsw.site-ym.com/resource/collection/E1582D77-E4CD-4104-996A-D42D08F9CA7D/NABSW_Trans-Racial_Adoption_1972_Position_\(b\).pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/nabsw.site-ym.com/resource/collection/E1582D77-E4CD-4104-996A-D42D08F9CA7D/NABSW_Trans-Racial_Adoption_1972_Position_(b).pdf).
- National Committee for Adoption. *1989 Adoption Factbook: United States Data, Issues, Regulations and Resources*. Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Adoption, 1989.
- . *Adoption Factbook IV*. Edited by Thomas Atwood et al. Sterling, VA: National Committee for Adoption, 2007.

- . “Adoption Factbook: United States Data, Issues, Regulations and Resources.” Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Adoption, November 1985.
- National Indian Child Welfare Association. “The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.” 1978. www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Indian-Child-Welfare-Act-of-1978.pdf.
- O'Connor, Stephen. *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. “ASPE Issue Brief.” Office of Human Services Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, August 2005.
- Oh, Arissa H. *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption. Asian America*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Okiihiro, Gary Y. *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Ortiz, Anna T., and Laura Briggs. "The Culture of Poverty, Crack Babies, and Welfare Cheats: The Making of the "Healthy White Baby Crisis."" *Social Text* 21, no. 3 (2003): 39-57.
- Park Nelson, Kim. *Invisible Asians: Korean American Adoptees, Asian American Experiences, and Racial Exceptionalism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016.
- Pate, SooJin. *From Orphan to Adoptee*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- PBS New Hour. “Tally of Children Split at Border Tops 5,400 in New Count.” Oct 25, 2019. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/tally-of-children-split-at-border-tops-5400-in-new-count>.
- Pertman, Adam. *Adoption Nation: How the Adoption Revolution Is Transforming America*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.
- Raleigh, Elizabeth Yoon Hwa. *Selling Transracial Adoption: Families, Markets, and the Color Line*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018.
- Riis, Jacob A. *Street Arabs in Night-quarters - Mulberry Street*. 1890. Photograph. Museum of the City of New York, New York, U.S.A. https://library-artstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/asset/AMCNYIG_10313347471.
- . *Street Arabs in Sleeping Quarters*. 1890. Photograph. Museum of the City of New York, New York, U.S.A. https://library-artstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/asset/AMCNYIG_10313346403.
- Rodgers, Daniel T. “Nineteenth-Century Boy’s Literature.” In *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader*, edited by Caroline Field Levander and Carol J. Singley, 90-94. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003.
- Rosenberg, Chaim M. *Child Labor in America: A History*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2013.
- Rosman, Elisa A., et al, editors. *Adoption Factbook V*. National Council for Adoption, 2011.

- Selman, Peter. "The Global Decline of Intercountry Adoption: What Lies Ahead?" *Social Policy and Society*. 11, no. 3 (2012): 381-97.
- Selman, Peter, Karen Smith Rotabi, and Judith L Gibbons. "The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century." *International Social Work* 52, no. 5 (2009): 575-94.
- Shuman, Matthew and Victor E. Flango. "Trends in U.S. Adoptions: 2000 to 2009." *Journal of Public Child Welfare* 7, no. 3 (2013): 329-349.
- Singley, Carol J. *Adopting America: Childhood, Kinship, and National Identity in Literature*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- . "Childhood Studies and Literary Adoption." In *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and The Humanities*, edited by Anna Mae Duanne, 183-201. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013.
- Solinger, Rickie. *Wake up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Statistics Korea (통계청). "The Statistics of Birth and Death Rates in 2001 (2001 년 출생.사망통계 결과)." *Korean Statistical Information Service* (KOSIS; 국가통계포털), August 2002.
<http://kosis.kr/index/index.do>
- Strasser, Mark. "Conscience Clauses and the Placement of Children." *Utah Law Review* (2013): 985-1193.
- Taylor, Charles, and Amy Gutmann. *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Trenka, Jane Jeong, Oparah, Julia Chinyere, and Sun Yung Shin. "Introduction." In *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption*, edited by Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin, 1-15. Cambridge, MA.: South End Press, 2006.
- Tuan, Mia. "Domestic and International Transracial Adoption: A Synopsis of the Literature." *Sociology Compass* 2, no. 6 (2008): 1848-1859.
- . *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?: The Asian Ethnic Experience Today*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.
- Tuan, Mia, and Jiannbin Lee Shiao. *Choosing Ethnicity, Negotiating Race: Korean Adoptees in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011.
- Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism*, edited by Thomas Cooley. 3rd ed. Norton Critical Edition. New York: Norton, 1999.
- . *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. 1876. London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1994.
- United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner, Human Rights (OHCHR). "Convention on the Rights of the Child." November 20, 1989.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>.

- . “Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.” May 29, 1993. *Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)*. <https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/full-text/?cid=69>.
- . “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.” December 16, 1966. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census, “Urban and Rural Areas.” last modified December 17, 2019. https://www.census.gov/history/www/programs/geography/urban_and_rural_areas.html.
- . “Table P-4. Race and Hispanic Origin of People (Both Sexes Combined) by Median and Mean Income.” Historical Income Tables: People. August 27, 2019. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-income-people.html>.
- . Table 1 “Urban and Rural Population: 1900 to 1990.” October 1995. <https://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/urpop0090.txt>.
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. “Fact Sheet: Child Citizenship Act of 2000.” U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Services, December 1, 2000. https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/pressrelease/ChildCitizenshipAct_120100.pdf.
- U.S. Congress. Public Law 80–774. “S. 2242 - The Displaced Persons Act of 1948.” Library of Congress, June 25, 1948. <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/80th-congress/session-2/c80s2ch647.pdf>.
- . Public Law 83-203. “H.R. 6481 - the Refugee Relief Act of 1953.” U.S. Government Publishing Office, August 7, 1953. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-67/pdf/STATUTE-67-Pg400.pdf>.
- . Public Law 103-382. “H.R. 6 - Improving America's Schools Act of 1994.” Title V, Part E: Multiethnic Placement, Subpart 1: Multiethnic Placement - Howard M. Metzenbaum Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, October 20, 1994. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/6>.
- . Public Law 106-395. “H.R. 2883 - Child Citizenship Act of 2000.” October 30, 2000. <https://www.congress.gov/106/plaws/publ395/PLAW-106publ395.pdf>.
- . Public Law 112-264. “H.R. 1464 - North Korean Child Welfare Act of 2012.” January 14, 2013. <https://www.congress.gov/112/plaws/publ264/PLAW-112publ264.pdf>.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. “America’s War.” Fact Sheets. November 2019. https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf.
- Vandivere, Sharon, Karin Malm, Child Trends, and Laura Radel. “Adoption USA: A Chartbook based on the 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2019. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/adoption-usa-chartbook-based-2007-national-survey-adoptive-parents>.

- Volkman, Toby Alice. "Introduction" and "Embodying Chinese Culture." In *Cultures of Transnational Adoption*, edited by Toby Alice Volkman, 1-21; 81-113. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Vonk, M. Elizabeth. "Cultural Competence for Transracial Adoptive Parents." *Social Work* 46, no. 3 (2001): 246-255.
- Vonk, M. Elizabeth, and Richard R. Massatti. "Factors Related to Transracial Adoptive Parents' Levels of Cultural Competence." *Adoption Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (2008): 204-226.
- Warren, Andrea. *Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.
- Weil, Richard H. "International Adoptions: The Quiet Migration." *International Migration Review* 18, no. 2 (1984): 276-293.
- Will, George E. "No One Is Safe from GOP Attack Dogs." *Miami Herald*, September 1, 1992. 39A.
- Winslow, Rachel Rains. *The Best Possible Immigrants: International Adoption and the American Family*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.
- Wong, Edlie L. *Racial Reconstruction: Black Inclusion, Chinese Exclusion, and the Fictions of Citizenship*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.
- Woo, Susie. *Framed by War: Korean Children and Women at the Crossroads of US Empire*. New York: New York University Press, 2019.
- Yuh, Ji-Yeon. *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America*. Nation of Newcomers. New York: New York University Press, 2002.
- Zelizer, Viviana A. Rotman. *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. 1985. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Zey, Nancy. "Children of the Public: Poor and Orphaned Minors in the Southwest Borderlands." In *Children and Youth in a New Nation*, edited by Marten, James, 173-189. New York: New York University Press, 2009.