

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIRACIAL IDENTITY  
IN PATRICIA PARK'S *RE JANE***

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**ABSTRACT**

Race in America is an important issue because, through the decennial census, the American government distributes the federal budget to many communities to support their education and health. Throughout the American census history, the government starts to acknowledge the people with one or more races in 2000. However, in society, people with more than one race will be classified based on their physical features and acknowledged by only one race. This research aims to reveal the biracial identity development in *Re Jane* novel by Patricia Park (2015) using racial identity and negotiation theory. It uses a qualitative method with primary data source from the novel and secondary data source from books, thesis, journals, articles, and online sources. This research shows that factors that affect Jane's biracial Korean-American identity development are microlenses factors consisting of inherited influences and social environment. These factors make Jane not have a sense of belonging both in the the Korean-American community and the Caucasian community. Second, to have a sense of belonging in the community, she negotiates with her family, friends, and workplace by supporting and challenging others' desired self-image. Thus she can feel secure, trusted, and accepted.

**Keywords:** *biracial; factor; Korean-American; negotiation; racial identity*

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## INTRODUCTION

Race in America has been important issue from the slavery era until today's headlines. The rise of Anti-Asian in America proves it, and the Black Lives Matter movement in recent years, where the racial issue roots the cases. In the decennial questionnaire of the Census Bureau, race question is also included. It aims to count who and how many people live in America and distribute federal funding to the communities. However, race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably. Based on Goldberg (1992), a professor and leading scholar in race critical theory at Arizona State University, wrote that semantically "ethnicity is mode of cultural identification and distinction" (p. 553) while race tends to emphasize the descent, breed, and pedigree (p. 555). He stated that race is not biological inheritance, whether of physical, intellectual, or moral characteristics (p. 550).

America's racial issue has its paradigm and theory. There are about three (Black, white and Asian) five major races based on geographically separated origins. Each race has its essence or "genius" inherited by the individual physically and carried in the blood. It is believed that there was a Darwinism struggle among all of the races and the fittest one was the white race, then the non-white race was inferior to the white race (Mencke via Zack, 1993, pp. 120-121). Because of this physic and blood paradigm, the white Americans tried to protect their race pure from miscegenation. They created the basis of the one-drop rule that contained the designation of race by the whites. The basis of one-drop means if there is non-white blood carried in one person, they are not white people, although this paradigm does not have any empirical basis. However, it has no scientific proof.

The issue of defining the racial identity of mixed-race person America is illustrated in *Re Jane* novel by Patricia Park. The researcher chooses this novel because this novel depicts the struggle of a biracial Korean-white Re Jane to develop her racial identity as a minority in America. Based on Kerwin and Ponterotto (1995), biracial is the most often used to describe the "first-generation offspring of parents of different races.... and it most appropriately signifies the presence of two racial backgrounds" (p. 201). The authors also explain that "multiracial" term is used interchangeably with "biracial" and describes a person with two or more different racial heritages. However, the term that will be more suitable for this research is biracial instead of multiracial. This novel consists of three chapters, and each chapter constitutes several parts. From the main character's perspective, Re Jane, is told fully to search for the sense of belonging of her parent's race background from the United States of America to Seoul and back to America again to determine her racial identity. Half Korean and half American, Re Jane cannot be accepted as Korean in her Korean Community and her mother's country – South Korea – although she grew up in Korean Community and lived at home with Korean customs and values. She cannot be considered white, although she felt comfortable with the White American way of life.

Researches discussing biracial and identity negotiation have been conducted. However, no previous research examined Patricia Park's *Re Jane* as the primary data of the research. The researchers also do not examine biracial Korean-white issues like what the researcher attempts to analyze in this research. They mainly examine biracial Black-white, Mexican-white, or other mixed races, such as "The Canary in the Post-Racial Coal Mine:

The 21st Century Mulatto in American Fiction” by Roxanne Huertas (2013), “The Intersectionalities of Identity in Young Adult Fiction with Biracial Protagonists” by Tiffany Nicole Browne (2016), “Pakistani-American Muslim 12 Women Identity Negotiation as Reflected in Diaspora Literature” by Nur Asiyah (2020), and “Identity Construction and Negotiation of Chinese Students in Canada” by Fangfang Yu (2018).

The researcher analyzes the novel as the primary data to reveal what factors affect Re Jane’s racial identity development and how are the processes of negotiations of her racial identity development. The researcher uses books, articles, journals, and online sources to support the analysis. This research is a qualitative method that examines and comprehends the meaning given by individuals or groups to a social or human issue (Cresswell, 2009, p. 30). In analyzing the data, the researcher uses the post-nationalist approach and ecological model of racial identity development by Maria P. P. Root and identity negotiation theory by Stella Ting-Toomey.

Rowe (2000) stated that the post-nationalist approach challenges the study of America as a state from the influence of cultural studies, ethnic studies, women studies, and gender studies in America (p. 26). In other words, it can be said that the post-nationalist approach studies ethnicity, including immigrants, women as marginalized part, and gender. This study focuses on race which is a part of the ethnicity issue in which race is the starting point in determining what ethnicity of an individual will connect and choose.

Based on Root (1998), the ecological model of racial identity development relies on:

- a.) Contextual macrolenses such as gender, class, and region history of race to filter the meaning of situations and experiences to which people are exposed.
- b.) Microlenses of *inherited influences* such as given names, language spoken at home, cultural values, parent’s identity, family identity, and extended family; *traits* such as temperament, talents, and coping skills, and *social environments* such as home, school, work, friends, and community (pp. 238-239).

A professor of Speech Communication at California State University, Stella Ting-Toomey (1999) defines negotiation as an interaction process in which individuals in the intercultural environment try to “assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their own and others’ desired self-images” (p. 40). There are five dialectic themes in negotiation identity theory stated by Ting-Toomey in the identity construction process of biracial individuals. There are “identity security- identity vulnerability, familiarity-unfamiliarity, inclusion-differentiation, connection-autonomy, and stability-change” (1999, p. 41). From 1790 to 1950, Americans from mixed race backgrounds were counted in a single race or classified based on someone’s Blackness gradations, such as mulattoes. Since 1960, Americans finally had started to determine and choose their race. Afterward, in the 2000 census, they could choose their racial identity from more than one race. In addition, the Korean-white biracial issue is still relatable today because only European immigrants do not build America. Still, there are some immigrants from other countries throughout their long history. One of them is Asian-American that now can adjust to the culture and the way of American lives. This Asian-American is identical to being Chinese. Even

in literary works, a Korean-white person is wrongly considered Chinese-American as in the novel itself. Besides, the literary works that discuss Korean-Americans are not really much, especially about biracial of Korean-white issue. Hence, this issue is needed more discussion in academic world.

## DISCUSSION

The microlenses factors tend to affect Jane's racial identity development especially in inherited influences and social environments.

### Inherited Influences

The first factor is inherited influences. These factors have huge influence in determining Jane's biracial identity in the novel. These are parent's identity, family identity, and home values. These factors expose the situation where the biracial people experience the daily basis.

#### a. Parent's Identity

According to Root, parent's identity is one of the inherited influences from the microlenses factors that affect the racial identity development. Parents are the first and crucial agent in the racial identity formation for kids. They are the media to teach and socialize their heritage to the kids as biracial people. Hence, their position is the basis that is important to determining the children's racial identity formation and development. Since Jane lived with her Korean-American uncle Sang, she was only given Korean heritage socialization, although there were some cultural assimilations and social adaptations in the family. Mostly, she was raised in the Korean community with strong ethnic attachment. Jane only lived with her Korean-

American family in America without knowing her American father's family.

Jane could normally develop her racial identity in Korean and American heritages as a biracial person. She did not feel belonging during her life in America with her Korean-American uncle Sang family and her friend from the Korean-American community. She felt that no one wanted her existence. In her uncle's family, she was not accepted with her bad parent's background as Hannah told and felt like a burden to them, "I was a burden, the daughter of his dead younger sister-and a *honhyol* (mixed race) bastard to boot" (Park, 2015, p. 18); while in her Korean church community, she felt that she was not well-accepted because of her appearance just "Korean-ish". She was unlike others that had a real Korean face. Hence, she wanted to find her Korean heritage in South Korea since she did not know her American family from her father. Jane could feel at ease when she saw that her mother was not a wild girl. Her mother was the third child of four siblings. Big Uncle is the oldest child, Uncle Sang is the second child, her mom, and *emo* Younghee as the youngest one in the family (Park, 2015, p. 18). Her mother was not as bad as Hannah told from her *emo* explanation. Jane's mother met her father when she was a college student in Seoul who was on a school-volunteer work trip in the countryside of Jeolla province. They kept in touch until Chuseok (Korean national holiday). Her mother invited Jane's father to come home. Jane's mother was just a college girl who fell in love with a voluntary American man on a peace mission. They decided to marry, although Re Myungsun did not give permission.

When Jane knew that her mother was not as bad as she used to know, she also found that

her father was not a bad person and not a GI. Her father was just a volunteer in *The Peace Corps* for South Korea. “For one: My father had come as part of some “government volunteer mission” promoting “peace and culture”. *The Peace Corps?* I’d asked, to which *emo* nodded and said it sounded familiar.” (Park, 2015, p. 245). She finally could reconcile with her Korean heritage and accept it.

### **b. Family Identity**

Family identity, where biracial persons live, has to be analyzed because it creates the environment surrounding them, which has a critical role in helping them understand and value both racial heritages. The interracial partnerships and also extended family take the promotion role of positive self-concept and view toward other people. They have to teach that person’s value is separated from the race that everyone has. Then, this environment gives security to biracial persons and helps them overcome their racial identity crisis (Root, 1990, p. 191).

From the family structure, Jane lived with her relative that has a conjugal or nuclear family structure. It was different from the traditional Korean family structure that usually lives with the extended family consisting of several generations in one home. Jane was raised in a Korean-American family in Flushing. She lived with her uncle Sang Re, aunt Hannah, and Jane’s younger cousins Mary and George. In Flushing, they lived in the Korean-American community neighborhood, the second-largest Korean community in the Western world (Park, 2015, p. 19). The place where they lived was all Korean way, although they had assimilated with the American way of life in some parts.

Mostly, Jane’s family still retained their strong ethnic attachment. It can be seen in their home environment, language, and Food habit. Uncle Sang had a grocery store named FOOD in Flushing, Queens, a few blocks away from their house, and Jane as the oldest child in the family, came with sang to help him there as an unpaid family worker. The grocery sold a mix of Korean and American products and was surrounded by other shops and markets that used Korean language names, such as *Daedong* River Fish Market, *Chosun* Dynasty Auto Body, and *Kumgang* Mountain Dry Cleaning (Park, 2015, p. 3).

Besides consuming Korean food, they also ate American food on several occasions. It was when the grandfather, Re Myungsun visited them from South Korea. They treated him with Western food at Windows of the World to impress him. Uncle Sang ever took Jane to eat at McDonald’s once in the novel. They ate there after they cleaned the grocery from a dead mouse. “After we finished for the day, Sang took me to McDonald’s next to the public library. As he ate his Big Mac with gusto, I stared at my Chicken McNuggets and thought about the dead mouse picked clean. Nothing ever went to waste” (Park, 2015, p. 34).

Sang Re family communicated using mixed Korean language and English from the language. As a Korean immigrant, Sang spoke his broken English and would only talk to Korean with his wife and his South Korean family. It can be seen from his conversation with Jane and his father. He spoke in his broken English. “Even if Lowood reject you again, don’t matter. You gonna stay home. You not going back that family.” (Park, 2015, p. 115). When he talked to his father in the restaurant, he used Korean language, although

the author translated it into English words in italic form. "*Father, enjoy the openness,*" Sang said. "*Closed rooms are tap-tap-hae.*" (Park, 2015, p. 111).

Different from her husband, Hannah, she spoke mostly in Korean, which was also translated into English in italic words along the novel. For example, it was the conversation when she interrupted Jane for talking back to her uncle, "'*Don't talk back to your uncle,*' ..... '*Are you trying to make his high blood pressure go up?*'" She continued in Korean" (Park, 2015, p. 8). For the rest of the family, Jane spoke in English and sometimes in Korean, while Mary and George spoke in full English. Thus, it can be concluded that the family identity where Jane lived was Korean-American with their strong ethnic attachment and selected cultural assimilation of the American way of life such as food habits, and language.

### c. Home Values

In Jane's racial identity development process, home values are crucial. The values determine and guide her when she behaves toward others. Hurh states that Korean-Americans have strong cultural values. They practice the Confucianism ethic. Based on Hurh (1998), it teaches "respect to filial piety (honors and obedience to parents), negatives attitudes on intermarriage, conservative gender ideology (traditional sex roles), family interest over individual interest, preference for Korean churches, and perpetuation of Korean cultural heritage among posterity" (p. 73). Otherwise, the American values are "individualism, equality, freedom, self-assertion, self-reliance, and so on" (p. 72). Besides, it has been known that Koreans still maintain the Confucianism ethic nowadays, such as bowing the adults,

because the moral education is emphasized through the formal education system (Y Xiao and J Hu, 2019, pp. 158-159).

At home or at the Food grocery store, Jane's uncle had some rules to be obeyed. People had to be able read his mind, no chewing gum, no back-talking to him or the customers, no acting like special, and no asking stupid questions (Park, 2015, p. 6). Throughout the novels, Jane practices Korean values based on a Confucian ethic that her uncle and aunt taught. They were having *nunchi*, no talking-back, respecting and obeying the adults.

Living with her uncle's Korean-American family, Jane had to have *nunchi*. *Nunchi*, according to Robertson, is the ability to read the situation and behave as expectedly in society (Robertson, 2019, p. 103). For example, Jane was expected to use her *nunchi* every time, including when she worked at her uncle's grocery store. As written in the novel "...*Why you ask stupid question? Where your nunchi?-as though it were something I'd carelessly misplaced somewhere, like a set of keys or receipt*" (Park, 2015, p. 7).

The second home value based on the novel is no back-talking. As Korean-Americans, children are not taught to talk back to their parents. It is based on Confucian teaching. Choi (2007) stated that Confucianism is a belief system that guides hierarchical relationships between parents and children, husbands and wives, elders and youth, etc. (p. 23). An example is when Jane was scolded by her aunt Hannah for back-talking to her uncle. "*Don't talk back to your uncle,*" my aunt interrupted, walking toward us. . . ." (Park, 2015, p. 8).

The last value of Confucianism that Jane did in the novel is obeying the parent's orders. It was her uncle and aunt at her case. Her opinion was put aside, and she had to obey her uncle's order and expectation as long as she lived. "All my life Sang barked the orders, and I obeyed them. All my life I'd been expected to put aside my opinions and desires in favor of his. I felt a roiling rage-*han*-building up inside me" (Park, 2015, p. 115). However, in the middle of the novel, she started to give her opinion and decided on her life.

### Social Environments

The second factors are social environment. Social environments based on Root are important in affecting people's identity. Their identity is derived from how they are treated in their environment. The social environments that will be discussed here based on Jane's case in the novel are home, friends, and work (Root, 1998, p. 238).

#### a. Home

Living in America, Jane experienced a family dysfunction from her childhood until her young adult age, 20 years old. She felt the abandonment because her parents had passed away, and she underwent family violence, especially emotional cruelty or emotional abuse. Being repeatedly told as stupid, unwanted, unworthy, or ugly can cause color-coded. According to Root (1998), it makes individuals distance themselves from an ethnic group, or they would remove the remnants of cultural or racial markers to free themselves from what went wrong (p. 244).

The emotional cruelty or the emotional abuse that Jane experienced had been told many times in the novel. It can be seen from the novel that she felt that she was an

unwanted one, a burden, and also a wild girl. She felt unwanted throughout the novel, and it bothered her so much when her aunt or uncle scolded her. Thus, she felt no sense of belonging to the family and her parents. It impaired her racial identity development. Throughout the novel, Jane did not know who her parents were. It made her feel ashamed because she thought she was an abandoned baby from a bad mom and an American GI father. Because Jane tried to hold and learn about her Korean heritage, she came to South Korea, where her mother's family lived to know who her parents were. However, she found that she was actually not her parents' "unwanted" child. Based on the novel, ". . . But this picture, too, revised my whole history-Sang had been wrong. I had been wanted. "Not fair, you keep something so big from me!" (Park, 2015, p. 247).

Jane also weathered repetitive negative statements that affected the negative emotion. Her uncle always made her felt like she was a burden. The way Jane narrated her feeling, it seemed like she was a burden because she thought her uncle was hard on her since she was a baby. ". . . . I was a burden, the daughter of his dead younger sister-and a *honhyol* bastard to boot" (Park, 2015, pp. 17-18). Besides, when Jane chose to live in South Korea when she came to her grandfather's funeral, her uncle Sang also told her that she would be a burden only to *emo* and Big Uncle there. "Before I could press my uncle to go on, he stopped himself. His tone resumed its usual roughness. "Anyway, here nothing like America." He reached for his pocket. "You like burden to Emo and Big Uncle"" (Park, 2015, p. 154).

## b. Friends

The second social environment that will be analyzed is Jane's friends. There are two circles of friend that Jane had. They are Korean-American friends and American friends. It is important to be analyzed because the circle around Jane can influence the sense of belonging toward her racial identity. Jane would embrace her biracial identity if her friends accepted her just the way she was.

When Jane was gathering in the Korean church community in Flushing on Sunday morning, she was told by her friend Eunice to apply for an au pair job from Brooklyn for a nine-year-old Chinese daughter. Eunice told Jane that she had a good feeling about that because Jane was Asian-ish look at least, and it would increase her chance of being accepted. "Their daughter's Asian, you're also Asian"- she glanced up at my face, revised-"ish" (Park, 2015, p.13). Then, Jane also realized that and started to scrutinize her different face features in the mirror when her cousin, Mary, told her about her pimple. She had a different face features from her other friends in the church basement. She had different hair colors, cheekbone shapes, eyes color, skin color, etc. It made her look half Korean and half other. ". . . You realized that the face you were staring into was not Korean at all but Koran-ish. . ." (Park, 2015, p. 15). Even when at a high school graduation party in the church basement, Jane was told that she was different, unlike a human creature. "'I feel like I'm looking at something from Willow. Like, kinda human but not really'" (Park, 2015, p.99).

Another Jane's friends circle was American friends. They were from Nina Scagliano's circle. Jane and Nina became a

best friends when they met at their au pair job. Jane felt that she was not attractive to guys she met at a party with Nina's friends. Every man she met at the party did not talk much to her or talk with her just for the sake of the man's group. It made her thought that that she was not pretty enough or not Asian enough or even too Asian to be attractive to others (Park, 2015, p. 93).

From the explanation above it can be seen that the most scrutinized by her friends is her physical appearance differences. In America, Jane interacted with her friends in Korean-American church community. She was treated like "other" in the community. It was because of her half and half appearance.

## c. Work

The third social environment that has affected to Jane is work environment. There are two environments exposed at the novel. Actually Jane was an unpaid employee at her Uncle Sang's grocery store but it was considered as a home environment because she interacted with her family member mostly only with Sang and Hannah. Jane worked as a nanny for a nine years old Chinese adopted girl in an American family Beth Mazer and Ed Farley. There was a misunderstanding when she was accepted to do an interview about that job. The mother, Beth, thought that she was the right one to be hired because Jane's facial feature looked like Chinese. She even asked Jane to check her Mandarin pronunciation and accent. When Jane told her that she was a Korean, not a Chinese, Beth automatically was in shock and said that they would be in touch (Park, 2015, pp. 30-31). Nevertheless, she was a Korean; Jane was accepted as the caregiver in that family at the end.

Working at American family, Jane was well-treated by the Mazer-Farley family although she was shocked because the family had different rules and habits with her uncle Sang family. The first different culture was how to peel the fruits. The different values were no stupid questions and having conversation. Jane had been accustomed with her uncle's family rules and habits. She was supposed to have *nunchi* so there was no question. Otherwise, in Mazer-Farley's family, if there was something that Jane did not know she had to ask. It was because there were no stupid questions there. It was when Jane peeled the fruits at Beth's kitchen; she was told by Beth fruit such as pear was not supposed to be peeled because it was organic and the nutrients were in the peel (Park, 2015, p. 45).

The other different value was having conversation, in Jane's uncle family there was no conversation. Uncle Sang taught her that people outside didn't care about her problem so she had to keep everything by herself. However, Beth Mazer and Ed Farley told her that she could have conversation or shared her problems to them. Beth once delivered her concern about Jane's relationship with her uncle after Beth visited Jane's uncle grocery store. She wanted to make sure that the work environment where Jane could be comfortable and opened up to the family members whenever she wanted. However, it was the opposite one with what her uncle taught to her since her young. It was not helping to tell other people about her problem. He would say "*Why other people gonna care about your problems?*" (Park, 2015, p. 62).

From the au pair work that Jane had experienced, she learned about American heritage that she could not get from her father

that had passed away and was clueless about her American extended family. She learned there were many differences between the culture and value at her uncle home with her au pair family. They were how to peel the fruits, no stupid question, and have a conversation. The one that she wanted to apply to home was having conversation with her uncle so they can understand each other.

In achieving the development of her biracial identity, Jane did some negotiations toward her family, friends, and work environment. Individuals in all cultures or ethnic group, Ting-Toomey states that they have basic motivation needs. They need identity security, trust, inclusion, connection, and stability from both group-based (cultural and ethnical membership) and person-based (unique attributes such as traits) levels. If they do not feel these needs, they will negotiate to achieve it. Based on Stella Ting-Toomey, negotiation is "a transactional interaction process whereby individuals in an intercultural situation attempt to assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their own and other's desired self-images" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p.40). There are five dialectic themes in negotiation identity theory stated by Ting-Toomey in identity construction process of biracial individuals. There are "identity security- identity vulnerability, familiarity-unfamiliarity, inclusion-differentiation, connection-autonomy, and stability-change" (1999, p. 41). However, in this research, the researcher only focuses on identity security-vulnerability, familiarity-unfamiliarity, and inclusion-differentiation theme based on what researcher finds in the novel.

In addition, according to Marsella, De Vos, & Hsu, 1985 via Ting Toomey states that in collectivistic group-oriented culture, people

will more concern with group-based (cultural and ethnical membership) and person-based (unique attributes such as traits) identity issue (Ting-Toomey, 1999, pp. 28). Thus, this analysis will focus on Re Jane group membership-based issues than the person-based identity issues.

### **Identity Security-Identity Vulnerability**

In this theme, individuals tend to experience identity security in a familiar culture environment and experience vulnerability in an unfamiliar culture environment. The identity security refers to the degree of emotional safety while identity vulnerability refers to the degree of anxiousness or ambivalence regarding both group-based membership and personal-based identity (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 42).

Jane, as the biracial person in both her in-group community and out-group community, experiences identity vulnerability of anxiousness and ambivalence. In her in-group community or Korean-American community, she felt the ambivalence for being the biracial individual because of her facial appearance. It can be seen when her friend Eunice told her as a Korean-*ish* when she offered an au pair job to Jane in weekly church visit. “. . . But I have a *good* feeling about this. Their daughter’s Asian, you’re also Asian”- she glanced up at my face, revised-“ish. . . .(Park, 2015, p.13). This statement made Jane rethought again about her group-based identity which made her felt as Korean-American member and otherwise at the same time.

Jane also experienced anxiousness in Korean-American community as half of Korean and half American or biracial individual. It was when Jane explained to Devon that she was biracial person and treated

badly in her community. She was treated like a “sore thumb” and people would give a “*What are you?*” look. Even Jane preferred to be born again as a fully Korean or American so she would not face that bad experience because of her Korean-ish look (Park, 2015, 78).

From Jane’s out-group community, she also experienced the identity vulnerability of ambivalence on her attractiveness. She felt that man would talk to her just for his friends. It made Jane thought that she was not pretty enough and started to blame herself for being too Asian or not Asian enough (Park, 2015, p. 93). However, at another party, Jane was pretty enough to attract a guy. The guy was Evan and it was Jane’s first time to be considered as pretty from an out-group guy or white American friends. ““You’re real pretty, you know that?” His words cut through the fog of my inebriation; I’d never been called pretty before” (Park, 2015, p.99).

To achieve the secure feeling, Jane supported the other’s desired self-image toward her. All the things that Jane did was only keeping silent and accepting the judgment from her friends while building a close relationship with someone who supported her as biracial person. She made close friend with her out-group friend Nina Scagliano from her au pair job in an American family with Chinese adopted daughter. It was shown by Nina’s support when someone looked down Jane. For example, Nina defended Jane when Jane’s Korean friends compared her with Jane. She also defended Jane when they hang out at an Irish Pub in Seoul. Then an English teacher man from America considered Jane as a Korean who was fluent in speaking English by saying that Jane is American who speaks better than that man. “She’s American.” . . .

“And she obviously speaks it better than you.” (Park, 2015, p. 221)

### **Familiarity-Unfamiliarity**

Based on Ting-Toomey, individuals will experience trust when they interact with culturally similar people because expected norms and routines will occur frequently while individuals will experience distrust when they interact with culturally dissimilar people (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p.42). However, in the novel, Jane experienced the reverse of this statement. She experienced trust with her culturally dissimilar group and distrust with her culturally similar group.

Jane experienced trust when she was in her out-group community. It was when she worked au pair job in American family Beth and Ed. Although Jane was taught with culture and value different with Beth Mazer and Ed Farley family, Jane actually built a trust with this American couple. The unfamiliar culture and value that Jane faced was the Western healthy and organic life style and the open conversation value.

Despite the cultural dissimilar with her boss, Jane accepted and learned all those opposite matters from this American family. She showed her trust while showing her distrust to her own family with her actions. For example, it was when she worked hard in reading a book entitled *The Feminist Primer* that Beth asked just because she wanted to impress her. Jane also trusted her boss genuine to her. “Why did I do it? Well, for one –she was my employer. But there was something else. After I’d left her attic, I remembered the way her eyes flooded with concern. It seemed genuine. Sang and Hannah never had “conversations” about my feelings. And in

truth-I wanted to impress her.” (Park, 2015, p. 68)

From all the explanations above, Jane distrusted her own family, where she was grown up with South Korean culture. She overcame this distrust issue by modifying her desired self-image. She forgave her uncle by discussing Jane’s mother, that had bothered Jane her entire life. It was because Jane did not trust her uncle’s assumption that her mother was a bad girl as he told and Sang never wanted to have a conversation with Jane especially when it discussed about her mother. Hence, at the end she could proud of her mother and embrace her racial identity from Korea.

### **Inclusion-Differentiation**

Inclusion-differentiation theme refers to membership-based boundary maintenance issue where inclusion is perceived as the degree of nearness both psychological and emotional between the individuals with their in-groups and out-groups while the differentiation is perceived as the degree of remoteness physiologically and emotionally between the individuals with their in-groups and out-groups (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 42).

Based on the novel, Jane experienced differentiation both physiologically and emotionally in American community and Korean-American community. The first differentiation is in Jane’s work place in American family as her out-group community. She felt the differentiation both emotionally and physiologically. It was when Jane was mistakenly considered as a Chinese when she was interviewed for her au pair job and she was told to be “in touch” by Ed Farley (Park, 2015, p. 31). It can be seen that Jane felt excluded or different when she was accused

wrongly as a Chinese person to take care of their adopted Chinese girl Devon and it was proved by “I’d bombed-for being the wrong kind of Asian” (Park, 2015, p. 31) statement. Another factor also made her feel different when she was told the different rules at home, such as consuming food and interacting with the family members.

When she was accepted as Devon caregiver, Jane overcame the differentiation. She supported Beth’s desired self-image by following Beth’s rules if she wanted to work there to feel included or accepted. These rules are consuming organic food, reading feminist books, and being open to talk about everything with the family. Besides, she also deemphasized her ethnic identity, which is South Korea. It can be seen from how Jane reacted that she was ashamed of the traditional meal of Korean food that Hannah packed for her “. . . Later, when I would unpack the bag at the Mazer-Farley’s. It would burst with the smell of 718 Gates, of the plasticky linoleum tiles, of Hannah’s *dwaenjang* bean paste and toasted barley tea” (Park, 2015, p. 60).

The second is the differentiation that Jane felt in her Korean-American community. She experienced the differentiation or exclusion physically that affects Jane physiologically. It has been mentioned many times in this research that Jane has a different physical appearance from other Korean people in her community. Her church activity showed that she was considered half Korean or Korean-ish by her friends. A Korean boy she crushed also worsened this differentiation experience by acknowledging that Jane did not seem like a human creature (Park, 2015, p.99). Her Korean church friends considered her the other, whereas her Korean-American community in Flushing considered her different because of

her appearance by the statement, “What are you” look every time people stared at her (Park, 2015, p. 78).

Another differentiation, unaccepted or exclusion experience from her in-group is emotional. It affected Jane’s emotions because people in her in-groups assumed that her mother was not a good girl. Even though she was unwanted by her Korean mother and abandoned by her American father, she was left as an orphan to her uncle Sang. This case influenced her entire life from how she denied her parents and her biracial identity. The script proves it “. . . After that I started to regard my mother the same way everyone else did: as a loose, foolish woman who’d been abandoned by her no-good American boyfriend” (Park, 2015, p. 88).

Jane overcame her differentiation by accepting that she was a biracial individual and challenging others’ false assumptions about her parents. She started to think that she must live like she wanted to live and stop pleasing other people. She stated, “there come a time where you just got to be who *you* want to be.” (Park, 1025, p. 312). She also started to feel included in her in-group of the Korean-American community. She also acknowledged that she belongs to this community “. . . It was guided by a logic that was a neither purely Korean nor purely American, perhaps a bastardized of both. But it was ours-it was New York.” (Park, 2015, p. 312).

In the end, Jane negotiated this differentiation, unaccepted, or exclusion experience in her in-groups by finding the truth about her parents by flying to South Korea herself. She challenged the false assumption spread in Flushing about her bad parents. She finally realized that her parents

were not a wild fox-girl and GI. Her emo told her that her parents passed away in a briquette accident. The most crucial fact that she found was the reality that she was not left behind because her parents did not want her at all from the statement “I *had* been wanted” (Park, 2015, p. 247). This fact clarified all the wrong assumptions that influenced her biracial identity development.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis reveals that people in America still classify someone's race based on their dominant physical feature. The biracial people have Caucasian and other non-white, such as Asian parents. They will be classified as Asian mostly if their physical features tend to look Asian or if they have more Caucasian physical features, they will be considered Caucasian. Thus, these biracial people feel they do not fit either as Asian or Caucasian, although they want to embrace both of their mixed heritage.

The biracial person mostly interacts with the family. Through family education, a biracial person usually learns which racial heritage she can embrace and be proud of. While in the social environments, the biracial person knows whether she can be accepted or not in the community based on her racial identity. However, as the biracial person, she is treated as other or excluded from the community because of her mixture face features that make her not Korean enough to be fitted in the Korean-American community but not Caucasian sufficient to be fitted in the white community. Thus, despite the support systems that should encourage the biracial person to feel accepted in the community, these factors discourage the biracial person from being included in the community.

Despite the physical features determining race classification in America, biracial individuals still can choose and develop their racial identity preferences by negotiating others' desired self-image. Hence, in obtaining a sense of belonging in both communities, the biracial person has to negotiate with family, friends, and the workplace to feel secure, trusted, and accepted. In negotiating with the family, friends and workplace, the biracial individual has to challenge and support the other's desired self-image toward her. In the end, Jane embraces her Korean heritage and acknowledges her American heritage.

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