

A Psycho-social Exploration of **Trans-racial Adoptive Subjectivity**

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to convey a psycho-social and experiential understanding of the lived experience of trans-racial adoption. As a woman that was adopted as a baby from Malaysia by Caucasian parents during the 1970s, the personal experience of the phenomenon of trans-racial adoption has been integral to the theoretical foundations and overall research approach of this study. The primary aim of this study has been one that has sought to deepen understanding of the affective dimensions involved in being a trans-racially adoptive family member from both the perspective of the adoptive mother and the adoptee.

The concept of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity is informed by phenomenological and psychoanalytic thinking and assumes an embodied subject that is embedded in a relational and material world. The analytical focus therefore prioritises understanding the historical, social and political processes that engage the body in particular ways that we can understand as being trans-racially adopted.

The research framework assumes a psycho-social methodological framework that has prioritised depth of understanding experience. Six sets of trans-racially adopted adults and their adoptive mothers were engaged where each family members was interviewed over a period of six months, four times each. Influenced by the relational psychoanalytic tradition, the notion of inter-subjectivity was central to the methodological process. The research interview encounters therefore assumed a two person psychology where the feelings I experienced as the researcher were considered as important forms of research data. An inter-subjective dialogue enabled the method to go beyond purely the discursive and recognise the complex layers of unconscious forms of defence that are understood as being the multi-dimensions of experience.

The empirical chapters have been presented in three separate analytical chapters entitled: *Race, Class and Loss*. In theorising an embodied subject, I have emphasised in this interpretation of trans-racial adoptive experience the inter-connection between these three analytical categories. That whilst presented as separate categories, the presentation of the experience in each empirical chapter has aimed to demonstrate the fluidity involved in the process of being trans-racially adopted.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
CHAPTER ONE: THESIS INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Chapter Introduction	1
1.2 Reclaiming the trans-racial adoptive identity	1
1.3 Trans-racial adoption policy context	3
1.4 Trans-racial adoption research context	5
1.5 Embodying trans-racial adoption	5
1.6 Thesis structure	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Chapter Introduction	10
2.2 The politics of trans-racial adoption	10
2.3 Domestic trans-racial adoption	11
2.4 International adoption	18
2.5 Contemporary trans-racial adoption campaign	20
2.6 The research evidence	21
2.7 Outcome based research evidence	25
2.8 Racial/Ethnic identity research evidence	28
2.9 Chapter conclusion	34

CHAPTER THREE: THEORY OF THE SUBJECT

3.1 Chapter introduction	37
3.2 The 'fixity' of social identity: Beyond the Cartesian subject	38
3.3 Identity and the Western diaspora	40
3.4 The reflexivity of the body	43
3.5 The inter-subjective dynamics of experience	48
3.6 Infant experience and the life course	49
3.7 Feeling through skin	53
3.8 Chapter conclusion	56

CHAPTER FOUR: THE EMERGENCE OF TRANS-RACIAL ADOPTIVE SUBJECTIVITY

4.1 Chapter introduction	58
4.2 The historicisation of race	59.
4.2.1 The great chain of 'racialisation'	60
4.2.2 Darwin and scientific racism	62
4.2.3 The primitive and the civilized	64
4.2.4 Race coded as culture	67
4.3 The naturalness of family	69
4.3.1 Bastardy	70
4.3.2 The concept of adoption: matching, completeness and eugenics	72
4.3.3 Welfare movements	77
4.3.4 Interracial intimacy	78
4.4 Chapter conclusion	80

CHAPTER FIVE: EXPLORING TRANS-RACIAL ADOPTIVE EXPERIENCE: A PSYCHO-SOCIAL METHOD

5.1 Chapter introduction	82
5.2 Contextualisation of a method	83
5.3 A relational and phenomenological method	88
5.4 Methodologically approaching the trans-racially adoptive family.....	91
5.5 Methodological framework.....	94
5.6 Recruitment strategy	95
5.7 Research sample	95
5.8 Interview technique	96
5.9 Data analysis: An inter-subjective approach.....	104
5.9.1 Ethical framework	109
5.9.2 Chapter conclusion	114

CHAPTER SIX: PROCESSES OF 'RACE'

6.1 Chapter introduction	115
6.2 Spatial contexts and the intensity of 'race'	117
6.3 Cultural misreading's of the body and belonging in place	126
6.4 Racism and differentiation	130
6.5 The power of the skin	136
6.6 Sexualisation and racialized bodies	139
6.7 Responding to processes of racialization	146
6.8 Chapter conclusion	150

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE DYNAMICS OF ‘CLASS’ IN TRANS-RACIAL ADOPTION

7.1 Chapter introduction	152
7.2 The disruption of community	152
7.3 Class origins and the silent mother of ethnicity	165
7.4 Class expectations and emotional needs	170
7.5 Chapter conclusion	176

CHAPTER EIGHT: DIMENSIONS OF LOSS IN TRANS-RACIAL ADOPTIVE EXPERIENCE

8.1 Chapter introduction	179
8.2 Experiencing ‘being mixed’	180
8.3 Parental mixing	186
8.4 Coming home	191
8.6 Chapter conclusion	208

CHAPTER NINE: THESIS CONCLUSION

9.1 Chapter Introduction	209
9.2 The situation of the body	211
9.3 Hybrid lives: Communicating difference through skin	212
9.4 Moving beyond the discursive in method	217
9.5 Redefining concepts: The embodiment of ‘race’, ‘class’ and ‘loss’ in trans-racial adoptive experience.....	219

Chapter 1: An introduction to the trans-racially adopted family

1.1 Chapter Introduction

Invariably, the subject matter of a doctoral thesis is influenced by personal histories, and this study is no exception. Internationally adopted as a baby from Malaysia by Caucasian parents, I make explicit from the outset of this thesis how my own lived experience of the substantive topic, my status as a social worker, an academic and a mother have all consciously and unconsciously influenced the epistemological and methodological dimensions of the study. Prior to engaging with the substantive topic of this thesis, I had never encountered the term 'transracial adoptee', so had never known myself under this term. My adoptive mother and father are the only parents I have ever physically known and remember. The resounding silence on issues of adoption and race sharply contrasts the culture of openness that permeates the dynamics of contemporary adoption governance today (Curtis & Pearson, 2010; Muller & Perry, 2001). Informed by these personal insights, the primary aim of this thesis is to convey an experiential understanding of transracial adoptive subjectivity.

1.2 Reclaiming the trans-racial adoptive identity

Since its conception in our modern history of adoption, the notion of the trans-racial adoptive identity has attracted much controversy from different spheres of society and has long been an object of investigation by a range of academic disciplines. Trotman (2002) describes that it has been articulated from multiple cultural and historical perspectives. The idea of trans-racial adoption continues to be compelling one, if not equally as controversial. From certain perspectives, the trans-racial adoptive family extends the possibility of the liberal ideology of multiculturalism, a political idea that has dominated the European political and public sphere since the 1970s (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). Contained within this family form is much societal hope around the possibility of racial harmony. As a trans-racial adoptee, I am acutely aware of this societal hope that my particular family form represents, and whilst this ideal of racial harmony is something that I continue to always socially and politically aspire towards, at times I feel the weight of the burden of living out this ideal.

Our culture remains influenced by what Nelkin & Lindee (1995) describe as the Western fascination with genes and genetic explanations in matters of human bonding

and development. In relation to the trans-racially adopted family, our experience of family is defined by being situated alongside the molecular family ideal that I argue continues to sustain unheralded strength in our culture at large. This cultural definition of the meaning of family as being defined by blood relations renders non-genetic family forms, as 'abnormal, pathogenic and unworkable' (Weger, 2000:363). In addition to our transgression of what I argue as being historically defined norms of family, another layer of complexity involved in trans-racial adoptive families is the racial parenting relationship that makes starkly visible our further transgression of historically defined norms of appropriate racial intimacy (Olund, 2010).

In part, as a reaction to the enduring influence of genetic family ideology, in recent years, scholars have championed the reconsideration of family as part of a wider societal shift in meanings of blood and kinship. The call from researchers to employ definitions of the family that depend on how families define themselves that have had important implications for family studies as well as for adoption scholarship. This thesis aims to contribute to this body of existing work that seeks to redefine and subsequently normalise families that I argue have been historically and discursively defined as different. Rather than definitions based on genetic and sociological criteria as credible ways to legitimise families of difference, Dorow & Swiffen (2009) have argued that there should be an increasing emphasis on experiential understandings of various family forms in order that they may be understood on their own terms.

Since its conception, the practice of trans-racial adoption has courted much controversy. The primary ethical concern that lies at the heart of trans-racial debates, from both an international and domestic adoption perspective, is argued by Bartholet (1993) as a concern that lies at the centre of all adoptions. Namely the process of adoption is argued as representing the ultimate kind of exploitation or symbol of loss. The drastic inequality of power and wealth inherent in both global and local economic systems are starkly illustrated by the process of adoption. Concerns around the significant numbers of black and mixed race parentage children in care started to first emerge context during the 1960s. However it was not until the 1970s that the UK Government first provided formal backing to trans-racial placements, where in its Guide to Adoption Practice indicating that children of mixed parentage should be considered equally for black or white placements.

1.3 Trans-racial adoption policy context

Trans-racial adoption is considered as being the most visible of all forms of adoption because of what Gunnar *et al* (2000) describe as the more apparent and immutable physical differences between adoptive parents and adoptee. The domestic trans-racial adoption policy has evolved from a peak in trans-racial adoptions taking place during the 1970s, to a shift in a widespread 'same race' practice policy introduction that has largely been in operation up until the present moment. The focus of domestic trans-racial adoption debates from a practice perspective has largely focused around the concept of race matching. The notion of race matching in adoption contexts is a principle that has governed non-relative adoption practice for much of the 21st Century (Frazer & Selwyn, 2005; Kirton, 2000; Rushotn & Minnis, 1997).

The brining together of racially different and non-biological parent and child relations starkly contravenes the historic aim of the matching process. This process has historically always assumed the most effective way to guard against adoptive failure was to match children and adoptive parents with as many physical, emotional and cultural characteristics as possible (Griffith & Bergeron, 2006). Race, was seen as absolutely integral to the process of matching. At the heart of the debates articulated by those against the practice of trans-racial adoption, has been to focus the argument largely on the detrimental effects of the racially different parenting relationship on a child's sense of self,.

In terms of international adoption, the debates have largely focused around the criminal dimensions involved in the process such as baby selling, kidnapping or forced labour (Hubinette, 2006; Tessler *et al*, 1999). Garrett (2002) has articulated the process of international adoption specifically as a practice that explicitly transforms children in to commodities. This emphasis of the critique has subsequently led certain countries to discontinue overseas adoptions or significantly review the protocols governing the practice (Selman, 2006). These critiques are counteracted by the compassionate/humanitarian altruistic response that argues both international and domestic trans-racial adoption can provide a highly needed and very practical solution to children left for various reasons, without someone to care for them (Boswell & Stevis, 1997).

Central Governments over the past three decades have, to varying degrees, demonstrated a determination to increase the number of trans-racial placements. In the context of domestic adoption, the policy shift has largely been justified under the belief that permanent placements provide a more effective solution. The detrimental effects that long delays in the public care system can have on a child have been highlighted. Conservative administrations have historically stressed the importance of making common sense human judgements on prospective adopters. It is further argued that the need for common sense values should equally be applied to matching racially different children to prospective adopters. It has been the lack of alleged rigour by social work practitioners in the pursuit of same race placements that has been considered as the cause for the overrepresented number of children of ethnicity experiencing delays in care.

The timeliness of this thesis is of relevance, given the recent change in emphasis of the Children Act 1989 pushed through by our current Conservative administration. Government guidelines now infer that race and cultural background should no longer be a barrier to finding a permanent home for a child from the public care system. It is the weight of emphasis that a practitioner is required to give in regards to a child's heritage and culture in placement decisions that has recently changed. In order to meet a policy aim that specifically aims to increase the overall number of trans-racial placements. This recent shift in Government policy has in part been changed through a year-long media campaign in the Times Newspaper (2011-2012). The emphasis of the campaign has focused on the alleged barriers that middle class Caucasian parents have experienced in their attempts to adopt trans-racially.

The combination of research evidence that details the detrimental effects of delays in the public care system and personal testimonies of the difficulties Caucasian have faced in the context of adopting trans-racially has culminated Clause 2 of the Children and Families Bill (2013) removing the explicit legal wording requiring adoption agencies to give due consideration to religious persuasion, racial and cultural and linguistic background when matching children with prospective adopters. This significant shift in policy and practice is likely set to increase the overall number of trans-racial adoptions that take place across the UK in our immediate future.

1.4 Trans-racial adoption research Context

The subject of trans-racial adoption has been studied extensively by a range of competing academic disciplines. Simon & Alstein (1996) indicate that the majority of trans-racial adoption research has in the main been carried out from a psychological, psycho-social or welfare perspective (Brodzinsky, 1993; Brodzinsky *et al*, 1998; Chimezie, 1975; Silverman, 1993). According to Shaio *et al* (2004), it has primarily been the fields of social work and psychology that have set the research agendas and questions (Lee 2005). Empirical research on the subject of trans-racial adoption has largely concluded that children are not detrimentally affected by being raised by parents of a different race and has therefore been used to support the case in favour of a domestic trans-racial adoption policy (Simon & Alstein, 1996).

A large majority of research has created research frameworks that explore certain aspects of trans-racial adoptive identity, such as mental health, the impact on identity in relation to levels of family adjustment, IQ or academic performance (Horwitz & Scheid, 1999; Howe, 2003; Juffer & Ijzendoorn, 2005; Kim, 1995; Silverman, 1993; Van Londen *et al*, 2007). The majority of research has focused its attention on children and young people with very few studies available that have examined the lives of trans-racially adopted adults. Much research has examined adoptees, but few authors have documented the stories of trans-racially adoptive parents as an independent issue worth addressing in its own right.

The majority of the available empirical research evidence from a social work perspective has been informed by clinical paradigms. I will go on to discuss in more depth the existing body of trans-racial adoption research in the literature review in *Chapter Two*.

1.5 Embodying trans-racial adoption

The conceptualisation of identity advanced in clinical trans-racial adoption research is problematized in this thesis. A central critique of the concept of identity that underpins much clinical work on trans-racial adoption is the effects of the Eurocentric ontological and epistemological influences that have informed its conceptualisation (Groenwald, 2004). It is the Eurocentric influences on the existing body of trans-racial adoptive knowledge that has called in to question whether the realities and complexities

involved in lives effected by trans-racial adoption can be further enriched in the depth of the understanding in its' representation (Hayes, 2008). This theoretical questioning of the notion of a pre-given meaning to a trans-racial adoptive identity has informed the conceptualisation of subjectivity from advanced in the thesis from which the experience of trans-racial adoption is explored.

The theoretical shift from a static concept of trans-racial adoptive identity to approaching trans-racial adoption under the terms of subjectivity seeks to liberate the potentially oppressive effects of being involved with a social identity that I have argued remains connected to deeply historical social dynamics. Informed by Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of the 'body-subject', the emphasis on the location of the body in place is argued as being central to the way in which trans-racial adoptive experience is felt. Instead of static in-heritance from family and kin, or racial and ethnic identities (Gans, 1979; Gutierrez *et al*, 1999), the analytical aim of the conceptualisation of subjectivity is to understand the contingent functions and dynamics in relation to wider social contexts that are assumed to change over time through the body's experience of place (King & DaCosta, 1996; Tuan, 1998).

Under the terms of the 'body-subject', it is argued that the way in which we feel the world is intrinsically linked to the way in which we think, perceive and navigate the world. By taking in to account the whole of the social, political and historical elements of the system in which the body is located, definitions of what is considered normal or abnormal can be understood as being defined by the dynamics of the system itself. It is therefore argued that the way in which a subject may think or be thought about, is itself deeply connected to the system in which relationships take place.

New ethnicity research emphasises the influence that social geography and the relations experienced in place may have on a person's ethnic identity (Imber-Black, 1993; Waters, 2000). It is argued that equally as relevant to an understanding of the trans-racial adoptive identity is the enduring influence that the ideology of the family premised upon blood relations has on personal and cultural meanings of the adoptive family. By prioritising the analytical focus of the relationship between the body and place that incorporates inter-subjective unconscious dynamics in a theoretical understanding of relationships, experience of trans-racial adoption aims to convey the contingent

functions and dynamics of the body's relation to the wider social context in which it is located. It is from the perspective of those individuals that have actually lived through this discursive concept from which personal meaning of the term through the analytical lens of experience makes possible the restoration of a cultural identity that I argue is often approached from a starting point of deficiency (Kiing & DaCosta, 1996; Tuan, 1998).

Acknowledgement of the increasing diversity of racial and family forms that make up the contemporary family landscape is well documented (Amato *et al*, 2002; Demo *et al*, 2000; Hetherington & Blechman, 2014; Ingoldsby & Smith, 1995; Zinn *et al*, 1990). Indeed, the meaning of adoption itself has dramatically evolved over the past fifty years moving from what Ball (2005) describes as a shameful secret to a more acceptable way in which to form a family. Whilst members of the adoptive triad, the birth family, the adoptive family and the child, have been analysed separately, there remains a paucity of studies that include all three members in studies. Given the theoretical centrality of the relational dimensions placed on subjectivity, it has been important to me to involve and analyse both the adoptee and one of the adoptive parents experience in the research framework through a theoretical lens of inter-subjectivity.

The thesis aims to respond to the following three questions:

- How does trans-racial adoptive subjectivity become embodied?
- What are the material and immaterial forms of power involved in the process of the embodiment of trans-racial adoption?
- How are these dynamics of power perceived, felt and negotiated for members of the trans-racially adopted family?

1.6 Thesis structure

In this introductory chapter, I have made explicit my own personal involvement with the substantive topic of the thesis. I have also provided a brief summary of the policy and research context from which the aims and questions of the thesis have emerged. I have outlined the theoretical foundations of subjectivity upon which this psycho-social and exploratory study aims to convey an experiential understanding of trans-racial adoption. A primary argument of the theoretical conceptualisation of subjectivity

advanced in the thesis has been to problematize the 'fixing' and pre-given static notion of a trans-racial adoptive identity. I have articulated a theorisation of subjectivity that takes in to account what Moi (2005) describes as the personal, the local and the specific as well as the objective and universal dimensions of the world in which trans-racial adoptive subjectivity is constituted and emerges from.

In *Chapter two* I present a more detailed critical review of the existing body of trans-racial adoption literature that derives from the UK, US and Europe. To contextualise this chapter, it commences by providing a brief historical overview of the social and political debates that have surrounded the practice of transracial adoption since the 1960s up until the recent policy shift in domestic trans-racial adoption. The chapter then goes on to provide an outline of the two main areas of literature, these being: outcome based trans-racial adoption studies and ethnicity and identity studies that derive from both an international and domestic adoption perspective. Against the backdrop of this existing trans-racial adoption literature, *Chapter three* will provide an in depth discussion of the conceptualisation of subjectivity that has been informed by psychoanalytic and phenomenological ideas.

Chapter four further acknowledges the emphasis on the body's relationship with the social world as being the site from which subjectivity emerges. This chapter carries out an historical analysis of the discursive concepts that I argue are specific to trans-racial adoptive subjectivity in their influence of how experience can be affectively lived in our present moment. Consideration of the social and political contexts from which the meanings of historic discursive concepts emerged is given in order to illustrate how this history may be enacted in relational dynamics of the experience of trans-racial adoption.

Chapter five provides a detailed outline of the process of the methodological approach that was created in order to answer the research questions and convey an in-depth understanding of the affective dimensions of experience. Locating the work in the psycho-social methodological tradition means that my own experience of the interview process is an important part of the overall research process. It is assumed that my own unconscious will influence the direction of interview dialogue and subsequent analysis and interpretation of data.

The following three empirical *Chapters six, seven and eight*, will present my analyses and interpretation of participants experience as it was articulated and felt by me through the inter-subjective dialogue of the research exchanges. I have presented three separate empirical chapters under the analytical categories of Race, Class and Loss. Throughout my interpretations of participant experience presented in these three empirical chapters I have sought to illustrate the connections between these three separate analytical categories. The way in which the body is affectively experienced from instances of participants being in the world that are described in ways that can be analytically understood under the terms of loss, race and class.

In the final concluding chapter, *Chapter nine*, I provide some reflective consideration of the experience conveyed to me by the adoptive mothers and the adopted adults. The final section of this concluding chapter will provide consideration of the implications of the study for personal, social work practice and policy considerations.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Introduction

Located in what Galvin (2003) describes as the vortex of race, culture, class and gender, the study of the phenomenon of trans-racial adoption has been made in to an intense site of inspection by a range of disciplinary perspectives resulting in a multi-dimensional research perspective. The aim of this chapter is to contextualise the study by firstly providing an historical outline of recent policy and practice debates, and then go on to provide a critical review of key parts of existing trans-racial adoption studies.

2.2 The politics of trans-racial adoption

Largely because of what Rushton & Minnis (1997) argue as the actual subject of trans-racial adoption not just touching on individual identities but encroaching on political identities of communities, the practice has created significant debate. The first part of this chapter aims to provide a summary of aspects of those debates in order to illustrate what I argue as being the connection between the politics of trans-racial adoption and its influence on the kinds of empirical evidence that come to inform practice and policy in this area. This section will consider the debates around the two forms of trans-racial adoption that are considered separately, firstly domestic trans-racial adoption and then international adoption.

It has been strange, as a trans-racial adoptee, someone intimately involved in the family life of trans-racial adoption, to have reviewed the controversy and contentious debates that are essentially commenting on my own family. I have lived my family life as I have lived it, which has up until the engagement of this thesis and the inevitable entrance in to the social and political world of trans-racial adoption, never encountered any trans-racial adoption discourse. My formative years were passed at a particular point in time, as were the participants involved in this study, during the 1970s where trans-racial adoptive families were very much a minority family form.

The number of trans-racial adoptive placements has increased in England and Wales over the past fifty years but trans-racial adoptive placements are a minority of the overall contemporary adoption picture (Lewis, 2004). The increase in general levels of awareness of adoption related issues has risen, these are largely due to what Javier *et al*

(2002) describe as an increase in awareness of global socio-political and economic changes. The widespread media coverage of international adoptions from global celebrity adoptions has in part influenced an increasing awareness of the subject of trans-racial adoption.

The most common understanding of the term 'trans-racial adoption', as it appears in academic, cultural and academic contexts is captured by Silverman's (1999) definition as 'the joining of racially different parents and children together in adoptive families' (Silverman, 1999:104). A similar understanding is reflected by Hollingsworth (1999), articulated as 'the legal adoption of children of one race or ethnic group by a family of a different race or ethnic group' (Hollingsworth, 1999:456). What is not explicitly stated in the common agreement of the definition of the term trans-racial adoption in the West is that the definition does not acknowledge that trans-racial adoption has almost always involved the adoption of non-Caucasian children by Caucasian parents. There has in fact been very little inquiry around or monitoring of trans-racial adoptive parenting relations that have seen parents of non-Caucasian adopt children of Caucasian descent.

There are connections between the two different forms of trans-racial adoption, namely: domestic and international adoption, in terms of what Bartholet (1993) describes as the power and wealth inherent in every adoption. However, it is argued by Bagley (1993) that the two forms of trans-racial adoption should be considered and evaluated separately. This is argued as largely being because of additional complications of adaptations or language and culture for older internationally adopted children. Internationally adopted children are also less likely to have ongoing involvement with birth parents and the motivations of the adoptive parents are also recognised as differing (Bagley, 1993). The dimensions of the debates that have surrounded each form of trans-racial adoption also differ in terms of the emphasis of their respective critiques.

2.3 Domestic Trans-racial Adoption

Trans-racial and cross cultural families have increased dramatically over the past ten years. In a context of what Oswin & Olund (2010) describe as the regulatory standard of white, middle class and heterosexual intimacy remaining the dominant family form, racially mixed families are very much part of our contemporary family landscape in the

UK (Tizard, 1977). Lewis (2004) argues that adoption has always been seen as a litmus test in respect of much wider issues, namely, what a 'normal' family should look like. Therefore the very obvious visible transgression of what Gunnar *et al* (2000) describes as the apparent and immutable physical difference between adopted child and adoptive parent continues to ignite very contentious debates both for and against the practice.

The debates that have surrounded the practice of trans-racial adoption from the perspective of the public care system and international adoptions have been highly polarised. The dilemmas posed around trans-racial adoption are argued by Perry (2006) as having as much to do with broader and contested views on the politics of contemporary families, as it has to do with deeply emotive politics of race and adoption. Perry (1993) argues that the differing perspectives fall in to two main conceptual paradigms described as, 'liberal individualism', and 'colour community consciousness'. These two conceptualisations articulated by Perry (1993) originate from a US perspective where concepts of racial identity, the citizen and the state are acknowledged as being different from the UK context.

However, it is argued that the conceptual distinction remains relevant in relation to UK trans-racial adoption debates largely because our adoption law and practice maintains much more in common with the US than that of other continental European countries (Warman & Roberts, 2004). Both the UK and US place much more emphasis on the looked after children system as being the means from which the state provides support for families. Also, it is further argued by Warman & Roberts (2004) that both countries have a much larger population of looked after children in comparison to other European countries. I will go on to consider these two different conceptual paradigms further on in the chapter and relate them to aspects of trans-racial adoption debates from the UK.

The context for state supported trans-racial adoption during the early 1970s was influenced by firstly a political atmosphere that espoused racial integration. There was an increasing societal acceptance of illegitimacy and a widespread use of contraception resulting in a significant drop in the number of babies actually available for adoption. The increasing number of non-Caucasian infants and children entering in to the public care system combined with the introduction of state sanctioned policy support that sought to find homes for this part of the looked after children population. Post 1968, the

process of trans-racial adoption became a salutation for finding permanent homes for children previously considered unadoptable (Raynor, 1970). The central argument for those voices who have advocated for trans-racial adoptive placements has always been to focus on the benefits that permanent stability can bring for a child in comparison to a child's life chances where their early and adolescent years are spent in the public care system (Banks, 1998).

Alongside children with disabilities and older children, children from minority ethnic backgrounds were categorised as children with 'special needs'. The 1970s saw the UK Government first providing formal backing to trans-racial placements, largely as a response to an increasing number of children considered unadoptable. The increasing number of children of mixed parentage children in the looked after children system and the cost involved in supporting children in institutionalised or foster families meant Government during the 1970s required a political solution. A shift in policy direction of children previously considered as unadoptable, which included non-Caucasian children settings was created where the administration of a guide to adoption practice that indicated children of mixed parentage should be considered equally for black or white placements.

In terms of the relationship between empirical evidence and domestic trans-racial adoption policy shifts, several key studies are noted as being particularly influential. The seminal work of Goldstein *et al* (1984), *Beyond the Best interests of the child*, challenged the prevailing traditional mode of thought that biological ties and legal parenthood was more important to a child than that of a psychological parenthood relationship. In strengthening the security of the adoptive/psychological/ child relationship, the text was regarded as revolutionary at the time. It served to strengthen the view that children from neglectful or severely disordered families can benefit if placed in permanent, loving and secure family environments.

Braithwaite's (1959) personal account of his experience of working in a Child Welfare department in London, *To Sir with Love* also drew attention to what was described as the culture of social work practitioners and the adoption of black children. The account illustrated the blocks to the adoption of black children that was argued as being caused by the culture of social work departments holding on to rigid notions that black children

were unadoptable. The belief that their heritage and the problems they were expected to have later on in life, meant that the accepted solution would need to involve a placement with what was described by Braithwaite (1959) as being with their own kind.

In 1965, the British Adoption Project (Raynor, 1970) established a project with the sole purpose to demonstrate that adoptive homes could be found for non-white children. Raynor's (1970) work detailed the work of this project that emphasised the multi-racial dynamics of Britain and the emphasis on all adoption agencies to find homes for all children who need them regardless of racial or nationality background. The research emphasised that 'in a multi-racial society such as exists in Britain today, it is an adoption agency's job to find homes for all children who need them, regardless of racial or nationality background and to give a professional service to all those concerned with adoption (Raynor, 1970:81).

In the 1970s, the development of trans-racial adoption in Britain was fundamentally structured by broader shifts in the child-care field, particularly around the 1973 Children's Act. Influential empirical studies such as that of Tizard (1977) and Rowe & Lambert (1973), indicated in their study's conclusions a support of permanency over institutional or foster care placements, even if the permanency of placement involved a trans-racial family. These studies are examples of how research influenced the increasing emphasis being placed on adoption as a major tool of child care policy during this period in our modern trans-racial adoption policy history.

Tizard's (1977) comparative study involved examining mixed-race children adopted by white couples where the difficulties of children placed in long-term foster homes were compared to that of children who are adopted and children that were returned to their natural parents after spending up to seven years under institutional care. It was concluded that the children that had obtained a sense of permanency through adoptive placements were considered as doing better than children that had been involved in alternative forms of care. Similarly, Rowe & Lambert's (1973) study indicated that once children were placed in care, a proportion of children did not return to their birth family, but instead, remained in limbo. Again, the considerable number of mixed-race

children experiencing delays in finding placements was cited as a consequence of a resistance to place children from public care in to trans-racial placements.

As well as key and particularly influential empirical studies that intimated support for trans-racial placements in their findings, the shift in Government of a pro-trans-racial adoption policy during the 1970s is argued by Frederick & Goddard (2007) as also being influenced by a body of empirical evidence that emphasised the connection between adversity in childhood and life chances in adulthood. A particular strong and influential part of this argument highlighted the detrimental impact that long stays in care could have on a child. The legal concepts of the 'welfare of the child' and the 'child's best interests', combined with the evidence detailing the poor outcomes for children in the public care system as argued by Selwyn *et al* (2008), were deployed to facilitate a shift in the same race placement policy that in the main has governed trans-racial adoption practice in the UK for the past thirty years.

The rhetoric of what Perry (1986) describes as 'liberal individualism' in the context of trans-racial adoption debates has deployed the notion of 'the best interests of the child' to justify the argument to increase the number of trans-racial placements. Embedded within this rhetoric are the complex and often highly conflicting views and understandings of the rights of the child, birth parents and adoptive parents. In contrast to the perspective of liberal individualism, a community conscious perspective as articulated by Perry (1986) in relation to the practice of trans-racial adoption, considers this placement choice to be an assault on black families and communities.

Critiques that have derived from a community conscious perspective sees the placement of black children in Caucasian family settings as seriously compromising the gains advanced by the black rights movements and black community activists since the 1960s. It is further argued that the practice reinforces the subordination of black people and communities by apportioning the failure of the parenting capacity on the individual black parent rather than taking in to account the economic and social contexts that black children being taken in to the public care system originate from.

Rather than state intervention seeking to address the significance of race and racism, and poverty and disparity embedded in the structure that facilitates the actual process of trans-racial adoption. Critiques from a community conscious perspective have called

for policies that serve to strengthen black communities, rather than remove individual children and place them with Caucasian families. It has been further argued that this practice of token desegregation of minority children serves to reflect the exercise of power by whites as a dominant and more powerful group through what Gailey (1999) articulates as their ability to pick and choose a child of their wishes. In contrast to these critiques of the practice of trans-racial placements, Banks (1998) argues that an unanticipated consequence of those who have advocated against the elimination of state-imposed barriers to transracial adoption, not only prevent the formation of trans-racial families, but may also contribute to conditioning wider society to think badly about racial intimacy.

These broad critiques have led to further critical questions around whether the real issue in trans-racial adoption is really about the best interests of black children or the rights of white adults to adopt which ever children they choose. The 'love is blind' philosophy that permeated the social context from which trans-racial placements first gained Government backing during the 1970s, is argued as demonstrating a failure to acknowledge the realities of race and racism. Where contrary to the notion of 'one race, the human race', critics of trans-racial adoption have argued that people are not 'colour blind'; that skin colour and perceptions of racial difference can trigger within the beholder unconscious stereo-typical expectations (Barn, 2000; Small, 1989; Matsuda, 1993). These expectations have been argued as potentially creating deeply psychologically damaging effects for a minority person growing up without any racial affiliation (Barn, 2007; Fiegelman, 2000; Ishizawa, 2006; Kirton, 1999; Lowe, 2002; Rhoades, 1992).

Since the 1980s, trans-racial adoption policy started to come under increasing public scrutiny. The social context during this period was one that was characterised by great upheaval in race relations in the UK following a series of high profile injustices against black community and a subsequent increase in political consciousness and subsequent strengthening of the identity of Black communities (Barn, 2000). Combined with an increasing number of critical studies evidencing individual examples of the detrimental effects of placing children in trans-racial family settings and a significant change in the wider racial dynamics across the UK, the critical voices against the practice of trans-racial adoption started to gain influence in the policy sphere.

The early research studies examined issues such as adoptee self-esteem, family integration and other developmental issues (physical, language, cognitive) (Shaio *et al*, 2004), and largely adopted comparative methodological approaches to compare various outcomes or aspects of identity of transracial adoptees and non-adoptees, or same race placement adoptees (Fanshel, 1972; Raynor, 1970; Grow & Shapiro, 1974; Kim, 1978; O'Brian, 1997; Shireman & Johnson, Simon, 1988; Simon & Alstein, 1977). The Black Association of Social Workers and Allied Professionals were particularly influential during this time in bringing forward research evidence and advancing critical arguments around the ethics of trans-racial placements (Black, 1990; Lewis, 1996; Macey, 1995; Stubbs, 1987; Tizard & Phoenix, 1989). Some of these early studies documented some of the highly negative and disturbing experiences of black children placed in trans-racial contexts (Gill & Jackson, 1983; Triseliotis, 1973).

Emerging critiques around the concept of 'the best interest of the child' and its application in trans-racial placement decisions also gained influence. In Howard's (1983) summary of these critiques, he articulates the tensions in the varying ways in which this legal term was being used to guide practitioner's decisions. Where on one hand it was being interpreted as a standard for a decision and at other times it was being used to fulfil a goal that the system aims to achieve, which in the context of increasing the number of trans-racial placements the policy aim was to reduce the public expenditure on the increasingly sizeable number of black and mixed parentage children coming in to the public care system.

Howard (1983) further argues that because of the vague and subjective definition of the term has resulted, a minimal amount of standardisation was being achieved across trans-racial placement practice cultures. Potentially leaving disparity and inconsistency in placement decisions and inhibiting genuine analysis of the multi-faceted and competing values that exist in child adoption practice. Ultimately, a term that describes all of the child's interests may actually obscure the complexity of the child's needs and placement decisions that could achieve the opposite effect of the intended aim of the best interest principle.

Social work and mental health practitioners in the UK and US increasingly started to detail the harmful effects on the children placed in trans-racial contexts, and the stress

involved for the child in comparison to same race placements (Herman, 1993; Helwig & Ruthven; 1990). A particularly influential study conducted by Gill & Jackson (1983) is described by Barn (2000) as being a catalyst for a re-evaluation of fostering and adoption trans-racial placement policy and practice. In 1983, the Black Social Workers and Allied Professionals publicly attacked the policy leading to a re-evaluation by BAAF in 1987 of its position on transracial placements and policy statements on the placement needs of black children. Social work agencies started to initiate strategies that aimed to recruit more black and ethnic minority families, where since the 1980s, whilst largely in the field of placements for looked after children, significant efforts have been made to place children in same race placements (Barn, 1997; Barn *et al*, 1997).

2.4 International Adoption

The practice of international adoption is defined by Tizard (1991) as a phenomenon that first occurred in large numbers following World War II. Weil (1984) records nearly 3,000 Japanese children being adopted by Caucasian American families between 1948 and 1962 and 840 Chinese children adopted mostly by Caucasian American families, during that same period. Largely in response to the effects of wars or natural disasters, international adoption has been strongly associated with philanthropic or humanitarian aims of Western countries based on a model of what Triseliotis (2000) describes as 'the kindness of strangers'. As international relief efforts and indigenous economic and social developments started to be mobilised within the sending countries, Silverman (1993) argues that the number of international adoptions also started to dramatically decrease (Selman, 2006; Selman, 2009).

The change in family dynamics in the UK is also noted as being a contributory factor to the international adoption context. Between 1968 and 1972 the majority of the mother and baby homes serving unmarried mothers closed. The rapid decline of the social stigma associated with lone motherhood and illegitimacy and the wider access to the availability of contraception produced a significant change in the dynamics of the Western adoption scene. One of the factors of these changes was a significant reduction in the availability of babies which was not met with a decline in demand from childless couples to parent a baby. The motivation for international adoption in more recent history has largely been motivated by the desire to parent a baby in a UK adoption

context that has very few babies to adopt (Triseliotis, 2000). Prospective adoptive parents have been willing to travel abroad because of the availability of healthy babies in developing nations, that are widespread and readily available (Anagnost, 2000; Barn *et al*, 1997; Barn, 2000; Dorow, 2006; Hayes, 1995; Volkman, 2003).

There is a rapidly growing literature on inter-country adoption that investigates various facets of the practice such as the health and welfare of the adopted child, the demographics, and the social and political reasons for the rise in the demand for adoptive children from abroad. Scholars have also examined other issues such as, social justice, the role of nation states and international legalities involved in inter-country adoption (Selman, 2000; 2006; 2009). A characteristic of the critiques of international adoption is its concern with the commercial and corrupt dimensions potentially involved in the international adoption process. Criminal activities such as baby selling, kidnapping, forced labour and the subsequent laundering of children are issues related to international adoption and documented as creating a highly lucrative trade in children for criminal gangs across the world (Graff, 2008; Smolin, 2007).

This focus on the criminal and economic dimensions of international adoption has meant that many academic critiques have focused the attention on the disparity in economic structures of the global economy. It is widely argued that an effect of the power imbalances that exist in the global economy has created global markets in child welfare that unavoidably turns children in to commodities (Garrett, 2002; Humbyrd, 2009; McKinney, 2006; Smolin, 2005, 2006). This emphasis on structural critiques that are argued as facilitating the process of international adoption has meant that the practice has been described under the terms of a new form of colonialism, cultural imperialism and a neo-colonialist mistake (Hayes, 1993; Hubinette, 2006; Luo & Smolin, 2004; Masson, 2001; Ngbonzizz, 1988; Perry, 1998; Smolin, 2004; 2005; Tessler *et al*, 1999;).

Triseliotis (2002) contends there is a distinct lack of legal, moral or professional legitimacy that has created what is described as a legal and moral vacuum governing the process of international adoptions, outlining five main areas that further develop the critique: A total disregard for children's rights as set out in the UN convention; the absence of legality; lack of choice for birth parents; disregard for empirically based

knowledge of what is known to be best for children; and the absence of an ethical base. The public concerns and protests resulted in the establishment of international rules for adoption (e.g the Hague convention on protection of children and cooperation in respect of inter-country adoption of 1993_ and federal legislative policies (i.e. inter-country adoption act and child citizenship act of 2000) that made international adoption more standardised (Selman, 2009).

2.5 Contemporary trans-racial adoption campaign

Returning to the domestic adoption context, there has been a significant change to trans-racial adoption policy under the current UK Conservative administration resulting in the re-emergence of the historic delay in care vs permanency debate. The relationship between the parent (biological or social), the child, and the state, has always involved tensions between the triangle of interests and the varying degree of rights over time of all three parties involved. This tension was recognised in the House of Lords Debates in the 2002 legislation, reflected in Baroness Barker's statement around the key issue being the need to achieve 'balance' between the conflicting views (10 June 2002, c.26). Lewis (2004) suggests that policy-makers have tended to favour the rights between birth parent, the child and the adoptive parent over different points in time.

As Triseliotis (2002) points out, politicians for a long time, with the aid of some of the media have come to recognise that there are votes to be gained when they urge no or minimum regulation in adoption in general. Whilst the same media are incensed at the idea of trade in children, but if obstacles are seen to be put in the way of adults, when pursuing either domestic or inter-country adoption, problems arise. The determination to move children out of the care system into permanent placements resulted in an amendment to the Children Act 1989 where Clause 2 amended the wording requiring adoption agencies to give due consideration to the religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background when matching children with prospective adopters.

It has largely been the prominence and increase in the rights of the white adoptive parents that have featured in the recent campaign to increase the number of trans-racial placements. The Times newspaper ran a series of features during 2011 as part of a

campaign to fulfil the Conservative administration's long held ambition to speed up the adoption process and increase the overall number of transracial placements for children from the public care system. 'Britain's adoption crisis' (The Times, Monday April 18, 2011), 'Black youngsters wait extra year to leave care' (The Times, Tuesday April 19, 2011) headlined lengthy pro-transracial adoption articles that referenced empirical research that compared the length of time spent in care for ethnic minority children in comparison to white children and detailed the inequalities embedded in the adoption process.

It is relevant to note a point made by Lewis (2004) that details what is described as a 'previous suspicion' from Conservative administrations towards the helping professions, especially social work and its professional ideologies. It is the social worker, and the perceived 'pursuit of the perfect racial match' by social workers that is attributed to causing the delays for ethnic minority children to find permanent placements. This claim of the 'fixation' of social workers on the issue of racial matching, is attributed to creating the barrier for prospective parents and influences the experiences of waiting for a child. Selwyn *et al.* (2006) identifies research evidence that illustrates the detrimental effects on children when delays in decisions reduce their chances of being adopted (Murch *et al.*, 1993; Lowe *et al.*, 2004; Harwin & Owen, 2003).

2.6 The research evidence

In light of the current practice and policy emphasis on an increasing reliance on an evidence base to inform policy and practice decisions (Webb, 2001), in this chapter, I have aimed to outline some of the key empirical studies and critically discuss the conclusions advanced in these studies. The potential range of evidence available to practitioners and policy makers is vast, spanning different disciplinary fields that individually conceptualise ideas of race, identity and adoption in very different ways. As part of the modernising agenda of central government over the past decade, there has been a reinforcement of social work's reliance on scientific knowledge paradigms. Particularly in the fields of children and family social work, Weiss-Gal & Welbourne (2008) argue that as part of the broader aim of the professionalization of social work and the burgeoning concern to ensure that social work is 'evidenced based' and research informed (Nutley *et al.*, 2000).

I have previously articulated the crucial relationship between research evidence and the shifts in trans-racial adoption policy over the past fifty years. As Simon (1998) argues,

‘The case for trans-racial adoption rests primarily on the results of empirical research. The studies show that transracial adoptees grow up emotionally and socially adjusted, and aware of and comfortable with their racial identity. They perceive themselves as integral parts of their adopted families and they expect to retain strong ties to their parents and siblings in the future. The data show that transracial adoptions clearly satisfy the ‘best interests of the child’ standard. (Simon, 1998:275)

The adopted subject maintains a long standing historic relationship with the academy. We have provided researchers with a kind of living experiment to study factors such as genetics, separation from birth parents, environmental exposure both pre-natal and postnatal, the adoptive environment or the effects of ‘nature and nurture’ on behavioural outcomes or mental health (Miller, 2005).

Early trans-racial adoption studies deployed disparate trans-racial adoptee populations, diverse research questions and varied methods that Triseliotis (2002) has argued makes the results bewilderingly difficult to synthesise. In broad terms, trans-racial adoption research involves a complex disciplinary interplay of politics, economics, race, culture, identity and kinship studies. In slightly varying forms, a number of clinical studies have attempted to answer the following research questions; ‘what are the psychological consequences of growing up in a trans-racial adoptive family (outcome studies) or ‘what are the effects on the racial/ethnic identity development of a child placed transracially’ (racial identity studies) (Miller, 2005).

Studies of adult inter-county adoptees indicate that, as a group, they are more likely to have mental health, social and economic difficulties than other children in the same families who were not adopted (Lindblad *et al*, 2003) with comparable rates to non-adopted children who are from immigrant families. There are less researched trans-racial placements that are very much part of the whole trans-racial placement picture that are not taken in to account. Such as indigenous peoples in Australia, Gypsies in central Europe, Hispanic children placed in black families and in the US, the trans-racial fostering of West African and Chinese Children in the UK. Rushton & Minnis (1997)

argues that any broad conclusions drawn from the existing body of trans-racial adoption research must take in to account the limitations of the trans-racial adoptive community as a whole

For the purpose of this literature review, studies from the domestic and international adoptive context from the 1990s to the present from the UK, US and Europe will be discussed. The relationship between the research evidence and policy has been particularly strong in terms of informing the policy context, where in contrast to the rhetorical and ideological basis against trans-racial adoption, the case in favour of trans-racial adoption derives primarily from empirical research (Bagley & Young, 1998; Simon *et al*, 1994; Simon & Alstein, 1996).

According to Perry (1986), the majority of studies have concluded that children are not detrimentally affected by being raised by parents of a different race. In contrast to this view, and in despite of positive empirical findings, several studies do acknowledge that many children can become confused about race and ethnicity and are poorly equipped to handle bias and discrimination. It is therefore argued from the position of this research that ethnic matching in adoption enhances the development of self-esteem, racial and ethnic identity and coping mechanisms of strategies for living in a racist society (Johnson *et al*, 1987; Shireman & Johnson, 1986; Silverman, 1993; Simon & Alstein, 1996; Tuan, 2008).

A large majority of studies have been less willing to recommend trans-racial placements and in general state that wherever possible children should be placed for adoption with families of the same race. The empirical dissonance and conflicting conclusions, combined with what Alexander & Curtis (1996) and Rushton & Minnis (1997) argue as being the theoretical and methodological limitations of the research itself. This indicates that proponents of trans-racial adoption have critically unaccepted conclusions supporting trans-racial adoption without taking in to account some of the limitations articulated above.

A large majority of adoption studies have been conducted in order to determine factors that cause mental health problems among adoptees. However, the actual frequency of mental health problems among adoptees in comparison to the general population has, since the mid-80s, become the focus of considerable debate (Benson *et al*, 1994;

Borders *et al*, 1998; Marquis & Detweiler, 1985). Even psychologists who focus on the risks of adoption (Brodzinsky, 1990; Brodzinsky *et al*, 1993; Brodzinsky *et al*, 1998; Van Ijzendoorn *et al*, 2005) have begun to emphasise the importance of recognising variability among adoptees and the fact that most adoptees fall well within the normal range of functioning. Yet since most research on adoption has explored only problematic aspects, it can really only be speculated about the reasons why adoptees in some respects might do and feel as well or even better than their non-adopted peers.

It is also commonly advanced in the literature that adopted children and children placed in foster care remain increasingly at risk of a number of developmental impairments. A number of studies view these impairments through the lens of attachment theory. The adopted subject maintains a long history with attachment theory where the early relationship trauma experienced in the pre-placement histories are argued as creating problems of an attachment relationship (Bimmel *et al*, 2003; Golding, 2003; Graze & Rosenthal, 1993; Howe, 2001; Howe, 2003; Howe, 2006; Howe & Fearnley, 1999; 2003; Juffer & Rosenboom, 1997; Van London *et al*, 2007; Steele *et al*, 2003). The diagnosis of attachment disorders that are believed to result from previous experience of relational traumas associated with abuse, neglect or rejection is argued as giving rise to a range of negative behaviours. In the case of children placed as babies (normally between birth and six months), it is argued by Fergusson *et al* (1996) that these risks remain low and are largely confined to problems around poor peer relationships met in late childhood and adolescence.

Attachment theorists have developed therapeutic interventions such as 'cognitive restructuring' and 'therapeutic holding' in order to offer alternative support when health interventions have failed (Howe & Fearnely, 2003). A sizeable body of adoption evidence details the concerns of disorders of attachment in adopted children, and whilst I have not located a study that has articulated the trans-racially adopted family specifically in terms of attachment disorders, the dominance of the theory in adoption practitioners' evidence base and the subsequent ways in which we may approach the adopted subject, it is a relevant body of knowledge to consider in this review of the trans-racial adoption literature (Golding, 2003).

Certain research suggests that trans-racially adopted children are as likely to form as secure attachments with their parents as children in the general population (Juffer & Rosenboom, 1997; Marcovitch *et al*, 1997; Noy-Sharav, 2005; Vaughan & Waters, 1990). However many of these studies are argued as being very limited methodologically and in terms of scope do not cover large samples and in some cases where positive outcomes were reflected, questions regarding ethnic identity formation were often not posited (Haugaard, 2000; Noy-Sharav, 2005). Researchers have also raised concerns around the fact that children may adjust at the expense of their ethnic identity (Kim, 1995; Tizard, 1991), which links in to broader debates around the assimilation of non-Caucasian children in to virtually all white environments. For instance, Hollingsworth's (1997) research found a negative relationship between trans-racial adoption and ethnic identity development. Parental responses to the needs of their trans-racially adopted children may be pivotal in determining the adoptees long term adjustment and racial and cultural identity development (Rojewski & Rojewski, 2001; Heimsoth & Laser, 2008).

2.7 Outcome based research evidence

The notion of outcomes has been central to the shifts and changes in trans-racial adoption policy for the past fifty years. As I have articulated previously, an integral part of the campaign to change the recent amendment to the priority of heritage and culture in placement decisions and the subsequent change in the wording of the Children Act 1989, has been in part justified on the basis of the poor outcomes for looked after children. Outcome-based studies typically compare trans-racial adoptees with either same-race adoptees or non-adoptees on measures of psychological adjustment. Lee (2003) argues that the underlying assumption of the research is that the trans-racial adoption is not a problem for trans-racial adoptees if there are no significant variables or group differences on psychological adjustment (Verhulst & Versluis-den Bieman, 1995).

A number of outcome based clinical literature largely focuses on emotional issues (Imber-Black, 1993; Reitz & Watson, 1992), where mental health is of particular concern. The early outcome based studies from the 1970s examined concepts such as adoptee mental health, self-esteem, racial adjustment and other developmental issues

(physical, language, cognitive) (Shaio *et al*, 2004). Meta-analysis of studies of adopted children have indicated that they do not generally have self-esteem levels lower than those of non-adoptees and there have been no overall differences found in self-esteem between trans-racially and same race adoptees (Juffer & van Ijzendoorn, 2007). However, there is very little acknowledgement of whether children or adolescents involved in the studies have been in receipt of earlier supportive or therapeutic services which may impact on the outcomes concluded in the studies.

The clinical trans-racial adoption literature relies particularly on comparative sampling methods in what are outcome based orientated studies. This over reliance on the comparative method is that it may not capture the vastly varying potential differences in individuals both in terms of the group of trans-racial adoptees and also the control group. It is further argued that the theoretical concept that underpins identity is one that does not take in to account the potentially vastly different circumstances of origin and current home environments of each adoptee. For example, a study conducted by Kim *et al* (1999) involved a group of Korean-American adoptees and compares their psycho-social adjustment against their siblings, the biological children of their adoptive parents. In this study, the notion of psycho-social differs from the conceptualisation of psycho-social that is advanced in this thesis. In that, the unconscious dimensions of adjustment are not considered. The study concluded that there was in fact very little difference in levels of adjustment between the adoptees and the control group.

Similarly, Linbalds *et al* (2003) clinical study examines mental health and educational problems of trans-racially adopted children against a general population of immigrants. The aim of the clinical study carried out by Feigelman & Silverman (1984) sought to understand levels of long term adjustment of international adoptees compared to same race placement adoptees. The research was based on a national survey of 372 adoptive families involving Colombian, Korean and Afro American trans-racial adoptees. After a period of the adoptees being in their adoptive homes for at least six years, the study concluded that the adolescent and school aged trans-racial adoptees were no more poorly adjusted than the children that had been adopted in to same race placements.

In another clinical study conducted by Feigelman (2000), again a sample of trans-racial and Caucasian children adopted by Caucasian adoptive parents from infancy are again

compared and measured on levels of adjustment. The study concluded that there were degrees of adjustment deficit for the trans-racially adopted children in comparison to the subgroups of same race adopted white peers. The research question sought to answer whether the self-esteem of trans-racially adopted children differed from those of the children from same race placements. This over reliance on comparative sampling

Research in several Western countries suggests that in general internationally adopted children tend to have higher self-esteem than either domestically adopted children or non-adopted children (Textor, 1991). Another consistent finding is that international children adopted at a young age experience fewer problems than those adopted when they are older (Simon *et al*, 1994). Because most internationally adopted children are adopted at infancy or a very young age, they typically have no recollection of their cultures of origin. In a study carried out by Galvin (2003) it is asserted that the majority of internationally adopted children do not demonstrate severe and or persistent medical, behavioural or developmental problems.

There are however, contradictory reviews that exist within other studies that have concluded internationally adopted children are actually at risk of significant long term identity difficulties in one or more domain (Welsh *et al*, 2007). A study carried out by Lindblad *et al* (2003) involving examining adult inter-country adoptees indicates that, as a group, the cohort were more likely to have mental health, social and economic difficulties than other children in the same families who were not adopted with comparable rates to non-adopted children who were from immigrant families. The conclusion of this study attributed the elevated levels of difficulties for inter-country adoptees as relating to the child having a different sense of nationality and of ethnic status from the adopted country. This particular finding is concurrent with a wider body of research that suggests that racial minority adoptees construct their own ethnic and cultural identity, in part by retaining connection to their own racial backgrounds whilst simultaneously assimilating parts of the dominant culture (Ames, 1997; Bagley & Young, 1980.; Banks, 1992; Barn, 2000; Bartholet, 1991; Grotevant, 1997; Grotevant *et al*, 2000)

In a study carried out by Tizard (1977) three groups of children were compared. All of the children originally spent time in nursery care and then were adopted, fostered long

term or restored to their natural families. All of the placements were found to be problematic. The problems were attributed to all of the families living in predominantly white areas where the children were described as experiencing immense difficulties in acknowledging their mixed racial origins and in forging links with black children. Tizard (1977) also commented that the majority of the adoptive parents did not themselves have a positive feeling about the child's origins.

Tizard's (1977) study concluded that by the age of 8 only four of the eight children had been told that they were of mixed origin which suggests that the concept of race could not have been discussed in these particular families. The ideological thrust of Tizard's (1977) work is revealed when she suggests that the problems involved in transracial placements are not surmountable by same race placements. Her commitment to the practice of finding permanent families for children in care leads her to suggest that social workers are unusually obsessed with blood ties. Barn (2000) critiques Tizard's (1977) work for its sole conception of the study being based on one issue, whether or not trans-racial placements have been successful where success was measured by various methodological tools, including social work judgements, supposedly objective psychological tests and portraits of the experience of families.

A broad conclusion drawn from outcome focused studies is that there is much disparity in conclusions amongst empirical research evidence. Similarly, as Rosenberg (1989) usefully points out, there is very little agreement amongst different academic disciplines as to the meaning of key concepts employed in research frameworks such as, self-identity, racial and ethnic integration or adjustment. Therefore, comparing and drawing any final conclusions from research studies must take in to account the varying differences in meaning of these terms that exist in various research frameworks.

2.8 Racial/Ethnic identity research evidence

Despite the dramatic change in the racial landscape of Britain, and indeed across the Western world, the question of the elusive concept of identity of trans-racial adoptees remains a strong feature of the overall trans-racial adoption research picture (Miller, 2005). In clinical studies the object of identity is conceptualised in such a way that is approached as a static phenomenon (King & DaCosta, 1996). It is further argued by Maxime (1986) that the individual identity under certain paradigms is conceptualised

as being essentialist, natural and primordial consciousness. As though members of a particular group possess certain pre-defined, or pre-given characteristics which socially enables the individual to belong to a particular group.

From this perspective, the notion of identity is something that is understood as residing inside the individual, abstracted from culture so that, as Ingleby (1986) describes, the social is understood as something which has to be stripped away to reveal the object. In terms of the trans-racial adoptive identity, both ethnicity and adoptive status are 'assigned aspects of identity' not chosen ones (Cheng, 2004; Grotevant 1997:73). One of the early attempts at understanding the identity experience of trans-racial adoptees was offered by Falk (1970) that noted very little theoretical work had been carried out in this area. This section seeks to consider aspects of the literature that considers the trans-racial adoptive identity.

Even though, as Hayes (1993) points out, there is actually no clear evidence that promotion of racial identification by parents is actually necessary for a child's adjustment, the majority of identity based trans-racial adoption research has focused the question around the effects of the transracial parenting relationship on a child's identity. Indeed, certain adoption researchers have argued that normative crises in adopted children and their families are incorrectly viewed as pathologic (Dorow, 2006). Despite the concept of identity being one of the most studied concepts within the trans-racial adoption literature, there remains a distinct lack of agreement amongst disciplines as to its actual definition. Rushton & Minnis (1997) connects this lack of conceptual agreement to a broader lack of what the authors describe as theoretical underpinnings in empirical research in adoption that assumes the concept of identity as being uncontentious.

The work of Steward & Baden (1995) and other researchers in the field that stated that black children learn the special meanings and values of being black in America through their birth parents and their community. It was first argued by Steward & Baden (1995) during the 1990s (cited in Baden & Steward, 2000) that non-Caucasian children who are brought up by Caucasian families learn the values and meanings of their white middle class families. However, drawing on the theoretical work on identity of Erikson (1968) the study concluded that given the necessary guidance and affection by adoptive

parents, trans-racial adoptees could develop a positive self-concept and the social and interpersonal skills needed to successfully cope with the environment. It is now a widely accepted theme in the existing literature that through exposure to the history and culture of the trans-racial adoptees race, the child can obtain more information regarding the meaning and values associated with their race (King & Da Costa, 1996; Marcovitch *et al*, 1997; Muller & Perry, 2001; Noy-Sharav, 2005).

In a study carried out by Richards (1994), identity formation in trans-racial adoptees was also considered, citing the popular Erikson's (1968) concept of identity in examining issues of adjustment. However, Richards (1994) stated the importance of recognising that although identity involves a sense of sameness, commonality with others, and identifying with larger groups or systems. He also advocated that distinctions be made between one's personal identity and one's social identity where the difference between these two aspects of identity is particularly important in examining the experiences of trans-racial adoptees.

Richards (1994) argued that a social identity results from memberships to certain social groups, in forming social identities. Here, individuals tend to classify themselves according to those group memberships that they consider to be important. Personal identity, on the other hand, involves the way in which we are formed through our relationships with other individuals other than through our relationship of belonging or not belonging. Tessler *et al*'s (1999) study shows how Chinese American trans-racially adopted families are critical towards the unexamined assumptions about what it means to be American as a way of resisting. This illustrates how the trans-national and trans-racial adoption of children actually provides the opportunity to explore how race binds and differentiates kinship and national belonging, especially when considered in relation to options for adoption both at home and abroad.

A particularly influential study from the 1980s conducted by Gill & Jackson (1983) explored the degree of identity confusion for a study of trans-racially adopted children in their adolescent years. The thirty six families involved in the study adopted their children at a time when empirical evidence and policy approaches were not concerned with a child having access to and understanding their birth context and culture for healthy identity development, as it is in contemporary transracial adoption practice.

The parents involved in the study did not highlight or address the promotion of their child's racial identification as being actually necessary for a child's adjustment. This was the appropriate approach of the time, and the study concluded that there was no evidence of identity confusion. Barn (1997) critiques the study carried out by Gill & Jackson (1983) for its lack of emphasis upon issues of race and ethnicity within their methodological framework. It is argued by Barn (1997) that the interpretation of the findings that claim trans-racial placements as being successful in spite of the difficulties experienced by a large number of trans-racial adoptive families points to an assimilation and integration philosophy.

For Wegar (2000) the preoccupation of trans-racial adoption debates has been very much focused on the effect of the racially different parenting relations on the child's identity. For Banks (1992) a healthy racial identity is based on 'an integrated personality' that involves having a stable concept of self as an individual as well as a group identity. Under these terms, a black identity becomes an extension and indeed is part of the child's self-identity' (Banks 1992:21). Richards (1994) argues that it is the child's lack of access to a racial identity that is the same as their own that has informed much of the controversy around trans-racial adoption. It is argued that this is why the majority of studies have focused the research around the effects that the transracial parenting relationship itself can have on the identity of a child.

There has been an increasing reliance on developmental psychology in the field of adoption and fostering. Burman (2007) indicates how far reaching and persuasive the agenda of psychology has been in the context of social work practice where it is argued that 'all professional talk about relationships, parenting skills and styles, as well as about attachment, bonding, cycles of abuse and the like, rely upon forms of developmental psychology' (Burman, 2007:135). Within child development theories there are assumptions about children's nature and qualities and processes of growth and change. From a child developmental psychology perspective, it is assumed that if problems and unresolved issues emerge at a particular developmental stage of a child's life, then it is likely that these problems may inhibit the completion of future developmental tasks. It is therefore assumed that successful development will be compromised (Erikson, 1968).

It is argued by Burman (2007) that a central argument advanced by child development theory is the child's reliance on the mother as the source of a child's affections needed for a healthy identity to emerge. Whilst the claim that infants and children need warm, continuous and stable relationships to maintain a sense of self seems indisputable. The diversity of parenting relationships in contemporary families means fathers, grandparents or non-biologically related carers are increasingly the primary carers for children. Burman (2007) therefore usefully articulates that the over reliance on the mother for the success or failure in promoting the child's development does not take in to account the diverse conditions that children can come to grow up in and go on to achieve a healthy sense of self.

Patel (2007) draws on a symbolic interactionist approach to theorise the trans-racial adoptive identity. The study concludes that despite some difficulties, trans-racial adoptees can grow up with a healthy racial identity provided children are raised by 'racially sensitive families in multi-cultural settings'. Patel (2007) further argues that the effect of trans-racial adoption, can be dependent on the attitudes and social expectations towards adoption, and more generally racial intimacy in families. It is this emphasis on the social dynamics and attitudes experienced in relational encounters by members of the trans-racial adoptive family that the study seeks to further develop in order to understand the ways in which trans-racial adoptive subjectivity emerges. When in fact, what could be potentially more damaging is what Wegar (2000) describes as the effects of the stigma of being located in an adoptive family and the effects of the stigmatisation of adoptive kinship in the community at large. These are considerations that this study seeks to take in to consideration and explore from both the perspective of the trans-racial adoptee and the adoptive parent.

In relation to the issue of a child's sense of their ethnicity, Phinney (1990) argues that not unlike other personality constructs, ethnicity has many different personal meanings to different individuals. Phinney (1990) goes on to articulate that definitions of an individual's ethnicity can range from the ethnic component of a social identity, self-identification, feelings of belonging and commitment, a sense of shared values or attitudes, similarities in language, behaviour values and knowledge of ethnic group history. Given the potentially wide ranging definitions described, it is argued that

ethnicity needs to be understood as a dynamic and fluid aspect of an individual's sense of self, rather than as simply a given.

The systems theory literature on race and ethnicity argues that many clinical studies do not take in to account the diversity within adoptive family itself. Grotevant *et al*, (1999) discussed the effect of ethnic minority group perspective in the wider context of family studies that seek to recognise and value the diversity of families. Scholars of various ethnic groups and others have called for a revised paradigm of family science that recognises and even celebrates the diversity of family experience especially of those marginalised or oppressed groups.

In problematizing the theoretical concept of identity, new ethnicity research approaches the family as the primary institution of socialisation for children (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). However, it also explores the extra-familial institutions and influences such as the social geography where parents chose to raise their children in residential neighbourhoods and friendship networks. Other environmental factors include those chosen in adulthood such as organisational affiliations, leisure activities career and employment contexts, political participation, experiences with racism and discrimination, in short relations experiences through place (Frankenberg, 1993; Shiao & Tuan, 2008; Tuan, 1998).

What I have intended to convey in this section is to situate the notion of a static trans-racial adoptive identity that I have argued has largely been the object of study within much trans-racial adoption research frameworks. Emerging research paradigms that emphasise the relational, social and the contextual aspects of the environment create potential new ways to think about how we may approach conceptualising transracial adoptive subjectivity that as Landau (1982) has argued acknowledges the effects of differences in families, so as to view their problems as due to cultural transitions rather than as dysfunctional. As Hollingsworth (1999) has argued for in developing support for transracial adoptive families, the emphasis has been to bring in African centred ideological perspectives in raising families, so as to teach the white parents to meet their children's heritage half way in relation to learning about other cultures.

This approach advanced by Hollingsworth (1999) clearly draws on knowledge that creates a shift from what I have argued as the euro-centric foundations that underpin

much clinical knowledge in this area. By acknowledging the existence of alternative knowledge paradigms that inform how other parts of the world give meaning to the constitution of family, there is a political sentiment that shifts from the historic assimilation of the transracially adopted child in to the adoptive culture. It is through the increasingly prominent studies that acknowledge the euro-centric knowledge paradigms employed to examine an identity that involves race, class and gender that will inevitably mean that it is approached from a position of deficiency. Rather than as an increasingly emerging norm in a context of an increasingly racialised and globalised situation where this identity takes place. As I will go on to argue further on in the thesis, by employing the notion of hybridity, it becomes possible to create a form of knowledge that approaches an understanding of the transracial adoptive identity on its' own terms.

2.9 Chapter Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to locate and contextualise the research questions and theoretical and methodological framework of the study against the backdrop of the existing body of trans-racial adoption research. In describing aspects of the historical debates associated with the practice of both domestic and international adoption, I have aimed to convey the complex and highly contested social and political discourse that has surrounded trans-racial adoption in the UK since its conception. The debates in relation to domestic trans-racial adoption policy have been highly polarised since the first state support for transracial adoption policy in the 1970s that have fallen primarily into arguments based on outcomes and those based on rights (Selwyn *et al*, 2008).

I have argued that in terms of the justification for domestic trans-racial adoption policy, it has been the known shortage of adopters available for children of black, Asian and mixed parentage that have posed dilemmas for practitioners. I have indicated that it has primarily been the notion of delay in finding children a permanent home that has historically justified government support for a trans-racial adoption policy (Selwyn *et al*, 2006; Selwyn *et al*, 2008). It has also been the employment of a wide-ranging body of empirical evidence that Simon & Alstein (1996) argue has minimised the detrimental effects caused by trans-racial parenting, tending to conclude the positive possibilities of trans-racial adoption placements.

It is argued that within the research evidence, there are also a number of studies that acknowledge the potential complexity around the identity of the child and acknowledge the difficulties that may arise from being located in a wider context of a racially different family to that of the child. One of the research questions seeks to deepen our understanding of the experience of this family through an analytical emphasis being placed on the situation so that we can firstly understand how transracial adoptive subjectivity becomes embodied, and what the material and immaterial forms of power are involved in this process of embodiment.

Given what Quinton & Selwyn (2006) argue as the role and use of research in the context of current pressures to make policy and practice more evidence based, I have discussed the increasing dominance of developmental psychology based knowledge that underpins the clinical studies of transracial adoption and argued for the wide range of alternative theoretically and methodologically informed research to increase our potential understandings and subsequent approaches to the transracially adopted family. As Phinney (1990) argues, this tripartite structure of 'physical', cognitive and emotional development set up by developmental psychological accounts in the analysis of the relationships between parents and children provide us with one explanation to understand children's social selectivity and responsiveness.

This emphasis on a child's relationship with space in terms of the development of a child's identity has been incorporated into the theoretical foundations I take in my own formulation of subjectivity. It is from this foundation that a methodological framework has been developed in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how the experience of trans-racially adopted families is felt that is the focus of the methodological chapter detailed in *Chapter 5*. This formulation of a methodological framework and the prioritisation of seeking to understand affective experience as part of the overall research questions is in part inspired by what I have identified as the lack of studies available that understands trans-racial adoption under the terms of the experiential, the emotional and articulated from the perspective of those who have actually lived through the phenomenon under investigation.

Through the presentation of the two main approaches taken in studies of both domestic and international adoption studies, identity studies and outcome based studies, I have

sought to highlight that the majority of the existing body of literature focuses primarily on the individual child during late adolescence. There are very few studies that capture the experience of adult trans-racial adoptees and early infancy and there seem to be no available studies that examine the trans-racial adoptive parent. Further to this point, there remains a significant gap in the literature that has incorporated both the adoptive parent and adopted child in the same research framework. It is argued that given the highly visible nature of the trans-racial adoptive parenting relationship, and the effects this visibility may have on the development on the sense of self of the child and indeed parent. This study aims to make an original contribution to the existing trans-racial adoption literature by responding to the methodological and theoretical gaps discussed so far through an analysis of the experience of both the adoptive parent and child in the same piece of work.

The third member of the adoptive triad, the birth parent, has maintained a history of marginalisation and stigmatisation where the position of birth parents in the adoption structure has only recently actually become visible and taken in to account in research studies. There are very few studies available that take into account the birth parents influence on individual trans-racial adoptive experience, and there are no studies that examine all three members together in the same piece of research. By centralising the notion of unconscious processes in my approach taken to subjectivity, I have aimed to create an opportunity to understand the psychological effect of the birth parent in the overall analysis of trans-racial adoptive experience. The following chapter aims to provide an in-depth outline of the theoretical foundations of subjectivity.

Chapter Three: Theory of the Subject

3.1 Chapter Introduction

Being involved in the writing of this thesis, has engaged me in a deep process of reflection about my own experience of living through a trans-racially adopted family constellation. As Naple & Sachs (2009) argue, the notion of reflection and reflexivity has been a central tenant of feminist work and post-colonial writers that have sought to critique established grand narratives or dominant paradigms. As a trans-racial adoptee writing about transracial adoption, it is this power to reflect that has served to overturn symbolic power, in the academy and beyond. In the course of interrogating and critiquing my own experience, to reflect on its meaning during the course of the writing of this thesis, I have transformed the meaning of my own life, and aspire to do that for others.

I acknowledge the risk that Ang (2001) describes in her mobilisation of the autobiographical in her own work of coming over as self-indulgent or narcissistic. Where resorting to personal experience can be potentially interpreted as a privileged source of authority. Indeed, many times during this thesis, I did feel that imparting personal experience seemed to render the work in some way as not being as 'academic' or lacking in rigour and therefore not widely accepted as legitimate. As Butler (1988) has done in her critiques of gender, she has refused to write under any identity category because of the risk of reproducing the process of being colonised under the very same sign that is being critiqued.

However, I am moved to employ the autobiographical so that the reflexive positioning of my own experience as it has been lived through a particular place in culture and time conveys an active that experience under my own terms (Hall, 1986). As I have articulated earlier on in the thesis, it is primarily from being exposed to the way in which my identity has been articulated in much of the existing work of trans-racial adoption and my personal experience of being located in the wider culture at large that has influenced the study to be located in the psych-social tradition. A central tenet of the psycho-social tradition is to take seriously the role of the unconscious in all aspects of the research process. It has been the incorporation of the unconscious in psycho-social

concepts of the subject that has been used to both theoretically and methodologically problematize notions of researcher objectivity and the Cartesian mind/body split.

Inspired by this feminist impulse of foregrounding experiential reflection, the approach to subjectivity advanced in this chapter is informed by a myriad of personal insights and memories. A central tenet of the approach to subjectivity articulated in this chapter is one that contrasts the subject as being understood by what Malone & Friedlander (2000) describe as integral, holistic and autonomous. I take up the notion of an embodied feminist subject that centralises affect in any understanding of human experience in order to make possible or indeed visible, what Code (2002) describes as a rehabilitation of the 'emotional self'. This process of an embodied emotional self is assumed to always be undergoing cultural construction as it moves and feels through space. By making visible the ways in which human problems are lived and felt, it becomes possible to understand how social, historical and cultural processes create moments of inclusion and exclusion. Processes that Hall (1996) argues have for so long defined the lived experience of the racialised other.

My point of departure, therefore assumes that I, as a subject have always been involved in political acts through the realm of everyday life. The micro-political is therefore reinstated as the legitimate object of analysis. Where through my own personal reflection and the reflections of the participants involved in this study, the tools for changing the conditions from which our bodies are engaged and sustained in specific ways that may limit our forms of expression can be comprehended. This conceptualisation of subjectivity is indebted to the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962) that emphasises the body as always being engaged in a dynamic relationship with the world.

Under the terms of this dynamic relationship, rather than the assumption of a passive body, it is argued that the process of embodiment is always engaged in an active process of engagement. Therefore, how we think and speak is assumed to be through our experience of our dialectic relationship with the world. In the final part of the chapter, I will articulate the relevance of understanding the affective dimensions to human experience. I integrate specifically the work of relational psychoanalysis in order to acknowledge the deeply unconscious and invisible forms of communication involved in how subjectivity is experienced. It is through this analytical emphasis of the dialectic

relationship between the body and the world that it may become possible to understand how dynamics of power are perceived, felt and negotiated for the members of the trans-racially adopted family.

3. 2 The 'fixity' of social identity: beyond the Cartesian subject

In turning to the history of philosophy, many feminist philosophers have problematized the historic dominance of the subject as rational, autonomous and self-sustaining (Butler, 1988; Butler, 1994; de Beauvoir, 1952; Grosz 1994, Henriques *et al*,1998; Moi, 2005; Walkerdine *et al*, 2001). It is this image of the individual as conceptualised in Western philosophy that psycho-social schools of thinking have interrogated. The Cartesian separation of mind and body, and passion and reason conceptualised as discrete analytical entities has been critically examined by feminist and post-colonial theorists that have sought to highlight the gendered and racial bias.

The idea of the rational subject advanced by Western philosophy has relegated the emotional dimensions of human existence to what Jaggar & Bordo (1989) describe as considered as potentially, or actually subversive forms of knowledge. This privileging of the so-called higher faculties of reason, intellect, spirit and so on, over what Shildrick (1997) identifies as the material and mundane, has resulted in a two tier system of knowledge validity and subsequent cultural value. It is this two tier system of knowledge that I argue has had significant affective consequences on those 'othered' by Enlightenment conceptualisations of the human subject.

It is argued by Shildrick (1997) that women and non-Caucasian people have historically been tied to the realm of the body, deeming them largely incapable of autonomous and rational thought. Where for women it is has particularly been the reproductive body that they have been associated with. The social consequence of this privileging of mind over body has ultimately led to the absolute devaluation of the realm associated with the feminine and the emotional. It is against this backdrop of Western philosophy that the concept of the self and static notions of an autonomous identity has emerged.

In Figal's (2008) literary analysis of the English novel, the fixity of identity is argued as being integral to historic representations of Englishness. Despite the English experience being described in novels as one that is actually characterised by a sense of fluidity and a need for otherness, the idea of singularity and autonomy endures as the dominant

representation of human identity. Figal (2008) further argues, this idea of an assumed strength of an autonomous identity associated with the historical era of colonial societies, has served to counter schisms, friction and dissent since the nineteenth century. Whilst this idea of fixity described by Figal (2008) resides in the literary context, as I have discussed in relation to the way in which child development theories conceptualise the notion of a healthy identity. It is argued that there remain echoes of the literary construction of a fixed and autonomous identity in what has come to be viewed as a healthy identity as posited by certain perspectives of developmental psychology.

The founding fathers' of the psychologies on which our current thinking on identity is based describes a 'subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity'. For (James, cited in Erikson, 1968) identity is something that is articulated as being associated with a man's character where mental or moral attitude is argued as being part of an individual's identity. The notion of a positive identity, of a fearless freedom, an inner identity assumes that one person's group identity may be relative to another's and that the pride of gaining a strong identity may signify an inner emancipation from a more dominant group identity, such as the compact majority. It is this idea of a pre-defined category of existence that the approach to subjectivity taken in this thesis seeks to problematize. The notion of an identity that assumed to be uninfluenced by outside forces is turned on its head. The approach to subjectivity in this thesis seeks to illuminate how cultural discourse become embodied and enacted in ways that give meaning to a pre-given nature that Hall (1997) argues has characterised the lives of racialised others living in the West.

3.3 Identity and the Western Diaspora

In Ang's (2001) description of the complexity involved with the fixedness and pre-given nature of what she articulates as what it means to be Chinese in the West, a much wider dilemma for those people designated as 'other' is opened up. Central to Ang's (2001) argument is the idea that her identity has been defined by spatial and historical devices and cultural co-ordinates. Where the way in which her body is read is connected to a particular location of a point in time and place that, she adds, serves to position lives in ways that contradict an internal self. Her refusal to speak Chinese, and the implicit or

explicit categorisation as an 'overseas Chinese', reflects not only the situation for herself but for different diasporas. It is further argued that the meanings of these categories need to be understood as constantly negotiated and rearticulated, both inside and outside China.

Equally for Fanon (1967), the meaning of being a black man only becomes possible in relation to the white man, where through an imposition of culture, relations of being come in to existence through our relations with others. In terms of the trans-racial adoptive identity, I argue that this social identity gains a particular meaning through its location in an ideology of blood ties as a marker of authenticity of family and the existence of separate racial categories. Although my family were legally and socially constituted in the same way as the biological family, where my adoptive mother and father have been the only people I have ever known or remember as parents. The myriad of ways in which our appearance has been read has meant that I have never been able to claim a true sense of belonging to whiteness, the whiteness of my family. Nor have I been able to assert to the world that the family I have, is the family to which I feel that I belong to.

For Bhabha (1971), the terms of cultural engagement, are produced performatively. It is through acknowledging the cultural aspects of racial categorisations, that can often be hastily read as the reflection of 'pre-given or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition' (Bhabha, 1971: 87) that can deny our claim to a community that fulfil our need to belong. Through the colour of our skin, or the texture of our hair, our bodies transgress the norms of Western traditions that through our adoption we belong to, but the barrier of flesh comes to be culturally constructed as being in a permanent state of searching for belonging.

Our dwelling on what Bhabha (1971) describes as the borderline of cultural difference means that our very presence in situations can unsettle boundaries and normative expectations. It is like a river flowing, where migrations patterns that have emerged over the past century means the diaspora population has moved from an imagined homeland, so that our roots, traditions or foreign and exotic cultures are brought to new geographical spaces. Our very presence can significantly unsettle, or at its worse, be perceived to contaminate, someone else's sense of an imagined purity of bloodline. Like

water, our presence, the 'non-Chinese speaking Chinese', like myself and millions of others living in the West, seeps into, breaks down and reconfigures the static cultural expectations so often associated with race.

This intrinsic connection between the social and communal provides the foundations from which the psycho-subject becomes possible where dichotomies between mind and body, and inner and outer world that have long dominated the philosophy of the Western subject are problematized. Employing Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of the body-subject, it is assumed that there is no separation between the world and the body, nor mind, but an assumption that the historical and social dynamics of the world is itself the subject. It is from this vantage point, of the impossibility of having any firm claim to race or tradition that matches a cultural expectation, that a part of a way of being in the world has always involved feelings that emerge from my body inhabiting a liminal space. There is a long history of babies like me born in to social and political circumstances that meant we became adopted by Western couples, and this is a history that I can make a claim to.

The way I have experienced the severance from a culture through my international adoption, means my history starts with me, there is no homeland, no firm claim to a place of origin where this lack of psychic and bodily connection means my geographical community is just me, or the whole world. I belong with no one, and I belong to everyone, and it is in the attempt to de-pathologise this way of belonging in the world, to reframe it from being a 'crisis of belonging' to 'just how it is' that arguably characterises the dimensions of millions of people experience of place in our ever increasing globalised world.

Taking the relational psychoanalytic work of Mitchell & Aron (1999) as central to human consciousness, where reality and fantasy of both the outer and inner world, both the interpersonal and the intra-psychic are mediated through the qualities and constraints of human bodies. For Sullivan (1940), theoretical approaches that have sought to illuminate the many meanings of an experiencing body-subject that has relied purely on communicative speech is problematized through the psychoanalytic concept of 'defence':

‘One has information about one’s experience only to the extent that one has tended to communicate to another, as I do here, thinking about it in the manner of communicative speech. Much of that which is ordinarily said to be repressed is merely unformulated’ (Sullivan, 1940:109).

Psychoanalytic phenomenology is a depth psychology that acknowledges the role of the unconscious in human subjectivity, and provides a range of concepts that make possible an illumination of the many possible meanings of the experiencing body-subject. It is from personally knowing the complex spectrum of emotions that can arise from being located in a position of a racialised minority, both through the transracial family context and geographical context of my immediate community, the UK, the West, that any understanding of subjectivity must go beyond just the articulation of experience. It is acknowledged that Foucault’s notion of discourse prioritises subjective embodied worlds as being mediated through language, and that as Hall (1989) insists, ‘the way in which we speak, what we have to say, from the personal to the institutional, is intrinsically connected to and emerges from particular histories and cultures, located from positions within the global distribution of power’ (Hall, 1989:83). Through employing psychoanalytic phenomenological ideas to inform the foundations of subjectivity, I aim to acknowledge the power of the discursive on the way in which the body consciously and unconsciously responds to the world.

3.4 The Reflexivity of the Body

It is feminist and post-colonial writers (de Beauvoir 1952; Bhabha, 1971; Fanon, 1967; Grosz, 1994; Blackman & Venn, 2010; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999; Walkerdine, 2010) that have called for a retrieval of something under the sign of the body, where notions of passion, emotion and affect are taken seriously in the theorisation of human subjectivity. Feminist readings of philosophical classics have taken affect as pivotal to challenging the Cartesian subject characterised by the separation of body and mind. Instead as Liljestrom & Paasonen (2010) describe, the body and mind have been conceptualised as part of the same object and considered as being analytically inseparable.

I have previously emphasised the relevance of the multiple ways in which the body can be read in relation to understanding trans-racial adoptive experience. It is the social

expectations that arise from the interpretation of the viewer of the body that Ang (2001) and other cultural studies writers have argued can create a sense of dissonance between self and body. The new body, as argued by Vernant (1989) has begun to be identified as no longer being able to be considered as a brute fact of nature, providing much liberation for those people wedded to a history of oppression and domination through the non-whiteness of their bodies.

This re-thinking of the Cartesian subject through feminist critiques of the body provides a foundation from which assumptions around innate characteristics understood as residing in the body can be problematized. The Foucauldian (1997) account of the body has usefully foregrounded the discursive conditions of the body as an object of domination, and remains relevant to this perspective of subjectivity. I acknowledge how the language of transracial adoption, the very existence of the term, the historic bodies of knowledge associated with race and adoption can manifest itself in the contours of the way in which I experience relationships. The point of elaborating a paradigm of embodiment that goes beyond a purely textual or social constructivist reading of the body, to relocate critical attention from language, discourse and representations through the notion of a body-subject, is to understand how discursive conditions of the body are actually felt.

As Kristeva (1986) argues, this approach does not exclude the possibility of identity and agency. The political aim is not to supplant textuality, since as the following chapter will argue, the historic discursive conditions of race and adoption remain deeply influential in how the subject emerges in our present moment. Rather, it is to acknowledge what Taylor (1989) describes as the body as being in a world which is a field of meanings for him, and thus inseparable, because these meanings, interpretations are what make the human the subject what it is.

It is from this semiotic notion of inter-textuality and the phenomenological notion of embodied inter-subjectivity that serve to provide the foundations of subjectivity as a reflexive actor embedded in relationally and inter-subjectively organised flows of practices, that Wetherall (2005) argues are not just encounters pre-existing discursive resources, but endlessly mobilize and rework them. The primary purpose of advancing a conceptualisation of subjectivity under these terms, is to acknowledge Merleau-

Ponty's (1962) notion of our body's capacity to gain access to absolute limitless possibilities of living in the world and it is from this notion of possibility that Hall (1986) argues in his theorisation of identity, that new forms of representation can emerge.

This constant process of reflection and negotiation of the body and the world creates the possibility of constituting us as new kinds of subjects, from where we may be able to discover new places from which to speak that acknowledge the fluidity of identities and serve to critique the proposed fixity and stability of human identities. Whilst Gendlin (1962) stays close to Merleau-Ponty's (1969) work, through the foregrounding of the body and acknowledges that language is already complicit in any human experience, he further argues that the body is not a mere pre-condition that is wholly transformed once there is language. Rather, it is argued that experience will always exceed concepts and language used to describe it which suggests that according to the terms of experience advanced by Gendlin (1962), the wholeness of experience can never be truly understood.

It is the perspective of phenomenological writers that acknowledges the distinction between the physically 'real' body and the body as it is experienced by its inhabitant. For phenomenologists, the body becomes not a thing, nor an object, but rather for Merleau-Ponty (1962), acknowledging the limits of experience, it is argued that a 'body-subject' that recognises that our lives are not always lived through an objectified body, for our bodies are not originally objects to us. Central to the argument advanced in the *Phenomenology of Perception* is that it is the ground of perceptual processes that Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues ends in objectification and it is this interplay between pre-objective and objectified bodies that exist in our culture that is precisely the focus of feminist readings of the body:

'A slow composition of myself as a body in the middle of a partial, spatial and temporal world, such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather a definitive structuring of the self and of the world, definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world'. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:214)

What Merleau-Ponty (1962) alludes to in this statement is a central tenet of phenomenological work, that of the situation, from which it is argued a sense of our body is found. The process of the objectification of the body is argued as being the product of reflective, ideological knowledge, whether it be in the form of colonial Christianity, biological science or consumer culture, that all take form through the dialectical relationship between the body and world. The corporeal conditions of ourselves are therefore understood as an inseparable fact of the process of embodiment. It is argued that place is where we learn how to enact our social identities, where reward and punishments are felt for either conforming or not conforming to societal expectations (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

It is through the experience of place that the body comes in to contact with the discursive dimensions of the world, where our intimate understanding of both experience and language happen. Under the terms of phenomenology, the body is therefore always undergoing a process of cultural construction, rather than being understood as passively scripted as if the body were a lifeless recipient of a wholly pre-given set of cultural relations. Bordo (1993) argues that cultural messages become inscribed on the body by mediating interactions with objects in the world. The body is therefore fundamentally linked to representations of spatiality and temporality where this relation to space and time is a pre-condition of the subject's relations with objects. It is only through grasping the idea of external space through certain relations that we have through our corporeal schema that Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues we come to perceive the world.

In writing on the distinction between sex and gender in the *Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir (1952) also acknowledges the situation as being crucial to any understanding of social identity.

'One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the fate that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an 'Other' (De Beauvoir, 1952:295).

Under these terms of the primacy of the situation in relation to a theory of embodiment, I have become and learnt to know myself as a trans-racially adopted subject where through my location in place I enact this subject position as such. This process of becoming is argued by Scott (1991) as happening in a way that we are not always aware of. Whilst we experience movement in our bodies as a result of being located in a situation, this movement happens independently of us. In effect, what is argued is that our bodies disappear from us, so that movement always flows without us always being conscious of it.

For Scott (1991), it is never our objective body that we move, but rather it is our phenomenal body, a body that is not in space like things are, but something that inhabits space. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues, when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object. Our body belongs to us and through it we have access to space, and it is the relationship between bodily space and external space that, he argues, forms some sort of a practical system. Behind this body, our experience becomes characterised by the disappearance of our body from our awareness. He argues that we project what we feel in our own body so that the intimate experiences of our own body are transferred on to the other.

Psychiatry typically advances a disembodied mind, where the patient is both the subject and object in the contract between himself and the psychiatrist. What classical academic psychology refers to as functions of cognition, intelligence, perception and imagination (Dolan, 2002) Merleau Ponty's (1964) analysis of the *Child's Relations with Others*, leads us back to activity that is prior to cognition. What he describes as 'organising experiences' that impose on certain totalities the configuration and the kind of equilibrium that he concludes are possible under the corporeal social conditions of the child himself. Behaviour, under the terms of an embodied subject, can never be reduced to physiological processes. We encounter the things and events of our environment as 'situated' that is in actual or potential relationship to ourselves. Rather as Sheets-Johnstone (2011) argues, movement in the world that is otherwise referred to as behaviour, can be explained as a result of the integration of reflexes, so that the interpretive directions I take in the world can be understood as a result of the integration of those reflexes. For Gendlin (1962) our felt senses are not senseless states of consciousness, but rather modes from which to detect the signification of situations

where felt senses of situations are experienced as an intricate whole, so that previous experience create the reflexive responses that emerge in our present moment.

To ignore the primacy of place or the situation in any understanding of behaviour ignores the relevance of the power of human memory and its influence on the dimensions of a person's environment relationship. The focus therefore shifts from a situated individual person to the intentional relationship between human and the world. Intentionality here means that consciousness, experience, behaviour refers to something which by this very activity is meant to exist independently of its being intended. This ambiguity of being situated which we experience from the moment of our birth and try to overcome by our activities, is thus an essential feature of the human condition. It is this ambiguity of situated personhood, the precariousness of our 'situatedness' that characterises the way in experience has been conceptualised in this study of an exploration of trans-racial adoption experience.

3.5 The inter-subjective dynamics of experience

I have so far discussed the centrality of the experiencing body-subject from a phenomenological perspective, where it is assumed that the structures of experience are always lived, rather than known. It is therefore only by living those structures that Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues their immanent significance can be discovered. It is this concrete, immediate experience that phenomenologists argue produce intentional acts and not just a reaction in a physical sense. To gain access to the direct conscious descriptions of experience and the underlying dynamics of structures, the pure description of knowledge of the affected and feeling self is relied upon.

Taking the relational psychoanalytic work of Mitchell & Aron (1999), the subject is approached under two central tenets, these being firstly, the formative importance of infantile sexuality and secondly the existence of an unconscious mind. Personal reality is therefore assumed to be linked to this early formative experience, whether this be through the lens of Freud's (1922) drive model or the object relations tradition (Klein, 1959). The primacy of early childhood experience in the later products of a person's subjective interpretations and constructions of reality is a central tenet of the psychoanalytic subject.

This emphasis on affective forms of communication offered to us by the psychoanalytic tradition and more specifically, the relational tradition, in some ways contrasts a central tenet of the phenomenological approach that emphasises the notion of gaining 'rich descriptions' of a person's life world in theoretically conceptualising an experiencing subject. However, the two traditions remain compatible and by acknowledging the role of the unconscious and relational dimensions involved in human experience, it is argued that a much deeper understanding of an experiencing body-subject becomes possible. Therefore, to understand the way that we move in the world, the way in which as Merleau-Ponty (1962) describes, we 'orientate ourselves in the world', from a relational perspective that acknowledges unconscious processes, would always understand any articulation of experience as an expression of a subjective reality, rather than the description of experience and must therefore be read in that way, as an inter-subjective dialogue between two worlds. Thus, it is therefore assumed that our experience of our bodies in space is both perceptual and sensate in what Grosz (1994) describes as the phenomenological sense, but also emotional and unconscious.

3.6 Infant experience and the life course

It is from this point of departure, an experiencing subject, that relational psychoanalysts assume the patterning and thematic parts of subjective life are pre-reflectively unconscious. As Chodrow (1999) describes, the self is assumed to be structured as being fundamentally implicated in relations with others. In relational psychoanalytic terms, a 'two person psychology' is assumed, therefore what is known when I articulate my experience can only be understood as my own subjective reality and the ever shifting inter-subjective field created by my interplay in dialogue with someone else. I am always who I am only in relation to another, where our two separate minds, histories make us into distinct individuals. It is through a dialectical relation between individual subjectivities that Ogden (1983) suggests an inter-subjective analytic third space emerges. It is from within this conceptual space, the inter-subjective space that I argue is where the felt senses of subjectivity are culturally perceived, imposed, and re-negotiated by the body-subject.

The significance of the inter-subjective perspective advanced by Stolorow & Atwood (1984) acknowledges the continuous forms of communication between two worlds of

experience, in terms of transference, defence mechanisms, in short, unconscious processes. Inter-subjectivity concepts have in part been developed as a response to what is described by Stolorow & Atwood (1984) as the unfortunate tendency of classical analysis to view pathology in terms of processes and mechanisms located solely within the individual. Therefore the emphasis of the relational approach, aims to acknowledge that such an isolating focus fails to do justice to each individual's irreducible engagement with other human beings.

It is from the patterning of early infant caregiving interactions that analytical investigators have argued affectivity experienced during the first few months of life, to the development of a coherent core sense of self is paramount (Emde, 1983; Stern 1995; Stolorow & Atwood, 1992). The general thesis advanced here is that the mutual sharing of affective states is argued as being 'the most pervasive and clinically germane feature of inter-subjective relatedness' (Stern, 1995:152), so that the responses of the caregiving environment in the development of the infant's affect and self-regulatory capacities is crucial. For Loewald (1960) infantile experiences are also attributed to giving intensity and depth to our present experiences, where the unconscious infantile experience is always in interplay with the indestructible matrix of all subsequent experiences.

In consideration of these ideas in relation to the context of adoption, the traumatic experiences prior to adoptive placements are well documented within the existing literature (Groza & Ryan, 2002; Howe, 2003; Howe & Fearnley, 1999). This can bring particular challenges to the adoptive parents, where the availability of a highly attuned caregiving environment was not available to their adopted children prior to adoption, which has the potential to bring a particular set of dynamics into the new family space. It is not the quality of the biological and parenting relationship that I seek to differentiate. Rather, in listening to the pre-adoptive birth histories of the adoptees involved in this study, and acknowledging the effects complex care environments can have on unconscious mechanisms in adulthood. Understanding experience takes in to account the potential impact of the effects of inter-generational trauma.

The work of Davoine & Gaudiere (2004) enables a further development of the concept of inter-subjectivity that I will argue is of great relevance to the trans-racial adoptive

family context. The central premise of their thesis advanced in *History beyond Trauma*, invites an interweaving of historical and psychoanalytic analysis, where the concept of and affective dynamics of inter-subjectivity would be conceptualised as being situated in the larger dimensions of history. For these authors, madness of any other form of socially unacceptable behaviour would be understood through the assumption that history pervades the lives of individuals, so that the behaviour cannot be understood as simply an attack on the social order, but rather, must be understood on a much deeper level and interpreted as some kind of effort to make a previously foreclosed social connection come into existence.

Any attempts to understand exactly what an individual is trying to bring back into existence, needs to be located within the history of families. In advancing this thesis, Davoine & Gauldiere (2004) make reference to wars worldwide, civil or ethnic wars, wars of decolonisation, as examples that such extreme circumstances bring about the disintegration of previous societal points of reference and produces links outside the norm. It is argued, that if for some reason the societal trauma cannot be told through another, such as the excruciating experiences and memories of war for then the traces of the trauma are carried generationally and lived as a duty to represent what Freud (1922) described as, the family's archaic heritage.

Any radical dislocation of human beings from their social context through a wider event that is beyond the control of any individual, for Davoine & Gauldiere (2004) means that behaviour, or any representation of it needs to be understood not just as an individual acting out his or her own trauma, but rather the representation needs to be understood as being on behalf of all those family members and ancestors represented. I fuse the ideas of Davoine & Gauldiere (2004) with Stolorow & Atwood's (1992) concept of inter-subjectivity in order to understand the effects that inter-generational trauma may have on the relational dynamics of the adoptive family and its' location in place.

Relational psychoanalysis acknowledges how the early roots of inter-subjective experience influence unconscious processes that guide the routes the body-subject may take in experiencing the world. If we take seriously the notion of the potential effects of inter-generational trauma where representation of another from history can manifest itself through inter-subjective dynamics of not just two world experiences between

relating subjects, but from the historical story of the individual and their relationship to the world. Those caring for racially and non-biologically related children must always be engaged in a process of being able to restore the links that may have been previously foreclosed - an essential social context to the broader historical story which the child is situated in.

Being born into the impossibility of a finely attuned care-giving environment because of the reasons I have previously articulated is argued by relational theorists as effecting processes of affect integration. Mitchell & Aron (1999) describe that when a parent cannot tolerate the child's depressive feelings because they do not conform to her own affect states, then she will be unable to assist the child in the critical task of affect integration. Although the histories of those involved with experiences of adoption cannot necessarily be directly comparable to the effects that a world war. Drawing on the work of Davoine & Gaudiere's (2004) that has examined the effects of war on individuals, I argue that the importance of recognising unspeakable levels of trauma potentially involved in a separation of mother and child may be relevant to consider.

If personal stories are understood as never just personal life stories of a particular individual, but a story that is part of history, and we think about the potential threads of historical stories a trans-racially adopted child comes to embody and remain connected to, that for various social or political reasons the truth of part of that history has never been articulated, or silenced, then the individual can become lost in the disaster that marks the history they are connected to. For racialised others, the rupture and destruction of colonialism is an integral part of our history, permanently illustrated through the colour of our skin, where the non-whiteness of our bodies in close proximity to the adoptive parents in a way reproduce colonial dynamics. This breaking of personal and national autonomy, to be governed or parented by someone external to our own people itself are the power dynamics that critics, particularly of international adoption have provided as the reason that the practice of trans-racial adoption should be considered as a new form of colonialism (Ngabonziza, 1988).

There has been no justice, no societal recognition for the women that in many cases were forced to relinquish their children, geographical lands have been restored to their original people, but permanently changed from colonialism where the wealth gained

from this period in history creates a certain subservience to the West from colonised parts of the world. As adoptees, our broader social histories are replete with oppression and trauma, so when I speak, I may be speaking on behalf of someone, through my various links with the extreme situations of history.

The historical institutional violence towards unmarried mothers and racialized others is well documented. It is through the dynamics of inter-subjective relations and their personal histories, that Davoine & Gauldiere (2004) makes reference to mental health. As I have outlined in the literature review chapter, the mental health of trans-racial adoptees has been an object under investigation. Davoine & Gauldiere (2004), argue that any behaviour that arises from mental states should be understood as being necessary in order to survive and therefore must be understood under the successive shocks that lead us back to the field of historical and social trauma. It is therefore necessary to continuously go back to the multiple moments of trauma from our histories, for there can be no transition from the past to the present when the impact of disaster has immobilised time.

3.7 Feeling through skin

Remaining with Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of the body-subject as being central to how we come to perceive the world. It is through the skin that Ahmed (2004) acknowledges that we come to inhabit the world not merely as perceptual subjects but also as affective beings. It is through the physicality and permanency of our skin that our differences, our histories, our claims to a community are communicated to the world. It is through our skin that Jenkins (2005) suggests, we remain captive, a prisoner in, forever, and yet our skin can be a site of hope from which the opportunity to change the cultural expectations or stereotypes that cultural history permeates the way in which our skin is perceived in the present moment can take place.

Through entering and dwelling in spaces that historically certain skin colours have not occupied, barriers, perceptions and expectations of skin can be remoulded and reinvented. For Tate (1998), it is through the skin that our bodies become the site of hybridity, in a way that echoes Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of the body-subject, insofar as it foregrounds the hybridised identity in diasporic space through a culturally

and historically produced dynamic process. This is not an easy process, as Walkerdine *et al* (2001) argue, there are no easy hybrids.

Hybridity in effect splits us through the contact of our skin with our external environment. We cannot claim to feel or to be, unitary subjects that Tate (1998) argues, can produce feelings of self-denigration, feelings of worthlessness, blame and accusation because of our impossibility to feel whole or complete. It is the skin that Ahmed & Stacey (2001) centralise in their explanation of how subjectivities emerge, that can be perceived in a multiple of ways and has the power to invoke powerful feelings of love, hate, belonging or exclusion. The myriad of potential affective responses are argued by Ahmed (2007) as creating fields of forces, through affinity, distance or repulsion through affective processes that reside deeply in the socialised body.

It is our skin that is the most obvious outward manifestation of race, where interpretations of that meaning of race can involve a complex array of unconscious processes that means people continue to be judged, irrespective of their social or educational attainments or economic status. A significant part of defining the way in which my body is acted upon, is recalled as being so dependent on my skin, what I have culturally learnt as 'the yellowness of my skin'. It never seemed to feel 'yellow' next to my adoptive parents, and certainly our blood was always exactly the same colour. The complexity of my perception formed from my body being situated in the trans-racial adoptive context, meant the distinction that culture seemed to make between my skin, and the skin of my parents, my family, my nation has meant that I still maintain a slight sense of being in, what Wilton (2000) describes, as the wrong body. This leads to the question, of what it may feel like to be in the 'right' body, to be able to claim internally and externally a sense of belonging to a skin that is culturally accepted as your own, to continue a history of skin through transmitting it through the skin of our bodies.

Our skin is identified equally as a potential prison, or a site of hope. Whilst Fanon (1967) argues it is from our skin that it becomes possible to contest and negotiate relationships beyond the stereo-typed meanings attributed to skin, he also acknowledges the existence of the industry of science that has sought to produce serums for 'degenerification'. Where laboratories have 'sterilised their test tubes, checked their scales, and embarked on research that might make it possible for those

that are not white, to whiten themselves' (Fanon, 1967:184). This is all in the attempt to throw off the burden of what Fanon (1967) describes as the corporeal malediction, of not being white. As Tate (2007) describes in her analysis of Black skin as a marker of difference or racial otherness, it is through her skin that she becomes the site of hybridity that emerges through her body's relation between place.

What is problematic according to Ahmed (2007) is the existence of what she describes as a bodily kinetic sensitivity of inferring logic, that has consequences for individuals whose worlds and being, fall towards the negative pole of social evaluation. In Rothman's (2005) analysis of her own experience of being a trans-racially adoptive parent she articulates a racial hierarchy existing within the world of adoption itself. She describes that it is black children that are at the bottom of the hierarchy of the social value of children available for adoption.

There are many arguments that outline the positive possibilities of hybridity that continue to be debated. A positive reflection is one that sees the hybrid subject as having access to the best of both worlds, or at the other end, that hybridity means a process of force is imposed to live in neither, but at the interface between worlds. My main concern is not to necessarily answer the question of whether a 'boarder crosser' can ever find a place or condition of her own and therefore some stability, but rather to understand how this difference, made visible through the skin of the body may be theoretically conceptualised to enable an understanding of how the dialectic relationship with the world makes us feel in our skin.

In considering the work of Bick (1968), in this understanding of a feeling body-subject, what I intend to acknowledge is the role of affective communication experienced through our skin. The importance of the skin was first advanced in the tradition of infant observation to child psychotherapy. Where it is argued that the experience of skin contained two elements: the experience of feeding, a nipple in the mouth and secondly of being held close to a warm body, with a soothing voice. Similarly for Lewis (2009), the human skin is argued as representing a considerable range of differences as regards grain, colour, texture and smell, which allows one to identify others as objects of attachment and love which is learnt through the baby being pressed against the mother's body, whose warmth, smell and movements it feels.

The self-system reflects all experiences and modes of relating which are associated with anxiety. Anxiety leads us to search for the familiar and comfortable in experience, even if that familiarity can be bad, or familiar from the experience of the infant environment. It is this environment that as I have previously outlined, of Stolorow & Atwood's (1992) notion of creating the optimal environment for the infant to integrate their affective states effectively, that Bick (1968) foregrounds the sense of skin against the infant's body that all offer a feeling for the infant of emotional holding so that the baby does not feel as though their body is going to disintegrate. At this point, there is no repression and no thought, but only feeling and affect for the infant. In this optimal kind of relationship between mother and child, where the nipple is available for the infant, the caresses from the mother are responsive, the familiarity of smell, voice and the sense of her skin creates an embodied relational process that the Bick (1968) argues creates a sense of interiority and an emerging sense of self in the infant.

It is this kind of intimate care environment that Stolorow & Atwood (1992) have argued the infant is able to integrate their affective states. In this optimal kind of relationship between mother and child, where the nipple is available for the infant, the caresses from the mother are responsive, Bick (1968) argues, creates a form of an embodied relational process that provides a sense of interiority and an emerging sense of self to the infant. At this point, there is no repression, and no thought, the infant is merely a mass of feelings and affect, so that what Bick describes as the psychic skin emerges through the responsiveness to the infant's physical skin providing an affective sense of our boundaries. We might argue that the kind of complex unconscious defences put in place as protection can also act as deep obstacles to the exercise of choice and to the fulfilment of consciously held goals.

3.8 Chapter conclusion

Informed by relational psychoanalysis and phenomenological ideas, this chapter has aimed to convey a conceptualisation of subjectivity that heavily interweaves and mediates my own experience of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity. For all diaspora subjects who spatially and temporarily sprawl across imagined boundaries of communities, the dynamics of time and place create certain responses to the history that is displayed through the skin of the body.

According to Merleau-Ponty (1964), it is impossible for me to claim that I can access someone's psyche to know how another's subjectivity, the power dynamics, the relationships has been experienced. The psyche is something that is incommunicable, that no other person can access, only the person who lives it and therefore owns their experience.

'I cannot reach other lives other than through processes, since by hypothesis they are open only to inspection by a single individual the one who owns them. You will never experience them in my place' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:114)

The relational focus on inter-affectivity emphasises the specific inter-subjective contexts that can facilitate and influence the affective experience of the inter-subjective world of an individual. It is then a by process of the concept of subjectivity here that the time-honoured aim in psychoanalysis of making the unconscious conscious seeks to develop and expand capacities for self-reflection and at the same time to persist in articulating ever more vulnerable and invisible ways of being in the world.

This acknowledgement of the importance of taking in to account the earliest experiences of childhood, where for Freud (1922) mechanisms of defence such as transference operated as a resistance to the 'memory work', that involved sorting out and decontaminating the past from the present. Through acknowledging the relevance of relational psychoanalysis, the analytical focus remains on understanding specific inter-subjective contexts that are argued as influencing the way in which we can orientate ourselves in the world.

Our post-modern ethnicity can no longer be experienced as naturally based upon tradition and ancestry. Rather it is experienced as a provisional and partial identity which must be constantly reinvented and renegotiated. It is with this spirit of reinvention and renegotiation that I embark on the following chapter to outline what I argue as the discursive influence on the process of becoming trans-racial subjects. The analytical importance I have placed on the body's relationship to space in this conceptualisation of subjectivity is discussed in the following chapter. By historicising concepts that I will argue are specific to trans-racial adoptive subjectivity, the analytical focus of the next chapter is located in the place in which subjectivities emerge.

Chapter 4: The emergence of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity

4.1 Chapter Introduction

A central tenet of the conceptualisation of subjectivity advanced in the previous chapter, is that of the analytical importance of the dialectical relationship between the subject's body and world. When de Beauvoir (1952) claims that woman is an 'historical situation', her writing illustrates how the body goes through a certain cultural construction not just through the process of coming into contact with the ideological norms that sanction and prescribe how one performs one's body, but also in the tacit connections that structure the way in which the body is culturally perceived. It is the distinction that de Beauvoir (1952) makes between sex and gender that the notion of culture is argued as being central in the crafting of sex into gender that is relevant to this consideration of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity.

Under the terms of culture, Butler (1988) suggests that specific corporeal acts emerge through the mundane manner of the everyday that conform with the social expectations of gender. Any transgression of these expectations become pathologised and understood as unfeminine. It is by making explicit the multiple transgressions that I will argue trans-racial adoptive subjectivity is historically connected to that the chapter aims to understand how historical dynamics may continue to permeate the way in which trans-racial adoption is experienced in our present moment.

As I emphasised in my theorisation of subjectivity in the previous chapter, the primacy of place that phenomenology attributes to the theorisation of the body is that of being where subjects come to discover themselves as subjects is central to understanding trans-racial adoptive subjectivity. A central concept from existentialism is that of the 'situation'. This concept is further developed by Charlesworth (2000) in his notion of the 'natural-cultural-historical milieu'. It is this location of the milieu that Charlesworth (2000) argues, the responses of our founding senses to the relational and discursive dimensions of our experience is located.

Centralising Foucault's (1978) notion of discursive conditions and the regulation of subjectivity, Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) illustrate how discourses out there in the world, become deeply imbued in the meanings and categories of our socialisation. It is argued that the processes of our socialisation are deeply historical, political and

cultural. The emphasis on place and the body's relationship with place in what I have argued as being the site from which processes of trans-racial adoption emerge in my theory of subjectivity, the primary aim of this chapter is to outline what I argue as being the specific dimensions of the 'natural-cultural-historical' milieu of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity. Through an analysis of specific concepts, namely concepts associated with race and adoption, it is argued that the bodies contact with these discursive concepts that can be enacted through unconscious and conscious relational dynamics create moments or processes that engage the body in certain ways that give personal meaning to transracial adoptive subjectivity.

Whilst the linguistic models of subjectivity in structuralism and post-structuralism is an integral part of this theorisation of subjectivity, I have drawn on Foucault's (1978) work and argued in a previous chapter how historic discourses come to influence not only the way in which we may approach transracial adoption in our present moment, but also come to define the social reality of those constituted under the sign of transracial adoption. If we are to understand what Grossberg (1996) describes as 'the conditions of existence', the way in which historically specific subject positions are held in place, as Henriques *et al* (1998: 201) describe, the 'relations, conflicts, contradictions, their physical and psychological struggle through situations', the perspective of embodiment is imperative.

Subscribing to a post-structuralist model of subjectivity, as contingent, provisional and lacking in autonomy and authority in relation to language, it is through the terms of hybridity that it may become possible to understand what the processes are that come to give the body to bare cultural meaning.

4.2 The 'Historicisation' of Race

It is to the analyses of how historic concepts of race and their association with what Brah & Coombes (2000) describe as, originary, unity and racial purity that remains so problematic for the trans-racially adopted subject. The notion of 'race' has been central to the political dilemmas and controversies of debates and research. The terms we use to name ourselves as non-white people living in the West, (Black, Ethnic Minority, Person of Colour, Third World, Transracial Adoptee) carry what Boyce-Davies (1994) describes as the strings of echoes and inscriptions from history. In that, each term

represents an original misnaming and the simultaneous constant striving of the dispossessed for full representation. What is clearly evident within the trans-racial adoptive debates and research is the historic idea of racial concepts understood as being heavily intertwined in to the meaning of family and blood ties.

In the very term I have come to know myself under since my engagement with this thesis, 'a trans-racial adoptee subject', there is an historical meta-physical assumption of separate races embedded in the very term. This term assumes that it is actually metaphysically possible to transfer a child from one racial context to another. This displacement between bureaucratic categories has unsettling and disruptive effects for all involved. In Grosz's (2010) conceptualisation of difference it is recognised that whilst the notion of race may appear as a static category that is capable of being conceptually frozen through various definitions that serve various purposes. There are always incomplete forces at work, historical and social influences, within all entities and events that can never be definitely identified. Rather, it is argued that the myriad of terms we employ to describe various features of our identity should be understood as inherently open-ended and incapable of specification in advance.

This fundamental questioning of the meaning of the term 'race', as a trans-racial adoptee, is in part an attempt to convey a social articulation of difference from the position of a minority perspective. The use of racial essentialism has long been discredited in the academy that has led to the generation of alternative versions of reality (Zack, 1993). The way in which I live through the appearance of my body indicates an enduring influence of the power of the notion of static and racially separate categories of people. This attempt to write about race in a way that seeks to understand the historical origins of the term opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference in a way that removes the existence of any assumed or imposed hierarchy.

4.2.1 The Great Chain of 'racialisation'

There were several contributors during the 17th Century that established the notion of viewing difference through anatomical distinction which resulted in the classifications of four types of humans according to skin colour and related differences. It was the angle of the face that created a series of measurements used for the comparative

ranking of animals and humans along a scale. The ancient 'Great Chain of Being' ranked all creation along a scale beginning with inanimate objects. It was in this chain that the African was placed right after the ape. The discipline of physical anthropology founded by Broca (1864) further assumed that physical structure determined the salient differences between the human groups. Brickman (2003) argues that whilst eighteenth century thinkers wrote about 'people' or 'nations' rather than about 'races', by the nineteenth century, physical attributes came to be widely understood as the basis for the differences between human groups.

The science of anthropology made use of the figure of the primitive to serve as the locus of the evolutionary origins of humankind. This came to define the qualities of civilized Europe through the representation of their antithesis. Through a combination of theories at the time, all biological and social forms were seen to be arranged along a continuum of ever-evolving forms of which the highest was affirmed as the European middle classes. It was via the physiological features of 'species' that the size and shape of the skull or brain and even hair quality came to be used to explain why the primitive mind could not exercise reason and had no aptitude for civilization. It was believed that the cranial measurements purported to explain why certain species were not adaptable to civilization. Where ideas around limited brain capacity of certain species assumed that mental development of the 'uncivilised' was limited to the level just prior to that of adolescence. This kind of logic therefore assumed that the uncivilised were unable to pass into adulthood and subsequently comprehend the complexity that characterised the attainment of the civilised.

The philosophy of science and race involved the establishment of philosophical tools that set out a biological taxonomy or set of physical categories used to informatively describe, explain and make predictions about groups of human beings and individual members of those groups (Zack, 1993). It is argued by Figal (2008) that when the notion of race first emerged as a scientific category, it was positioned along the already established line connecting individual and species. Unlike species, race was not conceived as a category defined by the sum total characteristics of all its natural members. On the contrary, race was identified as a group of people that exhibited a defined set of characteristics taken from a finite sample group. The way in which this category was set up, the very structure of the race category placed a limiting function

upon the individual identity of its members, race became understood as not being able to be considered a permanent category like species. Scientists and philosophers embraced the hereditary logic of the species concept for their development of natural history.

The social conditions in which this hereditary logic of the species emerged during the 17th century was one heavily dominated by Christian traditions. Understood in Foucauldian (1978) terms, the continual reconstitution of species advancing the creation of separate racial categories is argued by Figal (2008) as being concurrent with an emerging language of enlightened celebration of universal brotherhood. The intersection of these two discursive doctrines enabled a marking of the distance from the long tradition of Christian representation and can be very much understood as socially serving a much wider political and social aims of the age of reason.

However, it must be noted in relation to the knowledge advanced by the enlightened universal brotherhood, it is argued by Figal (2008) as being for the most part being limited to the concern of white, propertied men. Whilst thinkers such as Kant critiqued the patterns of paternalism involved in religious institutions, it is argued by Zack (1993) that the fatherly authority of the enlightenment movement in effect served to reinforce the existing power structures. Zack (1993) further argues that the ideas of race as human biological typology and the associated racism emerged partly because of the historical origins of the modern science of biology and partly because of the historical development of Western colonialism. The privileging of Europeans and white Americans advanced through enlightenment discourse in effect justified the governance of Western colonialism, and the subsequent slave/master relationships that were integral to it.

4.2.2 Darwin and scientific racism

The eighteenth century produced a new physiological and historical understanding of species, one that is still largely operative today (Wilson, 2003). According to what is now identified as the 'biological species concept' (Avice, 1990), a species comprises a set of organisms actually or potentially capable of reproducing fertile offspring. Human kind at the time in question ascribed a physiological reality with genealogical history. Figal (2008) argues that the ontological status defined from the emerging scientific

definitions of the human species advanced by anthropology, had the social effect of justifying what came to be posited as a, 'natural' social and ethical organisation premised upon an ideal of familial relations based on blood relations. A profound effect of the vocabulary contained in this emerging scientific discourse was that of influencing the social meaning of community that naturalised who could make a legitimate claim to a community through its reliance upon the language of genealogy.

Bernasconi (2010) argues that this discursive transition to a hierarchical form of racism of the 17th and 18th century, created through scientific terms that naturalised the notion of racial superiority, has justified the race based systems of slavery, segregation, apartheid, eugenics and ultimately the holocaust from modern history. These new scientific understandings of race and gender of the late eighteenth century are argued by Lettow (2014) as being integrally linked to emerging debates on procreation, generation and heredity of this time. This notion of heredity was crucial to the processes of propagation and the sustaining of long term successions of individuals and communities. Central to the notion of evolutionary theory, and the subsequent political and social power this discourse created, was indebted to the belief of a naturally endowed greater racial fitness of the white European. Therefore, as Lettow (2014) argues, the definitions of the concepts of race and indeed gender, co-emerged within the procreation discourse of the late eighteenth century.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the expansion of Western colonial practices is argued by Figal (2008) as extending this notion of fitness articulated within evolutionary theory. Therefore women of any social status, savages, children, criminals, peasants and the urban poor were socially and politically considered as inferior to the male, white European in terms of the position on the evolutionary path (Deutscher, 2014). The way in which this scientific thinking manifested itself in to the reality of social relations is argued by Figal (2008) as being exemplified in the relationship between private property and lands. Where justification for ownership of material wealth became articulated in specifically evolutionary terms where the degree of individual property ownership became the measure of the transition from savagery to barbarism, to civilisation (Bernasconi, 2002; Bernasconi, 2014; Lettow, 2014). Similarly, Maine's Ancient Law (1906) suggested that the linked development of the law of family and of property reflected the central dynamic process in the growth of civilisation:

civilisation required the development of privately held land and the person who qualified for civilisation, the citizen, was one who owned private property. It is worthy to note in relation to the history of adoption, that it has only been during the last century that adopted children gained full equal inheritance rights to estates.

4.2.3 The primitive and the civilized

I discuss in this section is the relevance of the disparity between notions of primitive and civilized in the dynamics of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity. Evolutionary theory provided a full systematisation of the relationship between civilisation and primitivity and between coloniser and colonised. It is argued by Figal (2008) that the influence of Darwinian theory brought about the idea of the differentiation between non-Western 'savages' and Europeans. In effect, the discourse around Europe established itself as being the fullest manifestation of the potential humanity, where through the demarcation between primitive and civilized, Europe became the governing class to large sections of the non-European world. The racial hierarchy advanced through scientific discourse similarly influenced the class and gendered differentiations that emerged in Europe itself (Hans Reill, 2014). For Mazzoloni (2014), the ideas of anthropology during the late seventeenth century, that studied the physical differences between individuals and communities placed its emphasis on skin colour and its physiological and historical origins as central to its' explanation for the existence of human diversity.

Skin colour was crucial to the separation of Europeans and Africans and the emerging definitions of primitive and civilized that accompanied the economic structure of colonialism and the later social strata established during the period of industrialisation and urbanisation. The meaning of primitives is argued by Mazzoloni (2014) as being created through the intersection of the epistemic, political and cultural realm. A social effect of the meaning of primitive was that those deemed primitive became the living embodiment of what Europeans could never allow themselves to become.

George (1958) describes the endless descriptions by civilized observers of primitive cultures, their skin colours, their dress and conduct. That became a discourse that disparaged the alien primitive, which successfully created the distinction between the coloniser and colonised. Torgovnick (1990) provides an example of the discursive ways

in which the primitive was described that became scientifically sanctioned body of knowledge that maintained significant economic and political consequences.

‘Primitives are our untamed selves, our id forces – libidinous, irrational, violent, dangerous. Primitives are mystics, in tune with nature, part of its harmonies
Primitives are free (Torgovnick, 1990:8)

As Steigerwald (2014) argues, during the 18th century, the basis for racial classification shifted from social, cultural and religious criteria to biological measurement. Intelligence and cultural capacity came to be widely accepted as being embedded in unalterable biological structures. Figal (2008) argues that it was the notion of cranial configuration that became indexed to skin colour where this discourse became operative in a way that politically justified the inevitabilities and rightful rulers of the world. Arguments concerning savages were transformed from religious documents and scientific fact so that characteristics of primitive peoples themselves were understood to allow if not require domination (Figal, 2008; Hanns Reill, 2014).

The scientific knowledge that emerged during the nineteenth century, was brought about under the political ideology of freedom and equality. That natural science emerged as an essential feature of the capitalist mode of production where the concerns for this order were of class, race and sex divided social order. Evolutionary thought also added to the long history of justifications of forced labour and slavery through its elaboration of western and understandings of primitive peoples who by the end of the nineteenth century were described in terms of savagery dark skin and a small brain. Arguments concerning savages and infidels were taken from scientific fact that imputed characteristics of primitive peoples themselves were understood to allow, if not require their domination. Relations of colonial domination were reified and naturalised in the figure of the primitive that functioned to conceal the other in the cloak of purportedly disinterested scientific terminology.

The ideas of scientific racism, particularly the claim that humankind was naturally divided into biologically discrete races, came under increasing scrutiny during the early twentieth century from scientists themselves, initiating what Barkan (1993) describes as the ‘retreat’ from racism This is classifying differences between people was based on a superficial level. It does not really matter then how groups are assigned race

classifications since the difference between major racial categories no matter how defined, turn out to be small (Lewontin *et al*, 1984:136-7).

It is possible, in principle, for differences in individuals to be inborn without being biologically inheritable, which sharply contrasts historic discourse where heredity, the knowledge of blood relations, was understood to be a guarantor of the moral and physical quality of families, nations and populations. The convergence of the two meanings of inheritance, the social and the biological legitimises the passage of social power from generation to generation. The notion of the inheritance of human behaviour and therefore of social positions which so permeated the literature of the nineteenth century, can thus be understood not as an intellectual atavism, but on the contrary, as a consistently worked out position to explain the continuation of a hierarchical society (Bernasconi, 2014; Figal, 2008; Holland, 2014).

Post-colonial theory has given much consideration to the idea of the primitive under the same endeavour that I articulate above. That as Brickman (2002) argues, has long abandoned the relic of anthropology's colonial ancestry and its' associated ideas of the primitive and civilized. As part of this broader critique, of which the ideas of feminists and post-colonial writers have been the mainstay of the critique of historic scientific racism, and of which this thesis is indebted to many of these ideas. Brickman (2002) challenges the clinical usage of the term primitive by arguing for an acknowledgement of its connection with the racist category that for centuries classified the non-white, non-Western world as requiring colonisation and domination.

Similarly, Freud (1922) also employed the notion of primitivity, as a way of challenging the supreme self-confidence of European understanding of itself by arguing that the evolving meanings of what is considered as primitive, was actually an integral part of the structures of modern European subjectivity and institutions. Brickman's (2002) reading of psychoanalysis seeks to illuminate how the discourse of psychoanalysis itself has been susceptible to multiple and contradictory readings that can support a range of social and political perspectives that are argued as being able to create the oppressive effects of racial difference.

This critical reading of psychoanalytic knowledge and its' relationship with race has been further extended in to the therapy room where Young (1995) suggests that issues

of race can be denied or repressed by what is largely a community of white and middle class community of clinicians and therapists. Therefore, even with knowledge that has essentially been written with the purpose of liberation in mind and an implicit intention in the application of knowledge to help those groups or individuals that have historically been oppressed. The critical readings of foundational texts, again emphasise the Eurocentric dimensions of that knowledge.

4.2.4 'Race' coded as culture

The writing on new racism shows how contemporary manifestations of race can be coded as culture, however the central feature of these processes is that the qualities of social groups are fixed, made natural, confirmed within a pseudo-biologically defined culturalism (Zack, 1993; 1995). The Western philosophical contribution to scientific ideas of race is difficult to assess in terms of exact motive and influence. However, as Barkan (1993) argues, the primary philosophers of race were influenced by the external economic and cultural events of colonialism so that their speculations about hierarchical human taxonomy rationalised the injustices committed by Europeans as they expanded into Africa and Americas. It is argued by Bernasconi (2002) that the ways in which Kant described Africans as inferior to whites have come to receive sharp critical attention in modern times where the focus of the critique has largely been around the author's connection with the supremacy of whiteness.

The ideology of human nature as being co-operative and altruistic, advanced by the work of social Darwinists is argued by Hawkins (1997) as changing the way in which people had traditionally perceived the conceptualisation of human nature defined by the enlightenment thinkers. The general theme of the emerging criticism of the discourse of Darwinian natural selection as being dictated by the human genotype that was moulded during the course of evolution, was that the accompanying social aspects of non-white race and non-male gender that are subordinate to aspects of white race and male gender were the result of culture, rather than nature. Lewontin *et al* (1982), argue that notions of co-operation and altruism began to be accepted as overt characteristics of human social organisation in an underlying competitive mechanism, rather than the natural superiority of biological species.

It is further argued, that a crucial step in the building of the ideology of biological determinism, following the claim that social inequality is based on intrinsic individual differences, is argued again by Lewontin *et al* (1982) as being contained in the equation intrinsic with genetics. Therefore, those who began to deny biological foundations of race as an explanation of the economic ordering of societal relationships, argued that the racial aspects of some of the differences advanced in the discourse of Darwinism, were culturally constructed (Hawkins, 1997). It was to the social existence that social Darwinists argued that psychological attributes were developed that ultimately created a discursive context of questioning assumptions about nature, time and how humanity is situated within both.

The discourse of the semiotic science that we now call genetics (El-Hani *et al*, 2009), illustrates the enduring influence of the historic concerns around the identity of those who we come from. This ongoing investment in the historic notion of heredity and blood lines contained in the scientific discourse of the 17th and 18th century, both economically and socially maintains significant influence in the weight that the State attributes to genetic relationships (Marteau & Richards, 1996). This is no more clearly influenced in the details of custody battles and the precedence that biological parents have over adoptive or step-parents. The main motivation of this reflection on the origins of concepts and categories that I have argued influence how people remain subordinated by race-thinking today is to consider how the historic meanings of these concepts continue to be enacted through processes of racialisation.

4.3 The naturalness of family

The family has been a central concept of modern social history. The historical connections between blood and affinity imbued in our modern meaning of family is connected to the rights of the family has equated to the rights and responsibilities of entire nations (Marteau & Richards, 1996; Bernades, 1985). Crucial to survival, the family has formed nations and given people a psychological and physical claim to citizenship. Despite the enormous diversity and complexity of family constellations that make up the contemporary family landscape in the UK today, and as Walkerdine (1989) further argues, there is no singular family, no normal mother, but families that are

'constituted in their difference from and in opposition to each other' (Walkerdine *et al*, 2001:152).

The powerful currents of meaning generated by Western culture's long history of presumptions about biological ties, blood relations advanced through the concept of heredity, continue to determine what are culturally approved and designated as 'real' families. It is from my location as an adoptee, of being outside this realm of the naturalness of family that our visual difference in the trans-racial parenting relationship induces the necessity to manage the dialectic of rejection and questioning when dealing with the larger community.

Figal (2008) shows how the 17th century was a time where the centrality of biological ties were culturally accepted as transmitting moral character, embedded with a language of inheritance, heredity and generation. The relations formed through biological ties were invested with a material historical, physiological reality where this assumed intellectual and spiritual value was believed to guarantee some form of higher affinity upon the emotions, spirit and reason. Claims to a social group, a claim to an origin, a daughter's claim to a father's support and metaphors of power and love where the meaning of being a father to a daughter were all realised through bonds of blood and legislated by the state. The notion of a 'mother tongue' became a metaphor that linked hereditary with community and which shaped and limited organisation through a historical/psychological elevation of the blood family as a natural model.

Family members perceived themselves as part of a larger 'imagined community', where the entire bloodline, the kinship group, was understood as a common body that through a genealogical line assumed the origins of altruism, where ethics passed on through bonds of kin. The characteristic cultural movement produced by capitalist development in the nineteenth century is argued by Figal (2008) as being one of simultaneous processes of unification and differentiation. Whilst the globalisation of the imperial emerging capitalist powers meant the family and cultures became increasingly dislocated, the nineteenth century continued to assert the reality of the family in hereditary biology where there remained a truth in blood. The blood bond between people was assumed to be a guarantor of a higher affinity, with claims for better or worse upon the emotions, spirit and reason.

As Young (1995) argues there remained a metaphorical relationship between family and political community, a political relationship between family and state order, a metaphorical relationship between family and moral good and a physical objective relationship between family and race, species where the reality of the bloodline through its symbolic functions was socially and politically undisputed:

‘The community of common blood is accepted as a reality that orders the law, it is the regulation of natural kind. This increasing attention to the reality of the bloodline was in part encouraged by research into generation and hereditary by life scientists and was the use to which another branch of state legislation put their findings (Figal, 2008:287).

The concept of heredity was vital in efforts to control the quality of the genealogical state of the nation through monitory reproduction, where populations and particularly the notion of the family were of state of concern. Figal (2008) argues, the concept of hereditary was visible everywhere and the linked development of the law of family and of property reflected the central dynamic process in the growth of civilisation. Questions of civilisation required the development of privately held land, and the person who qualified for civilization, was the citizen that owned private property. McDougal (2013) argues, that the transformation of marriage practices matters most as a crucial step in the development of Western European marriage. Marriage not only required monogamy, but also limited inheritance of property and succession to title to the any children born out of a union of wedlock. It was through the blood lines that genealogical lines and community boundaries were maintained.

4.3.1 Bastardy

The unmarried mother, and her illegitimate child has historically sustained a deeply problematic relationship with the social order. As Saeger (2001) argues, the distinction made between and observation of illegitimate and legitimate fertility first emerged during the eighteenth century. A description of the term sourced from the Oxford English dictionary is identified by Zirkle (1950) that, although more subtle in contemporary times, seems to illustrate the derogatory tone associated with the notion of illegitimacy that reflects the level of social anxiety that has surrounded unmarried mothers and their children.

‘The word ‘bastard’ is derived from ‘bast’, a pack saddle used as a bed by muleteers in the inns. A bastard was a ‘pack saddle child’ as contrasted with a child of the marriage bed.’ Its father was (figuratively) a traveling muleteer and its mother (also figuratively) some broad minded scullery or chambermaid. There was evidently a great need for the word, for its use spread quickly and it is now found in both the Romantic and Germanic languages’. (Zirkle, 1950:315).

It is argued by Saeger (2001), that the meaning of the term bastard can only be understood in relation to patriarchal authority and what is argued as being its historically rationalised foundation. The early descriptions of hybridization is argued by Saeger (2001) as being found in the general history of genetics. The social emphasis on historically authorising legitimate genealogy through the emphasis on blood relations, has meant children conceived outside of wedlock have been regarded as a threat to the purity or integrity of a system of kinds, natural or cultural (Figal, 2008).

‘From a man must come an heir, but from a mother’s body comes an animal whose bodily signs must be read by medical semiotic science to ensure that it is the correct animal’ (Figal, 2008: 189).

The dawning age of positivism was characterised by a system of law that distrusted the power of the symbolic order upon which it rested, so relied on scientific evidence to provide material proofs. This notion extended to the paternity of a child, and its’ subsequent relegation to the realms of illegitimacy or authentically continuing the heredity blood line. As an organising fiction, matrilineal genealogy for centuries wielded great power. The nineteenth century would assert the reality of the family in hereditary biology, in a truth of blood. Whilst Law’s writings of the bastard, was written in the 18th century, ‘the linked development of the law of family and of property’ was understood as the process from which the growth of civilisation rested upon. The bastard child, was never able to own private property, and was therefore by virtue of its own generation, considered as a threat to the progress of civilisation (Figal, 2008).

Over the centuries, the practice of adoption has served as a societal tool that has managed the social problem of illegitimacy or orphaned children, where Cohen (1994) argues adoption has maintained a civilizing mission for those children born as ‘bastards’. In more recent history, the analysis of Lewis & Welshman (1997) of historic

discourse on unmarried motherhood since the 1920s to the 1970s, demonstrates the integral relationship between the social work and public health professions in defining the meaning of 'never-married' mothers. The personalities of unmarried mothers, based on research during the post war era, portrayed unmarried mothers as neurotic and psychologically disturbed (Lewis & Welshman, 1997).

Young's (1954) influential ideas advanced from 1945-1970 around how to treat unmarried mothers as not being promiscuous nor mentally deficient, but rather purposefully set out to become mothers. Bowlby (1951) further developing Young's (1954) work, advanced similar ideas that described deprived children as being a 'source of social infection' or as 'carriers of diphtheria and typhoid' (Holmes, 2012: 187). It was suggested that the background of the mother of an illegitimate child was more often than not unsatisfactory. It was this contextual background of the mother that was used to explain why certain women developed neurotic characters where the illegitimate baby was understood as a symptom of the neurosis (Holmes, 2012: 188).

This discursive history of the unmarried mother and the illegitimate or bastard child, seems to contain no reference to the involvement of men in the conception of the child. The more recent knowledge in the area of attempting to manage the social problem of children born out of wedlock, as advanced by authors such as Bowlby (1951) and Young (1954), led to state implementation of policies advocating for the adoption of these children. This is despite of Bowlby's (1951) stress on the importance of the mother-child relationship in the case of married mothers (Waters *et al*, 2000). What has remained consistent in relation to the ways in which the unmarried mother has been discursively articulated is that of medicalization and questions around morality that served to prevent contamination of the community body as a whole. Whilst our increasingly diverse ways in which the family is lived out in contemporary society, in relation to the trans-racial adoptive subject, there remain echoes of this history in the discursive dynamics that constitute members of the trans-racially adopted family in particular ways.

4.3.2 The concept of adoption: matching, completeness and eugenics

From fairy tales and myths, to modern novels, tales of loss, search and reunion, for long lost relatives and a permanent quest for belonging, there are many different features

involved in cultural representations of adoption. An effect of the dimensions of the cultural stories associated with adoption, is that the adoptive family status is affirmed as being a family of difference. It is not very often explicitly articulated as being inferior to what Miller (2005) articulates as the naturalness of biological ties. The proclaimed dangers in raising children apart from their birth families that are inherent in legal and institutional approaches involved in the adoption process, as Bartholet (1993) argues that society's current laws around adoption signal adoption's inferiority to the biological family.

Our contemporary adoption laws design adoptive families in imitation of the biological family and although there has been a recent emphasis in open adoptions that has recognised as being in the best interest of the child. Adoption legal history has largely aimed to ensure that the birth parents, the child and the adoptive parents can all proceed with their lives as if the child had been born to the original parents once the legal severance between child and birth family has been made. Bartholet (1993) further argues that this not only reinforces notions that the true family is the closed nuclear family which is a clear implication of this 'as if' model of adoption, but that adoption is an inferior and not quite real form of family, which can at best aspire to look like the real thing.

The priority of matching reflects the primacy of imitation of the biologically related family form, where the aim of the matching process was to find a match that was as visually similar between parents and child as possible. A number of criteria were used in matching adoptive parents with children, such as physical features, religion and temperament. However, one of the most important considerations historically was that of race where a practice of race matching maintained the separation of racial/ethnic groups. Historically discursive practices of adoption reflected the ideological aims of eugenicists, of maintaining the purity of the population. Fregoso (2003) describes a central strategy of colonial discourse viewed children of ethnicity as being marginal where there was an implicit assumption of their 'natural' inferiority. Adoption of ethnic minority children by white families represented the outer limits of acceptance; racist representational strategies involved stereotypes of poor temperament and feeble mindedness. It was widely assumed that these characteristics were innate to this particular grouping of children (Barth, 1988).

A range of other derogatory representations was available for mixed-race children, such as impulsive, unstable and prone to insanity (Fregoso 2003). In these accounts, the child's resemblance to their parents, historically had more than just a relevance of appearance. The efforts to control the quality of the genealogical state through attentive monitoring of reproduction involved the classification of individuals in order to determine their optimal relations with each other. The goal historically was literally to match, to give prospective parents children with similar physical features and similar mental characteristics so that the parents could pretend to the world and even the child that this was their biological child. Resemblance of the child to its parents was important for more than just a child's claim to legitimacy; its very status as a human hung in the balance. Parental screening policies remain operationally widespread in contemporary adoption practice that reaffirms historical prejudices (Bartholet, 1991; Bartholet, 1998). In general the rules for matching waiting children with prospective parents are designed to maximise sameness and avoid what has historically been seen as dangerous diversity within families.

Although contemporary adoption policies have encompassed a range of potential parents, there remains the widespread sentiment in practice culture that adoption has the best chance of working if the child is as much like the parent as possible. This culture again illustrates the enduring power of historic ideological norms of the family as being defined on blood lines. By choosing children who are like themselves or an idealised image of who they might be, birth and adoptive parents match themselves to one another and perpetuate the notion that a real family is one that mimics biologically based likeness. In his critique of kinship, Schneider (1984) describes the emphasis on blood relations that, I argue, illustrates the connections our modern adoptive family discourse maintains to the historic notion of heredity and blood lines of the 17th and 18th century.

'A blood relationship is a relationship of identity. People who are blood relatives share a common identity, they believe. This is expressed as being of the same flesh and blood. It is a belief in common biological constitution, and aspects like temperament, build, physiognomy and habits are noted as signs of this shared biological makeup, this special identity of relative with each other. Children are said to look like their parents, or to 'take after' one or another parent or

grandparent; these are confirming signs of the common biological identity. A parent, particularly a mother, may speak of a child as part of me' (Schneider, 1984:25)

This reference to completeness, is argued by Yngvesson & Mahoney (2000) as being dependant in part on its difference from other families; thus completeness and identity are related to boundaries and to systems (such as discourses of biology, of race, of class and of gender) that constitute difference along specific lines. According to this line of thinking, a normal individual can only be considered as complete in terms of her whole identity through her differentiation from other. An individuals knowledge of her unique biological and social history that connects her to a particular set of parents constitutes the identity of the individual. It is this very lack of certainty in parental history and knowledge of the adopted child that I argue explains why much historic and contemporary research questions the identity of the adoptee.

In trans-racial adoption, this fiction is immediately apparent. The pressure from the outside world for the adoptee to construct a narrative of self is culturally evident in the plethora of search and reunion stories contained in the wider discourse of modern adoption. This has its origins in biological connectedness to a mother, is again shaped by the assumed grounding of biology and of identity, in a specific national soil (Bartholet, 1995; Figal, 2008). One of the consequences I have experienced is that for those adoptees who have not returned in some way or established a connection with the 'blood roots' of their origins, are culturally assumed to be somehow deficient. Those who are denied a seamless origin story, such as myself, a woman that was adopted across national and racial boundaries struggle with the compelling discourse of authenticity visited upon them countless times in encounters with others. That, I argue, is because of the cultural discourse of the 'denied' birth right, and our lack of wholeness, of making a claim to an authentic identity grounded in prescribed hegemonies of race, blood and nation. (Anagnost, 2000; Yngvesson & Mahoney, 2000; Young, 2011; Zontini, 2013)

It is argued by Alexander & Curtis (1996) that the adopted subject has long been subjected to empirical inquiry and technical innovation. This level of inquiry has been generated from a range of disciplinary traditions: geneticists have probed the

relationship between heredity and environment; psychologists charting the developmental course through childhood and into adult life; sociologists seeking to unearth the logic of social roles; and social workers refining procedures for placing children who needed parents with adults willing to take them (Herman, 2001). Scientific knowledge has played a significant role in the recent history of adoption, deployed to make adoption conform to a unitary model of 'natural' kinship. Arnold Gesell (1880-1961, quoted in Herman, 2001) articulated the central premise of scientific adoption when he asserted that 'nothing in the field of social welfare needs more deliberate and conscious regulation than child adoption' (Herman, 2001:682).

What started to emerge was the logical premise of scientific adoption, the causal link between professionalism and positive outcomes for deserving children and families. Research on nature and nurture that utilised adoption data, along with numerous studies of adoption practice and outcomes, attempted to join the production of knowledge to the promotion of child and family welfare. In this transaction that turned biological strangers into kin, scientific professionals saw an unusual experimental opportunity, a challenging social laboratory and a series of intricate operations that promised intellectual discovery. The statement by Gesell (1960) below provides an insight in to the ways in which the adopted subject has featured in research frameworks.

'Adopted children on the other hand provide almost as useful data as the rare identical twins, reared apart, and they are far more available. Adopted children are not genetically descended from the family of rearing, so that environmental differences between families are not confounded with genetic differences in the children, if the adopted children are randomly placed by adoption agencies. Theoretically regressions of adopted child outcomes on adoptive family characteristics will provide genetically unbiased estimates of true environmental influences' (Gesell, 1960:3)

Similar to the child welfare movement, the period of greatest influence of eugenics was the first half of the 20th century, when reformers believed that a good deal of the social problems of society were attributable to hereditary factors. The message endorsed and validated through science was that families could and should be constituted under the

guidance of scientific evidence, because science was believed to offer the safest way to adopt and the surest way to ensure that adoption turned out well. Herman (2001) articulates that the science of the home emerged as a developmental imperative at a time when the ideology of institutional care went into precipitous decline and family life was championed as the highest and finest product of civilization.

Scientific adoption was therefore a central aspiration for many human scientists, helping professionals and state regulators during the first half of the twentieth century. Professional elites turned to engineering methods and metaphors in their quest to modernise adoption precisely because they believed that science was superior to sentimental, commercial and other idiosyncratic ways of making up families. Scientific adoption stood for making families methodologically, on a foundation of empirical knowledge supported by the protective machinery of bureaucratic regulation, disinterested professionalism and technical competence. Although the practice of classifying children, so as to meet adopters' desire or promote children's interests opened the private sphere to regulatory style that clashed with the ideology of familial love and autonomy, many educated adopters desired the safety and knowledge that science offered. They learned to associate them with professional practices, such as developmental and intelligence testing.

4.3.3 Welfare movements

Twentieth century social movements were instrumental in shaping adoption practices in the UK. The child welfare reform movement that emerged early in the century represented a response to the many changes occurring at the time including mass migration, industrialisation and rapid urbanisation (Lindemeyer, 1997). The aim of the child welfare reform movement in promoting the adoption process was an attempt to redefine children from being economically useful entities, to sacred and priceless gifts (Zelzer, 1985).

Adoption was seen as one means from which to remove children from the labour market, and to sustain the family unit and move children into schools. Similar to the child welfare reform movement, the eugenics movement's emphasis on heredity and anxieties about 'race' suicide (the fear that whites would be outnumbered by non-whites) were reflected in attempts to limit immigration and reform child welfare laws

and practices. de Corte (1978) argues, that contrary to modern assumptions, the eugenics movement was largely composed of persons convinced that we needed to limit breeding of populations deemed 'inappropriate' and assimilate children and youth deemed salvageable. In the US, sterilization was seen as a means by which this social and political aim could be achieved. As a result of the eugenics movement, thousands of mostly poor and women of colour were involuntarily sterilized.

A significant number of eugenics proponents were also strongly in favour of carefully planned adoptions, through which children deemed worthy could be placed into white middle-class homes that would provide proper civilizing influences and opportunities. In post war Britain, Zack (1993) argues that the intention of the eugenicist was to promote neither class nor professional achievement, nor personal characteristics, but the fulfilment of parental obligations. The claims served two purposes if eugenics was to enjoy a post war role: to establish a large gap between Nazi racism and implemented by force, and British eugenics – educational and never coercive, thereby overcoming the class bias of pre-war British eugenicists.

According to Ellis (1906) eugenicists should improve the physical condition of the race as a whole, however that was defined, not of any particular class within it. Whilst class related fears were central to the activities and undertakings of certain eugenicists, they were not the only or even the primary reasons for the success of eugenics in the Edwardian and inter-war periods, a success that is measured not so much in legislative influence, but in the way in which eugenic ideas of decay, degeneration, struggle and selection pervaded social and cultural life in this period. A desire to protect the British empire, to resist the political aspirations of feminism and organised labour, and racist beliefs in the superiority of the British (usually English) race and hence the need to protect it from immigration and miscegenation were all fundamental motivations (Stone, 2001).

4.3.4 Interracial intimacy

In Western society, Figal (2008) argues that much cultural effort has gone into rendering race and sexuality as facts of nature. It is argued by (Avisé & Ball, 1990) that the naturalisation of racial and sexual categories that has been part of the culture of liberal societies have contributed to the uneven distribution of economic and social

benefits. The institute of marriage was established as the prime site of socialisation. Historically, matters of racial identity and interracial intimacy were strictly circumscribed by ideologies of racial essentialism and separation, ostensibly rooted in science, morality and religion (Bernardes, 1984; Bernasconi, 2010).

The historical neuroses about intercultural union, especially, although not exclusively for unions that involved the display of visual signs of difference such as skin colour (McDougal, 2013). The legal and social answer to whether an individual was free to choose the race of their spouse was absolutely forbidden. Interracial marriage/relationships, whether scholarly or popular has until fairly recently, been mired, usually implicitly in racist and colonialist fantasies of distinct races with intrinsic qualities (Gilman, 1985). In matters of adoption and racial identity, both law and social norms continue, albeit with decreasing fervour to restrain individual choice in services of collective notions of racial appropriateness. Concerns around miscegenation were largely focused on notions of originary, unity and racial purity (Brah & Coombes, 2004; Camper, 1994).

The regulation of intimate relations was managed through the production of the liberal subject. Liberal discourse sought to disavow the whiteness and heterosexuality of the self-governing subject. A condition of this self-governing subject was appropriate forms of intimacy. Figal (2008) argues that it was the black subject and the assumed primitive sexual instincts that required governing. Olund (2010) argues that whilst the liberal subject refused its own reproduction in a racialized and intimate sphere, this same liberal subject was nonetheless very anxious to explain the production of its racialized and sexualised others and their intimacies. Figal (2008) describes how the black community's assumed lack of appropriate intimacy emerged and was defined by its supposed contrast to the regulatory standard of white, middle class intimacy.

Figal (2008) describes how nearly a century ago a prominent social reformer Jane Addams made a plea to her fellow white Americans to allow African Americans access to the same sexual discipline enjoyed by themselves. Her oppositions were between the legitimacy of marriage and the shame of prostitution, between the authenticity of domesticity and commodification of flesh (Olund, 2010). Addams was not only offering an explanation for the so-called Negro problems, she was also offering a theory of

whiteness and legitimising a reason for its' putative success. This theory was inextricably bound up with a particular material arrangement of heterosexual intimacy that was seen to be the very basis for reproducing the capacity for full citizenship.

4.4 Chapter Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to consider how historical discourse may influence the relational, structural and ideological dynamics of the world in which trans-racial adoptive subjectivity emerges. I acknowledge that there are many concepts that could potentially be relevant to influencing how individuals that live under the signs of race, class, gender or adoption feel their way in the world. In the selection of the concepts that I have argued as being relevant to trans-racial adoptive subjectivity, it is my own experience of feeling the effects of certain concepts that has defined the selection of historicising certain ones.

I have also acknowledged the much broader critiques advanced by the feminist tradition that has problematized the authority of scientific knowledge by illuminating the political and social purpose that the meaning of these concepts has served in the social ordering of relations. Through this analysis of the discursive history of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity, I have aimed to give consideration to the ideological devices that are involved in the constitution of subjectivity. Of which one of the devices I have critiqued, whether it be in the seventeenth century or the contemporary human genome of today, is the power that knowledge maintains in convincing people of the inevitability of present social arrangements and affirm the dominant order of its' legitimacy (Hedgecoe & Tutton, 2002).

The centrality of the body's relationship with the discursive dimensions of space is integral to the notion of subjectivity that I have advanced in the previous theoretical chapter. In this chapter, I have further argued and aimed to illustrate how the politics of knowledge can never be divorced from the meaning of concepts that maintain a powerful effect of creating processes of differentiation against a standard of norms that we culturally accept as being 'natural'. In her analysis of the notion of difference, Grosz (1994) refers to Deleuze's (1994, cited in Grosz, 1994) notion of four philosophical principles that reduce difference to four primary means. Here, difference is converted and transformed from an active principle to a passive residue that is articulated by

Deleuze (1994) as being, identification, analogy, opposition and resemblance. It is argued that difference becomes mediated, constrained, reduced and translated by the four philosophical principles of identical, the similar, the analogies or the opposite. All of which have the power to define the qualitative felt senses of difference.

With reference to the self as developed by de Beauvoir (1952), it is argued by Grosz (1994) that there is no self before it begins its process of becoming. Where even through the age of the hybrid generation of inter-sectionality, the process of self differentiation is the undermining of what Grosz (1994) describes as unities and cohesion where differing movements simultaneously distances and decentres all identity. Boundaries, by the very nature of what Dilthey (1976) articulates in his understanding of human experience is the importance of history in a comprehension of the meaning of someone's experience. It is by reflecting on the political, social, religious and economic activities, as I have done through the course of this chapter, that these boundaries that I have argued, both exclude and produce the emergence of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity.

Chapter Five: Exploring trans-racial adoptive experience: A Psycho-social method

5.1 Chapter Introduction

In the two previous chapters three and four, I have sought to convey an understanding of the theoretical approach to subjectivity that is indebted to Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of 'inter-corporeality'. It is this idea of lived embodiment that is assumed to be always implicated in the passion, emotions and materiality of the world that has centralised the relevance of an analysis of the dynamics of the world from which I have argued is the place from where trans-racial adoptive subjectivity emerges. Through an analysis of the historical origins of specific discursive concepts, I have argued that it is through the body's relationship with both material and immaterial dynamics of power contained in the history of 'race' and 'adoption' that firstly engages the body in ways that can be understood as trans-racially adopted, and subsequently may limit and give meaning to lived experience.

This approach to understanding trans-racial adoptive experience through the theoretical lens of subjectivity intentionally makes the theoretical shift from what Malone & Friedlander (2000) describe as the 'integral and autonomous' individual as conceptualised in Western philosophy to subjectivity from which experience can be articulated and understood. It is from this theoretical approach to the subject that becomes the point of departure that a methodological approach has been developed in order to facilitate participant's experience to emerge. The primary aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed account of the methodological framework and to describe the process of the method.

The overall intention of the method has been to enable an in-depth understanding of trans-racial adoptive experience to be communicated, interpreted and conveyed to the reader and is therefore located in the psycho-social methodological tradition. It is argued by Gendlin (1968) that to understand the experiential response and details of the way in which personal situations and complexities are actually felt in a whole situation always acknowledges and involves aspects of interpretation. Similarly, in Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'inter-corporeality', to think and feel is argued as taking place

through the process of embodiment not as an object that stands apart from the world, but rather through the body's contact with the world.

What is foregrounded in the method that attempts to understand the subject's experience is an acknowledgement of unconscious processes involved in the revelation of the meaning of a participant's world. With this research aim in mind of seeking to reveal an understanding of experience that takes us beyond just thoughts, cognition or perception of worlds, the methodological framework has been developed around the following three research questions.

- How does trans-racial adoptive subjectivity become embodied?
- What are the material and immaterial forms of power involved in the process of the embodiment of trans-racial adoption?
- How are these dynamics of power perceived, felt and negotiated for members of the trans-racially adopted family?

The chapter will commence by broadly contextualising the psycho-social tradition by situating this work in relation to other sociological methods. In order to locate the development of this method that is indebted to relational psychoanalysis and theories of embodiment, I will briefly discuss its' location in relation to existing psycho-social methods, specifically free association and narrative analysis. The chapter will then go on to provide a detailed account of the actual process of the method and provide some reflections on my engagement with the process of developing a psycho-social method.

5.2 Contextualisation of a method

The psycho-social methodological tradition is located in the broad spectrum of the interpretive tradition that contrasts the intention of much clinical work that has methodologically sought to emulate the scientific method. In contrast to the claims of objectivity in the knowledge making process, and subsequent research findings and outcomes assumed to be value-free, the interpretive tradition and more specifically, psycho-social methods take in to account what Quayle (2007) describes as the particular values, beliefs and potentially intensely personal feelings that are acknowledged as

influencing the knowledge making process. Indeed, psycho-social methods go much further than certain qualitative feminist methods where the notion of reflexivity has been employed as a way of counteracting the methodological assumptions of approaching a subject that is essentially conceptualised as the same as inanimate natural phenomena.

A central tenet of the feminist tradition has been for the personal to be acknowledged in what Moi (2005) describes as the theoretical and methodological that has resulted in much auto-ethnographical work that has acknowledge the social, gendered or ethnicity of the researcher that sharply contrasts the scientist's emotional and participatory involvement in the world being considered as irrelevant and a hindrance. Inquiry that is informed by introspection within the method relies on and acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher as an actual means to obtain and interpret the detail of description and provide an insight in to how consciousness itself is experienced. This remains the central principle of the psycho-social method that argues even explicit aspects of the researcher's persona will never be complete enough to really fully understand what her or his contribution to the nuances of the knowledge making processes.

For Stolorow *et al* (1987), the notion of reflexivity in psycho-social research is extended in a way that acknowledges what Giami (2001) describes as the pre-existing investment of the knower in the engagement with the research process where complex unconscious processes are assumed to be interacting with the research work. In contrast to the scientific method, a psycho-social method assumes that within the research process, the certain directions and routes taken in the process of research encounters are not always consciously known and cannot always be anticipated.

It was largely through the influence of Descartes mechanistic philosophy that saw the advent of Cartesian philosophers devote themselves chiefly to the problem of the relation of body and soul, of matter and mind. Through the extension of mathematical method to all fields of human knowledge, an understanding of the human subject based on a form of analytic geometry became the dominant image of the individual. Premised upon the notion of what Malone & Friedlander (2000) describe as an 'integral (holistic)

and autonomous' concept of the self, the dualism of mind and matter is an integral characteristic of the Cartesian subject.

It is this idea of the subject that underpins much social science and clinical research that have sought to replicate the scientific method in order to discover universal laws that Cohen et al (2011) describes are considered to determine individual social behaviour. Concepts such as validity and generalizability have been central to the experimental frameworks where the location of the researcher is one that is assumed to be objective and research participants where by default of the nature of experiments, the research participants are reduced to the status of an object Scott (1991).

It is this conceptualisation of the Cartesian subject that the psycho-social tradition has interrogated in order to question concepts and categories employed in experimental designs. In this process of critically questioning conceptual foundations within experimental research paradigms, psycho-social methods have sought to highlight the effects of premature selections of concepts and the imposition of any pre-designed experiment framework on the knowledge making process, Moustaka (1994). In relation to the substantive topic of this thesis, where there is an increasing prominence of the clinical research paradigm informing the field of trans-racial adoption studies, the questioning of the objectivity of the researcher that psycho-social methods offers enables us to acknowledge how private feelings on race and adoption may be subtly and unconsciously intertwined into the knowledge making approach and process.

In part, what the psycho-social methodological tradition provides is a theoretical route to overcome what Clarke & Hoggatt (2011) describe as the classic sociological dualism of the separation between 'individual' and 'society' that provides the conceptual foundation of much social science and clinical research. In contrast to the assumption of objectivity both in terms of researcher and epistemology, the psycho-social method created for this project has not only assumed that any private feelings on race and adoption will come to influence every aspect of the research design, but by foregrounding psychoanalytic ideas in epistemology a bridge between the split of individual and society is made (Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Hoggett, 2011). By employing a psycho-social research framework that acknowledges the interactive unconscious

dynamics between researcher and researched in epistemology, I am recognising in method how deeply personal feelings that exist around race and adoption are an integral part of the collection and analysis of research data.

In the clinical psycho-analytic work of Lynne Layton (2004), the notion of 'normative unconscious processes' describes how the unconscious is permeated by cultural norms just as our conscious mind is. Layton's (2004) emphasis on maintaining an awareness of understanding how psychic life, social norms and family dynamics may create our prejudices, ethnocentric blind spots and cultural hierarchies that may play out in the epistemological process. It is this recognition of personal feelings that exist not only in individual researchers but also institutional settings that serves in part to illuminate the potential unconscious dynamics that may have influenced the contours of the existing body of trans-racial adoption knowledge. Where for Brodzinsky (1990), it is the unconscious personal feelings of the adoption academy that may explain why a large majority of adoption research has assumed a starting point of deficiency.

The strength of the psycho-social method is not in its' provision of a prescriptive recipe of formulaic method that can be replicated across samples. Nor do the eclectic forms of psycho-social methods make claims to what Lindset & Norberg (2004) describe as conceptions of validity, truth or generalizability. By placing the notion of the unconscious at the centre of the knowledge making process, the strength of the psycho-social method is in its' ability to deepen understanding, to explore and redefine conceptual foundations that may influence the way in which we methodologically approach human subjects. The post-structuralist emphasis on language and cognition rooted in the 19th Century has given way to what Clarke (2006) describes as an equal interest in emotion and affect in the context of the human subject.

This has resulted in an increasing prominence of the psycho-social method being used across disciplinary boundaries. It is primarily the complexity of affect involved in my own experience of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity that brings me to foreground the unconscious in method. Referring again to Layton's (2004) notion of 'normative unconscious processes', where it is argued that the processes of psychic life are in part derived from the social inequalities and cultural ideologies in which they occur. A

subjectivity that I have previously argued remains connected to much historic inequality, not only in terms of material but also discursive dimensions that I have argued remain connected to the ways in which trans-racial adoptive subjectivity is constituted in our present moment.

For Frosh (2003), it is suggested that the complexity of the theorisation of the psycho-social subject means that no one author has really quite worked it out. It is with this humility and uncertainty about its' own eclectic theoretical boundaries and distinct lack of authority over knowledge claims that is found in Frosh's (2003) statement that makes the psycho-social tradition a theoretical approach that may encompass and illuminate the potential depth of complexity involved in trans-racial adoptive subjectivity. I have argued in the theorisation of the subject, trans-racial adoptive subjectivity involves central pre-defined concepts such as 'race', and yet as Young (2011) argues, writing and researching about race needs to be acknowledged as complex largely due to the fact of the lack of consistent reference of the actual term across disciplinary boundaries.

By employing psychoanalytic ideas in method, it becomes possible to move away from inadvertently imposing a pre-defined meaning of race in the research paradigm. These impositions of categories may actually come to distort rather than disclose racial dimensions of subjectivity and instead allows a style of methodological approach that enables meanings to emerge through ontological challenge of the foundations upon which conceptualisations of race can be premised upon. The acknowledgement of unconscious processes assumed in the relationship between researcher and research in the psycho-social method also contributes to allowing meaning of concepts such as 'race' to emerge through what Holloway & Jefferson (2000) describe as a dynamic of co-production of meaning.

There are several increasingly widely used methodological approaches that can be understood as being associated with the increasingly prominent psycho-social methodological paradigm. As Clarke & Hoggatt (2011) describe, the biographical and narrative interview method, the application of infant observation and social observations and psychoanalytic ethnography fieldwork and interviews informed by

free association, are all associated with psycho-social methods. What principally unites all of the varying forms of psycho-social research is to move what Tolman & Brydon-Miller (2001) articulate as 'research subjects from subjects, to subjectivities'. Dependent on specific methodological styles, psychoanalytic concepts such as projection, transference and counter-transference are employed. With this projects aim being one that is largely characterised by an impulse of exploration and understanding, it is primarily the lack of strict lines of demarcation of methodological practice and boundaries that characterises psycho-social methods that provides a methodological space from which the process of creating an approach to understand the experience of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity has been located.

5.3 A relational and phenomenological method

In the course of describing the method created for this project, in this section I aim to give consideration to how the dimensions of this method relates to other forms of psycho-social methodological approaches. As I have previously articulated, the point of departure for approaching members of the trans-racially adopted family is to assume the unconscious in the methodological framework. Whilst the biographical and narrative methods do not encompass the unconscious as part of the research framework, there are elements of these methods that are relevant to the approach taken in this exploration of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity.

For Webster & Mertova (2007), narrative and biographical methods both rely on the telling of human stories in the methodological process and in different and yet similar ways are both seeking to understand the subtleties and complexities of human experience. a distinction is made of the areas of difference by Andrews (2007) where the narrative method is understood to indicate a temporal sequencing of events that involve a beginning and end where considerations of time lie is what lies at the core of narrative research. For Golden (1997), the narrative method acknowledges the multiple discourses circulating in language and culture from storylines within which people are positioned and position themselves in a variety of ways and through which they come to understand the world and their place in it.

As methodological approaches both the narrative and biographical method open up particular ways of approaching an understanding of human subjectivity that has the power to define the dynamic interplay of individuals and history, inner and outer worlds, self. Given the phenomenological emphasis of subjectivity in this thesis, where the methodological aspirations of biographical and narrative methods recognise the sentiments encapsulated in Merleau-Ponty's notion of the 'body-subject', narrative forms of key part of the interview technique in this methodological approach. For Webster & Mertova (2007), a narrative can provide a meaningful connection to the diverse sociocultural landscape of a person's way of being in the world so that an understanding of the meaning of experience can emerge. Further more, for Dyson & Genishi (1994), stories or narrative are at the heart of any relationship where the ways in which stories are told and expressed where subtle and not so subtle feelings are expressed can itself convey a sense of a person's experience.

Biographical and narrative methods have been deployed in a wide range of research settings. For Connelly & Clandinin (1987), a joining of narrative and biographical methods were used to understand the story that the teacher had undergone in the past to better understand how classroom practice operated. This empirical research was premised up on Schon's *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (1983), and has been widely used in the care settings to enable researchers to consider how people tell the stories of their lives. This ability of the story to give a structure to experience gives form to the content in a coherent way and has provided a powerful methodological tool to facilitate a process of reflection in a range of interdisciplinary research settings (McQueen & Zimmerman, 2006).

Influenced by elements of the narrative and biographical method, a primary aim of this research method has been to gain access to what Kensit (2000) describes as rich descriptions of participant's lives. By assuming an inter-subjective relationship between myself and the participant as outlined in the work of relational theorists Stolorow et al's (1987), the unconscious forms of communication between myself and the research participant are assumed to enable an understanding of experience that goes beyond just the discursive. It is acknowledged that I will never be able to gain complete access to participant's experience, because as Holloway & Jefferson (2000) have argued, it can

never truly be gained access to. Similarly for Bion (1983), words can never really be enough in communicating the narrative of experience, but by acknowledging the interplay between the differently organised subjective worlds between what is conceptualised in relational psychoanalytic work as a 'two person psychology', that the feelings and unconscious dynamics that emerge during the telling of life stories can provide a layer of experience that adds an additional dimension to reliance purely on the discursive.

This incorporation of the complex processes of transference and countertransference in the production and analyses of experience is exemplified in the pioneering work of Urwin's (2007) psychoanalytic infant observation method. Originating from Kleinian (1959) and the British school of psychoanalysis, Urwin's (2007) use of psychoanalytic infant observation assume that feelings of the observer of the observed provide valuable insights to understanding human experience. A study carried out by Urwin (2001) examining the interactions between six sets of pairs of same-aged babies. Involving psychoanalytic concepts focusing on defences against anxiety, primitive phantasy and the account of the depressive position put forward by Melanie Klein (1935), the research aimed to understand how infants came to know another person as being distinct from their selves and subsequently for them to have a sense of knowing themselves. Through a longitudinal study of observing mothers and babies interactions, the ultimate aim of the research was to better understand the processes which promote and impede this process of discovery within infants.

The psychoanalytic method of free association has informed the biographical interpretive work of Holloway & Jefferson (2000). The subject is approached as defended and involves an assumption that personal identity emerges on the interface between the psychic and the social domain in a constant interplay between the environment and the inner world of the subject (Alexandrov, 2009). The method of free associations requires a giving up of intellectual censorship and encourages a process of speaking about any thought. A core principle of this method is that the critical mind does not intervene to censor spontaneous thought. Processes of analysing text gained from free association would assume that certain repetitive topics indicative of psychic

complexes of emotional charge, these complexes are assumed to be unconscious (Green, 2000; Kris, 2013)

The task of psychoanalysis is to bring such complexes to the surface of conscious mind and integrate them into the patient's life. As part of the argument of the subject as being defended, that interview respondents are transparent to themselves is challenged in the free association narrative interview method where the way in which descriptions of experience are told assume that various forms of unconscious communications, of transference, counter-transference and projective identifications are intertwined in to the research dialogue and relationship (Holloway & Jefferson, 2000; 2008). The defended subject is assumed to always be working to protecting her own painful experiences, part of defence strategies, a strategy of intellectualising, of managing painfully confusing emotional experiences through words which offer the comfort of comprehension and the prospect of control.

The unconscious dynamics within this research method therefore would acknowledge that the emotional space of the inter-subjective field must be incorporated in order to gain access to another level of human experience which may be able to portray a deeper and fuller account of the life world of participants. By acknowledging and encompassing the interplay between the differently organised subjective worlds of the observer and the observed, all the feelings and unconscious dynamics that emerge during the interplay of the research exchange is equally valued as the discursive dimensions of the research dialogue.

5.4 Methodologically approaching the trans-racially adoptive family.

Having provided a brief background to psycho-social methods, the intention of this section of the chapter is to provide a description of the actual methodological framework developed and to provide a description of the actual interview technique. As I have previously acknowledged earlier on in the chapter, the strength of psycho-social methods is not necessarily its' ability for a precise translation or replicability in to other interview settings. Therefore, whilst the intention in this description of method does not aim or suggest that the method can be transposed exactly like an experiment can be, I

intend to outline the process of the method with an aim of its' basic elements to be able to be replicated in future research settings.

In the theorisation of subjectivity articulated in previous chapters, I have acknowledged post-structuralist sentiments in the conceptualisation of the subject. Where I have argued that multiple discourses circulating in language and cultural devices are integral to the ways in which the trans-racial adoptive subjectivity is positioned and engaged. The subject is therefore assumed to be precarious, contradictory and in process. By acknowledging the unconscious dimensions of subjectivity both in theory and in method, an understanding of how the potential complexity of a precarious subject position is affectively lived can be conveyed.

An increasing number of writers have given consideration to the challenge that a postmodern world characterised by high levels of cultural diversity, presents to psychoanalytic clinical practice and the dominance of ethnocentric practitioners that exist within that practice (Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Kimayer, 2001; Leary, 1995; 1997; Moncayo, 1998; Pinderhughes, 1989; Stopford, 2004; 2007; Tseng & Streltzer, 2008). The work of Pinderhughes (1989) examines issues around race, ethnicity and power, it is argued that the issue of cultural diversity is one of the most neglected and unstudied dynamics in client-practitioner interactions that can lead to patients feeling powerless to cope with practitioner's unconsciously expressed superiority. Psychoanalytic writers have called for a much needed integration of the fragmentation of psychoanalytic practice in working with cultural diversity where it has been argued that previously therapists may have often ignored addressing or acknowledging these power dynamics or anxiety as disavowed counter-transferences (Pinderhughes, 1989; Robinson, 1993).

It is argued by Brickman (2003) that Freud's work has been heavily influenced by the colonialist discourse of the evolutionary anthropologists of nineteenth century colonial Europe. Freud's mapping of the universal human unconscious, the hidden desires and the creation of a general method of psychological inquiry has gone on to create an evolution of theoretical perspectives. The implications of the relationships between psychoanalysis to the colonial construction of race as a system, is argued as resulting in a configuration of racial alterity in psychoanalytic constructions of subjectivity and the

associated invocation of the presumed inferiority of non-white and non-western peoples that legitimated Europe's colonial and slaving enterprises around the globe. The potentially potent ethno-cultural factors that have also come to shape the complex body of psychoanalytic thought is argued by Perez-Foster & Moskowitz (1996) as largely being unacknowledged as an issue that itself needs consideration by the wider psychoanalytic community. Brickman's (2003) work has considered the epistemological implications of the foundational texts of psychoanalysis on configurations of race and have been taken in to account in this method through a theoretical prioritisation in method of inter-subjectivity.

The idea of the recognition of the inter-subjective field was central in the decision to involve both the mother and the child in the same piece of analytic work and inform the dimensions of the research relationship I aimed to establish with participants in the interview exchanges. The concept of the inter-subjective field is also relevant to my position as the researcher, my relationship with the participant is understood as a system of interacting differently organised subjective worlds emerging from the intersection of the various personal and intellectual perspectives of each participant.

For Loewald (1960), transference serves as a revitalisation, a relinking of the past and the present, fantasy and reality. Within an interview framework conceptualised upon a two-person psychology between myself and the researcher the inter-subjective field has the over a series of research encounters, the dynamics of the inter-subjective field according to Loewald (1960) are saturated with primary processes of the unconscious and secondary processes of everyday reality where the present gains or regains meaning from reflecting on the past. It is therefore assumed that within the inter-subjective field of the research interviews, a link to infantile fantasies that Giami (2001) describes will always involve a process of transference and counter-transference being projected in to each other will emerge and be considered as valid forms of research data.

A central principle of a method informed by phenomenological ideas is that of the need to 'suspend judgement' by the researcher when approaching the research exchange in order to deepen the understanding of the world situation of another. Bringing in the

relational psychoanalytic aspects of subjectivity, the recognition of the unconscious in subjectivity highlights the potential limitations of ever being able to completely suspend judgement. By acknowledging that inter-subjective field in the research encounter, it is assumed that the influence of my own unconscious will always involve on some level a transmission and communication of personal, institutional or cultural assumptions.

These debates are relevant to the context of this method that seeks to work with families where ethnicity, whiteness and power are not only central dimensions of the inter-family racial dynamics, but are a prominent feature to the situation in which this family is lived and experienced. For Stopford (2007), much discussion on inter-raciality has been shaped by denial and repression of the presence of race, where fears of miscegenation and normative assumptions about the superiority of endogamy have characterised much psychoanalytic writing. This has had consequences for clinical practice, where the therapist's interpretations of racial and cultural dimensions of a client's subjectivity can lead to unconscious processes of reinforcement of racist stereotypes.

What is argued as being the least acknowledged barriers in treatment, this being cultural dimensions of subjectivity such as race, class or gender will be taken seriously in the cross-cultural encounters involved in this phenomenological and relational psychoanalytic method. It will be by maintaining an awareness of the precariousness, the contradictions and fluidity of the subject that a methodological priority is to not reproduce an implicit hierarchy between myself as the 'all-knowing' researcher and research subject. There is an overall methodological intention that seeks to avoid producing a form of knowledge that may reproduce some of the historic power dynamics that I have argued are part of the discursive dimensions of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity (Stopford, 2004).

5.5 Methodological framework

The overall prioritisation of depth of understanding of experience and the emphasis on the quality of relationship in the interview technique meant that the research framework involved what could be described as a relatively small sample of six set of

adoptive mothers and the adult trans-racial adoptee. Each participant was interviewed through this psycho-social interview technique over a period of six months four times each. By conducting the research process over a period of four separate interviews, a form of a relationship between participants and I was developed in a way that would not have been possible from just carrying out one interview. The research framework produced a data set of forty seven psycho-social interviews. One adoptive mother requested to withdraw from the interview process on her final interview.

5.6 Recruitment strategy

Initially, I established a systematic recruitment strategy that involved me sending a letter of invitation for people to take part in the research process to the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF). The invitation provided a summary of the research project and outlined how participants would be involved in the process research, detailing the number of interviews. This letter was disseminated through the adoption networks of BAAF, but this strategy did not successfully manage to recruit any participants.

It was through a trans-racially adopted adult that I knew on a personal basis that the participant recruitment strategy actually involved a snowball process that Clarke (2002) describes as being a fairly haphazard way of obtaining a sample. My initial contact with one family lead to them knowing and referring the details of my project on to another family that lead to meeting another, and so on. The only limitations around the recruitment sample was largely based on a limited amount of travel funds where I believe that the offer for the interviews to take place in participant's homes was fundamental to successfully managing to gain the support of six families involvement in the research process. Therefore, the snowball sampling process meant that apart from one of the adoptive mothers who was based in the North of England, all of both the mothers and children were located relatively close to my research base.

5.7 Research Sample

The characteristics of the research sample are detailed in appendix A which provides a verbal portrait of participants descriptions of themselves. There are unavoidable

references to racial terms, in the sense of describing themselves as of Indian, Chinese or Iranian origin, but any reading of these racial categories must assume the complexity associated with them in terms of their personal meaning for participants in trans-racial contexts. What I would argue as being imperative in the reading of the descriptions of these families, the way in which a reader imagines how they are, is to know them under the generic term of trans-racially adoptive families, but to simultaneously acknowledge the absolute uniqueness and complexity of each family.

Although the research invitation specifically used the term 'parents', what actually transpired was that it was only the adoptive mothers that came forward from the parents to be interviewed. Another characteristic of the families that became involved in the study was something that I had not anticipated probably because it was outside of my own adoption experience. Where five out of the six families already had more than one biological children of their own, so that the trans-racial adoptions took place in the later years of the family life where all the biological children were at the age of being beyond infancy.

5.8 Interview technique

As I have articulated earlier on in the chapter, the psycho-social methodological tradition is informed by a range of theoretical influences that shape the methodological framework. It involves specific interview techniques and analytical processes such as free association, narrative and biographical methods. The overriding component that distinguishes a psycho-social approach from other qualitative methods and interview techniques is that of the idea of a defended subject both in terms of the researcher and the researched which has specific consequences in interview techniques and data analysis.

This section of the chapter seeks to sketch out some specific aspects of the interview technique where the methodological aim was to understand the wholeness of a participant's experience. The inter-subjective field between myself and the researcher was central to this methodological technique both in the discursive dimensions of experience but considered equally as important are unconscious forms of

communication between myself and the participant. The way I experienced and interpreted the interaction of each interview was itself considered part of the data collection process. The interview technique was developed in a way that takes in to account the primacy of experience as encompassing a range of psychological phenomena such as psychic conflict, trauma, transference and resistance. As the researcher I therefore approached an understanding of each research participant as a defended subject.

The relationship being crucial to the interview technique meant that basic pragmatic issues such as meeting the participant in the location they preferred for the interview to take place, giving consideration to the clothes I wore and arriving on time were all things that collectively contributed to trying to form a positive relationship. The emphasis of the interview technique was one that sought to obtain rich descriptions of a participant's experience of the world so that pictures of the phenomena as it is experienced speaks for itself (Giorgi, 1993). The early stages of the four interviews was very much focused on trying to make the participants feel emotionally safe and secure enough in order for them to feel comfortable enough to reach a level of trust where this depth of description could emerge.

The use of my own body and a continuous awareness of the influence that the presence of my body would have on the inter-subjective dynamics was central to the technique of this method. This field is argued by Stopford (2007) located at the point of the intersection of two subjectivities, my own and that of the research participant. My disposition throughout the interviews was one that was informed by psychoanalytic principles. Frosh (2010) articulates the need for researchers to be aware of simplistic translations of psychoanalytic thinking and practices from therapeutic to research arenas. Where demonstrating an embodied form of listening was absolutely central to this interview technique.

I was very aware that some of the issues that emerged during the research dialogue caused degrees of distress. Relational psychoanalytic perspectives do not agree that distress is necessarily an indication of accessing more meaningful data, indeed it may actually be a sign that the dialogic route I have taken as a researcher needs to be

redirected (Stopford, 2004). In psychoanalytic terms, Holloway (2004) argues that a sign of re-traumatisation in a patient could facilitate a process whereby buried or split repressed material is accessed. I found that particularly in relation to the adoptive mothers, it was the first time they had ever had the opportunity to articulate their experiences of caring for their adopted children. Whilst Holloway (2004) acknowledges, that causing distress can sometimes be harmful, it was impossible to avoid distress when researching anxiety provoking subjects.

The most difficult aspect of listening was when I needed to listen to the silences, which was important because for Bion (1993), it is argued that emotional truth is not just confined to language. The primary aim of each interview was for me to have minimal intervention in the dialogic exchange. To just simply guide the conversation and prompt and reassure participants when I felt that this was needed. Always, it seemed that participants were comfortable with describing situations, but it became more problematic when I asked how experiences felt. For some of those experiences described, there seemed to be no words appropriate or available to participants that could do justice to the enormous complexity that must have accompanied those feelings.

The silences in dialogue are argued by Bion (1993) as being crucial to the therapeutic encounter. However, the desire to help and know can get in the way rather than prove useful in a profound sense. It is noted in the field of therapeutic work, that the therapist, even with the best intentions can get caught up in a subtle controlling of mastery stance toward the emotional reality through stunting a listening perspective. In the early stages of the first interviews, although I had an intellectual awareness of the importance of listening, in practice, I found holding the silence very difficult. I was often too quick to console and to actively demonstrate care when participants described memories of their absolute powerlessness.

It is argued by Stopford (2004) that the desire to help or respond can sometimes get in the way rather than prove useful in a profound sense. There were no set time restraints to each interview, but rather participants were able to just speak. Some of the interviews could go on for hours. I know for certain, without it being articulated, the enormity of some of those interviews for participants. Where the words being spoken between us did not do justice to the affective forms of communication transmitted

between us. Together we weaved a form of a co-produced narrative through a physical and affective demonstration of empathy which I was aware was absolutely crucial to creating the kind of relationship where intimate details of participants' lives could be articulated (Truzzi, 1974).

It is argued by Holloway (2004) that whilst aiming to facilitate conversation in the interview, my verbal interventions could actually work towards blocking the openness of mind necessarily for inklings of emotional truth of a serious form might evolve. Stopford (2004) highlights that staying attuned to the shifts and nuances of the interview is an integral part of the listening process and central to the technique of this method was to visibly demonstrate that I was also listening with the medium of my body.

To listen to the movement of the participant's body whilst simultaneously listening to the discursive elements of the dialogue involved intense focus in order to show how my body was connected to and in harmony to theirs. Also, it is suggested by Stopford (2004) that it is crucial when participant's need a sense of reflective holding or to change the way in which I was speaking or to be able to interact in a way that responded to the unconscious communication involved in the dialogue. At times, I was aware that I did not manage to respond appropriately. I tried to maintain an awareness of sensitivity in order to ensure I was careful not to trample on vulnerable aspects of the self, but I was acutely aware throughout many of the interviews that I did not always manage to achieve this.

Initial contact with participants involved me gaining verbal confirmation from the first participant that the trans-racial adoptive family they knew had confirmed that it was alright for me to make contact following them receiving confirmation that they would like to be involved in the study. I made initial contact via telephone to introduce myself and to confirm the arrangements for the first interviews. Although I had originally always envisaged interviews to take place in the home, I did not realise how being exposed to the participant's home environment would open up a completely new layer of data and subsequent deeper level of interpretation and understanding of the participant's life experience.

Initial contact was made over the telephone to arrange the logistics of the first interview where I would introduce myself as the researcher and explain a bit more about the aims of the research and how I envisaged the participant being involved in the interview process. To provide an insight in to the actual process of the field work, I provide a description below of each stage of the four interviews carried out with participants. It is important to understand that each interview with individual participants had their own unique characteristics, but there were certain elements to each stage of the four interview process that crossed across the whole data set. In this setting out the process of the interview method, I provide both description and reflection on the interview process and technique. The data collection process lasted a period of one year, where I carried out a total of forty seven psycho-social interviews that were transcribed and the content of previous interviews used to inform the direction of experiential explorations in the following interviews.

Interview One

This first interview would be the first visit to the adoptees or adoptive parents home to conduct the first interview. I had not anticipated the amount of further information and indeed understanding that I would gain about the participant from visiting their home. In Bion's (1983) psychoanalytic writings, he emphasises the importance of the need for the therapist to take in to account of what is going on in the immediate environment of the patient which is argued as being central to the overall interpretation process. Entering in to the participant's homes, and having this level of access to this intimate part of their lives provided me with a depth of insight in to the dialogue that I do not think I would have been able to gain in other settings. Following the first interview, I made brief notes describing their homes, and how they had made me feel. To provide an example of the kind of notes made I provide an example below.

“The parents home was out in a suburb in the South West of England, the father was present in the home, but he did not come in to the space where I was sat with the mother. He just remained in the background, I could sense his presence during the interview, and it felt oppressive, I felt that he was listening to what the mother was saying and that the mother was aware of his presence as well.

The house was like any large middle class home, the neighbourhood seemed primarily of white ethnicity. I felt extremely anxious going in to this home, as I had already carried out one interview with the adoptive daughter who had described a large amount of violence from the father of the family. I felt false, going in to this setting where I knew of the violence and then interviewing the mother where I was not permitted to disclose any kind of detail of the daughter's interview. It was very difficult to even meet the father, who presented to me as any white middle class elderly man would, it was all very decent and proper. I remember how the curtains matched the carpet, family photos, loads of clocks on the wall everywhere, the mantle piece, in every room there were just loads of clocks. I was very aware of the ticking during the interviews, it made me think of my own childhood, being small, sat in Scottish granny's front room listening to all the adults talking, bored and listening to the ticking of the clock. Made me think of the orderliness of middle class life, where time is money which so sharply contrasted the adoptive daughter's artistic and messy flat. There was a photo of their transracially adopted daughter dressed as a bridesmaid, this little black child in a pink 80s bridesmaid dress with her afro hair sharply contrasting the other blonde haired and blue eyed bridesmaids, the same but so different. There were photos, everywhere, christenings, birthdays, graduations, and all the other kinds of photos you would expect from any other middle class setting. I felt so uncomfortable, almost a dislike of the environment, everything was so orderly, everything completely in place'.

Descriptions of these kinds were recorded following every first interview, where following completion of each of the four interviews with each participant I would sometimes add further detail to these written reflections where for example I had been shown another part of the home, or the garden or a new member of the family had been encountered. This process of writing reflective notes following the interviews also became an important way for me to 'get out of me' and on to paper some of the complex feelings that would always arise after each interview. Although this data did not become directly part of the actual data analysed, it was the wholeness of the experience as a researcher that the environmental context was relevant in order to put in to practice a central tenet of the theory of the subject conceptualised in this thesis.

Bion's (1983) emphasis on the importance of the need to take in to account of what is going on in the immediate environment of the patient in order to deepen levels of understanding involved in the overall interpretation process. I would arrive at the participant's house and in effect as soon as the door had opened, the process of data collection was thought of as being in process where my initial feelings upon meeting the mothers or the adult trans-racial adoptees would be noted in reflective notes where I would try and consider why those feelings might have arisen. My experience of being in the home setting was detailed in my field work notes. Where the ways in which I was shown around the home, or taken straight to the room where the interview was taking place, the observations I made of the home, the relationship dynamics I observed between the husband or other members of the family were all aspects of the research experience that were reflected upon. All these dimensions of my experience of the interview were considered in terms of defining and interpreting the inter-subjective field between the participant and I.

I carried out an informal interview prior to embarking on engaging with the process of interviewing participants. Following the completion of what can be described as a pilot interview, I was aware that although the overall approach to the psycho-social method was one of exploration, having some initial questions for that first interview would aid the flow of the dialogue where I found that both myself and the trans-racially adopted person that I knew from a personal context seemed to find it equally as difficult to speak. This first pilot and practise interview was characterised with awkwardness, anxiety and misunderstandings, so a few questions were sketched out and taken with me to every first interview in order to aid the exploration.

The use of pre-prepared questions were not used in a systematic way, and in some interviews it did not feel like I needed to refer to the questions during the first interview, but rather the questions provided a sense of support for myself during some of the difficulty in facilitating dialogue that seemed to characterise the first interviews. A feature of all the first interviews was how to start the dialogue, where with every single participant I often felt when we first met that there was a subtle process of negotiation involved in what I felt was the participant's feelings around the perceived power I had

as a somehow more knowledgeable and powerful researcher from a Russell Group University. I felt very uncomfortable with what I felt as being a misperception of my status, and whilst it was never articulated I felt that this dynamic blocked the initial dialogue between us, and seemed to create some very complex feelings in myself as the researcher which seemed to indicate my unfamiliarity with being situated in the position of power in the relational dynamic. This dynamics was ultimately overcome through dialogue that emphasised reassurance through discussing my own experience of trans-racial adoption and some of my feelings of being located in the university.

Interview Two

Before arranging the second interview, I had transcribed the interview and read through the interview data. I would identify in each interview specific areas that I would follow up with the participant during the next interview. In the initial stage of the second interview, I would often ask participants to clarify, or tell me more about a particular line of experience they had articulated, so that a deeper layer of meaning could emerge. In effect the interpretation and analysis of the data from the previous interview was carried out together where as Moustakas (1994) argues, being open and honest about my thoughts and feelings related to my interpretive conclusions was a hallmark of this psycho-social research strategy. When meeting some participants for the second time, it became quite clear that reflections on experience had unearthed memories that may have created affective dimensions to participant's experience in the present moment. If I felt that this is what appeared to me at the start of a second interview, then I would just carefully raise it with participant's to acknowledge the feelings that could be emerging for participants.

Interview Three

I found the third interview was often what I felt to be the most meaningful interview out of the series of four interviews. I found that there was a stronger sense of trust between myself and the participants and I myself felt more relaxed so that the style of dialogue in the third interviews was one that was characterised by a conversation. I felt that some of the depth of descriptions of participants experience was very meaningful and when I

had transcribed and re-read some of what was said in these third interviews there was a sense that at this stage of the process I had really managed to gain an insight in to how some of the experiences described had actually felt for participants. This was an important part of the overall interview technique, that had involved me always going back to asking how an experience had felt when something was described to me. I had felt in previous interviews that I had not really managed to gain access to this level of experience. Having analysed some of the interactions in this stage of the interview process, there seemed to be much more dialogue that managed to focus on the feelings of experience.

Interview Four

I found the last interview to be the hardest interview to conduct, particularly with some of the parents, where I felt often in the last interview that participants really had had enough of talking to me. This feeling was particularly strong with some of the adoptive mothers, and one of the mothers called in advance to withdraw from the final interview. It made me realise how much they had. It was in these last interviews that I realised that in part they had probably become involved in the study because of a duty they felt towards their children. There seemed to be something I often felt about that last interview that made me feel as though I was in some way not wanted there. Maybe a realisation of all the intimate details of their family life, or maybe it was my own feelings of having to say goodbye to women and men that I had come to know in a way that I never would have outside of the realm of this research framework. We were complete strangers to each other, but what was shared during the course of those four interviews was so deeply intimate, transformative that had a profound effect on me.

5.9 Data analysis: An inter-subjective approach

In the remaining part of the chapter, I intend to undertake a discussion of the data analysis process. Throughout the analysis phase, the feminist aim of reflexivity acknowledged that the words of my participants were never to be considered as what Plummer (2001) describes as 'just stories'. Instead, it was assumed that the words of the participants had emotional, ethical and deeply political implications that may provide an insight to the reader of participant's experience.

The approach taken to analysis of the data can be described as fitting under the broad banner of 'thematic analysis' where my own subjectivity are assumed to be the interlinked fractions that Ashworth (2003) describes as the lens through which the process of data analysis takes place. The primary challenge of the data analysis process was to remain as faithful as possible to the meaning attributed to the experience as expressed by participants. As I have mentioned previously, guided by Giorgi's (1985) notion of levels of descriptive analysis, there was an on-going process of analysis throughout the interview process that was produced alongside participants.

Acknowledging what Bion (1983) argues as memory always being misleading as a record of fact as it is argued that memory can be distorted by the influence of unconscious forces by selection and suppression of material. It is therefore assumed that what was articulated by participants can be understood as both fantasy, what was supposed to have happened, and fact, what has not yet happened. What is articulated to me by the participants does therefore not privilege the realm of the irrational over other aspects of self-experience. Everything that is articulated needs to be grasped and understood as having important functions and meanings.

There were so many instances of participants describing memories of their experiences where they seemed to drift off. It was as though my presence in the interview had disappeared from their awareness. Where at times certain participants were answering a question or reconstructing an event that had happened in childhood, where they had been powerless. The way in which the memory was retold and described to me, seemed to involve the participant reimagining how the situation could have been, had they been more powerful..

There were endless descriptions of traumatic experiences. Even when one of my participants came to my house to be interviewed, he was severely racially abused outside my house. He had tried to telephone me to let me know he was here, and the high number of missed calls that I had on my phone demonstrated the anxiety this experience had caused. I felt terrible that I had missed those calls, probably like so many times he had experienced racism and no one had been there to respond, or to stick up for him. These traumas of every day experiences pervaded every interview I had with both the adoptive parents and the adopted child.

Fromm (2001) describes trauma as being something that happens in the environment, which is life experience, a real-life experience. The way in which participant's often described how these traumatic events felt for them did not seem to match the way I felt the events had actually been for them. As an example of this contrast between the discursive part of the interviews and the emotional dynamics of the interviews, the participant that had been quite severely racially abused outside my house had stated that he had not been bothered by the incident. This sharply contrasted the emotional expression on his face and my intuitive recognition of the anxiety and shame this experience had caused him.

Kohut's (1977) proposition that the empirical and theoretical domains of psychoanalysis are defined and demarcated by its investigatory stance of empathy and introspection, were central to this on-going process of co-produced interpretation of meaning between the researcher and I. Through our own subjective frames of reference, our multiplicity of formative experience I worked with research participants to attempt to organise the analytic data from interviews, two, three and four into a set of coherent themes that were talked about in more depth. The direction of the themes always involved and was guided by the participant. I believe that it was through our shared experiences that may be unique to the trans-racially adopted family that a level of intuitive understanding was achieved that became an integral part of the research process.

It is exactly this kind of familiarity with the substantive topic that Boyatzis (1998) argues highly ambiguous qualitative information can emerge. Maintaining an awareness of my own projections of values and conceptualisation of events in to analysis and interpretations was the way in which the ambiguous nature of the data was managed so that an element of structure in the presentation of participant's experience was possible. Indeed, Potter & Hepburn (2005) highlight the problem of the flooding of the interviews with researcher's own or social science agendas and categories and this is something that I was acutely aware of whilst reflecting on the content of interviews.

When re-reading transcripts it was evident in some interviews that I had perhaps unconsciously and very subtly guided conversations in ways that could be understood as linking dialogue to social science categories, such as gender or class. This checking

out between interviews of my interpretation of the meaning of parts of our conversations with participants was vital to managing my own projections in the interpretation process. There were many instances during the first level of analysis with participants that suggested my interpretations did not accurately reflect the meanings participants had meant. Or on another level, my interpretation was too painfully close to their unconscious meaning that it was rejected as being inaccurate.

Interpreting data under a paradigm of psycho-social principles means that we acknowledge our unique biography of anxiety and desire provoking life events and the manner in which their meanings have been unconsciously transformed in internal reality. It is through what Hollway (2004) described as the real events in the external social world that should be analytically approached as desirously and defensively, as well as discursively appropriated. As Braun & Clarke (2006) argue, using a thematic approach to data analysis under a psycho-social paradigm assumes a multi-layered approach to interpreting meaning of experience. This contrasts an analytical process that just cuts across data to ascertain categories of similarity at the expense of neglecting the affective complexity of unique biographies experienced through the life worlds of participants.

Therefore, under the overarching analytical strategy of thematic analysis, the data analysis approach involved me identifying generic themes that accurately described the structures of the experience taking into account the inter-subjective dynamics between the participant and myself. As Jervis (2009) acknowledges in the use of self as a research tool, that my own unconscious experience as much as conscious analytical self has been of primary influence in what is presented in my analysis, as much as what is left out. Indeed, the primary challenge at the beginning of the data analysis process was actually finding a way to find a way in to a set generated from a phenomenological and psychoanalytically inspired method that emphasised rich description. I delayed and delayed starting the process, largely I think because I did not know where to start, or what to leave out of what was to me, as a transracially adopted person, where every interview and intricate articulation of experience seemed so crucial to conveying an understanding of transracial adoption.

Whilst acknowledging that a level of analysis had been taking place throughout the interviews, the first stage of the formal analysis process, involved me starting by re-reading entire interviews straight through to gain a sense of the whole interview as it was articulated on paper. When reading individual interviews, I would simultaneously consider my own personal reflections of the feelings and memories I had noted following each interview. Whilst I read through each interview from every adoptive child and adoptive parent, I made notes of recurring words that appeared to me across the transcribed interviews.

I did not use what Coffey & Atkinson (1996) describe as a strict coding method, but rather made on going notes of recurring micro events that appeared and in what was a very slow way managed to organise the data interview in to some very broad categories. This first stage was approached with what Corbin & Strauss (1990) describes with an openness and flexibility in order to be able to perceive the patterns. The parents data was analysed separately to the children's, although many of the same key words emerged in both sets of data. At this first stage of reading through all the interviews and the reflective notes from interviews, I was left with approximately fifty odd key words that had appeared recurrently across interviews with the children and the parents. This was a challenging process, where through this re-reading of every interview, I was required to recall some of what were very difficult feelings that arose during interview situations.

The data comprised of so many rich descriptions of participants' memories, collectively all the words made up such a rich portrait of the intimate dynamics of family life. I felt throughout the analysis process, that this data did not just represent the social category of 'transracial adoption', but rather provided an in-depth insight into the affective complexity of family dynamics. All throughout the analysis process, I was aware that the task was to find a way of reducing what was a vast data set in to three analysis chapters and the hardest part of the analysis process was to accurately represent the worlds of participants in a way that did justice to the experiences they had described.

The next step of analysis involved making connections between the key words that I had identified as appearing across the interviews of the children and the parents, to combine and catalogue related patterns into subthemes (Bogdan & Taylor 1989). This

involved the bringing together of a number of fragmented data which gained further meaning when organised into a subtheme. The coherence of ideas rested with my own subjectivity, where the connections I made and subthemes I produced were in part unavoidably influenced by my own projection. The final three analysis chapters were separated in to the overall themes of Class, Race and Loss, that I think emerged as dominant themes or ways of categorising forms of experience. What was clearly evident was that although I represent the worlds of the participants in these three categories that sought to maintain fidelity to the phenomena described to me as they had been lived in order to apprehend the contexts of the person living through the situation. It was by establishing these three overarching themes that I interwove the data with related literature in order to develop my overall argument for choosing the themes, which mainly is connected to the fact that transracial adoption is not articulated under these terms.

5.9.1 Ethical framework

The consideration of ethical concerns for this project has been formed by feminist and post-colonial perspectives. The model of what Urban-Walker (1998) describe as 'utilitarian ethics of consequence' is an ethical framework that prioritises the goodness of outcomes of research. The study is not completely divorced from achieving the aim of utilitarian ethics, where this experiential understanding does seek to increase understanding and knowledge of the experience of trans-racial adoption ultimately to contribute to influencing the sphere of policy and practice so that it the knowledge may affect real lives for the good. Equally important to the actual impact of the production of knowledge is the ethical concerns that are contained within the actual research process itself.

The attention to the ethical concerns within the 'process' of research advanced by feminist writers on ethics has involved illuminating and emphasising the importance of care and responsibility involved in the process of research. In *Moral Understandings*, Urban-Walker (1998) presents a template for moral theory that is described as being expressive and collaborative, culturally situated and practice-based. Whilst recognising the tenets of utilitarian ethics of the outcomes of research or the effect on justice or rights, informed by elements of the moral theory described by Urban-Walker (1998),

the negotiation of ethics for this project moved beyond a model of pure reasoning and rationality, to one that acknowledges and places at the centre of the research an awareness of the feelings and emotions of both the research and researched.

Urban-Walker's (1998) ethical concerns reflects the responsibilities embedded in the research process, the responsibility I have towards the research participants where ongoing agreements need to continuously negotiated throughout the undertaking of the research process. An awareness of the cultural 'situatedness' seems particularly relevant to consider as an ethical concern, because of the different responsibilities I have that are grounded in gender, race and class of the adoptees and the adoptive parents. The practical basis of research, is also made relevant by Urban-Walker (1998), because there are actual practices of responsibility involved in the research process that need to be considered from an ethical perspective.

In consideration of feminist ethics perspectives, Edwards & Mauthner (2002) take up the work of Porter (1999) to describe three interrelated features of feminist thinking on ethics: personal experience, context and nurturing relationships. It is argued that the researchers own experiences of these three dilemmas have the capacity to generate different ethical perspectives. It has very much been because of my own experience of living through the trans-racial adoptive situation that I have sought to theoretically de-stable the notion of a pre-given trans-racial adoptive identity as being something that resides within me, as though who I am is detached from the influences and restraints of historical, social and political forces. It has therefore been an ethical priority in ontology and epistemology to enable an understanding of the phenomenon of trans-racial adoption as it has been lived. Incorporating Peter's (1999) proposal of three interrelated features of feminist thinking, ethical concerns in the actual process of method was to enable research encounters that enabled forms of expressive collaboration in order to understand the experience on the terms of those who have lived through the trans-racial adoptive situation.

Having established the feminist perspective that has influenced and guided the ethical considerations of this research project, in this following section I will now provide some reflection on the actual process of managing ethical concerns of the research project. There were two very separate processes involved which I divide in to pragmatic and

what I describe as an sensibility that had taken in to consideration the ethical concerns involved in the project prior to engaging in the interview processes. Firstly, before I was able to recruit the sample I was required to complete and submit an ethics application document to the Cardiff University School of Social Science ethics committee board. This involved me providing a detailed description of the proposed research questions, strategy and framework, the methodological and data analysis techniques. An additional request was made by members of the ethics committee to interview one of my doctoral supervisors Professor Valerie Walkerdine, which I understand involved the ethics committee members gaining further information on the detail of the project. The application to the university ethics board was authorised which enabled me to embark on the process of recruiting the trans-racially adoptive families to be involved in the study.

I sought to recruit participants through a formal network of the British Association of Adoption and Fostering organisation, but no one came forward through this recruitment strategy. Therefore I approached personal trans-racially adoptive contacts to ask if they would take part in the study which lead to a snowball effect. I was aware that in me asking people that I knew, there was a potential ethical concern in that the friend I knew that put me in contact with other families may have felt a degree of obligation to assist. The way that I managed this concern was to firstly explain in detail the aims of the project and the research approach and to provide several opportunities for her to decline becoming involved in the study.

This awareness that there may have been a degree of vulnerability on the part of all the participants was central in my mind when first making contact with potential participants. I was acutely aware that this involved me having to balance my own need of being required to produce a phd thesis with the potential needs of the research participants. Therefore following every initial contact I made with the participants providing them with the detail of the research and explaining their involvement, and to arrange the details of the first interview to take place, I would ring before the interview date just to give them an opportunity to withdraw. This opportunity to withdraw was offered at each stage of the four interviews. Steps taken to be, being up front about the potential emotional risks of being involved with the project, and continuously checking

out these risks, participants should be informed of the benefits they can realistically expect from participating.

Caring for the research subject is something that Holloway (2004) argues needs to be considered throughout all stages of the methodological process and has more broadly been of a central concern to the ethics of the psycho-social tradition (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009; Cooper and Price, 2012; Holloway and Jefferson, 2012). Even though my conscious intention would always be to create only forms of good from the research process, I was acutely aware throughout the research process that I could also be creating forms of harm.

As Holloway & Jefferson (2012) argue, claiming unintentional, relational and even unconscious forms of what one may consider as beneficence is a deeply complex and contentious process. I became acutely aware that as the four interviews progressed, the content of the dialogue was very intimate and sensitive where much of the dialogic exchange was clearly quite painful to relive for some participants. In a sense, the aim of the study to gain access to an in-depth understanding was not without emotional consequences. This emotional and often unspoken experiential terrain involved participants imparting deeply personal feelings. At times I felt deeply uncomfortable at what felt like an intrusion and even exploitative.

Research participant involvement in research and the potential benefits that are brought by their involvement in the research process on one level was reconciled by knowing that by listening to their stories, their voices would be heard and conveyed. Where in almost all instances with the adoptive mothers, they all articulated never having an opportunity to talk about their experiences. On one level I felt that me listening to them provided them with an opportunity to be heard, to reconcile what in some instances were very difficult experiences.

As a way of acknowledging the potential emotional complexity involved in engaging with the project, at the beginning of each interview, I would ask each participant if they were alright to continue the research process as a way of providing an opportunity for them to stop their engagement. There was one mother that after the third interview did not want to continue after the third interview, and I contacted her to say thank you for her involvement. I became acutely aware, that in many ways during the interview

encounters, I felt to be going beyond the boundaries of whatever I imagined a researcher to do, and felt at times to be starting to enter the realm of being a therapist. I was also acutely aware that I was not a therapist, and whilst the psycho-social tradition centralises psychoanalytic ideas, it is recognised that psycho-social methods do not attempt to replicate the role of an analyst during the interview exchange. It has rather been by drawing on therapeutic insights and translating them in to the approach of a method and the disposition I maintain as the researcher that marks the boundaries between a psycho-social method and a therapeutic encounter.

The stories that were told were often extremely traumatic to comprehend and absorb. After every interview, I would ring my thesis supervisor to discuss each interview as a way of providing me with some form of emotional support and outlet from which I could in a sense off load what I had heard and felt during research exchanges. I felt a pressure during the interview with participants to always maintain a sense of togetherness, of strength, for the dynamics of care to be focused around the participant. At the end of the data collection process year I was mentally and physically exhausted. I felt things driving to the interviews, and driving back from the interviews. I dreamt of participants, and thought about them during the day. For one year, and even today as I write this thesis three years later from the process of collecting data, I often remember instances or stories that participants told me about. Their lives are now an integral part of my subjectivity.

This year of data collection was psychologically and emotionally very difficult. In many instances, I was not always aware of how the experience of collecting the data was effecting me both mentally and physically. I remember throughout the interview process, typically when I left each interview intense feelings of guilt. Where on some level I felt that our dialogue had opened up intensely private moments of participant's lives that made me feel like I was an intruder. Where on some level, I felt that my guilt was connected to my feelings of exploiting my position as a researcher and in some way felt guilty about using their experience to ultimately would enable me to gain a doctorate.

There was a need throughout the data collection process to talk through these kinds of feelings that arose as I progressed through completing the interviews with participants.

I felt conflicting feelings of guilt and yet maintained an awareness that paid close attention to the nuanced dynamics of power where it helped to verbally reflect on questions. Bion's (1962) notion of containment is concerned with the interplay between thoughts and feelings and particularly the significance of anxiety on people's behaviour and responses. A way of managing some of the vulnerable positions of the participants, and indeed myself, involved me maintaining an awareness of my responsibility to contain certain interactions if I felt the impact of uncontained anxiety to be too problematic. The way in which this was achieved was to acknowledge the description of their experience, where in many cases I found that visibly showing my own feelings in response to situations described to me had a calming and containing effect (Holloway & Jefferson, 2012).

5.9.2 Chapter Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to provide an insight in to the process of developing a methodological approach that has enabled me to respond to the research questions. The overarching thesis aim of seeking to gain an in-depth understanding of the experience of trans-racial adoption has meant that I have located the method in the broad tradition of interpretive methods. This has involved a reliance on placing the psycho-social interview as the source from which this inter-subjective understanding of experience becomes possible.

Drawing specifically on the relational tradition as articulated by Stolorow & Atwood (1992), Stopford (2004) and Mitchell & Aron (1999), the interview method acknowledges unconscious processes as being central to the forms of communication that emerge during the interview exchange. This meant that my own subjectivity as the means by which experience is communicated through and interpreted sits in sharp contrast to the position of the researcher in clinical research. This centralisation of inter-subjectivity throughout all aspects of the research method has meant that the dialogue between myself and the research participant extended across both the interviews and the data analysis process.

There was so much that was said and expressed throughout the course of the four psych-social interviews with each participant that I was unable to present in the word limit of this thesis. I believe the depth of intimacy that was shared during each research

encounter affected us all profoundly. For many people involved in this study, including myself, it was the first time they had ever articulated or reflected upon their experience of life. Certainly, from the point of view of the researcher, engaging in the process of this method has changed me forever.

Chapter 6: Processes of 'Race'

6.1 Chapter Introduction

The point of departure for this chapter is its consideration of how the body's relationship with space engages the body in particular ways that can be understood as 'racialised'. This emphasis on seeking to understand how race is experienced in trans-racial adoptive contexts aims to problematize an understanding of racial identities defined by physiological and biological features. The assumptions of behavioural, emotional or intellectual capacities that have historically been associated with racial features is well documented (Barkan, 1993; Essed, 1991; Lewis, 2009; Smedley & Smedly, 2005; Staples, 1984; Wetherell, 1992)

In this attempt to destabilise the notion of a static racial identity through the analysis of trans-racial adoptive experience, the theorisation of subjectivity upon which this analysis is premised upon aims to speak to the much wider context of the millions of people are living out their racialized lives in a world that is increasingly globally connected and characterised by diaspora populations. I have articulated previously in the introductory chapter in outlining the critical debates that have surrounded the practice of placing non-Caucasian children in Caucasian families that it has primarily been the effect of the trans-racial parenting relationship on the child's identity that has been the focus of the argument. Largely as a consequence of this, a large majority of research has focused as its object of investigation, various facets of the trans-racial adoptive identity.

The theoretical shift from a static notion of identity to a concept of subjectivity from which to understand the experience of trans-racial adoption has been in part motivated by a desire to reflect the specificity of trans-racial adoption but also to connect to the highly complex racial identities that exist today. As Yngvesson & Mahoney (2000) argue, it has been the child's birth family context which culturally is where the 'racial identity' is assumed to be located. The disconnection of the child from what is often posited as being their 'roots' has meant that the trans-racial adoptee is never able to make a claim to a seamless narrative of origin. This narrative of origin has been historicised in *Chapter 4*, where I have illustrated the political and economic relevance of the blood line in making claims to origins.

Whilst the affective complexity involved in experiencing what is culturally assumed to be an origin of identity that is culturally perceived to be located somewhere else is something that is very specific to trans-racial adoptive contexts. It is argued that the globalised labour processes that have dominated our economic sphere over the past century means millions of people have complex psychic and an embodied relationship with some kind of imagined homeland.

The trans-racial adoptees involved in the study did not face the very real structural barriers that many non-Caucasian people experience as being central to the way in which their bodies are racialized. The adopted children's location in the middle class context of their adoptive parents meant that they had access to and enjoyed the material benefits of this setting. What seemed more relevant to the ways in which the trans-racial adoptees described their experiences in relation to issues of race, was the affective ways in which feelings of being racialized enacted historic assumptions that created very real psychic barriers. The myriad of ways in which my own body has been read, its 'Chineseness' and all the associated complexities of expectations that this discursive term can create in relational dynamics has been central to my experience.

The centralisation of affect in the analysis of the experiences of race enables a shift from the meaning of race being understood as socially constructed or produced and defined by discourse, to an approach of understanding racialized experience through the body being engaged in a 'process in practice'. Lewis (2007) engages with the work of Williams (1985) to critically discuss the claim that culture is ordinary to explore some of the ways in which racializing cultures are embedded in everyday interactions and processes of identification that found subjectivity. It is through processes of co-emergence and co-enactment of the body with the world where the physicality of the body has the power to evoke feelings in the other that in turn invokes a feeling response where it is this feeling that can be understood as part of the process of being racialized (Blackman & Venn, 2010; Haraway, 2004).

In this chapter, it has been by paying attention in method to what phenomenologists refer to as the 'mundane' aspects of everyday life that the chapter aims to convey the ways in which culture sustains particular ways of interactions that can be understood as racialized. There was a pervading sense across the experience described of a conflict

between the cultural messages of the externality of the body and the interiority of a sense of self where the power for others to read their bodies in ways that were dissonant to a sense of self that has been shaped in the context of the trans-racial adoptive family that illustrated quite clearly what Yngvesson & Mahoney (2000) describe as the deep historicity of our existence (Probyn, 1996).

There was so much that was said about race in the experience of both the mothers and adopted adults that the word limit of this chapter will never really be able to capture. As I have articulated earlier on in the introductory chapter, whilst these three empirical chapters are presented through three separate analytical categories of Race, Class and Loss. I emphasise that in understanding the experience of trans-racial adoptive families there is no separation in the actual way these categories become enacted and are felt.

6.2 Spatial contexts and the intensity of 'race'.

We are required to occupy multiple spaces and imagined communities, the presence of our racialized body spills out on to new territories that in some instances have traditionally been uninhabited by blackness. Our presence in particular spaces can create unsettling effects upon dividing lines of historical ideas of racial categories and groupings that ideological, cultural and historical devices continue to create. The aim of this section is to illustrate some of the interacting-effects that racialized bodies can have on the relational network it is both connected to, but often experienced as being separated from.

For Catherine, an adoptee of Iranian descent, the description of how she feels about her race seems to illustrate how the spatial environment in which her body is located comes to influence how she feels about her own racialized body. Being located in a spatial context characterised by high levels of difference where Catherine's relational network was equally as diverse. She describes herself experiencing a sense of an embodied security in relation to place. She seems to have less awareness of her own body. The sense of embodied security changes when she moves to what she describes as a predominantly white area where the physical difference in the appearance of her body is noticed, pointed out and accentuated so that the effect of these interactions creates a different relationship towards her own body. It is not only her racial difference that becomes a more prominent dynamic of her relationships but also her adoptive status.

‘When I was in London, I didn’t really feel that difference, cause like you say I was surrounded by different people. Our next door neighbours were Greek Cypriots, my brother was good friends with a West Indian family down the street and white working class people, students and the church where my dad was the Baptist Minister, it was full of English people but also West Indian, some, a few other sort of nationalities and so I don’t really, it was normal to be around different backgrounds and I felt quite happy and secure generally. I think I did feel I was around people from different backgrounds as well, different nationalities, so I didn’t feel as though I was missing out massively. I knew that I was adopted, but it wasn’t an issue, but then when I was ten and we moved to the North East, and that was when it really was rammed home to me by the people around me, you know it was straight away in at the deep end. You know, at school ‘Why are you a different colour to your parents’. I think my parents found it hard as well’ (Interview 1, Catherine)

As Ahmed (2007) describes, the psychic dimensions of being are formed through the point of view of the others and that are minds are not somehow cut off from matter and space, but rather, an embodied mind has been formed through its process of engagement with a spatial and temporal relationship with the world. For all of the trans-racially adoptive families involved in this study, all of the adoptees were adopted as babies so that the process of the embodied mind for the main part had taken place in immediate proximity to the same place of the adoptive mother and father.

The concept of the ‘body-schema’ advanced by Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests that mind is always embodied, always based on corporeal and sensory relations. A characteristic of the way in which the body-schema is lived in trans-racial adoptive contexts had varying degrees of consequences for the families involved in this study, where the processes of the ways in which the body was engaged in some instances had detrimental effects on state of minds. For Rebecca, in the extract below, she describes a change in the way that she feels about her ethnicity as a result of the experiences she has when moving to a more rural and predominantly white area.

‘And then we came to (City name) and then my dad got a job in (Town name) which is quite rural and erm, like I was on my own basically so I

must have been about six or seven maybe, I can't remember properly, but off the top of my head, and then I got a little bit bullied, I don't think anything really badly but I can remember like being upset by people in primary school and going home and being upset and then that must have triggered my mum and dad to feel that it wasn't right that I was the only black person in (Town name). (Interview 3, Rebecca)

Similarly for Catherine, she describes an instance where her blackness is accentuated through the white relational context she is located in. What was very difficult to listen to was the fact that she had to cope with this experience herself, because all the friends that she was with were white. Somewhere in her early years, as I have done myself, she has learnt that these experiences cannot be shared with anyone.

C - Yeah, like you're not doing anything to anybody are you, yeah, that wasn't very good and like going abroad I guess as well. Like I'd say a lot of European cities are a lot less multicultural really, they just can't cope with black people really, and I can remember feeling really stared at and feeling really uncomfortable

CL - can you tell me a bit more about that

CL - Can you remember how that felt

C - Like I would never say anything to anyone, but like because all my friends on that trip would be white so like you could say that they wouldn't even understand so I don't even begin to say it, like you just keep it to yourself don't you, or you joke about it really. (Interview 4, Rebecca).

There is a consistent theme throughout Rebecca's four interviews that indicates that although she is alright, 'that she is comfortable with who she is', she talks extensively about how her black mixed heritage adoptive brother and sister are the ones who have created and experienced all the problems. It is evident in the first part of the extract below, where she describes herself not having a problem with being black, but considers that her adopted sister is the one that has the 'battle with being black'.

C - Like there were times when I'd probably say I just want to be like everybody else, not different, but very infrequently and only if something had happened, but

I haven't got a hatred or a battle with being black but I think my sister does because of everything that's happened. I don't know, it's hard to say, but no I don't have that. I'm quite comfortable and I think I always have been quite comfortable with who I am, just accepting of, yeah. I think it was nice when I went to university and I met other people from different backgrounds, but I didn't have many non-white friends until I went to university really and then I had regular contact with people from different cultural backgrounds really and that was good I suppose.

CL - why do you think that was nice

C - I've never had it and I just think, I don't know. I suppose it's comfortable, you're not in a minority, it's comfortable, like people can relate to things that you're talking about

CL - Yeah, that must have been hard.

C - yeah, there's not a black person in sight really and even the black people that were there or the few like, there might have been one or two Chinese people, one or two Asian people but the thing is I wasn't friends with any, not because I wasn't going to be friends with them but there was nothing that brought us together. So like there was one other black people in my year group but we weren't in classes together. So through the whole of school I don't know whether I really spoke to him because there was nothing, so like oh they've got something in common, you'd think someone would think oh it would be quite nice. But there was no one there thinking like that I suppose, like I can remember in school they did a text in English 'A taste of honey' and it's got some racist words in the story, in the play and I can remember her taking me out of class and saying 'oh do I mind' and I'm not going to say no am I, that's not me, I'm not going to make a big fuss and I think a part of how I've been brought up, that's my dad, like don't make a fuss, don't make a fuss, just be quiet that sort of thing, whereas was it my place to have to deal with that sort of thing anyway and like the school can't cope with, they didn't know any better (Interview Two, Rebecca).

In the extract below, Rebecca again illustrates a heightened sense of awareness of her blackness through the way in which she is seen through the white relational context she

is located in. It is this subtly of the way in which she is looked at that affirms her difference and minority status. It is the perception of her body that creates this sense of being a minority. Whilst she demonstrates that she can intellectually understand what is going on in this situation she describes, it arguably must have been painful as she clearly remembers it happening when she was seventeen years old. At the time of interview she was thirty four years old.

'I don't know how old I was then, I must have been about seventeen. I can remember just people pointing and staring at me and there were no other black people, so maybe it's not to be rude, like you can reflect on it, maybe no one's ever seen black people before. That's like when we went to Africa and you take white kids, if they've never seen white people, they weren't necessarily horrible but it just like reaffirms like it did when you're in the minority' (Interview 2, Rebecca)

For Catherine, she describes a painful description of an experience that provides an insight in to the level of isolation involved in the black-white relational network that she exists in. One way that she describes herself coping with her difference was to deny her Iranian side. This process of denial of her difference seems to be described as being replicated by her adoptive mother in the way in which she describes her adoptive mother talking about difference in others.

CL - Do you think there were ever occasions where your mother or father, they were ashamed of you in terms of your difference.

C - Not really, I do remember when I was a child with my mum talking to an Aunt and we were in Birmingham and we'd come to visit relatives in Birmingham and my mum had her arms around me and my aunt facing us said 'look at those lovely half caste kids' they're really cute and it was like she'd slapped me in the face because she was totally ignorant as to how that could have hurt me and not really seen the person I am being half Iranian. It was denied, totally denied and I felt quite hurt, very hurt by that it went deep inside and I think it was, I don't know how old I was then, I might have been quite young but that was a traumatic moment because I could see that I do remember the ones that cut me deep and I

think it was round when I was 12 or 13 and we'd been living in the North east for about three years. We'd moved there when I was ten in 1977 and the first year we lived there we were on a very ruff council estate, which didn't help as I was surrounded by very uneducated North Eastern working class people who were often very ignorant and racist and also a lot of skinheads, I had things thrown at me, I think my brother got in to a few fights because he sounded cockney but he was that bit older (Interview four, Catherine)

For Rebecca, she described to me in a tone of resignation that she had always had to manage the racism she experienced by herself. This is illustrated in the extract below when she returns home and describes not being able to say anything to her adoptive parents about a racist incident that she experiences. However, the severity of the incident overflows, where she is not able to contain the emotions. Through her tears, the trauma is communicated to her adoptive parents.

'I can remember my 18th or my 21st birthday, and then like coming home and like not wanting to say anything, and then everyone singing happy birthday and then I was just crying. It's like shock, I suppose, like I was brought up there and everyone knew me, so people might have been racist, but they weren't racist to my face and then like strangers and really that should affect you less but really I think it's the shock and I'm not the type to retaliate and then I suppose I just kept it quiet and then I'm quite emotional, I was just so upset.' (Interview 2, Rebecca)

The bringing together two distinct individuals, whilst with their own minds and their own histories, many descriptions of experience illustrated how the relational context of the trans-racial parenting dyad shaped the experience of both the mother and their child (Winnicott, 1960). As I have argued previously, for relational psychoanalysts, the early inter-subjective dynamics between infant and caregiver are absolutely crucial in the process of early identification of embedded patterns of interaction (Stolorow & Atwood, 1992). What was apparent from speaking to both parents and children separately was the overriding sense of them each trying to protect each other from the experiences of racism that they had themselves had experienced. The parents, in their descriptions of racism they experienced towards themselves because of their adoption of a non-Caucasian child left them feeling very isolated. Rebecca, an adoptee describes a

response from her adoptive parents towards the racism she experiences, where she is bought a teddy bear to comfort her. This same family then went on to adopt two more black children, of which Rebecca describes being told was in part motivated by her adoptive parents not wanting to be the only black child in the family.

‘I can always remember that really vividly, so they gave me this bear and they must have felt oh it’s not right, she needs a little black brother and sister. I’m not going to make a big fuss, and I think a part of how I’ve been brought up, that’s my dad, like don’t make a big fuss, don’t make a fuss, just be quiet sort of thing, whereas was it my place to have to deal with that sort of thing anyway and like the school thing’ (Interview 2, Rebecca).

What I argue as being very specific to the trans-racial adoptive parenting relationship is the impact that racism or differentiation experienced by the child will have had on the overall family dynamics. The social position of all the adoptive parents was one that was characterised by autonomy and experiences of power and respect. This assumption was not only made because of the environment of the adoptive parents at the point of interview, but because of their details they all provided about their own parents social and economic position. All of the parents had grown up in middle class and highly educated professional settings. The sudden powerlessness described by the adoptive parents of not being able to protect their children from racism was described as exhausting and humiliating that was accompanied by feelings of guilt and anger.

Their inability to know how to respond meant that often the actual response they provided to their adopted children was minimal or completely avoided. It was the subtlety of racist interactions that one adoptive mother, Joanne described as being particularly problematic. It seemed that the historic regulation and surveillance of populations that have been part of the historic social anxiety around miscegenation and in more general terms, black and working class communities became continuously enacted. The way this was experienced by Joanne, the adoptive mother was for her to feel constantly watched.

‘It’s like covert racism, people, perhaps people aren’t shouting so much abuse, they have had enough to know that’s not ok, but I don’t, It’s almost an unsaid thing amongst them as well’ (Interview four, Joanne adoptive mother).

To imagine what it may be like to parent a child for anyone, can often contradict the emotional and physical reality of being a parent. At the point in time that the families involved in this study adopted their children, preparation was very limited. Every single adoptive mother described being completely unprepared for the racism they would experience as a result of adopting a non-Caucasian child. There was a sense of absolute 'bewilderment', of feeling 'unprepared or of being 'adequately equipped' to deal with both the physical and emotional effects of adoption. I sensed much pain expressed by some of the mothers that they had not been supported. One adoptive mother articulates what all of the other adoptive mothers described was their response to these complexities, which was that she just 'got on with the job of mothering'.

The arrival of a child of racially different origin to the parents and siblings, and of non-biological relation created a significant shift in the previous family system as a whole. The unique biological and social history that the adopted child brought in to the family, unsettled the existing equilibrium and the individual identities of the family members that up until the point of the adoption, were largely undifferentiated from the socially embodied norms of the middle class, heterosexual, genetically formed family. What was apparent from some of the descriptions by the adoptive parents, was that the barrier of race, introduced through the adoption of the child created a barriers of a different sort for all the family members, that required the creation of a new family narrative. Their previously held family identities were disrupted where although the adoption was supposed to add to the existing family, descriptions of participants experience of the new arrival of the adopted child actually served to prevent the process of completion of a family taking place.

The impact of the wider family's response to the adoption of the child of ethnicity is something that is not discussed widely in the existing literature, and yet, from the perspective of the parents involved in this study, it was an issue that was of relevance to them particularly during when the child was an infant. What was clear was that not all of the extended family members were welcoming, where in two cases there was outright racism directed towards the child. In one case, I felt that the adoption of a black child was actually an act of rebellion against the adoptive parents' own parents. Although this was not consciously expressed as such, the level of racism that existed within the immediate family for Joanne, an adoptive mother is described below.

‘They told me to cover his face with a blanket. She would not walk down the street with that black baby and there was another time when he (adoptive mother’s father) came round and started insulting me and the baby, calling him a black bastard, well the baby just started screaming, so I just grabbed him out of his high chair and just left them all at the dinner table, it was like me and the baby against the world’ (Interview One, Joanne)

The instances of hostility that existed within both the immediate family, is an issue not considered in the literature, where racial attitudes from a previous generation were in certain cases significantly disrupted by the arrival of a child of ethnicity. The descriptions of racism and outright rejection of the newly arrived child culminates in the mother describing her parents need to ‘block out the child from their sight’. Where her own mother, the adopted child’s grandchild that she is unwilling to walk down the street with the black baby in the pram, clearly illustrates the grandmother’s need to deny the child exists.

Although in the case of this particular family, the arrival of the adopted child had particularly extreme consequences that involved outright forms of racial discrimination being projected on to the child and a rejection of this parenting relationship by the grandparents. Drawing on the work of Stolorow *et al* (1987), I have emphasised previously the importance of the patterning of early infant-caregiving interactions during the early years of the child’s life for the infant’s sense of inner experience. The quality of this early mutual sharing of affective states between carer and child is very much dependant on the sanctuary and safety of the family environment both in terms of the parents own affective state and subsequent ability to respond to the affective needs of the child. Whilst the material environment of all the families involved in this study meant that the caregiving responsiveness was not compromised by financial issues, what did have a significant impact on the overall dynamics of the family and the parents confidence in parenting a transracial child was the traumatic effect of racism, not only experienced just by the child, but the racism that was directed on to themselves.

The question of how the relational network of the immediate and its level of diversity in terms of family, racial and cultural difference is a less prominent feature of the debates around whether trans-racial placements can be. From the experience described above

by the trans-racially adopted adults involved in this study, the diversity of dynamics in the relational network was of importance not only in terms of their race, but also the frequency of being required to explain their adoptive status as well. In an increasingly complex racial and family landscape where the immediate appearance of the body can no longer be so confidently attached to an assumed cultural and historical place of belonging.

6.3 Cultural misreading's of the body and belonging in place

Just as the nation is imagined, and produced through everyday rhetoric and maps and flags (Gilroy, 1993), it is also constructed on the skin and through bodies by different types of what Grabham (2009) describes as corporeal flagging. 'Flagging' has been conceptualised as a set of rhetorical techniques and practices that reiterate nationalism within communities (Billig, 1995). In the political questions of, the nation's destiny, the nation's parameters or existence and the perpetuation of national stereotypes is not often questioned. Ahmed & Stacey (2001) argue that the flagging of difference has both rhetorical as well as fleshy effects, embedding the nation on the body through the mundane.

In this section I aim to convey the subtlety involved in the ways in which bodies were culturally misread. The misreading of our bodies is central to the way in which many of us experience our relationships, where who we feel to be is often contrasted with the ways in which we can be perceived. What I argue that is specific to trans-racial adoption contexts is that the duration of time that the trans-racially adopted child spends in the white cultural context of their adoptive parents creates accentuated or more intense forms of affective complexity when their bodies are read in particular ways that can be understood as racialized. What these particular experiences illustrated very clearly was how historic forms of belonging to nation and place remained strongly connected to blood.

The blood line of the adopted child was communicated through the appearance of the body and it was these processes of misreading that created an overall effect of destabilising the sense of the body's security in place. As I have articulated previously, the notion of roots is an integral part of the adoption story. It is our severance from our birth families through the process of adoption that culturally leaves us rootless subjects,

in search of belonging. By considering aspects of the experience of trans-racial adoptees, I aim to show how the repeated and ongoing process of the mis-readings of our bodies influence how our connection to nation and place can be experienced as insecure and tenuous.

For Goldberg (1988), racialized ways of thinking and notions of race are historically situated and can be experienced in such a way that result in a sense of a lack of authenticity in making a secure claim to national and cultural identities and practices. Being followed in shops by security guards, assumptions around intellect or economic status and sexual morality are all ways that participants described as being some of the subtle ways in which their bodies were engaged in a process of racialization. The conditions of a culture where race remains coded as culture, and visible forms of cultural representation do not include the black body as part of the legacy of our cultural histories, which illustrates firstly how the social and the psychological are both constructed in relation to each other and explains why it is more problematic for the transracially adopted body to make a firm claim of belonging to dominant meanings of nationhood.

Catherine illustrates a common experience described by the trans-racial adoptees that involves the viewer of their bodies only seeing difference and not seeing and subsequently interpreting the complexity that difference entails. In this instance, Catherine describes herself being interpolated under the sign of being Muslim, although her appearance seems to clearly contrast this particular category.

CL - Well yes, it's very complex. Can you describe any incidents relating to that kind of experience where people have, like you said, assumed because of the way you look

C - One, I don't know whether I've said this before, but one time I was at a party at the AnaPhoeney, I'd been involved in some kind of creative thing there and there was an after party, a few years ago, and I was having a dance, I had a can of beer in my hand and this guy that I didn't know very well, but I'd seen him around, I think he was involved in someway, this English guy came up to me and said 'Oh I didn't know you drank, I thought you were Muslim'

CL - Right, how did that feel

C - I got angry with him, I felt like slapping him, I said 'don't make assumptions, you know, I'm not Muslim for one thing, you don't know me, piss off'. I remember feeling quite angry, you know he expected me to be, you know he was obviously very ignorant, not very well educated on these sort of things but I guess we all do it to a certain degree in different ways through ignorance not through malice. We might upset people by saying things that we don't realize are hurtful to them, you know some people might just laugh you know if they were Asian and brought up by their own parents and knew who they were and all the rest of it, they'd probably just think oh that's funny and you must be a hippy because you've got long hair, make fun of it, and kind of laugh it off, not affect them, but you know I think he might have been a bit drunk as well, anyway that's one example, I think I've had people when I was growing up people saying 'Oh is it hot enough for you here' in the summer or 'I bet you can't stand the cold, or bet you like spicy food' or 'are you going home for Christmas, where do you come from' and I had that still when I first moved to Bristol people saying 'where do you come from' and I'd say 'from venus actually, or mars' or I'd just say from England actually, then there's the next question 'but you don't look English' and I'd say 'No I don't' and there's a lot of people who are British that don't look typically English or British, and if you delve in to white people's history, what is British anyway, we're all such a mixture anyway, this country England, Britain has been invaded throughout centuries, we're all a mixture but because you're obviously a different mix and you're not just white, people feel they have the right to ask you very personal questions, and make assumptions about you and I don't think they even think consciously 'I have a right', it's just an unspoken assumption, 'oh there's nothing wrong with asking, you know if you have a problem with it, you're the one with the problem, you're the one with the chip on the shoulder. (Interview Two, Catherine).

Sheila also illustrates in the extract below some of the complexity of the feelings associated with the way in which her body is read through projections of cultural representations. The way in which she responds to the conflict between the exteriority of herself and her interior sense of self that has been formed since birth through the cultural and relational context of her adoptive family, is to reject the Asian part of

herself. Throughout Sheila's interviews, there was a strong sense of her body being a complete burden to her. The complex psychic dilemmas that many participants described that emerged through what was described by one participant as the 'weight of the body' and the cultural messages it communicated that created processes of 'uprooting' of the body. The extract articulated by Sheila, an adoptee, illustrates what Gilroy (1993) describes how race assumes a cultural aesthetic that is rooted in popular ideas around national identities and belonging.

'It's complete discrimination and when you're there everybody knows you're there because you're an ethnic minority but I'm (nation), my mother's (national identity), they are definitely (national identity) believers, my boss said to my boyfriend, well she ticks the box doesn't she and I was just like, I don't like people telling me that I am brown, I don't want to think about being Asian, I don't feel myself as being ethnic at all and I don't want to tell you that I am Malay because for me I am not Malay at all, but they need an answer, they demand an answer. Yeah like I was Welsh and that was it, you know, there was no other, nothing else, obviously with my dad, we ate with chopsticks and things like that, but like it was never, I just become a white person but in an Asian body, we don't fit into any category I don't think, it's 'other all the time...' (Interview three, Sheila)

Grabham (1993) describes a concept of belonging involving a cultural force that links an individual or a group of people to a geographically defined area through possessions that carry significance. For several adoptees, these experiences of mis-readings of their bodies resulted in a tentative link to wider claims to nation and state. For one adoptee, she describes a reluctance to wear the official team shirts at national sporting events. She describes that she 'didn't feel comfortable in wearing the official shirt' so instead would only wear a red jumper or a scarf. Whilst many people would attend a national sporting event and not wear the official shirt in support of their team, for the transracially adopted adults, this seemed to hold a much more complex and deeper meaning that illustrates how processes of pseudo biologically defined culturalism continues to maintain a power to exclude and include.

To understand why someone would not feel comfortable to wear the nation's official shirt at a national sporting event, despite a legal right and the length of time spent in a particular geographical location means they have a right to wear it. It seems that the surface of the body, the historical forms of projection and identification that have formed social the fundamental interweaving between self and other creates a psychic barrier, and subsequent embodied barrier to experiencing a claim to nation. For Shotter (1993), belonging refers to a range of experiential or psychoanalytic approaches to a sense of inclusion, or home.

6.4 Racism and differentiation

The term 'racism' has the power to evoke deeply complex forms of affect. In considering this term in the contexts of trans-racial adoptive family experiences, I firstly aim to convey the many meanings the term acquires and to illustrate the absolute subtlety in the way in which the term becomes operative in experience. Secondly, through personal insights of my own relationship with this term, I seek to illustrate the many ways in which this dimension of trans-racial adoptive experience is negotiated and managed. In this consideration of the meanings and enactment of racism within trans-racial adoptive contexts, I aim to consider aspects that I will argue are specific to trans-racial adoptive situations, but also take in to account how the micro dimensions of experience articulated in this study, may have broader implications of understanding racial dynamics that permeate wider social contexts.

I remember when I presented this subject area at an academic conference and referred to this dimension of participant's experience as 'differentiating experiences', rather than racism. I feel that this unconscious choice to not use the term 'racism' in what was a largely white academic and practitioner audience gives an insight in to the unconscious ways in which I have been required to negotiate the deeply shameful and painful feelings that racism can bring, namely to deny that they exist. There is also a sense of deeply split loyalty where speaking about racism not only affirms my difference to the only community I have ever belonged to since birth, it is my community that has the power to create deep feelings of degradation through racist interactions and yet is a community that I maintain a deep sense of protection towards. My own reluctance to confront the uncomfortable fact of racism that Puwar (2004) argues is endemic and

deeply entrenched across different spheres of society, was something that both the adoptive parents and trans-racial adoptees seemed to illustrate a theme that was present across much of a participant's experience

For the participant above, a black man, there were many instances of racism that were described as part of his experiences. Something that was common amongst many of the interviews was that what I would describe as traumatic experiences were described, instances like the above, that I would then gently ask how that made them feel and I was often met with a response such as 'I don't care', or 'that it didn't bother me' spoken in a nonchalant tone, or to laugh at the description of the experience.

'I was about fourteen or fifteen and then an older man on his push bike sort of came past and then knocked me down and held me, I don't know whether, what he do, yeah I think he pin me down, calling me a black bastard or whatever, what did he do, yeah I think he did pin me down, calling me a black bastard' (Andrew, Interview 4)

Very few participants would respond in a way that conveyed any emotion that correlated with the severity of some of the incidents they described. However, when I displayed a sense of shock or disgust to the descriptions of their experiences, the dynamics between us would often change. I felt that their initial restraint in the way in which they described how these events had affected them were part of the defences they had had to build up over the years. It was through my exaggerated reactions to the descriptions of their experiences that from a discursive perspective they had described as 'not bothering' them, that a sense of release and relief would emerge between us.

'Like I remember walking back from school and you'd have to walk across the bridge from home and there's a pub at the beginning of the bridge and there's always be like drunk people coming down from like the (geographical place) and I can remember people being really horrible then when I was on my own, so I was like walking really quickly' (Catherine, Interview 2)

The power of the skin in its ability to evoke both unconscious and conscious forms of corporeal communication, that for Venn (2010) creates certain 'vitality affects' within the relational milieu is considered as central to interpreting the process of living in the world. This feeling that one participant describes, of a sense of others assuming some

kind of a right over you, a right that is asserted through the asking of personal questions or being casually touched without permission. The surface of the skin, its blackness creates processes of projecting assumptions upon the surface of the skin that seems to conflict with the mind-body formed in a trans-racial adoptive situation. Through the trans-racial adoptive context, the situation is characterised by certain class norms of the middle class setting and inherently Caucasian. In Andrew's description of an instance from his adolescent years, he expresses his feelings about the right that people have over him, the indiscernible zone between corporeality and culture becomes visible and illuminates echoes of the historical dimensions of black and white relations.

A – And I remember another thing now when I think about it, this is where I did feel difference. Because of my, now I say it, I was swimming, and this has made me a little bit conscious even today. We were all swimming and when I stand up my posture is, because I've got a West Indian backside, so to speak, genetically now, y hips are quite higher up, so it almost looks like I've got, because of where my bum's positioned it almost looks like I've got a slight lean, and I remember it never even entered my head, I never even thought about it before, but one kid pointed it out and I remember everyone sort of walking round and like looking at my posture and everyone was going 'stand up straight' and I was like 'well I am standing up straight'. Yeah, that felt a bit, that felt, I remember that, that made me think because I was kind of sat there on my own and I was thinking, I didn't get it because I was stood up straight

CL – Oh it makes me so angry

A – Well I don't know, maybe at the time, but I don't know now but then I had, I had no other black boys to compare my physique with, but then when I look at some of the West Indian friends or black friends especially from the West Coast and stuff, their posture is exactly the same. Even my step mum, I remember the one time she went on about my physique, because when I was younger I was a lot more muscley than like other boys my age, I was a lot, but that was a positive, that was quite positive, but she was like for instance in the summer when my skin was dry I think it got quite obvious that things like that were overlooked because they purely didn't know what products to put on my skin sort of thing,

like the basic moisterisers probably weren't even enough or what they were using like hair products' (Interview 3, Andrew).

For the same participant, Andrew, he describes another experience that illustrates the deeply traumatic effects that the black skin of his body has the power to create

A – Yeah because it takes you back to that prominent childhood moment I'd say. And I guess that's the power of thought, but there was also another one because I've had some discussion so to speak and there is another equally powerful memory as well that I guess I overlooked because I kind of blocked it in my mind. Because when I think about when I react so harshly as an adult towards people with racial abuse erm was also because of a childhood experience in Cardiff because sort of playing football in the street with a very good friend of mine Craig. I don't think I did anything to do anything to initiate what happened, but an older gentleman of around, I was about fourteen or fifteen if I remember rightly and then an older man on his push bike sort of came past and then knocked me down and held me, I don't know whether, what did he do, yeah I think he did pin me down, alling me a black bastard or whatever, but I remember, because I was so young, it wasn't like I couldn't handle myself but because I was so young I guess because of the shock of that and because of him being so much physically stronger erm being physically, the gentleman in particular being a lot physically a lot stronger than me at the time rendered powerless physically, but then I guess then emotionally and I guess that sort of contributed if I hear something like that as an adult and I can do something about it, that's why I reacted so expressively, hence even potentially actually if I'm honest , violently, sort of retaliating and hitting back but I think a lot of that stems from well I couldn't deliver it that person at that time, so everyone else was being punished for that incident, but I have got a handle on that now, but that's also just a childhood experience in itself, but to be honest until I'd had discussions, I'd almost blanked that, not hadn't blanked it because I did remember it, I don't whether it was because a coping mechanism with it I guess, but when you're deep back in thought and you think about it and it comes up again and you bring it up and it comes to the fore front again, now I've had time

to reflect back on it and realise actually yeah that was quite a severe experience (Interview Three, Andrew).

As I have described in Chapter 5, all of the adoptive parents involved in this study apart from one family out of the six had already given birth to children of their own, therefore there existed a pre-adoption form of family life. For Yngvesson & Mahoney (2000), prior to the adoption of children of a different race to the existing family, the completeness of their family identity were in alignment with social normal boundaries and a wider Western family system. The literature recognises that despite challenges and the family stress associated with racism, the family is hypothesised to serve as a sanctuary that can protect non-white people from the impact of racism and provide a level of support that is often unavailable in wider society (Williams *et al*, 1984). The central dilemma for the trans-racially adopted family is the possibility of racism existing in the very sanctuary that serves to create the context from which a child can form a sense of self through a protective environment. Belinda describes in the extract below an experience that illustrates forms of racist interactions that reside within the extended family.

CL – Was there any racism, did you experience any differentiation between black and white in the family

B – From so early, I can't tell you

CL – Really? From your mother and father

B – They used to say sort of politically incorrect stuff, racial stuff, but in that ignorant, we're not really racist. They're not racist, ignorant, saying coloured, that ignorant. I don't believe that's racist, even if I hear it today, old people going 'Coloured'. They think they're being polite, they're not being racist, they're thinking about the nice coloured gentleman they met. I know they're not. Yeah, ignorant stuff like that, old fashioned stuff and like I can't remember the words was it 'darkie', something old fashioned. He said that and he said 'Oh you're not allowed to say that anymore'. And looked at me' (Interview Four, Belinda).

The psychological and physiological effects that can come from experiencing racism are linked to a multiple of stressors for both the individual and the family well-being (Horwitz & Scheid, 1999). Sharing the experience places the racial experience in a wider social context, relating race related stressors to historic social issues, which

depersonalise it (Billingsley & Billingsley, 1965). The importance of race socialisation in providing a protective barrier against prejudice and racial discrimination and its role in the development of black racial identity is acknowledged by several authors (Harrison, 1995, McAdoo, 1990). For some families involved in the study the intensity of racial differentiation moved the relational dynamics in to the sphere of racism, as is illustrated by Belinda, a female adoptee.

B – Yeah, it hurts, it's horrible and my sister went 'I can't believe you said that, that's racist!' then she said 'come on' to me, my brother, and my other brother 'We're going, we're going for a walk'. And we always used to escape up there after dinner as soon as we'd done the polite bit, because we all hated them. So my sister was like 'that's racist, we're leaving, it's time to go', and we went back to the car when it was time to go, and that was big for her because my adoptive parents were the type that would have hit you and said 'sit back down', you know, so she took a stand and no one, fair play to her, fair play to her, but yeah I remember things like that, but they were out and out racist. But I knew my adoptive parents knew that wasn't right as well. I know they did. (Interview Four, Belinda).

This section has sought to illustrate how there were consequences to adopting transracially in the wider family, where for some adoptive parents they describe their own parents being welcoming of the idea, but equally a sense of novelty or confusion also accompanied the arrival of the new child. What was very difficult to listen to and accept was that for some of the adoptive mothers involved in this study, the bringing in of a non-Caucasian child in to the adoptive family was met with outright forms of racism and rejection towards the child.

6.5 The Power of the Skin

The overriding conviction in British culture at the point in time of the adoptions of the liberal view that in part motivated a lot of the parents to adopt transracially, was the notion that we are all the same under the skin and that there is no difference between black and white. In the consideration of Anzieu & Turner's (1989) concept of the skin-ego, for Venn (2010), the skin acts as a trans-ductor between inside and outside. The

skin is understood as modulating between Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of the body's relationship to the world. In this scenario, it is assumed that there is no separation between the individual organism and the environment.

As I have articulated previously, psychoanalytic theory has long recognised the importance that boundaries, surfaces and thresholds maintain for the well-being of the individual serving the function of both communicating and holding with regard to others and the environment. Whilst the asking of questions around the appearance of the body on one level can be viewed as part of our normal and polite cultural exchanges, 'where are you from' or 'how long have you been here'. It is the everydayness, the frequency of this kind of relational interaction that for many participants has psychologically wearing and disempowering effects. It is what can be understood as the public nature of the black body through its extreme visibility amongst a sea of whiteness, that one participant describes us becoming a 'form of public property'. Where over a process of time can wear away at the boundaries of the skin and the harmonious relationship with the mind. For Andrew, he describes how he experienced the process of his own body was that the boundaries of his body were felt to be less secure, where he describes feeling that people had the right to ask him personal questions that illustrate the subtle power dynamics that are at inter-play.

"People feel they have the right to ask you very personal questions, and make assumptions about you and I don't think they even think consciously 'I have a right', it's just an unspoken assumption 'oh there's nothing wrong with asking, you know if you have a problem with it, you're the one with the problem, you're the one with the chip on the shoulder' (Interview Two, Andrew).

The complicated processes of unconscious projections on to the skin of difference provides an understanding of embodied cognition, in a way that makes it possible to destabilise the notion of mental health as residing within the individual. Rather, it is assumed that there is a process of mutual enfoldment between the mind-body subject and the world (Varela, 1993), so that forms of mental distress is argued as needing to be understood through the ways in which the body is affectively lived in the world. For Andrew, he describes an instance that illustrates his experience of feeling like his body

is a form of public property that leaves him with a sense of feeling as though he does not belong in his own body.

‘Yeah and it’s definitely different to everyone else, and I remember people pulling my hair but it wasn’t in a bad way, people just used to stroke your hair, to the point where it was almost like an invasion of your personal space because it was like they almost felt, I don’t think they, I’ve got to remember, people would just walk up and go ‘oh I love your hair’ and rustle their hands through your hair but actually like that’s my body and that’s my personal and that’s me but I don’t know, people’s boundaries or what they feel is. Everyone would be breaking things down in to physical things, your lips, god now I remember people looking at my lips, because obviously my lips were different, everyone would focus, and then your nose, like people would push my nose, so they’d peer at you and they’d look quite closely up at your features’ (Interview Three, Andrew).

Whilst the historic right of ownership as property of slaves to their white masters is obviously far from the experience detailed here, there remains a sense of ownership that pervades the dynamics of the interaction that whilst diluted, arguably echoes the power relationships of what Bhabha (1971) describes as the familiar alignment of colonial subjects – black/white, self/other. It is the surface of the skin that signifies to the viewer an unconscious sense of having an assumed level of authority over the black body of the transracial adoptee, that manifests itself through the touching of the body without permission. This touching of the hair, the inspection of features, not only can be understood as an act of mere differentiation or of fascination, but points towards a relational interaction that brings back from history what Fanon (1967) articulates as ‘the enslavement of the negro by his inferiority and the white man by his superiority’.

For Buytendijk (1987) in his analysis of the phenomenological approach to the problem of feelings and emotions, the sense of touch is argued as being the father of all senses. In that, touch is the discovery of our real existence in its own limitation, the most original mode of the experience of participation and feeling. The gesture from the toucher demonstrates the intention of being involved in an anticipated developing situation that will evoke and disturb emotions between the touched and the toucher. The feelings generated by the touch, the act of touching depends on the situation and the projection

of our mode of relation to the object being touched, so that the act of touching the nose, the hair and the inevitable invasion of space can be understood as a gesture that marks out the boundaries between self and other, where in the case illustrated above, the effect of touching renders the participant to experience a sense of disempowerment that point towards historic power dynamics between black and white.

When Venn (2010) draws on Dalal's (1993) notion of racism, what is being advanced is an understanding of the purpose that the language of racism serves. The essentialist names we refer to such as whiteness or blackness gain a cultural meaning of naturally occurring categories, that sustain an effect of repressing sameness between groups and of repressing difference between ourselves and others in our group. Whilst these acts of a body being touched without permission or for some participants being looked at in a way that makes them feel 'owned' by the looker, cannot be described as racist acts. How can you accuse someone of racism when they just 'russle your hair' as an expression of their love for it? However, this breaking up of the black man's body through the way in which it is felt it is looked at, the way in which a nose is touched, lips, skin or in instances involving female participants, their breasts, can be understood as an act of what Bhabha (1971) describes as an act of epistemic violence. Again, Andrew provides an insight in to the ways in which his body was approached as though it was a form of public property.

A – But everyone would be breaking things down in to physical things, and your lips, god I remember now, people looking at my lips, because obviously my lips were different, like quite big lips, but the girls used to love the lips, but everyone, it would be almost a point of fascination, everyone would focus, and then your nose, god I remember that, but these are all physical attributes, like people would push my nose. But not in, I don't think it was, there was nothing, no meaning behind it, but because my features would be different, so they'd peer at your, and they'd look quite closely up at your features' (Interview 4, Andrew).

These acts of touching, of looking that were common amongst many of the participant's every day ways in which their bodies were lived in the world, illustrate how race is a material reality pertaining to the real world. Returning back to Dalal's (1993) notion, these acts, as the viewer reaches out to touch the body of the black person, this act can

be understood as an act of repression, that although on one level can be interpreted as an affectionate gesture, could equally be understood as an act of affirmation of the toucher's own affirmation of identity through the touching of lips, or hair, on an unconscious level, what Dalal (1993) would describe as steering away any threats to the toucher's sense of belonging. In this sense, the dynamics of touching influence the way in which the body belongs, as a function of possession, has never been far away from hierarchical notions of property – a subject-object relationship involving use, control and transferability (Grabham, 2009)

A – 'But people still, like even where I work today, people still feel inclined to like, and it sounds funny but because of like my bum, women in particularly, people still feel inclined to like slap it, as crazy as it sounds . But to be honest I don't even, it's got, I don't even see it as, when I see it, now I break it down with helicopter vision, and let's say zoom out and look back in then yeah obviously there's, there is something that's not quite right and plus if it was the other way round and I guess it was a woman, that would be sexual thing wouldn't it, but it's like whatever isn't it, do you know what I mean. But I don't think, the one thing I did actually' (Interview Three, Andrew).

For Freud (1948), it is argued that repression and the unconscious are closely correlated, where the purpose of repression serves to keep something away from the conscious. For Merleau-Ponty (1964), the body simultaneously sees and is seen, and it is in the power of looking that the body of ethnicity is seen, touched, made visible and sensitive for itself in the eye of the other. The act of touching a bottom or the touching of the afro hair can be understood as an act of repression can actually be understood as an unconscious response to the threat of bodily presence. Through the touch, a power relation is established.

6.6 Sexualisation and racialized bodies

The historic representations of the sexuality of black people from the eighteenth century, both male and female became what Gilman (1985) describes as the icons for deviant sexuality, where by the nineteenth century, the black female had come to represent all black sexuality. As bell Hooks further argues (1981), these kinds of historic representations of black women's sexuality engaged the black body in a process of

commodification through a form of racialised fascination and voyeurism. The enduring influence of this historic discourse was that both the adoptive parents and children became involved in a dynamic of voyeurism and fascination that introduced feelings of 'sexualisation' or left participants with a feeling of 'being sexualised'. It has not been just African women that are the only ones framed as sexualised.

There is no evidence to suggest that white women are less sexual, but there is a societal projection, where historical concerns around female sexuality comes to be projected on to the bodies of non-white women. Systematic unconscious projection of denied characteristics onto another group result in the production of fantasised characteristics, certainly blacks like women have been constructed as possessing the characteristics which are negatively valued by white western culture, for example emotionally, sexuality and hedonism.

What is clear in the descriptions of experience around the issue of the body engaged in a process of sexualisation, it is helpful to deploy psychoanalytic terms in order to understand the complex unconscious processes involved to explain the interacting effects and resulting 'felt senses' that these kind of interactions produce. Kohut (1977) has shown, lustful feelings and strivings can serve the purpose of self-restoration through the search for an eroticised replacement for a missing or unsteady self-object experience. The description that Joanne, the adoptive mother of Andrew outlines below illustrates how the presence of the black body evokes sexually defined interactions.

'We had a party, about our age group, and he was here and he knows most of our friends, he's great fun and then there's this woman perhaps a couple of years younger than us, and she's kind of flirting with Andrew a bit, but Andrew never, he knows that this is, he's in control of this, so she's flirting with him a bit and he never takes, and he doesn't, he's well used to this, white women flirting with him, seeing him as a sexual being, and so after our party, she said to a friend of ours what did she way? Is way the right word here?. He's talked about, this, oh she fancies a bit of black, so he's seen as a kind of object (Interview Three, Joanne)

Again for Joanne, she describes another experience where the historic dynamics associated with black and white sexual relations become enacted in a relationship, this time with complete strangers that they had met on holiday.

'We had this time where we'd shown a photo to somebody on holiday of him and she said, she, I mean you don't say that about, about what, I can't remember exactly but the suggestion was I'd go down on him, or would I. It's not just women these things happen to is it, do you know what I mean, it's him that's being seen as a sexual object by these older women. Because he's black, he's an object, a sexual object. They wouldn't dare have a relationship with him, they're just looking for a bit of sex, not good enough to have a relationship with because he's black, but they use him for sex, it's really shocking (Interview Three, Adoptive mother of Andrew, Joanne)

As an Asian woman, I am very familiar with the notion of cultural representations of Asian female sexuality. The notion of 'Thai brides for sale' and the associated state supported prostitution in Thailand that Ford & Kittisuksathit (1994) argue underscores the multiple constructions of Asian female sexuality is a discourse that I have grown up with. For Sheila, an adoptee of Asian descent she talks extensively about this dynamic of sexualisation that she experiences both with strangers and friends throughout all four of her interviews. The way in which these kinds of experiences seem to have been managed by Sheila is for her to completely deny any link to her Asian heritage. She herself describes herself as being a white person in an Asian body.

CL - Do you think your experiences as a trans-racially adoptee, would you directly link them with difficulties that you've had with relationships as an adult

C - Well yeah, definitely being adopted, not sure about the trans-racially adopted because, but perhaps there is that kind of feeling of wondering whether people's perceptions of you because you're mixed race is different

CL - What makes you say that

C - I think I remember reading or hearing something about how white men think that mixed race and black women are you know up for kinky sex, and black men who might want to have a relationship with a white woman, find mixed race women a bit more accessible than white women and a bit easier game maybe. - Kind of impression, that women when they're from mixed heritage as being easier game or you know or because of having low self-esteem, maybe they are actually a little bit easier, but I think it's to do with having the low self-esteem

and that maybe is compounded by, you know it's a combination of society's institutionalized racism and ignorance, but also kind of sometimes maybe lack of self-identity effecting your own kind of self-worth and that's definitely been a problem for me, is my self-esteem and my own self-worth. (Interview Two, Sheila).

Similarly for Sheila, an adoptee of Malaysian descent, she describes how her own perceptions of Asian people have in effect been influenced by the environmental influences and attitudes towards Asian people that she has grown up in that seems to illustrate the complexity of racial categories.

S - It just isn't quite right, it's kind of funny. We used to go to the pub, Oceana, I don't remember what night it was, but there always used to be a lot of Asian men in there and I always used to get a lot of attention from the Asian men, my friends used to think that it was hilarious that I'd get all this attention from Asian men, I just thought it was so awkward and so, I don't know, they just stared

CL - I can understand that

S - Because obviously they thought I was asian, it was like, a lot more sleezy than British boys, I know British boys can be quite sleezy, but I don't know there was something about Asian men in clubs and the way they approached me.

CL - I know exactly what you are talking about, I do. It's as though you are their property

S - Obviously with my friends I would laugh about it, but inside I would feel really uncomfortable and you could kind of, and I don't think that British people do, but they would literally stare at you and don' stop staring at you, like you might glance or whatever, but I found the Asian men would just stand there staring at you like, they wouldn't dance they wouldn't even drink half the time they would kind of lear, and that always make me feel uncomfortable. It's a bit like, I know Asians are meant to be muslims and obviously they, you see an Asian girl in slutty clothes and think she's slutty, or she's cheap or whatever, where as I'd be wearing the exactly the same things as my friends, I can imagine for other cultures, it is a bit like that

CL - yeah, but that's what we wear here

S - Yeah, we're no different from anybody else or it's just not perceived in the same way. Sometimes it's difficult because I find myself being a bit racist to Asians and different people, it's strange. One of the things they ask me, this category of just Asian, people thinking, like all Chinese, like everything, like all Asian countries, like you're a part of everything, where as you're not, the whole Thai thing, the whole Thai bride thing, people like make fun like say that I'm my boyfriend's Thai bride' (Interview One, Sheila).

It was not until I started to speak about this issue that I remembered a time when I was sixteen, and on a very rare shopping trip out with my father, we went together to buy a dress for my school prom. It was my father that told me about it, he said that the women in the shop were looking at him in disgust, and it was not until I called out the word 'Dad', that the shop assistant's approach changed towards my father. This affective shift in the dynamics between my father and the shop assistants as the boundaries of the relationship became defined as acceptable so that they re-formulated their perception to understand the scenario that presented to them a father and a daughter. Similarly for Catherine, she describes an experience that illustrates how one of the many responses to the racial intimacy that is communicated through the trans-racial adoptive parenting relationship is one that assumes a sexualised nature.

'Well I've had conversations with my mum and dad over the years and they've told me that they had people saying 'oh was your wife playing away from home kind of thing, was I the product of an affair' (Interview Four, Catherine)

This connection of experience with historic attitudes towards miscegenation was a dynamic that was encountered again by Rebecca where she describes the sexual assumptions that she has experienced seem to have been internalised and have had a detrimental impact on her sense of self.

'They want to have a relationship with a white woman, find mixed race women a bit more accessible than white women and a bit easier game. You know it's a combination of society's institutionalised racism and ignorance, but also kind of sometimes maybe lack of self-identity effecting your own kind of self-worth and

that's definitely been a problem for me, is my self-esteem and self-worth' (Interview Two, Rebecca).

As Fanon (1967) describes, the atmosphere of certainty that surrounds the ways in which relations between black and white formed through dynamics of power, is that of uncertainty where this uncertainty for many of the families involved strong dynamics of sexualisation. For Robert, an adoptee of mixed heritage the description below of his experience of being sat with his adoptive mother illustrates the absolute subtlety involved in the transmission of affect.

R - Yeah I guess so, but I think she found it funny and I certainly did, but I guess it tends to be the last thing, you know if you see a woman in his late fifties and a man in his early twenties, the last thing you probably think is that if the younger man was of mixed race, the last thing you probably would think was that he was adopted, do you not think. It's a strange one. I was just thinking back, thinking about last weeks interview, ages ago me and my mum we went to the Tate, the Tate modern for the afternoon and we were sitting in the café having lunch and my mum suddenly started laughing and I was like what's going on and she said she'd seen two women looking at us and my mum just burst in to hysterics and she said you know those two women looking at us over there probably assume that I've got you know a young lover half my age that I'm taking out and I was thinking that's really bizarre that those two people that that's their reaction and you know I just laughed and thought it was quite amusing, but it's quite weird to strangers that that's going to be the first thing that they are going to think, maybe they didn't, maybe they thought oh he's her adopted son, you know. (Interview Four, Robert).

What is specific to the trans-racial adoptive situation, particularly in relation to all of the participants involved in this study given that they were all adopted as young infants. Echeruo (1999) argues that for the trans-racially adopted child, the self is constructed both from themselves, but equally from everything they are not so that they are white and black but can claim make no firm claim to either. The way in which this precariousness in claims to racial identity emerges can be explained through the terms of what Merleau-Ponty (1964) explains as the relational environment of the family.

Where it is argued that the early experience of the family for the child does a lot more than just impress on him certain relationships between one human being to another, but rather, it is argued that an entire way of thinking about the self and the perception of the world starts in the relational environment of the family.

This early sense of self developed in the family environment, is ostensibly based on the cultural context of the white middle class family, of which all the children involved in this study were adopted into. It is in this initial family context that Merleau-Ponty (1964) argues the child's first sense of racial self and perception of the world emerges. Whilst no physical injuries were sustained in these descriptions of racist experiences, it was the unpredictable nature of these kinds of incidents and the accompanying feelings of absolute powerlessness, shock and trauma that illustrates the ways that the trans-racially adopted body has related to other subjects and objects in the world.

6.7 Responding to processes of racialisation

In Venn's (2010) reference to the work of Dalal (1993), it is argued that the language of racism has the power to repress difference between ourselves and others in our group. In this section I aim to illustrate the personal effects that processes of differentiation and racism can have on members of the trans-racially adoptive family. As Parain (1971) has argued, situations are created by our speaking, so that when I speak about differentiation, I am defining a definite nuance of feeling whilst also projecting an image of a world. In my use of the term 'differentiation', the feelings of protection towards my white community by using a term that in effect denies the experiences as racism accompanied by my need to articulate the reality of trans-racial adoption, I illustrate a mechanism that many transracial adoptees involved in the study deployed to emotionally manage certain experiences, this being, to deny their experiences to the world.

For Andrew, he describes the powerlessness he felt during his childhood in his inability to be able to respond to racist or other violent incidents. What he describes seems to show how memories he holds of these incidents go on to later effect how he conducts himself as an adult, where violence he acts out on other people later on in life, is in part connected to reclaiming some of the powerlessness he felt during childhood.

'it wasn't like I couldn't handle myself, but because I was so young I guess because of the shock of that and because of him being so physically stronger, it rendered me powerless physically but then I guess then emotionally I guess that sort of contributed to me hitting back violently, where it stems from, because I couldn't deliver it to that person at that time, so everyone else was being punished for that incident. I'd almost blanked that, no hadn't blanked it because I did remember it, I don't know whether it was because a coping mechanism with it I guess, but when you're deep back in it, you realise actually that was quite a severe experience' (Interview Three, Andrew).

In phenomenological terms, a word is not only a communication concerning a concrete attitude and situation; it also creates new situations, attitudes and feelings, so that by using words that reformulate our experience and the deeply shameful and painful feelings associated with negative experiences, our words create a change in the situation as it is remembered. In that, every feeling is a feeling of something. It is argued by Buytendijk (1987) that all mental experiences, including feeling, are modes to detect the signification of situations, the response to us being physically subjected to a given situation. Rebecca describes many experience of racism that are both subtle and in other instances very verbally violent forms of aggression that have come from complete strangers. In the extract below, what I want to consider is this relationship between the body and mind where it is argued that because of the ways in which her black body has been responded there has been some kind of disconnection made between her body and her mind. Ultimately, this has resulted in what she describes as not 'seeing a black body'.

C – Yeah, you want blonde hair, you don't want afro hair, I wanted to be tall, I didn't want big feet, I didn't want big boobs, but then it's all things you have more acceptance of yourself as you get older. It was more of a problem when you're young, when I was younger.

CL – Do you see a black person

R – Yeah, I do, I see a black person, but culturally I've got no concept of black culture or don't feel part of black culture like even if you watch things on telly, like you know I love Carribean food and stuff, and you just think that could be your norm, but it's, everything is alien and it's just like, I see a black person, but

like it's like when I read those books and they use the term coconut, but it's true. My thoughts are probably white thinking, middle of the line, I just have that outlook because of how I've been brought up definitely and black people and black culture are very different I just think and I yeah, that bit is, not lacking, but it makes me a bit sad sometimes, like oh it would be nice, but it's like a little idealistic about what black culture's like, it's a load of crap really

CL – Yeah, every culture has it's oppressive parts

R – There's loads of negative things about black culture, like how black boys and young men are underachieving or likely to be linked to violence or gang crime, you know like their parents are in menial jobs on minimum wage and a lot of them are single parent families, it's all quite stereo typical, but a lot of it is to a degree is true isn't it, and that would be the case like because my mums mum didn't have a male partner. If I'd been brought up with my mum there would have been no male figure there so it would have been a completely different upbringing so yeah you try to imagine it but you can't can you unless you've lived with it really (Interview Four, Rebecca).

In much of the experience that has been articulated so far, there has been a common theme of the individual parent or child, feeling some kind of tension inside themselves because of the responses they feel they experience from the outside world. At times like these, when parts of ourselves are with other parts, we are clearly not unitary subjects. We may even be actively engaged in a destructive relationship towards other parts. Anger directed against the external world, but which remains unspeakable is turned upon the self, turned inwards with its full and destructive force, to produce self-denigration, feelings of worthlessness, blame and accusation. A black male adoptee describes how he projects the feelings that his experiences creates, that involves externalising those feelings in to violent incidents. For the female adoptee participants, the kind of emotional response they had involved internalising feelings that led to different kinds of destructive behaviours. Again, the experience described below by Andrew illustrates again how external experiences of racism become internalised and acted out in this case through violence.

For Kohut (1977), forms of social and psychic alienation and aggression are argued as being needed to be understood in ways that go beyond an attributing this kind of behaviour to purely social instinct itself. It is argued that it is because of difficult experiences related to the misrecognition of a subject that Kohut (1977) argues enactments of rage and vengefulness can come to serve the purpose of revitalising a crumbling but urgently needed sense of reclaiming power (Kohut, 1977). If the description of Andrew's violent response to what are very extreme forms of racism, a much more sympathetic sensibility can be created in any intervention designed to support emotionally managing these kinds of interactions.

'A- But then you realise, you're kind of, the problem with myself in particular, whereas people might cry, or, my reaction is anger and that's major and that's why I can get myself in to trouble, that's sort of, you know the last gentleman who was saying 'all black people should get out of the country', and all that rubbish, well actually he said all non-white people, everyone should get out, whatever, and I left him alone I didn't touch him, but my mum said, unless you're prepared to beat up every single person that has that mentality, then that's it, you've got to do it another way, yeah I think it's more of a deep rooted thing, I'd get upset and angry when I was younger, I'll get angry initially and then I'd get upset. I have my coping mechanisms, I can't remember what they were, I know there was one bully who in particular used to focus his attention on me, but I used to fight back and it got quite bad to the point where my parents were called in to the school. But I think it was always like I wouldn't put up with it, just wouldn't put up with it, but I've it's only in this half, well it's not in my younger years that I've experienced whatever, it's only really in adult years that I've began to experience like direct, direct racism

CL – Can you tell me about that

A – Well erm, I was working and a gentleman was and this gentleman shouting all kinds of abuse, like paki this, I could hear him, paki this and I think he had a go at another African gentleman and I just thought oh just ignore it, and he come right up to my face like practically kissed me and said 'niger' like that. I just knocked him out though, I shouldn't, but it was more of a shock, you know it was

like a shock cause you're not dealing with a juvenile, you're not dealing with a kid, he was like a grown man, do you know what I mean; (Interview Two, Andrew).

In such instances, sexual and aggressive enactments serve to concretise and thereby solidify endangered or fragmenting structures of experience (Atwood & Stolorow, 1984). From this inter-subjective viewpoint, various disorders of the self are understood as arbitrary points along a continuum (Adler, 1986) rather than as discrete diagnostic entities. For Catherine, she also describes experiences of her aggressive response to experiences of racism.

CL - Do you think that was because of the way that you looked

R - I wasn't that popular. I was probably someone that, you know I did have friends in secondary school, yes, I did have some very good friends that stuck up for me and encourage me to speak up for myself erm, but I always did feel quite different and subconsciously you know. The worst thing that happened when I was at, I think I might have told you before. I was friends with this girl that had lived in South Africa and I was really good friends with her for a while and I mean something happened. I don't even remember what, but she started calling me racist names. This went on for some time until another friend said 'why don't you stand up for yourself' so I saw red and got really angry and punched her in the face and gave her a bloody nose and said 'don't you ever do that again' and she didn't

CL - Can you remember how that felt? Do you think those kinds of memories

R - I remember it clearly because a lot of stuff I've probably buried and I don't really remember and stuff but I do remember that incident as being the first time I got really angry, really lost my temper, the pain of being made to feel different, asked questions and left out all that pain came out and I directed it at her, because she was one of the people that had been nasty and racist to me and I really at that point I thought, you're not going to treat me like that and I got very very angry, I got in touch with my anger and hurt and let it out. It was very explosive,

and nobody said anything afterwards. I don't know anything being said' (Interview Three, Catherine).

For, the most part, and certainly at the point in time that the interviews took place, all of the family was what could be described as 'functional', where all of the adoptees had attained educationally and were all in full time employment. The adoptive mothers still lived and managed a home and were all married to the same partners that they had been with at the time of adopting their children, apart from one mother who had entered into a same sex relationship. Therefore, whilst there were moments of self-esteem or a sense of self that was described as negatively coloured, for the most part there was evidence of stability and structurally cohesive dimensions to overall experiences. However, particularly in relation to the adoptees, whilst they had all seemed to manage or overcome previous years of structural fragmentation and disintegration, there remained a strong sense of an overriding sense of isolation that was experienced by all the members of the trans-racially adopted family.

6.8 Chapter Conclusion

A large amount of the interview material gained from the four stage interview process with both adoptees and their adoptive mothers involved discussions around experiences of 'race' and racism. What I have aimed to convey in this chapter is to illustrate the many ways in which the process of embodying race emerges becomes enacted through the socio-cultural-historical milieu. What has been important to show is that processes of racial enactments are not just linked to structural causes, but rather, for the participants involved in this study it has been through the relational encounters and unconscious processes that the subjects have become racial subjects. The following chapter will further explore this relationship between body and place through the lens of the class dynamics involved in transracial adoptive subjectivity.

Chapter Seven: The dynamics of 'class' in trans-racial adoption

7.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this chapter is to consider how dynamics of 'class' have been experienced through trans-racial adoptive contexts. In contemporary debates that surround the practice of trans-racial adoption, it has largely been race that has been the central component around which both proponents and critics have focused the argument. This has resulted in academic and policy questions focusing on the impact on the racially different parenting relationship. Where the effects or outcomes of a child being transferred from one class context to another, is a less prominent question in the overall debates. Given the centrality of class, both in terms of structural, social and moral dimensions in the history of adoption practice in the West, where historic legal structures, supported by both Church and State, those deemed 'half-bloods' (Good, 1976:24) were excluded from the inheritance of property. From the perspective of liberal individualism, the question of whether a middle class setting can ever offset a child's loss of heritage and culture has been central to trans-racial adoption debates (Perry, 1986).

There has been an increasing questioning of the actual relevance of class over recent decades both conceptually and politically. As Labour relations in the West have changed drastically since the 1980s, there has been an increasing questioning of whether the concept of class actually exists anymore. For Gilles (2005), social class distinctions have become increasingly codified, displaced and individualised so that class has become an invisible phenomena. For Skeggs (2004) theories of individualisation and de-traditionalisation have come to displace class even though its effects are simultaneously institutionalised and reproduced. Much post-colonial and feminist work has critiqued the all-encompassing grand narratives advanced by historical sociologists which is of relevance to this analysis of class in trans-racial adoptive contexts.

Drawing on the distinction made by Smaje (2000) between an all-encompassing system and a cultural scheme deployed contextually in social classification. It is necessary to acknowledge both elements in this analysis, where it is the all-encompassing structure of a system that the labour processes exist in that one could argue create the economic conditions between the context of birth and the context of adoption. Yet within these

structures there are specific and nuanced modalities of class as lived experience that are relevant to this analysis. Lawler (2005) acknowledges the paucity of language and theory available to actually describe the concept of class in contemporary contexts.

The aim of this chapter is to consider the affective dimensions of the experience of the 'bringing in' a child of ethnicity that the process of trans-racial adoption involves. In this analysis of the interrelating dynamics between the family and the immediate community, this section also seeks to consider the micro lives of the transracially adoptive family members and also give thought to how these experiences may enable a much wider consideration of how communities can be created and sustained in ways that value tolerance and acceptance of 'others'.

7.2 The disruption of community

In this section, I intend to consider how the presence of the racially different child through the process trans-racial adoption was experienced for the families involved in the study. I have discussed in the previous chapter, the dramatic psychological shifts involved in not only the family identity, but the individual identities of family members resulting as a consequence of the adoption, and the added complications of adopting a child of ethnicity (Baldo & Baldo, 2003). The term 'community' is widely deployed in political and cultural parlance, nations are built on the history of communities, and our sense of selves can be defined through the communities we make a claim to originating from and belong to. A critical question for the study of communities, advanced by McMillan & Chavis (1986) is: How can communities be developed that value tolerance and acceptance of outsiders while maintaining their own cohesion and purpose? (Chavis & Newborough, 2006).

There is very little research that raises the issue of the relationship between the adoptive family and its' relationship with the community, despite what Bagley & Gabor (1995) argue as the community being an important stakeholder in the adoption process. Social acceptance and support for the adoptive parents of their adoptive child is acknowledged as a potential buffering mechanism between stress and health for these individuals, and a lack of social support can exacerbate family problems (Miall, 1996). All of the families involved in this study were located in materially affluent areas. The professional status of all the adoptive fathers was of higher educational attainment and

professional employment. At the time of the children's adoptions, all of the mothers stayed at home with the children when they were young infants. At the point in time that I carried out the interviews, the homes of the adoptive parents, the cars in the drive way, the art on the walls and the books on the shelves all symbolised a middle class and upper middle class status.

The arrival of any new born child creates an affective response in the network of relationship the child is born in to. At the point in time that the adopted children were brought in to the families was during the 1970s, where adopting a child of ethnicity was not only a radical thing to do, but a relatively uncommon practice. In this sense, this bringing in of a child of ethnicity to the immediate family was not only something that created dynamics of change for members of the immediate family, but also created effects for the wider community that the family were part of.

Unlike a pregnancy, there was no familiarity of a gestation period around which community members could acknowledge the normal societal response. The adoptive mothers described both positive and negative, and indeed sometimes confused responses to what was from one day to the next, the arrival of a child of ethnicity in to family and community environment. All of the families involved in this study already had children that they had given birth to, so in this sense the arrival of the adopted child was very visible and changed the entire appearance of what were previously all white families. What was clear when mothers talked about this initial period of the child's arrival and the early years of their children's childhood, was that whilst there were many instances where they felt their children were welcomed, there was also an overriding sense of having to explain, negotiate and unspoken responses that were experienced as subtle forms of rejection.

For McMillan & Chavis (1986), a sense of community belonging is gained through various elements of a force working together. The relational force between bodies is understood as being radically interior to the relation and not just an outside force. These forces are argued as having effects that can be experienced as feelings such as pleasure, fear and as emotions such as sadness, joy or shame. The myriad of responses to the bringing of the 'black' body in to both the immediate family and wider community created what can be understood as particular patterns of meaning for the adopted child

through the 'I-other' relations. The experience of living through this collective contained a milieu of symbolic, technical and psychic elements that operated as conjoined assemblages, where the previous chapter illustrated some of the affective forces involved in responses to the racially different body.

For Joanne, the adoptive mother of three trans-racially adopted children, throughout all four of the interviews I carried out with her, she experienced many difficult situations caring for one of her trans-racially adopted children in particular, her adopted son. Even though this child was brought in to the adoptive family as a young infant, it seemed from the descriptions of the mother's experience that even from his early years he experienced difficulty in gaining a secure sense of belonging with his immediate family and wider community. Particularly during his adolescent years, some of his actions indicated very aggressive forms of rejections of his immediate environment.

Parenting through the adolescent years is well documented as being a potentially problematic time for all parenting relations (Steinberg *et al*, 1989; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Giving consideration to the additional complexity of what are argued as the inter-relating forces of the racialized and gendered body and its' location in an affective relational network of the immediate and wider community involved in trans-racial adoptive experience. For many of the adoptive parents, there were additional layers of complexity involved that brought in sometimes traumatic forms of family dynamics that the parents had not experienced parenting their biological children.

The extract below by Joanne, illustrates how the brining in of 'difference' through the trans-racial parenting process took them in to parts of previously uninhabited worlds that I want to interpret as 'being classed'. For Joanne, she describes herself growing up in a family of dentists, who then went on to marry a medical consultant. Not only herself, but also her husband's families had never had anything to do with the police. One way of being for Joanne's trans-racially adopted son in the inter-relating forces of the community network was to actively reject it communicated through his behaviours. Joanne refers to these kinds of parenting experiences with her son that often involved the brining in of the police as bringing 'chaos' in to an inter-generational community that had always previously been characterised by order. Joanne's son's 'chaotic', disorderly and at times violent behaviour seems to live out what has historically been described as

'primitive here behaviour', where as I have argued previously, it was skin colour that was so crucial to the definitions of the primitive and the civilized that accompanied and largely justified economic structures (Mazzoloni, 2014).

J - That was very difficult especially when he started to get in to trouble, not trouble, I don't think he had that many problems, but it was just that with the twins we did have the trouble and then we turned to the police, I certainly had the police so often at home we were on Christian names together, and yeah and they were absolutely lovely. I must say the police in (town name) was fantastic

CL - That must have been quite traumatic, to have those experiences

M - Yeah, because we are not a family that is mixing with police, not at all. One evening there was trouble with (adopted son's name) and they wanted, I don't know why it was, perhaps he had a fight or a row with his friends, I don't know, but they rung up the Indian and they booked a meal for us, the Indian came with I don't know how much food for us and we said no no no, we couldn't understand it and then what did they do to someone else and they came, the fact is they say there's a fire, so the firemen came and it was wrong and then (adopted son's name) had something else, anyway, it was absolutely chaos. (Interview 3, Joanne)

For another of the trans-racially adoptive mothers, Corrine, she describes a similar experience of how her son's relationship with the community brings in experiences that were not previously known to any of the immediate and wider family members that has the effect again of bringing in chaos to the orderly context of middle class relational networks. Familiar chaos differs in its very nature from repressed experience or experience distorted by the other traditional defensive processes.

For Mitchell & Aron (1999) unformulated material is experience which has never been articulated clearly enough to allow application of the traditional defensive operations, where in the case of the mothers they had all described not accessing therapeutic support, but had been required to just overcome what in some cases were significant examples of loss. For Sullivan (1964), the self-system includes all these experiences and ways of relating to others which have been found through experience to be safe and secure, so that it is assumed that the self-system rejects all experiences that cause

anxiety. For Mitchell & Allen (1999), it is argued that once one finds for an interpersonal dilemma a solution which minimises anxiety, or an apparent solution, a mode of perception, thought, feeling or behaviour one may apply that salutation indiscriminately from then on may itself provide a sense of firstly security and also chaos that may both serve to fend off the painful feelings associated with loss and grief and anxiety.

'We did give him every week money still with his disabled, he has his disability allowance and he has the flat, I don't know who pays his flat really, but he still got from us money as well, that was silly, everyone said it was silly, we, he has been here again at night crying. We had Americans, (Adoptive father's) sister from America, and suddenly a knock on the door at 11 o'clock crying, looking very dirty and saying he wanted money, so we don't want that, what have you done, so (Adoptive father) was so upset because it was his sister here, so he gave him money and said go away as quick as you can, we don't want to see you, yeah, so he does, you don't know what he does, still he could do that, it's really upsetting, I have it in my mind, If I would see Lewis here without me asking him to come or knowing when he is coming, I wouldn't go in to the house. He sat here also when we came back home, that has happened. We've only been here five years now that he's sat here and rang the bell, tried to open the door and we had the burglar alarm on, so he sat here waiting with the burglar alarm peeping and then he said 'oh I was waiting for you' and he was drunk, there was a whole empty bottle of vodka next to him. But what do you do, we both don't want that anymore, and I've lied, I must say if he rings and I know he's drunk in the evening and you can hear that, I take the phone off the hook because he can ring through the night and I can't cope with that anymore, if he rings at half past eleven say we both can't go to sleep, we just can't do that anymore. So I told the children if you don't hear anything then the phone is off the hook, yeah so we're still sort of haven't finished with that. We put the sister, we said leave it, leave it, he was stood outside, we put the sister in the sitting room, because they wanted to say hi lewis and so, but they didn't see it and we just told Lewis to go outside, gave him the money and put him in a car and went, yeah. They all know what (adopted son) is of course' (Interview Three, Corrine).

For Joanne, an extract of her experience below seems to illustrate the impact that the bringing in of ethnicity in to what she describes as an 'all white' community, on the affective dimensions of the previously held community relations. In this instance, the family had lived next to the neighbour with their biological children for several years. Joanne describes that there was acceptance of the adoption of the first black girl, but Joanne describes that she felt the adoption of two more black children as being very problematic.

The relationship with the neighbour was not one that was described as particularly close, but characterised more by formal politeness and conviviality. The neighbour starts to mark out boundaries between the two parts of the house as a way of keeping the children out of the previously shared area. In the end, the neighbour seeks out legal representation to enforce these boundaries. There may have been many reasons that caused the neighbour to respond in the way that he did, but what is important to consider is the way in which Joanne interprets the neighbours actions as being related to the adoption of two more black children.

'I think it was a shock that we came here, we lived in a big house on the sugar loaf, a sort of mansion house and it was divided in to a flat and the West wing we lived in, and the bigger part was for the neighbour, and then you had a stables, and there was also a lovely house next to the big house and the gardens were a bit mixed. And it was a lovely house, beautiful. And they were happy with (first black child the parents adopted), and the big house had, they were divorced and then they got together and they had one girl and she was (first black child the parents adopted) and they played a lot with each other, then we got the twins and that was too much for the whole lot. They did all funny things and the twins couldn't go there. I think there were too many black people and he started, with very strange, he started to write to the solicitor that we couldn't do this and that, about the garden and the twins were not allowed to go to the stables and it was really getting very bad, and we moved because of that'. (Interview 2, Joanne)

To understand the ways in which the bringing in of a child of ethnicity in to the community under the terms of class, I refer to a concept advanced by Walkerdine (2007) in her understanding of the dynamics of a steel town community, this being the

notion of a 'community body'. Drawing on the work of the child psychotherapist, Esther Bick (1968), the sense of being held as a baby is argued as being crucial for an infant to begin to feel a sense of an interior which is contained by her/his own skin. Bick (1968) advances the idea that when this process of being held is problematic, a second skin phenomena develops in which un-integration persists and the baby tries to seek an object that allows that sense of being held, to be restored. It is therefore argued that the psychic skin is just as important as the physical skin because it provides us with a sense of containment, and prevents spilling out of the boundaries of our physical body.

Whilst Walkerdine (2007) draws on these ideas to think about the relations of a steel town community as providing a community body where it is argued that the social and political changes to the labour conditions that members of this community were historically connected to, have left this community without a community body. Taking up Anzieu's (1984) argument Walkerdine (2007) argues 'that when groups suffer from not having a body, the body is imagined so that the fantasy of a body provides an organising principle and a nostalgic dream of symbiosis between its' members, which provides a containing envelope delimited and protected by an ego-skin'. In relation to considering the community body in which the children were adopted in to, the physicality of the child's body seemed to penetrate the existing community skin in a way that had diverse effects.

If the notion of the psychic and physiological skin of the community body advanced by Walkerdine (2007) is considered in relation to understanding the neighbours response to the arrival of two more black children, the skin of the community body of which the neighbour and the adoptive parents belonged to was characterised by whiteness which is been penetrated and disrupted by three black children. Employing Bick's (1968), notion of the psychic skin, the need for the neighbour to deploy a solicitor to define the boundaries of where the black children are able to physically go can be understood as a need to restore the psychic skin through the reaching out to an external object to restore the feelings of un-integration that the presence of the three black children created.

As Bion (2013) argues in his psychoanalytical work on group dynamics, there are rules of procedure in the dynamics of a group that is understood as a relational matrix that

incorporate intra-psychic and interpersonal realms. The adoption of a child of ethnicity in to a white family is a significant change to the rules of procedure, primarily because of the rarity of it occurring even today. Whilst this description of experience, could be understood under the terms of race, understanding it in terms of class dynamics illustrates the complex interweavement of the relationship between historical dimensions of analytical categories of class, race and caste through the body's relation to the community it is located in.

As Blakely & Snyder (1997) argue, 'the setting of boundaries is always a political act, they create and delineate space to facilitate the activities and purposes of political, economic and social life'. Since the early 1980s, gated communities have increasingly become a way to keep out and separate areas of society from each other. The class of communities maintain what Schopflin (2001) describes as thought worlds that organise modes of thinking about problems and thought styles that determine the way in which these are articulated. In the case of the neighbour's response to the arrival of the adopted children, we can understand his actions through his style of thinking that reflected a style of thinking that he may have been exposed to through his own social location. One of the effects of this classed way of thinking was to enact political, economic and social assumptions historically associated with blackness.

As Schopflin (2001) further argues, every collective will seek to secure its own existence. The collective of the neighbour that Joanne lived next to and brought her adoptive children in to historically did not involve black people living on equal terms and in such close proximity. The deployment of legal means is the instrument from which the majority of us turn to in order to secure security from the potential threat of chaos, whether this be the rights of access to a gated community, the fencing off of space between neighbours, or indeed war. The neighbour's individual fear of the disturbance caused by the children's arrival, the potential disintegration of his previously ordered world can be understood as reflecting a much wider phenomenon of legal frameworks that define borders and boundaries to nations that determine the flow of bodies around the world. At the point in time in which this experience happened, the youngest two black adopted children, were two years old.

The paranoid fantasy described by Fanon (1967), of the fear of the native wanting to take the place of the coloniser, where the dream of the native is assumed to want to settle in the settlers place which leads to the potential threat of the inversion of roles, manifests itself in to actual reality through the process of transracial adoption. The very visibility of these children make the paranoid fantasy articulated by Fanon (1967) in to a very visible reality, the child of ethnicity is now in amongst the 'coloniser', inhabiting the same space as those who have either by birth or through labour resided in this space over longer periods of time than the colonised.

The historical ways in which middle class geographical communities were built, did not include the black man or woman to be living beside them as equals, but rather as slaves, or servants or worse. The community is the place from which the organisation of time and space becomes apparent, and serves as a way of keeping people in the community and shutting others out and maintaining the moral propositions that regulate the definitions of right and wrong, desirable/undesirable, unpolluted/polluted. This requires a defence strategy both psychically and physically that result in a re-affirmation of the boundaries. Again, for Joanne, the extract below illustrates a manifestation of this paranoid fantasy articulated by Fanon (1967). Particularly painful for Joanne was to experience a kind of re-enactment of the historic separation between the civilized and primitive in her experience of being with her three black adopted children. One relational dynamic in this community setting found it too painful to actually black children in such close proximity, so that Joanne was asked to remove the children from being in this space.

'No, no, and another woman also colleague, all middle class, all lovely and I came with the twins only once and she said oh better that my parents or his parents don't see them, because they do not like black children at all, I thought well that's the last time I'm coming here, they were from the army or so and they didn't like that' (Interview 4, Joanne)

Inhabiting the correct space is argued by Cooper (1998) as being rooted in suitableness, but also in segregation and exclusion where the implications of one's 'proper' position or class are hard to shift. 'Proper place' acts as a normative principle, where Butler (1988) has argued how belonging is performatively produced. It did not matter how the

transracial adoptees performed their identity and their subsequent legitimacy over the spatial dimensions of their family or community. Responses to their bodies could range from subtle forms of questioning to explicit forms of psychological or physical violence had a cumulative effect of creating an embodied sense of being dislodged from the place where community was being experienced. For Belinda, a trans-racially adopted woman who was adopted in to a middle class community setting that she describes as being largely an 'all white terrain'. She was one of two non-Caucasian children in her school, the other one being her adoptive brother. What this extract seems to illustrate is how through relational dynamics, is how notions of race and class become interwoven.

'When I was fourteen and I was in home economics and I was really in to art and fashion I took textiles for my GCSEs, all the home economics teachers were proper twin sets and pearls, blonde hair and matching earrings, proper the same style of women they were such a clique together, do you know what I mean and my textiles teacher, her and another home economics teacher, I was getting on doing my stuff, I loved that subject, you had to pick an item, a piece of clothing to make for our exam, everyone was making these simple dresses and I was making a double breasted jacket and it was really hard but I knew I could do it, I was good and erm I was sewing away and you know when you're busy and you're kind of aware of a conversation. I became aware of a conversation and it was my textiles teacher and another one of them sitting on a table going 'Look at her, look at the state of her, look at her hair'

CL - Oh no

L - 'Look at her hair' because I had a picky afro because no one was taking care of my hair and they were going 'Look at her, look at the state of her' and I went in my not quite got the balls to stand up for yourself. Can you imagine if you were a child of Malcolm X you'd be like rinsing, give them some thundering speech, but all I did was go 'That's rude, you're rude' I was going 'That's rude, you're rude' I was being really daring, and I told my adopted mum and she just made excuses for them, just made excuses for them. Oh and the reason I brought up the coat dress was that next thing it went missing and I didn't even get a grade in textiles because of that. I went off fashion, didn't even get a grade in textiles and I was

honestly in to the fashion side of art and when school was over and we were clearing out the cupboards miraculously in a cupboard blatantly at the front, there it is in cupboards we had looked at one hundred times. And that made me not get a CGSE. Why do you think she did that, I don't know because usually when people bully people it's because they're threatened by them but I was a little girl and they were the twin set and pearls brigade so why would be threatened by a girl with a picky afro' (Interview Three, Belinda).

Similarly in the experience described below by Joanne, a mother of three black trans-racially adopted children, the interweaving of race and class are enacted again through the way in which the close proximity of race to the mother's body is perceived by the shop assistant. The intertwining of race and class has long been recognised as being illustrative of how race relations are located in a white patriarchal capitalist context (Baliar & Wallerstein, 1991; Gans, 2005; Sivanandan, 1976). Where the kinds of experiences described in this study by some of the trans-racial adoptees such as being followed in shops by security guards, or having your economic status being out rightly questioned, are likely to be experiences shared by many people both black and white.

What I argue is specific to the trans-racially adoptive context is the psychological complexity involved in the child actually spanning two economic worlds, the class context of their birth and the middle class context they have grown up in that may provide additional layers of affective complexity in experiencing these kinds of interactions. For the adoptive parents, an effect of the 'bringing in of ethnicity' through the trans-racial adoption was for cultural interpretations of race to be introduced in to the inter-subjective relational dynamics between themselves and their adopted children. In the extract below, Joanne describes an experience of being with her children where her close proximity to the bodies of her black adopted children evokes an assumption that enacts historic assumptions around the relationship between race and class.

'That hurt me terribly, it was just again beginning 80s, and the twins we went to (city) for shopping which we always did because we lived in (city area) and I had (first black adopted child) and the twins, I had the three of them and we went to mother care and I think they needed shoes anyway I had quite a bit of

shopping there and I always paid with the cards and they wouldn't accept it, and I'm sure they thought she can't afford it, she's with black children, I'm definitely sure, we waited for an hour they had to ring up the bank and they card was perfectly alright, they rang the bank they rang my husband and I had to speak to them and I'm definitely sure they told me with the three black children and this happened in (another city), I had one of the three with me and she looked and I'm definitely sure it was because, because on my own I never had any problems and it was alright always isn't that funny. I mean it didn't happen, I felt terrible, I felt racism to me as well'. (Interview Three, Joanne).

In the extract described by Andrew below, it seems possible to gain an insight in to the way in which class may be specifically experienced for trans-racial adoptees in terms of spanning two classed worlds, that of origin and that of present. In Andrew's description of his comparison between the family that were in a position of poverty and his own adoptive father's relationship with class, he acknowledges his awareness of class related aspects of his experience that ultimately seems to mean nothing to him. However many descriptions of Andrew's experiences throughout all four interviews, as with the other trans-racial adoptees, made reference to class that indicated that class did actually mean quite a lot. It seemed for the trans-racial adoptees involved in the study that class origins sustained an influence on the way in which class was perceived in the present moment. Where in Andrew's description of his neighbour's poverty below, the fact that he actually sees and acknowledges the economic position of the family in the same village as his adoptive father indicates that there remains an unconscious awareness of belonging to this economic context whilst at the same time being separated from it.

'I remember this cause, this whole class thing, I might, whereas I probably was expressing it out in that way, but I can remember being young and like thinking god my father, we lived like in the manor house of the village, the second village we lived in (name of village), I got to say actually, when I was really young when I first moved to (name of place), I moved to a place called (name of village), it was a parish, there was no shops in either direction for two miles, it had a number of houses in a row, we used to have this family, they used to fascinate me, they were called the (name of family), I'll never forget this lot and there was

like, I mean obviously they were in an awful position of poverty, they were in a position of poverty, there was quite a few of them to the house. I don't know what figures were actually living in the house and I remember I just used to watch them in fascination through the hedgerows of my garden, and like I'd always make an effort to talk and I remember my step mum would always give clothes and old prams and stuff and I just used to see them as a point of fascination, but to the level where they would like ride a bike for six miles and pick up a bag of potatoes and stuff. There was all this thing about class, class, and who fits in what class, and culture, race wasn't necessarily in it, but this whole class division thing, and I remember standing there thinking what the hell is going on, at a young age now, thinking this, because I stood back and looked at the house and where my dad had tried to fill in the bloody, the roof with holes in it. It was a manor house, but fuck me, and then we had a Mercedes outside and an MG, they weren't the top of the range, they were like older, and he were drinking champagne, and he looked the part, but I just didn't, it didn't mean nothing to me' (Interview 2, Andrew)

In the description from Andrew below, he discusses his feelings about an experience that involves his girlfriend's mother telling her that she does not have to settle for a black man. The black man is Andrew in this situation. This seems particularly complex for Andrew as it seems that whiteness in this context is a symbol of being upper class, of which Andrew cannot make claims to being. He is also never really accepted by the class context of his birth family as he describes himself to be perceived as being contaminated by the whiteness of his adoptive family. This is the first black woman that Andrew has been out with, where again he finds himself being located on the periphery of belonging which on this occasion is not because of the colour of his skin, but because of the internalisation of colonial class structures where whiteness was always considered as superior.

'But even some blacks think they're superior, or upperclass, or higher, but I think that's quite a cleverly indoctrinated colonialist attitude, that they're so up there in the class systems and that, do you know what I mean, and some of these places they never had it, do you know what I mean. Oh I'm going off the whole subject now. Yeah, yeah I think because like Kenyans, culturally, well her particularly,

her tribe, there was like all things I'd learn about her, but she was quite passionate about being black do you know what I mean and all this, and all this black history and stuff, she knew it all, and came from this, I was having a relationship with someone who was very passionate about being black but eventually she went the other way anyway because she married a Greek, but I knew all along, this is funny, I knew that she wanted to be with an upper class, posh or rich white man'

CL – How did you know that

J – I don't know, but I was saying to her the one day, I remember clearly saying it as well, and I think it was because of this whole class thing, because of colonialism I would say primarily, this whole notion of she still perceived here and this life I would say as having achieved, and having a white man is seen as having achieved. I might, if I spoke to her now she might say you probably, she might say you've got that wrong, but that's how I felt

CL – But if you felt something it was probably quite correct

J – Yeah, and even her mum used to say, you don't have to get involved, you can get with a white man, you don't have to settle with, and I was aware her mum was saying that, do you know what I mean. But like her mum was quite well to do in Kenyan society but I think it is almost like she was with a, do you know what I mean, but I clearly knew that was going on because she used to say her mum was saying that and it was like, she was like, I guess in a way, and she was like the first girl I'd actually been with and I was hearing that you know (Interview Three, Andrew).

7.3 Class origins and the silent mother of ethnicity

An integral part of the adoptive parent and child's relationship is the existence of another family, particularly the presence of two mothers. This presence can manifest itself in to the adoptive parent and adopted child relationship as a physical form, where four out of the six adoptees involved in the study had actually met and maintained some form of contact with their birth mothers. The aim of this section is to consider how this experience works at an unconscious level, where the presence of the birth mother is

arguably more accentuated through the visible difference of skin between the adoptive parent and adoptee.

What I aim to convey in this section is to convey some of the complexity that having two mothers, either psychologically or physically can be experienced in very complex ways that reflect the historical polarisation of class origins between adoptive mother and birth mother. The social and political emergence of what Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) describe as the 'sensitive mother' is argued as being a strategy of regulation since the 1950s, as a way of producing as natural the truth of a liberal social democracy. Gilles (2005) argues how over the last decades, attention and concern has focused on a particular kind of mother.

She is portrayed as irresponsible, immature, immoral and a potential threat to the security and stability of society. While this type of mother is accused of bad parenting, it is her status as poor and marginalized that sees her located at the centre of society's ills. Working class mothers who do not conform to standards grounded in middle class privilege are vilified and blamed. The adopted child is a living symbol and an affirmation of the deviant working class mother, they carry the shame of losing the child and of living these out in class contexts that actually construct these capitalist.

The adopted child is a sign of the working class mother failing to gain those skills outlined by Gilles (2005) and other theorists. Certainly blacks, like women have been constructed as possessing the characteristics which are negatively valued in white western culture, for example, emotionality, sexuality and hedonism. Racism reproduces itself not only mechanically at an economic and social level but also through the power relations between white and black people and the subjectivities which these produce and reproduce in both (Henriques et al, 1998). The extract below from Theresa, an adoptive mother of two black children seems to illustrate some of the historic dynamics associated with wider cultural representations of birth mothers.

'If they're good mothers, but if they're awful mothers they shouldn't, and they've proved to be, they shouldn't be given a second chance. One of my friends adopted trans-racially, it just happened that, but this woman went out and left this child on her own for two days in a cot and nobody knew, this child was in a terrible

state when she got back, well she was immediately taken away and adopted' (Interview Three, Theresa).

The sexuality of the mother – the positing of boundaries in relation to who can and cannot belong according to certain parameters which are extremely heterogeneous, ranging from the credentials of being born in the right place, conforming to cultural or other symbolic practices, languages and very centrally behaving in sexually appropriate ways, of which as I have previously argued, the black unmarried mother has never done. For Walkerdine & Lucey (1989), what is described as the 'sensitive mother', has been part of the political discourse that has served to regulate the middle class home and the children. The system of moral regulation in the middle class family has been central to its' position in the social order (Schopflin, 2001), and a crucial part of the moral values of the middle class positions has been for women to not transgress the accepted codes of motherhood. Catherine describes how these sexual dynamics and the social anxieties that surrounded unmarried birth mothers becomes part of the relationship that her adoptive mother has with her. Where the fear of the sexual transgressions that her adoptive mother made is transferred on to the way in which the adoptive mother relates to Catherine.

'Well she said to me once as well, which she probably deny or not remember saying now, but it was burned in to my memory because I was a bit shocked and hurt by it, but she said at one point, I can't remember the context or the conversation but maybe I got crabs when I was 17 or 18, maybe 16, I don't know, slept at a friends house and I'd got crabs from this boy and we'd fooled around, but I was a virgin till I was nearly nineteen, but I did fool around a bit. Erm, and I got crabs and I was totally ignorant as to what they were and so was my mum much to her embarrassment because she worked in the doctors surgery as a receptionist and er anyway she didn't know what they were and they were a sexually transmitted... so she was quite shocked and worried that I was going to be promiscuous and get pregnant and got quite upset with me and got angry and shouted at me and said 'I don't want you to be irresponsible like your mother was'. She was anxious that I was very careful to get pregnant' (Interview Three, Catherine).

Mothers of colour have historically been marginalised and their 'natural' inferiority presumed. Adoption of children of colour by white families represented the outer limits of acceptance; racist representational strategies involved stereo-types of poor temperament and feeble mindedness, and these were presumed to be innate to these children. A range of other derogatory representations was available for mixed-race children (particularly bi-racial children with African American heritage). Where characteristics as 'impulsive, unstable and prone to insanity came to be associated with those mothers that dared to transgress the accepted codes of motherhood McGinn (2000). In the description that Theresa, an adoptive mother of two black children, provides below, again historical dynamics become part of the discursive way in which Theresa talks about the unmarried birth mothers.

'That's the trouble you see and I think they're the people who are the ones who spout out aren't they. I remember I was absolutely outraged, there was a programme on you know one of these you can phone in, but I can never get the number down else I'd have picked up the phone, and it was this girl, she was obviously, she was half West Indian, I think she was, she just spoke because she said her parents, she said how you know how much, how her mother I think she had had a child of her own, she had three children of her own and then had a miscarriage, was told she couldn't have anymore, so she, because she'd got children, because in our time you couldn't adopt children white children if you had children of your own so she obviously didn't feel at all racist like I don't, I mean a baby's a baby and she went out and adopted this black baby and this girl was going on against her mother saying how selfish she was, she'd adopted me because she couldn't have a baby as I if I was a, and this girl had obviously, and you know that she ought to have been adopted in to her ethnic background but this girl had obviously been brought up really well, she'd been to university, she didn't think. She was about nineteen, but it never occurred to her to think of the context that she wouldn't have been adopted, and if she had been adopted she would have been sitting in a home at that time. And secondly if she hadn't been adopted, if she'd been adopted by her ethnic background, the chances are she'd have been in some slum in London and she would never have had the chances she's had. Yeah

but, you know, she just thought she'd lost her ethnic background (Interview Two, Theresa).

Freud's latency age, adoptees sees the birth parents at any moment in time, she may see the adoptive parents as the opposite. When thoughts of adoption coincide with splitting, one set of parents may be vilified, while the other is idealised. This concept of splitting relates well to Freud's (1990) concept of a family romance, a common reveries in which latency children engage. They fantasise that they are really the offspring of other parents, and have wrongly been placed with or kidnapped by, the ordinary, not-heroic people who are raising them. Often the fantasy is of having a royal or super-hero type lineage. For adoptees, this is a more complicated fantasy as there is, in reality, another set of parents about whom to fantasise. This can prolong the fantasising and aggravate the splitting a non-adopted child might do when comparing his ordinary parents with other fictional parents. The fantasising can take on epic proportions, what may be a passing daydream for a non-adoptee can be a prolonged confusing reality for an adoptee. The way in which Robert talks about how he feels about his birth mother seems to illustrate some of this complexity involved in being part of two parental relationships.

'Um I don't know, I don't have any sort of hatred for him because I don't really have much knowledge of their situation and you know they certainly won't be the first couple to have a one night stand and accidentally get pregnant, so I don't really feel that I can be too negative to him and again and not knowing about the situation, he may have been desperate to be a father and it being my mother's choice to say no we're not having a relationship so it's hard really to kind of, to know how somebody that you have no knowledge of, and have no real knowledge of why they're not your father, well no I do have knowledge of the situation, but to not know fully how that situation came about, it's hard really to have any set feelings about it really. Although I don't know, I do sort of, I do feel that when I have these thoughts of wanting to see a photo of a blood relative to see if there's any physical similarity, or any of those little questions sort of thing, I guess it's my mum that I imagine asking rather than my father. I don't know if there's any reason behind that or not, it's not conscious, but yeah if I did ever envisage sitting down having a conversation about that sort of part of my life, I en-

visage it with my mother rather than my father. Yeah I don't know, I don't know if it's that, I don't know if there is sort of an underlying issue of me feeling that my father should have been more responsible, I don't know if it's that, the fact that I know that my mothers parents refused to sort of help her makes me feel more sorry for her whatever the situation was between my two parents and she was obviously in a difficult position and her parents wouldn't help her, so it makes me feel something stronger towards her than I would to my father, I don't know, but yeah, I've always thought that if I did ever want to meet them, then it would probably be easier to meet my mother, but you know. Yeah I don't know why it is. At any stage of my life, it's never felt worth the risk or the effort to kind of search them out, I've never been, touch wood, I've never been sort of, I've been in a position where I don't feel part of a family sort of thing, or I don't belong, you know so that's very much meant that I'm quite content with how things are and how my life is and who my family are and how I consider my family to be sort of thing, and you know I do feel like I'm from a family that is forever changing, because we're so big and then my step family (Interview Four, Robert).

The existence of others is crucial in defining what is normal and in locating ones own place in the world. One way in which I believe the adoptive mothers managed the complexity of the emotions involved in parenting another woman's child, whilst maintaining a sense of ownership to being the mother of their adopted children involved them oscillating between articulating sympathy and criticism towards the birth mother. Object relations theory suggests ways in which boundaries are constructed, separating the 'good and the bad' (Winnicott, 1957; Klein, 1959) 'the stereo typical representations of others which inform social practices of exclusion and inclusion but which at the same time, define the self.

7.4 Class expectations and emotional needs

The family is acknowledged as being critical in the formation of racial or cultural identity. The socio-economic position of the family is also recognised as having a tremendous impact on how parents socialise their children (Kerckhoff, 1972; Dereene & Tai, 1975; Brimeyer et al, 2006). The private domain of the home is argued by

Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) as long being a domain of political concern to ensure the upward mobility of working class children. The centrality of the role of the mother has historically been central to educationally successful children and passing on the moral and values of the middle class home. The process of adoption has historically been a societal mechanism that has served to reproduce class structures which has involved the adopted child typically being transferred from contexts of poverty or illegitimacy to a middle class home.

It is argued by Brymeyer et al (2006), that there is actually very little known about how the micro dynamics of family life transmits advantages to children and sustains the passing on of middle class norms, expectations and values from the parent to the child. In this section I aim to convey an aspect of experience that illustrates some of the complexities and tensions involved in the bringing in of the adopted children in to the middle class family context. The small but limited and yet important amount of literature on middle class black identity that suggests the experience of being black and middle class is different from that of the black working class and poor, is testimony to the weight given to socioeconomic advantages for children of middle class status. Yet, in some of the experience described by the adopted children, these advantages were not without additional layers of complexity that accompanied it.

It is argued by Miller *et al* (1986) that middle class parents value self-direction while working class parents place a premium on conformity to external authority. Educational attainment was something that was valued in all of the families involved in this study. All of the adoptive parents had obtained higher educational status themselves. In three of the families, either the adoptive father or mother had attended top universities and described their own parents also being academic achievers. The interrelation between class structures and educational attainment is a relationship that has long been considered from sociological perspectives (Douglas, 1964; Goldthorpe, 1996; Scarr & Weinberg, 1978; Sullivan, 2001) and it was a subject that was spoken extensively about throughout the interview with the adoptive parents. What was of interest in this consideration of class context and its' emphasis of educational attainment was how the educational expectations and achievements of the adoptive parents and their biological children was not necessarily something that was expected for the adopted child.

Theresa, an adoptive mother, describes how important educational attainment was not just for herself and her husband, but the educational achievement of or her own mother and father. What is worth noting is the different educational expectations that she had for her two adopted children where she describes her adopted daughter as being a 'competent' little thing. It seems that the educational and professional expectations she has for her adopted daughter replicate the class expectations of the birth family context. The adoptive mother's desire for her black adopted daughter to become a secretary, was actually what the adoptive daughter became in her professional life.

'We never had any expectations that (adopted son) or (adopted daughter) would be particularly bright, but then we had to accept that (biological son) wasn't doing well at school either even though he had good genes on both sides, he had. (Husband) and I had been to Oxford, but three out of the four grandparents had been to Oxford and Cambridge, (biological son) you know and he did abysmally at school, I mean he's done well since, but is very intelligent, I told you his mother wrote poetry, I mean she's obviously a very interesting person, I mean again that's why I think it's difficult when they keep up with their birth parents, you know this mixture, funnily enough I was talking to (biological son) about (Grandson).... My parents were both lower middle class and they both were scholarship kids and they both went to Oxford and Cambridge which is amazing from their background and as a result they were obsessed with academic achievement and when I had the children they were obsessed with the children doing well at school, so I knew that I, with a university lecturer husband, I'd got no contacts in business or anything else so I was obsessed with academic achievement and it was only I suppose, when (her biological son), I got less obsessed with the two young ones because I saw how (her biological son) turned himself round later. My (adopted daughter) was a very competent little thing, but we always knew she wasn't academic so I don't think I'd even wanted her to go to university, I wanted her to be a secretary or a nurse, which in fact she did end up doing, and she was extremely good at it

CL – yes mum and dad never ever pushed, it was like in the whole family, it was just never an option

M – yes I think I certainly did the same with (adopted daughter) because she was very very bright, she was one of the best at the comp, well I think, how many got to Oxford in her year, three I think maybe four or five, certainly not more, but she always was near the top, she was just very, she inherited her dads brains really and she was very very clever, but (biological son) is equally is clever, but because he, I think I'd always hoped he'd go to university, I think it was rather a disappointing, but when he'd made such a mess of his time, you see by the time he was dropping out of university with his illegitimate son and everything, that was when (adopted son), ten years younger, he was becoming, (biological son) was making a mess of his life and (adopted son) was twelve, so I sort of felt what was all that good of pushing (biological son) when it got me nowhere and (adopted son) was a very competent little thing, but we always knew she wasn't academic so I don't think I'd ever even wanted her to go to university, I wanted her to be a secretary or a nurse, which in fact she did end up doing, and she was extremely good at it, when she went to secretarial college, the lady said she was the best student she'd ever had. She's just incredibly efficient at whatever she does you know and she's very efficient, she gets her housework done by about ten o'clock. When she's here, I mean I can't believe it, I turn round and the whole kitchens' tidy and I spend all day trying to tidy the kitchen and it's still a mess, She's so... ' (Interview Two, Theresa)

In the extract below from Rebecca, she describes how she shouldn't have done anything 'more than nursery nursing', which again seems to reflect the professional and educational achievements of the class contexts of her birth family. What is interesting to consider is how these kinds of beliefs became internalised given that she was raised in a highly educated and high status professional family.

C - I know, he's definitely taught you passiveness and also it's had an impact on our family because if you look, I wouldn't say that people haven't succeeded but from where I've come from like my academic background, how people perceived my academic background I've done amazingly because I shouldn't have done any more than nursery nursing, I shouldn't have done more than go to college and be a nursery nurse

CL - who told you that

C - Well I never, like I don't know I've never felt bright, no one's ever said. I know I'm not naturally bright but my eldest brother went to private school, my eldest sister went to private school, my other brother went to private school for a bit. If anything we've pushed to excel, like me and (adoptive sister's name), it's as though we're proving ourselves, more so than their kids I'd say and like I think why am I doing it, am I doing it to prove a point, why am I doing it, question what you, but yeah do to a degree. Like you feel you had to achieve. It was always busy and bustley but in a nice home, like we always said it, like we had a nice home we'd always have meals on the table and sit together in the evening, a nice upbringing, we were brought up with nice values, good opportunities, we were treated the same in that respect, we weren't treated differently. If anything we've pushed to excel, like me and (adoptive sister), it's as though we're proving ourselves, more so than their kids I'd say and like I think why am I doing it, am I doing it to prove a point, why am I doing it, question what you, but yeah do to a degree. Like you feel you had to achieve' (Interview three, Rebecca).

The adoptive parents of this adoptee divorced soon after this participant had been adopted as a baby where the husband had found a new partner, so that his formative years had been spent between both his adopted mothers and his adopted father's homes. The adopted mother later became involved in a new partnership and shortly after, the adopted child as a young boy moved to live with his adopted father and his step mother and children. I felt that this participant had been enormously effected by his adoption, where this participant had often described experiencing very intense forms of racism throughout his entire life. He conveyed a sense of resentment towards the class aspirations of his adoptive father, and certainly as the above experience describes felt particularly resentful towards the decision of his step mother to change his school where he remembers and describes to me feeling very out of place. This feeling he describes of being a 'thicko' is something that stays with him throughout his life.

'My mum pulled me out of that school and she put me in to this primary school, flippin' posh, up your arse primary school, where kids were in it from the waiting

list, like it was a real posh blazered school, like to come from a local village school where you know, she pulled me out of that, to this primary school, and they were like....where kids were on that from birth this waiting list for this school and I'd gone in there because her daughter had gone there and her son with my dad or my step brother was in there and then I came over and it was just like, it was like I was taken out of there, put in here as though it was going to improve me or something, but in terms of academic achievement, like 11 plus, which I failed, and then I went back to the comprehensive, where-as my step brother and my step sister went to the High schools, because in Lincolnshire the 11 plus and all that was still relevant, so it was almost like, they're the academic achievers and you're like the flippin' idiot, but then on top of, and I was just like, and then where else I wasn't fitting in and I'd cause issues then on top of, there was the whole sort of, well you two have been in, or going to high school or you two are like high academics, and I'm the thicko like, you know because I went to comp, it wasn't really admitted like, but there was this.....'

CL – What was it like at the posh primary school

J – It was alright, they're just, I don't know, it was, well the head teacher was really nice as I remember, the teachers were quite nice, I got on, I did get one, but we're talking a school where everyone would pull up in a 4x4. It was almost like I sort of, ok, I'll put it this way, this one distinct memory, I think my dad had told me off because I'd gone and played with the kids from the council estate, which is ironic really because my step mum was from the back end of Leeds and my adopted father was from the real East end back end of London, but they'd kind of worked their way through society, which is good, so they'd got themselves to this stage where the Manor House, that had no central heating and the roof was half nackered and we had a Mercedes and an MG out the front, so picturesque, Manor House, two cars, the biggest house in the village sort of thing, and it was like, I guess in their heads they'd reached that point of, do you know what I mean and for me it was like, I don't know, I always felt like different, I always felt different, anyway and I wanted to do what I wanted to do, and if I wanted to hang around with the boys from the council estate street and have my friends, what was the

question again? Yeah, failing, yeah they don't have them here, yeah you're a waste of time' (Interview Three, Andrew).

Whilst Rebecca talks about the positive comments about the material environment of her adoptive family and acknowledges the cultural material benefits she has gained through her adoptive family, she also talks about the lack of emotional support she has with . She describes herself as being an emotional person, but during the interviews this is not really the person that I feel as though she has gained.

C – I guess it makes me feel sad, but I, because I just think I'm not that kind of person, I'm quite an emotional person, I'm probably over emotional if anything and I know everyone's different but yeah, but it is quite sad I just think because I don't think they're completely open with their feelings or how they feel because they see it as a sign of weakness and they don't want to show that side, I don't know, maybe it's because they've just not experienced it, I don't know, it's just weird, because I haven't experienced that emotional support but I can't imagine being like that in the same respect, I don't quite understand it, because I think I've been quite different in terms of outwardly showing my emotions, telling my kids how I feel, less guarded, I just think it's been quite guarded, but there'd be times when you don't really know what's going on. Yeah, like emotionally, you wouldn't talk about being adopted to my dad, like emotionally that's where they're more lacking really. Like I can talk about anything to my mum really, but yeah my dad he's just always busy and he's always working so it's a different kind of relationship I just think

CL – But again, like you say, that's probably like quite a lot of middle class professional blokes, traditionally they just haven't been

C – And I think it's part of his upbringing, that's the thing if you look back, it's not just how my dad was, it's just how he was brought up, his mum and dad weren't very emotional, he was sent off to boarding school and does he know any better, any different that's what I just think. I know he loves his kids, he loves us all and in some emotional, he was sent off to boarding school and does he know any better, any different that's what I just think. I know he loves his kids, he loves us all and in some way he's more soft than my mum in some respects about certain

things my mum's more hard, but then she's had to be like that, but yeah in terms of dealing with emotional issues like with Lewis I just don't think they knew what to do really, like what do they do, it must have been hard for them to say they don't want him to come back and like he knows like after he's naughty, but then like he's always got leeny so they'd never completely cut him off, because Leeny was still living with them and stuff, so it was awkward really

CL – That must have been hard. Do you think they were sensitive to your difference

C – No probably not that sensitive, just get on with it. There was nothing to do with our identity and culture but then why would we, we adopted their culture. I don't know whether that's to our detriment or not, in some respects maybe. And how they were raised themselves and ultimately they must be really giving people to have done what they've done but they don't give in terms of showing their affection I suppose and I think if they had been more affectionate and been able to talk about issues, they've have had a lot less trouble and stress from my brother. Like for example he's never going to work, he's on benefits, he's got a really IQ and reading age, he's like into drugs, he's dependent on methadone and all that, like he's going to be a burden for what I see to be all his life, he's never going to be totally independent, so he'll always be asking for money. Because like speaking with my sister she did the same, she said 'oh I've got loads of issues and they don't support me at all' like I think by now they could support you easier, but we've never gone looking, but I think you can't put a price on being able to deal with people's emotions. (Interview Four, Rebecca).

Rebecca's description of the emotional level of support she needed, and the support she actually received is something that is likely to resonate with many families. Rebecca articulates an awareness of the reason why this emotional support was not available through her acknowledgement of the classed upbringing of her adoptive and mother and father. Whilst the middle class family may emphasise educational and professional attainment, the additional emotional needs of the adopted child may require additional guidance and support for adoptive parents, because the experience is outside of that of the parents.

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

What I have aimed to illustrate in this chapter is to create an understanding of class as it is experienced through trans-racially adopted situations. I have argued in this conceptualisation of class for a need to break down the opposition between the different traditions in approaching the analysis of class to encompass elements of both cultural schemes and systems are of equal relevance. Under these terms, it is both local and global social forces that are acknowledged as influencing the dimensions of social interactions which for the body-subject create moments that in this chapter I have interpreted through the lens of the analytical category of class. In this aimed I have sought to address what Lawler (2005) argues as the paucity of language and theory available to actually describe the notion of class. Where for Skeggs (2004) it is argued, theories of individualisation and de-traditionalization have displaced class even though its effects are simultaneously institutionalised and reproduced. This increasing acknowledgement of the invisibility of 'class' has been made visible through the experiential descriptions of how feelings associated with economic relations become enacted through trans-racial adoptive subjectivity.

The many ways in which class dynamics emerge aims to further affirm Gilles (2005) argument for the relevance of the concept of class despite a wider questioning of its' relevance in the academy and beyond. Through this analysis of experience, I have aimed to show how social class distinctions need to be understood in increasingly codified, displaced and individualised ways that can emerge through relational inter-subjective processes. The central of argument of this chapter has been to affirm the need to consider classed dynamics in the subjective lives of trans-racially adopted people. During the course of this argument, I am simultaneously illuminating the existence of the social practice of transferring children from either poorer parts of the world or contexts of poverty in our own country. This illumination leads on to a much broader political point that remains integral to trans-racial adoption, this being that labour processes in global class structures do indeed continue to matter. In the following final empirical chapter, I will conclude this empirical phase of the thesis, by re-focusing the lens of trans-racial adoptive experience towards the notion of felt senses of loss.

Chapter Eight: Dimensions of loss in trans-racial adoptive experience

8.1 Chapter Introduction

The notion of loss is a prominent part of the adoption story. For Yngvesson (2003), there are two dimensions to how loss is articulated in cultural representations of adoption. It is both a story about abandonment and a story about roots. In the abandonment story, 'a baby is found in a marketplace, on a roadside, outside a police station, or in the tour of an orphanage; alternatively, a child is left by its mother at a hospital or is relinquished or surrendered. The child is given a new identity, they belong in a new place.' (Yngvesson, 2007:7). For Humphrey & Humphrey (1986), this language of loss, abandonment, grief and reunion that continues to permeate the discourse of adoption illustrates how adoptive subjectivity is formed through its' relation to the ideology of the blood related family. Where it is this separation from the 'primal connectedness' that associates the adoptive subject with an historical legacy of 'genealogical bewilderment' that for trans-racially adoptive subjects is a loss that is permanently displayed through the medium of our body.

Under the terms of Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of the 'body schema', this final empirical chapter aims to foreground the focus of its analysis around the experiences of loss in trans-racial adoptive contexts. In this analysis of the experience of loss in the trans-racially adoptive family situation it becomes possible to reflectively consider how aspects of contemporary trans-racial adoption discourse may unwittingly re-inforce a sense of differentiation through sustaining historical ideas around the sanctity of blood ties through the relationship language maintains to and shapes reality.

A secondary aim of this chapter in its consideration of experiences of loss in trans-racial adoptive contexts, it aims to illuminate and connect those experiences to a much wider shared heritage of diaspora populations. This diaspora community is formed across global spaces where individuals are all disconnected from imagined 'origins' of place, communities and nations. In attempting to make this connection to shared experiences of being in place where bodily appearance can be read as belonging to an original homeland and not in the place of where the body is dwelling in the here and now, an attempt is made at creating a new narrative of loss that takes in to account the complexity of family relations that characterise the modern world.

8.2 Experiences 'Being Mixed'

In this section, I aim to consider the notion of 'mixing' and 'being mixed' as these sentiments have related to experiences of trans-racial adoption. The very visible difference inherent in trans-racial parenting relations is a dimension of family life that affects many of the racially mixed families that exist today. In their studies of mixed identities, Tizzard & Phoenix (1995) refer to what has generally been a long held societal view that people of mixed identities can be expected to suffer from low self-esteem, confusion and potentially problems leading to forms of delinquent behaviour. Rather than as Tizzard & Phoenix (1995) articulates, people of mixed identity being seen and seeing themselves as the fortunate inheritors of two cultures, culturally it is argued that this social identity is regarded as an object of pity.

I have previously argued of the relevance of the concept of 'miscegenation' in trans-racial adoptive subjectivity where historic fears around racial mixing in intimate relations continue to subtly influence both the contours of trans-racial adoptive debates and as I have argued previously, the affective dynamics of the experience of trans-racial adoption. This emphasis on historic meanings of discursive terms and their connection to the present is integral to the theory of the subject advanced in this thesis, where terms such as 'mulatto', 'mixed breed', 'half breed', 'half caste' remind us of the deeply stigmatising processes that racially intimate relations historically maintained. The historic belief that the dilution of white blood through racial mixing would be accompanied by a dilution of intellectual and moral capacities that would ultimately lead to the transmission of inheriting the assumed negative qualities of the inferior race (Tizzard & Phoenix, 1995).

A dominant feature of the racial complexity in many Western societies is that of people of mixed descent. Assuming a broad and pluralistic approach to the experiences of 'mixed race' people, Parker & Song (2001) argue that the increasing size of this population significantly contests the historic logic of categorisation that has dominated racial thinking and racial divisions. A number of scholars have approached a theorisation of the 'mixed race' identity that has sought to transcend the black and white binary historic conceptualisations of race have created (Brunsma, 2005; Kerwin

et al, 1993; Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005; Udry & Hendrickson-Smith, J, 2003; Song, 2003; Storrs, 1999).

Several studies have sought to understand how adolescents from dual heritage backgrounds self-define their racial identity and their attitudes towards their mixed parentage that reveal the complexity and range of racial identities and cultural allegiances involved in dual heritage identities (Mahtani, 2005; Tizzard & Phoenix, 1995; Wilson, 1997). Much of this work on mixed identities has enabled us to deepen our understanding of an increasingly prominent part of our racial landscape and provides useful insights in to understanding dimensions of mixedness in trans-racial adoptive contexts. Similarly, the trans-racial adoptive Maintaining echoes from its' past, the problematisation of mixed identities is sustained where much public policy in the UK continues to tend to see family breakdown or parental inadequacy as a direct result of racial mixing (Aspinall & Song, 2013).

In this discussion of 'mixedness' and 'being mixed' through trans-racial adoptive family contexts, I aim to convey how being mixed emerged for both the adoptee and the adoptive parent and to convey the deep senses of loss that accompanied these experiences of being mixed. Whilst there are many parallels that can be made in this analysis of mixedness with the experiences of living a mixed race identity such as experiences of racism or a sense of being between two worlds. This discussion also aims to illuminate specific aspects of mixedness involved in trans-racial adoptive subjectivity for both the parents and children.

For Belinda, she talks continuously throughout her four interviews about the ways in which she becomes mixed which seems to acutely illustrate the feelings involved with living through a position of hybridity. Many cultural theorists have begun to rely on notions of diaspora and hybridity that take in to account racial ambivalence and complexity in order to problematize categorical interpretations of race and nation. In this association with a 'third space', hybridity varies not only over time but also in difference cultures and these meanings have informed the boundaries that Mitchell (1997) argues has made the term so relevant in its ability to problematize the constant policing of internal and external boundaries that are responsible for producing hybrid subjectivities. Whilst these theoretical concepts that stress and acknowledge fluidity

and a sense of celebration contained in liminal spaces, Belinda's description of actually being positioned in and through a liminal space by the engagement of her body in a process of 'being mixed' has deeply emotional consequences. The interacting effect invoked by the appearance of her body by the boys at her infant school creates this sense of affectively living through a process of being split.

'I got taken the micky out of, because the other black children at school had their hair dealt with. I had mixed race bullying actually. Not very serious. There were these two little boys at my infant school and they used to say 'You're a bit rusty aren't you?' and 'You're half baked'. 'Don't you wanna get back in the oven' . They knew they were taking the micky out of me for being brown and not white. Do you know what I mean, it was mixed race bullying. They said half baked, you need to get back in the oven. They said it at infant school and I used to get upset. But because of what I was going through at home, that's like nothing. No, quite honestly, I remember them saying it, being upset, but it wasn't an issue in my life. I was surprised when I just called it bullying just then because I don't feel like I was bullied. Teasing, yeah like I said that was nothing compared to what was going on at home and loads of things in my life since. I can deal with so much because it's nothing compared to being a little kid having to be strong on your own in a room against adults and be so strong and get through it and you wish you can get through it and know you're not going to kill yourself and you know they called me a horrible child you know. You know, it's like how much your hair, I didn't know how much that made me feel about my hair, my race, you can't go to a little mixed race child, 'You're horrible'. Isolate them from the others and say 'you're horrible'. You're a horrible child and send them to their room on their own with their own thoughts'. (Interview Three, Belinda)

For an Iranian female adoptee, Catherine, there is a sense of the everydayness to the way in which she experiences processes of 'being mixed' which involve conflicting responses and feelings. Catherine describes her experiences of racism, sexualisation and the general mis-recognition of her sense of self that characterizes the way in which she is related to. For Wilberg (1998), the concept of core-relatedness involves that being a self and bodying the self is what gives the individual a sense of being real. In contrast to phenomenological sentiments, Wilberg (1998) argues that the self is not conceptually

approached as a 'transcendental subject' confronting a world of objects, but rather it is the self's relatedness to people and things in their beingness that constitutes core-relatedness that enables a sense of self emerges. Again, one of the effects of being involved in processes of 'being mixed' is to experience a sense of objectification. For Buber (1958), the capacity to relate to another person as 'You', rather than as an object is central to the notion of core relating. The frequency of 'I-It' dimensions involved in her relationships created by both discursive and affective responses to her mixedness means that she describes herself feeling like she is an object for somebody else. As Wilber (1998) argues, if you are related to as an object, rather than as a whole person, then our potentiality for being can become compromised. For Catherine, she describes one of the consequences of her sense of being objectified is to project her trauma on to the world in way that veers towards the extreme dimensions of loss, this of being towards death.

'I became much more aware of being different, really at first I was confused, I had no idea but it really confused me because I didn't feel myself as different at all and then suddenly it was pointed out to me every single day that I was different. Why am I different? You know, where are you from? Are you going to go home for Christmas? You know, it's a bit cold for you hear and then to be laughed at and people wouldn't really listen and then they'd try to make jokes. People weren't comfortable around me and I wasn't comfortable around people. When I was at school, a group of skinheads lined up against the road taunting me, threw stones, spat at me, called me names. At about 12 or 13, I started self-harming. I used to scratch my wrists and take lots of disprin, I didn't ever want to really kill myself, but I felt very suicidal, depressed, I had all this emotional pain but that I didn't know how to express'. I don't know whether my parents have some regret knowing that the move from London when I was ten to the North east was so difficult for everybody, not just for me, but it was most difficult for me in terms of the racism that I experienced and I don't think they'd thought that through at all, they were very naïve in that way about how the average person that I would be coming across would see me a mixed race child in their family, they had no idea that that was ever going to be an issue, they were like, oh she's a child, it doesn't matter that she's half Iranian, mixed race. I don't think they even

thought of me as half Iranian. They gave no thought to my mixed parentage which is ignoring half of who I am and it's like ignoring the fact that I've got two heads or if I was a disabled child, you know to just kind of not acknowledge that somebody has a difference, I don't know it's like, I can see in some ways they're trying to do the best they can, just not give it importance and sort of hope that everything's going to be ok, oh we'll just ignore that fact, you know but if we ignored the fact that one of my pupils at school was in a wheel chair then you know and we didn't provide a lift for him, how would he get around the school, you know it's, that's just an extreme example' (Interview Two, Catherine).

Similarly for Belinda, the description of her experience below that illustrates some of the feelings that arise from the body being engaged through a position of hybridity.

'Yeah, that's when things started changing, still not to the degree of how I live now, but things started changing. I felt very awkward about being mixed race in whatever scenario. Yeah, you've got me there, that's it. Like every way of being is uncomfortable and it is our toughness that made us stand there and go through it. Erm I used to work in a really cool club in Western. And we had all the best, current DJ's and people used to come from all sorts of places to our club, you know, so all of a sudden I'm right in the middle of this multicultural thing you know and I remember I was working on the door, I wasn't serving alcohol, underage. It was when I was working in that club that another mixed race adopted guy, trans-racially adopted guy used to come to the club and I was alright with him. I could talk to him and we were easy with each other, but then other black people would come in and there would be that awkwardness. We never talked about why we were easy with each other. It's such a funny thing and it's so, you're embarrassed, you're ashamed, you feel small, you feel like you don't know nothing. I'd say it was shame and embarrassment. It's such a funny thing and it's so, you're embarrassed, you're ashamed, you feel small, you feel like you don't know nothing. I'd say it was shame and embarrassment confident I was, it was New Years and I was up in London staying with a white friends and we were up in Bow and we were in this pub and I was really getting on with this big group of guys. We were chatting away, just friendly, do you know what I mean, not like that. We were chatting away and I was a bit separate from my

girlfriends and I was more confident, you know, holding the conversation, I was the only girl. And they said 'Shall we go to a blues'. London's different, in Bristol it's really multi-cultural, but in London it's different especially back then. I don't know what it's like now, I couldn't comment now. But back then white people didn't go to blues and I said 'Yeah, girls we're going to a blues.' And they all looked disgraced at me and walked off and I was like and I did think oh, they meant me and not them. Innocently, I went, not innocently because I sort of knew that story, but I had to invite my friends. They were like what you on about, they didn't say anything they literally just shipped off, but that was a different thing because I was more confident with all sorts of people (Interview Four, Belinda).

The historical connections between blood and affinity imbued in our modern meaning of family is connected to the rights of the family has equated to the rights and responsibilities of entire nations (Marteau & Richards, 1996). For those that are located outside the powerful presumptions about biological ties, blood relations advanced through the concept of heredity requires the adoptee below to manage the dialectic of rejection and loss as one way of being in the world. In this extract below, again described by Belinda,

'I am of mixed heritage and I've missed out on knowing about one half of my ancestral heritage and I do feel that loss and it's affected me all my life, mainly because of other people's expectations. Judging me by the way I look, you know, I look Jamaican, so people make assumptions and that really pisses me off when people make assumptions, not just about me, well yeah, even more when it's personal kind of thing, yeah and I know people who weren't adopted and all sorts of other things have trouble finding who they are, but this is so deep. It's so different, the things people take for granted, in your family, it's everything, your health, what you look like, who you are, how you speak, how you walk, how you talk, how you do at school, how people are with you, relationships, it's eeeverything. I'm learning about me and my partner now in terms of learning about me, I'm learning, it's just, and I shouldn't be at this age, well we all learn till our dieing day, but it's at another level, it's too deep. They robbed us of knowing ourselves, you know (Interview Three, Belinda).

8.3 Parental mixing

For Schenider (1984), an enduring effect of the family ideology of genetics and blood lines is its' powerful ability to render all other variants of family forms as problematic. The ideology of families formed through blood has equally emphasised the purity of that blood, where the mixing of bloods was historically socially and politically actively prevented. Parenting a child from a young baby, being called mum or dad, performing the everydayness of mothering seemed to be challenged frequently the validity or authenticity of the parenting relationship, leading to a sense of precariousness of their parenting status.

This position of in-betweenness does not involve inhabiting an empty space where one gets lost in the cultural translation from one side to the other in the bipolar dichotomy of where you're from and where you're at (Bhabha, 1971). Employing the notion of hybridity, the transracial adoptive parenting relationship is filled up with a new cultural form and can be therefore understood on its own terms. As Grosz (2000) argues, space carries properties which are simultaneously open to transformation, and there is always an affective shift in any group dynamic when a new person enters the space of the family, group, or nation.

From the descriptions of the experiences of some of the mothers it was clear that the presence of their parenting relation had a powerful ability to always transform, if not disrupt and unsettle space. The frequency and intensity of the change in affective dynamics that characterised the way in which the transracial parenting relationship inhabited space can be understood as a process of embodiment. This was a process that was unfortunately experienced as deeply traumatic and illustrates the affective complexity involved in living in a space that creates an opportunity to break down the claim to hierarchical purity of the dividing lines of race

There was a strong sense of the everydayness to the prejudice that ain families described, where although in many social contexts they felt a sense of acceptance, the dynamics of this acceptance was one that still marked their family out as different. It only took one person to look at their family in a particular way, or for someone to innocently ask a perfectly legitimate question, the fact that one way in which they inhabited space was for the spatial environment to question their presenceEarly

authors such as Stonequest (1935) suggested that laying claims to two different cultures simultaneously can be detrimental to an individual's psychological well-being, particularly when group members have distinct physiognomies and culture that enjoys a higher social status than the other.

What seemed apparent in the mother's experience of parenting a child that was of a different ethnicity to themselves, was a constant shift between parenting cultures where the status of being involved in a transracial parenting relationship had significant consequences to their own sense of self. The close proximity of the parent's body to the racially different child seemed to totally transform the ways in which their own white bodies had previously inhabited space. This positioning of what Gilroy (1993) describes as an 'in-betweenness' of parental status where through the adoption, the mothers maintained a certain status of being white and middle class within the hierarchy of social acceptability and yet also experienced an acute sense of differentiation through the dynamics of miscegenation when with their adopted child, that seemed to psychologically relegate the mothers to a devalued part of the parenting social scale.

Whilst authors such as LaFramboise *et al* (1993) have suggested that this kind of movement between parenting cultures does not necessarily mean that identity confusion is inevitable, mothers described the way their family was 'looked' as having the power to destabilise their sense of security as mothers. Rather, complexity can emerge when individuals internalise the conflicts between the two cultures, and it seemed that this constant relegation of being associated with the perceived low status group of their black child, did have emotional consequences for certain mothers where for some they had never experienced any form of disempowerment having come from upper middle class and relatively privileged lives themselves. Many accounts of the experiences described by the adoptive parents conveyed a sense of an 'everydayness' to their differentiated parental status that left them being confronted with situations that meant they had to respond to their child in ways that they were not prepared for.

At the point in time that these adoptions took place, the mothers all described that they had no access to formal support, and very little access to informal support that could have been gained through knowing other transracially adopted families. There seemed to be no doubt in the genuine sense of love, duty and responsibility that the mothers felt

towards their adopted child, but the conditions under which they had been required to form a bond with their child was one that required having to maintain an awareness of a myriad of possible reactions to their child from the environment. An example of which is illustrated below by Corrine, an adoptive mother.

'Yeah, yeah, but some people I haven't told that, we, the twins were not baptized and then we still sort of went to church, attended catholic church, came of course with it, well they had to be baptized, well they were two then, no it wasn't baptism, it was christening and you needed a godfather and a godmother, again you haven't got that in Holland so that was all with our children, all very strange and very funny for me, but anyway, we got one of our best friends, the girl was godmother and then Lewis started to do his little things and I told her thinking, just talking to her and you know if she could talk with me, and she said oh that's terrible I'm not his godmother anymore, I don't want to be his godmother. That was it

CL - Can you tell me a bit more about that, sorry I didn't, it was a friend of yours

C - Yes, a very good friend, and she was the godmother of the twins, so I talked many years later what Lewis did just as friendly, tea and so, talking, and I said, probably, oh lewis has stolen or so or been in whatever happened many times and she said that's terrible I am not his godmother anymore, and that was stopped everything, a little present for Christmas and birthdays, that was it

CL - Oh that's terrible, but Christian love is not unconditional

C - No, but I am not christian anymore, that is, that was amazing I thought. I mean here's things from your friends, well you think that they're your friends and they are still with us, we still see them, but I thought that was a terrible thing to do really.

CL - That's weird

C - Yes, very weird, instead of thinking oh I have to help

CL - It should be the other way round

C - Yeah, that's what I thought a godmother is or godfather, you know, be a little bit nice to them or so, or help the parents or whatever, but I thought it was very strange,

CL - How did that feel for you

C - Oh, I was shocked really, I couldn't believe it. I thought well if it is like that, that's it, you can't do anything about it. And they had another pair, she was a godmother, and another friend in (name of town) and they were lovely, I mean they didn't do, but they gave them little presents on their birthday, a card, little presents at Christmas, she took me and the twins out a few times and I thought it was all lovely and they have done that presents for Christmas until they were eighteen or so.

CL - Because that's a whole new avenue of how you've experienced being the parent of these children

C - Yeah, exactly

CL - And that's not recognized

C - No, no, and another woman also colleague, all middle class, all lovely and I came with the twins only once and she said oh better that my parents or his parents don't see them, because they do not like black children at all, I thought well that's the last time I'm coming here, they were from the army or so and they didn't like that. Well..

CL - And these are well educated middle class people?

C - Very well, medical people

CL - Really, all medical people, that's just unforgivable (Interview Four, Corrine).

Everybody has the potential to experience traumatic events in one's life, but what was apparent for the mothers was the frequency of traumatic events, if it is accepted that caring for a child that experiences racism and forms of differentiation is as traumatic for the parent as it is for the child. There was a strong sense of the everydayness to the prejudice that certain families described, where although in many social contexts they

felt a sense of acceptance, the dynamics of this acceptance was one that still marked their family out as different. It only took one person to look at their family in a particular way, or for someone to innocently ask a perfectly legitimate question, the fact that one way in which they inhabited space was for the spatial environment to question their presence, itself brought affective consequences.

As Joanne, the adoptive mother of a black male adoptee describes below in relation to parenting her black son, there are clearly additional dimensions to her experience as a transracial parent that she describes never fully anticipating before the adoption.

‘Yeah, and I can remember kind of like when he was younger and I’d take him anywhere, I was like that looking around, like who’s going to have a pop and I would be watchful. But when you see it first hand for a little boy coming from school it’s just, it’s just devastating, you know that’s an incident I caught, that’s just one of them but he had to deal with that every-day and that is shocking and he still has to deal with it every-day, I mean that’s appalling, it’s really shocking, so to have an insight in to that, I mean we do in some respects, you can divert that can’t you, but you can’t stop being black in our society’. (Interview Three, Joanne).

The same adoptive mother goes on to describe another incident that illustrates some of the affective complexity she, and the other adoptive mothers experienced in parenting their racially different child.

‘And it’s complicated because you hit situations day after day that you least expect, when it’s just ordinary family life and some bloody idiot comes at you for being black and it’s like, oh here we go again’ (Interview Four, Joanne).

From being ‘looked’ at, to witnessing and having to respond to their adopted child experiencing severely racist incidents, there were consequences to the dynamics of the intersubjective fields where certain incidents experienced by the mother and child seemed to have much wider effects on the way other relationships were conducted. There was a requirement for the mothers to remain alert to the possibility of situations unfolding in negative ways, which was described by one mother as being exhausting. The participant above articulates her sense of loss of being able to maintain ‘just ordinary family life’, the space that she may have inhabited previously with her biological children, was dis-

rupted by the adoption of her black son where she described always having to fight or to maintain a position she was ready to fight that she described had an impact on her ability to enjoy the experience of parenting to the extent that she had with her white biological children. The way in which this mother describes her managing this situation is to navigate a new path of the world where she describes she has found new relations that accept her and her black child just as they are.

8.4 Coming Home

The adverse implications brought about by the loss of genealogical continuity for personal identity has been a widely held view in Western culture. As I have discussed previously through a consideration of the relationship Figal (2008) makes between capitalist development in the nineteenth century and the role of the hereditary blood family. The blood bond in family relationships did not only maintain what Young (1995) describes as metaphorical relationship between family, political community and state order. The reality of the blood bond in the family since the 17th Century was assumed to be the mechanism through which claims to a higher form of spirit, reason, and emotions could be made. It was through the notion of bloodlines that meanings of family, race and species could be made.

I have discussed previously through an analysis of how concepts such as illegitimacy, miscegenation, and bastardy are part of the historical dimensions of adoption culture, where the meanings of which can influence the affective dimensions of engaging trans-racial adoptive subjectivity in our present moment. The notion of blood, or 'bad blood' has been an integral part of our adoption history. The unmarried mother and her illegitimate child or the mixed race child considered as a threat to the racial purity of blood lines, have historically been socially viewed as a potential threat to the moral order of the nation. In part, the social purpose that adoption served was to transfer those children socially viewed as having bad blood, whether this be through their ethnicity or illegitimacy in to middle class where moral faculties through the blood line would maintain the moral order of the nation.

The assumed detrimental impact caused by the loss of genealogical continuity remains a perspective widely accepted in the practice context of adoption and fostering (Triseliotis, 1973). For several decades now, since the rise of identity politics in the

1960s the diverse and complex identities that exist in an advanced capitalist society in the West have been increasingly recognised and legitimised. Yet as Yngvesson (2003) argues, as adoptees the alienation from our blood line and our source of likeness from an identity associated with a root or ground of belonging to others whom the adoptee is like (as defined by skin colour, hair texture and facial features) remains problematic.

Where the model of adoption practice that seeks to preserve the birth identity brought about by the search movement has created more 'open models of adoption' resulting in the incorporation into the Hague Convention a child's right to the preservation of their 'ethnic', religious and cultural background (Hague Convention 1993, Article 16 C). Maintaining connections with birth family and gaining information about birth origins is assumed to help strengthen a sense of self by returning to the original source of origin and blood line. This reconnection of the child with birth origins provides the sense of genealogical continuity that has culturally come to be assumed to be lost.

Even though the story of adoption convinces us that there is something to be gained psychologically from forming a connection with the origin of our bloodline, for the adoptees in this study that had made contact with birth family members was the deeply traumatic and emotional complexity that these experiences involved. All of the children involved in this study had been adopted as babies and had been adopted under the terms of a closed model of adoption where blood ties had been severed. Being exposed to the reality of what were in most cases the deeply traumatic lives of their birth family members, an insight was gained of the deep sense of loss involved in this part of trans-racial adoptive experience.

In conveying this dimension of the adoptive family experience, where reconnecting with birth contexts seemed to in many instances described, sharply contrast the assumed psychological benefits. I seek to problematize and complicate this part of the adoption story so that the dramas of 'abandonment, genealogical bewilderment and search and reunion' may be tempered with the de-location of the adoptive story from within the individual and reconnect it to the cultural, historical and political context from which it emerges. Rebecca made contact with her birth mother so becomes aware of the context in which her mother is living. She provides an insight in to how part of being an adopted subject is to carry an awareness of the loss that of our birth mothers have experienced.

‘Yeah, I do, I feel very sad for her because I just think I’m her only child she hasn’t been able to have children, maybe that’s a result of what happened so yeah she’s probably got loads of regrets and upset, and the fact that we’re not really now like we haven’t got a strong relationship but then if you wanted to change something, you could change it. If you felt that strong about it, you could move back to the UK if you wanted to, but then I know life’s not that simple. There are bits of me that aren’t explained I just think, personality wise even maybe I just think and she’s not very happy. She hasn’t had a very nice life, she’s not a very happy person I just think but then I probably wouldn’t be very happy if I reflected on my life that much. I think she gets like quite depressed, she’s just in America alone really and I feel bad then I feel I should be out there more, but then it’s the cost to go there (Interview Four, Rebecca).

For Catherine, when talking about her birth parents, she expresses a much stronger sense of anger and injustice towards the situation of her birth parents that she attributes to her birth parents having to give her up for adoption. In the analyses of historic concepts that I have previously outlined in *Chapter Four* in my historicisation of trans-racial adoptive subjectivity, the social dynamics around class, miscegenation and the racism that both black and Irish people have historically experienced all seem to be part of the dynamics that Catherine describes surrounding her young birth mother and father. There is an overriding sense of powerlessness to the whole description of Catherine’s birth parents situation that is both personal and deeply political.

In Kohut’s (1977) specification of the bi-polar self, he employs the term fragmentation to refer to disturbances in various structural properties of a person’s self-experience. This same idea is described by Stolorow & Lachmann (1980) as disruptions in the sense of self-coherence of self-esteem. It is argued that the enormity of the historic disruptions that Catherine’s birth parents experienced in their lives, in terms of the psychological and indeed physical impact that the social and political dynamics of racism and poverty will have had, has become part of Catherine’s subjectivity. From the perspective of the transmission of inter-generational trauma, Catherine reconciles the injustice her birth parents experienced by locating her birth in the context of a wider system.

Brazelton (1982) comments on the absolute centrality of the in-utero experience, where a developing foetus is understood as being able to hear its mother's voice, experience her biological rhythms and basically share her very existence in a most literal way. It is further argued by Brazelton (1982) that even if the new born child is delivered directly into the adoptive parents' arms, with no extra-uterine experience with the birth mother, the loss does not go unnoticed by the child where the sudden change of mother means the voice, smell and pattern of movement are missing. To imagine from the description that Catherine provides of the moment that she was 'whipped away' from her birth mother seems to illustrate the potentially deeply traumatic circumstance of her birth and removal from the familiarity of her mother's body.

'I feel like my birth parents were a little bit conned out of me, the system, there was a woman, a social worker, named through all my notes dealing with it all, she er, my birth mum when I met my birth mum and dad erm they both remember her. They dealt with her every time. When my dad found out I'd been born and adopted, mum told him and was really distressed, didn't do anything because you were here, I'll tell you what I had in my notes before I met them actually. It just proved that my dad was telling the truth in my notes, language isn't it, my mum knows who she slept with, but they still had to call him the putative father anyway. The putative father has been in touch with the court in London, Liverpool and everywhere and he wants the baby back, he never knew about the baby saying it's not right I got adopted and the birth mother is joining forces with him now he's back and the language was like 'ha ha ha they came in to my office, they want the baby back, maybe back together, with an exclamation mark, no work of a lie, with a laughing tone. 'It hurts me, it's shit, its robbery and they robber her as well, they robbed our parents. It's not their fault, oh my goodness it's robbery all round and just the way they treated like my mum, like all them Irish, you know, you're the devils spawn and just had the baby whipped away all of them women that have the baby whipped away, you know. So how did human beings think that human beings could cope with that?' (Interview Three, Catherine).

As March (1995) argues, persistent questions around origins can influence adoptees to search for birth family members in part because of the hope that their perception of self

will be more socially acceptable as an adoptee. The historic stigma involved in the breaking of bloodlines that the adoption process involves is argued by Quinn & Earnshaw (2011) as contributing to the devaluation of adoptive families so that it is a subject position that anticipates stigma. For the trans-racially adoptive family, this stigma is worn through our skin, impossible to conceal so that one way in which this subjectivity is relationally experienced is a questioning of the very presence of our bodies in place. For the participants involved in the study, actively seeking out birth family contact was described as one means to reduce this sense of stigma.

For Andrew, of Jamaican descent, an insight of the complexity is gained as to how he feels about making contact with his birth mother and his motivation to actually make contact being driven by embodying a sense of incompleteness. When Andrew describes him being able to see where part of you is from, I gained a deep sense of the loss that is involved in living an embodied experience where our bodies have never had contact with the expected traditions and cultures so that the imagined place that he is from, where he expects to find part of himself that the linguistic influences of the adoption story have taught him. A sense of normalisation that the hybrid subject so longs for (Bhabha, 1971). In coming to terms with not only the diaspora subject that can never truly return to her or his origins, but also more importantly that the cultural context of where you're at always informs and articulates the meaning of where you're from.

'I suppose that nagging curiosity has gone I suppose, you can see where part of you is from, not complete because I guess I didn't feel that incompleteness, I had a curiosity and I suppose you have had a little bit of a dream, not dream, but try and imagine that it would be nice, and you'd all get on, and you can have a new family, you know, like you make it, you wish all the things that you want it to be, but then in reality, well in my reality that's not the case at all. You know I can see that she's a nice person and we'd get on.' (Interview Four, Andrew).

Catherine describes in depth the experience of her first contact with her birth mother. This scenario of waiting by herself seems to repeat the dynamics of that early experience of separation from the security of the mother's body where the presence of the breast and the skin of her mother is lost as she becomes placed in the new environment of skin of the adoptive family. It seems that there is almost a reversal of the process of

loss where the participant's decision to meet with her birth mother can be understood as satisfying an unconscious desire to return to the original breast and psychological security that she lost as an infant.

It was actually the maternal grandmother that arrived at the station to meet her, where the participant described that she knew immediately that the woman walking towards her was her maternal grandmother, and talks about the shame she felt in her immediate repulsion towards this woman, this stranger that was dressed so bizarrely and spoke so loudly. The long held phantasy of a reunion was shattered as she entered in to the world that she describes was represented by her grandmother's appearance. harder to comprehend, that brought about feelings of 'deep disappointment', and 'confusion' that brought new feelings around both their sense of self, their origins and their relationships within the adoptive family.

C – Yeah, so when I met my biological mum for the first time in London, I met her because obviously she was staying at her house because she'd come from America. I just think I did it completely wrong and I wouldn't advise anyone to do it the way I did it, because basically I, I ... when she phoned up saying that your mum is trying to get in touch with you I was basically going to Holland the next day to go on work placement for three months abroad and I was like I can't do anything until the summer so we started writing to each other and corresponding through letters so we knew a bit about each other before we met and then she arranged to come over during the summer and I went on my own on the train from Wales. I don't know what I was thinking to bring no one with me and I was going to stay with them for a week and I'd never met them before, like why would you do that and I don't think my mum and dad should have let me do that, but they're a bit like don't think things through either I don't think.

C – And all I had was a picture and I was waiting and I was at (train station name) waiting and no one came, no one came and I was like Oh should I go back to (Place name).

CL – Oh no, how long were you waiting

C – Quite long, it was a good hour, and I was like maybe I should just go and my mum and dad were like oh no just wait a bit longer and then I saw this woman walking towards me and I had this photo and I was like no that doesn't look like her, that definitely doesn't look like her. She had like a terry toweling suit on, dressed like not like anybody I'd have anything to do with. Basically she was heading towards me and I was like that can't be her and she was getting closer and closer and I was like 'oh my god' and then I heard this 'hello child I'd recognise you anywhere' and then I was like that doesn't look like her, but that was my grandmother and she was like 'get in the car, get in the car child, your mother's being healed' because she had like thrombosis on her legs that went to her lungs and that's why she nearly died so she was at some healer, so she didn't even come and meet me at the train station, she was at some healer, some healer house sorting out her legs, so she was like 'I'll drive you, I'll drive you' so it was all a bit mad, so I got in this car, drove across bloomin London bridge and god knows where, she was just a nutter then she pulled up at this person's house, this healer's house and then there was this big African woman, I can always remember with wacky hair, and she was like 'come in, come in child, your mother she's in the back' and they were calling me Charlene which was my name before I was adopted, they wouldn't call me Caroline which was a bit disturbing and then you don't know what's going to happen and the four of us we were put together in this room and we just both were crying and just hugging, we didn't know how to behave, it was just overwhelming really and then we ended up going back to my grandmother's house then where we were going to stay and then she must have just felt years of guilt and stuff because she'd brought so many presents over from America, and clothes. She didn't even know my build and they were all the wrong size, and they were making me do a fashion show and you just don't want to be doing that. And she was calling me Charlene which I didn't like, it was all a bit mad and then I met her like half-brother, he was my uncle I guess, her half-brother and he was nice and normal, really nice but it was all too much, and too freaky and too intense and I wouldn't recommend anyone else to do it that way. Terrible and probably it's tarnished my relationship long term, because it wasn't a nice experience because of in terms of my grandmother (Interview Three, Catherine).

Catherine goes on to describes in detail how she feels following meeting her birth mother. It is this sense of isolation that she is left with that seems to characterise this experience. No enduring relationship has been sustained apart from Facebook messages and letters. I gained a sense from the participant that despite what seemed a very traumatic experience, there still seemed to be a need for the participant to salvage something positive about her adoptive mother, where she concludes this part of the interview that talks about the experience with her adoptive mother with the statements that 'she is a 'nice person'. After articulating all the quite traumatic details of what was an experience that she had been through with no support, there was a sense of resignation that she had gained some sense of helping to understand herself. During what I felt was a reconciliation in her own mind of the emotional difficulty of the experience against what she felt she should feel about her birth mother, was that she compared her own birth parent contact with that of her adopted brother and sister which she describes as their birth situation being much worse than hers. I felt that this description of her adoptive brothers and sisters' situation was actually a mechanism that served to protect against the understandable pain that her own experience had brought about.

C – Yeah and that can be a whole bag of worms really, and I suppose it was because there's no way that I would have stayed at my biological grandmothers house, really didn't get on with her at all, and I was there for a week, trapped and I couldn't do anything because my biological mum had come from America so in a way I'm too nice because that's the way I've been brought up, like some people would have gone I'm going do you know what I mean, but I was like I've got to stay

CL – Did you have anyone to speak to

C – No and then because you're in somebody else's house, it was before mobiles, I didn't have a mobile or anything like that, so yeah, no I was just on my own and you don't actually know these people comfortably enough and like my biological mother's obviously going through loads of issues like coming to terms with it all so yeah there's no outlet really, it was just mad, and then I must have been there for about, she was over for about a week, so I must have been there for about five

days really and then she came back to Wales to meet my mum and dad basically and they had people staying with them from America I think so more people came towards the end of the week, their friends and like my biological mother's friends and then she obviously didn't want to come on her own, so there were three of them, these guests, so I didn't even know who they were, who came to Wales with her so she had emotional support coming the other way but I was on my own I suppose. So it was a bit like,

CL - But again there's that being on your own

C- Yeah, so then we all had lunch, they took them to like a touristy place, that's like really in the country, it was like mad to them, like wow this is where you've been brought up and stuff, but then they were like oh you can tell they are really nice people, you've been lucky, they all said that erm yeah, and then like my mum had made a whole book of me for my biological mum, like photos of me growing up and stuff so

CL – What was that like, how did that feel when you saw that

C – Well I don't know whether I actually really saw it, but she just gave it to her I know like she's got it, and like when I've been to stay with her she's been like it's really nice and they're like nice people, and she'll always go how are your folks, like I don't call her mum, she's not my mum, so yeah it's all a bit mad really

CL – Yeah, that's probably quite intense

C – Yeah and she didn't stay there, so they must have only come for the day and then they went back to London

CL – So did your mum sort of did she say anything, did your mum say anything after about all this sort of meeting the birth parents, did you get any support after

C – No not really, they just said she seems like a lovely woman, like you can see the similarities, but they never asked how do you feel, is everything ok, no not emotional support in that sense, just asked if everything was ok, they don't look too deeply (Interview Three, Catherine).

According to certain perspectives, the initial separation from birth parents, the loss of the breast that the object relations tradition suggests as being central to a new born baby's organisation of self-experience, is the root of many of the psychological issues that are believed to persist into adulthood for individuals that are adopted (Leon, 2002). It is therefore assumed that we bring with us, what is described by Cubito & Brandon (2000) a sense of unresolved loss that is from certain theoretical perspectives attributed to the primacy of the loss of the first external object of the breast upon which anxiety forces in the early ego are satisfied and the associated loss of the affective comfort associated with the mother's body of the in utero experience. Catherine provides an insight into something that I argue is particularly specific to the adoptive subject, this sense of not knowing our histories.

'There could have been a really bad incident, like a worse-case scenario is that she could have got raped and she doesn't want to talk about it, fair enough, but I do feel like she could say oh it was a very negative time, I don't know who he is, and I can't talk, and I don't want to talk about it, but she's not even said that much, she's just not saying anything at all, all she's said is what is in your adoption file isn't right, lies, it's not the truth, so like....It's like just part of me that I now don't know, I'd rather know that... you know that she was young, she was drunk, she didn't know who she slept with, fair enough, that happens, it's accepting and you can just accept it fair enough, but the fact that I don't know anything, yeah....Then people are different, maybe like something really bad happened and it's ingrained in her that that's really shameful and she mustn't talk about it, you don't know do you, whereas I've got quite an open mind, she might not think I am open minded, I might be really disgusted, you don't know do you, people are just different aren't they?' (Catherine, Interview Four).

Returning 'home' to a world that was in most cases completely unfamiliar to the adoptees was replete with complex emotions. For some of the adoptees, returning to a mother that they had been separated from, seeing her for the first time, created feelings of absolute devastation where the expected fantasy of reunion was tempered by the complex reality of seeing the very painful lives their birth mothers had lived. The feelings some of the participants had imagined feeling did not materialise, where instead,

the class and racial divide created through the transracial adoption context was too vast.

What was apparent in certain descriptions of situations of the adoptees' was how this original scenario of loss of the mother was in a way replicated in the reunion encounters that showed that original loss could never be resolved and permeated the intersubjective dynamics between birth child and birth mother. In many of the descriptions of the reunions with adoptees 'roots', there was sense conveyed that despite being the physical presence of each other, and in that sense close. There remained a chasm of emotional distance that created an invisible barrier with the effect of making mother and child again unavailable for each other. It seemed that for many, this original loss could not be overcome.

Andrew was adopted as a baby describes below an aspect of his experience of making with his birth family at an extended family wedding of one of his biological brothers. He had already had contact with his birth mother, and his three biological brothers but attending the wedding would mean that he was meeting many people from his birth family for the first time. He was the only child that was adopted out of the family in to a trans-racially adopted context. Out of all the participants involved in the study, I felt that this participant had experienced an overwhelming sense of trauma throughout his childhood. His adoptive parents had divorced not long after his adoption, where following his adoptive mother embarking on a new relationship, he moved to his adopted father's home in another part of England. He described himself as being very angry throughout his childhood, where the frequency and severity of his experiences of racism were deeply traumatic to listen to.

When the Andrew arrives at this wedding, he is almost immediately mistaken for a waiter by one of the members of staff who asks him to carry some glasses to the bar. It is a relatively simple mistake to make, to assume someone is a waiter when actually they are a guest. This kind of incident has happened to me, and in the majority of cases most people would just laugh it off, but for the participant, the embodied history that is brought to this situation means that this incident is experienced in a much more complex way that he describes as compounding his already existing feelings of insecurity

about being at this wedding of his biological brother. He has previously articulated a life time of mis-recognition around his family status in relation to the whiteness of his adoptive family, where the stark contrast in skin colour has meant that he has been assumed to be a lover to his adopted mother, a visitor in his own home, and at its' worse, a 'nigger in a white place'.

The mis-recognition by the waiter of him not being a member of the family brought up the feelings of anxiety, a state of anxiety that I was able to observe when this same participant experienced racism outside my house as he came for an interview. He had tried to call me on the phone but I had not heard it, and so he had called his adopted mother, just like a young infant would reach out to the breast, or the mother as an object to respond to affective attunement of anxiety. I had seen, and felt how this anxiety was managed and as he described the incident with the waiter, I could also feel the absolute sense of shame and anxiety in returning to the place where his 'roots' lay, to be then identified as someone that did not belong. I know that feeling, of misrecognition, and the embodied feelings involved in managing these kinds of everyday interactions, it is so tiring to experience these feelings. Andrew provides an insight in to how this experience actually feels for him that connects to this notion of the body being destabilised from place.

'Old people, young people, children and I felt really strange because I felt I'm surrounded by loads of people that I look like, but I don't feel like I don't feel like I can really connect with them. It was like there was an invisible wall between us which was quite...it made me feel wobbly. I think there's a lot of feeling of guilt when I am around, when I'm there in front of their face you can quite clearly see they all feel very guilty' (Interview Three, Andrew).

This spatial distance between himself and his birth family seems to reflect how hybridity actually manifests itself in to the spatial relations of his experience. Through his experiences of adoption, the participant is already very familiar with the effects of being questioned around the status of his transracially adopted parenting relationship that contributes to the many ways in which he experiences 'otherness'. For Bhabha (1971), the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy, it is always the production of an image of identity and the trans-

formation of the subject in assuming that image. The image of a black body in close proximity to the body of his mother, a white older woman, has meant he has felt a myriad of assumptions projected upon him around the status of their relationship that has ultimately had the interacting effect of creating inter-subjective dynamics of separation and disconnection between himself and his adoptive mother.

For Gendlin (1968), it is one's emotions, learnings, past experiences that one always brings to situations from which the felt senses of situations are interpreted and construed. Therefore, a felt sense according to Gendlin (1968) is something that is not just felt, but there is always an intellectual element to the process of interpreting situations. What is evident in the way in which the participant speaks about this experience of the wedding is that being seated at the top table, is interpreted as repeating the spatial distance between himself and his other family where he describes again feeling as though again he is 'stranded' between two worlds. It is this return of an image of identity that Bhabha (1971) argues bares the mark of splitting in the other place from which it comes, that the participant brings this previous experience to both the emotional and intellectual interpretation of the situation at the wedding that for the participant, evokes the feeling of displacement between two family worlds.

What is of interest in this description of the wedding, is the way in which the participant articulates the experience that I believe provides an insight into some of the defence mechanisms employed by this participant to manage what seems to be a deeply traumatic event for him. I believe this not only to be in terms of him being at this wedding, but what I feel is actually the way in which this participant has been required to emotionally manage this sense of precariousness around inhabiting an in-between space throughout his life. Andrew describes a particularly relevant part of this experience that seems to illustrate how this sense of liminality and in-betweenness is actually lived out.

"There was quite a few of them smoking the other side of this van and everyone was laughing and joking and the conversation was quite bubbly, but as I approached, everyone kind of, not in a bad way, but in a respectful way kind of was just like, you can see it in their faces, it's not awkward but they always feel like they've got to justify what happened, do you know what I mean, it's like, it's difficult, yeah, it's like you, and you can see the way they look, like they view, I guess

you almost get, because you're objectified in a sense, but it's just guilt, it's just pure guilt, which is hard for them, and then every time (his birth mother) gets drunk, she does this every time to the point she starts saying sorry this and that, yeah but you know it's five years, I've known her for five years, but she'll do it to, even if I'm there for a weekend there'll be a point when you know, so it's difficult I guess for everyone' (Interview Three, Andrew).

It is impossible to know the way in which members of the adopted family are feeling about the participant being present at this wedding, but again what I feel is of interest to recognise is the fact that his interpretation of the feelings that his birth family is attributed to feelings of guilt. The participant has already articulated the anger he felt during this wedding, and it is perhaps his own desire for his birth family to actually feel guilty because of his adoption out of the family or it could be understood that attributing guilt on to his birth family could be a mechanism to defend against feelings of his own guilt from leaving what he describes as a very emotionally and materially difficult family situation. I do not aim in my interpretation of the possible feelings involved in this situation to claim any sense of authority over the finality of what may actually have been going on emotionally, but rather, the aim has been one that seeks to convey the potential complexity of unconscious processes involved in experiences of returning to 'roots', relationships that have long been severed that when returning to, have the potential to reaffirm the hybrid position characterised by liminality.

As I have previously outlined in *Chapters 6 and 7*, of the difficulty the parents had articulated in responding to some of their child's experiences that left them feeling what could be described as helpless. This had meant that for certain families involved in the study, the experiences of racism that both the parents and their adopted children had not been shared or discussed with each other. I felt that this lack of any discussion on issues of racism was largely because both the parents and children wanted to protect each other. As I have previously discussed in relation to some of the traumatic experiences both the mothers and the children experienced, they each brought significant disturbances in various structural properties to the self-experience, sense of self-coherence, self continuity or self esteem (Stolorow & Lachmann, 1980). The sentiment that is illustrated in a Chinese adoptees description of her feelings when she first met a large number of people of the same race in her visit to her country of birth, Malaysia seems to sum up what

Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) describe as the emotional complexity involved in lives of hybridity

There is always an additional layer of choice in adoptive parents engaging in the adoption process. For the parents involved in this study, they all talked about their motivations behind choosing to firstly adopt and secondly why they had chosen to adopt trans-racially. The question of why any woman chooses to have children has been an issue raised in much feminist work, in part, as a way of critiquing the 'myth of the maternal instinct' (Badinter, 1981; McMahon, 1995; Phoenix & Woollett, 1991). According to Kristeva (1986), this relationship between motherhood and femininity is bound up with the consecrated (religious or secular) that has sustained a process of the cultural naturalisation of the woman's body with motherhood. The trans-racially adoptive parents that became involved in this study, five out of the six families already had biological children prior to adopting where the sixth family had already adopted a Caucasian child before choosing to adopt trans-racially. The primary reason for choosing to adopt was therefore not motivated by infertility and the desire to parent a child having not being able to have a biological child.

In considering the different explanations articulated by each mother as to how they had come to adopt trans-racially despite all of the families involved in this study already having experience of being parents either to their biological children or having already adopted a child. I felt that there was much more emotional complexity involved in the process that brought the families to the point of adopting trans-racially. Something that was experienced by all of the adoptive mothers involved, was the fact that each mother prior to engaging in the process of adoption had experienced profound incidents of loss prior to adopting trans-racially. One mother was left by her husband as he embarked on a new relationship with another woman, another mother experienced a miscarriage, violence from her husband and the death of her biological daughter's husband. Another mother contracted cancer which she overcame. Another mother also experienced a series of miscarriages, one of which was late in to the pregnancy.

In effect, all of the mothers apart from one, described experiencing significant experiences of loss prior to choosing to adopt. None of the mothers consciously articulated a connection between these experiences of loss and their motivations to adopt, but prem-

ised on an assumption of how the mothers own subjectivity involves a complex interplay between historical experience and unconscious processes. What were described as deeply traumatic experiences in most instances, one of the unconscious motivations that may have lead the mothers to adopt is on some level associated with

For Mitchell & Aron (1999), defensively motivated unformulated experience is described as a kind of 'familiar chaos', to borrow a phrase from Paul Valery, that is a state of mind cultivated and perpetuated in the service of the wish not to think. One of the unconscious reasons to explain adopting a young baby, is to sustain a comforting sense of familiarity of chaos that may have provided some form of comfort at an unconscious level for the mothers where their own children were becoming at an age where they were no longer babies and much less dependant on their mothers. As well as the emotional chaos that the experiences of trauma may have caused that had not been processed.

What I want to advance through consideration of the mother's emotional and traumatic experiences prior to adoption and the availability of the children for adoption is the production of a process of exchange where on an unconscious level the adopted child maintains an intrinsic value for the adopted mother, whether this be to restore some sense of the familiar chaos described by Mitchell and Aron (1999)that serves to defend against more anxiety and painful feelings where I am suggesting that dynamics of commodification may be accentuated through the intersection of the two constituent parts of the emotional needs of the mother and the subsequent meaning that the adopted child may hold for them.

It was against a backdrop of a family ideology of genetics that these adoptive parents have been required to negotiate a sense of a family bond that Schneider (1984) argues renders all variants of child parent relationships formed outside the biology of reproduction, where 'natural love' is believed to be formed, as second class. It seems therefore understandable that being the everyday parent in an ideological context that consistently questions the validity of your parenting relationship, that one of the emotional responses to their child making contact with their birth parent could further compound the embodied felt sense of the precariousness of their parenting status.

Those parenting relationships that are outside of the biology of reproduction that Schneider (1984) argues is where 'natural love' is believed to be formed, are very quietly rendered unreal. The child's contact with their birth family, although on a rational level, the adoptive parent knows that this is something that will inevitably happen, if indeed the child is not already adopted in to the family under these terms of ongoing contact with the birth family. Parenting a child from a young baby, being called mum or dad, performing the everydayness of mothering, could mean that more complex irrational feelings could quite understandably emerge when faced with the presence of the birth mother moving from a thought to an actual visible presence in reality. One way of dealing with some of the more complex emotions involved in a child contacting their birth family is that to meet the situation with silence or ambivalence as a way of potentially showing a sense of anger or anxiety about the possibility of the loss of their child. For Theresa, the adoptive mother of Robert, I felt that the way in which she managed some of the very complex emotions potentially involved in parenting someone else's child was actually to pathologise the mother.

M – But they keep saying they're thinking about the children, they are thinking about the birth parents, and I don't think people have got the right to be parents, being a parent is not just a biological thing, it's looking after them, you remember the story of the ugly duckling, who was the mother of that, that ugly, you know, the swan wasn't the mother, it was the duck, I mean you know

CL – I have to agree with you, but often these children are in a poverty cycle

M – If they're good mothers, but if they're awful mothers they shouldn't, and they've proved to be, they shouldn't be given a second chance. One of my friends adopted trans-racially, it just happened that, but this woman went out and left this child on her own for two days in a cot and nobody knew, this child was in a terrible state when she got back, well she was immediately taken away and adopted. Well now they wouldn't, oh she'd have help, she'd have social workers coming in, but somebody like that shouldn't have the right to be a parent, she's forfeited the right, and if you aren't, look at Baby Ps, that coming in with all those things, how could they gone on giving her, they might have eventually taken him

away, but think what state he would have been in if he'd been then adopted, it was clear at the beginning she was useless, if people are obviously useless or they say they don't want the child, then don't force the child on them and don't put them in foster care for ages and ages and then wrench them away, you know when it's definite. You see that's all the things you wouldn't get if you were fostered, I mean for heavens sake, and then they keep saying they're thinking of the children, they put the children first, they're not putting the children first, they're putting the birth parents first and I don't think if people can't be good parents they shouldn't be parents at all,. I don't' think people have a right to have a child and drag it up. The funny thing was I think they had this one in the pipeline that they knew was dodgy. I mean this is just the sort of person who should have kept her baby, the poor woman, no, no, this one wasn't sorry, this one was a young girl who'd already had one baby aged seventeen, a black baby, half caste, and she was one of six kids or seven kids I think and lived in a tiny house in Fishponds, I went to look at it and this, and she'd had another illegitimate baby, I think by a different man, but I'm not sure about that, by the time she was eighteen, so she'd got two by the time she was eighteen and her mother had said 'enough is enough, I'm sorry, one, I took one in, but I'm not taking a second one in' and so the point was the father was living in Swindon and working in Swindon and they hadn't got very good communication the two of them and I think he thought adoption was fostering and so we got this little baby, there's a photo of her up there, when she was six weeks old, a little sweetie, cutie, we had her three months and the mother got together with the husband and they decided that they would keep the baby, that they would get together and keep the baby, they'd got a council house and everything and that really was heartbreaking' (Interview Four, Theresa)

8.8 Chapter Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to convey to the reader how felt senses of loss can be experienced in the trans-racial adoptive family context. I have centralised Bhabha's (1971) notion of 'hybridity' in order to explain how loss emerges through the body's involvement in situations. This centralisation of hybridity in this understanding of

trans-racial adoption has been employed so that I can try to create a way of approaching trans-racial adoptive subjectivity that does not implicitly pathologise experience. Rather, this interpretation has aimed to convey an understanding of people's lives as they have been remembered, articulated and interpreted under our own terms.

It is against the backdrop of an ideological canvass that prescribes racial and family norms that I have argued influence the lived experience of returning to birth family cultures. Where the imagined experience and the expectation, was often in contrast to the way in which the experience was lived, so that coming home was actually felt in much more emotionally complex ways for both the adoptive parents and the adoptees.

It seemed so tragic that I believe all the adoptive parents held nothing but genuine motivations in their choice to adopt transracially. Although I have argued that there may be further unconscious processes that I have further argued are again associated with ideological devices that define femininity as being intrinsically linked with motherhood. The depth of complexity involved that some of the adoptive mothers described in parenting a trans-racially adopted child conveyed a strong sense of loss in being just a 'normal everyday mother'. Where descriptions were given around the actual emotional impact on having to maintain a degree of alertness when out with their children.

I felt this to be largely because of their fears around having to be ready to respond to any verbal or physical harm directed towards their adopted children. Whilst it was not articulated by any of the mothers directly, I felt that this kind of permanent state of alertness involved in parenting their racially different children had significant affective consequences in the inter-subjective dynamics of the relationship between the adopted mother and children. In relation to the emotional consequences, this chapter has conveyed aspects of experience through the analytical category of loss. The final concluding chapter will draw together aspects of the reflections conveyed in these three empirical chapters and consider the connection to the three main research questions.

There is a recognition within the literature that motivations to make contact with birth family is in part a response to reported discrimination from others where unknown biological kinship ties are continuously questioned. I know this kind of interaction, where someone I do not know. Perhaps someone I am introduced to. They see that I do not look the same as them and yet I speak with the same voice and words as they do. I have

many times witnessed the fleeting sense of confusion they experience as somewhere this mismatch between my appearance conflicts with the expectations of their perception of me, and so follow the questions. 'Where am I from', 'have you ever been back', 'have you ever met your real parents', and so on. Then follows the physiological change in my body, where a heat comes over me at the frustration, confusion and sometimes anger at being asked these kinds of questions by someone that I do not know very well.

As I have previously outlined in *Chapters 6 and 7*, of the difficulty the parents had articulated in responding to some of their child's experiences that left them feeling what could be described as helpless. This had meant that for certain families involved in the study, the experiences of racism that both the parents and their adopted children had not been shared or discussed with each other. I felt that this lack of any discussion on issues of racism was largely because both the parents and children wanted to protect each other. As I have previously discussed in relation to some of the traumatic experiences both the mothers and the children experienced, they each brought significant disturbances in various structural properties to the self-experience, sense of self-coherence, self continuity or self esteem (Stolorow & Lachmann, 1980). The sentiment that is illustrated in a Chinese adoptees description of her feelings when she first met a large number of people of the same race in her visit to her country of birth, Malaysia seems to sum up what Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) describe as the emotional complexity involved in lives of hybridity.

Chapter Nine: Thesis Conclusion

9.1 Chapter Introduction

In this concluding chapter, my aim is not to advance a grand statement around whether I consider the practice of trans-racial adoption as something that is ethically right or wrong. Nor do I intend to argue for or against either side of what I have articulated previously as the contentious and polarised debates that continue to surround this family form. Rather the aim of this thesis has always been to convey an in-depth understanding of aspects of the experience of trans-racial adoption. In achieving this aim, I have sought to conceptualise subjectivity as being an embodied process. My analytical focus has been located on the dialectic relationship of the body's contact with the world, and it is from this location that I have argued, is the site from which trans-racial adoptive subjectivity emerges.

The structure of white, black and minority ethnic groups in the UK today are highly complex and diverse. However, we continue to be required to bureaucratically categorise ourselves through the historic conceptualisation of static concepts of race, concepts that are unable to acknowledge the varying degrees of personal importance that the meaning of race, religion, language or culture may have on the daily lives of individuals in contemporary society.

In my attempt to denaturalise the discursive conditions of the trans-racial adoptive identity through historicising what I have argued as being central components and associated concepts that have culturally become accepted as natural, I have sought to open up new social conditions from which the process of becoming trans-racially adopted may be able to emerge. The purpose of illuminating the historical, social and political conditions from which the meaning of race and family has emerged, has served to create a discursive opportunity to create new definitions by the people that have lived through this discursive context.

9.2 The Situation of the Body

The situatedness of the body in what Charlesworth (2000) describes as the socio-historical-cultural milieu has provided an analytical concept to understand what Gendlin (1962) articulates as the felt senses of experience. From this analytical focus it

has become possible to problematize narratives of truth that I have argued sustains trans-racial adoptive subjectivity in particular ways. In Merleau-Ponty's (1962) notion of inter-corporeality, embodiment is never understood as being a private affair, but rather one that is mediated through our continual interactions with the dynamics of the world and other human and non-human bodies.

It is the body's movement through space that I have argued creates a sense of feeling and defines the body's response to a situation. I have emphasised the discursive dimensions of space where I have argued that the whitening and blackening of our language engages bodies in what we can understand as racialized ways. I have argued that the blood line and its link with what is widely accepted as the naturalness of family continues to legitimise the biological family constellation in ways that renders all other forms of family constellations in a position of inferiority (Hook, 2010).

It is this discursive context that I have argued creates some of the dynamics that are enacted in the dynamics of engaging in the process of relating to the world that creates positions of liminality, border crossing and hybridity that I have argued characterise much of the experience articulated by both the adoptive mothers and the adoptees. It is argued by Bhabha (1971) that these processes of differentiation become reflected in the division of the body and soul, which is the place from where the artifice of identity is enacted. By seeking to better understand how these dynamics are relationally and materially experienced by members of the trans-racially adopted family, it becomes possible for a new narrative of dissonance to emerge. The personal experience of the trans-racial adoptive family illustrates the political need to move beyond what Radhakrishnan (1996) describes as conventional understandings of authenticity to a process of multiple rootedness, ambivalence, fluidity and hybridity. This personal experience not only intends to speak to trans-racial adoptive family members, but to a much wider constituency of people living through the complex forms of family constellations that exist today.

9.3 Hybrid lives: Communicating Difference through Skin

In order to understand the experience of trans-racial adoption, I have employed the notion of hybridity (Bhabha, 1971). This concept enables an understanding of all the multiple tensions and contradiction involved in trans-racial adoption to be understood

on its own terms rather than from a distant position of observation of measurement. I have sought to offer a conceptualisation of subjectivity that moves away from cultural assumptions that I have argued are embedded in a pre-defined and static concept of a trans-racial adoptive identity. I have further argued that these definitions are linked to historical, political and social factors which continue to influence the dimensions of trans-racial adoptive experience in ways that may serve to limit rather than liberate an individual's life.

By drawing on object relation theorists such as Bick (1968), the skin of the body is taken to be the site from which difference is signified to the world and gains meaning and responded to. I have argued this process of viewing the body always involve deeply unconscious processes on the part of the viewer. The skin of the family, its difference has been so central to the experience of the trans-racially adopted family where the visual display of the lack of socio-genealogical connectedness has been central to enacting historic oppressive dynamics around race and miscegenation.

It seemed to be the 'everydayness' of the differentiation that influenced the experience of both the adoptee and adoptive parents. Communicated through a look that would generate a particular felt sense in the body, these forms of non-verbal communication that what Csordas (2008) refers to as 'the other of language' was part of the everydayness of the process of differentiation. In the differentiation between what Whorf (2012) identifies as the other of language, and just body language, it is argued that identification as the other of language is tightly bound up with the capacity to not only perceive but also generate similarities.

It has been from the perspective of the skin that I have argued both covers us and protects us but also exposes us for our skin to be read in particular ways. The everydayness of the skin being culturally mis-read was problematic in the experience articulated. Mitchell & Aron (1999) argue that projections of feelings associated with sexuality and aggression can take on meaning through relational contexts. Therefore an analysis or any understanding of behaviour is argued as needing to be understood in relation to the dimensions of inter-subjective relational dynamics that can be defined by the colour of skin and the cultural meaning that skin can have.

Yet, it held particular meaning for the trans-racial adoptees where their personal interpretation of this question had the power to disrupt their body's claim to spatial dimensions of their experience. This question of where you are from, opened up a much broader philosophical and political question of belonging and nation, which reaffirms the ambiguous position of the adoptee's story. This story implicitly assumes that for the adoptee to find her real identity, the truth of heritage and roots must be discovered back in an imagined homeland that matches the appearance of their body in order to discover an origin and a self that is real.

The way in which this culturally accepted adoptive story manifested itself in to the ways in which the lives of some of the adoptees in the story was to attempt to reconnect with contexts of birth or same racial groups in order to neutralise the stigma of adoption (March, 1995). In this union, the adoptees then had a verifiable answer in response to the question of where you are from. Unfortunately, for many of the adoptees that returned to their 'roots', their descriptions indicated that this reunion was not without deeply disappointing and emotional consequences.

It has been the notion of an individual trans-racial adoptive identity that is conceptualised as an isolated object that this theorisation of subjectivity has sought to critique. Through the illustration of the inter-subjective relational dynamics of experience, I have sought to approach members of the trans-racially adoptive family embedded and defined by their location in an historical, social, economic and political system. Understanding and supporting a trans-racial adoptive identity through the theoretical lens of this thesis would therefore firstly analyse the relational network that the child and parents are located in. It is argued that the potential scale of the network to be analysed would involve not only the members of the immediate family, but the cultural dimensions of the wider community and the effect of the historical legacies of power embedded in that community. This scale of analysis is a deeply political project.

From the experience described by the adoptive parents involved in the study, there were deeply affectionate and loving forms of parenting expressed and described. However, external pressures that arose from processes of differentiation experienced by not only the trans-racial adoptees but by the adoptive parents themselves, a significant amount of affective complexity that was largely unanticipated by the

adoptive parents, was introduced in to the family dynamics. In Walkerdine & Lucey's (1989) consideration of the inter-subjective dynamics between parents and their children, it is argued that the very irrational feelings that parents may feel towards their children such as envy or even hate may not exist on a conscious level but can still be felt towards the child. This can lead to behaviour associated with confusion where what is being said and what is being felt by the parent to the child may involve contradictions. Managing more effectively some of the external responses to the trans-racially adoptive family may require members of that family to become proficient in articulating their feelings with each other, in that as Perry (1986) articulates, may require to write or say out loud some of the complex and irrational feelings that may emerge.

An emerging body of literature has also started to acknowledge the link between in utero experience and psycho-social effects it has on the infant over the life course. For example the work of King & Laplante (2005) examined the general intellectual and language abilities of a child following their mothers exposure to stress, in this case a natural disaster. It was concluded that high levels of prenatal stress exposure, particularly early in the pregnancy, was believed to negatively affect the brain development of the foetus. Similarly Crnic *et al* (1983), examine the issue of the link between prenatal stress and the link between abnormal cognitive, behavioural and psycho-social outcomes. It is argued that these pre-adoption experiences are likely to have had a significant impact on the inter-subjective dynamics between the adopted child and the adoptive parents involved in this study. At the point in time of the 1970s when the adoptions took place, this level of understanding of the impact that pre-adoption experience of the child could have on later dynamics of relationships. All of the adoptive mothers involved in this study described that they had not access to support during the early years of the adoption of their children.

9.4 Moving beyond the discursive in method

I have drawn on the psycho-social methodological tradition that has enabled me to facilitate an inter-subjective dialogue between myself and the research participant. The focus of the method has been to gain rich descriptions of the everydayness and mundane aspects of experience as articulated by participants in order to gain access to their experience. Incorporating the unconscious forms of communication in the data

collection process enabled me to gain an understanding of experience that goes beyond purely the discursive dimensions of experience (Clarke & Hoggett, 2011).

The methodological approach has sought to research beneath the surface of the immediate appearance of my perception of the interview, so that what I felt during the interview process was considered as equally valid data. I have employed psychoanalytic concepts such as defence, projection and transference in the analysis and interpretation of participant's experience. The notion of defence has been informed by the relational psychoanalytic tradition which does not assume I will necessarily be able to gain access to a more true account of experience if I am able to get past unconscious defences. Rather, it is assumed that through the inter-subjective research exchanges the interpretation of the meaning of experience is something that is co-produced between myself and the research participant (Stopford, 2004). Therefore, the methodological aim has been to convey a particular version of the truth of trans-racial adoptive experience, from which it is acknowledged that there are endless possible meanings to experience.

Meeting and speaking so intimately with all the participants over a period of the four interviews had a profound effect on me, where on many occasions the interviews lasted more than two hours. It was very emotionally complex meeting all the trans-racially adopted families coming from a position of relative isolation in terms of previous contact, particularly during childhood, with other trans-racially adopted families. What was of much importance to me during the interview process was to maintain an awareness of the power dynamics inherent in any researcher and researched relationship (Stopford, 2004). I remember many of the images that I imagined when participant's described to me certain instances. I would think about participant's driving to the interviews and on the way back home. Their memories they articulated to me are part of me now.

9.5 Redefining concepts: The embodiment of 'race', 'class' and 'loss' in trans-racial adoptive experience.

I have presented the three empirical chapters through the separate analytical categories of race, class and loss. It was through my own subjectivity that the process of thematic analysis reduced what was a vast amount of experiential data gained from conducting

forty seven interviews in to what I felt were particularly prominent themes articulated by participants. Whilst the three empirical chapters are presented separately, I have emphasised the fluidity of these concepts in terms of the meanings given to them by participants in their processes of embodying trans-racial adoptive subjectivity.

Both in historical and contemporary trans-racial adoption debates, the child's movement from one economic context to a more economically secure context has justified the process of adoption. The homes that I visited during the course of the interviews were located in beautiful settings. All the children had clearly benefited from the positive material environment and protection from the destructive aspects of our society that these homes had provided. The experience described by adoptive parents showed how at times, the adopted children completely rejected not only the home environment but the whole community environment they had been adopted in to. These rejecting kinds of behaviours created very difficult dynamics in to the parent and child relationship. Understanding these rejecting behaviours are argued as needing to be understood through the whole context of the relational network the non-Caucasian child is adopted into. In the case of all the adoptees involved in this study, a strong characteristic of their immediate environment was the whiteness of the terrain. It seemed to be the density of the whiteness that offered incomparable privilege to that of birth contexts, but also brought a sense of everydayness to processes of differentiation.

In Fanon's notion of doubling disembling or what Friedlander (1999) articulates as a double consciousness, the sense of being in at least two places at once is encapsulated which is argued as having detrimental effects on a sense of coherence in identity. As a result of certain interactions that arose from what was felt to be in response to the appearance of the body was a sense of the mother's and children's precarious relationship with space. In terms of supporting the difficult emotional feelings that may arise from the deeply disempowering effects of external questioning of your own body's relationship with place, it is argued that supportive interventions could focus on stabilising or securing the body's relationship in place. Particularly in relation to counteract the powerful effects of being dislodged from space that you have been adopted in to, supportive interventions may work towards helping the child come to terms with the meanings of negative interactions so that a child may be able to

intellectually and emotionally process why they feel disconnected from a place, a community or a nation.

It is argued that dynamics of class need more prominence in debates and any subsequent supporting interventions. The ways in which these dynamics were enacted was through their historical interlinking with cultural meanings of race. For example, in educational settings, historical assumptions around intellectual capacities in those defined as 'others' became enacted in experience that had limiting effects. The permanent display of difference through skin also brought many economic assumptions that contrasted the legitimate right of access to the cultural and economic capital of the adoptive parents. There were many conflicting messages involved in the experience described. On one hand there is an ongoing monitoring and surveillance of adoptive families and a cultural acceptance that reinforces the notion that real parenting relationships are biologically based. On the other hand, the adoptive family is constituted in the mirror image of the biological family and certainly from the descriptions of the parents involved in this study, the every-day job of mothering their children did not seem to be practically any different to that of parenting a biological child (Bartholet, 1993). What was remarkable was the persistence by the adoptive parents of never giving up on their adopted children, but for some of the parents involved in this study, this perseverance involving demonstration of love and care was not without affective consequences.

The bringing in of ethnicity in to the family context for some parents meant that previously held relational networks were closed down. Where in the case of three mothers, it was articulated that those mothers had had to completely re-think and re-navigate their circle of friends. We can never really know exactly why the mother's friendship relationships changed, but what was important to consider was that the mother's attributed the reason to the adoption of their racially different children. As Charlesworth (2000) argues, the way in which class manifests itself is through everyday ruptures to the process of living. Despite these ongoing ruptures that characterised the family experience, I felt that all of the mothers maintained a strong sense of protection towards ensuring that the racism or negative experiences they felt through the trans-racial adoption was kept away from the children. The feelings that these kinds of experiences created found no space for release or expression, and had an impact on

family dynamics. What is argued as being necessary in terms of supporting trans-racially adopted families is to encourage the articulation of the effects of negative interactions in order for both the parent and child to potentially become closer through the opportunity to have an honest discussion around their individual experiences.

Engaging and completing this thesis has felt at times like an enormous task. The ultimate aim of this thesis has been to convey an experiential understanding of the experience of trans-racial adoption as articulated to me by the adoptive mothers and adopted children involved in the study. Our intimate and private conversations that took place between the participants and myself during the phase of four interviews is able to be made public through the writing of this thesis. There was very little awareness amongst the families of the legacy of the depth of the debate around their family constellation and the generally political nature of their family.

The experience, so generously articulated by the families involved in this study, left me with an impression that their family lives had been much the same as I imagine the majority of middle class family experience to be. There were extra curriculum activities, brownies, music lessons, family disagreements, arguments, reconciliation, a divorce, an affair, doing well in school and getting expelled from school, brothers and sisters and Christmas and squabbles. It is arguably this sentiment that is so central to a life that is liminal, of being the same as everyone else but simultaneously, deeply different. There were additional layers of complexity that race and adoption brought in to the lives of the families that participated in this study. This thesis has sought to convey an understanding of this complexity through an analysis of the situation, as it is the situation that trans-racial adoptive subjectivity is created. This thesis has been for future generations of trans-racially adopted children and their parents.

Appendices

Rebecca (Adoptee) Corrine (Mother)

A woman aged 34 of African descent, adopted from the public care system as a new born baby by a Caucasian mother and father. She was the first child to be adopted by the parents, who later went on to adopt mixed heritage Jamaican and white English twins. She spent all her childhood years in what she describes as a middle class and predominantly white environment in the countryside in the South West of the UK. The mother and father already had three of their own biological children prior to adopting trans-racially. For the majority of Rebecca's early years, she describes herself growing up in a predominantly white community in the South West of England. The primary motivation to adopt was described by the adoptive mother as being because of her work in Africa that her and her husband had carried out when they were younger, and their love of the country. As the biological children of the family have grown up, the mother and father chose to adopt Rebecca. The motivation to adopt the twins is described as being motivated by wanting Rebecca to not feel alone as the only black child in the family.

Catherine (Adoptee) Elizabeth (Mother)

A woman aged 34 of Iranian descent, adopted from the public care system as a six month year old baby by a Caucasian mother and father that she describes as middle class. The adoptive parents already had two boys that were their biological children. Catherine spent the first years of her childhood up to the age of ten years old in London, and then moved to the North East of England following her father's move to be the vicar at a new church. The motivations to adopt trans-racially are described by the adoptive mother as being primarily to do with wanting a girl in the family as she already had two boys of her own and also mentioned that a certain degree of religious motivation had influenced their decision. The father works in the field of medicine and the mother has always stayed at home to take care of all the children.

Belinda (Adoptee) Florence (Mother)

Belinda is a woman aged 36 of mixed heritage Jamaican and Irish descent, adopted from the public care system from birth by a Caucasian mother and father that she describes as middle class. She was the second child to be adopted as her adoptive parents had al-

ready adopted a boy two years older than her of Indian ethnicity. The adoptive parents already had two biological children of their own prior to adopting trans-racially. The adoptive mother described her primary motivation to adopt being based on religious beliefs where she had felt that inspiration from God had asked her to adopt trans-racially. Belinda describes her formative childhood years being spent in a middle class suburb of a large city in the South West of the UK. The father of the family had worked as a teacher all his life, and the mother has always stayed at home to take care of the children.

Robert (Adoptee) Theresa (Mother)

Robert is a male aged 32 of mixed heritage Jamaican and English descent, adopted from the public care system from birth by a Caucasian mother and father. Robert was the second child to be adopted trans-racially. The parents also adopted a female child of mixed heritage prior to adopting Robert. The adoptive mother and father already had two biological children of their own prior to adopting trans-racially. The adoptive father was a senior environment academic, but he later died when Robert was ten years old. The adoptive mother went on to marry and remained married to this husband who worked in the RAF. Robert describes growing up in a small village outside a large City in the South West of the UK. The primary motivation to adopt was described by the adoptive mother was her desire to parent more children, but after suffering a miscarriage, they had decided to adopt. The mother stayed at home to take care of all of the children.

Andrew (Adoptee) Joanne (Mother)

Andrew is a 30 year old male of Jamaican heritage, adopted from the public care system at the age of one years old. Andrew had two other birth brothers that remained with their birth mother so that he was the only boy out of the family to be adopted out. He was adopted in to a family with a Caucasian mother and father. There were two biological girls in the family prior to Andrew's adoption. The mother and father remained together until Andrew was aged six years old and then divorced. The mother later formed a same sex relationship with a partner that she was still with at the point of interview. The mother worked as a social worker and so did her partner. The adoptive father went on to marry another woman who already had two biological white children. Andrew lived for a period of his childhood with his adoptive father's family. His adoptive mother

lived in what Andrew described as a middle class suburb of a city in the South West of the UK. The motivation to adopt was described by the adoptive mother as being around the interest she had always maintained in ethnicity and difference.

Sheila (Adoptee) Francis (Mother)

Sheila is a twenty three year old female of East Asian heritage, adopted from the public care system as a young infant. The adoptive father is of Chinese descent and the mother is Welsh. Sheila is the second child to be adopted as the adoptive parents adopted a Caucasian child prior to adopting Sheila. The mother worked as a teacher and the father was an engineer. The mother stayed at home whilst the children were growing up. Sheila describes herself growing up in a particularly rural part of Wales that was predominantly a Welsh speaking area. The motivation to adopt was described by the adoptive mother was largely to parent a child where there were issues with fertility.

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