

Constructs that Comprise Marginal Encapsulated Adoptees and Marginal Constructive Adoptees:

With Special focus on Korean Transnational Adoptees

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Abstract

This paper focused on transracial adoption, specifically on the adoption of Korean children into Caucasian families, with some discussion of Chinese adoptees. This paper also examined the circumstances and personalities of Korean adoptees and the factors that may predict and-or facilitate the encapsulated marginal worldview (individuals limited by their experience) versus the constructive marginal worldview (individuals who successfully straddle two or more cultures). Additionally, this paper considered ways parents of adopted Koreans can interact and educate themselves and their interracial children to promote ethnic pride, thus increasing the probability of elevated self-esteem. It also determined whether the adoption of ethnic minorities into Caucasian families creates circumstances more likely to promote the encapsulated marginal worldview in adoptees. Finally, it incorporated the Adlerian perspective, exploring how interracial adoption may affect family social interest, positive direction, and upward striving of interethnic adoptees.

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Transnational Adoption: The Environmental and Biological Constructs That Comprise Marginal
Encapsulated Adoptees and Marginal Constructive Adoptees

Influences of Ethnic Dissimilarity and Misconception

The expansion of South Korean orphanages is a somewhat multifaceted story. Before the Korean civil war, there were relatively few orphanages in comparison to their exponential growth in numbers beginning after 1953. A series of unfortunate events, the war being one, led to the burgeoning increase of South Korea to become the largest exporter of children for many decades. According to Kim (2004), there were 38 child welfare institutions when Korea was liberated from Japanese rule in 1945. By 1950, after the repatriation of many Koreans from Japan and Russia and the refugee migration from North Korea to South Korea in which about 1.5 million North Koreans relocated to South Korea, the number of institutions rose to 215. This need for governmental institutions for displaced children kept growing. By 1957 there were 482 institutions, and the number would continue to increase (Kim, 2004).

As a result of the Korean civil war, millions of people were displaced. Many children lost their parents or entire families. The South Korean government, along with the U.S. government via the American military, structured and expanded the orphanage industry so that it would eventually provide enormous economic gain for the Korean government through fees levied upon the agents of adoption. Korea effectively turned orphaned children into a commodity and, in the process, eschewed the financial burden of caring for these children (Pate, 2014). According to Pate (2014), the Korean government receives approximately 35 million U.S. dollars a year from adoptions, mostly from American and French citizens adopting Korean children; conversely, Pate (2014) disputed that the rise in Korean adoption started in 1945 with

the arrival of American soldiers and the mixed-racial babies that were born during their deployment.

This project considers 1956 as the starting point of the Korean adoption diaspora. This was after the Korean civil war, specifically, when Harry Holt, the U.S. military, and the U.S. government transformed Korean adoption into a business and organized a *sine quo non* movement to “save” the thousands of Korean children orphaned by the Korean civil war (Pate, 2014). Pate (2014) pointed out that the Korean and U.S. governments worked symbiotically to create a recasting of the “American” family, incorporating the image of “Oriental” children as American daughters or sons while propagating the neocolonial interests of the U.S. in Asia along with financial advantages for the South Korean government.

As stated before, Pate (2014) estimated that the revenue from the distribution of South Korean orphans was approximately \$35 million a year, whereas a much earlier study of South Korean orphans by Rothschild (1988) stated that Korean orphans brought in approximately \$15-20 million a year for the South Korean government. The 1988 figures from Rothschild’s article, “Babies for Sale: South Koreans Make Them; Americans Buy Them”, determined that the amount of revenue orphans brought to the South Korean government had nearly doubled from 1988 to 2014. According to Rothschild (1988), at one time approximately 6,000 children were being adopted out of South Korea annually, and most of these children were infants.

From approximately 1953 to the present, South Korea has adopted out approximately 100,000 of its children to the United States, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and other countries throughout the globe (Historical International Adoption Statistics, U.S., 2014). As stated earlier, when adoption first began, the majority of these children were racially mixed, resulting from the unions of Korean women and American military men (Rothschild, 1988).

Nineteen sixty-six was the pivotal year when full-Korean children started replacing mixed-race children (Kim, 2010).

As South Korea has become more financially independent, it has worked its way up in the world economically and now ranks 12th. Nonetheless internal and external criticism has accompanied South Korea's economic success regarding the export of its children outside the country by extra-national organizations (Jones, 2015). There have been attempts to decrease the flow of adoption through laws championed by adoptee groups such as Adoptee Solidarity Korea (Jones, 2015). According to Jones (2015), in 1988 during the Seoul Olympics, *NBC's* Bryant Gumbel stated that South Korea preferred to keep quiet about its *exportation* of babies. Referring to the article by Jones (2015), Bryant Gumbel's comment shamed the South Korean government enough that it promised to decrease adoption rates; however, the result was minimal subsidies for South Korean families who adopted and no help for single mothers who chose to keep their babies (Jones, 2015).

As a result of fewer obtainable children for adoption in South Korea and the availability of adoptable children from other countries, the shift has turned towards China to fill the transracial adoption demand. Starting in 1988 to 2013, China began "exporting" its children at an accelerated rate. Approximately 71,633 children from China have been adopted into the United States as of 2013 (Johnson, 2014).

Currently, about 40% of all children adopted in the United States are transracial, (Baden, Treweeke, & Ahluwalia, 2012). "Transracial" adoption is defined as the act of placing a child of a certain racial or ethnic group with adoptive parents of a different racial or ethnic group. Thus, the influx of interracial adopted children has increased significantly (The term "interracial" being interchangeable with transracial). Subsequently, the need to educate adoptive parents, adopted

children, and siblings has increased. The focus of this project is on adopted South Korean children and their Caucasian parents, and despite the fact that there are some differences between South Korean and Chinese adoptions, the basic needs of acculturation and education are similar.

A Brief History of Antebellum Korea

The Japanese annexed, colonized, and ruled Korea from 1910 to 1945. When the Japanese army was defeated by the United States at the end of WWII and withdrew from Korea, the United States and the Soviet Union occupied the southern and northern halves of Korea, respectively. The plan was for the Soviet Union to govern the northern half of the Korean peninsula and for the United States to govern the South until terms of reunification were agreed upon (Fern & Fern, 2012). Effective terms of reunification never materialized. After several failed attempts to form a unified government, two de facto governments formed, claiming to be the legitimate authority over the entire Korean peninsula.

In July, 1950, with the approval of Joseph Stalin, North Korean forces invaded South Korea, advancing from the 38th parallel. With help from the United States under the auspices of the United Nations, South Korea fought back. The United States dropped hundreds of thousands of tons of bombs and some thirty tons of napalm on Korea (Fern & Fern, 2012). When the North Korean Army began their retreat, it massacred tens of thousands of prisoners of war and civilians. The fighting continued until the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. The result was the perpetual separation of Korea into two territories along the 38th parallel. North and South Korea are technically still at war today.

Despite being a relatively short conflict, the human toll of the Korean Civil War was staggering. Over 30,000 American soldiers, over 600,000 Chinese soldiers, and over 600,000 Korean soldiers (north and south) were killed. Most of all, however, was the loss of over a

million civilian Korean lives (Fern & Fern, 2012). By 1954, it is estimated that over 2 million children were separated from parents and families with no place to go (Gamage, n.d.).

According to Haan (2002), a total of 10 million Koreans found themselves separated from family members by the 38th parallel.

The fighting left the two new countries economically crippled, it devastated communities, and it left a considerable percentage of the Korean peninsula in ruins (Fern & Fern, 2012). To this day, some Koreans still greet each other by saying “Pap mago sayo?” meaning, “Have you eaten today?” This writer remembers living in South Korea from 1966 to 1971. The effects of the Korean civil war were still ubiquitous then. The economy was still struggling, and a general atmosphere of melancholy was omnipresent. Many people were still not getting enough to eat, including this writer and her family.

When this writer first arrived in the United States, she suffered from the effects of the severe malnourishment that she had endured during her 5 years living in South Korea. As a result, she had surgery on her teeth shortly after arriving so she could eat without pain. “My molars were rotten and hollow, and my mouth bled all the time, causing me great pain whenever I chewed” (Fern & Fern, 2012, p. 22). “I was rarely fed much more than rice and broth [in the orphanage]. This was a step down from the food my Korean family had fed me. I was so underfed that eventually my stomach became bloated” (Fern & Fern, 2012, p. 10). The older children at the orphanage would take the most and the best food, frequently leaving only broth with a few green onion shavings for the younger orphans.

Korean Orphans as Human Currency

After the war, as noted before, there were vast numbers of orphaned children who had no place to go and no one to look after them. Additionally, when the American troops pulled out

and returned home, countless American soldiers left behind impregnated women. Subsequently, many of the children who resulted from these unions were born after their soldier fathers had left. Abandoned and impoverished, their mothers were ostracized by their communities for having children out of wedlock and for having borne bi-racial children, a Korean cultural “double whammy” (Duck, 2014). These ethnically mixed fatherless children were unaccepted by Korean culture, nor would they ever be. Additionally, the Korean educational structures of the day would not allow biracial children into the Korean education system (Duck, 2014).

Traditional Korean kinship is patrilineal in nature, having been influenced by Chinese societal norms dating back to the first century B.C.E. Chinese thinking is firmly rooted in Confucianism, which espouses rigid familial and communal structures, including genetic purity along patrilineal lines. Subsequently, many fatherless children in Korea were not recognized as legal citizens. These norms still exist to this day. Even though a law in 2014 was changed to improve Korean attitudes toward adoptees, for example, very little has changed in reality. The rate of intra-country adoption of children [outside of newborn infants] in South Korea is scarcely rising and intracultural Korean adoptees are often severely chastised (Haruch, 2014). According to Haruch (2014), Korean adoptive parents who have been open about adopting have often had to move their families to protect their adopted children from ostracism by other students and their families. Haruch (2014) stated that intracultural adoptees in South Korea are frequently the targets of concerted bullying. Furthermore, Haruch (2014) stated that adoptees often become the school *wang-dda* (a Korean word for outcast, loser, or loner). Due to beliefs based in Confucianism, adopting a child is not acceptable to most Koreans. Of the Korean children who are adopted by Korean parents in South Korea, 95% are less than a month old, so the parents can pass them off as *natural born* offspring.

As mentioned previously, Korean orphans make the South Korean government millions of dollars in revenue each year. Additionally, the South Korean government does not incur the cost of caring for these children on a long-term basis, which also saves millions of dollars a year in social service expenses. According to Kim (2010), the peak of international adoption was in the 1980s when on average approximately 20 to 25 children were leaving the country every day. The goal originally had been to find homes for biracial G.I. soldier babies, but the stigma against single mothers is still exceedingly negative feeding the international adoption industry that still continues today.

Diaspora

Statistically, South Korean single mothers put their children up for adoption at rates ranging from 80 to 90%, compared to 1% in the United States (Davenport, 2015). The National Infertility and Adoption Education Agency (2011) stated that in 2010, 8,590 children were abandoned in South Korea, and only 1,462 of these children were domestically adopted. Due to the drop in overseas adoption, only 1,013 were adopted abroad, leaving over six thousand children to grow up in the Korean child welfare system. These children will have limited job opportunities and will suffer great social prejudices and injustices.

Haruch (2014) stated that due to pressure from adult Korean adoptees who have returned to South Korea, a new portion of a Korean adoption law requires mothers to enter their children's names on their family registries. By eliminating the ability of single mothers to stay anonymous, the law has created an unintended negative outcome. Despite the fact that each adoptee's identifying information will be removed once the child is adopted, the rate of child abandonment and abortion has increased (Haruch, 2014).

With the reduction of adoption abroad, the financial burden for the South Korean government has grown significantly; as thousands of children are abandoned by single mothers every year to grow up in South Korean orphanages. This care system has been deemed substandard by the United Nations. Subsequently, the South Korean government has been asked by the United Nations to implement reforms (Davenport, 2015). Davenport (2015) also stated that due to a lack of funding and understaffing in South Korea, orphans are subjected to a deprived existence within the care system until they are 18--when they can look forward to a life of social prejudice and limitation once they leave the care system. Additionally, Korean orphans are generally required to marry other orphans or adoptees (Haruch, 2014).

On the other hand, Korean and other non-white adoptees arrive into Western cultures and often struggle with identity issues. Nearly all of them grow up surrounded by White people and European-influenced culture. Deann Borshay Liem (2000) an adoptee and the documentarist of *First Person Plural* stated that everything seemed to be going well with her, she felt loved and accepted by her Caucasian parents, and she even considered herself an all-American girl (Haruch, 2014). Then one day while she was attending college, suppressed memories of Korea began to surface, and everything changed. Her subsequent need to find who she was led her to an orphanage in Korea where she discovered that she was not the person who had been identified on her adoption papers. She had, in fact, been switched with another girl whose father had changed his mind about adopting his daughter. Borshay Liem (2000) had taken that other little girl's place. She eventually unraveled the fabrications that comprised her adoption documentation and revealed the truth. This led to her first contact with her biological brother and a reunion with her birth family. The general storyline of erroneous identity is familiar to many Korean adoptees. This writer's identity, for example, had been switched in a similar way.

When the plane began its decent into Minneapolis, another flight attendant . . . put Hyogi's sweater on me. The only things identifying us were the nametags on those sweaters. That young woman had just changed my name, my community, my family, and my future. (Fern & Fern, 2012, p. 16)

Moreover, this writer has connected with several Korean adoptee group websites and has had the opportunity to hear numerous stories about inaccuracies and fabrications in adoption papers.

Early Racial Education

Adoptee Opinions

Several adoption rights advocates have questioned whether life as an orphan in Korean society with its negative social prejudices, limitations, and adverse social stigma is a better alternative than growing up as an international adoptee. According to some well-respected Korean adoption issue researchers such as Haruch (2014), Pate (2014), and Rothschild (1988), adoption into a country where the majority of the population looks nothing like the adoptee is, in these writers' opinion, a more troublesome choice. They all indicated that the life of each Korean adoptee would have become more significant had he or she stayed in her or his birth country (Haruch, 294; Pate, 2014; Rothschild, 1988). In an article by Pate (2014), Deann Borshay Liem stated that if she had remained in Korea as an orphan, she would have been a more prolific person. Liem went on to say that even if it meant growing up as an orphan on the fringe of society and not going to college, her life would have been more meaningful because she would have had multiple children and would not have spent so much time trying to come to terms with her identity.

Within many online adoption sites, many adoptees from Korea voice the same opinion as Dean Borshay Liem; that their lives would be more complete had they stayed in Korea even as orphans (Nelson, Park, & Fern, 2012). Conversely, many adoptees indicated that adoption out of

Korea saved them from multiple hardships and provided opportunities that would not have been available as an orphan in South Korea. This writer is conflicted regarding the quality of life as an interracial adoptee in America versus that of a Korean orphan or ward of the Korean government. The disadvantages and realities of orphans in South Korea as collective *misfits* are copious. It is difficult for this writer to imagine that growing up without the chance to go to college, have a good paying job, and to be stuck as a social outcast would have been a more preferred outcome. From this writer's point of view, the adoptees quoted and mentioned may have sentimentalized growing up as orphans in Korea, a life many of them admit that they have never experienced. These orphans' idealizations may constitute the thought constructs typical of encapsulated marginals. In other words, these writers may have identified with the victim aspect of their relative outcomes rather than framed their experiences as expansive. Many of them were adopted as infants, therefore, they have no memory of being Korean in Korea, nor do they have memories of being infants in orphanages (Nelson, Park, & Fern, 2012). This writer has memories of starving and is less likely to sentimentalize the Korean experience. (There will be more about the encapsulated marginal later in this paper.)

This writer agrees that the best option for Korean orphans would be to be to stay in Korea and grow up adopted by South Korean families. For this reason, until South Korea changes its harmful collective attitude towards orphans, adoption, bloodline, and single mothers, it is likely that international adoption will continue (albeit, functioning upon nefarious motives to some extent; Haruk, 2014).

Transition, Orphan to Adoptee

Transition for adoptees, no matter the age, is a challenge. Most orphans will have been moved from hospitals or family homes to foster homes and then to orphanages, making

transitions a minimum of three times before connecting with their adoptive families. Each transition may have emotional and psychological consequences, and each move may require the child to make adjustments to his or her new surroundings. By the time he or she reaches his or her new country and family, he or she will have developed, to some degree, an ability to adapt, necessarily. Trust and bonding with her or his new family and surroundings may take more time for some children, especially the older individuals. Furthermore, depending on the care they received before arriving into permanent homes, some children may need more assurance than others. When adoptees are very young, they are more likely to not notice that their new families are not of the same ethnicity (Baden et al., 2012). Consequently, as these children grow up, these differences eventually emerge into consciousness. Then it becomes the new family's responsibility to acknowledge, educate, and discuss these obvious racial differences.

Baden et al. (2012) stated that the physical dissimilarities between the interracial adoptee and his or her new family are not necessarily noticed until the individual reaches certain stages of development unique to each individual. Moreover, as a normal coping mechanism, interracial adoptees often begin to associate themselves with their respective dominant culture. Unlike immigrants who come to the United States with their families, often settling in communities surrounded by the same ethnic group; interracial adoptees are surrounded by family, friends, and the social interaction of the dominant culture, often of different race. In consequence, her or his external view frequently does not coincide with his or her inner view, or how she or he identifies as an individual. This *perception of self* often emerges in the form of a psychological conflict, usually starting around age 4 or 5 (Baden et al., 2012).

Suggested interventions with transracial or interracial adoptees to generate positive direction and to avoid misguided beliefs from congealing are open discussion, inquiry, and

education. Studies have shown that weaker self-esteem often accompanies absences of constructive interventions. Transracial or interracial adoptees whom are left to their own psychological stratagems regarding racial disparities are prone to impaired ego development (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2014). Interracial adoptees regularly seek ways to establish cultural connections at times in their lives regardless of how satisfied or dissatisfied they feel about their relative adoptions (Haruch, 2014). For this reason, early discussion and education is helpful for adoptees to promote acceptance of differences and adeptness regarding discrimination, birth culture identity, and self-image (Fern & Fern, 2012). Pate (2014) stated that most Korean adoptee stories have been related by non-adoptees such as Caucasian parents, academics, psychiatrists, and social workers. Pate (2014) paved the way for many adoptees to question the veracity of their documented adoption stories and to begin searching for birth parents and birth family members.

Parents who address the potential conflicts of their adopted children's core identities (contrasting with external appearance) can create better symbiotic integration of self-image and self-understanding while creating pride in birth heritage (Basow et al., 2008). Sue and Sue (2013) stated that as people of color are exposed to the values, beliefs, and standards of other-races, it is often normal for them to actively reject their own race in favor of the prevalent one. Sue and Sue (2013) posit that it is important for adoptive parents to openly and consistently expose their adopted children to their relative birth cultures, to expose their children to their relative languages, connect them to fellow members of the same culture, and to openly discuss racial differences (Basow et al., 2008).

In addition to positive ego development, discussion and awareness of racism gives interracial adoptees the tools to maneuver negative racial encounters without becoming

overwhelmed (Basow et al., 2008). Adoptive parents, correspondingly, need to be educated and need to be familiar with and to expect transitional rough spots at several developmental stages (adolescence, young adulthood, and mid-adulthood, and so on) in which adoptees will likely seek to cultivate awareness and understanding of birth culture. These rough spots often spawn curiosity and the need to reconnect with birth families. Open discussion between adoptee and adoptive parents, relating in positive, educational, and interactive ways, can encourage healthier integration and acceptance while encouraging solid connections with adopted family, friends, and community.

Educate Early

It is never too early to begin cultural education. On the other hand, cultural dissimilarity seldom becomes an issue until adoptees are 2 to 3 years old, when they begin to ask the questions *why*, *what*, and *how* (PBS Parents, 2015). Baden et al. (2012) stated that at this young age interactions such as exposure to cultural events, contact with similar-looking ethnic persons and birth-culture foods can be good ways to begin intercultural education.

According to Baden et al. (2012), children between the ages of 2 to 3 usually begin to notice dissimilarities between themselves and the people around them. In consequence, it is appropriate to initiate discussion regarding cultural differences at this age range so communication becomes routine and regularized. By initiating cultural exposure and cultural education early, parents and adoptees may facilitate joining. An example of cultural education would be to regularly attend groups comprised of other interracial adoptees for play and for discussion regarding birth country. While Basow et al. (2008) stated that exposure does not necessarily have to be with other adoptees from the same birth country, it is important to have

some exposure to other adoptees with similar ethnic backgrounds, experiences, and shared cultural icons such as food, dance, and music (Fern, personal communication, 2008).

As stated previously, early cultural education normalizes thought processes and builds foundations for transracial or interracial adoptees to freely discuss or ask questions regarding themselves, their birth countries, and-or myriad questions that children will not ask if they sense reluctance from family members. Because children want to conform to the cultures they are immersed in, they often have natural tendencies to avoid questions viewed as “off-limits.” Questions will arise such as knowledge of birth country, differences in skin tone and facial features, and questions about birth parents. Devoid of open dialogue and information, children will create idiosyncratic thought concepts. These concepts are frequently filled with misconceptions. In addition, if intercultural adoptees are left on their own to determine cultural heritage and roots, they are more likely to struggle with self-esteem, individuality, and fidelity issues regarding social identity, psychological wellbeing, and positive relations with others (Basow et al., 2008).

Basow et al.’s (2008) study *Identity Development and Psychological Well-Being in Korean-Born Adoptees in the U.S.* found a correlation between positive self-esteem and positive adjustment to adoption. Basow et al. (2008) affirmed that “self-acceptance is based on dual aspects of transracial adoptees’ social identities: identification with one’s ethnic heritage and adjustment to one’s adoptive status” (p. 11). This writer can attest to the fact that the celebration of an adoptee’s cultural past fosters feelings of significance along with the discovery of his or her own sense of identity. Feeling comfortable with who one is and where one comes from, along with knowledge of one’s birth country helps set up cultural competence skills for intercultural

adoptees and adoptive parents (Arredondo & Torporek, 2004). Awareness, education, and discussion should be maintained regularly.

Transracial and-or interracial adoptees around ages 4 to 5 begin creating interpretations, identifying patterns, and making observations. They may converse and describe observations, and form generalized explanations (PBS Parents, 2015). Appropriate dialogue between parents and interracial adoptees might be initiated by asking questions such as, *Since you were born in Korea, China, etc., do you know where that is on a map? What do you already know about your birth country? What questions do you have about your adoption?* Using questions that stimulate conversation and thinking helps adoptees to frame ideas that may be hard for them to articulate. Early involvement demonstrates support, and discussing questions in advance may prevent misconceptions before they arise. Some parents may need to learn to implement appropriate cultural integration and other means to educate their children (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2012). As their children mature, parents can delve into more detailed education about racial awareness and multicultural planning, such as racial or cultural socialization practices and survival skills to help children prepare and cope with the racism they will almost certainly encounter (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2012).

Baden et al. (2012) stated that discussions of incongruities of understanding, sensitivity to racially different persons, and negative, insensitive, or cruel remarks have been found to contribute to healthy self-esteem and a stronger sense of self. These discussions could be accomplished in story form with follow up of questions regarding allegory, metaphor, and analogy (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2012). As stated previously, identifying such information in advance prepares the transracial adoptee for situations that could potentially cause

embarrassment or distress. Furthermore, role-playing and discussion can be beneficial for adoptees, preparing them with diverse methods to address such circumstances.

Parental Influences

It should not be assumed that parents adopting racially different children are educated in racial awareness nor should it be assumed that they understand or recognize how to prepare their children to cope with racism. When adopting parents foster ethnic pride in their adopted children, they also provide the likelihood of higher fulfillment for their children later in life (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2012). According to a study done by Crolley-Simic and Vonk (2012), the kind of socialization selected by many parents for their interracial adopted children often has little to do with the children's birth culture and frequently did not address birth culture or racial differences. Crolley-Simic and Vonk (2012) also went on to say that research of adoptees has shown that parents who regularly practiced racial socialization created more connectedness with their children. The parents who practiced racial socialization with their adopted children also tended to foster higher self-esteem and ethnic pride in their adopted children. Parents who chose not to recognize racial differences and did not socialize their adopted children tended to have children who felt marginalized and more often struggled with self-esteem and racial identity. Thus, the ability to empathically engage with the viewpoints of other cultures, according to Crolley-Simic and Vonk (2012), can also aid in the ability to see someone from another culture objectively and see oneself objectively. The Adlerian perspective suggests that we hear with the ears of another, see with the eyes of another and feel with the heart of another. An Adlerian might view self-esteem and racial identity issues as struggles with social feeling (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1949).

Unhealed past wounds are frequently the causes of much avoidable pathology, and a good number of these wounds are due to unresolved issues with family, failed relationships, trauma, and more. In other words, when people do not process past wounds thoroughly, it often leads to development of psychopathology and-or somatization of symptoms. Many people with psychological issues do not understand their wounds because they have suppressed or normalized them. Adlerian theory stresses the importance of addressing the past in order to deal with the present and the ability to shape the future. Psychoanalytic theory emphasizes the importance of the first 6 years of life. Of course, adoptive parents do not always have the opportunity to intervene within the first 6 years of their adopted children's lives. Nonetheless, they need to educate and cultivate exposure and knowledge of birth country, expose their children (and families) to cultural events, and maintain open dialogue regarding racial differences.

Arrondondo and Torporek (2004) stated that there is abundant evidence of racism within our society. From racial profiling to hate crimes "based on race, religion, and other unalterable personal attributes such as looks and skin color" (p. 48), there is no shortage of examples. Some of the mothers in Crolley-Simic, and Vonk's 2012 study believed it was best to ignore the differences of interracial children altogether, and they did not discuss or expose their children to their relative birth cultures. Instead, these mothers made comments such as "Most of our friends don't notice he is Korean . . . I don't see any difference" (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2012, p. 305). In a study done by Basow et al. (2008), it was confirmed that Korean adoptees who had been exposed to higher levels of their own ethnic past had higher measures of personal growth and self-acceptance. Thus, development of a strong ethnic identity is important for transracial adoptees' psychological wellbeing in general (Basow et al., 2008).

Personal History

This writer is an interracial, international adoptee from South Korea who has traveled and studied abroad. Subsequently, she agrees with Evanhoff (2005) and thus recognizes that undergoing the experience of learning from other cultures does help enhance the mindset of culturally marginalized individuals. It is within the grasp of each individual to learn the values and traditions of other cultures, and it is the processes of exposure to those cultures that leads to the reexamination of one's own culture. As a result opening the door to a more comprehensive and flexible worldview.

About Transracial Adoption

Research on Asian adolescents and young Asian adoptees conducted by Mahanty and Newhill (2010) defined marginality simply as individuals feeling isolated and feeling as though they don't fit in due to belonging to more than one cultural milieu. The study found that feelings of marginality and self-esteem were highly inter-correlated ($r = -.62, p < .001$). They also found that the benefit of racial socialization, considering the wellbeing of the adoptees, was strongly supported. The study showed that lower marginality was related to racial socialization and greater marginality was related to low self-esteem. Moreover, the researchers found a correlation between higher positive psychological wellbeing and adoptees who were socialized to be aware of and prepared for discrimination and racial prejudices. The socialized individuals were less likely to be affected. Mahanty and Newhill also found Asian adoptees raised in families that empathized and actively supported racial and ethnic socialization developed a stronger sense of self. Consequently, Mahanty and Newhill found that supportive families who recognized and openly discussed ethnic and racial socialization increased the psychological wellbeing of their transracial adoptees. These adopted children were less likely to feel

marginally encapsulated (victimized) and were more likely to become constructive, especially when their adoptive families encouraged and actively supported a return to birth heritage (Mahanty & Newhill, 2010).

The study by Mahanty and Newhill (2010) focused mostly on Asian adoptees from teen to adult. The method used to recruit was various email *list serves* from online family support groups, and it consisted of 100 internationally adopted Asians. The study used the 14-item Cultural Socialization scale, which related socialization practices and ethnic socialization practice. It also measured psychological wellbeing and self-esteem.

Mahanty and Newhill (2010) stated that adolescent adoptees who were racially different from their parents could face unique challenges. Parents, as stated above, can mediate these challenges such as low self-esteem and feelings of marginality. Racially socializing children at a young age tends to moderate marginal feelings later in life. Again, here is research illuminating the need for adoptive parents to learn how to teach their adoptive children to deal with racial discrimination and to arm them with positive coping strategies related to the inevitable circumstances of hurtful remarks, racist slurs, jokes, or profiling.

Marginalization

Robert Park first coined the term *marginality* in 1928. He defined it as people straddling two or more cultures but not fully belonging to either (Horback & Rothery-Jackson, 2008). Janet Bennett, in 1993, further refined the idea by speaking of *constructive* and *encapsulated* marginality. The encapsulated marginal may feel that he or she is hopelessly isolated and may find no peer group with whom he or she can totally relate (“The Encapsulated,” 2009). The encapsulated marginal is at the threshold where two or more cultures meet but has difficulty constructing a cohesive cultural identity in either one (C’hav, 2008).

The constructive marginal, on the other hand, will actually use his or her position between cultures *as* an identity. He or she may actually celebrate marginality. Bennett further defined constructive marginality as taking a conscious and active role in constructing a useful response to one's own state of marginality, the ability to self-differentiate, and the ability to take personal responsibility for one's own decisions (Horback & Rothery-Jackson, 2008).

Conversely, according to Bennett, an encapsulated individual in similar circumstances would likely experience feelings of estrangement, isolation, self-segregation, and inner anguish. The degree to which encapsulated individuals internalize their differences with the dominant culture will affect how isolated each individual may become.

There have been few studies regarding the encapsulated and constructive marginal from a psychological point of view. Specific data of encapsulated and constructive marginals related to transracial adoption is lacking and the subject deserves additional exploration, especially with the current influx of Chinese and African adoptees within the United States and elsewhere (Mohanty & Newhill, 2010). Understanding the experience of both the encapsulated and constructive marginal would be helpful to adoptees and minorities alike, providing better methodologies to support all people who have become marginalized. Likewise, additional research concerning encapsulated and constructive marginals would benefit the therapy field. Further research would lead to new techniques and strategies to help encapsulated individuals develop constructive lifestyles.

Transracial adoptees often become encapsulated because of negative childhood experiences. They often express feeling marginalized by the societal structures in which they grew up. As adults, the encapsulated individual often expresses resentment or an exaggerated longing for contact with his or her birth mother and country of origin. Transracial adoptees often

have strong needs to identify with their adoptive cultures when they are young. Conversely, they often try to reclaim their birth cultures when they become older (Baden, Treweeke, & Ahluwalia, 2012).

Marginal Encapsulation

When individuals become trapped as encapsulated marginals, they tend to struggle with personal identity issues and, subsequently, lack healthy, interconnected cultural identities (Mohanty & Newhill, 2010). Encapsulated individuals tend to have porous boundaries (easily offended, etc.), and they possess unresolved loyalties (double binds) regarding their cultural diversity (Mohanty & Newhill, 2010). In view of that, when one becomes an encapsulated marginal, she or he will feel alienated from both or all of the cultures they straddle. An encapsulated marginal may feel unique in his or her isolation and may feel bound between loyalties to several cultures. For instance, an adoptee from Korea may feel the need to choose between a Korean identity and an American identity rather than a Korean American identity. Since Korean encapsulated marginals often do not consider either Korean or American culture fully their own, it is often the case that they live in a state of disconnectedness from both. The encapsulated mindset tends to be grounded in victim thinking and anger, thusly pitting the individual against any person or expressed idea that challenges his or her victim status (C'hav, 2008). In an effort to rebel against conformity, the encapsulated individual may withdraw emotionally and separate from the perceived hostile surroundings to feel better and to feel nobler (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Once isolation has taken root, an encapsulated marginal may search for like-minded individuals to validate his or her encapsulated worldview. Furthermore, he or she may resent other marginal individuals who do not share and-or express an encapsulated worldview. Some encapsulated Korean adoptees, for example, have successfully launched social

media sites to propagate their resentment as outlets against their adoptive parents and the dominant society. The content of these social media sites is, for the most part, filled with testimonies of mistreatment and past suffering. Constructive feedback from other Korean members to move beyond the encapsulated rage (efforts to frame adoptive experiences as sometimes positive) are often discarded or even attacked. This writer's memoir was poorly received in encapsulated circles because of its lack of anger and generally appreciative tone. Despite the negative experiences this author had as an adoptee, her willingness to move forward and resultant positive outlook were considered denial or even betrayal in some international adoptee circles.

In *Encapsulated Identity of Global Nomads* (2009), the encapsulated identity is regarded as disconnectedness due to ever-changing frames of reference. For example, encapsulated Korean adoptees may switch back and forth between identifying with their Korean roots and then rejecting their roots and identifying with the dominant culture (rather than identifying with them both at the same time). This style of disconnectedness can be influenced by previous experience, cultural exposure and education, personality traits, and the existing support system (especially parents and family), which all determine how intense the encapsulation becomes.

The marginally encapsulated Korean adoptee often internalizes his or her differences from the dominant culture. Consequently, this results in a perplexing thought process. Opposing views between the two cultures conflict and, at the same time, interrelate. This may make some Korean encapsulates feel that they have to conform to one culture more than the other, and conforming to the dominant culture may be experienced as an act of rejecting birth country and cultural heritage. Adoptive parents who have not included, educated, and involved themselves or their children in birth culture, customs, and-or cultural diet are more likely to have conflicting

feelings towards their children's nostalgia. These same parents may even accuse their children of rejecting adopted family, friends, and country. This can lead to the adopted individual experiencing even more conflict regarding loyalties, and he or she may feel the pressure to pick one culture over the other. The effect of this pressure leads to even more feelings of isolation, rejection, and crisis of identity, *ad infinitum*.

There are analogous experiences and circumstances that contribute to marginalized persons becoming encapsulated. The following studies explored cross-cultural adoption and shared parallel experiences and feelings by encapsulated marginal individuals from very different upbringings: the study of second generation Hare Krishna by Horback and Rothery-Jackson (2007), the study of transracial adoptees by Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2012), and the study by Jan and Joran-Arthur (2012). The second-generation participants of the Hare Krishna study overwhelmingly did not feel that they fully belonged to either of the cultures they straddled. The second generation Hare Krishnan had feelings of being stuck between the secular and religious worlds but also felt like outsiders to both cultural contexts. (Just as many encapsulated Korean adoptees do not feel that they belong to their birth countries or their adoptive countries.) Most of the Hare Krishna participants experienced periods of identity confusion during adolescence and reported poor self-esteem during childhood. Many felt they had a lack of family and social support. This supports the theory that parents of marginalized children need to educate and engage their children.

Furthermore, Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2012), supported Horback and Rothery-Jackson (2007), by demonstrating that social support networks buffered immigrants from psychological maladjustment or sociocultural maladjustment that may have otherwise resulted as a result of challenging acculturation experiences. Those immigrants without social or familial

support had more difficulty adjusting. This rejection from or lack of belongingness with members of other cultures often marginalized immigrants and created a lack of orientation regarding both cultures. Thus, having no social networks or being without familial support created a weaker or possibly more negative relationship with one or both cultures (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2012).

Acculturation

International adoptees, unlike immigrants and refugees, acculturate more quickly and completely to the dominant society, which is overwhelmingly Caucasian. Additionally, reverse acculturation back into birth country is, for the most part, accomplished via connections with other adoptees. Consequently, adoptees are more likely than immigrants or refugees to develop representational and imaginative connections to their birth countries (Mahanty & Newhill, 2010). International adoptees learn about their birth countries indirectly, and, for that reason, it is possible for them to create embellished or euphoric representations of alternative outcomes. Once again, it is important for adoptee parents to expose their interracial children to relative birth culture in order to avoid these unrealistic representations. Learning from books, videos, and other indirect experiences is good. Contrariwise, media cannot replace the direct experience of attending cultural functions in which there are like-racial individuals. Social interaction is important in building solid identity foundations and understanding.

Some adoptees may push back and state that they are not interested in their birth countries. This can, in part, be the result of sincere feelings of disinterest but often spawns from feelings of obligation and fidelity to adoptive family and culture. Additionally, the need to assimilate as part of the dominant culture is natural and sometimes so strong that interracial adoptees eschew references to the past (Fern, & Fern, 2012). This writer felt her birth country

had given her up or cast her away and therefore had strong feelings against her birth country for much of her adolescence. Many adoptive children do not want to be seen as different and feel embarrassment regarding any cultural differences. Nonetheless, it is important that adoptive parents expose their children to their relative cultural roots to foster positive social identity.

Basow et al. (2008) stated that minority groups that are considered second-rate or unattractive by the dominant group experience “feelings of embarrassment or shame [that] might be incorporated into the individual’s social identity, potentially resulting in the development of a negative self-image” (p. 3). Basow et al. (2008) went on to say that the struggle of developing a positive social identity is more likely in circumstances such as Korean-born adoptees adopted by Caucasian parents. This writer can attest to negative self-image and feelings of shame and embarrassment as a result of the dominant group’s view (the typical parody of Asians as nerdy, nearsighted, and homely) during her childhood and teen years.

Constructive Marginal

Mohanty and Newhill (2010) stated that constructive marginality is the ability to live harmoniously between two or more cultures and defining oneself without the restrictions of established cultural confines. Thus, a constructive marginal is able to integrate seamlessly between two or more cultures and consciously choose to be in control of herself or himself. Additionally, a constructive marginal tends to have strong boundaries and also tends to take responsibility for the choices he or she makes, including decisions related to the connectedness to the surrounding world (Mohanty & Newhill, 2010). Moreover, a constructive marginal consciously builds his or her identity by gaining knowledge of the cultural frameworks for which she or he chooses to identify. For example, a cultural marginal will often view his or her marginality as a positive without viewing her or himself as secluded. Additionally, a

constructive marginal will tend to be culturally curious and pleased to identify with her or his sense of diversity. In consequence, the constructive marginal often possesses the ability to make decisions grounded in consciousness regarding the multicultural context in which they live (C'hav, 2008).

For international, interracial adoptees, there is need for early and conscious integration by way of education, language immersion, cultural exposure, and continual contact with other like adoptees. Ethnic Korean or Chinese individuals can subsequently foster better integration and sense of belonging, resulting in an increase in the constructive marginal worldview. An encapsulated marginal generally does not feel strong connections to family or social groups (groups comprised of other encapsulated marginals, notwithstanding). Instead, the encapsulated marginal will feel like an outsider to most or all contiguous environments, which can lead to alienation from family, cultures, background, religion, and other minority populations. In turn, these feelings of alienation frequently lead to resentment and isolation (Mahanty & Newhill, 2010). The encapsulated marginal's state of isolation and feeling of victimization may lead to a lack of *social interest*. Furthermore, according to Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956), individuals who are exposed to hostile circumstances are more prone to express hostile traits of all sorts. Whether the hostile circumstances are real or perceived, marginally encapsulated individuals are particularly susceptible to these unproductive thought processes. From an Adlerian perspective, it is likely that the encapsulated marginal will search to satisfy what Adler called *Geneinschaftsgefühl* (community feeling). As a result, the encapsulated individual will search to find other encapsulated individuals to create a perceived unity in order to construct a community in which he or she may feel a sense of security, belonging, and significance. The natural urge is to grow personally. On the other hand, the expectation of an encapsulated group will be to grow

and develop collectively as like-minded encapsulated individuals, which will paradoxically limit each of the encapsulated group members. This in turn feeds into mixed feelings of inferiority and perceived feelings of threat and disconnectedness with those who do not have the same sentiments (Reardon, 2015). Thus the encapsulated group message may be to pick your alliances with the group or find yourself an outcast of the group.

Contrary to encapsulation, when one is marginally constructive, he or she is able to appreciate the value of both or all of the cultures experienced (Horback & Rothery-Jackson, 2008). The marginally constructive individual develops a healthy sense of self, so the constructive marginal would be able to belong and participate in a variety of groups consisting of varieties of group members. He or she would be able to identify with one or more subcultures and transition naturally between them (Horback & Rothery-Jackson, 2008). A study on transracial adoptive families validated that if a family prepares its transracial adoptee for ethnic and racial socialization, the child is more likely to become marginally constructive in this way (Mahanty & Newhill, 2010).

Genetic Components: Nature Verses Nurture

Genetics

Just as it is for any child, environments affect psychological outcomes in the development of interracial adopted children, such as birth-home environment, attachment to caretakers (post and pre-adoption), and other influences. Nonetheless, nature endows each individual with a certain capacity for change, growth, resilience, and psychological growth. Nature and nurture both play a role in the emotional development of (the creation of) encapsulated marginal and constructive marginal adopted children. This section will investigate biological influence and its role in casting transracial adoptees as encapsulated marginals or facilitating their capacity to

become constructive. In addition, it will consider the Orchids and Dandelions Theory, which explores the belief that some individuals are more susceptible to environmental factors than others.

The effects of oxytocin and how it has been linked to specific maternal influences along with how it plays a role in parenting and its influence on social bonds was explored in a study by Klahr et al. (2015). Klahr et al. (2015) stated that several tests on oxytocin receptors suggested differences that may influence social behavior and parental connection. There were three studies conducted between 2008 and 2012 that were mentioned in the article that specifically highlighted the correlation between oxytocin receptors and the decrease in hypothalamus grey matter volume (thus impacting functional connectivity between the hypothalamus and amygdala). Klahr et al. (2015) stated in their article that there have been several studies showing that mothers carrying a certain genotype (OXTR rs53576) showed less capacity for sensitive parenting and lower levels of social empathy. Conversely, divergent to these studies, one study conducted in 2008 showed the opposite conclusion, showing higher levels of positive parenting for the mothers with the OXTR rs53576. Klahr et al. (2015) wanted to replicate the OXTR rs53576 genotype study to further the research and to validate the biological impact this may have on parenting. Their work indicated that there might indeed be a connection between the OXTR rs53576 and maternal warmth. Thus the OXTR rs53576 genotype along with peripheral degrees of oxytocin functioning could be biological markers for poor parenting. These indicators along with other risk factors could, in the future, be used as markers for psychosocial parenting intervention. On the other hand, Klahr et al. (2015) stated that more research was needed and that their study was not conclusive. Conclusions regarding whether a cultural marginal will become encapsulated or constructive may be influenced by this research. Interracial-international adoptee ego formation

may someday be compared to the ego formation of biological children. Controlling for other factors, it may be that outcomes are not necessarily that different, depending on parental genetics, especially the genetics of mothers. This would almost certainly depend upon what age each relative adoptee was placed with his or her adoptive parents.

Another recent theoretical approach may influence how one perceives the formation of the interracial-international adoptee worldview. The *Orchids and Dandelions Theory* explores the now popular belief that both nature and nurture together play a role in shaping who one becomes, and through these circumstances the individual's biological inheritance will influence how environmental influences impacts her or him. An article by Jawer (2012) stated that a study conducted at the University of Essex found that some people are more sensitive to their environments and therefore more susceptible to damage due to family dysfunction. The Essex study focused on the serotonin transport gene DRD4, the neuro-transporter protein that plays an important part in cross-nerve signaling. There are two manifestations of this gene: the short and the long version. The orchids and dandelion theory takes into account that some people carry the short version of this gene, which was identified as the risk gene for *antisocial* behavior in a study at Jerusalem University (Dobbs, 2012). Those who carry the short version tend to have higher concentrations of serotonin in the gaps of their synapses (synaptic clefts) versus those who carry the long version. The long version individuals tend to have lower levels of serotonin in their synaptic clefts.

The results of the Essex study according to Jawer (2012) were that those individuals with the short version of the transporter gene (thus more serotonin) were more susceptible to the negative outcomes of poor parenting, neglect, and abuse. Consequently, theorists at first dubbed this short version of the DRD4 gene the *vulnerability gene* (Dobbs, 2012). These theorists

initially concluded that anyone who was unlucky enough to inherit it would be more likely to suffer depression, promiscuity issues, conduct issues, and so on. Those who inherited the long version of the DRD4 would continue right along, not necessarily flourishing but tending to suffer far less from significant psychological dysfunctions. Consequently, according to Dobbs, the short version of the gene was dubbed the ADHD gene, the drinking gene, the bully gene, and even the slut gene.

Eventually, the same researchers wisely expanded their genetic study group to include children who experienced good-enough parenting. They developed methods of measuring and quantifying things such as social concern and emotional intelligence. The children who scored most highly on social and emotional metrics were then tested genetically. Surprisingly, those who disproportionately had the highest levels of social functioning also had the short version of the DRD4 gene, the same gene as those who were considered the unlucky inheritors of vulnerability. This finding, of course, destroyed the notion that carriers of the DRD4 short version were unlucky (Dobbs, 2012).

Consequently, it is now generally accepted that carriers of the short version of the DRD4 gene are more likely to respond very negatively to abuse and, conversely, respond very positively to positive parenting. Thus the conclusion was changed to consider the DRD4 short version a heightened-sensitivity gene rather than a vulnerability gene. In difficult situations, these “gifted” individuals are more likely to develop anxiety disorders or to *wilt*, thus the orchid analogy. These individuals are also likely to become some of our most exemplary citizens when parented properly (Dobbs, 2012).

Additionally, the positive parenting effect on the carriers of the DRD4 short version gene was also found to have a longitudinal effect. Those individuals with the short version were

found to have higher capacities to cope with stress later in life when tested for resilience. Once the orchids establish their roots, it could be said, they tend to become steel magnolias. When the short version of the gene is coupled successfully with positive environmental influences for significant developmental periods of time, the susceptibility to dysfunction in the face of difficulty fades (This may be due to the higher level of social ability and emotional intelligence of these individuals, making it more likely that they would have stronger familial and social support systems, Dobbs, 2012).

Jawer (2012) stated in his article that it is now accepted that individuals who possessed the DRD4 short version had enhanced adaptability as well as greater vulnerability. People born with the long version of the transporter gene have an overall heartier reaction to the environment, however are less likely to be influenced positively by positive stimuli.

More research is needed to address the issues raised by this research, but the clinical ramifications are significant. When sitting across from a young person who is suffering from depression, PTSD, or other issues related to the effects of poor parenting, a therapist may now consider that this client's potential is considerable. Furthermore, since encapsulated marginals are individuals who suffer due to wounds sustained during childhood, it may be that they are disproportionately carriers of the DRD4 short gene and therefore capable of, not only recovering with treatment, but thriving with treatment (Dobbs, 2012).

Jawer (2012) stated that according to the University of Arizona developmental psychologist Ellis (2012), University of British Columbia developmental pediatrician Boyce (2012), and author Dobbs (2012), orchids have a finely tuned genetic sensitivity to *all experiences*. For that reason, the environment of the *orchid* is very important. Ellis, Boyce, and Dobbs referred to this environmental response as *the biological sensitivity to context*. This may

bode well for therapists treating encapsulated marginals. Whether an adoptee is an orchid or a dandelion would influence whether he or she would likely become encapsulated or constructive. While there is no available research specifically focused on this subject, research regarding the genetic influence on marginals would be helpful.

Caplan (2009) stated the opposite of the Jawer article's conclusion and specified that he disagreed with the nurture theory and instead believed that nature wins every single time. Caplan stated in his article that heredity accounts for almost all shared traits among siblings. Additionally, he went on to state that there is no more similarity between adopted children and their adoptive families than among strangers. Caplan (2009) then qualified his statement by saying that nurture did not have an impact on child development as long as the developmental stages were experienced within the presence of "*normal parent styles*"(p.2). Caplan (2009) further contradicted himself when he stated at the end of his article that children know when their parents are stressed and unhappy and that in turn makes them unhappy.

Caplan's claim that nurture does not positively or negatively play a role or impact child development is questionable, at best. This writer's biological family is far different in worldview and emotional perspective than her own. Her first daughter, who was adopted by another family as an infant, is very different from this author in many ways, as well. This includes mannerisms, thought processes, color choices, design preferences, and even partiality to clothing, pets, and music. On the other hand, this author and her biological family all enjoy singing (thus *Songs of My Families*). They all enjoy music and tend to enjoy travel. All these preference similarities could be caused by biological inheritance, but the paradoxical differences are far too great to discount the effects of nurture.

As Jawer's (2012) article pointed out, the studies conducted by the University of Arizona Development psychologist Ellis and the University of British Columbia developmental pediatrician Boyce, and popularized by author Dobbs (2012), indicated that nature and nurture separately and mutually impact an individual.

Regardless, it is the adoptive parents' responsibility to cultivate their interracial adopted children's environments and to recognize the significance and probable influence they will have on their adopted children. By providing positive, nurturing encouragement, education, and integration, the environment provided by the adoptive parents will foster the wellbeing of interracial adoptees while providing the best outcome for the orchid or dandelion within each individual.

Choice

An additional factor, apart from the orchids and dandelion genetic influence, is *choice*. Regardless of nurturing familial environments, oxytocin, orchid short genes, or dandelion long genes, choices are made by each individual. There are ample real-life stories in which children grow up in neglectful or abusive environments yet make solid, analytical choices. Surely, these individuals span the genetic spectrum. Likewise, in spite of heredities and nurturing environments, some children grow up making bad choices and struggling with poor decision-making. The paradigms within each individual's decision-making processes are complex.

According to Hong and Chang (2015) *self-construal* is a term that addresses how an individual views himself or herself in relation to others and her or his social environment. *Interdependent self-construal* relates to how she or he views him or herself as a unique individual "defined by his or her internal attributes and distinguishing characteristics" (p. 1393). The exercise of choice may be a reaction to one's social view and relation to the secondary

cultural factors, but it is still the exercise of choice. As mentioned earlier in this project, this writer can attest that growing up in an all-white family and how her social environment brought about doubts regarding self-image, fitting in, and affected social reaction to family, peers, and strangers (Fern, 2012). Had this writer had the opportunity to discuss racism and its personal effects, been exposed to like cultural groups, and grown up in an urban community that reflected diversity, this writer strongly believes her childhood would certainly have been more interesting if not less challenging. Nonetheless, in the span of her life, she has embraced quality choice-making and often practiced poor choice-making. Once the feedback loops (consciousness connecting stimuli to outcome) were established, choice making improved and so did quality of life. Her genetics remained constant throughout this spectrum of choice-making quality, and environmental factors were often consistent, as well.

Hong and Chang (2015) stated that when people are held accountable for their choices and actions, they are inclined to think in more elaborate and complex ways. They also stated that social pressures play an important part in decision-making. For example, Hong and Chang's (2015) article stated that when a person feels that they are pressured to justify a decision, she or he is likely to use extra cognitive processing in order to justify his or her decision, should the decision need defending. Accordingly, Dietz and Stern (1995) stated in their article that socioeconomic factors along with social context and personal preferences play a role in how an individual makes choices. Most interracial adoptees are adopted into families ranging from the lower middle to very high-income category. This social status is beneficial in that most adoptees do not have the added complications that come with poverty. Thus, the quality of choice making is likely to be higher. Nonetheless, many were originally born into poverty, and some are old enough to have been psychologically and physically affected by it and-or to remember it. Once

again, if adoptive parents take the initiative to prepare, educate, and properly implement integrating experiences with their interracial adoptees, future difficulties in later childhood or adolescence can be minimized or even avoided completely.

It is plausible to say that within the human life span, adolescence is one of the most difficult developmental stages in which significant changes occur, such as identity development, physical growth and sexual emergence, social-needs change, increased cognitive development, and emotional ups and downs. During this time, adolescents struggle with who they are and who they are in relation to others (Mohanty & Newhill, 2010). Adolescence is perhaps the time in which many individuals make the worst choices of their lives. It is practical to assume that racially integrated adopted children would experience additional challenges regarding their relation to birth family and adoptive family during adolescence. Toss into the mix the biological nature of the serotonin transport gene along with choice theory, and these unique challenges present a staggering dearth of certainty regarding causation. If children are left to pass through the seemingly inimitable challenges that accompany crises of racial identity, and they do so without any previous or continuous intervention from their parents, and they are then hit with the turbulence of adolescence, there is a probability that questionable choice-making will result (Mohanty & Newhill, 2010).

Adlerian Theory

There are three Adlerian-related concepts that relate to how interracial adoptees may develop encapsulated or constructive worldviews. They are *protest*, *belonging*, and *lifestyle*. These three Adlerian concepts can help to understand discouragement among adoptees and the thought processes that are used to maintain constructive or encapsulated marginal belief systems. Additionally, this section will examine the unique way *protest*, *belonging*, and *lifestyle* are

experienced by encapsulated marginals (Encapsulated marginals are more likely to seek psychological services, so this paper has and will consider them primarily).

Dominant Culture Protest

In the same way that the Adlerian concept of *masculine protest* was used to describe the experience of women, one could use the phrase *dominant culture protest* when referring to the racial or cultural marginal worldview. In the beginning of the 1900s, the message was clear that men and women were “psychologically different.” Men were seen as stronger, braver, and more determined than women. Whereas women were perceived as “weak, fearful, compromising, and gentle” (Manaster & Raymond, 1995, p. 60). Adler introduced the concept of masculine protest, describing a compensation mechanism in which women objected to or protested unfair biases and the general culture of gender-power imbalance. By the same token, an interracial adoptee might feel that the dominant culture (European) is held in higher esteem and that unfair biases and power structures are ubiquitous. Thus, many international adoptees feel compelled to speak out against the perceived privilege of the dominant culture; hence, dominant culture protest.

Individuals of subordinate cultures are often limited to narrow stereotypes in expressions of American culture. Asians know karate, for example, is one cliché that has been perpetuated by Hollywood. Africans are backward and have to be rescued from deprivation and starvation is another. Hispanics are parodied as hyper-grateful servants with nasal voices, and so on. An encapsulated marginal Korean adoptee, therefore, may feel limited, inferior, less potent, fearful, dependent, passive, and compromised.

Encapsulated marginal adoptees are often captured or limited by their fear or resentment of this depreciation or dearth of cultural identity. Consequently, encapsulated marginals may experience feelings of resentment or even aggression towards the dominant culture. The

constructive marginal may have the same feelings but is not consumed by them. The encapsulated marginal adoptee may compensate, feeling the need to reject adopted parents in order to connect with his or her birth culture. For example, he or she may feel the need to aggressively recruit friends and family to a like point of view. Adler would have characterized this as *striving for superiority*, fulfilling the need to master who they are and the need to find where they belong. Thus, the dominant social protest of the encapsulated marginal is based in a lack of belonging within the dominant culture.

Once adoptees identify with the encapsulated worldview, they may find it difficult to occupy prominent social positions or may be unable to receive privileges within the dominant culture. They may be unable to self-imagine themselves in positions of status or may be unable to accept the perks and privilege in whatever manner it may present itself. The encapsulated marginal is very likely to perceive injustices within the daily norms of the dominant culture even where they don't exist, which would serve to justify spiraling feelings of inferiority. Many encapsulated individuals actively differentiate from the dominant culture and fulfill their belonging needs by searching for like-minded individuals. This may lead the encapsulated individual to groups that strongly identify against the dominant culture, which may even further reinforce feelings of righteous anger. This, ad infinitum, leads to commiseration and may further continue the encapsulated's downward emotional trajectory.

From an Adlerian perspective, the social failure of encapsulated marginal adoptees and other encapsulated marginals in the manner previously explained is often influenced by early interactions between adoptive parents and family members relative to the community at large. As mentioned earlier, intervention with and education of adoptive parents and interracial adoptees is paramount. If adopted families teach and practice socialization, open discussion, and

exposure to diverse cultures and the relative cultures of each adoptee, each individual's sense of self-concern and goal directedness will tend to be more societal than individual. This author has observed many encapsulated Korean adoptees disconnect from their friends and adoptive families when the latter are non-Asian or perceived as insensitive to the encapsulated's sense of victimhood. The encapsulated marginal's psychological dilemma is that she or he often feels social interest only when surrounded by those with the same exaggerated sensitivity to dominant culture privilege.

Belonging

Adlerians would say that one's sense of belonging is satisfied by finding one's place in society, assuming that the individual's societal role is grounded in social interest. Social interest implies altruism to some degree. Thus, one would ideally be able to hear with the ears of another, see with the eyes of another, and feel with the heart of another (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). International adoptees are likely to have experienced many stressors before settling with adoptive parents. Many of these stressors imply, inherently, that the adoptee doesn't belong (moving from birth home or hospital to foster care and then to orphanage, for instance). These experiences may spawn excessive self-interest and a subsequent need to compensate later in life. For a therapist to foster social interest with the encapsulated client, the client's history must be taken into account, and the presenting pathologies of that client must be traced back to his or her early experiences.

Adlerian theory also posits that sense-of-belonging is sought within families, work-school environments, and social circles. To the degree that young interracial adoptees get their belonging needs met in these arenas, their sense of belonging will be fulfilled in adulthood. According to Stoltz et al., (2013), the purpose of striving for superiority is to gain feelings of

confidence, to remain psychologically safe, all while striving to meet the tasks of life. If the early family environment does not foster open conversation regarding dissimilarities of skin tone and facial features (physical differences between the individual and family members), this may lead to feelings of distress and identity confusion (Manaster & Raymond, 1995, p. 15). It is likely; therefore, that belonging will eventually be sought outside of the family rather than *in addition to* the family. Stoltz et al., (2013) emphasized the importance of the family environment and the impact it has. “These adaptive attributes—lifestyle—are formed in early childhood and brought forward to address all developmental tasks and challenges” (Stoltz et al., 2013, p. 197). Stoltz et al. (2013) went on to state that goals formed in childhood remained consistent throughout the lifespan. It is logical to conclude, therefore, that the schema of apperception for the encapsulated adult would have begun in childhood, and the initial motive could be traced back to a striving to belong. In a cyclical fashion, childhood goals are organized into schema by which an individual makes sense of the world, and he or she eventually assimilates those schema-constructs into ideas about belonging, ideas that he or she had formulated and stored unconsciously from the very beginning.

The goals of power, attention, revenge, and avoidance are presented by Stoltz et al. (2013) as “revenge = Going Along, power = Taking Charge, attention = Wanting Recognition, and withdrawal = Being Cautious” (p. 197). These characterize ways in which individuals strive for superiority in order to increase feelings of confidence, in order to continue feeling psychologically safe while simultaneously meeting the tasks of life. Teleologically speaking, the Adlerian might say of the encapsulated marginal that he or she is blind to the creative power of life within himself or herself. Thus, the encapsulated individual will make up goals “unknowingly from the fabric of his or her own misapperceptions” (Manaster & Corsini, 1995,

p. 75). The encapsulated individual's teleological movement has a false oppositional purpose and contrarian goal, and the direction of the encapsulated marginal may frequently lead to feelings of uselessness or negativity, the opposite of his or her original goal of belonging.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle for Adler comprised the "fundamental premises upon which a person predicates his movement through the world" (Manaster & Corsini, 1995, p. 77). For the purposes of this project, lifestyle is a cognitive organization or pattern of thinking and behavior that evolves to create an encapsulated or constructive worldview. The direction and movement towards perceived goals can include conflicting views formed by genetic factors, social and familial influences, and private logic. From the Adlerian perspective, an individual's private logic would have developed from about the age of 4 to 6 (Manaster & Corsini, 1995). The world might appear to be unpredictable and unwelcoming to an adoptee from another country and especially of another race. The goal of the encapsulated marginal would be to protect himself or herself from this perceived erraticism. The goal of the constructive marginal, on the other hand, would be to experience the world's variability with all of its rich opportunities and excitements. Two dissimilar lifestyle conclusions gleaned from similar early-childhood experiences.

An encapsulated marginal may hold resentment towards the dominant culture or his or her own birth culture, resulting in an exaggerated striving with a fear-based or resentment-based lifestyle. He or she would determine this hostility to be a movement toward *superiority*.

Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) specified that people who are misled into isolating themselves into nations, creeds, and classes have a predisposition to identify with or withdraw into group traits, which can result in further conflict. Conversely, the feelings of victimization and separation experienced by some encapsulated marginals may lead them in the direction of

striving for superiority by resigning themselves to the dictates of the dominant society and rejecting his or her birth culture altogether (This is different than simply not caring about one's birth culture). The latter is the fate of many encapsulated marginals whose lifestyles identify more with passivity.

Empathy and compassion are two recommended theoretical perspectives for psychotherapists working to transform the encapsulated lifestyle. According to Saiz and Main (2004), there are unavoidable stresses associated with adoption. Life can be far more stressful for an adopted child compared to a biological child, even if they are raised in the same family. The early wounds endured by adoptees (loss of family, culture, etc.) are often exacerbated, rather than healed, as the adopted child grows, and those unhealed wounds often fester and materialize later as peer attachment issues, identity confusion, and more. Adler stated that children are born inherently with the need to belong and with the ability to connect with others (Dreikurs-Ferguson, 2003). The sense of belonging with family, friends, and work, according to Adlerian theory, is essential to wellness in mental health (Shifron, 2010).

According to Ansbacher (1973), an individual's basic attitudes will be reflected in fragments, which the individual has designated as life symbols. A lifestyle infused with a sense of belonging manifests concern and affirmative obligation to family, occupation, and community (Shifron, 2010). The encapsulated worldview may lack a sense of belonging and may not include the value of contributing to community or family. An encapsulated marginal may feel disconnected or discouraged. The constructive worldview, on the other hand, as Mosak (1991) implied, is socially useful and prepared for cooperation and contribution. In other words, the constructive marginal understands the needs of others and is willing to make the effort to contribute. A constructive worldview begets feelings of empathy, intimacy, and identification.

According to Stoltz et al. (2013), family discord in early development impacts the perception of lifestyle, often resulting in a worldview that may impair psychological coping mechanisms and lead to less ability to adapt to changes later in life. According to Stoltz et al. (2013), this supports the assertion that constructive lifestyle conclusions formed from early experiences relate to adult perceptions of social connectedness, supporting the capacity to cope with life tasks such as career development.

Stoltz et al. (2013) affirmed the Adlerian view of functional individuals as those who adapt continually to the demands of the social world. Consequently, Stoltz et al. (2013) upheld the perspective that humans are continually striving for superiority, adapting to transformations, while attempting to overcome feelings of inferiority. Encapsulated and constructive marginals proceed likewise to interpret the world and their relation to it (for good or ill). Both will tend to seek groups or individuals with similar worldviews, attempting to satisfy the drive for social connectedness.

According to Dreikurs-Ferguson, (2003), self-created goals become the impetus for self-motivated purposefulness. Dreikurs-Ferguson (2003) went on to indicate that Adler accentuated emotional functioning and subjective future orientation as the guiding principles of the individual. Thus, self-created goals become the source of motivation and dynamic functionalism. With this impression taken into the framework for the interracial adoptee, his or her goals, according to Adlerian principles, are intrinsically social and have symbolic meaning. In other words, the individual's social interaction and contributions become symbolic representations of how she or he contribute and find his or her place in the world, thus erecting a concept of self within that social meaning (Dreikurs-Ferguson, 2003).

Adler stated that people are responsible to one another within the society, and they are joined to society through thought, expression, and feeling. When asked which is more important, heredity or environment, Adler stated, “Neither is important. Only the individual is important” (Olverhoster, 2013, p. 349). Adler continued by saying that an individual’s ego in relation to self and others is most important. Personal thought processes, perceived weaknesses and strengths, along with personal goals in life are likewise significant. Adler impresses here that one uses both environment and heredity to build up one’s lifestyle, and it is through the lens of the individual that relationships are perceived, constructed, and maintained. In consequence, the constructive marginal adoptee may have, Adler might say, a higher capacity to cooperate, coexist, and feel a common interest with family, friends, and society. Whereas the encapsulated marginal adoptee might be less socially concerned and be more inclined towards personal striving and superiority, consequently having less of a desire to develop social interest (Olverhoster, 2013).

Conclusions

It is important for mental health professionals to develop deeper understandings of the circumstances and personality traits that can lead to an individual becoming encapsulated. By gaining insight regarding such circumstances, early intervention and treatment methods may assist encapsulated individuals in their healing. Individuals who are marginally encapsulated struggle with identity issues and unresolved feelings of social, emotional, or mental disconnectedness. The victim-orientated feelings of encapsulation, in cyclical fashion, can further alienate individuals from culture, origin, friends, community, and family.

Strong family support can help the culturally marginalized child develop a constructive worldview (The same can be said for transforming an adult encapsulated marginal into an adult

constructive individual). Cultural education should begin at a young age. Exposure to birth-culture events, contact with similar-looking ethnic individuals, birth-culture foods, language, and birth country are all fodder for intercultural education. Open communication regarding cultural differences is paramount and should be routine and normalized.

Once an individual has embraced an encapsulated worldview, it is important that mental health professionals recognize it in all of its complexity. Most cultural marginals tend to struggle with identity and belonging issues, but the encapsulated individual will exhibit permeable emotional boundaries and tend to embrace a victim posture. The encapsulated marginal will often possess unresolved cultural loyalties (double binds) or may embrace a combative worldview. Both encapsulated and constructive cultural marginals may be involved in social activism regarding the issues of intercultural and interracial adoption, but the encapsulated marginal (as the term implies) will pass all interactions and perceptions through a victim prism and be trapped by them. All roads will lead to the pain that his or her adoption and race has caused.

Research into the genetic factors leading to mental illness has shed light on the susceptibility that individuals have to the effects of trauma, prolonged stress, neglect, and the effects of social marginalization in early childhood. Clinicians may now consider that their most delicate clients, the ones who may have inherited the DRD 4 short gene, may also be the individuals who may have elevated levels of emotional and social potential. Someday researchers may find that this genetic consideration applies to encapsulated individuals.

Adoption in the United States was first officially recognized in 1851, by the Massachusetts Adoption of Children Act. The first specialized adoption agencies were founded between 1910 and 1930, and the first transracial adoption was recorded in Minnesota in 1948, an

African-American child adopted by Caucasian parents (Herman 2012). Adler may not have addressed adoption specifically, and transracial adoption in his time was rare. Overseas transracial adoption was even rarer. If Adler had addressed transracial adoption, he may have instructed adoptive parents to foster constructive perspectives in their adopted children by nurturing mindfulness regarding the unique social and familial needs of the transracially adopted child. In consequence, the transracial adoptee might think, feel, and act in a conscious manner and, as a result, feel free to grow, participate, and express him or herself in the context of social interest (Olverhoster, 2013).

DRD-4 gene research has shown that biology plays an important role in shaping the origins of the encapsulated marginal and the constructive marginal worldview. If an individual should inherit the long version of the DRD-4 gene and experience a harsh upbringing, he or she is still less likely to experience mental illness because he or she is genetically positioned to make due even in the worst of circumstances. Conversely, the individual who receives the short version of the DRD-4 gene growing up in the same harsh environment is more likely to struggle. In fact, research has shown that the *orchid* children who experience chronic stress or trauma are prone to depression, cutting, anxiety, oppositional behavior issues, and promiscuity disproportionately to the children who have the long version of the DRD-4 gene (Dobbs, 2012).

There is now research that supports the notion that *orchids*, or the short-version DRD-4 children who were originally thought to be genetically disadvantaged, can become the outlier children, the children most prepared to face the world emotionally, mentally, and socially. Of course, this potential to prosper must be guided properly. What this means for therapists today is that they can consider young clients who are cutting, depressed, suffering from anxiety, or having suicidal ideation as clients with misguided potential. Adler might have said that these

individuals have misguided personal desires leading to imperfect lifestyle constructs. The Essex study revealed that persons with the short DRD-4 gene have the capacity to surpass even those with the long version DRD-4 gene when provided a generally nurturing environment. Mental health professionals armed with this information may now assume that the client who appears to be struggling the most due to environmental circumstances has the potential to excel the most, given proper direction. Surprisingly, these *orchid* clients have the potential to become even more resilient than the *dandelions* if their environments of origin are nurturing, contrary to the orchid analogy.

Many transracial adoptees who were adopted at young ages typically know little about their early histories. Any traumas experienced before transitioning from birth country to adopted country are likely to be unrecognized. Consequently, it is important for adoptive parents to be educated vis-à-vis the necessary components required to successfully raise transracially adopted children; namely, exposure to birth culture, open discussion regarding cultural and racial dissimilarities, and nurturing environments. Informed adopting parents of transracial children who are educated and informed regarding this research are better equipped to make choices to positively impact the mental health of their transracially adopted children.

Therapists' knowledge of the *orchids* and *dandelions* genetic approach can now utilize a new understanding of why some clients struggle more than others in the same or similar circumstances. Additionally, therapists can now consider clients with *orchid* potential as clients carrying placidity tendencies, and thusly have the ability to thrive in the face of adversity. This understanding of the short and long version DRD-4 gene can be helpful for therapists and can also be used as a psycho-educational tool for clients. Clients may benefit from knowing that they may have the orchid gene. The implications can be therapeutically beneficial, even if the

concept is speculative. Client pathology can be reframed as mis-channeled potential, which is consistent with Adlerian theory. Therapists can also take the approach that with the right guidance the orchid clients may be able become even more resilient than their dandelion peers.

More research should be done regarding the effects of how transracially adopted clients are affected in therapy by therapists who are educated in transracial adoption. This would include education of mental health professionals regarding genetics, environment, and how choice plays a role. More research is also necessary regarding the Adlerian perspectives of dominant cultural protest, belonging, striving, and lifestyles spawned in family environments that are culturally educated and informed.

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