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ARE YOU HER NANNY?

by

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M.A, SNTD Women's University, 2018

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication and Media Arts
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
May 2021

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

ARE YOU HER NANNY?

by

Ann Thomson

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

in the field of Professional Media and Media Management Studies

Approved by:

Dr. Walter Metz, Chair

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Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
March 29, 2021

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Ann Thomson, for the Master of Science degree in Mass Communication and Media Arts, presented on March 29, 2021, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: ARE YOU HER NANNY?

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Walter Metz

This project aims to share the experience of a South Korean immigrant woman in the United States in her journey of adopting a White embryo through the medium of a photographic essay. In doing so, the objective is to explore how the changing ethnoscape of the world and Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) is bringing the world together, the ways in which it has created a provision for an inversion of adoption norms simultaneously enabling mother-child bonding experiences from conception to childbirth, which is largely lacking in traditional methods of adoption. Although there are benefits and possibilities created via ART, any such collision between medicine and a complex society will create gray areas, difficult to foresee and theorize and even more difficult to negotiate as a subject living with their consequences. Questioning and addressing the benefits, disadvantages, and gray areas of embryo adoption is significant to understand the future of ART and its impact on an ever-changing society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A heartfelt thank you to Dr Walter Metz, who was paradoxically petrified and excited about this project. Thank you for the endless pep-talks, for pushing me to get out of my shell, and for what seemed like infinite reviews of this work. I would also like to thank Prof. Rowley for being the editor of Life magazine and for meticulously correcting the project along the way. I want to thank Sayaka Ikeda, Bruce Payne, Elizabeth Swartzendruber, Mini Mathew, everyone from Calvary Campus and 'WeFamily' for all their encouragement, friendship and support through every storm. Thank you to Ben Thomson, who knows how to uplift me when I am in complete despair. To my parents who loves me so relentlessly and never gave up on me. Thank you to the Philipose family, who welcomed me with love into their hearts and homes. I am infinitely thankful that I get to share my life with you. Thank you to Eunice, who opened up her story and her heart to be shared with the world. You are so beautiful, and your story is life changing. To God, who meets us in our barrenness.

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this work to Joel Philip Philipose. Eternally thankful for your friendship, you are strong as an anchor in the storm. Thank you for speaking words of peace and comfort into all of my chaos. I could not have done this without you, and I don't want to either. Thankful you are mine, and I am yours.

PREFACE

My wonder and shock at the adoption culture in the United States birthed the interest in the concept of adoption. I cannot deny that adoption is merely a concept to me but a lived reality for many. There is both beauty and pain in being lost and found. I have come to perceive adoptive parents that I have met as unpopular heroes who live out their lives making sacrifices and creating a bridge of love between them and their adopted children. It has been an incredible journey of trying to understand different perspectives and learning more about adoption. I still have a long way to go. I hope the reader experiences the same wonder.

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CHAPTER 1

ARE YOU HER NANNY?

I watch Eunice in wonder as she leans over the kitchen table, checking the consistency of the baby formula while stirring the refrigerated breast milk little by little into the baby bottle, simultaneously blending a green smoothie, pouring it over to the brim of about 4-5 massive mason jars, clearly prepping for the upcoming sleepless days while stirring the cold dinner soup boiling at the stovetop. She asks me without making any eye-contact, “So, what do you want to ask?” as she moves what seems like a hundred little baby bottles back to their place with their missing caps. I sit at a distance, my favourite place and observe her movements that almost seems ballet-like, graceful, coordinated and in control. Through it all, her attention is fixed on her phone screen that leans on a kitchen container monitoring six-month-old baby Mercy sleeping peacefully in her crib upstairs merely for few minutes before she wakes up to realize her mother is not by her side. Eunice’s well-trained ears can hear Mercy’s cry through the whirring of a thousand blenders. Eunice runs upstairs to the nursery leaving an empty kitchen behind, mason jars with green smoothies, chopped veggies, baby bottles with formulas on the kitchen top, unwashed blenders, dishes in the sink, a boiling hot soup on the stovetop and me.

In early March 2020 when I met Eunice to have a catch up over a cup of coffee, I remember being both mesmerized and shocked when a gleaming Eunice, a 46- year- old single woman pregnant with baby Mercy, shared her embryo adoption journey. Growing up in Mumbai, I struggled to understand why adoption is such a stigma in my culture when there are approximately 29.6 million orphaned children in India¹. In India, the reluctance towards adoption is mainly due to the shame attached to public admittance of infertility. The preference is always toward bearing children with the genetic and hereditary makeup of the parents over adoption. One would imagine we would have inculcated an adoption culture through the Imperial

Britain, but a colonized India could not adopt an adoption culture from Imperial Britain as it remained an uncommon practice in England itself. In her work *A Child for Keeps: The History of Adoption in England 1918-1945* (2009), Jenny Keating extensively maps out the shifting policies and debates centered on nurture versus nature with regard to child adoption in England. Post-1945, child adoption became more of an “established way” of a family (195). Abortions were made legal in India through the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act in 1971. According to Guttmacher Institute's reports, approximately 15.6 million abortions occurred in India in 2015, 47 per 1000 women². According to UNICEF, approximately 25 million children are born annually³, Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) adoption statistics show that there were only 5,693 adoptions within the country in 2010, and it declined to approximately 3,276 adoptions in 2017-2018⁴. As compared to the US, according to reports by Guttmacher Institute approximately 862,000 abortions occurred in 2017⁵ and approx. 3.86 million children were born⁶, and according to Statista Research Department, approx. 123,450 children were waiting to be adopted in 2017⁷ while adoptions of 59,469 children occurred with public agency involvement⁸.

Stepping into the US and bumping into families with adopted children amplified my culture shock. I am in awe of the adoption culture in the West and hope my community will be more open-minded about adoption, but I cannot disregard the risk and sacrifices involved in adopting a child. It took me sometime to process what Eunice’s embryo adoption journey. My shock escalated when she mentioned that the baby will be White with blonde hair and blue eyes. I tried hard to visualize her future: A South Korean immigrant woman living in the Mid-West of the United States holding a White baby that is, in every sense of the word, hers.

Conversations with Eunice caused me to reflect on the ways in which commercialization of IVF occurs, and the ethical issues involved in the process. In vitro fertilization (IVF) as a

method of ART has become increasingly popular among women who have struggled with having children. The per cent of women using infertility facilities between the ages of 15 and 49 is about 12.7% in the US⁹. C.D.C recorded approx. 16,000 donor embryos out of the two million transfer of embryos between the years 2000 – 2016¹⁰. The number of embryo donations has increased from merely 334 in 2000 to 1,940 in 2016¹¹. According to Grand View Research, a platform for market intelligence that identifies trends and strategies, estimated the IVF market to be worth \$45 billion by 2025¹² in its ART market analysis report. Because of the low success rates of implantation, the enormous financial cost and the complicated retrieval process, the facility tends to create approx. 10-13 embryos in one cycle. The unused embryos are stored in cryopreservation for future use, discarded, or donated to other recipients. Commercialization occurred as IVF facilities offer packages that include multiple implantation cycles. If the parents are catering to the package IVF deals, the facility includes charges for a monthly or yearly storage fee. They can be stored for 10 years or more. The longest an embryo has been stored is for 30 years, and a frozen embryo can be thawed after 20 years and still be capable of producing a healthy baby¹³. One cycle cost a minimum of \$10,000.

The one positive element that stands out in embryo adoption is the possibility of bonding between the mother and the child. Eunice is very intentional about bonding with Mercy. Breastfeeding and co-bathing help in comforting and lowering Mercy's anxieties. Eunice has created systems to care for Mercy singlehandedly as a single mother when there is no one around to help with everyday tasks. One of the systems is specifically for co-bathing, an essential practice for mothers and babies that lower stress hormones and encourages better sleep. The system includes Eunice placing Mercy in a bath chair securely within the tub. After doing so, she would slowly step into the bathtub for the purpose of co-bathing. The system helps her in avoiding any accidents caused by slipping. Eunice emphasizes the nutritional and nurturing

benefits of breastfeeding and prioritizes this method over formulas. Observing Eunice's intentionality in practicing methods that result in bonding raises the question of the ways in which bonding can look different and its beneficial roles in embryo adoption compared to traditional methods of adoption.

Although bonding is an ongoing process between the parents and child throughout their life, the first formative years prove to be foundational for psychological, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Traditional adoption methods and foster care systems do not allow the adoptive parents to access the first few years or months of the adoptee. Thus, it is difficult to reshape or undo what has been already learned by the adoptee. Especially in the case of foster care, the adoptee arrives with their own experiences and cultural differences, and it becomes a struggle for adoptive parents to introduce the adoptees to their home culture. The battle is intense if the adoptee has experienced traumatic events before they arrive under the adoptive parents' shelter. The adoptee may successfully or unsuccessfully try to adjust to the culture of the foster parents and families. However, adopting a newborn permits the adoptive parents to be more in control, thus allowing them to shape the child's learning and development process from their formative years. However, either form of adoption lacks the bonding experiences between the mother and the child. Specifically, in terms of breastfeeding and bonding developed between the mother and the baby in the womb.

In "Maternal-Fetal Attachment and Engagement with Antenatal Advice" (2012), Emily Rose, through her study on the impact of healthy behaviors by pregnant mothers on the child before and after birth demonstrates that the bonding experiences begin from the fetal stage itself. The behavior and dynamic changes made in the mother's lifestyle to prepare for childbirth contribute to the bonding process. This is particularly reflective in Eunice's life as she prepares her body and continues a healthy diet not just for Mercy but also for her subsequent pregnancy

via embryo adoption. The fact that Eunice is eagerly waiting for her next pregnancy reflects her emotional attachment to Mercy's brother, who is held in cryopreservation presently. Even without being in the position of being pregnant, the active everyday choice she makes creates an intangible attachment to the embryo.

Experiencing the fetal movements within the womb and watching the fetus while using ultrasound technology heightens the emotional attachment to the child, which keeps progressing until childbirth. The maternal-infant synchronous relationship begins during the pregnancy from the mother's awareness of the child's movements within her womb. The mother senses and pays keen attention to the baby's various movements within the womb, enhancing the experience of pregnancy and attachment with the baby. Finding a name and preparing a room for the baby reflects a deep emotional attachment forming with the fetus. The role of oxytocin in the lactation and birthing process contributes to increased trust, attachment and decreases anxiety. The kangaroo method of holding the baby to the mother's chest (skin to skin), gazing, touching and holding plays a tremendous role in the attachment process (Feldman, Gordon, Zagoory -Sharon 2011). Surrogate parental figures can experience some aspects of the bonding experiences post-childbirth. However, it is only through embryo adoption that an adoptive mother can experience these bonding processes from conception to childbirth.

In *The Primal Wound* (1993), Nancy Verrier, by studying her own experiences with her adopted daughter and conversations with adoptees who searched for the birthmothers they never met, realizes there is a common factor between most adoptees. She calls it the primal wound, "a wound which is physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual..." (16). The primal wound is a wound caused when the ties between the child and the biological/birthmother are severed, resulting in separation and abandonment. The primal wound marks the adoptee with a sense of loss and feelings of abandonment as an unhealthy consequence due to separation from the birth

mother. Embryo adoptees may not experience the primal wound through the impact of forced separation from the birth mother compared to adoptees resulting from traditional adoption methods. During the forty weeks in the womb, the maternal-fetal attachment's bonding process throughout the pregnancy solidifies. Hence, the separation between the child and the mother in a planned surrogacy setting can result in a primal wound.

The primal wound in adoptees can impact the child -turned adults' future relationship and attachment behaviors to their adoptive families, their future spouse, and their parental relationships. The consequences of primal wound align with John Bowlby's attachment theory. Bowlby in *Attachment and Loss* (1969) develops the attachment theory as he studies children who are emotionally disturbed, linking it to negative experiences of abandonment and loss as their ties with their birth mother is severed. The first few years of bonding is significant to lay a healthy foundation of attachment and trust between the child and the caregiver. If there is a lack of permanent caregiver, there is an anxiety of abandonment formed in the adoptees. According to Verrier, severing the ties between the birth mother and the child can cause a primal wound implicitly manifested through anxiety, depression, hostile or unhealthy behavior with others. Many adoptive parents keep the adoption a secret. Due to which adoptees are unable to process and heal from the primal wound, leading them to be more hyper-vigilant about possibilities of abandonment that is directly rooted in their first experience of abandonment through their separation from the birth mother. The gestation period is highly significant as the mother, and the child alone become sensitive and responsive to each other, creating a synchronous relationship where every other individual in the world is outside of that specific experience.

There is a difference between the birth mother and the primary caregiver. These two figures play a significantly different role in shaping the child's identity—most adoptees, regardless of the adoption method, desire to seek out specifically their birth mother. There is an

innate attachment formed, and even if the child is taken away, the baby remembers the smell, the touch and the bonding formed within and outside of the womb, and it is irreplaceable. *Lion* (2016), directed by Garth Davis, is a classic example of a 'primal wound' and the need for adoptees to search for their birth mother. The protagonist displaced from his home in India travels miles away with his Australian adoptive parents. The adoptee protagonist, who carries very few memories of his birth mother, finds his way back home to India using google earth. Psychologist Alexandra Lamont's work studies how babies remember melodies and music they heard from within the womb¹⁴. *The Prince of Egypt* (1998) portrays Lamont's finding where Moses walks away in anger and disbelief from his first meeting with Aaron and Miriam. He halts as he recognizes the song Miriam sings, and it sparks a memory in him. Moses's mother earlier in the film sings the same song as she places a baby Moses in a basket to save him from death. Moses' character is a classic example of the primal wound, its manifestation, and the gradual return to his people.

In embryo adoption, the primal wound does not occur, as the child is not separated from the birth mother and does not face the abandonment trauma. However, the primal wound could function differently as a sense of loss and abandonment through the displacement of the adoptee's conception and separation from the genetic parents. I suggest that the primal wound can occur through the displacement of the adoptee from conception itself. I would refer to it as a *conceptional wound*. When technology crosses the natural boundaries of reproductions where the child is displaced from its genetic parents, a consequence is eventually faced and needs to be processed by the child alone. The displacement of the child from conception itself reaps a wound. The embryo adoptee is placed in a womb it is not genetically related to in anyway. Although connected to the birth mother through the womb, the embryo still exists as a separate genetic entity altogether. Drawing on Merton's (1957) theory of manifest and latent function in a

social institution, I would like to explore the idea of a manifest umbilical cord and a latent umbilical cord. The manifest umbilical cord is the one shared between the mother and the fetus in the womb. It functions to nurture, develop, and play a significant influence over the child's identity. The latent umbilical cord is the one shared between the child and its genetic parents, and it functions as a significant influence over the heredity of the child. Both the manifest and latent function must work together pre-birth and post-birth to create a healthy psychological and physiological development in the child. Separating one from the other, whether it be pre-birth in the case of embryo adoption and post-birth in the case of surrogacy, traditional methods of adoption and surrogacy can lead to dysfunctions, primal and conceptional wounds. The embryo can be positioned as diasporic, cut off from the homeland and living in a host country/womb, set in limbo in the in-betweenness of both worlds.

Coined by psychologist H.J. Sants in 1964, "genealogical bewilderment" refers to the identity crisis faced by adoptees adopted through egg/sperm donation, fostered, through surrogacy or adoption. The genealogical bewilderment occurs in adoptees through their lack of knowledge or very little awareness of one or both their genetic parents. Healthy psychological development requires knowledge of both identity and heredity of the genetic parents. There is a need for genetic parents to be involved in a child's life for healthy psychological development. Thus, to avoid both the primal wound and the genetic bewilderment, the child needs a biological father and biological mother figures as permanent caregivers for healthy psychological development. That seems too utopian of an idea at this point.

The conceptional wound and the genetic bewilderment can be complicated for embryo adoptees. Embryo adoptees might even have their biological family and siblings that exists. Embryos made in a lab using gamete donors might go through genetic bewilderment and a complex conceptional wound. It might be even impossible for them to trace the anonymous egg

and the sperm donors who are unaware of the adoptee's existence and the biological other parent figures. Barn and Mansuri (2019) lists five important aspects of genealogical bewilderment in racialized intercountry adoption by using Sants' framework (1964). It includes motivation to search for birth family, belonging, identity, physical symmetry (body image, image mirror) and ancestral knowledge (14). An embryo adoptee placed with an interracial parent might struggle and face confusion on how to process the differences in appearances between them and the rest of the family. The ethnic differences between the adoptee and the caregiver could merely result in a surge in the identity crisis resulting in genetic bewilderment. It is too soon to predict what Mercy's relationship would look like with her South Korean uncles, aunts and cousins and the resulting identity crisis. The primal wound will not exist as Mercy is not separated from her birth mother, but the conceptional wound of being placed in a womb that she does not share her genes, hereditary and ancestry may manifest. The complexity of the paradox would be feelings of attachment toward her birth mother and the feelings of abandonment to the genetic parents.

Interracial adoption through any adoption method is challenging. The adoptee might feel doubly displaced with a double consciousness – initially coined by Du Bois in *Double-Consciousness and the Veil* (1903) and extensively used in diaspora studies to explain the dual/multiple facets of identities carried by the diasporic mind. African American studies played a significant role in understanding the complexity and dilemmas of double consciousness in diaspora studies. As DuBois writes, Mercy might experience "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (168) as she grows up to speak Korean, attending a Korean Language School with Korean grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Genetically born of White parents but birthed by a Korean mother will significantly impact the sense of belonging and identity, two of the five aspects of genealogical bewilderment mentioned earlier by Barn and Mansuri (2019). Her physical symmetry will stand in contrast to her mother. Interracial adoptees

carry a double consciousness and are well-aware of their hyphenated identities. The differences should neither be minimized nor exaggerated; neither should the adoptive parents forcefully pretend the differences to be invisible.

Interracial adoptive parents belonging to the majority are educated and encouraged to raise their adopted children belonging to the minority with healthy discussions and learning of racial/ethnic socialization (RES), a theoretical framework developed by Elizabeth Vonk in her work, *Cultural Competence for Transracial Adoptive Parents* (2001). Wherein Vonk emphasizes the importance for transracial adoptive parents to be culturally competent so that they may be able to develop a "particular set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills into the ability to meet their children's unique racial and cultural needs" (248). Similarly, interracial adoptive parents who belong to the minority should educate themselves in raising children belonging to the majority. So, they may develop a healthy cultural identity and is able to interact and socialize with others. As much as race is perceived to be a social construct, it primarily functions as a social division and method of categorization in our society today. Merely pretending to be color blind is erroneous. Instead, perceiving it as a lived reality and learning how to approach it healthily to tackle future challenges is beneficial.

Extensive literature and long -term research studies are available on interracial adoption, where the adoptive parents belong to the majority community, and the adoptee belongs to the minority. The switch in positions between Eunice and Mercy where the adoptive parent belongs to the minority and the adoptee belongs to the majority calls for long-term studies to understand the impact on identity, bonding methods, and development of healthy racial and ethnic identity. This does not apply merely to Eunice and Mercy's relationship, but to many more interracial families that would beat the adoption norms in US. The possibilities of bonding and attachment from conception to birth are possible due to embryo adoption, but that does not exempt the

adoptee from balancing his/her life in the hyphen. A bilingual Mercy with a Korean name and Korean mother is a signifier of the ever-changing complex society.

Eunice's decision to adopt Mercy receives a surprising array of both criticism and support from her friends and family. It took some time for Eunice's family in South Korea to engage with the baby emotionally. They did not know what to think about the White baby. Eunice began to forward pictures of Mercy after birth that resulted in an emotional engagement by Korean relatives. A South Korean mother raising her White American child stands out in the community, thus leading to Eunice receiving endless questions and strange glances wherever she goes. A lady once curiously asked Eunice, "Are you her nanny?" as she rocked baby Mercy. The curious questions and glances reveal the assumptions about adoptions and race. In the US, transnational adoption is familiar; it is not unusual to see White American families adopting children, especially from Asia. In 2019, the top five countries for transnational adoption include China (819), Ukraine (249), Columbia (244), India (241) and South Korea (166)¹⁵. The United States ranks highest for receiving international adoption. However, the rate of international adoption has been declining over the years because of changes in domestic laws of international countries. The international adoption rates in United States decreased by about 14% in the year 2018 and have declined¹⁶.

The question asked to Eunice recalls Robert Frank's picture from his photography book about the United States in the late Jim Crow era. In *The Americans* (1959), Frank includes a picture of an African American woman, a nanny holding a White child in Charleston, South Carolina¹⁷. The power disparity and inequality in the picture is unsettling for the African American nanny is trusted to care for the White baby but not trusted enough to share the restroom with. Raising questions and underlying beliefs as to who can be trusted to hold a White child. There is a sense of powerlessness in the case of the African American woman holding the

White child. Her position is predetermined. There is no escape from the contrasting image of Black and White in the image. There is no in-between, no space for doubt, curiosity or wonder. The African American nanny holds power in her hand. That is where the border lies for her; she can merely hold, gaze, and care, but the camera denies her access to agency or power.

W.T Lhamon in *Deliberate Speed: The Origins of A Cultural Style in the American 1950s* (2002) writes extensively about Frank's position as a photographer with his work in *The Americans*. Frank stood in a paradoxical but congenial position of both an outsider and an insider. In the position of being an outsider who did not interact with the seemingly close subjects in his photographs, and as an insider who witnessed the changing cultural landscape and structures. Frank does not explain the positioning of the subjects and leaves them anonymous for the viewer to interpret. He throws himself in the midst of the chaos of a shifting paradigm of the late 50s that is political, historical and cultural in every sense. Lhamon's examination of the transition in the 1950s where the walls between White and African Americans gradually came down brick by brick in addition to shifting into a post-industrial society birthed the complicated society. Similarly, Eunice and Mercy's relationship reflects the rapid transition occurring in the United Nations today. Similar to the shifting paradigm witnessed by Frank in the late 50s, the society is going through another transition where the walls built between White Americans and Immigrants is gradually being broken down brick by brick which would definitely result in a much a complex society in the upcoming decades.

The questions asked to Eunice reveal the underlying beliefs of the society concerning adoption and race. Unlike the African American woman, Eunice's position is undetermined, nor is it rendered either powerless or powerful; it just remains in an oscillating phase of doubt and curiosity for a community witnessing a new phenomenon. The curiosity and the perceived strangeness of Mercy and Eunice's relationship point to the preconceived notions and stereotypes

the society holds about adoption and race, and it is historical. However, these ideological positions are changing, albeit slowly, but changing, nevertheless. Because of the flow of immigrants from all over the world into the US, there is more diversity in addition to globalization, transforming the solid structures of the society into what Zygmunt Bauman (2013) would call 'liquid modernity'. But is it possible that everyone unknowingly mentally places themselves at a certain point of history as a linear timeline? For example, the lady who questioned Eunice's relationship to Mercy positions herself in solid modernity. She needs a clear demarcation so she may have a sense of order in society and the world. Therefore, she is unable to either receive or refuse to perceive the liquid modernity she is living in right now. Simultaneously, Eunice positions herself in liquid modernity, where she understands that this society is ever-changing and is extremely difficult to categorize anymore. It makes me wonder if the diasporic minds find it easier to position themselves in liquid modernity and make peace with it than non-diasporic individuals. As the diasporic individuals are well-aware, their hyphenated identities result from globalization compared to the non-diasporic individuals who find themselves wrestling with the diasporas who are in reality grappling with the idea of liquid modernity. Or it could also be possible that there is a continuous struggle between liquid modernity – meanings and ideas that possibly seep through our fingers and solid modernity – meaning and ideas that provide for immovable structures.

Eunice's motherhood is a signifier of liquid modernity. Arjun Appadurai's (1990) concept of the 'ethnoscape' charts a path for analyzing the possible cultural meanings of a South Korean woman adopting and giving birth to a White baby with the help of IVF. In *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy* (1990), Arjun Appadurai identifies five domains—ethnoscape, technoscape, mediascape, ideoscape and financescape—of global cultural flow in contemporary society. Appadurai (1990) specifically uses the suffix 'scape' to reflect the fluidity

and irregular forms of the landscape (297). The fluidity in all five domains is mainly a consequence of globalization. Goods and services are free flowing in and out of borders around the globe. Immigrants from the second world and third world countries have been rushing (or "flowing," in Appadurai's conception) in and out of first-world nations to pursue a better life and access to possibilities lacking in the immigrant's homeland. Ethnoscape refers to the movement of people, whether they are immigrants, tourists or exiles, who impact the politics and policies of the land. The ethnoscape includes the landscape of both people who move and the people who do not and is largely associated with the idea of deterritorialization in a shifting world. Appadurai (1991) emphasizes one of the consequences of deterritorialization as "the loosening of the bonds between people wealth, and territories fundamentally alters the basis of cultural reproduction" (193). Although deterritorialization as a consequence of shifting ethnoscape weakens the ties of the immigrants to the physical homeland, the immigrants as in the case of Eunice and the Korean community, is deterritorialized from their homeland but maintains their ties via cultural reproduction. The deterritorialized diasporic communities try to recreate their homeland in the host country, forming an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006). One of the conflicts within these imagined communities is the wrestle between culture heterogenization and homogenization. Culture homogenization mainly refers to the Americanization of the displaced communities. To counter the homogenization, the immigrant communities began to reterritorialize in their homeland. One of the key examples is creating Korean Language Schools, where first-generation Korean immigrants volunteer to teach the next generation. These schools exist wherever there is a large Korean community settled in the United States. As Eunice emphasizes, learning the language is key to understanding the culture and communicating with each other. It creates a sense of unity, belonging in the community, simultaneously maintaining ties with an imagined homeland through cultural reproduction.

In a shifting ethnoscape, how does a deterritorialized motherhood function, move and practice mothering? Reflecting on Eunice's mothering and home culture, her motherhood is an extension of her homeland's territories, creating, as Bhabha (1994) calls it, a 'third space'. This 'third space' is where Eunice chooses 'relative deterritorialization', which coincides with reterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977). In this third space, she reproduces both children and cultural practices rooted in the homeland while carefully integrating selective bits of the host culture. There is no purity of culture as it is impossible to do so in a globalized society. But it is the third space where both the American and Korean culture interacts with each other. In her third space, Eunice selectively and cautiously births a new culture with threads interweaving each other for the purpose of bringing two nations together. Reterritorialization occurs in the 'third space' by restructuring and reproducing a new culture where the transnational exchanges occur. The third space is not a space of hostility but a space for transnational powers to interact and make sense of each other. The 'third space' is similar to the 'liminal stage' (Turner 1969), marked by a transition in the rite of passage. In the liminal stage/third space, the old structures or solid modernity goes through a process of deconstructing, and liquid modernity with new ideas, meanings and structures are born.

Eunice's body, through reproduction itself, becomes a third space where two nations interact with each other. When two contrary entities interact with each other, there is a power disparity, for one will try to overpower the other. Reflecting on the image of Jacob wrestling with the angel, similarly when two nations wrestle with each other, one must adapt to the other for it to function meaningfully and be productive. In the case of Eunice's motherhood, Eunice has the maternal power to reproduce and recreate a new culture distinct on its own. Eunice's mothering and reproduction of both a child and distinct American Korean culture align with Nancy Chodorow's psychoanalytical analysis of the mother-daughter relationship in *The*

Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and Sociology of gender (1978). Chodorow emphasizes explicitly that the infant develops a sense of self through the mother-figure. The infant's psychological development and socialization is predominantly based on the understanding and internalization of the mother's behavior and representation. The infant perceives itself as one with the mother and gradually develops a sense of a separate self as she realizes she is not one with the mother. Applying this idea to Mercy's hyphenated identity, she will perceive herself as one with her mother's Korean American identity and consider Korea as her homeland solely based on her mother's experiences

. Eunice's 'third space' of reproduction functions as a space for reproducing a culturally and socially similar daughter who will identify as one with the Korean community. But there might be a time where she will digress from the infant years of oneness and perceive herself as a separate self to the point of being American - Korean. Chodorow interestingly makes use of Freud's psychoanalysis, who portrayed women as being stuck in their past. Utilizing Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* (1957), we could perceive Eunice as a diasporic identity who is melancholic over her separation from her motherland and mother. Freud considered melancholia as a persistent unconscious state, whereas mourning is a process of transformation. Eunice's reproduction of motherhood and culture is a way of creating a bridge between the loss of home and children. But in this process, Eunice is unknowingly preparing Mercy for a similar future reproduction of Korean culture and socialization.

Eunice and Mercy's relationship is diasporic in nature. As Roger Brubaker writes in *The 'Diaspora' Diaspora* (2005), there is "tension between boundary- maintenance and boundary erosion" (6). There is a selective process of both; boundary-maintenance – including preserving traditions, rituals and cultural and production simultaneously maintaining ties of the host country's dominant culture and boundary-erosion-including the resistance towards selective

cultural practices of both the homeland and the host country. A process of reterritorialization of motherhood occurs, emphasizing boundaries through the diasporic identity through the performances and practices of home culture. The diasporic identity stuck in a transnational space tends to utilize acculturation strategies. Acculturation strategy is fourfold, including assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. Assimilation strategies include altogether abandoning ethnic ties and assimilating to the dominant group. On the other hand, integration strategies include maintaining ties with their ethnic roots and the dominant groups; separation strategy includes breaking off relations with the dominant group. In the marginalization strategy, the individual cuts ties with both the cultural roots and the host society. Although Eunice

Although Eunice believes she is more American than Korean, she has assimilated to the dominant culture over the last two decades. From my perspective, Eunice practices the integration strategy of acculturation. She performs and lives her everyday lives firmly rooted in the Korean culture and simultaneously maintained her ties with the dominant culture. Erving Goffman (1956) writes explicitly about the presentation of self and role performance in interactions. Goffman emphasizes how every individual is a performer with a front stage and backstage. The diasporic identity wears many hats; transnational hats secretly carrying complex multiple identities, legacies, stories, historical burdens, languages, cultures all intertwined together, ever ready to perform a magic trick for the audience. The diasporic identity is a well-trained performer in shapeshifting and is fluid in its interactions. The audience sitting at a distance watching the masked diasporic performer on stage cannot perceive the alienation and the performer's wariness – the internal struggle 'to perform or not to perform'. Goffman (1956) specifies three key elements that impact the performance on the front stage – setting, appearance and manner. Eunice's performance as a diasporic identity depends upon the audience, and she shifts her identities back and forth from the frontstage to the backstage.

Aligning Goffman's (1956) performance theory and Cooley's (1902) 'looking-glass self' to Eunice's performance of her identity is wholly based on the audience's identity and how she perceives her appearance to the audience. If the audience is a room full of Americans – she performs her American identity on the front stage, and the Korean identity takes backstage. And suppose the audience is a room full of Koreans. In that case, she will code-switch and perform her Korean identity on the front stage and her American identity on backstage. Mercy will learn and follow similar performances of her mother. The performance of the identity plays a vital role for the purpose of preservation of the culture, reterritorialization, and resistance towards cultural homogenization. Because culture profoundly impacts the self's identity, culture preservation becomes equivalent to preserving the self. The performance and the protection of the Korean culture are primarily through the traditional practices, including eating-habits, languages and rituals that are ethnically rooted. The integration strategy works positively has the diasporic identity wants to hold on to the best of both worlds. As Turner (1969) would call the 'liminal stage' in the passage of rite, that is where the diasporic identity exists neither there nor here, stuck mid-stage. The diasporic identity is a theatrical stage, and the actors live in boundaries. The diasporic actor oversees the decision of who gets access to the performance, in what context, at what time and how it will be done. Through the Korean cultural transfer, Mercy holds a second-generation diasporic identity. She will grow up to be bilingual, part of a Korean Language School, and adopt the South Korean culture and traditions. The 'Baek-il', a Korean tradition celebration for the baby after 100 days of birth, served as Mercy's first public introduction to the recreation of Korean traditions and her first step to being an American – Korean. Mercy's introduction to 'Baek-il' as a traditional ritual for a child symbolizes a rite of initiation in a rite of passage (Turner 1969). She officially and publicly enters the Korean community, history, and legacy. They are introducing her into a brand-new social role or identity, which all breaks down

to performance. However, 'Baek-il' thrown by Eunice's American friends with sandwiches and salads marks the transformation of the traditional historical celebration with the legacy and memories of the Korean War into a globalized transnational space of interaction. Acculturation for the diasporic identity is mainly to integrate into the dominant culture. However, Mercy's identity and culturing direct us to a shift in acculturation. Wherein the non-diasporic, individuals belonging to the majority are acculturating themselves to the minority community. Similar to Lhamon's (2002) analysis of the cultural integration of African American and White culture. Mercy's diasporic identity could be the beginning of a change in acculturation patterns. The intensified, ever-changing ethnoscape could probably witness reverse acculturation wherein the majority would absorb the minority culture.

Eunice's motherhood results from the global cultural flow and marks the ethnoscape, but it would not have been possible without the development of ART which brings us to the flow of technoscape worldwide. Medical devices, equipment, surgical instruments, to breathing masks are imported and exported. The US imported approx. \$29 billion worth of medical equipment and heavily depends upon China for export. China provided for approx. 28% of those products, second to the European Union who provided 18% of the medical devices¹⁸. Shipping and exchanging these commodities are more fluid and more effortless with constant back and forth transportation between nations around the globe.

Even the development of information technology in the medical field is competitive. New types of equipment and software that are accurate, promising, portable, and efficient are always in the process of the invention to replace the old. IVF Courier transfers are available right now. The facility will ship the embryo, semen sample and eggs to your nearest IVF facility regardless of where you are in the world, from cryogenically frozen embryos to banked sperms to ovarian tissue. If English is not your first language and you cannot read the instructions on their websites,

do not worry about it! They will provide translation in multiple languages because they badly want you to have a baby and deeply care about your well-being as long as you pay for the postal service, which will cost you approx. \$2000 (taxes may or may not be included). It is hard to visualize thousands of embryos being exchanged or implanted across borders and trying to imagine a possible future where embryos are being packed in little Amazon boxes and delivered at an individual's doorsteps for home implantation. Although horrifying and dystopian in its form and thought, this world may not be that far away from such a possibility.

The shifting ethnoscape and technoscape advancement have given birth to fertility tourism, where individuals would travel from one nation to another to cater to IVF treatments. India and Israel are among the top countries that cater to fertility tourism, providing tourists with treatments for lower prices and better technologies¹⁹. In 2002, to promote medical tourism, the Indian government legalized commercial surrogacy and approx. twenty-five thousand children were born to adoptive parents; 50% of these parents were from the West. An industry left unregulated by the government with no explicit restrictions on how many children a surrogate can give birth to, and the age limitations caught human rights activists' eye. They perceived it as an exploitation of poor women who would provide access to their wombs in exchange for money. In 2016, the parliament passed the Surrogacy Regulation bill²⁰, and commercial surrogacy became illegal in 2019, allowing women to be surrogates for altruistic purposes. Israel has become a popular destination for fertility tourists because of thirty-five years of well-developed artificial reproductive technologies and higher success rates. Fertility tourism is reflective of the shifting financescapes where ART becomes a global medical business network where money travels in and out of borders in a fluid state via electronic money transfers. Consumers and stockholders have invested with different motive in this ever-growing baby-making industry. When an adoptive couple from a first world country decides to choose a

surrogate woman from India to give birth to their child, it is much cheaper as they convert dollars into rupees. They can easily sit in the West enjoy their life while their baby is growing inside the womb of a poor woman in Orrisa. The sole responsibility of the adoptive couple at this point is to transfer about \$300 monthly to her bank account without moving from their couch in their comfortable New York apartment. The fluidity occurring through the electronic transfer of capital around the globe gives the consumers a sense of freedom and choice. However, it results in the exploitation of women in second and third world countries.

Though there are benefits and possibilities created via ART, any such collision between medicine and a complex society will create grey areas, difficult to foresee and theorize, and even more difficult to negotiate as a subject living with their consequences. Gena Corea in her work *The Mother Machine: Reproductive Technologies: From Artificial Insemination to Artificial Wombs* (1985) lays out the horrifying history of the IVF industry from experimenting on animals to women. Embryo transfer began as an experiment on animals. Primarily cows, where the owners were in control of artificially sexing the embryo (reproduction of bulls or cows depending on the demand), twinning (reproduction of identical twins), freezing (so that the cattle owners can store up embryos and use them for implantation as soon as the cow's uterus recovers and fertile for the next implantation) (74 - 78). Because of the successful experimentation, the breeders could make more money by creating and selling the cattle born through embryo transfer. Eventually, the horrifying experiments began in women. The women who came up for testing were not fully aware of the experimentation result and the resultant consequence on their bodies. In the initial stages of unsuccessful attempts, they had to go through abortions and miscarriages. Corea (1985) raised questions about the whole system of IVF facility center that applies today too. She confronts the prenatal genetic diagnosis method "When babies are turned into consumer products, who oversees quality control? Who does decide which potential defects

the public should judge acceptable and which not? Will those searching for perfect babies begin first by socially outlawing major (though variable) birth defects like cerebral palsy and then, when we selected the principle of selection, move on to ever lesser defects such as asthma?" (93). The facility is not concerned about the mother or the child's health but more with their success rates. And success rates are defined by happy, satisfied consumers that will open doors for this industry to more consumers globally. Even in the late 1980's there were cases of missing embryos and facilities would merely say that the embryo was misplaced, but the consumers were suspicious if the facilities were misusing the discarded embryos by implanting it into some other woman's womb.

The grey areas of IVF treatments expose the commercialization of the methods implemented. Conversations with Eunice caused me to reflect on the ways in which commercialization of IVF occurs and the ethical issues involved in the process. The embryos' parents are the owners holding the embryos as their property with legal rights. There are about one million frozen embryos in the United States right now. Some owners are storing it for possible pregnancies in the future. Some owners are unsure of making a decision they might regret, and some are reluctant about giving it up for adoption. Giving it up for adoption is a tough decision; once they sign the legal papers, they have no legal rights over the embryo. It is hard for these owners to imagine adoptive parents raising children with their genealogical makeup. Owners with surplus embryos need to consider the few options available to them thoroughly, and it requires mutual agreement from both the individuals involved in the disposition.

Embryo donation is not an easy process. The owners create a profile of the ideal adoptive parents according to their imagination for the embryos. The profile includes age, ethnicity, religion, education, family dynamics etc. The interested adoptive parents are required to create similar profiles. There are long waiting lists for adoptive parents who have not received

the owners' approval to receive the embryos. Some would consider the process of profiling as discriminatory. It is challenging to promote a prohibition to create such a profile and forcing the owners to give up their rights over the embryos is unethical. The decision the owners make will impact the lives of their children. The owners will mostly prefer adoptive parents who share the same ethnic background to avoid any complications concerning inter-racial parenting.

Eunice did not match with the available embryo owners' profile. A single, 45- year-old Korean woman might not have been on top of the required list. She initially desired to adopt an embryo from a Christian embryo adoption center. Again, she did not fit the category as the age limit for an adoptive mother is strictly below 45 years old. She eventually decided to look for an embryo in another embryo adoption facility center. Eunice refused to choose an embryo according to her liking. She reasoned that a mother does not get to decide the gender, color, or ethnicity of the baby in a natural context of conception. Through her interactions with the facility, she discovered that the facilities create embryos using fertilized gamete by anonymous egg and sperm donor.

Embryos created externally in labs using donations from egg and sperm is specifically created for individuals who do not match the profiles of the owners of the embryos. Thus, the unmatched individuals must merely pay for the implantation without going through the hassle of a lengthy legal process and parents' approval. This is a great business strategy used by IVF facilities that commercialize the whole process in the name of goodwill. The facility is not accountable for the embryos created using donations by egg and sperm donors. They usually receive payment for their respective donations. The donors remain anonymous, with the sole identification provided is a serial number provided for them. The adoptive parents get to view the donors' pictures so they can visualize what the embryos might look like in the future. The facility will use the best quality embryos for implantation and discard the low-quality embryos. They can

discard without any restrictions or the legal process involved as they are not accountable to the donors.

Though ART, through the advancement of technology, has made the impossible possible and helped women to battle infertility. The creation and commercialization of surplus embryos by the IVF facility center needs new regulations. Embryo adoptions as created more legal battles and more children who will most probably suffer from genealogical bewilderment and conceptional wounds. The surplus number of embryos cause both legal issues and places the parents in positions of making decisions that are extremely difficult and complicated. The ownership and use of the surplus embryos have resulted in multiple legal battles finding their way into the courtroom. Both individuals need to enter into a disposition agreement with the IVF facility. In the disposition agreement, they will come to a mutual conclusion about the surplus embryos' fate. Possible death of one of the partners, divorce, separation, or disagreement will impact the embryos' future. One of the famous legal battles on embryos and their usage surfaced recently on the media between Modern Family actress Sofia Vergara and her ex-fiancé Nick Loeb. The legal battle hit the headlines for months. In this case, Loeb accused Vergara of neglecting the embryos by not giving them a chance to be implanted into a surrogate so they may live. Vergara won the legal battle over the two embryos named 'Emma and Isabella' because, according to the disposition agreement, Loeb cannot use the embryos without Vergara's consent²¹. The donation of surplus embryos for stem cell research is complex as research facilities cannot make use of most of the embryos because of their quality as the IVF facility chooses the best quality embryos to implant into the mother's womb. Donating embryos works well for individuals struggling with fertility. However, the number of donations will never free all the frozen embryos waiting to be donated as more embryos add up each year. The new regulation should permit only the creation of one embryo at a time and implantation of the same.

Implanting two or more embryos at a time does not increase the chances of pregnancy. Instead, it may lead to multiple gestations, which is risky for the health of both the mother and the child—miscarrying a twin or more during the pregnancy takes an emotional toll on the mother.

Germany is the only country in the world that prohibits creating a surplus number of embryos through the Embryo Protection Act in 1991. The facility creates two-three embryos for implantation into the uterus. The embryos that do not implant results in miscarriages which again, impacts the mother. Surplus embryos can neither be created, frozen, nor discarded. The surplus eggs retrieved is frozen, protecting the woman's health, so she does not have to go through multiple ovarian simulations. So, the surplus eggs can be frozen and not the embryos. Implementing such regulation in countries that caters to IVF treatments is practiced reducing the commercialization of IVF package deals, reducing legal battles, and thinking about the consequent result and struggles that embryo adoptees might go through. Furthermore, the success rate of IVF is low, and the possibilities of congenital disabilities from chromosomal disorders to cerebral palsy through these methods generally remain unstated. Mercy recently got diagnosed with Nystagmus causing rapid eye movements and near-sightedness. There is no known cure for it right now except wearing glasses that might help in relaxing Mercy's eyes so that her eye muscles may develop gradually. Mercy's diagnosis directs her condition due to hereditary and genetic causes rather than something that occurred during pregnancy. At this point, Eunice hopefully awaits a miracle of healing for Mercy, so she does not have to suffer and face challenges in the future for her present condition. The IVF facilities advertise their success stories with healthy, happy children and testimonials of satisfied customers like any other business. The industry focuses on maximizing its profit, whether through embryo adoption or embryo implantation. Having more success rates through embryo implantation is essential for the industry to prove its effectiveness and eventually enlarge its market.

ART has helped thousands of women to experience motherhood and battle infertility, but there is dark side to this industry that is hidden and unstated. Children born via IVF methods have 1% more chances of congenital disabilities as compared to children born via natural conception²². Sperm donors and egg donors can lie about their medical history. Although the donors require screening for health issues, some aspects of the medical and lifestyle are difficult to verify, such as the medical history of the extended family members, as verification would require consent from individual family members. It is unethical for both the donors to lie and the IVF facility not implementing better regulations and accurate information to the adoptive parents. There have been some severe cases of oversight, such as the American couple utilizing a sperm donor in 2007 successfully gave birth. The sperm donor supposedly was educated in neuroscience, with an IQ of 160 and a neat health history. The adoptive parents found out that the sperm bank made a mistake; the donor is a schizophrenic, dropout, and a convicted felon who presently has approx. 36 donor children²³. Cases of oversight and error on the part of the facility is not uncommon and it impacts the recipients for a lifetime. Again, the revolving financescape is the key element and target of the industry rather than the well-being of the child and the mother.

As I mentioned earlier, I belong to a culture where adoption is rare. My first introduction to the adoption concept occurred at the age of six while watching a Japanese anime called *Heidi* directed by Isao Takahata. The animated television series is an adaptation from a children's novel of the same name written by Swiss author Johanna Louise Spyri in 1881. The plot follows Heidi, a little orphan girl who lost her parents at the age of one. She is constantly travelling from one place to another under various authoritative figures for a home. If it were not for films and television series, I probably would not be aware of the homesickness, nostalgia, and feelings of abandonment experienced by the adoptee. Bollywood films did not produce many films centered around adoption in comparison to Hollywood. Hollywood creates adoption centered films across

genres, from horror to comedy. *The Switch* (2010), a romantic comedy directed by Josh Gordon, introduced me to ART in its remotest form. The protagonist throws an insemination party, gets pregnant, and gives birth to a baby only to realize that the sperm donor's sample got switched with that of her best friend. My understanding of adoption and experiences of the adoptees is constructed primarily through films. Mediascapes as Appadurai (1991) explains, is the flow and distribution of information through diverse media channels from television to magazines provide a "large and complex repertoire of images, narrative and 'ethnoscapes' to viewers throughout the world" (299). Digital media plays a significant role in creating a fluid pathway for mediascapes and ideoscapes- consisting of combination of images and text for the viewer to interpret issues or happenings around the globe which touches upon the local, cultural, social, political and economy of the ethnoscape. Digital media such as films based on a specific ethnoscape, when distributed to other locations around the globe, permits the audience a peek into the socio-cultural changes occurring in the characters' ethnoscape. Appadurai's (1991) understanding of mediascape and ideoscape is reflective of the functions of communication as explored by the early foundational figures of media and mass communication. Mediascape and ideoscape aligns with Laswell's (1948) function of mass communication including surveillance, correlation, cultural transmission and entertainment. Both digital and print media continues to play a vital role in the creation of fluid communication worldwide. Specifically, for ART in advertising, commercializing, educating, and creating awareness of both the good and the dark side of this industry. The dark side of this industry and the rising numbers in cases of infertility reminds me of the sci-fi dystopian film, *Children of Men* (2006) directed by Alfonso Cuarón portraying a world that is infertile and eventually there is one pregnant woman and eventually as a viewer all you want to see is the pregnant woman protected and safe from the violence. The child, a baby girl becomes the symbol of hope for humanity that is oppressed with infertility and hopeless. The

film is a dark portrayal of what the future might possibly look like and it is not hard to imagine a future world-wide pandemic of infertility. And if so, how far can ART help us navigate through such a disaster?

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013), directed by Ben Stiller played a vital role in this project. *Life* Magazine caught my attention for the first time while watching the movie. The film portrays the dreamer Walter Mitty, a photo editor who works for *Life* Magazine before it shuts down, living a life of fantasy. *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* creates a filmic graveyard for *Life*, that intends to memorialize a photography magazine loved by millions. Susan Sontag writes in *On Photography* (1977) photography tries to preserve the past; that is what *Life* intended; to preserve the past. But what happens when the medium (magazine) predominantly used to create the past is forgotten? Then there is a recreation of a new medium (films) to preserve the past (*Life*), and in turn, trying to preserve the history *Life* tried to preserve. Thus, the film is a graveyard for *Life* consisting of moving images. The viewer unconsciously pays tribute to *Life* every time they watch the film reminding the audience that such a glorious medium existed at one point in history. The position of *Life* in the film serves a different purpose for the viewer. If the viewer grew up reading *Life*, the film creates a sense of nostalgia that tries to resurrect the past in the viewers' memories and reconnect. And if a viewer like me is unaware such a magazine existed, the film passes on the knowledge of *Life* to the next generation. Passing on the knowledge to the next generation fulfills the purpose of communication, as Laswell (1948) puts it.

I started researching more about *Life*, a photography magazine that began a weekly publication from 1883 and a monthly publication from 1978 to 2000. *Life* focused more on stories of human interest and features on social commentary specifically during the war. I came across its last publication with a large heading called *Born Too Soon*. The cover picture is of a

premature baby with many tubes taped to its body held by two hands. The white sleeves on the two hands were visible, and I immediately knew it's hands of the doctor. The feature article named 'Saving Jason' written by Lisa Funderburg and photography by Co Rentmeester is a six-page article (with lots of advertisements in the middle) published in May 2000, marking the final publication of *Life* magazine. In the article, Funderburg writes extensively about the developed technology that can save many premature babies from death. The writer mentions the financial cost of saving Jason, who is 14 weeks premature, on the parents and taxpayers as the hospital bill exceeds \$500,000. It just made me wonder if life can be quantified in numbers. How do we decide who is worth saving and who is not? Not to mention many of these children will suffer from impairments. Two decades later, I could tangibly measure the development in technology in the form of ART, raising questions of whether the life of the embryos frozen in ice is quantifiable. The use and misuse of technology are evident with the commercialization of IVF treatments that create multiple embryos resulting in one million embryos in cryopreservation. There are advantages as it has helped so many women battle infertility. Moreover, if it were not for ART, Mercy would not be alive, and Eunice would have never experienced motherhood. I tried to visualize a feature article like 'Saving Jason' with Eunice and Mercy's embryo adoption story.

My aim along with writing about embryo adoption is to create a photo essay using storytelling and the pictures from Eunice's everyday life. W. Eugene Smith's work named "Country Doctor"²⁴ published in 1948 *Life* Magazine is an influential piece to this work. Smith photographed in black and white as he followed a country doctor named Dr. Ceriani who visited his patients to treat and save their lives. Smith is referred to as a photojournalist would follow the doctor wherever he went and tried to be as invisible as possible with his photography to keep the doctor and the patients from being distracted. In my work I utilized an iPhone camera to take

photographs that documented moments from her daily life as a mother. The iPhone functioned as both an accessible photography tool and as an audio recorder. The unobtrusiveness of using an iPhone camera compared to a sophisticated DSLR enabled the decrease in awareness and influence of the camera on the subject and the surrounding and to be as invisible as possible. I used the structure and aesthetics of *Life* magazine as a blueprint for the visual storytelling of Eunice's journey. *Life* focused predominantly on social commentary through photography. I needed to create a parallel between the last issue of *Life* Magazine published in 2000 and my recreation of *Life* Magazine's feature article of 'Saving Jason' to tell Eunice's story two decades later. The parallel enables in focusing the gap of two decades of using technology to save premature babies from creating, discarding and saving some. The purpose is neither to glorify ART nor demonize it but to present the good and the dark side. I found both Eunice and I somewhere lost in the gray with our internal struggles regarding this industry. Mercy is beautiful and her life is valuable. But is this industry worth it? Walter Mitty's character played a significant role as a dreamer as he jumps from one fantasy into another. I wanted to show Eunice's story and pictures as a merging of reality and her dreams. Rather than succumbing to mere dreams, she risked everything to adopt an embryo. Due to her decision, Mercy can share those dreams. I saw Mercy as a dream in limbo waiting to be brought to reality and brought to life and to breathe.

There is a specific scene in the film where Mitty looks up to the work board on his wall. A photograph where Sean O'Connell is standing and Mitty imagines O'Connell gesturing to Mitty as an invitation to an adventure. The faceless people in the background of Sean O'Connell go unnoticed as the character is the center of focus. Marcus Bleasdale originally photographed the image and published in *The Rape of a Nation* (2009). Bleasdale uses photography as a tool for humanitarian work focusing majorly on human rights. The original picture portrays the

displaced people trying to camp in Goma after running away from Karuba and Mushake villages in Congo. That is how I perceive the frozen embryos: as displaced people without identity, the ones in the background, with no wombs to camp on, forgotten by the world and somewhere waiting to be held.

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FOOTNOTES

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