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Teaching the Global Cold War with Korean Adoptee Oral Histories

Publisher's note: The original version of this article mistakenly referred to Kim Park Nelson as "Nelson" rather than "Park Nelson." The article was revised to correct her surname at the request of the author on April 26, 2023.

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION CARD
This card is for identification only and does not grant any special privileges to person to whom issued
Han Kyo Un
NAME
Houseboy
EMPLOYED AS
Hq, 213th FA Bn, APO 264
ISSUING UNIT
8A FORM NO 72
EMPLOYEES SIGNATURE
COUNTERSIGNED
GRADE
BRANCH
WEIGHT
HAIR
EYES
DOB
4'2"
75
brown
brown
16 Jan
BEARER IS (IS NOT) AUTHORIZED TO CARRY ARMS
CAL
SN
Hq Btry, 213th FA Bn, APO 264
NAME AND GRADE
OF (ORGANIZATION)
LEFT THUMB PRINT
RIGHT THUMB PRINT
CARD NO X 300135

Image 1: Employee Identification Card of Han Kyo Un, 1952 or 1953. Photograph by the author.

It is week 10 of the fall semester at Augustana College and I am teaching my course, "History of East Asia in the Making of the Modern World." The topic of the week is East Asia in the 1950s and my students are about to listen to my lecture on the Korean War. I explain that as I speak I will have students pass around an actual historical artifact of that war, an "Employee Identification Card," issued by the 213th Field Artillery Battalion to one "Houseboy" named Han Kyo Un. "What do you think this is and what kind of information does it give you?" I ask. "You can raise your questions and observations toward the end of class." But one student, who is already scrutinizing the yellowed paper and black and white photograph through the laminated cover, does not wait. "Dr. Lawrence, why do you have this?" I am standing at the computer kiosk ready to launch my PowerPoint. "You'll have to wait and see."

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The Cold War, Korea, and Intercountry Adoption

As teachers of World History, what should we do with the stories churned up in the long wake of epochal, twentieth century geopolitical conflicts? My answer is: teach them. In particular, this article recommends the use of Korean adoptee oral histories as source material for teaching the Korean War and the global Cold War more broadly. The Korean War (1950-1953) devastated a country and orphaned countless children. It also led to a distinctive diaspora: Koreans who migrated to the U.S. and other countries as adoptees. Intercountry adoption on a mass scale originated in the Korean War and Cold War dynamics. Korean adoptee oral histories thus speak to the unintended consequences of global conflicts and how they unfold across continents and generations.

The Cold War is conventionally defined as a drawn out ideological conflict between two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. But scholars have argued for decades that it was in fact a global maelstrom with causes and consequences that go far beyond superpower competition. Historians who interpret Cold War history quite differently often agree on the importance of its global dimensions and give special attention to the Korean War as a turning point. Odd Arne Westad, who understands the Cold War as an ideological contest and international system that spanned the entire twentieth century, argues that the mid-century war "symbolized the Cold War conflict at its most frightening. Extreme, barbaric, and seemingly inexhaustible, it reduced Korea to a wasteland and made people all over the world wonder if their country might be next for such a disaster. It therefore intensified and militarized the Cold War on a global scale."[1] Masuda Hajimu, in turn, sees the Korean War as the very "crucible" through which the Cold War took shape as an "imagined reality" co-created by policy makers and ordinary people across multiple local contexts.[2] The importance accorded to Korea by these scholars is echoed in James Carter and Richard Warren's textbook Forging the Modern World: A History, which states "more than one million people died in the Korean War, but it was also significant because it reinforced Cold War frames of reference," such as the containment policy.[3] Still, the idea of Korea as a "forgotten war" is hard to shake and when the war is remembered or taught in the United States, American policy and the experiences of American servicemen are often foregrounded.

The Korean War has never been forgotten in divided Korea, of course, not least because of the massive casualties. The one million figure cited by Carter and Warren is at the low end of estimates. At the higher end, Wada Haruki suggests wartime casualties reached 2.5 million for North Korea and 2.3 million for South Korea; most of the deaths were civilians.[4] Whichever estimate one accepts, the brutality of the war is beyond question, mass deaths of civilians occurred, and countless families were displaced and separated. Although this human suffering is widely acknowledged, it's rarely placed at the center of the story of the Korean War, which easily lends itself to the staging of a "great man" historical drama, with Stalin, Mao, Kim Il-sung, Harry Truman, and

General Douglas MacArthur all playing starring roles.[5] Moreover, the rebuilding of the Koreas following their total devastation is eclipsed in historical accounts by the rise of Vietnam as the primary "hot" battlefield of the Cold War. But as the novelist and scholar Viet Thanh Nguyen pointed out in the context of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, "Americans…like to think that wars end when they are declared to end. But the aftereffects of war continue for years." "The nightmare doesn't end…after the last American leaves."[6] In the case of Korea, Nguyen's words ring all the more true because the Korean War was never officially ended by treaty and there remains a significant U.S. military presence in South Korea.

Korean adoptee oral histories provide an opportunity to broaden student perspectives on the far-reaching and still-unfolding consequences of the Korean War. In recent decades, scholars have identified U.S. military intervention in Korea, and the subsequent Cold War relationship between the U.S. and South Korea, as the very origin of the phenomenon of transracial intercountry adoption.[7] In the 1950s, at a time when exclusionary laws and quotas barred most immigration from Asia, Korean War orphans and other Korean children, especially the mixed-race children of Korean women and U.S. servicemen, left their country of birth and entered adoptive American families by the thousands. In the decades that followed, tens of thousands of additional Korean children were adopted by families in America and beyond. Although most of these children were born long after the Korean War armistice, the adoption and subsequent experiences of some 200,000 children from Korea were shaped by institutions and discourses that emerged in the wake of the Korean War and as a result of Cold War dynamics. Generations of adoptees, for instance, had their lives shaped by a rescue narrative that far outlived the humanitarian crisis of war-ophaned children. This rescue narrative and what some have called a "transnational adoption industrial complex," with roots in the adoption of Korean children, laid the groundwork for intercountry adoption globally. A now-controversial method of family formation, intercountry adoption has staunch advocates and scathing critics, with adoptees themselves in both camps.[8]

Korean adoptee oral histories illuminate a surprising legacy of the Cold War. They also help students understand the war in its global dimensions, as a conflict that involved multiple world regions and instigated the movement of people between them. Finally, adoptee oral histories are both intimately relatable and methodologically complex, and thus a valuable addition to any course that seeks to foster intercultural competence and critical thinking. Below, I analyze three sources for adoptee oral histories: (1) scholar and adoptee Kim Park Nelson's 2016 monograph *Invisible Asians: Korean American Adoptees, Asian American Experiences, and Racial Exceptionalism*, (2) interviews of Kim Boone and Stephen Morrison by the UCLA Library Center for Oral History, and (3) the multimedia web-based oral history-focused documentary project *Side by Side: Out of a South Korean Orphanage and Into the World*.[9] Special attention is given to my own use of the *Side by Side* website in the classroom.

Invisible Asians

For decades, Korean adoptees did not have a significant public voice. They were mainly spoken for by the media, adoption agencies, adoptive parents, and social workers. But by the early 2000s, adult adoptees were producing documentaries, forming international networking organizations, and publishing influential memoirs.[10] Around the same time, Korean adoptees and others produced pathbreaking scholarship on the history of adoption and the adoptee experience. An adoptee community with a public voice and an academic literature on Korean adoptees emerged in tandem with significant overlap.

The ethnographer Kim Park Nelson is herself a member of the Korean adoptee community and her book, *Invisible Asians*, is based on over sixty oral histories of multiple generations of Korean adoptees, collected by the author in the early 2000s. Many of Park Nelson's narrators, particularly those from her home state of Minnesota, were personal acquaintances and friends of the author, who is an active participant in adoptee networks. All of the narrators were willing to speak about their lives and experiences, making them a self-selected group that cannot represent all adoptees. There is, however, a range of voices represented in Park Nelson's research and she took pains to reach beyond her personal networks, flying to the Pacific Northwest, for instance, to interview older adoptees. In her book's thoughtful and theoretically engaged opening chapter, Park Nelson explicitly discusses her interview process, methodology, and her own status as both insider and outsider in relation to her research subject. She notes that "the oral history process is not totally outside cultural norms within the Korean adoptee community: exchanging adoption stories is an informal ritual of socialization among Korean adoptees."[11] At the same time, "several adoptees" interviewed by Park Nelson "remarked that they had never been given the opportunity to tell their stories at such length or in such detail…The experience of telling their stories seemed to be both cathartic and difficult for them at times."[12]

Letting adoptees speak for themselves was a goal of Park Nelson's book project, but the book is not a collection of transcribed first-person accounts. Instead, Park Nelson interweaves her narrators' words with historical and ethnographic arguments. As such, the book, and particularly its chapter on the "elders" of the adoptee community, provides a useful entry point into Korean adoptee oral histories for students or for instructors looking to place first person accounts, like those discussed below, in broader scholarly and historical contexts. Indeed, I assign a section titled "Wartime Origins of Korean Adoption" as a capsule introduction to the relationship between the Cold War and adoption history. (See Appendix I).

The "wartime origins" of intercountry adoption hinged on the refugee status granted to Korean children. As refugees, adoptees were eligible to immigrate at a time when most Asians could not. A Korean adoptee was legally deemed an "eligible alien

orphan," a phrase used by Park Nelson as the title of her second chapter. Park Nelson explains:

> *As Korean nationals, the first Korean adoptees were effectively barred from obtaining permanent residence visas. Beginning in 1953, Korean children were admitted to the United States under the 1953 Refugee Relief Act. When the act expired in 1957, adoptees slated for travel to the United States had, for most of that year, no legal way to immigrate, and some first-generation adoptees had to be individually admitted into the United States by special acts of Congress. The Refugee-Escapee Act of 1957 was the first legislation to specifically address the admission of foreign adopted children to the United States as refugees…the Orphan Eligibility Clause of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1961 permanently guaranteed visas for transnational adoptees to enter the United States in anticipation of their adoption by American parents.*[13]

The first wave of Korean adoptees entered the country years before the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 finally dismantled Asian exclusion, which first arose in the late nineteenth century to bar immigration from China. Partly because they were the exceptions to exclusionary laws, many of these earliest adoptees grew up in predominantly white communities in which they had little to no contact with other people of Asian descent.

Humanitarian impulses partly explain the exceptions made to immigration law, but these impulses were deeply enmeshed with Cold War frames of reference. The "rescue" of Korean children gave Americans a moral victory as they turned the page on an unpopular war that America could not win. As pictures of broadly smiling adopted Korean children circulated in American media, they provided a tangible image of what America had fought for, "a visible reminder of the goodness of American involvement in what would soon become the Forgotten War."[14] During a protracted Cold War with no single battlefield, adopting ostensibly imperilled children, or even reading about their adoption, gave American families a way to participate in anticommunist efforts through their actions within the sphere of everyday, domestic life. The American families who adopted Korean children were held up as paragons of racial tolerance at a time when America's enemies were quick to highlight the way racism tarnished America's purported ideals. At the same time, adoptees were seen as uniquely positioned for assimilation into American society. The earliest adoptees from Korea, Park Nelson argues, "have become iconic in American's understandings of Korean adoption and adoptees," both in terms of the rescue narrative of adoption and insofar as they have been characterized as "exceptional…among American peoples of color and among immigrants" due to the perceived ease with which they integrated into the mainstream, white worlds of their American families.[15]

Park Nelson's book, as a whole, combats such simplistic narratives about Korean adoptees by spotlighting their life stories in their own words and highlighting the feelings of "extreme sadness" and loss that they often convey.[16] But Park Nelson does not minimize the genuinely bleak conditions the first generation of adoptees faced in Korea and notes that their "painful memories of Korea helped to cement the American experience as positive."[17] For some of her narrators, these painful memories include not only hunger and family separation, but also the cruelty they faced as mixed-race children. While the very earliest adoptees were war orphans, the adoption of Korean children surged in the mid-1950s with adoption campaigns targeting the children of Korean women and U.S. servicemen who were stationed in South Korea in large numbers after the war. When Oregon couple Harry and Bertha Holt adopted eight mixed-race Korean children in 1955, it marked a major turning point in adoption history. The family received significant media attention and the Holts went on to found Holt Adoption Program.[18] Along with their supporters on both sides of the Pacific, the Holts promoted proxy adoptions, petitioned the U.S. Congress to change immigration law, and even aggressively encouraged ambivalent Korean birth mothers to give up their mixed-race children for adoption.

Mixed-race adoptees were children of U.S. militarism and neo-colonialism, and on both sides of the Pacific, they faced occasional cruelty and ostracism. In an oral history excerpted in Park Nelson's book, Vivian, born 1949, describes the discrimination she faced in Korea, where she was constantly "on my guard," fearful that people would "yell at me or hit me" in the street, or volley abusive language at her birth mother:

> *I do remember my Korean mother and I know it was hard for her to keep me because I'm obviously not full Korean…when you're not full Korean, and if you're a by-product of a Korean woman getting together with Caucasian men, they just won't accept…if I was with her, yes, they would yell at her because they would assume that she was a prostitute and, you know, I'm thankful that she kept me for so long as she did.*[19]

In turn, David, born 1953, recalls the similar bullying he encountered in America.

> *They'd corner me and say, "We're going to send you back to where you came from!" Which kind of terrified me…Couple of them were saying, "Your mother was nothing but a whore," or whatever…I can remember being chased home, you know. And called any kind of Asian ethnic name that there is…And I told my parents about it once. And they said, "Don't worry about it, whatever, they didn't mean it."*[20]

Over time, even "full Korean" adoptees would come to bear the stigma of assumptions that their birth mothers had been prostitutes, while female adoptees would sometimes be seen as girls saved from prostitution but still available for sex.[21]

Interviews of Kim Boone and Stephen Morrison

By the 1960s, most Korean children adopted internationally were not mixed-race and this section examines the oral histories of two "full Korean" adoptees, Kim Boone and Stephen Morrison, who arrived in the U.S. in 1957 and 1970 respectively, with an emphasis on Morrison. Multi-session oral histories of these adoptees are digitally archived, with professionally-made transcripts available for download, by the UCLA Library Center for Oral History as a part of a series on the greater Los Angeles area Korean American community. (See Appendix II.)

Whereas Kim Park Nelson set out to capture the voices of adoptees specifically, the UCLA Library oral history project had different aims, as the series mainly features non-adopted Korean American narrators. Nevertheless, Boone and Morrison, speak at length about their adoption experience and exhibit what Park Nelson calls strong "adoptee identity."[22] Boone, a teacher, is not only an adoptee but also the mother of two domestically adopted children and she met her second husband through an adoptee network, the Association of Korean Adoptees. Morrison, an Aerospace Engineer, is the founder of Mission to Promote Adoption of Kids, or MPAK, an organization that promotes the adoption of Korean children by Korean nationals and Korean American families. Both Boone and Morrison, prompted by interviewer Alex Cline's questioning, speak out explicitly against critiques of intercountry adoption and Boone describes herself as part of a contingent of "happy adoptees," thus providing a different perspective from Park Nelson's narrators and framing.[23]

Boone embraces a vision of America as a "country of immigrants" and feels a sense of belonging as an "American Korean, because I'm American first."[24] Morrison sees America as a land of opportunity and denigrates "negative adoptees" for failing to recognize what he sees as their extraordinary good fortune: "these people who complain, they got college education, some Ph.D.s...And there are orphans in orphanages in Korea who would die to get their privilege, get Ph.D.s like they have, you know?"[25] Both Boone and Morrison thus characterize their "happy adoptee" status as a matter of disposition, but their oral histories make clear that they also benefited from certain privileges, namely, having safe and loving adoptive parents who fully included them in the family. Speaking from the perspective of an adoptee and, simultaneously, an adoptive parent, Boone notes "my parents always let us know that they adopted us because they wanted children. They really were–they didn't have any children, and they weren't trying to save us from Korea."[26] By contrast, one of Park Nelson's narrators recalls her mother calling her "their missionary project" and many Korean adoptees, particularly female adoptees, have shared experiences of abuse within adoptive families and communities.[27]

Boone and Morrison's accounts provide valuable counter-perspectives to adoptee stories that do underscore the adoption-as-loss perspective, but as with any oral history or life narrative, they cannot be taken as representative and ideally would not be

analyzed in isolation. The particularity of narrative perspective is especially pertinent when engaging Stephen Morrison's narrative, because it is so absorbing, so polished, and so informed by Morrison's own sense of mission, or what he views as a Christian calling to promote adoption. If oral history's value partly lies in its ability to capture voices that would otherwise be lost to the historical record, this is not the case with Morrison, who has told parts of his story repeatedly, in Korean American churches, to Korean media outlets, in opinion pieces, and on his organization's website. Still, his UCLA oral history captures unscripted musings, including some remarks on race, gender, and sexuality that will affront the sensibilities of many teachers and students.[28]

Over five sessions and 5.7 hours of recorded audio, Stephen Morrison discusses his early life in Korea, his teenage years in Utah, his college experience at Purdue University, and his adult life in California. Because he was adopted as a teenager, Morrison never lost his ability to speak Korean and he is now active in the Los Angeles Korean American community. Born around 1956, Morrison's birth mother left her two sons with an alcoholic father and the siblings became homeless when their father was arrested. The brothers suffered extreme privation and hunger and Morrison entered an orphanage established by Harry Holt after his brother was informally adopted by a Korean woman. He would live in the orphanage for eight years, making him a witness to the conditions of a large Holt-sponsored orphanage in the 1960s.[29] Morrison describes the orphanage as having perhaps "seven hundred children," housed in modest rooms, "maybe more like ten by ten, twelve by twelve, and rows and rows of kids just sleeping. And there would be black Amerasian, Caucasian Amerasian, and they looked just like Caucasian, they're all abandoned by their birth mothers."[30] Morrison notes that even young kids understood "that these children were the byproduct of those relationships" between Korean women and American G.I.s and he also talks about G.I.s who befriended children in the orphanages, coming over in Santa costumes with gifts during Christmas and giving some children their first taste of hamburger.[31] While not a war orphan, his life in the orphanage was clearly shaped by the war and its consequences, including the continued presence of U.S. military personnel.

At his orphanage, Morrison was raised to be a good Christian, and in his Korean elementary school, he was educated to be a good anti-communist. Asked by interviewer Alex Cline about his understanding of the G.I. presence at the time, Morrison talks about his ideological education:

> *You always learn about Korean War and how the United States and the U.N. forces came to rescue Korea, and how because of them Korea was saved, which is true…So we were taught in school, elementary school, to hate Communist North and to love United States and the democracy… you meet people who are working at the Ilsan orphanage, men and women and even teachers, who will show you the scars of, "Here's where*

I got my—on this shoulder, I got my bullet wound"…I hear the stories like that. So I knew that's why U.S. soldier, U.S. military had presence there, to protect… North Korea wouldn't even dare to attack South Korea because of them, and that's even true to this day…

Cline: …So you had a lot of drills and things?

Morrison: Oh, yes. Lots of soldiers, lots of helicopters flying, lots of tanks. It was still like—especially in that area of Ilsan, which is seven miles south of the DMZ, that was a normal, everyday thing. You see U.S. military practicing, dropping bombs on a hill, and you can see at night just a lot of flashes.[32]

While Morrison's school presented American intervention, past and present, as the salvation of Korea, the Holt orphanage communicated a vision of America as a land of plenty. According to Morrison, when children were matched with adoptive families, they were told:

"You're going to America to a nice family by the name of such-and-such, and you're going to be very happy there. They have lots of things to eat, a lot of clothes to wear, big houses and big yards," and things like that, and kids get real excited. But usually, what I remember the most was that on Sunday morning service at the church, we would have a regular service, and way at the end there would be announcement, and then the presider, the adult, would call out the person's name who's going to America and announce that he has a new family, he will be leaving us, and let's wish him farewell. And he would be brought to the front, and he would be given one pack of gum. That was a precious—we didn't even have things like that. He would be given a one pack of gum by maybe the pastor as like a going away, congratulation type of present, and then we would all clap our hands, and then we would sing a song. And that, you can make a movie out of that scene. I mean, it would make everybody cry.[33]

Morrison would see many fellow orphans get their pack of gum before he was adopted in advance of his fourteenth birthday, when he would have aged out of adoption eligibility.

Morrison describes his own adoption not as a rescue but as an act of Providence. His parents, who had already adopted a mixed-race Korean son, saw him profiled in an adoption newsletter.

And [John Morrison] said, "That's him," to my mother, and my mother said, "Oh, no. He's a thirteen-year-old boy. That's too old. That's dangerous. How about this guy, eight years old?" And my dad would say,

> *"No. That's him. He's my son." And she would choose another boy. "How about him? He's nine years old." No, honey. I know this is my boy." And I believe God planted in his heart that, "John, that is your boy," and somehow he knew that, so he didn't relent.*[34]

The recollected scene of American parents debating which child to adopt while perusing a newsletter recalls the critique that intercountry adoption tends to commodify children, but for Morrison, the newsletter simply facilitated a connection that was meant to be.[35] Morrison arrived in America in 1970 and, remarkably, grew up in Dugway Proving Ground, a military town in the Utah desert, where biological and chemical weapons were tested. Morrison recalls how "you would occasionally hear about how six thousand sheeps died because of chemical leak or something like that," but does not remark on the fact that the military installation has its own Cold War history and was used as a testing ground for weapons developed during the Korean War.[36] Morrison's main memories of Dugway are of its isolation and racial homogeneity as a primarily white community. He would reconnect with his Korean heritage and interact with other Korean Americans only after leaving Utah to attend Purdue. At Purdue, Morrison excelled as a student in the high-demand field of aeronautics and thus had his pick of employers after graduation. He specifically chose to move to the Los Angeles area, with its large Korean American population.

As an adult, Morrison felt nothing but gratitude and love toward his family and he attained substantial career success. Still, he had his own "internal struggle within me…the Koreans call it shade within my personality," which stemmed from questioning why he had to suffer so much as a child. For Morrison, this inner tumult was ultimately resolved when he discovered his life mission: helping homeless children find homes through adoption.

> *…one day I prayed to God, "What is the purpose that you sent me on this earth for? And why did you allow me to go through all this pain and hardship in early life, and to bless me with adoption? What's the meaning?" And after lots of prayers, I believe God spoke in my heart in a way that, "I didn't let you go through all those painful experiences without any reason. There is a purpose."*[37]

In Morrison's account, God gave his father the conviction, "this is your boy," and years later, God let Morrison know that his painful experiences had a purpose, for they guided him toward the founding of MPAK and the mission to promote adoption. But there are other explanations, historical explanations, for Morrison's difficult experiences. Though Morrison was not a war orphan and his family separation occurred after the war, it was the American military presence that accounts for his boyhood in a Holt orphanage amongst so many Amerasian children. And it was within a Cold War

context, which fostered adoption-as-rescue narratives, that he and thousands of other Korean-born children immigrated to America, where many adoptees would struggle with those same questions that shaded Morrison's heart for years.

Side by Side

If Stephen Morrison has an explicitly pro-adoption agenda, the one hundred oral histories of Korean adoptees included in the "online video installation" *Side by Side: Out of a South Korean Orphanage and Into the World*, are presented as "neither an endorsement nor an indictment of inter-country adoption."[38] According to the project directors, husband and wife team Glenn and Julie Morey:

> *These stories, collectively, do not represent a political agenda of any kind. The purpose of this project is only to open an intensely experiential window of oral history, of social and academic understanding, and of empathy through art. We, as the filmmakers, ask you to recognize each story as that teller's truth in life. We do not present them here to be judged.*[39]

While individual narrators do speak to the controversy surrounding intercountry adoption, the project is designed to be about people, not politics.

Like Kim Park Nelson, Glenn Morey is a Korean adoptee who embarked on a project that privileges the voices of adoptees. In Morey's project, "voice" is further centered through the audio-visual format. In seven countries, from 2013 to 2015, the Moreys filmed one hundred narrators, born across six decades, as they faced the camera and told their life stories while seated in front of identical neutral backgrounds. The lightly edited videos, most between twenty and thirty minutes long, are archived on a webpage that organizes the anonymous interviews in a grid of portraits, or still images from the recordings. Though the project is generally textualized as *Side by Side*, its title is actually side×side, with a multiplication symbol in place of the word "by." The × sign visually reproduces the grid-like organization of the archived oral histories and also underscores the directors' vision of juxtaposing a multiplicity of adoptee stories. This anticipates a passage from the conclusion to Arissa Oh's *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption*; in Oh's words:

> *The story of international adoption is a multitude of stories…It is a kaleidoscopic array of stories of war, infertility, poverty, despair, cruelty, compasion, and love. Each individual story of Korean adoption has at its center an intense core of human emotion and experience. But when the lens zooms out, those very individual, highly personal stories merge into something else, like a poster of a city skyline that is actually composed of thousands of small images. At this degree of magnification,*

> *it is not the individual stories but the grander, public movement that dominates.*[40]

The *Side by Side* project asks the viewer to sit with that "intense core of human emotion and experience" a little longer before zooming out. All of the videos are closed captioned or subtitled (the narrators speak six different languages) but no transcripts are available anywhere on the site. The historian or student cannot sit down with the transcripts and quickly mine them for information. The only way to engage the content is to look and listen, to the words yes, but also to the moments when voices crack, to undercurrents of anger and grief, to the occasional sob.

Despite the lack of transcripts, *Side by Side* provides a flexible teaching resource. In addition to the main page, with the clickable portraits of the one hundred narrators, the filmmakers have produced eleven short films, which splice together different stories around themes like "'Growing Up, *New families in adoptive countries*" and "'Memory,' *Families and orphanages in South Korea, before adoption*." An adapted version of the lead short film was featured in the *New York Times* Op Doc series under the title "Given Away."[41] Any of these could be shown as part of a lesson that explores the connection between the Cold War and intercountry adoption. Many of the stories included in the short films are riveting and hard to forget. The short film "11 Short Stories," for instance, features a French adoptee who learned, as an adult, that her Korean birth father allegedly threw her infant body out of a moving vehicle as it drove past an orphanage. Two other female adoptees share experiences of sexual abuse by members of their adoptive families; one of these women also recalls her American mother calling her a "little maid." A man recounts the moment he realized he was being "given away." Another woman describes her grief when her son was born looking nothing like her, because she had hoped for a moment of recognition upon meeting, for the first time, a blood relation.[42] The curatorial choices in this and other short films emphasize diversity of experience, underlying commonalities, and moments charged with emotion.

The homepage's grid of narrators is randomly organized, but a side bar allows one to narrow down results according to a number of metrics: birth year, gender, adoptive year, adoptive country, adopted versus aged out of orphanage, and subject matter. By adding a "1950s" birth year filter, one finds that fifteen narrators were born in that decade.

While the sample is not large, some generalizations can be made about this group when compared to the adoptees of all ages. All eleven adopted narrators with birthdates in the 1950s were adopted by American families. The other four narrators born in the 1950s aged out of their orphanages in South Korea and remain South Korean citizens. Although America was always the biggest receiving country for Korean adoptees, the

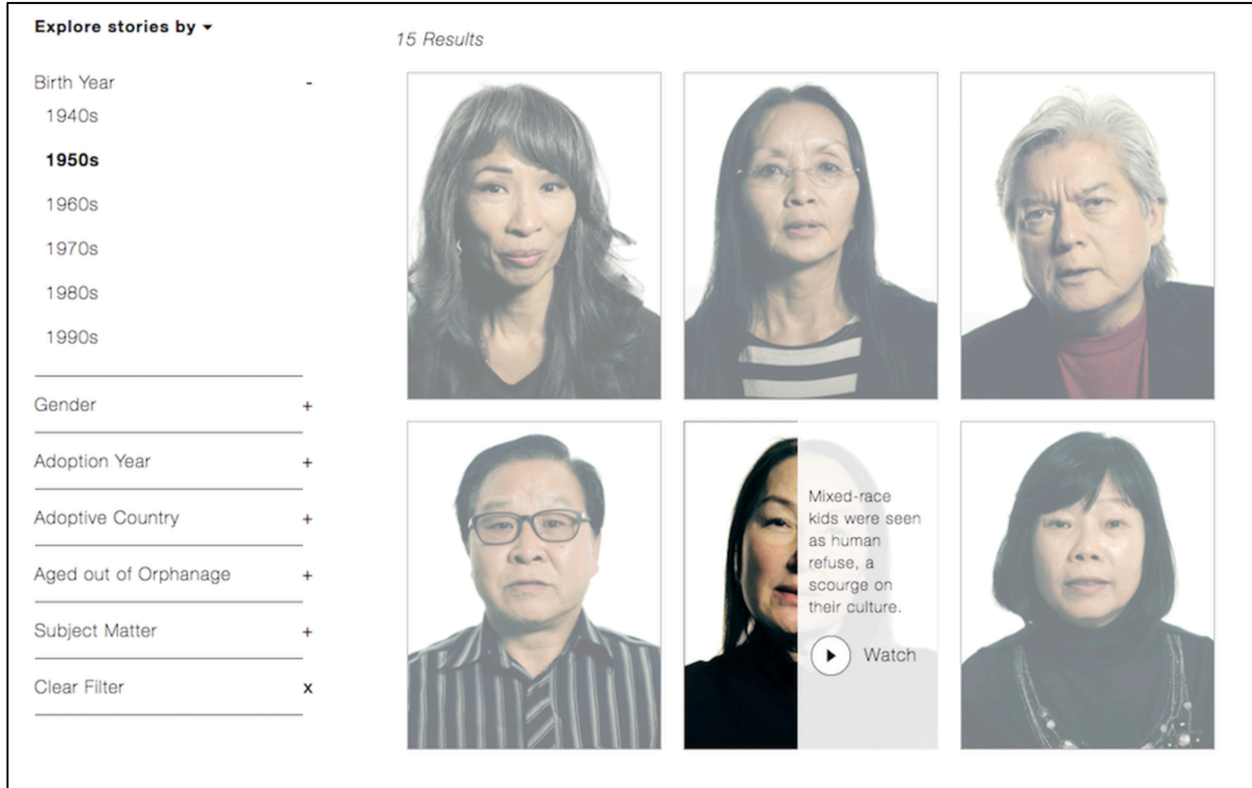

Image 2: From *Side by Side: Out of a South Korean Orphanage and Into the World,* sidebysideproject.com. Reproduced with the permission of Glenn Morey.

project as a whole features thirty-four narrators who were adopted by families from other countries. This pattern maps onto what we know historically about intercountry adoption: that it was an outgrowth of U.S. military presence in South Korea and only later developed into an industry that sent Korean children to other countries. Moreover, seven of the narrators born in the 1950s, or over half of those who were adopted, discuss their experiences as mixed-race adoptees. The project as a whole only features an additional four narrators who speak to their experiences as mixed-race adoptees. So before even listening to the stories, one encounters a profile of Korean adoptees who were born in the decade of the Korean War. They are disproportionately mixed-race and American through adoption.

While I appreciate the availability of the filters, which facilitates a “zooming out" style of analysis like the above, I also acknowledge the filmmakers’ emphasis on the individuality of each narrator and the parallel experiences of narrators across generations. The portrait grid could be arranged chronologically by default, but the random presentation, newly configured each time the webpage is opened or refreshed, intentionally invites the viewer to encounter each story on its own terms and to discover surprising juxtapositions between narrators from different generations and countries. When I taught a lesson that used the *Side by Side* website in Fall 2021, I considered

assigning the oral histories of the older narrators, but ultimately embraced the logic of the website design and asked students to view one narrative by any individual before a class meeting. Each student was further asked to paraphrase their individual's story, following the four questions asked of each participant according to the project's "About" section: "(1) Tell us about your origin; (2) tell us about your adoption or aging-out; (3) tell us about how you grew up; and (4) tell us about the years when you became an adult, up until now."[43] Students completed this exercise as the core part of a weekly assignment I call an exhibit.

Some further context into the structure of my course is in order here. I teach a one semester course on the history of East Asia from roughly 1600 to the present. Most of my students have little prior knowledge of Asia or historical methods. As is also the case in my World History course, I must communicate basic factual knowledge and standard historical narratives as a prerequisite to deeper analysis, while avoiding the stultefying effects of what's been called "coverage," basically a textbook and lecture approach to history that fails to develop critical thinking skills and disciplinary knowledge.[44]

To meet this challenge, I organize each week of lessons (for a course that meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) according to what I call a pedagogical tripod, with three differently oriented lessons (the metaphorical tripod legs) that support the weight of learning. The Monday lesson is devoted to historical background; it is for these lessons that textbook readings and lectures remain in my teaching repertoire. Wednesday lessons are exercises in source analysis; I always assign a tightly curated selection of *brief* primary and secondary source excerpts and students spend the full class session placing these sources in conversation by discussing not just what they say, but what they are (e.g., source type), and how they relate to each other as sources for historical inquiry. Friday lessons are focused around extended learning activities. Students come to class with a printed-out "exhibit," a single-page presentation of learning, which often includes an image and short responses to prompts. An "exhibit" prompt may ask students to explore a digital resource, dig deeper into a previously introduced source, learn about a historical monograph and the historian who wrote it, or conduct basic library research. In class, we do activities around the assignment, make current events connections, and view media clips.

The pedagogical tripod structure is recursive, but designed to foster connections and hone historical thinking skills over time. For instance, when students engage the *Side by Side* narratives, it is neither the first time nor last time they confront retrospective first-person accounts and interrogate their value and limitations, as they do with all sources. The previous week's curated source selection features oral histories related to World War II in Asia, including comfort women testimony. In a subsequent week, students read excerpts from English-language memoirs about the Chinese Cultural Revolution, along with excerpts from secondary sources that question the

evidentiary value of such memoirs. (See Appendix I for details about readings and assignments completed by my students during the week the course centers on the Korean War.)

The *Side by Side* paraphrase is thus part of an exhibit assignment and familiar to students as an opportunity to explore an archive and extend their knowledge about the week's topic into a new direction. When we met as a class for our Friday exhibit session, students introduced their narrators to each other in groups of two to four. This activity produced enthusiastic small group participation. In a course on East Asian History, in which students were habitually stretched to think about times and places that felt quite distant from their experiences, the *Side by Side* stories proved intensely relatable, as they touched upon those very things that most prominently shape the shifting identities of members of Generation Z: family, school, the search for self-understanding, the yearning for a sense of belonging. For some students, who might themselves be adopted or who might relate to some of the narrators' experiences as racialized minorities, or even as victims of in-family abuse, the encounter with the stories may even feel too close for comfort. I issued a generalized content warning for this reason.[45]

In the full group discussion that followed my students' peer-to-peer introductions of individual stories, I reviewed the big picture argument that intercountry adoption originated in the Cold War. And in keeping with a central objective of the class as a history class, I pushed students to think critically about these stories as sources for historical inquiry. As much as possible, I let students propel this discussion; however, I offered my own questions and insights at times, starting with the simple question: are these narrators reliable? (See Appendix I for some additional questions that can drive the discussion forward.) Below, I turn to my own analysis of the *Side by Side* narratives as historical sources.

These oral histories belong, first and foremost, to the narrators, but they were not spontaneous or randomly preserved. Starting in their home city of Denver and then branching out to the world, the Moreys relied on social networks, both online and off, to recruit their project participants. The narrators, just as much as those interviewed by Kim Park Nelson, represent a self-selecting group of adoptees who felt that they had stories to tell and were willing to tell them on camera. For many of the narrators, moreover, their filmed account represents one moment in a chain of storytelling that has been ongoing for as long as they could reflect on their own origins or respond to a question often heard by adoptees: what are you? One *Side by Side* narrator, Anonymous, born 1960, calls this the "narrative burden": "it's something we all carry with us. It's the...who are you? What are you? Why are you here? What does all this mean...thing. And it's the burden hoisted on people like us to explain ourselves and explain our identities."[46]

Whether viewed as a burden or as a source of empowerment, many of the *Side by Side* narrators manifest a drive to investigate their own life stories, placing them in

historical and sociological contexts. These investigations begin with listening to the adoption stories conveyed by parents and adoption agencies, and for some, they extend to networking with other adoptees, researching adoption records, and visiting their birth country, South Korea. This active process of self study raises questions about the boundaries between individual memory and the collective construction of group identity and historical narrative, questions that are pertinent when analyzing any oral history or retrospective first-hand account.

One *Side by Side* narrator, Anonymous, born 1957, also came to conclusions about her background by reading academic literature. "In the last year," she explains:

> *I learned that my mother had been a military prostitute. I knew nothing about that culture, and why there had been so many mixed-race children. I actually found that out by going online and finding academic papers written about mixed-race children in Korea. It was through reading these academic papers that I learned that most of us were born to gijichon–military prostitutes who worked in the camptowns, serving the US soldiers. So without knowing for certain that my mother was, I would say with 99.999%, that she most likely was.*[47]

Anonymous clearly still struggles with the implications of being a mixed-race Korean adoptee. Elsewhere in her account, she says "mixed-race kids were seen as human refuse, a scourge on their culture," a sentence that appears as the tagline for her oral history, as seen in Figure 2. As quoted above, the Moreys, as filmmakers, "ask you to recognize each story as that teller's truth in life. We do not present them here to be judged." But if being the daughter of a military prostitute was the current "truth in life" for Anonymous, that does not make it a historical truth. Recent research by Yuri Doolan argues that characterizing mixed-race adoptees as the children of prostitutes was a strategy whereby the Holt generation of advocates promoted intercountry adoption through rescue narratives that erased, or outright incriminated, the birth mother. Drawing on his own oral history research, Doolan further asserts that many birth mothers of mixed-race adoptees were not prostitutes, that the U.S. military intentionally broke up families formed between G.I.s and Korean women, and that birth mothers often provided loving and stable homes for their children, homes that were broken up through the aggressive tactics of Holt Adoption Program representatives.[48] Bereft of any first-hand memories of her birth family, perhaps Anonymous, like any good historian, will change her own narrative, her own "truth in life," as the scholarly conversation around the origins of intercountry adoption continues to evolve.

We all live in the stream of history. Some of us will investigate our own pasts and those of our families, looking for how they link up to History with a capital H. Others will not. For Korean adoptees, their birth family histories are black boxes that might never be opened, but their origins as outsiders to their adoptive families are written on

their bodies. Whether or not they choose to research their own pasts, they will always have a connection to Korea and its histories. And Korea, though it is not always acknowledged, will always have an important place in World History, as the setting of a tragic mid-century war, as a recipient of America's militarized humanitarianism, as the original sending country in cross-border adoptions, and as one highly significant node in a global Cold War that still casts long shadows across our world of today.

Coda

Having completed my lecture on the Korean War, I turn my students' attention back to the historical artifact that has circulated through the classroom, inviting questions and observations. Students are quick to remark upon the boy's young age and they express surprise that he would have been employed, in any fashion, by a U.S. military unit. I explain that Korean houseboys and mascots were a widespread phenomenon of the Korean War and that some of them would be adopted by American families. I then introduce the argument that intercountry adoption on a mass scale originated with the Korean War and its aftermath. I have piqued some students' curiosity, but as it nears the end of our scheduled class session others are getting antsy, as students do. Even so, all twenty-four pairs of eyes dart toward my face when I say: "to answer the earlier question, I have this historical artifact, because the boy it belonged to is my father." Underlying that personal disclosure is an important perspective on the Cold War that is reinforced by Korean adoptee oral histories. The Cold War was not just a superpower competition, or an "us" versus "them" story. Nor was it something that happened elsewhere and in other times, with no bearing on the here and now. It was, instead, a global conflict that remade and continues to remake the American "us" by spurring global migration on a mass scale, beginning with "eligible alien orphans" like my father.

Appendix I

Pedagogical Sources & Strategies
Day 1: Historical Background

- **Before-class reading:** James Carter and Richard Warren, "Hot Wars, Cold Wars, and Decolonization, 1942-1975," in *Forging the Modern World: A History* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 317-341.

- **"Entry ticket" prompt:** in a paragraph that cites evidence from at least two sections of the assigned textbook chapter respond to the following statement: "The Cold War is often understood as a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, but East Asia is central to understanding Cold War history."

- **In class:** a lecture that introduces the Cold War, Cold War East Asia, and the Korean War in particular. In a 75-minute class session, I break up the lecture

with brief media clips and think-pair-share discussions. At the end of the session, as noted in the coda, I first introduce the connection between the Korean War and adoption history.

Day 2: Source Analysis

- **Before-class reading:** a curated source selection of brief primary and secondary source excerpts.

    1. **Source 1**: selections from the preface to Wada Haruki, *The Korean War: An International History* (Washington D.C.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), xxiii-xxxv. Especially relevant are the sections titled "Clashing Interpretations of the Korean War" (xxvi-xxviii) and "The Declassified Russian Materials" (xxx-xxxv).

    2. **Source 2**: Wilson Center, "Ciphered telegram from Shtykov to Vyshinski," May 12, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112980.

    3. **Source 3**: Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2011), 152-153, 158.

    4. **Source 4**: Harry Truman, "Speech Explaining the Firing of MacArthur," April 13, 1951, Teaching American History, https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/speech-explaining-the-firing-of-macarthur/.

    5. **Source 5**: Douglas MacArthur, "Address to Congress," April 19, 1951, Teaching American History, https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/general-douglas-macarthur-defends-his-conduct-in-the-war-in-korea/.

    6. **Source 6**: Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 76-77.[49]

    7. **Source 7**: selections from Kim Park Nelson, "'Eligible Alien Orphan,'" in *Invisible Asians: Korean American Adoptees, Asian American Experiences, and Racial Exceptional* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 41-71. The selected text is from the section titled "Wartime Origins of Korean Adoption," 42-46.

- **In class:** students first discuss the sources in small groups for a minimum of 20 minutes while I circulate and check that the sources are printed and annotated, a requirement of each source analysis session. In the full-group

discussion, a member of each small group introduces one source and class participants as a whole critically evaluate and connect the sources.

Day 3: Extended learning activity (includes pre-class exhibit assignment)

- **Before-class assignment:** Side by Side exhibit assignment. Students are asked to watch one filmed oral history narrative archived by the website: https://sidebysideproject.com/. In the written exhibit assignment, they choose one quotation to reproduce in a large-size font at the head of the page and follow the quotation with a paraphrase of the narrative.
- **In class:** we watch the Side by Side companion video "Given Away" together: https://sidebysideproject.com/11-short-films. Students introduce their exhibit assignments to classmates in small groups. The guided discussion invites full class sharing, revisits the connection between Korean adoption and the Cold War, raises questions about the Side by Side narratives as historical sources, and reviews the week as a whole.
- **Discussion questions might include:** Are these individuals reliable narrators? Why do you think they agreed to take part in this documentary project? Do they, individually or together, help us better understand the history of the Cold War, Korea, and or the Korean diaspora / Korean Americans? Why or why not? What other sources or source types would enhance the historical understanding gained through these oral history sources? What accounts for similarities and differences in the narrators' life experiences?

Appendix II

Online Resources Described in the Article:

- For more on oral historian Kim Park Nelson's work, see: http://kimparknelson.org/.
- The UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research interview with Kim Boone can be found here: https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/catalog/21198-zz001400n6?counter=10.
- The UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research interview with Stephen Morrison can be found here: https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/catalog/21198-zz001d0kck?counter=8.
- The oral history and digital storytelling platform Side by Side: Out of a South Korean Orphanage and Into the World can be found here: https://sidebysideproject.com/.

- An additional website that may be of interest is “Korean War Children’s Memorial: Adopting the Children,” (http://koreanchildren.org/docs/adoption.html).[50]

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Notes

[1] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 159.

[2] Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 2.

[3] James Carter and Richard Warren, *Forging the Modern World: A History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 325. This is a strong textbook, most appropriate for the college level. I have assigned this textbook in a college-level World History survey course and I assign the chapter on “Hot Wars, Cold Wars, and Decolonization,” (317-341) to students in my “East Asia and the Making of the Modern World” course in advance of our deeper analysis of the Korean War, which includes my lesson on adoptee oral histories. See Appendix I for more information on sources assigned in my class.

[4] Wada Haruki, *The Korean War: An International History* (Washington D.C.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 286-287. To put the statistics in perspective, some 3 million Japanese people, mostly military, died during the Asia Pacific War, which lasted far longer than the fighting in Korea.

[5] One noteworthy exception amongst English-language publications is Charles Hanley, *Ghost Flames: Life & Death in a Hidden War, Korea 1950-1953* (New York: Public Affairs, 2021). Perspectives of Americans who fought in the Korean War are readily available as video-recorded oral histories through the Korean War Legacy Foundation, https://koreanwarlegacy.org/. Notably, many of the keyword searchable interviews include references to Korean houseboys, including cases in which houseboys were adopted by U.S. soldiers. See, for instance, Charles Comer, interviewed for Korean War Legacy Foundation, accessed January 2022, https://koreanwarlegacy.org/interviews/charles-comer/.

[6] Viet Thanh Nguyen, "I Can't Forget the Lessons of Afghanistan. Neither Should You.," *New York Times*, August 19, 2021.

[7] A good historically-grounded monograph cited multiple times in this article is Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015). SooJin Pate emphasizes U.S. militarism and the U.S. occupation of South Korea beginning in 1945 as the origin point of intercountry adoption. Yuri Doolan, by contrast, identifies that origin point in the U.S. military camptowns that date to the period after the Korean War. Swedish scholars, including Hubinette (below), have further globalized this field of academic inquiry. For instance, a recent article by Youngeun Koo argues that intercountry adoption was a crucial means by which Sweden and South Korea negotiated their Cold War era geopolitical relationship. Many other scholars have contributed to this dynamic scholarly conversation and I cannot hope to cite them all. See SooJin Pate, *From Orphan to Adoptee: U.S. Empire and Genealogies of Korean Adoption* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Yuri Doolan, "The Camptown Origins of International Adoption and the Hypersexualization of Korean Children," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 24, no. 3 (October 2021): 351-382; Tobias Hubinette, "The Adopted Koreans of Sweden and the Korean Adoption Issue," *The Review of Korean Studies* 6, no. 1 (2003): 251–266; Youngeun Koo, "The Question of Adoption: 'Divided' Korea, 'Neutral' Sweden, and Cold War Geopolitics, 1964-75," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 80, no. 3 (August 2021): 563-585.

[8] At the extreme, critics have compared intercountry adoption to child trafficking or even the transatlantic slave trade. On the "transnational adoption industrial complex," see Kimberly McKee, "Monetary Flows and the Movements of Children: The Transnational Adoption Industrial Complex," *Journal of Korean Studies* 21, no. 1 (2016): 137-178 and *Disrupting Kinship: Transnational Politics of Korean Adoption in in the United States* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2019). For a defense of adoption across borders see Mark Montgomery and Irene Powell, *Saving International Adoption: An Argument from Economics and Personal Experience* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2018). The range of opinions regarding international adoption expressed by adoptees is captured in the sources analyzed below.

[9] This article does not provide a comprehensive survey of Korean adoptee oral histories. A print source of transcribed adoptee oral histories is Ellen Lee, Marilyn Lammert, and Mary Anne Hess, eds., *Once They Hear My Name: Korean Adoptees and Their Journeys Toward Identity* (Silver Spring: Tamarisk Books, 2008). Other scholarly sources that are partly based on adoptee oral histories include Yuri Doolan, "The Camptown Origins," and Kimberly McKee, *Disrupting Kinship*. Additional video recorded oral histories are available through the websites of Korean American cultural organizations. See, for instance, KoreanAmericanStory, "Tag: Adoptee," accessed June 2022, http://koreanamericanstory.org/tag/adoptee/.

[10] See, for instance, *First Person Plural*, directed by Deann Borshay Liem (San Francisco: NAATA [distributor], 2000); "International Korean Adoptee Association (IKAA) Network," accessed January 2022, https://ikaa.org/; Jane Jeong Trenka, *The Language of Blood* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2005). For a useful, open-access analysis of Korean adoptee memoirs, including Trenka's, see Jenny Heijun Wills, "Fictional and Fragmented Truths in Korean Adoptee Life Writing," *Asian American Literature: Disourses & Pedagogies* 6 (2015). Trenka's memoir is also analyzed in Soojin Pate, *From Orphan to Adoptee*, ch. 5. For a study of Korean adoptee memoirs alongside a fictionalization of the adoptee experience, see Eli Park Sorensen, "Korean Adoption Literature and the Politics of Representation," *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 12, no. 1 (2014), 155-179.

[11] Kim Park Nelson, *Invisible Asians: Korean American Adoptees, Asian American Experiences, and Racial Exceptional* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 19.

[12] Ibid, 21.

[13] Ibid, 52.

[14] Ibid, 43.

[15] Ibid, 41-42.

[16] Ibid, 32.

[17] Ibid, 51.

[18] For more on Harry Holt and how the Holt Adoption Program transformed intercountry adoption see Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea*, 89-104.

[19] Vivian, in Kim Park Nelson, *Invisible Asians*, 47-48.

[20] David, in Ibid, 66.

[21] The hypersexualization of adoptees, stemming from perceptions of the camptowns, is the core argument of Yuri Doolan, “Camptown Origins,” which examines how “constructions of the Korean birth mother as prostitute and Korean children as sons or daughters of prostitutes became central to the spearheading and maintenance of international adoption from South Korea,” 352. On the perceived sexual availability of adopted girls for sex, see the section on “Adopted Girls and the ‘Camptown Shadow,’” 367-372.

[22] Kim Park Nelson, *Invisible Asians*, 30.

[23] Kim Boone-Nakase, interviewed by Alex Cline for Center for Oral History Research, (hereafter COHR), University of California, Los Angeles, May 13, 2009, https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/catalog/21198-zz001400n6?counter=1. The transcript of the interview is titled “Interview of Kim Boone” and she is referred to as “Boone” throughout the interview transcript and in the Interviewee Biography and Interview History. However, the UCLA Library website archives the interview as “Interview of Kim Boone-Nakase,” apparently reflecting a recent name change.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Stephen Morrison, interviewed by Alex Cline for Center for Oral History Research, University of California, Los Angeles, June 24, 2009, https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/catalog/21198-zz001d0kck.

[26] Kim Boone-Nakase, interviewed by Cline, COHR, May 13, 2009.

[27] Kim Park Nelson, *Invisible Asians*, 60. On the victimization of female adoptees, including sexual abuse, see for instance, Yuri Doolan, “Camptown Origins,” 67-72.

[28] The most problematic comments all come up in the fifth and final session: Stephen Morrison, interview by Alex Cline, COHR, July 9, 2008. While discussing the 1992 Los Angeles unrest following the aquittal of the police officers in the Rodney King case, Morrison criticizes the African American community for having what he calls a “victim mentality.” Later on, when discussing his openness to his children marrying outside the Korean American community, he says “I’m open to them marrying Caucasians or *even different races, even African American if they want to* [the emphasis is mine].” Further on, Morrison expresses his conservative gender politics, noting “I would prefer to have stay-home mother [for other adoptees] like my mother was, like my wife is” but also suggests that working mothers, including celebrity mothers, “can be just as loving.” But if working mothers are acceptable to Morrison, gay parents are not. He states, “I think it’s really morally wrong to place children into homosexual couples. They’re not given the opportunity to grow up in a normal family background, but kind of thrust into that environment, which is not of their choosing.” Morrison’s attitudes toward race, gender, and sexuality could lead to some fruitful classroom conversations, but if I assigned the fifth oral history session to students, I would want to preview and discuss some of Morrison’s statements in advance.

[29] Morrison, interviewed by Cline, COHR, June 4, 2009.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Morrison, interviewed by Cline, COHR, June 11, 2009.

[34] Ibid.

[35] On the commodifying tendencies of intercountry adoption, see Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea*, 164-174.

[36] Morrison, interviewed by Cline, COHR, June 17, 2009.

[37] Morrison, interviewed by Cline, COHR, June 24, 2009.

[38] "About," *Side by Side: Out of a South Korean Orphanage and Into the World*, directed by Glen Morey and Julie Morey, https://sidebysideproject.com/about.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea*, 207.

[41] Glen Morey and Julie Morey, "Given Away: Korean Adoptees Share Their Stories," *New York Times*, July 13, 2019, accessed December 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000006572850/given-away-korean-adoptees-share-their-stories.html.

[42] "11 Short Films," *Side by Side*, accessed December 2021, https://sidebysideproject.com/11-short-films.

[43] "About," *Side by Side*.

[44] Lendol Calder, "Uncoverage: Toward a Signature Pedagogy for the History Survey," *The Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (March 2006).

[45] There is an active debate around the usefulness of trigger and content warnings, with some evidence-based studies arguing that they do not benefit students. With this lesson, in which different students are engaging different narratives, I fall on the side of issuing a content warning. The written version of my warning reads: "many of the *Side by Side* narratives include content that some students may find troubling. Such content includes experiences of racism, poverty, sexual violence, and attempted suicide. If you have concerns about this assignment because of the possibility of encountering troubling content, please reach out by email or schedule an appointment right away and I can direct you to particular narratives." I have not had a student request an accommodation for the assignment. I do, however, have particular narrators that I would direct students to upon request. One is Anonymous, born 1944, *Side by Side*, https://sidebysideproject.com/stories/kor4464. This is the oldest narrator interviewed for the project. He lived at the Gongsaengwon orphanage until he aged out. Another is Anonymous, born 1960 (cited below). This narrator discusses his explorations of racial and sexual identity (he is gay) as a college student at the University of Wisconsin Madison. The narrative delves into the complexity of adoptee identity without explicitly discussing traumatic experiences.

[46] Anonymous, born 1960, *Side by Side*, accessed December 2021, https://sidebysideproject.com/stories/chi6061.

[47] Anonymous, born 1957, *Side by Side*, accessed December 2021, https://sidebysideproject.com/stories/bos5761.

[48] Yuri Doolan, "Camptown Origins." See especially the section "To Save the Mixed-Race Children of Camptowns," 358-367.

[49] The brief selection includes casualty statistics, notes atrocities committed by both sides, and discusses the 1951 Geneva convention that limited international refugee protections to European refugees.

[50] This website was created by an American veteran of the Korean War. It "honors the American servicemen and women who, during the Korean War and the years following, rendered compassionate humanitarian aid to the children of that war torn nation." From a distinctly biased perspective, it celebrates the informal and formal adoption of Korean children and archives stories about mascots, soldiers visiting orphanges, and adoption. It is included as a suggested resource here, with the caveat that it gives a very one-sided perspective that does not include the voices of actual adoptees, because it serves to archive historical media about early adoptees, especially from the U.S. military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*. For instance, the adoption of Roger, or Han Kyo Un from this article's preface, is documented in *Stars and Stripes*, October 19, 1953, accessed July 2022, http://koreanchildren.org/docs/SSS-314WP-Q.htm. Instructors interested in teaching materials analyzed in this article may well want to explore the website and perhaps use images from the website in slide presentations.