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Photo credit: Eva Tind Kristensen, from her collection of poems “do/도”

Racialization in the intimate relations of transnational adoptees

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Summary

How does transnational adoptee subjects experience racialization in their intimate relations? This is what this thesis sets out to examine, with a strict focus on a contemporary, Danish setting. It does not attempt to give a final answer but rather to contribute to the existing research tradition on transnational adoptees. The thesis is the result of a collaboration with Forum for Adoption Politics, and therefore also contains a report based on a problem formulation given by Forum for Adoption Politics.

The thesis is based on five semi-structured interviews lasting between 1,5-2 hours each. The informants are grown adoptees, both male and female.

The theoretical groundwork of the thesis is a combination of Foucauldian discourse analysis, a Butlerian concept of performativity, and a poststructuralist focus on subjectivation and racialization as remoulded in the work of Dorthe Marie Søndergaard and Lene Myong.

The Foucauldian discourse analysis and Butlerian concept of performativity is used quite directly as a tool of analysis in regard to the interviews, whereas the theoretical understanding of racialization forms the underlying understanding of what is at play between racialized and racializing subjects. However, racialization is additionally used to emphasize race as a reiterative discursive and intersubjective practice. In this thesis, subjects are understood as procedural, fragmented and contradictory, and this is in alignment with the poststructuralist mode of thought, in which the world is seen as made up of structures that are created, reproduced and changed through e.g. language.

The idea of analyzing the intimate relations of transnational adoptee subjects was based on the notion that there exists a special form of kinship in these. But it was also motivated by its being space that is generally thought to be 'safe', as opposed to the public sphere. My analysis of the interviews showed that the intimate relations and the informants are constantly racializing by using a discourse subscribing to dominant narratives of whiteness, Danishness, colour-blindness and likeness. The transnational adoptee subject was left oscillating between these narratives, never fully inhabiting any one category.

1 Thesis statement

This thesis asks the question of how racialization discursively manifests itself in the intimate relations of transnational adoptee subjects[1].

Racialization is generally embedded in a broader, social and public context of racism and xenophobia. Intimate relations are generally thought of as a space free of these political and public issues, but this thesis will argue that for transnational adoptees this is not the case. The analysis will demonstrate that if anything, intimate relations are even more sensitive and fraught with anxiety concerning modes of racialization, than a more general, public space tend to be. The thesis is written in cooperation with Forum for Adoption Politics.

2 Introduction

How does transnational adoptee subjects experience racialization in their intimate relations? What is meant by racialization? How do the intimate relations of transnational adoptee subjects differ from intimate relations in general?

This thesis explores the lived experience of racialized transnational adoptee subjects in a contemporary, Danish setting. The purpose is not to give a full, definitive understanding of what constitutes this experience but to nuance and broaden the general understanding of what is at work in transnational adoption. Accordingly, this thesis will not argue 'for' or 'against' adoption, as the ambition is a wish to produce more thorough and critically reflective knowledge of the experiences transnational adoptee subjects have concerning racialization.
The thought-provoking aspect of intimate relations is that they are generally thought of as apolitical; a place outside of and beyond politics. What is shown in this thesis, however, is that intimate relations are in fact highly, if implicitly, political and that this is an aspect quite difficult to grapple with for all parties concerned.

The thesis is an organization thesis written in collaboration with Forum for Adoption Politics. The thesis itself endeavours to give a modest contribution to existing literature on racialization of transnational adoptee subjects by focusing on intimate relations. The collaboration with Forum for

[1] The use of "Transnational adoptee subject" is bound to the theoretical framework of the thesis, and is also used as a disruption. This is elaborated in paragraph 4.4

Adoption Politics is based on a hope to strengthen the general discussion on transnational adoption, especially in regard to being a racialized person in a white, Danish family-construction.
The report produced for Forum for Adoption Politics is in part a short introduction to the results of the thesis, written in an available-for-all language and in part a summary of two questionnaires[2] done in collaboration with Forum for Adoption Politics. The report will contain a short methodological reflection on the questionnaires but will not go in depth with the quantitative method as Forum for Adoption Politics did not wish for an elaborate analysis of the results, but a very simple, descriptive outline of the general results.

3 Interview Process

In this thesis a poststructuralist approach is adopted in order to better understand the discursive modes and manoeuvres at play in the intimate relations of transnational adoptee subjects, with a particular focus on racialization. Therefore in-depth, qualitative interviews become the obvious choice of method, as these can provide insight into the life-worlds of the transnational adoptee subjects. This thesis is based on five semi-structured interviews.

3.1 Reflections on the Interview Situation

The semi-structured interview is chosen on the basis of a wish to understand the experiences of the transnational adoptee subjects more in-depth than what e.g. a survey could provide. The semi-structured interview allowed me to set the theme but still follow-up on certain unplanned aspects brought up in the interviews. Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann distinguish between a thematic and a dynamic interview guide in their book "InterView" (2009). Accordingly, a good interview guide should be both thematic and dynamic, where thematic is understood as the 'what' of the questions: What knowledge do we wish to gain? And dynamic is understood as the 'how' of the questions: how do we gain this knowledge? E.g. how do we get the informants to share their experiences?

My interview guide[3] was structured so that it began with general questions about race and the interviewees' personal experiences of being racialized and then narrowed its focus with more concrete and personal questions regarding their particular relationships and racial issues. The general questions

[2] See appendix 3
[3] Throughout this thesis I will distinguish between method and analysis. By 'method' I mean the way in which I have conducted the interviews, and by 'analysis' I mean the way in which I have chosen to interpret the resulting, transcribed texts

mostly had a dynamic function of easing into some quite personal and potentially emotionally sensitive questions concerning childhood and intimate relationships but also had the thematic quality of setting up a basic understanding of the informants' general view on racialization. The personal questions are thematic, in that they very clearly relate to the subject of the thesis but also contain a dynamic quality through the specific wording of the questions, e.g. the more broad and neutral way of asking is the way I wish to obtain knowledge.

In the beginning of each interview, I made sure the informant was aware of the fact that this would not be a thesis arguing for or against adoption as such, nor would it comment on what might be said to be right or wrong ways of raising a racialized child in a adoptive family. The informant was made aware, that this was a way of looking into racialization occurring in intimate relations; in what shape and practice does it occur? What concrete words and expressions are used and what impact do they have? Furthermore, I focused on asking open questions, trying not to make any implicit assumptions in advance. This included always asking whether or not they experienced something, before asking how this experience played out or felt. The interviews were what Kvale and Brinkmann would define as 'narrative interviews'. These interviews focus on the stories that the informants tell, and they emphasize the time-bound and the social aspects, along with the structure of meaning in the interviews (173: Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In my interviews, the stories and memories the informants focused on when answering my more thematic questions became essential in my analysis of racialization. To understand how the transnational adoptee subjects were racialized in their intimate relations, I had to listen to concrete stories and memories of how the interplay between whiteness and colour was at work. I did not specifically ask how whiteness was in play but asked more generally such as: "how did you talk about your looks with your family?" I did not wish to foist any specific ideas or interpretations on the informants but wanted them to simply tell stories related to race as unbiased as possible.

In regard to power-relations, I tried to align myself with the informants, by telling them of my own heritage: That my mother is a transnational adoptee subject and my father is white. Even though I'm not a transnational adoptee subject myself, I wished to signal that I in part understood the experience of being an transnational adoptee subject through my mom, and also that I myself had a white parent and therefore had some sort of understanding of the experiences you have as a racialized subject with

intimate white relations, or at least that I myself was not 'colour-blind'[4]. I did not spell these intentions out but simply mentioned my own heritage and informed them of where my interest in the subject stemmed from. I felt that this was positively received, and throughout the interviews several informants dropped comments such as 'you know', and other statements implying that they expected me to have had a similar experience. This, I interpret as a confirmation of my intention to indicate similarity between us but of course it can be argued that phrasings such as ending a sentence with 'you know', can also be interpreted as a sign of a slight uncertainty, or merely as being formulaic. However, because of the body language of my informants, e.g. the way they looked at me, when they said it, I feel fairly sure that this was a way of indicating that they expected me to understand. This form of intimacy and trust between my informants and myself creates the risk of more easily overstepping their boundaries in relation to intimate questions. As I was very aware of this, I noticed while transcribing my interviews that I was almost overly cautious when asking about personal experiences – I am so worried about overstepping boundaries that I almost always over-explain and excuse a personal question. For instance, in one interview I want to ask how they talked about physical similarities in the informant's family. Instead of just asking, I formulate an almost incomprehensible question along the lines of:

> "Yes, maybe there is an aspect, I don't know if you've ever thought about it, and it's completely okay if you haven't, but I just want to... because often, when you are related to someone, you talk about how you look alike. Like "you have your fathers nose" etc. Is this something you've thought about when you grew up, or is it something you've talked about in your family? It's completely okay if you haven't, I'm just curious"

Here, there is a clear question somewhere in the middle, but I wrap it up in a messy bundle of excuses and explanations on both sides. My informant had absolutely no problem answering, and actually mentioned that this was something she had thought a lot about and really wanted to talk about. This very circumspect way of asking, I remember, came about because I was simply afraid it would be a very personal question, stirring up unpleasant emotions. And since we were quite far in the interview, and my informant and I had a very good connection, I was afraid that my informant would share something that they would later regret or have felt pressured to share. However, this sort of intimacy could also legitimize the opposite: Everything in the interview situation would be implied. Adopting the role of the outsider allows you to ask questions about things taken for granted, and since I used my role as a sort of insider, it exposed the interview to the danger of becoming too implicit. I

[4] This term is further elaborated in paragraph 4.5.4

tried to counter this by having small disruptions[5] in my questions, e.g. by using academic terms such as 'racialized' – making the informant stop and reflect, maybe feeling a bit puzzled.

I have discussed that I shared my own personal heritage with the informants, as a way of creating intimacy between us. However, this can also be a bias to consider in my thesis. My interest in this subject in part stems from personal experience, and I do collaborate with an organization that is very critical towards adoption as such. I will argue that this does not disqualify me from looking into this subject, but that it is important that I constantly reflect on my own positioning in this analysis[6].

3.2 Ethical Considerations

As I had the symbolic and discursive power of being the researcher, I made it clear that I would not send them my transcriptions and analysis for approval, but that they were more than welcome to read the finished product. This, I chose simply because of the time scope of the thesis, as I would not have the time to send drafts back and forth. Karin Widerberg mentions how we have to adopt an ethical code working as qualitative researchers. For her, it amounted to being very open about the purpose and layout of the research done, meaning she wouldn't pressure the informants to tell personal stories in any way (95: Widerberg, 2002). She also argues that my decision – not to send my analysis for approval – can be ethically challenging as informants would look for themselves in the analysis and thereby the possibility of feeling misunderstood and misrepresented may very well arise (175: Ibid.). I find this important to reflect on, as it is very likely that my informants – grown transnational adoptee subjects – will look for themselves and their stories in my thesis. This thesis follows Lene Myong's argument in her Ph.D. (304: Myong, 2010), i.e. this is not a psychological examination of my informants. My analysis wishes to contribute to the general picture of existing structures in regard to race, racialized subjectivation and conflicting categories – I am not trying to lay out a single 'true' and therapeutic story of my informants' lives. This is also why I've chosen to depersonalize my informants. Not only do I change their names, I also break up their stories. This means that the stories stemming from one informant might be presented as George in one place and Anne in another. I adopt this approach from Myong, who in turn adopts it from Dorthe Marie Søndergaard (1996) and Christa Breum Amhøj (2007). Myong argues that whether or not a story is related to a

[5] This is elaborated later on in paragraph 4.4.1

[6] Max Weber is one of the first to discuss the position of the researcher: "Science can help make a human conscious of the fact that all actions – and, given the circumstances, naturally also not acting – has consequences that implies choosing side for certain values and thereby – which these days we are inclined to overlook – regularly a disfavour to others" (70: Weber, 2003)

specific person is not the decisive issue. The interesting part is the movements, the positions, or the negotiations happening between people. These can be analysed whether or not it was George or Anne who experienced them (292: Myong, 2010). This way of depersonalizing my informants supports a non-individual reading of my text. It is a way to break with the reader thinking of a single person connected to this and that experience, and to focus, instead, on the experience itself, on the structures it reflects and uncovers. As a researcher, I've analysed the structures and meanings, the relationships between people, which *are* personal but not the entire life stories of the individuals (304-5: Ibid.). Some would argue that this is paradoxical: I seek to create a sense of trust between my informants and myself, but I only wish to uncover purely structural features. I do believe that a sense of trust is essential in my interviews, as I am interested in stories about the informants' personal relations. However, I am not interested in their personal relations as a way of telling something individual about them, as a way of creating a single 'true' story about their individual life. I am interested in their personal relations and the discourses within these relations, as a way of uncovering how general structures is at work between people in intimate, transracial relationships. The experiences, which are focused on in this thesis, are interesting regardless of whose experience it was. With this way of depersonalizing my interviews, I have tried to respond to the ethical challenges arising when using people's stories but it is indeed a difficult ethical subject to fully comply with. I can only hope that being informed of what my thesis wishes to achieve, along with the depersonalization of the interviewees, can help smooth over any troubled feelings the informants might have when reading my thesis. But choosing not to let them approve the text beforehand, will always give rise to some difficult, ethical considerations.

3.3 Calling for Informants

I called for informants by writing and circulating a text asking adult, Korean[7] adoptee subjects to participate in a study. The aim of my thesis was explained, my cooperation with Forum for Adoption Politics was described, and an account of the kind of questions they would encounter was provided. Furthermore, I described my personal and academic background and the promise of anonymity was given. The text was advertised in a number of Facebook groups for adoptees, on the page of Forum for Adoption Politics and their page for the Adoption House. More than double the number of the needed informants volunteered, and I chose 5 participants at random. The participants are between

[7] I chose to have informants with the same birth country because having informants from different birth countries would open up nuances and differences that the scope of this thesis would not accomodate

24 and 49 years of age and consist of one man and four women. Four of them live in Copenhagen, while one live in Odense. They have different educational backgrounds but all have at minimum completed a bachelor's degree. Two of the informants are only children, whereas the other three have one or more adopted siblings. None of them have siblings who are biological children of the adoptive parents. They are all in long-term relationships and four of them are with white partners while one is with a racialized partner. Three of them have children of their own, all with white partners. Two of them use a Korean name, while three of them use a Western name. This is why the synonyms will be two Korean names and three Western.

3.4 Translations

All of my interviews were done in Danish and transcribed in Danish. For the thesis I will translate the quotes myself, and if I estimate that a possible loss of meaning could be present in the translation, I will refer to the quote in Danish. This also applies to sources read in Danish, Swedish and Norwegian.

3.5 Transnational Adoptee Subjects in Denmark as a Quantitative Group

First of all, it is very difficult to give a specific number of transnational adoptee subjects in Denmark, as the registration of adoptions has varied or been completely neglected. Compounding this issue, the method of registration has varied throughout the years. Overall, the number of transnational adoptions peaked through the 1970s and 1980s. Between 1970 and 2008 20.337 transnational adoptions are registered. Of these, Korean adoptees are the largest group with 8.642 adoptions (26: Myong, 2010). Today, however, the overall number of transnational adoptee subjects is assumed to be higher, since we have no numbers for adoptions done before 1970. During the 1990s the number of Korean children up for adoption fell, which resulted in an turn towards other countries such as China (26: Ibid.). Largely the number of transnational adoptions is falling: In 2015 there were 97 transnational adoptions, hereof only 7 from South Korea. This is the lowest number in 10 years. Between the years 2005-2015 the overall number of transnational adoptions is 3.728, yielding an average of 372,8 transnational adoptions per year (http://bit.ly/2rdoqI3). In a global perspective, the transnational adoption of Korean children has been dominating. It is estimated that between 150.000 and 200.000 children have been given up for transnational adoption since the end of the Korean War in 1953 (27: Myong, 2010).

4 How do we Uncover Oblique, Halfway Invisible Traces?

The theoretical backdrop for this thesis is manifold: It will lean on canonised theorists such as Foucault and Butler in the understanding of central tenets, and it will draw on recent, more methodologically minded researchers such as Søndergaard and Myong in the understanding of poststructuralism, subjectivation and racialization as an approach. Firstly, I will outline certain aspects of the poststructuralist body of thought used in this thesis. This will entail a short overview of Foucault and Butler. Secondly, subjectivation and racialization as both theoretical and working concepts will be introduced, along with a specification of the understanding and use of both terms in this thesis.

4.1 A (short) Introduction to Poststructuralism

I will not embark on a genealogy of the term poststructuralism, but I will try to outline the general thoughts leading up to and defining it. As the prefix implies, it derives from a body of structuralist ideas. Structuralist thinking can be said to begin with Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics in the beginning of the 1900s and was developed especially by Claude Lévi-Strauss in the late 50s and 60s. Generally, the structuralist approach argues that specific parts of human culture is best understood through their involvement in underlying, coherent structures. Some of the most prevalent features of structuralism, when seen in the light of poststructuralism, has to do with the idea of underlying language structures as primary, where humans become passive; someone who simply communicate existing structures without any agency (Madsen, 1970, Hyppolite, 1972, Donato, 1972, Stormhøj, 2006, Saussure, 1970, Lévi-Strauss, 1970).

Poststructuralism followed in the wake of structuralism, inasmuch as a majority of so-called poststructuralist figures initially accepted that the meaning of different phenomena is derived, not from reality but from each other and the systems they participate in (19: Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999). However, poststructuralism – which is admittedly a potentially vague umbrella-term – also differs a great deal from structuralism. As mentioned, one notable factor is that poststructuralism does not see language and language systems as something fixed but as interchangeable, malleable, historically conditioned and as creating meaning[8][9]. The structure is created, reproduced and changed in and through specific, socially codified uses of language (20-21: Ibid.). Another notable difference is the

[8] As John Law points out in "Making a mess with method" (2003) poststructuralism is completely coherent with e.g. primitive realism inasmuch as poststructuralism does deal with reality, and simply points to the fact that reality is being made a certain way

[9] This thought was in large measure introduced by Hans Georg Gadamer in his seminal work "Sandhed og Metode" 2004 [1960], where he is one of the first to confront the, at that time, prevailing idea that language is a mere instrument

fact that the meanings of signs are more fluent in their relation to each other than e.g. Saussure would allow.

It is, however, difficult to flesh out a precise understanding of poststructuralism, as Stormhøj notes (13: Stormhøj, 2006). Stormhøj argues that poststructuralism is not any *one* theory but a diverse collection of: "Anti-fundamentalist ways of thinking, which is developed through dialogue between the different schools of thought, and which is realized, through different analytical strategies, in various criticisms of the metaphysical basis ('foundation') of traditional, Western philosophy and the social sciences" (Ibid.).

4.2 Poststructuralism as an Analytic Approach

In the following paragraphs, I will attempt to explain how I understand and apply the term poststructuralism in this thesis. The approach used in this context is mainly based on Dorthe Marie Søndergaard's conception of postructuralism as a method but broadly draws on Foucault's archaeological discursive work and Butler's theories of gender performativity, as they form a major part of the backdrop to Søndergaard's method.

4.2.1 Foucault's Discourse Analysis

The analytic method deployed in this thesis is discourse analysis. By 'discourse' I mean the given totality of allowed or legitimate articulatory practices within a distinct episteme[10] (Foucault, 2001). In the main, this concept is derived from the work of Michel Foucault[11]. Foucault argued that a discursive field always already exists, and even though from a practical standpoint we cannot examine everything written and said, we may establish general principles of how we will examine certain aspects of and effects within the discursive arena and stipulate how and why we isolate certain contexts that are of interest for our endeavour (Foucault, 1993 [1969]). Foucault proposed, that the discursive event[12] offers the question: "How is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another"?

[10] According to Foucault an episteme is the ways in which different forms of knowledge is established and developed in a given, strictly delimited historical period (Foucault, 2001)

[11] I am aware of the fact that Fairclough, Laclau, Mouffe and countless others have expanded, modified or disagreed on how we might interpret and employ the Foucauldian concept of discourse, cf. (37-61: Fairclough, 1992) and (105-7: Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). In this particular context I am going to limit myself to the Foucauldian definition stated above

[12] We should distinguish between Foucault's archaeology and genealogy. Whereas his archaeology looks into the above mentioned – how and why discursive events takes place in a given way – his genealogy aim to uncover the origin of a given discourse (e.g. the evolution of a psychiatric terminology in the 1890s), and then reconstruct what has been possible and impossible to say within it (Foucault, 2001). This thesis will employ his archaeological approach to discourse

(27: Ibid.). In raising this question, Foucault wished to focus on the unsaid, the things left out, silently excluded from the register of articulatory practices. The emphasis should therefore be on the phrase '*rather than another'* in the above-mentioned quote. Foucault himself describes his archaeological work as an ambition 'to write the story of silence' (156: Foucault, 1970, 20-21: Stormhøj, 2006). Foucault argued that subjects are created by and within discursive practices. Thus, Foucault wishes to argue that subjects are decentralised and regulated by a variety of pre-existing power relations. These power relations are conveyed through discourses, in which the subject is always already embedded. The power relations that are distributed through discourse create the subjects, which in this way become a sort of medium for language and not the other way around (45: Foucault, 2003 [1997], 22: Jørgensen & Philips, 1999). This we can exemplify with one informant, Jens, who said:

> "It's really difficult when people comment on something, not with a bad intention, but you can feel that it hurts you. I feel like it's very difficult, very difficult to put somebody in a situation by saying 'I don't like it when you say this to me, because it doesn't feel good to me' and then they're going to be like 'oh, I'm sorry... but what's the problem, I only commented that you were a fast runner?' So I feel like, I think a lot about not making people uncomfortable, when they point to something about me, which is attached to something I maybe don't want to talk about"

Jens does not want to posit himself as a subject that might create an awkward or negative situation, and thereby gives way to a power relation where other subjects can racialize him, because he would rather be simply a racialized subject than be seen as an angry/awkward racialized subject. The implication is that language is not a neutral tool or instrument but much rather something that regulates and moulds the formation of the subject itself.

To sum up: This thesis will draw on a Foucauldian understanding of discursive utterances, specifically the idea that subjects are created by and through discourses suffused by asymmetrically distributed power relations. In addition, attention will be paid to the unsaid. Although the main focus will be on the specific ways in which things are articulated, this often entails the question of why it is not articulated in a different manner.

4.2.2 Butler's Reiterative Practice

Judith Butler draws heavily on Foucault and is well known for her concept of gender performativity (18: Stormhøj, 2006). Performativity for Butler: "Must be understood not as a singular or deliberate "act", but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (2: Butler, 1993). Performativity is, then, not a single act but rather a reiterative practice, norm or set of norms and: "To the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals

or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition" (12: Ibid.). Butler applies this to her critique of the distinction between gender and sex. Feminist theory view 'gender' as a social understanding of sex, whereas 'sex' refers to a biological sex. Thus gender becomes an extension of sex and sex becomes the naturalized backdrop for gender. This, Butler argues, is a way of maintaining a biological understanding of sex. Butler argues that sex, just like gender, is a construction resulting from social processes being fostered, negotiated and reproduced through and within articulatory practices. There is no pre-discursive, ontological sex (12: Butler, 2007 [1990]). Sex is a reiterative practice, mimicking the social ideas of gender – a citational practice beginning with the midwife exclaiming 'It's a boy/girl' (19-20: Bissenbakker, 2005). The reiterative practice is central to Butler, as this is how gendered identity is created for the subject. According to Butler, these citations are fundamental to the subject as subject – without them, the subject would not be able to be understood or exist as a subject (ibid.). I will use this understanding of reiterative and citational practice to investigate how race materializes itself as a biological fact, and to show how discursive techniques create transnational adoptee subjects as racialized subjects.

4.3 The Specific Analytical Approach in this Thesis

This thesis accepts and replicates Søndergaard's (2001) version of the poststructuralist analysis. This approach tries to outline some very general and concrete approaches to analysing empirical data from a poststructuralist standpoint, which can be used intertwined with each other. Among those approaches are discourse analysis, storytelling and disruption. I will only apply discourse analysis and disruption[13]. Discourse analysis seeks to analyse how different categories interact with one another, e.g. the categories of 'race', 'adoption', 'Danishness' but also to challenge this procedure. Søndergaard writes about this practice:

> "She/he focuses on the connotating processes and interpretations that are active in the material – on the discursive premises on which communication and actual acts occur. She/he focuses on which acts among the subjects seem to be comprehensible and in which ways, on why something is spoken into existence as taken for granted, on how and when something is taboo or a subject which is silenced, on what is told as a rupture, although it is acceptable, or at least potentially can be made legitimate in special circumstances or legitimate by particular subjects through their particular positioning (...) the point in this set of analytical proceedings, as in the others I will come to, is to contradict the obvious (...) make the processes of constitution explicit, processes that usually are regarded as natural and taken for granted in our discourses and practices and which silently require us to create ourselves and each other (...) an attempt is made to destabilize what is taken for granted and expose it for reflection" (191: Søndergaard, 2010)

[13] Disruption is elaborated in paragraph 4.4.1

I will scrutinize the ways in which transnational adoptee subjects – and their intimate relations – come to normalize racialization, and how they silently take certain modes of experience for granted. I will try to tease out and reflect on the experiences that are considered to be 'normal' (e.g. whiteness, colour-blindness and anti-racism). Stormhøj highlights this form of analysis, in which you disturb the taken-for-granted as an integral mode of poststructuralist critique. This critique has the potential to identify and define the delineations that every society is fixed on, along with the power relations that maintain them (20: Stormhøj, 2006).

4.4 Subjectivation

The concept of subjectivation is fundamental when understanding racialization and draws very heavily on the poststructuralist understanding of e.g. subject and discourse.

4.4.1 Subjectivation as Concept

The subject as a concept stems from the Foucauldian tradition in feminist theory and diversity research, especially by researchers such as Judith Butler, Patti Lather, Bronwyn Davies, Hanne Haavind, Magareth Wetherell, Ann Phoenix (34: Søndergaard, 2003).
Søndergaard introduces Bronwyn Davies (2010), and argues that Davies employs the concept of subject instead of identity, because she wishes to shift the focus from something autonomous and self-identical to something procedural, interchangeable, decentered, contradictory and fragmented[14] (82: Søndergaard, 2000). This entails that the subject, as opposed to the individual, is something that is always already being produced according to certain implicit or explicit rules. In other words, the idea is based on pitting a certain widespread notion of identity and self-identity (fixed, stable, autonomous, distinct) against the idea of the subject and subjectivity as something that is always in the making; something that is being produced and is itself producing its own subjectivity in a never-ending, heteronomous process.

These processes are not something the subject can decline, they are constantly produced through discourses, non-verbal acts, etc. between subjects[15] (12: Myong, 2010, 60: Staunæs, 2004). Myong

[14] It can be claimed that people like Stuart Hall (1990) have argued that identity is exactly this – procedural, fragmented, etc. What is important is not so much an academic discussion in regard to the two terms, but the distinction between something static and something changeable

[15] To be more precise: the argument is that epistemological constructivism is derived from a more fundamental ontological constructivism; the fact that subjectivity is always linguistically mediated follows from the fact that reality itself is always already a linguistic construction according to Foucault, Butler etc.

exemplifies this with an informant, Thomas. Myong asks him how he experienced *becoming* Danish. Thomas is quite puzzled by this and has a hard time explaining – he was simply told that he was Danish, and he supposed this was good enough. Myong writes: "The obviousness of the subjectivating process which moulds the subject into exactly a Danish child, is difficult to make explicit, it is difficult to explain the actions, movements, discourses and patterns of socialization that constitutes the subjectivation" (13: Myong, 2010). This is exactly the point of focusing on modes and procedures of subjectivation as it means a focus on the discourses and patterns of socialization that constitute the subject but which are difficult to make explicit qua their obviousness, i.e. the normalization of them. This is why I insist on using the term 'transnational adoptee subject' throughout the thesis, as it functions as a disruption by way of mildly 'irritating' the reading experience, and thus hopefully make the reader reflect on the concept of subjectivation.

In this thesis, it is assumed that subjectivation is foundational for the notion of racialization and this yields the following question: How does race as a subjectivating process unfold in intimate relations?

4.5 Racialization

Generally speaking the main issue at play is race as a biological fact; the corporal element of race which extrapolates to certain assumptions about character traits. In line with Butler, I wish to use the concept of racialization to point out that race as a biological fact is constructed just as the concept of sex is constructed.

Before going in depth with the concept of racialization, I will outline the general research tradition in relation to race, transnational adoption and racialization, along with providing a short statement on how the concept of racialization can be said to differ from race and racism. I will then map out how race and racism can be understood in a specifically Danish/Scandinavian perspective. Lastly, I will introduce the understanding and use of racialization in this thesis.

4.5.1 The Existing Research Field of Transnational Adoption

There are several differences between the American and the Scandinavian research tradition of transnational adoption. Firstly, the American research tradition has existed for far longer than the Scandinavian. Secondly, the American research tradition has focused on both ethnicity and race,

whereas the European has traditionally focused on ethnicity only. However, the interest in race and transnational adoption is rising, and, partly thanks to the increasingly established use of qualitative methods, race, transraciality and racialization have entered the research field of transnational adoption in Scandinavia[16] (37: Myong, 2010).

Many different researchers work within the field of qualitative, empirical studies of adoption. Among these are Patton (2000), Dorow (2006), Park Nelson (2007), Hübinette and Tigervall (2008) and Myong (2010). All of these engage in a critical analysis of the connection between kinship, race and subjectivity (38: Myong, 2010.).

Sara Dorow's ethnographic study of China/U.S. adoption, examines how race as a subjectivation process brings out: "Flexibility, excess and inclusion (e.g. in relation to the Asian child which is estimated to be adoptable in a white family) but also uneasiness, marginalization and exclusion"[17] (39: Ibid.). Patton, along with Dorow, looks into how whiteness is normalized in adoption families. Patton especially breaks with the idea of adoption being a completely colour-blind, unproblematic practice (39: Ibid.). Park Nelson is one of the researchers focusing on grown adults (as Myong also does), and she finds that her informants' experience of racialization is very complex. A main point being that it is far from unproblematic for a transnational adoptee subject to enter into a non-white identification, as this puts a strain on the kinship-relation with the adoptive family but also this transformation of identity in itself can be seen as problematic (39: Ibid.). Hübinette and Tigervall's ethnographic study of both grown transnational adoptee subjects and adoptive parents scrutinizes their experiences of discrimination in everyday life. The study also focuses on the relation to whiteness as normality (Dorow, 2006, Patton, 2000, Park Nelson, 2007, Hübinette & Tigervall, 2008). This is in part the theoretical backdrop and research tradition that this thesis draws on.

4.5.2 The Research Tradition and Origin of Racialization

The specific term 'racialization' is largely credited to Franz Fanon, specifically his 1967-work "The Wretched of the Earth". Robert Miles (1993) further ascribes the development of the concept within sociology to Michael Banton (1977). This is a widely accepted version of the origin of racialization (5: Murji & Solomos, 2005). Mostly, the influence of a Fanonian concept of racialization has been to draw a relation: "Between the psychic and the social dimensions" (7: Ibid.). Banton, however, calls racialization a process: "There was a process, which can be called racialization, whereby a mode of

[16] The difference between ethnicity and race is elaborated in paragraph 4.5.5

[17] Original quote: "fleksibilitet, overskridelse og inklusion (fx i forhold til det asiatiske barn der skønnes adopterbart i en hvid familie), men også ængstelse, marginalisering og eksklusion"

categorisation was developed, applied tentatively in European historical writing and then, more confidently to the populations of the world" (18-19: Banton, 1977). Here, racialization is seen as a process but mostly focused on physical differences. Murji and Solomos state that: "He [Banton] introduced racialization in 1977 as a way of naming the modes of categorization through which people and nations came to be called races. For Banton, if the language of race was present then racialization occurred" (9: Murji & Solomos, 2005). So, even though Banton does acknowledge a procedural aspect of racialization, he still insists on a biological origin of the very notion of race.

This has been criticised by two theorists who did a lot for the development of the concept of racialization in the 80s and 90s: Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown (10: Ibid.). The work of Miles and Brown (2003) revolve predominantly around race and class. Miles defines racialization as: "The existence of a social process in which human subjects articulate and reproduce the ideology of racism and engage in the practice of racial discrimination, but always in a context that they themselves have not determined" (177: Miles, 1982). This means that he: "Uses racialization to examine the ways in which ideas about race are constructed, maintained, and used as a bias for exclusionary practices" (10-11: Murji & Solomos, 2005). In this way Miles distinguishes himself from Banton and broadens the concept of racialization to also incorporate e.g. Jews, and thereby the concept of racialization in Banton's view can also apply to ideological practices and cultural and political processes (11: Ibid.)[18].

Brah (1996) and Rattansi and Westwood (1994) introduce a more pronounced poststructuralist approach to racialization. They have "Sought to explore the bases of differential racialization as a mode of power that defines 'others' in racial and/or cultural terms" (19: Murji & Solomos, 2005.).

The view given here has been mostly focused on the European research tradition. If we focus on racialization in the US, the concept seems to have been more influential. We should not overstate the difference between the American and European tradition, as US scholars such as David T. Goldberg (1993) has been an integral part of the European sociological discussion on racialization (21: Murji & Solomos, 2005.). Mostly, the idea of racialization in the US tradition has been applied as a: "Lens or a

[18] Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) open up an even broader use of racialization, by focusing on the intersection between race, gender, ethnicity and class through a notion of inferiorization. In this perspective, racialization does not need to form the backdrop of racism, as racism can be about the undesirability of a specific group, e.g. an ethnic group (13: Murji & Solomos, 2005). Lewis and Phoenix (2004) use the term 'ethnicisation' alongside racialization as a term that works in the same way as racialization but invokes "ethnicity as a cultural or national difference" (13: Murji & Solomos, 2005) instead. The relationship between ethnicisation and racialization has not been systematically explored, and there may be instances where it makes sense to look at them together (14: Ibid.)

perspective through which issues and debates become racially marked or signified" (Ibid.). Zilbar and Niven (2000) examine racialized news coverage and argue that 'non-racial' issues become racialized by being affiliated with racial politics. In this way the term racialization: "Appears sometimes to be a synonym for racial or racist meanings, or to suggest the process by which those meanings are made" (21: Murji & Solomos, 2005). Omi and Winant (1994) argue that racialization has to do with an ideological process, in which various social groups produce meanings of race through different practices (Ibid.). Miles along with Torres (1999): "Object to Omi and Winant's idea of a critical theory of race because they maintain that such ideas are rooted in a race relations paradigm that reifies the idea of race itself" (23: Murji & Solomos, 2005). In this way, they differ, inasmuch as Omi and Winant see the concept of racialization as producing race, whereas Miles and Torres argue that the concept of racialization criticizes the concept of race as such (Ibid.). This leads to a need for distinguishing between race, racism and racialization.

4.5.3 Race, Racism and Racialization

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give a comprehensive overview of all the different ways in which scholars have approached the distinctions between race, racism and racialization. I will outline some of the discussions mentioned above and also specify how and why this thesis uses the concept of racialization as opposed to race or racism. As a general discursive point, the concept of race and racism differs in that the general understanding of race has to do with physical appearances that are associated with people from specific parts of the world. Racism, on the other hand is generally understood as explicit discriminating views on what these external characteristics entails.

The academic debate on the term racialization revolves around race, racism and anti-racism, where the researchers criticizing the term argue that it does not provide an adequate framework: "An analysis of racialization as the process of the social construction of race can lead theorists away from the possibility of race-conscious strategies for struggling against racism" (5: Tessman & Bat-Ami, 2001). Whereas the researchers supporting the use of the term argue that it provides a tool as to how 'race-making' occurs (23-24: Murji & Solomos, 2005). As the concept of racialization is central to this thesis, I of course accept the supporting arguments for the term; that it can be a very useful term in regard to examining how race-making occurs. And, as previously argued, that both reader and informant are disrupted in their reading and interviews, to better make them aware of the constructedness of race.

4.5.4 Danish Racialization: Colour-Blindness, Anti-racism and Whiteness

This thesis places itself within a specifically Danish setting. Its focus is on transnational adoptee subjects in Denmark, and the analysis touches upon the concept of Danishness and feeling Danish. Therefore we must also look at the research tradition in relation to a specifically Danish racialization.

David Goldberg writes about the development of racism in Europe including Denmark. He describes how 'classical' racism is about colonialization and enslavement, whereas the recent style of European racism is about denial (Goldberg, 2006). Peter Hervik has examined and developed a more delimited understanding of Danish racism in extensive research. Hervik (1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2001, 2002) applies the term 'new racism'[19] when arguing for the specific kind of racism that seems to have developed in Denmark. Hervik examines how in Denmark racism is often associated with Nazi-Germany or the black struggle in the US (43: Hervik, 2001). After the Second World War, there was a general European consensus that racism was strictly forbidden: that the biological idea of race is wrong and that we therefore should reject the idea of race altogether. This is how anti-racism became fundamental in a European and Danish societal self-perception. This is criticized by Goldberg, who says that a complete denial of the term altogether will neglect the influence that race to this day still has (336: Goldberg, 2006).

Hervik agrees that ignoring race threatens to create a blindness to colour and argues that colour-blindness is the core of Danish racism[20]. This is supported by a historic argument made by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003) and explained by Rikke Andreassen and Katrine Vitus in "Affectivity and Race" (2015). They describe colour-blindness: "As a way of avoiding and neglecting continued racial inequalities after the end of formal colonisation and the dismantling of legal discrimination that took place in the 1960s and 1970s" (62: Andreassen & Vitus, 2015)[21].

As racism is often connected to very explicit and violent actions such as the Nazis, what happens in Denmark when racialized subjects are racialized is not seen as racism but at most as a problematic

[19] This is supported by other researchers such as Kim Su Rasmussen, who argues that the new form of racism in a Danish context is a cultural racism (46-47: Rasmussen, 2011)

[20] For an extensive research on the representation of race through Danish history see Rikke Andreassen's "Human Exhibitions" (2015), where she makes a similar point through an comprehensive examination of ethnic displays in the 1800th and 1900th century

[21] What could make for a really interesting examination, but is not within the scope of this thesis, is the emergence of colour-blindness in exactly the same years as transnational adoption peaks

clash of different cultures. Ulla Fadel elaborates on this via the examination of the Danish view of equality. She proposes that: "Equality is a seemingly positive and very important ideal to most Danes. But behind the concept of equality, the understanding that people can only be equal, when they are identical, is hidden" (219: Fadel, 1999). Thus, the understanding of equality becomes racialized: Only certain people can be properly equal. But this is hidden behind the concept of culture and the belief that race is irrelevant is often very important to stress in a Danish and European narrative (52: Myong, 2010). Myong argues that equality being reached through similarity is exactly what is imposed on racialized minorities: They have to adapt to a white normality (Ibid.). Myong states that this colour-blindness is what: "Renders impossible the understanding of racism as a structural or systematic phenomenon (...) Racism becomes a question of individual deviation (in the racist) from a colour blind norm and individual (and often illegitimate) suffering (in the victim)" (53: Ibid.).

If we backtrack a bit and note the use of 'white normality' by Myong, we may ask ourselves: What is meant by whiteness? And how is whiteness seen as normality? As the theoretical area of whiteness studies is immense, I will only include a few researchers to understand some key notions in regard to the concept of whiteness. Myong gives a very informative overview of the general field of whiteness studies in the US:

> "Since the beginning of the 1990s a long list of whiteness studies have emerged in the US, especially a strong tradition of ethnographic and qualitative studies of whiteness (...), examinations of whiteness and racialized otherness in regard to aesthetic and cultural production (...), whiteness as a historical construction and identity (...), whiteness and methodology (...) and psychoanalytical conceptualization of whiteness" (242: Ibid.)

She notes that in a Danish context the study of whiteness have been relatively neglected, although there is an increasing interest in the field (e.g. Andreassen, 2005, Cawood, 2007, Blaagaard, 2008, Hervik & Jørgensen, 2002) (242: Myong, 2010.). Bolette Blaagard argues that there is a need for an epistemological shift in the understanding of whiteness in Europe:

> "It is, then, not a shifting of political and historical grounds alone that I am proposing; it is moreover an epistemological shift as well as a new way of understanding 'whiteness' as an inter- and intra-mingling of power relations, structures and subjectivities. It is a shift away from a binary and oppositional understanding of difference to a multi-layered exploration of ethnic, religious, gendered, sexual, social, cultural and political dimensions of subjectivities" (11: Blaagaard, 2008)

Bearing in mind this consideration, we need to understand whiteness as a result of an ongoing racialization process: It is not something someone inherently is but something that is created through various processes such as discourses and non-verbal acts. George Lipsitz writes: "As the unmarked category against which difference is constructed, whiteness never has to speak its name, never has to

acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relationships" (1: Lipsitz, 1998). Dyer supports this notion by writing: "Whiteness needs to be made strange" (10: Dyer, 1997). Dyer more actively points to the need to highlight whiteness. Interestingly, in the interviews done for this thesis whiteness is almost never mentioned. Appearance and looks are talked about in so many ways, but almost never do any of the informants mention whiteness. It is as if being Danish is equal to being white (hence invisible and self-evident). This will be elaborated on in the analysis.

4.5.5 The Understanding and Use of Racialization in this Thesis

I've now outlined the research tradition of both transnational adoption and racialization, the difference between race, racism and racialization along with the specific form of Danish racialization, I will now specify what elements of the concept of racialization this thesis draws on.

I wish to emphasize that the experience of race is contradictory and changeable as opposed to an implicit notion that race is somehow a fixed, immutable trait: something simultaneously given and fateful. To slightly paraphrase Simone de Beauvoir: race as destiny. It is important to note that racialization is indeed fraught with implications for the individual subject – implications which might be experienced as being fateful but the point of using the concept of racialization is to emphasize that both in descriptive and normative terms race is not an immutable, biological given but much rather a set of discursive practices that serve to create a specific reality for the racialized subject[22].

I would like to elaborate on why racialization is used as opposed to ethnicity. First of all, the choice is a continuation of the poststructuralist method applied. The term racialization, as it implies the term race, seems to be something uncomfortable, unsettling: Something unpleasant to say and to read, evoking e.g. Nazi eugenics. Therefore, both in my reading and in the interviews, the concept of racialization functions as disruption. As with subject, I intend the use of racialization to make the reader stop and reflect. It is a way to mark that even though, for good reasons, the term race in many ways have been unmentionable since World War II, the realities of racialized people are still very much shaped by the term. Secondly, as Myong argues, there seems to exist a sort of canonization of the term ethnicity in research. It is often used as a neutral umbrella term able to embrace all aspects

[22] In this thesis I limit myself to uncover and describe certain specific traits of racialization of transnational adoptee subjects in a Danish context, the political or normative question of changing or modifying these practices falls outside of this thesis

of minorities in Denmark, and the thesis does not wish to subscribe to this tradition (25: Myong, 2010).

4.5.6 'Transnational Adoptee' as a Category

We generally understand adoption as the incorporation of another person in a family. In regard to transnational adoption it refers to the fact that the person being adopted into a family is from a different country. Myong gives an excellent overview of how transnational adoption went from being named international to transnational adoption through a focus on flows and circulations of things, people, capital, etc. (35: Ibid.).

Adoption is at the heart of kinship-discussions by creating a specific kind of family, which contains a sort of alienation and constant negotiations. Jiyeon told me of the scepticism her parents were met with when they decided to adopt:

> "My parents were at the time older than the average age to have children, so for starters it was like: Why don't you want children? And then secondly: Why are you adopting? When they couldn't have children. There was this kind of 'this will never end well' attitude from friends and family"

Similarly, Lea conveyed an experience she had with her mother:

> "she [her adoptive mom] said something along the lines of: 'If you want to, when you grow up, to not be connected to us, then it's your choice, and that's how it is'. So she may have been in a situation where, because you didn't know how it would be with adopted children, so it could possibly be when you grew up, you found out 'what is this I'm in, it can't...' and then you broke off the connection or something"

Jiyeon and Lea express how kinship in these situations is unpredictable and met with scepticism in a way that a 'normal' kinship relation would not be. Dorow formulates it as: "Adoption is a "no" to naturalized forms of kinship" (5: Dorow, 2006) and:

> "In transnational, transracial adoption, where the disparate sites and subjects of a global political economy are brought into the intimate sphere of everyday kinship (...) At the same time, however, adoption's particular set of institutionalized practices and exchanges leans toward reproducing the latter – middle-class American kinship and its hegemonic whiteness and heterosexuality" (Ibid.)

The category of transnational adoptee is intersectional with race, or more precisely bound to the category of race but this also underlines the lack of involvement of other relevant categories such as gender, class, etc. in this thesis. These categories, although relevant, are not included in the thesis due to its scope. Myong describes it this way:

> "Race and adoption are used interchangeably, not because these categories are mistaken for each other, but because it is in transraciality that kinship is materialised and articulated. Race

> and adoption are closely interlaced in this intersection; the two categories are inextricably connected and point to each other" (84: Myong, 2010)

This very important point will be fundamental in the analysis, where I will often discuss how the two categories influence each other.

5 Stories of Racialization

It is now time to proceed to the analytical section. The theoretical framework for the analysis of the interviews follows a broadly poststructuralist mode of thought with a focus on: 1) The discursive production of subjectivity, 2) Reiterative, citational practice and 3) Racialization as subjectivation. The argument will unfold in the following manner:

Firstly, I am going to uncover central schisms related to being a transnational adoptee subject in a Danish family setting. Secondly, I will describe and analyze the ways in which the social and structural problem of racialization is consistently turned into a private and individual problem and hence all responsibility for avoiding racist incidents is relayed to the transnational adoptee subject. Thirdly, I will outline two basic modes of dealing with transnational, racial difference in a Danish setting: What I name the either-or and the both-and modes. Lastly, I will summarize the argument and touch upon the basic problem of getting the informants to engage with the issue of racialization in intimate relations.

5.1 Racialization in the Intimate Relations of Transnational Adoptee Subjects

How does it feel to be a racialized subject within intimate relations? To be the only one in your family, relationship or intimate friendship to experience racialization? How does the experience of being a transnational adoptee subject play into the category of racialization? These are some of the guiding questions in this analysis, based on five semi-structured interviews all between 1,5-2 hours long. The overall aim of the analysis is to uncover and describe the mechanisms and techniques whereby discursive racialization takes place and thus to nuance and deepen our understanding of transnational adoptee subjects' own experience of racialization in intimate relations.

It was very striking that when asked why the informants had volunteered, one of the main reasons was that they had never previously discussed race with anyone in this manner, i.e. with a pronounced focus on racialization in intimate relations. After the interviews were over I informed them that I would send them my finished product if they were interested, they all stated that their motivation for participating had been to find out what kinds of questions would be asked and to read about the

experiences of other transnational adoptee subjects. Most of them also asked me questions during the interviews: What had other participants answered? Those with young children asked a lot about my own experience of being mixed race and growing up with an adoptee parent.
Hence, my aim is to contribute to the ongoing study of the experiences of transnational adoptee subjects. As well, via my collaboration with Forum for Adoption Politics, I hope to further nuance and broaden the entrenched, general and public narrative related to this field.

5.2 Part 1: Hidden Schisms of Intimate Relations of Transnational Adoptee Subjects

In this first section, I will show how the intimate relations of transnational adoptee subjects are strongly governed by discourses of likeness, colour-blindness, whiteness and Danishness. I will argue that these discourses are naturalized through various rhetorical and discursive strategies: repetition, normalization and silencing among them.

5.2.1 'I Never Have a Safe Space'

First of all: Why focus on intimate relationships? What is the difference between racialization in intimate relationships and racialization in general? Sine explains it like this:

> "Where other people have their family as a safe space, and that should be understood in many ways, because of course a lot of people have conflicts with their family, that's not it at all, but they have a completely stable and defined, or a clearly defined role or affiliation, and there I've experienced my own role as more fluctuating. That I've been dragged out of context and put in another role as pleased"

Sine goes on to describe how she experiences herself as fluctuating – one minute she is the daughter, another she is speaking on behalf of all racialized people and a yet another she is to confirm that racism does not exist. It can be argued that all subjects are fluctuating, and their roles in relations are constantly changed and challenged. However, Sine mentions a particular difficulty when this occurs in an intimate setting. Sine states that:

> "Often, you don't have a safe space, as the only racialized in a family. You can only create the safe space with yourself. Then you'll have to lock yourself up and not see anybody else, haha, then you'll have a safe space. And that's the difference [between being racialized in the intimate relations and being racialized in a more general setting]"

Following these statements made by Sine, it becomes necessary to scrutinize how this very specific, delimited group of people, transnational adoptee subjects, are without a so-called safe space even in their most intimate relations. Whereas other racialized people often have their closest family to relate to, all the immediate relations of transnational adoptee subjects are white, and in a Danish setting this means that they do not share the experience of being racialized in an almost only-white setting. This is

one of the central features that make the intimate relations of transnational adoptee subjects so relevant in a racialized perspective[23]. Hübinette and Tigervall state that it is:

> "The decisive difference between adoptees and other minorities' experiences of discrimination is about the most sensitive life world, meaning the intimate sphere between family and close friends and lovers. While minorities often see this as a free zone from the majority society's expectations and ideas based on looks, the adoptees stand alone with their experiences and reflections" (72: Hübinette & Tigervall, 2008)

There is a general understanding of intimate relationships as a place where you are met as yourself, a place where you can relax and get a break from the everyday judgments and evaluations you are constantly met with, whether they relate to your skin colour, gender, sexuality, or even style. This is not the case for transnational adoptee subjects.

5.2.2 Likeness is Inherited

In "A phenomenology of whiteness" Sara Ahmed points out that likeness is a sign of inheritance; to look like a family is to look alike (154: Ahmed, 2007). This poses a central question in regard to transnational adoptee subjects and their adoptive families; how is an absence of physical likeness dealt with? I propose that some transnational adoptee subjects have their racialized experiences repressed or minimized due to an ideal of likeness with the adoptive family. Further, this suppression of racialized experience is a racialized subjectivation in itself, as it is tied to a colour-blindness that paradoxically stems from the notion of Danish normalcy as white.

It is important to note, that transraciality is a premise for the adoptive family; there is no way to hide the adoption: "The transnational/racial adoption family differs from the ideal, as they cannot call for a biologically defined kinship, as they are able to in adoptive families where adoptive parents and children share racial category" (81: Myong, 2010). This forces out a public and visible truth about the adoption and thereby an urgent need to create kinship, understood as likeness, is produced.

When I asked the informants about likeness there were many interesting answers. Jens commented that:

> "My parents have always been very good at saying things like 'now you remind me of...' my grandmother or someone, but it's clearly always in relation to behaviour, but this they have

[23] A pertinent counter-argument would be that the norm is never normal, i.e. that what is considered to be normal is almost always more complex and ambivalent than we tend to assume, e.g. in a given white family, all sorts of patterns of feeling different and feeling outside might very well be prevalent. I am fully cognizant of this counter-argument, and have no wish to reduce the norm to something static and unambiguous, but insist that in these particular cases there is indeed a complex confrontation between a normative culture and transnational adoptee subjects' feelings of being different

> verbalized, and I've been able to see it sometimes. But I also think I've had a certain distance in regard to it, where I've been thinking 'yeaaaahh...' because you also have this idea, that there might be something a little deeper"

What Jens' observations point to is his adoptive parents trying to establish likeness through alleged personality traits. I am aware of the fact that socialization in general will always help produce patterns of family resemblance but the schism experienced by transnational adoptee subjects is slightly different, in that the biological-genetic component is missing. Thus, the production of a perception of family likeness will inevitably be questioned and appear more fragile and contingent, than is otherwise the case. This then prompts the transnational adoptee subject to quality and modify whenever mentioning a so-called family likeness.

In the case of Jens the attempt to create likeness is appreciated, but it fails. For it does not resonate fully with Jens' own view; hence the attempt is not completely accepted. Jens can see what his adoptive parents are trying to do but he also questions it and adds that there might be something 'a little deeper'. What he is referring to is his racial difference. Jens, as a racialized subject, tries to trivialize the experience but cannot fully allow for his intimate adoptive family to eliminate the experience all together.

A discursive schism is at work. This ongoing schism is the experience of different categories clashing within the transnational adoptee subject: Danishness, which brings forth proximity to the white majority and racialization, which distances the subject from the selfsame white majority. The transnational adoptee subject is left constantly oscillating between the categories never quite falling into place in any one of them.

Minji mentions the way in which her husband steps in when he feels she is being racialized:

> "It was very... 'Why should people say and do what they do? That's not okay, what they did. And I hadn't noticed it. So maybe I've walked through life with a lot of those experiences, because people always somehow unconsciously reacts, and they will always do this, but when my husband observes it, then he thinks 'what? This can't be right. I don't think this is okay, this is really annoying', on my behalf he is annoyed or angry sometimes. And then another thing, which is about, well one thing is that I look the way I look, I can't really change this, but I can forget it. A lot, right? In my everyday life, I am not reminded, but then my husband challenges me – and he still does this"

Minji expresses how she has a very aware partner who verbalizes the racialization and reacts against it but this is experienced as uncomfortable and unpleasant for Minji. Minji herself says that her well-intentioned husband reminds her of the fact that she is racialized. In the very attempt to address

racialization, the husband paradoxically comes to produce it. Minji's husband breaks with the colour-blindness that Minji has cultivated, e.g. her remark that she can 'forget' her racialization. The difference between her partner pointing out racialization and Minji herself not wanting it pointed out may in part be explained by Myong, who states that:

> "While a white, Danish subject often (but not always) is given access to positions, which connote anti-racist, tolerant, open and modern through the search for interracial intimacy, it is different for black and brown non-Danish subjects, who seek out interracial intimacy in a white partner. For this subject, the intimacy produces a position closer to the normalizing majority culture, because the interracial intimacy with a white partner connote well integrated and assimilated" (236: Myong, 2010)

If we follow the argumentation put forward by Myong, Minji's sense of unease could be founded in a wish to seem well integrated and the pointing out of her racialized difference disturbs this self-subjectivation. Whereas for Minji's partner, when he points to injustice or racialization happening, he confirms the positioning of himself as anti-racist, tolerant etc. The argument being that, in the attempts to create likeness, family and partners tend to overlook the importance of positioning in the relationship; that they as part of a white majority hold a different and more privileged position than the transnational adoptee subjects.

Sine recalls that her adoptive parents tried to ascribe certain characteristics to her and her siblings that would make them appear alike:

> "I was ascribed some characteristics which would make me look more like my father, my adoptive father, and my sister was ascribed some characteristics that would make her more like my adoptive mother. And it was almost forced upon us... I remember, that I thought a lot about why I was forced to go to some things that I hadn't asked, because I really wanted to go to piano lessons, but I wasn't allowed. I thought it would be very interesting to learn how to play an instrument, but I wasn't allowed. 'It wasn't something for me'. I thought that was very odd"

The point is that Sine's adoptive parents projected their own identities onto their children. And since Sine was supposed to be like her adoptive father, who had no inclination to play the piano, she was not allowed to take piano lessons, although she expressed a desire to do so. Sine told of how her sister, however, was supposed to resemble their adoptive mother and thus took piano lessons. Sine sensed the artificiality of this construction of psychosocial likeness and subjectivation and reacted against it.

Jiyeon recounts how she found it necessary to verbalize the connection between her and her adoptive father when walking in different public spaces:

> "Jiyeon: but also the thing with, the thing I became aware of as I got older, like my dad, he is a Danish man in that way, and when I walk beside him, people might think I'm his wife, even though I know that my body language and the way I dress often will be significantly different from a Thai wife or a Philippine, or what it could be.
> I: Is this something you've talked with your dad about? Or have you just reflected on it yourself?
> Jiyeon: I think I've talked with him about it, where he's been like 'but they can see it'. Yeah. He doesn't take it as hard as I do, and I think it's also what kind of signal you send out, when you're walking together. But I remember a period of time, where I thought a lot about it. But yeah. Like, I don't do it anymore, but I can also sometimes, if you're in some store together and have to buy a gift or something, and like 'are you here together' and 'yes' and 'hmmm'. They never really know if I'm there alone, or if I'm with my parents or something. And if I'm just there with my dad, in those kinds of shopping situations, I like to say 'that's my dad' because then it's like, maybe you can prevent awkward situations, just as much for the sake of the sales clerk, as for my own sake"

This is a central passage with a lot of things at work. Firstly, it would be possible to write extensively about the trope of the 'Thai wife', which all of the female participants mentioned at some point of the interviews but this is beyond the scope of the thesis[24]. Secondly, it is striking that Jiyeon initially states that it is only something she thought about for a period of her life, but then immediately afterwards admits that it still bothers her when she enters a store with her adoptive father. She feels the need to verbalize their kinship, as this is not readily apparent. Her adoptive father does not seem to be bothered by it, or he verbalizes it as a non-problem. For Jiyeon the lack of physical likeness is obvious and the lack is apparent to her in the meeting in the super market, store, etc. This might present itself as troubling to Jiyeon, because there is another category intersecting in the apparent categories of racialization and kinship, namely gender. Jiyeon explains how people might think she is the wife of her father, which is something uncomfortable to her and nothing she worries about when she is out with both her adoptive parents. The category of gender, here made solid in the assumption of a romantic relationship, is what makes the racialized situation so uncomfortable for Jiyeon that she feels a need to verbalize it; to correct a perceived assumption. For Jiyeon, even the possibility of her being subjectivated as not only a racialized subject but as a sexualised and racialized subject is so disturbing that she immediately tries to subjectivate herself as a racialized adoptee subject instead – both verbally and non-verbally.

In this passage, I have shown how likeness is a pressing theme for the transracial, adoptive family. Many have tried to deal with it by creating a psychological likeness, which in turn is not fully accepted by the transnational adoptee subject, as the absence of physical likeness is undeniable. Furthermore,

[24] Myong has a very interesting discussion of this figure in her PhD (189: Myong, 2010)

the form of accepted racialization depends on the positioning of the subject and is constantly negotiated. Lastly, when racialization intersects with other categories such as gender, it can become even more uncomfortable and the need for a public verbalization of likeness becomes ever more prevailing.

5.2.3 Not White but Adopted, therefore Danish

A tendency within the family and intimate relations to downplay or ignore difference can be observed. To find explanations other than racialization for unpleasant experiences seems to be a general tendency for the transnational adoptee subjects interviewed and goes to the heart of their double subjectivation.

Hübinette and Tigervall point out that several informants have been taught that their racial difference is unimportant and therefore have a hard time bringing up conflicting experiences (65, 67, 75: Hübinette & Tigervall, 2008). Lea was positive towards the way in which her adoptive parents had taught her that she was no different than anyone else, but when asked how she felt towards a racializing incident she had experienced, she said: "I just think a lot of people don't understand how deeply it can touch you when you're constantly confronted with the fact that you differ from how you identify yourself". When I asked how she talked with her adoptive parents about it, she answered that they said she was no different than anybody else – and that this was comforting to her. It is unfortunate that I did not catch this in the situation, and therefore did not ask how she could identify herself with something that was constantly contested. It plays into the intersection between being a transnational adoptee subject and being a racialized subject. Because Lea feels, and have been told, that as an transnational adoptee subject having grown up in what she defines as Danishness, she is Danish, but then as a racialized subject she is constantly being reminded that this is not how she is perceived in many situations. This is where the intimate relationship *does* create what Lea perceives as a 'safe space', because in the relationship to her adoptive parents she is confirmed in her subjectivation of herself as Danish. The intimate nature of the relationship creates a space where the colour of her skin is rendered unimportant in which the spoken word confirms her own desire to fit in with Danish whiteness.

We should note that Sine and Lea have different experiences of the intimate sphere. Whereas Lea experiences the intimate sphere as a place where she can be herself, a place where she is met as she is

and not based on her skin colour, Sine experiences the intimate sphere as a place where she is constantly veering between roles – one moment she *can* be met without regard to her racialized body, but another moment she is not. This unpredictability makes her regard the intimate sphere as unsafe. Does Sine and Lea then have different types of adoptive families? Is Lea's adoptive family merely closer, less prejudiced? One could speculate that this was the case, but an alternative interpretation might be that Lea and Sine simply have different perceptions of the racialized subjectivation taking place. Because even though Lea's adoptive family confirms that she is 'just like everybody else', this confirmation is also a brushing-off of her experience, and it does play into Goldberg (2006), Hervik (2001) and Fadel's (1999) view of the Danish concept of colour-blindness: Lea's adoptive family believes that her experiences are merely random, maybe provoked by something else, because racism does not exist in their white, Danish world-view.

Jens describes how his adoptive parents talked about adoption:

> "And on their part they've been very open about it. Like, they couldn't hide that I was adopted, so that part has been explained to me. But I can see now that a lot of their explanations are connected to the fact that they had certain ideas about how it was. Like, they know nothing about Korea. And they know nothing about, what can you say, that culture, the Asian something, anything. And in some way I think that was an advantage, I think, because then I've never thought of it as anything special"

Let us note that in Jens' view his adoptive parents' lack of explanation and lack of knowledge of his birth country is a positive thing, because then he can be seen as unexceptional. Jens describes colour-blindness as a positive feature, and it seems as though he fully subscribes to the narrative that race is unimportant. I will argue for an interpretation of Jens' remark as a desire for colour-blindness. He finds it positive that his being different is not something special; something, which his adoptive parents has downplayed or ignored, but he is not blind to the fact that he was transnationally adopted and thereby racialized.

Hübinette and Tigervall notice that the transnational adoptee subjects had a hard time:
"Acknowledging that you are teased because of your looks has been difficult for the adoptees to realise, because they did not want to acknowledge that their appearance is different" (65: Hubinette & Tigervall, 2008). This is what we can see at play in the abovementioned quotes. The transnational adoptee subjects - such as Lea and Jens - struggle with acknowledging their non-white appearance, even when describing incidents they unambiguously connect with racialization or racism. They therefore find comfort in their adoptive parents' reassuring confirmation of their alleged normalcy,

even though they might not, as Lea puts it, fully believe in this. Similarly, we find this point being made by Myong:

> "Myong illustrates how racial differences within families are deliberately ignored or consistently verbalised as not important. She argues that there is an idealised 'Danish we', in which intimate members of 'the Danish family' – for instance adopted children of colour – are verbalised and positioned as part of the 'white we', and in which white family members insist that their racially non-white children are exactly the same as their racially white children. Personal experience of race as an important category and marker of difference are ignored or subordinated by the dominating ideal of sameness" (107: Andreassen & Vitus, 2015)

This is to a large degree what we see happening with the informants in this thesis. Their recurrent experience of being racially subjectivated is consistently downplayed to make room for an idea of idealized, alleged likeness. In the quotes presented I have argued that adoptive parents, partners and friends, try to downplay, minimize, or individualize the experiences of the transnational adoptee subjects as a way to subjectivate them as properly Danish.

5.2.4 Two Prevalent Strategies of Naturalization: Repetition and Silencing

In the following paragraphs, I am going to describe two prevalent strategies to naturalize, or normalize, racialization: firstly, repetition as a mode of suppressing racialized experience and secondly, silencing and excluding differences from the discursive field.

5.2.4.1 Repetition

In all of the interviews, I observed an attempted normalization of racialized experiences in one way or another. One might argue that this is a predetermined circumstance of the informants' life experience as racialized subjects. The racialized subject has never experienced, and can never experience, how it is to be a non-racialized subject, so obviously the racialized experience is the normal experience for the racialized subject. However, as I subscribe to a poststructuralist understanding of discourse and life-worlds, I argue that bringing forth and questioning the normalized is essential to unravel how constructions impact subjects. Jiyeon tells us:

> "Well I think it was like, it was like 'yes, of course we were Danish, but we were also Danish and have our origin somewhere else, and that was like a natural part of it, but it wasn't like those two things were incompatible, it was just a part of the same...It was just a natural story, just like being born at Rigshospitalet [Danish hospital], and then we came with the airplane. We had a short existence before we came to Denmark, but of course, when you've lived the majority of your life in Denmark, then that place is your place. Or, your belonging lies there. But I don't know, we haven't talked about becoming Danish..."

Jiyeon's identity as 'Danish with a different origin' was a natural part of her life. It was considered unproblematic and normal. Here we see a very similar dilemma to the one Myong pointed out in the case of her informant Thomas: That the obviousness of the subjectivation process, of the *making* Danish, is difficult to pinpoint *exactly* because of its sheer obviousness (13: Myong, 2010). Jiyeon feels Danish, but she and her adoptive parents never verbalized exactly how Jiyeon as a subject became Danish, it is simply something she is. This identity, however, is established by repetition, or as Butler would call it, a reiterative practice of simply stating that she is indeed Danish. It almost becomes a never-ending circulus vitiosus: I am Danish because I am repeatedly told that I am Danish. Jiyeon points out how she is Danish with a different origin, but in the interview Jiyeon would additionally mention that when out walking with her adoptive parents or her white boyfriend or white friends she would stand out, because she was with someone Danish. In these various situations, Jiyeon implicitly points to herself as someone projecting non-Danishness, because people would question her relationship to her intimate relations, as they were obviously Danish qua their whiteness. This is a way of implicitly equating being Danish with whiteness. Her friends, boyfriend and adoptive parents are considered Danish inasmuch as they are white.

Based on this, we may unlock some of the reiterative dilemmas we found when Jiyeon had to make explicit how she became Danish. To the extent that we regard being Danish as equivalent to whiteness, Jiyeon will never be able to become fully Danish because she cannot become white. She will always be a racialized subject, and whiteness will never be something she inhabits. Therefore, her adoptive parents cannot invent a way to make her Danish as such and find themselves limited to the reiterative practice of repeating 'you are indeed Danish' over and over again as an attempt to make it tangible and true through an infinitely repeated verbalization.

5.2.4.2 Silencing

A different mode of naturalization occurs through silencing. This is a way of maintaining closeness by creating a narrative of likeness, thereby ignoring or refusing to acknowledge racial difference.
Lea points out: "My partners in general are always surprised and shocked as to what you experience as an Asian woman in Denmark, because they of course haven't thought about it". Minji confirms this:

> "Most boyfriends have been like 'What is this? How can they talk to you in this way? Why do they say these things?' and have been pretty shocked by e.g. their being asked what my name is and where I am from, even though I am standing right next to them"

I claim that what is operative here is that the colour-blindness of the various partners are challenged by the intimacy with a racialized partner. This is an uncomfortable and disturbing experience, and it brings forward the need to verbalize the tacit 'just like everyone else'-narrative, because in the intimate relation frictionless likeness is desired. For instance: "The colour-blindness that Myong points out is fostered by Ahmed's points about proximity; it is the proximity in intimate relations (i.e. the intimate transracial relations exemplified in transracial adoption or interracial marriage) that legitimises and maintains sameness as a dominant narrative" (107: Andreassen & Vitus, 2015).
Andreassen and Vitus combine Myong's points concerning colour-blindness with Ahmed's claim in regard to proximity and thereby argue that the intimacy of the relationship is what legitimizes and maintains likeness as a dominant narrative. Hence, we may understand the need for likeness as a need for intimacy in the relationship. As if the experience of difference creates a distance that is considered problematical. Minji describes talking about her experiences with her ex-boyfriend:

> "With my boyfriend at the time, the father of my children, I had a hard time discussing racism, we almost never... we actually never discussed it. And he got annoyed when I brought it up, because he thought it was awkward to talk about. He didn't see colour, and he thought it was really weird when I began talking about racism"

Minji's boyfriend found the conversation uncomfortable and got annoyed. Minji says 'he didn't see colour' and apparently her experiences disturbed this worldview, this idea of equality (e.g. likeness), cf. Fadel (1999).

I have argued that racialization is produced through discourses, but what is produced when someone refuses to talk about something? Nothing? Not necessarily. Within the perspective of a Foucauldian discursive analysis, we learn that the unspoken, the things linguistically excluded, are very telling[25]. Language creates power relations, but these relations are additionally created in and through what is excluded and silenced. To the extent that Minji's boyfriend refused to talk about racial experiences, he paradoxically contributed to racializing Minji[26]. This experience seems to be one of the more 'extreme' in regard to colour-blindness, but all the informants have experienced it and several informants saw it as something positive, as a symptom of anti-racism. Minji's conflicting experiences

[25] See paragraph 4.2.1
[26] A possible, adjunct aspect of this is that people are racialized through language, but it is also through language that you can verbalize these experiences and thereby combat the practices oppressing you. If language both racializes you and makes it impossible for you to verbalize the racialization, you have no way of competing against it – you are caught in a total mode of paralysis; a discursive catch-22. This related to different modes of resistance, which is a topic too broad for this thesis to include

even engender annoyance, because they disturb the boyfriend's perception of Danishness as anti-racist.

This, I would argue, is at stake in all of the informants' lives and experiences: their adoptive parents, partners and friends consistently downplay their experiences, individualize them or even deny them in order to maintain closeness through likeness and this way maintains the status quo of colour-blindness. The reiterative practice of 'you're just as Danish as anyone else', notwithstanding the benign intentions, is a discursive expression that amplifies a neglect of the transnational adoptee subject's experience of racialization.

5.3 Part 2: The Individualization of Responsibility

I will now proceed to argue that structural, general and public racialization is in many cases turned into a matter of individual and private feelings. Hence, unpleasant instances of racialization might be brushed off as a matter of the transnational adoptee subject feeling insecure or perhaps as him or her having misunderstood what took place. In this manner, responsibility for racialization is turned into a private matter, a matter of self-agency, much rather than a public and collective issue that needs to be dealt with.

5.3.1 Internalization and Insecurity

What most of the informants expressed was insecurity towards what could be accepted as being racialization, or even what would be accepted as racism. One of the first things I asked was whether they had had any immediate ideas about of racism? Jens said that it would have to be a big deal, something very serious for him to use the word racism:

> "Jens: I would say, it should be pretty serious, or really... if I were to call it racism. It's not something I myself... if I use that word, that something is racist, then I think, personally, it would be someone who really crossed a line...
> I: A big thing?
> Jens: Yes, exactly. The times where someone says 'nihao' to me on the street, well, I can feel that it is annoying, I feel that way sometimes, but a bit... yes, okay. It's not something I immediately would understand as racist. It's typically young people walking in groups, and they might as well be saying something else, but it's attached to how they see us [him and his racialized girlfriend], how they experience us in a very fickle moment. But I think... it's more when... then it's more if I read something, where there can be some radicalizing trends, but not something...
> I: not something personal?
> Jens: Not what I would categorize as racist, but it is possible, when we've talked it over, that I will think 'I wonder if my own definition and experience of it...'"

It is evident that Jens expresses doubt both towards his own definition and his own experiences. Not only does he not trust how he defines racism, he does not trust the experiences he has had[27].

It is central to the experience of transnational adoptee subjects that they are mostly raised with a reiterated narrative of their not being different, of their being completely like everyone else, while simultaneously experiencing that they are not completely like everyone else (11, 19, 39, 73-89: Myong, 2010, 43, 47, 54, 67: Hübinette & Tigervall, 2008). Lea expresses how, when she tried talking to her adoptive parents about the racializing experiences she had had, they told her she was like everyone else: "I've also experienced those situations [the racializing ones] which I've talked with my parents about and then they've been very 'But Lea, you're just as Danish as they are'". Minji, when asked how she talked about being Danish with her adoptive parents, answered: "I was like everyone else" and: "They've never ascribed any meaning to the fact that I was different".

What we observe here is something very interesting. In the case of Lea, she herself brings up situations that she found racializing, and is told implicitly that they are not, since she is 'just as Danish as they are'. When Lea told me about this, it was not mentioned in a negative way but was given as a good example of how to properly respond to her experiences. Because, she stressed, what was uncomfortable was being pointed out as different: "Because it is very often that, which bothers you, when you're pointed out as different. It bothers you, because you feel very Danish". Lea wishes to subjectivate or position herself as Danish, and she is uncomfortable with someone pointing to her racialized body, pointing out her racialization as such. For Lea, the verbalization her adoptive parents present her with is well received, because it subjectivates her as she wishes to be subjectivated: The painful experience of being racialized is weakened by way of her adoptive parents' reiterated reassurance.

5.3.2 The Responsibility of the Racialized Subject

When asked about her feeling racially different, Jiyeon compares herself with her little sister who is also adopted from South Korea. The issue has to do with complexes about her physical height:

> "My little sister is very small, and for her it hasn't been the part about being adopted that's been important, but the fact that she is small has been an extremely sensitive issue. So in that way it's been a really nice... I've been able to see that for me, this [being a racialized adoptee]

[27] Let us note that we can all distrust our own experiences, especially in a setting such as the research interview, where the informants might feel they are sitting before an expert, someone who they feel can confidently define and categorize when something is racist and the opposite

> has been the issue, but for her something else was the issue. In that way, I could see that everyone has some kind of complex about their looks"

In this instance, Jiyeon juxtaposes her specific complex about being a racialized transnational adoptee subject to the fact that everyone has complexes about something. Jiyeon told it was her adoptive parents who focused on the fact that everyone has issues regarding their looks, and I will interpret it as a trivialization of her own experiences: That the racialization might as well have been something else or indeed nothing at all. Once again, colour-blindness is at work: The adoptive family wishes to minimize the problems stemming from Jiyeon being racialized. I argue that this reflects a wish to downplay the fact that they are a transracial family, because transraciality itself points to a lack in the family-relation, a lack of likeness, which cannot be rectified or remedied as such. In connection to this Jiyeon says something interesting when asked about how her white boyfriend deals with a racialized experience [someone using racist slur against her at a nightclub] she had:

> "I: Did you feel that he understood you, when you talked about it?
> Jiyeon: Yes. I think so... Yes, I feel like he did... based on how much he can understand it. But he was also very 'it can happen, yes, and such and such', but I also think that he was very focused on 'what can you do, to make it easier on yourself?' 'You can't change what others do, but what can you do yourself?' So. Put it on my plate a lot, like 'what can you do, to make it feel less difficult'. So yes... He could understand it, but he was also very 'what do you do then?' Where I felt, 'well it's kind of difficult, it's a structural problem that I experience...' But on the other hand, I could see how I cannot control what other people do, but it's more about finding a way to handle it"

Initially, Jiyeon senses the racialization happening to her and she does not blame herself. Nonetheless however, she finds herself without options on how to manage it in the situation and therefore turns the experience inwards as a solution. The pseudo-solution being to simply modify her own reaction to the racializing incident.

In regard to Jiyeon's racialization, the seeming solution becomes to effect a change within herself – not to work for any outward change in terms of e.g. political and legal modes of dealing with hate crimes, bullying, etc. Both her adoptive parents and her boyfriend try to change her outlook on her feelings and experiences instead of engaging in a talk about the legitimacy of the feelings or how to handle racializing experiences.

I am not proposing that this would be a preferable way to deal with the experience, I am simply pointing out what seems to be the case: That Jiyeon as a racialized subject seems to experience her adoptive family and intimate relationships trying to downplay her experiences and offering this as a coping mechanism. This can or cannot be deemed a good coping mechanism but the interesting part

is how intimate relations immediately and spontaneously respond to a racialized experience. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, they downplay the reality of what Jiyeon experiences or even attempt to make the experience disappear. Not one of them brings up or mentions the fact that this is about race. The adoptive parents try to dissolve the feeling of being a racialized outsider into a far more vague and general feeling of not belonging or feeling out of place. Whereas the boyfriend immediately tries to come up with a solution – not to the problem itself but with Jiyeon's way of coping with it.

We should note that in conversations about racialized experiences the words 'race', 'racism' or even 'ethnicity' or 'culture' is not brought up and this absence is quite striking. Colour-blindness dominates the conversation, even though the conversation is quite obviously about colour. I propose that the reactions to Jiyeon's racialization are based on the understanding of equality that Fadel brings up; white people tend to understand Denmark as a country based on equality and anti-racism and therefore the racialized experience must be neutralized (Fadel, 1999). In addition, it is an effort to create likeness within the transracial family as the racialization is reduced to a trivial occurrence that might befall everyone within the family.

My hypothesis is that the focus amongst family and partners is not on racialization, which is systematically silenced but instead on self-agency. Sine describes how: "In most cases I can just shrug my shoulders, but there is a period in one's life where you find those things more unpleasant than others and where it bothers you more". Here we witness how Sine does not point out the general unpleasantness of being singled out as different, of being racialized, but instead how the incidents has to do with herself and her mood on a specific day or period. According to Sine's statement then, the problem is not the racialization in itself but rather the time and place of the incident and Sine's own feelings towards the experience.

Lea expresses how the feeling of never being acknowledged has affected her today:

> "The feeling of being discriminated was never acknowledged. It was always brushed aside. For example, I remember if I said 'well him and her does this and that' then I was told, that I probably just misunderstood it. It was constantly evaded. It was never talked about, and my experience was never acknowledged (...) and it's probably the reason why today, I am very sensitive towards getting my feelings acknowledged"

As with Sine above, Lea's parents tried to downplay her experience, because it broke with their attempts at a normalization of the transracial, adoptive family. But Lea differs from Sine in that it has

affected her today in a very negative way. Lea's parents did not succeed in creating more likeness by trying to normalize the experiences but instead installed a sensitivity towards acknowledgment in Lea. Had Lea been validated in her experiences, it would also have meant acknowledging that their adoptive family faced challenges other families did not: That they were not simply a regular, Danish family but a transracial family dealing with issues that other, only-white families were unconcerned with. Lea told me this, when I asked her further:

> "I made a big del out of being Danish, feeling Danish, eating Danish and singing Danish songs, haha. All those things. And it was never, my racialization was never verbalized. Other than the times I came home and was sad because someone had called me a slant-eye or spat on me, and then I was told that 1: It was an individual act, 2: It was due to stupidity or ignorance or 3: They didn't mean it that way. So if I thought of it as racist, it wasn't meant in a racist way. This meant that my feelings were ignored, because I had to embed myself in Danishness, meaning whiteness"

Lea is very explicit, and it shows that she is very conscious in regard to racialization and whiteness in general. This supports our reading that the lack of validation is due to a wish for normalization, a wish for a Danishness, in which racialized experiences do not belong. I will argue that the adoptive parents' efforts to categorize the racialized experiences which Jiyeon has with other experiences can be seen in the same light, namely as an effort to create likeness. The concept of likeness is central in the transracial family, and Myong has argued that personal experiences of racialization has been ignored or subordinated due to an ideal of likeness (146: Myong, 2010).

5.4 Part 3: Two Discursive Modes of Dealing with Racial Differences

I will now present what I have categorized as two modes of discourse concerning the ways in which transnational adoptee subjects and their intimate relations describe the racial difference of transnational adoptee subjects: the either-or and the both-and.

5.4.1 Either-or

An important aspect that many of the informants describe is a double-articulation, whereby people close to you confirm that they have never thought of you as different, but exactly by verbalizing this they point to the fact that the transnational adoptee subject is in fact perceived as different. Minji recount what her in-laws have said in regard to her looks:

> "It's always been something where I've been complimented on how well integrated I am. And they have underlined many times that I was no different than anyone else. That I was the same as everyone else. Which for me is the same as saying: Yes, I've noticed you are different"

In this instance, there are two slightly different effects in play. Firstly, it is necessary to mobilize the point made by Foucault, that the very manifestation of the utterance in and of itself produces a given

effect: here, racialization. Had Minji been a so-called normal, white person the in-laws would never have brought up the difference in the first place and the statement would not have been made. This, I will argue, relies on a basic, most often implicit and silent presumption of either-or: You are either Danish or racialized. By pointing out that the transnational adoptee subject is 'as everyone else', the effort is to subjectivate the transnational adoptee subject as Danish as opposed to someone 'different'. Secondly, the concept of belonging becomes pressing: I argue that the in-laws feel a need to point out that the belonging exists, that the likeness exists, as a way to make the transnational adoptee subject feel included. Paradoxically the effect becomes the opposite – Minji feels singled out.
In both cases there is an implicit anxiety that the transnational adoptee subject herself will feel different or will suffer from a feeling of not properly belonging but the attempts to remedy this only produces these exact feelings.

I asked Lea about her friends growing up, if she ever thought about them as white? She did not: "I: It wasn't something you thought about at all? Lea: No, and later on I've had it confirmed that my friends did not think of me as different". What I should have asked about is how the non-difference was confirmed? We might think that in order for Lea's friends to claim that they never thought of her as different, they would have to verbalize this in the same way as Minji's in-laws, which is a way of obliquely pointing to the difference.

It is highly unlikely that we would hear a white person utter the sentence 'my friends have confirmed that they never thought of me as different', because exactly by virtue of saying that a sense of difference is being articulated. If there was no difference at all why point that out? We do not usually comment on something non-existent, saying, for example, to a white, heterosexual, able-bodied, cis male that 'I've never thought of you as different'. This, simply because we *have never* thought of that person as different and would not bring up a non-existent thought. Pointing to the transnational adoptee subject's race as being unnoticed is a way of noticing it, of repeatedly creating it, through an attempt to deny its very existence.

5.4.2 Both-and

At this point we need to distinguish between attempts to remedy a perceived lack of racial similarity as opposed to discursive manoeuvres seeking to portray racial difference as a 'positive' and unique feature. Whereas some transracial adoptive families silently subscribe to the either-or model (you are

either white or non-white) and then attempt to erase or ignore this racial difference, some other adoptive families aim to celebrate and emphasize the duality of belonging and being racially different, i.e. to think of it as plenitude rather than lack. Most adoptive families waiver between the first and the latter model, but for analytical reasons it is important that we distinguish between them.

One informant, Sine, describes it this way:

> "I was just supposed to be Sine, who was adopted from Korea. That was the way I was supposed to be. And then I was of course a part of my mother's family, a part of a Danish family, but it wasn't a condition that I had to see myself as white, or that you couldn't talk about that it was different for me than it was for other children. It was just a natural part of life"

Sine's adoptive mother verbalizes her as being an adoptee subject, a part of a Danish family but not white. In this way, Sine's adoptive mother tries to create a different category of transnational adoptee subject – a category which is not based on any lack; of whiteness, of likeness, of experience but one that is something different, something unique and positive and this Sine responds to quite well. On this reading, Sine is not lacking something to be a 'complete' daughter, but already is a 'complete' daughter, indeed an enriched subject so to speak, being not only a Danish subject, but as well a transnational subject. In a similar vein, Jens tells me how he was special but in a positive way:

> "Jens: I know from my childhood that when I was younger, I was the special one, but in a positive way. Or, how to put it... All small children are like a magnet to older people, and I was as well. And I don't know, I think maybe because an adoptive child was a relatively new phenomenon, a lot of people were curious in some way or another. Especially those who saw 'wow, he looks like a human being'. And I remember many times when, when I was very young, and we're in a public sphere, in the city, where strangers came over and talked and touched, because it is... it is... I don't know what they thought, but it's always been in that way. I can't remember, and I don't think that there have been any negative experiences.
> I: So you and your parents, you've just... or not 'just', but... it didn't bother you that people came over and asked about you?
> Jens: But that was how it was.
> I: How it was?
> Jens: Yeah, well. It wasn't like 'stay away'. I think my parents might have been a bit overwhelmed to begin with, but you're also proud, yeah? Like if you have, I know from myself that if you have small children, and you see other people liking them, you're like 'yes, that's right. That is the biggest treasure of the world, right there'. And that's... that's what my parents experienced when things like these happened"

First of all, it is important to notice how Jens points to the experience that some people might have been surprised by the fact that he looked like a human being. As if other people, by implication white people, would expect that a racialized child was something other than a human being? Curious as well, is Jens' own use of the word 'looked like', as if his child self was not actually a human being but simply looked like a human being. Furthermore, this experience is not negative for Jens, but something positive that he associates with admiration. Even when people touched him – a gesture

some might interpret as a form of physical racialization; that they need to feel with their own hands, that he is 'like a human being' before being convinced by it – Jens compares this with ordinary admiration for a child, and recalls how his adoptive parents were proud of the racialized attention he got. It could seem as though Jens has imbibed this positive perception of the experience from his adoptive parents and now thinks of the experience as something exclusively positive. Even though in his own verbalization of the incident it is a racializing experience that casts him as being non-human, and it connotes an almost zoo-like setting where strangers need to touch him in order to validate his existence and humanity. For Jens the attention becomes something positive added to his subjectivation as a son – he is not only a cute baby: He is a cute baby in a special way, a more unique way than all the white babies.

It might seem that the both-and approach is a more positive approach, but this is not the point. What is important to notice is how both Sine's and Jens' experience constitutes a normalization of racialization. Sine rationalizes the racialized subjectivation in general and turns it into merely a natural part of life. Jens relates his experience to that of 'all small children' and 'all parents' – a normalization of it. This normalization of being a transnational adoptee subject is quite common in all of the interviews. With both of them there exists a normalization of this racialization. Whether or not the narrative is deemed positive, it is a racialization that becomes hidden.

I have now described the problems relating to well-intentioned but problematical attempts to address racial difference and uncovered two discursive modes of these intentions. Either the urge to say 'you're not any different', by way of compensating for a lack of likeness, or an attempt to highlight and celebrate racial difference as a cosmopolitan surplus 'you're both Danish and transnational'. In both instances benign intentions discursively produce unintended results, namely problematical modes of engaging with racial difference.

5.5 Summary Remarks

We have now uncovered two dominant ways in which normalization takes place in racialized discourse. It is time to conclude this analytical section. First, I will summarize all points and conclusions and second, I will touch upon the complexity of a premise underlying all interviews, namely the need to scrutinize and verbalize the ways in which racialization occurs in intimate relations.

This analytical section has been organized in three parts. Firstly, I tackled the necessity of recognizing that there is in fact a problem: Transnational adoptee subjects in Denmark have not grown up in a non-racial setting. Instead, even in the midst of families and intimate relations, they have had to engage with the narratives of likeness, colour-blindness and whiteness. Secondly, I then proceeded to uncover and describe the ways in which all responsibility for racialization was systematically turned into a matter of private self-agency: 'So there is no problem, and to the extent that there are problems it is your own responsibility to deal with it, *and* we all deal with the same problems anyways'. Thirdly, I described two discursive modes of perceiving the category of transnational adoptee subjects: Either by way of an either-or mode, i.e. trying to gloss over or compensate for a perceived binary difference based on an implicit distinction between 'us' and 'them'. Or else, setting up a both-and discourse, whereby transnational adoptee subjects are viewed as being Danish + adoptee, hence as carrying a positive, extra attribute. I argue that both modes generate specific discursive techniques, but that they both engender racialization.

5.6 Lastly: The Complicated Thing about Intimate Relations

A prevalent feature of the interviews that I have not explicitly mentioned yet concerns the difficulty of getting the informants to talk about their intimate relationships in the first place. The call for informants very specifically stated that the thesis would revolve around intimate relationships. When I began the interviews I stated this and most of the questions in the interviews had to do with intimate relationships. Still it was as though all the informants very quickly moved from the intimate relationships to their general experiences. Furthermore, few of the informants used words such as 'race', 'racism' and 'white', even though these were the words used. Instead they took to words such as 'Danish', 'discrimination' or 'ethnicity', when describing experiences that had to do with race, racism or whiteness.

Hübinette and Tigervall also noticed this in their research: "Generally it turned out that the adoptees found it very difficult to talk about the fact that they were not white and experienced discrimination even when talking to intimate partners, parents, etc." (34: Hübinette & Tigervall, 2008).

In my interviews, I would ask about verbalizations or experiences of race in intimate relations and the most general and immediate reaction would be to downplay and/or generalize the painful or awkward situation. There seemed to be something very uncomfortable in the implication that someone close to

you would participate in something that hurts you. The racialized subject needs a sense of comfort and trust in any intimate relation, a safe-space. But this does not seem to be fully available to them, as techniques of rationalizing, excusing, silencing and internalizing of experiences take place. What the informants describe and what becomes readily apparent in the analysis above is that they cannot create a space free from the racialized subjectivation that permeate their discursive life-world. An exception was the informant with a racialized partner. She describes how:

> "When we are on vacation in the US, visiting my partner's family, or sister, and she's married to a Vietnamese guy, then their children are such a lovely mix. And when we're out together, then we simply look like a big, Asian family. And that is something, it's not like it's... it's something I think about, understood as a comfort: I feel comfortable. And sometimes I've thought about: What if I looked like my adoptive parents? Understood as; what if I looked Caucasian, meaning a Dane, how would I experience it? The consciousness as to how I look when I'm alone, when I'm with my partner, when I'm with his parents, when we're with my parents; then we're suddenly two Asians and my parents, so... Yeah, there is something. Some kind of awareness to the fact that we look a certain way, and that we stand out"

Strikingly she feels a strong sense of comfort in the bosom of her partner's family, a sense of physical likeness and hence belonging that is not available to her in her own adoptive family.

Paradoxically, the intimacy of transnational adoptee subjects' relations would seem to preclude an ability to freely talk about the painful and awkward aspects of racialization within those relations. A central aim of my series of interviews has been to tackle and overcome this obstacle. In all the interviews a number of evasive manoeuvres took place most often the swerve from the individual and personal towards the general and the public. In and through this the transnational adoptee subjects themselves unwittingly helped reproduce the patterns of their own racialization, e.g. by way of repeating the narrative of colour-blindness.

I interpret this fact as a consequence of the schismatic nature of racialization in intimate relations: On one hand parents and partners are kind, loving and well-intentioned, on the other they unintentionally foster and produce painful or awkward forms of racialization. The informants all seemed to be on the brink of articulating this but then systematically evaded or ignored this insight. Hence a central aim of my analysis has been to make visible this phenomenon and to uncover the discursive strategies and citational practices whereby what we might term 'intimate racialization' takes place.

6 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have worked towards enabling a more nuanced and knowledgeable understanding of the plight of transnational adoptee subjects in a contemporary Danish setting.

I have done this by way of first outlining the method used in setting up and conducting my five semi-structured and depersonalized interviews, along with my reflections concerning these. I then proceeded to describe my theoretical starting point, being a combination of Foucauldian discourse analysis, Butlerian constructivist performativity and the specific focus on subjectivation and racialization in the work of Søndergaard and Myong. This formed the backdrop for a detailed analytical engagement with the body of transcribed interviews.

My analytical approach aimed to uncover and describe oftentimes sensitive and elusive discursive articulations of being racialized in intimate relations. My analysis showed that the interviewees were consistently being racialized by being discreetly enlisted in dominant narratives of whiteness, Danishness, colour-blindness and likeness. Frequently, well-intentioned and kind adoptive family members and intimate partners thus foisted unpleasant and awkward forms of racialization onto these transnational adoptee subjects. Thus, the adoptive family itself was complicit in the construction and reproduction of discursive racialization, e.g. by way of an earnest desire to partake in the fiction of whiteness and colour-blindness. This left the transnational adoptee subjects in disturbing oscillation between positions they will never be fully able to inhabit: Either being completely Danish and white or being seen as utterly foreign outsiders. The transnational adoptee subjects tend to long for the first position and work to avoid the latter but in effect are left to hover between both positions. These mechanisms are seldom explicit and transparent, but most often come across in oblique and partly camouflaged ways. My analysis uncovered central aspects of this set of manoeuvres in order to be able to subsequently engage in a critical discussion of these discursive, reiterative practices and this form of racialization in a Danish setting.

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